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Effectiveness and Significance of Nepal Tourism Years

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of Nepal's tourism campaigns, including Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and the postponed Visit Nepal 2020, aiming to boost tourist arrivals, economic growth, and regional development. Employing a cross-sectional study approach and analyzing secondary data from the Nepal Tourism Board and other credible sources, the study evaluates key metrics such as tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructural improvements. Findings indicate that while campaigns have spurred growth in central regions, rural areas remain underserved. The study highlights the need for inclusive tourism policies that address regional disparities, thereby supporting a more equitable distribution of tourism benefits across Nepal. Limitations include a reliance on existing data, which may affect comprehensiveness. These insights hold value for policymakers and tourism authorities as they seek to create sustainable and balanced tourism development strategies.

Keywords: Nepal Tourism Years, Tourist Arrivals, Foreign Exchange Earnings, Infrastructure Development, Regional Disparities, Tourism Campaigns

Introduction

Tourism, as a global phenomenon, has evolved significantly over time, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world. Historically, the concept of travel for leisure or exploration can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, who engaged in travel for trade, pilgrimage, and recreation (Smith, 1994). However, it wasn't until the 19th and 20th centuries that tourism, as we understand it today, began to flourish with the advent of modern transportation technologies like the steam engine and the expansion of railway networks, making travel more accessible to the middle class. Following World War II, global tourism experienced significant growth due to rising disposable incomes, advancements in aviation technology, and increased interest in international travel. By 2019, international tourism had become one of the fastest-growing global industries, generating 1.5 billion arrivals and a notable economic impact on developing countries like Nepal (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2019).

Globally, tourism has become a key driver of economic growth, generating employment, stimulating investment in infrastructure, and contributing to cultural exchange. According to the WTO (2019), international tourist arrivals reached 1.5 billion in 2019, highlighting the industry's significant impact on global GDP, which stood at approximately 10.4%. Countries worldwide have recognized the potential of tourism as a tool for economic development and have actively pursued strategies to attract tourists through various promotional campaigns and the development of tourism infrastructure (Smith, 1994).

In the case of Nepal, tourism has emerged as a vital sector within its economy, contributing significantly to foreign exchange earnings and employment generation. Nepal has leveraged its cultural diversity, scenic landscapes, and famed trekking routes to become a leading destination for adventure tourism and spiritual exploration. These natural and cultural assets attract tourists worldwide, contributing significantly to the national economy (Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023).

The country's tourism history gained momentum in the 1950s with the first successful ascent of Mount Everest, which brought global attention to Nepal as a destination for adventure tourism. Over the decades, Nepal has experienced both peaks and troughs in its tourism sector, driven by political stability, natural disasters, and global trends.

Recognizing the immense potential of tourism for economic development, the Nepalese government has launched several ambitious tourism campaigns over the years, aiming to attract a larger number of international tourists and promote the country's cultural and natural heritage. Notable among these initiatives were the Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and Visit Nepal 2020 campaigns. These campaigns were designed not only to boost international tourist arrivals but also to improve Nepal's global image as a unique destination offering a blend of nature, culture, and adventure (Nepal Tourism Board, 2011). For instance, Visit Nepal 1998 was launched following a period of political instability, with the aim of revitalizing tourism by attracting over 400,000 visitors—a goal that was successfully achieved with a 40% increase in tourist arrivals (Nepal Tourism Board, 2011). Similarly, Nepal Tourism Year 2011 saw further growth, positioning Nepal as a favored destination for international tourists. However, the global COVID-19 pandemic delayed the anticipated Visit Nepal 2020 campaign, hindering the achievement of its goal to attract 2 million tourists.

Despite the successes of these campaigns in increasing tourist arrivals and boosting foreign exchange earnings, significant challenges remain in the regional distribution of tourism benefits. The tourism industry in Nepal has been heavily concentrated in well-established destinations like Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan, which have received the bulk of tourism-related investments and infrastructure development. Despite their unique natural and cultural attractions, rural areas such as Karnali and the Far West have seen minimal tourism development due to limited infrastructure and marketing. This regional disparity underscores the need for equitable tourism policies (Pandey et al., 2020; Nyaupane & Chhetri, 2009). This regional disparity raises questions about the inclusiveness and sustainability of tourism in

Nepal, particularly regarding how future tourism initiatives can be more equitable in their impact.

The purpose of this study is to critically assess the effectiveness and significance of these tourism campaigns, particularly in terms of their impact on tourist arrivals, economic contributions, and regional development. While previous research has largely focused on the quantitative successes of these campaigns, such as increased tourist numbers and foreign exchange earnings, there has been limited exploration of their regional impact (WTO, 1996). This study aims to fill that gap by using existing data from published secondary sources, including government reports, tourism statistics, and economic surveys to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the campaigns' outcomes, highlighting both successes and shortcomings. Through this research article, insights will be provided for policymakers and tourism stakeholders to guide the planning and execution of future tourism campaigns, ensuring that tourism development is both inclusive and sustainable across all regions of Nepal.

Literature Review

Tourism has become a vital economic driver in many developing countries, with its potential to generate foreign exchange, stimulate employment, and support infrastructure development (Bhandari, 2016). As global tourism trends have surged, many countries have implemented focused tourism campaigns to capitalize on this economic opportunity. Nepal, known for its rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and adventure tourism offerings, has similarly launched several high-profile campaigns, including Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and the anticipated Visit Nepal 2020 (Ghimire & Thapa, 2014). These campaigns aimed to increase international arrivals and position Nepal as a premier tourist destination, leveraging the country's unique assets to boost economic growth (Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023).

Impact of Tourism Campaigns on Economic Growth

Globally, tourism campaigns have proven effective in raising national visibility and attracting international visitors. The World Tourism Organization

(UNWTO, 2019) highlights that effective tourism campaigns can significantly impact a nation's GDP by creating jobs, fostering cultural exchange, and driving investment in infrastructure. In Nepal's context, tourism campaigns have contributed to an increasing share of GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and employment in related sectors like hospitality and transport (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2018). For instance, Nepal Tourism Year 2011 achieved a remarkable 22.2% increase in tourist arrivals, translating to substantial economic benefits for central regions (Nepal Tourism Board, 2011).

However, the economic gains from these campaigns have been unevenly distributed across the country. Research indicates that most tourism benefits are concentrated in established destinations such as Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan, which are already equipped with better infrastructure and amenities (Sharma, 2016). Conversely, remote regions, including Karnali and the Far West, have seen limited development and minimal economic benefit from national tourism initiatives (Rijal, 2013).

Regional Disparities and Infrastructure Challenges

One of the major barriers to balanced tourism growth in Nepal is the disparity in regional infrastructure. Studies by Nyaupane and Thapa (2004) and Ghimire (2021) emphasize that insufficient roads, lack of accommodations, and poor transportation systems in remote areas hinder their accessibility and attractiveness to international tourists. Without sufficient infrastructure investment, rural regions struggle to attract visitors, despite their unique natural and cultural appeal (Nyaupane & Chettri, 2009).

The government's emphasis on central regions exacerbates these disparities, as development efforts have historically prioritized well-known tourist hubs over less-visited areas. Sharma and Pandey (2018) argue that government initiatives, including tourism campaigns, have largely neglected rural destinations with untapped potential. This imbalance has led to overcrowding in popular destinations, putting strain on local resources and diminishing the overall visitor experience, while remote areas fail to benefit from tourism-related economic opportunities (Bhandari, 2016).

Sustainable Tourism and Inclusivity

Sustainable tourism aims to balance economic benefits with environmental and cultural preservation, an approach particularly relevant for Nepal's fragile ecosystems and cultural heritage. According to Butler (1999), sustainable tourism not only contributes to economic growth but also protects local resources, ensuring long-term benefits for communities. While Nepal's tourism campaigns have attempted to include sustainable tourism principles, the lack of inclusivity in regional benefits has raised concerns about the long-term viability of this approach (Pandey et al., 2020). Developing lesser-known destinations in a sustainable manner could relieve pressure on overburdened areas and create economic opportunities for underdeveloped regions (Sharma, 2016).

Previous Research and Research Gaps

Existing literature has examined the general economic and social impacts of tourism in Nepal, focusing primarily on visitor numbers and foreign exchange earnings (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2018). While studies by Blaikie et al. (1980) and Bjonness (1980) provided early insights into tourism's social and environmental impacts, recent studies lack comprehensive data on regional economic disparities resulting from national tourism campaigns. Sharma (2016) and Ghimire & Thapa (2014) point out that there is a need for research that addresses how tourism campaigns can equitably impact both central and peripheral regions. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the effectiveness of past tourism campaigns in terms of economic contributions, tourist arrivals, and regional development, while identifying key areas where these campaigns fell short.

Methodology

This research employs a cross sectional study, utilizing published secondary data to assess the effectiveness and significance of Nepal Tourism Years, particularly Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and Visit Nepal 2020. The study focuses on key metrics such as tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructural development, with no primary data collection or surveys conducted.

The data for this research are drawn from reliable secondary sources, including Nepal Tourism Board reports, Ministry of Tourism publications, and economic surveys from the Central Bureau of Statistics. These sources provide comprehensive information on tourist arrivals, revenue generated through tourism, and the state of infrastructure development during the campaign years. Additionally, government documents and media reports on Visit Nepal 2020 are reviewed to understand the preparations and the impact of the campaign's postponement due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data collected are presented in tables, highlighting trends in tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, and key infrastructural development. This study does not employ advanced statistical analysis; instead, it focuses on a descriptive review of tourism campaigns' outcomes, presenting trends and insights through published secondary data. The data are displayed in 2 tables for ease of understanding and comparison, focusing on changes observed before and after each campaign.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study, focusing on the effectiveness and economic impact of the Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and Visit Nepal 2020 campaigns. The results are based on secondary data, presented in tables to highlight key metrics such as tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, and infrastructural developments.

Tourist Arrivals and Economic Impact

Table 1

The tourist arrival and average length of stay before and during the tourism campaigns

*Effectiveness and Significance of
Nepal Tourism Years*

Year	Total		By Air		By land		Average length of stay
	Number	Annual Growth Rate(%)	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1997(Pre - campaign)	4,21,857	7.2	3,71,145	88	50,712	12	10.49
1998	4,63,684	9.9	3,98,008	85.8	65,676	14.2	10.76
2010(Pre - campaign)	6,02,867	18.2	4,48,800	74.4	1,54,067	25.6	12.67
2011	7,36,215	22.2	5,45,221	74.1	1,90,994	25.9	13.12
2019(Pre - campaign)	11,97,191	2.05	9,95,884	83.19	2,01,301	16.81	12.7
2020	2,30,085	-80.7	1,83,130	79.6	46,955	20.4	15.1

Source: NEPAL TOURISM STATISTICS 2022 ,Government of Nepal, Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation Singhadurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal May, 2023

First Campaign (1997-1998). Tourist arrivals grew by 9.9%(4,63,684- 4,21,857/4,21,884)(see table 1).The majority arrived by air (around 88%), while land travel saw a modest increase. The average stay slightly increased from 10.49 days to 10.76 days.

Second Campaign (2010-2011). This campaign was highly successful, with a 22.2% increase in tourist arrivals(See Table 1). Air travel remained the dominant mode of entry, with a slight increase in land travel. Tourists stayed longer, with the average length of stay increasing to 13.12 days from 12.67 days(See table 1).

Third Campaign (2019-2020). The COVID-19 pandemic caused a drastic 80.7% decrease(See table 1) in tourist numbers. Though arrivals dropped significantly, the average length of stay increased to 15.1 days, likely due to travel restrictions extending visitors' stays. Overall, while the

first two campaigns demonstrated steady growth in tourist arrivals and economic contributions, the third campaign was severely impacted.

Economic Contributions of Tourism

Tourism has long been recognized as a significant contributor to Nepal's economy. It serves as one of the primary sources of foreign exchange and generates employment opportunities in various sectors, including hospitality, transportation, and local handicrafts (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2018). According to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation (2023), the tourism sector in Nepal contributes around 8% of the national GDP. Successful tourism campaigns, particularly Visit Nepal 1998 and Nepal Tourism Year 2011, resulted in a significant increase in international tourist arrivals, with foreign exchange earnings rising in parallel.

However, the economic benefits of tourism are not uniformly distributed across the country. The majority of economic gains from tourism are concentrated in regions like Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan, where most tourist activities are centered. These regions have well-developed infrastructure, including international airports, luxury accommodations, and popular tourist attractions. In contrast, rural areas with immense potential for tourism, such as Rara Lake, Humla, and Mugu, remain underdeveloped due to a lack of infrastructure and promotional efforts (Nyaupane&Chhetri, 2009).

Table 2

Gross Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism before, during and aftermath of tourism campaigns.

*Effectiveness and Significance of
Nepal Tourism Years*

Fiscal Year	Total Foreign Exchange Earnings		from Tourism	% Change in US \$
	NPR(Million)	Annual Average Exchange Rate	US\$(Million)	
2000/01(Aftermath of Visit Nepal 1998)	11717.0	73.8	158.7	—
2001/02	8654.3	76.9	112.6	-20.1
2010/11	24610.7	72.3	340.5	-9.8
2011/12(During Nepal Tourism Year, 2011)	30703.8	81.0	379.0	11.3
2012/13	34210.6	88.0	389.0	2.6
2019/20	60885.0	116.3	523.5	-21.6
2020/21(During Visit Nepal 2020)	7266.3	117.9	61.6	-88.2
2021/22	32447.2	120.8	268.5	335.6

Source: NEPAL TOURISM STATISTICS 2022 ,Government of Nepal,Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation Singhadurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal May, 2023

The data on foreign exchange earnings from tourism in Nepal shows fluctuating trends between 2000 and 2022. There was a significant drop in earnings in 2001/02 and 2019/20, followed by a dramatic decline in 2020/21, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a sharp recovery occurred in 2021/22, with foreign exchange earnings rising by 335.6%(See table 2). Key periods of growth include the Nepal Tourism Year 2011, which saw an 11.3% increase in earnings, while 2020/21 experienced the largest fall, with an 88.2% decline(See table 2). Overall, tourism earnings recovered strongly after the pandemic downturn.

The data reveals that there is no available information before 2000, so for the Visit Nepal 1998 campaign, only the data after 2000 has been considered.

After this campaign, foreign exchange earnings from tourism dropped sharply in 2001/02. A significant decline is also seen in 2020, likely due to the global pandemic, as earnings plummeted by 88.2%. However, within one or two years, tourism earnings recovered substantially, with a sharp 335.6% (See table 2) increase by 2021/22, indicating a strong rebound after the pandemic-related disruption.

Infrastructural Development and Regional Disparities

To establish itself as a premier global destination, Nepal has made significant strides in tourism infrastructure development from 1995 to 2024. These initiatives align with the objectives of national campaigns such as Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and the planned Visit Nepal 2020, which aim to attract international visitors while encouraging regional tourism development (Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023; World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2021). As the global tourism industry continues to recover and evolve post-COVID-19, these investments also reflect Nepal's commitment to enhancing tourist experiences and meeting modern expectations in hospitality and accessibility (UNWTO, 2023).

Tourism Infrastructure Development.

Significant investments have been made to meet global standards in accommodations, increasing the capacity to 54,370 tourist-standard beds, including 182 five-star hotels as of March 2023. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have played a key role in these advancements, enabling the development of boutique hotels near cultural sites and eco-friendly resorts that preserve natural landscapes (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2018; Ghimire, 2021). This expansion of high-quality lodging options enhances Nepal's appeal to international tourists and aligns with the global trend toward more diverse and sustainable tourism accommodations (World Bank, 2022).

Highway Rest Stops and Cultural Hubs.

Infrastructure improvements along major highways like Prithvi, Araniko, and

Siddhartha support both local and international tourism, enhancing regional connectivity and making remote areas more accessible (Pandey et al., 2020; Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023). The development of rest stops with amenities at key points on these routes encourages exploration beyond central hubs, providing economic benefits to previously underserved areas. Research shows that improved regional infrastructure not only enhances visitor experiences but also promotes balanced regional economic growth by attracting tourists to lesser-known regions (Nyaupane & Chettri, 2009; UNWTO, 2021).

Investment in Adventure and Recreational Tourism

Adventure tourism has become a key area of investment in Nepal, reflecting a global shift toward experience-driven travel. Investments in trekking, mountaineering, paragliding, and recreational parks align well with Nepal's unique geographical features and the growing demand for active tourism (Bhandari, 2016; Sharma, 2021). Studies indicate that adventure tourism not only increases visitor numbers but also attracts higher-spending tourists, which can significantly boost local economies and support conservation efforts when managed sustainably (UNWTO, 2023; Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023).

MICE Tourism Expansion

To attract a diverse range of tourists, Nepal has targeted the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector. By improving conference facilities and enhancing air transportation, the government aims to position Nepal as a competitive destination for business tourism (Sharma & Pandey, 2018; Nepal Tourism Board, 2020). MICE tourism offers economic advantages as it attracts high-spending travelers and stabilizes seasonal tourism flows, providing year-round revenue and elevating Nepal's profile as a sophisticated, multi-faceted destination (World Bank, 2022; UNWTO, 2021). For Nepal's MICE tourism, improving air transportation includes

enhancing international airports such as Gautam Buddha International Airport and Pokhara International Airport, increasing direct international routes, and modernizing airport facilities to meet the expectations of corporate travelers. This is critical for positioning Nepal as a competitive destination for MICE events, which rely heavily on seamless, high-quality transportation options.

Transportation Infrastructure Improvements

Transportation infrastructure improvements have been essential to Nepal's strategy to enhance accessibility and distribute tourism benefits across regions. Upgrades to highways such as the Prithvi, Araniko, and East-West highways, along with the development of Gautam Buddha International Airport and Pokhara International Airport, are critical for supporting increased tourist arrivals (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2018; Ghimire & Thapa, 2014). Improved transportation not only enhances convenience for international visitors but also supports the tourism industry's resilience by diversifying accessible locations and reducing congestion in popular areas (Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023; UNWTO, 2023).

Regional Disparities in Infrastructural Development related to Tourism

Nepal faces notable regional disparities in the development of tourism-related infrastructure, which have significantly influenced the distribution of economic benefits from its national tourism campaigns. These disparities align closely with the central theme of the research article, which evaluates the effectiveness of tourism campaigns like Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and Visit Nepal 2020 in addressing equitable tourism development across the country. While tourism has contributed significantly to the economy, the unequal distribution of investments and resources has limited the potential of regions such as Karnali and the Far West (Sharma, 2016; Pandey et al., 2020).

Concentration of Investments

Tourism investments have predominantly focused on established destinations such as Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan. These regions benefit from advanced infrastructure, including international-standard accommodations, well-developed road networks, and high visibility in promotional campaigns. In contrast, underdeveloped areas like western Nepal, Karnali, and the Far West have received limited investments, resulting in inadequate amenities and minimal tourism growth. This concentration perpetuates regional imbalances and restricts the equitable distribution of tourism benefits (Bhandari, 2016; Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023).

Accessibility Issues

Western Nepal and other remote regions suffer from poor accessibility due to the lack of adequate roads, airports, and transportation facilities. While central regions enjoy multiple entry points and improved connectivity, areas such as Karnali remain difficult to access, deterring potential tourists. Nyaupane and Thapa (2004) emphasize that accessibility is a critical determinant of tourism development, and regions with limited transport infrastructure are often excluded from the economic benefits of tourism. This disparity is further exacerbated by insufficient government efforts to bridge these gaps (Ghimire & Thapa, 2014).

Limited Tourist Attractions

Popular destinations like Kathmandu and Pokhara dominate tourism-related marketing and promotional activities, overshadowing the potential of lesser-known regions. Western Nepal, despite its unique natural and cultural attractions, is underrepresented in national and international campaigns. This lack of recognition affects its ability to attract tourists and limits economic opportunities for local communities (Pandey et al., 2020; Sharma, 2016). Without targeted promotional strategies and investments, these regions will

continue to lag behind.

Economic Development Factors

Regions with advanced tourism infrastructure, such as roads, hotels, and entertainment facilities, tend to enjoy stronger economic connections and higher levels of development. Central tourist hubs have benefited from these advantages, while areas like Karnali struggle with underdevelopment due to limited infrastructure. The World Bank (2022) highlights that infrastructure is a key driver of economic growth, and its absence in rural areas creates significant barriers to tourism-driven development (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2018; Ghimire, 2021).

Slow Government Initiatives

Although the government has launched various campaigns to promote tourism in underdeveloped regions, the implementation of these initiatives has been slow and inconsistent. Public-private partnerships, which have driven significant improvements in central regions, are almost absent in remote areas. This lack of timely intervention perpetuates disparities and prevents regions like the Far West and Karnali from fully realizing their tourism potential (Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, 2023; UNWTO, 2021).

By addressing these disparities, Nepal can create a more inclusive tourism strategy that leverages the potential of all its regions. Targeted investments, improved accessibility, and equitable promotional efforts will be essential in ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed more evenly across the country. These efforts align with the research article's problem statement and underscore the importance of balancing regional development to achieve sustainable tourism growth.

Future Challenges and the Role of Sustainable Tourism

Looking ahead, the challenge for Nepal's tourism sector will be to align its growth with the principles of sustainable tourism. As the number of tourists

increases, the environmental and social impact on the country's fragile ecosystems and local communities becomes more pronounced. Bjønness (1980) points out that unsustainable tourism practices, such as unmanaged trekking and overdevelopment in sensitive areas, can lead to deforestation, pollution, and the degradation of cultural sites.

The concept of sustainable tourism involves balancing economic growth with environmental protection and cultural preservation (Butler, 1999). Nepal's recent tourism policies have started to incorporate sustainable practices, such as promoting eco-tourism and enforcing regulations that limit the environmental impact of tourism activities (Pandey et al., 2020). However, more needs to be done to ensure that future tourism campaigns do not repeat the mistakes of the past. Campaigns like Visit Nepal 2020, which were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, should emphasize sustainability as a core component of their strategy.

Encouraging responsible tourism by engaging local communities in tourism management and ensuring that economic benefits are distributed equitably can help mitigate the negative effects of tourism (Nyaupane, 2004). By focusing on long-term sustainability, Nepal can safeguard its natural and cultural assets, ensuring that tourism continues to contribute to economic development while preserving the country's heritage for future generations.

To sum up, the findings indicate that while the Visit Nepal campaigns were successful in increasing tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings, the benefits were largely concentrated in central regions like Kathmandu and Pokhara. Infrastructure developments, such as airport expansions, were also focused on these areas, leaving remote regions underserved.

The data from Visit Nepal 2020 highlight the potential for further growth, but the postponement due to the pandemic underscores the need for resilience in future tourism strategies. To make future campaigns more inclusive, there is a clear need to invest in infrastructure in remote areas and promote these

regions to international tourists. This will ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed more evenly across Nepal.

Major Findings

1. **Increase in Tourist Arrivals:** The tourism campaigns—Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and the planned Visit Nepal 2020—significantly boosted tourist arrivals and extended average stays, especially in central tourist regions. Nepal Tourism Year 2011, in particular, saw a substantial increase of 22.2% in tourist arrivals, indicating the campaign's effectiveness in attracting international visitors.
2. **Concentration of Economic Benefits:** While these campaigns led to notable economic gains, the benefits were largely concentrated in established tourist hubs, such as Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan. This centralization left remote regions, including Karnali and the Far West, with limited economic development and tourism infrastructure.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** Investments and infrastructure enhancements focused primarily on popular tourist areas. While projects like airport expansions and the development of luxury accommodations contributed to increased tourism in central regions, remote areas continued to face limited access, lacking essential infrastructure like roads, accommodations, and basic amenities.
4. **Unrealized Potential of Remote Regions:** Despite the significant tourism potential of rural and remote regions in Nepal, these areas received limited promotional and infrastructural support. Unique natural and cultural attractions in regions like Karnali and the Far West remain underutilized, and they continue to struggle in capturing a share of the tourism market.

Limitations

1. **Dependence on Published Secondary Data:** The study relies solely on secondary data from sources like the Nepal Tourism Board and Ministry of Tourism, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Primary

data from tourists or local stakeholders in underserved regions could provide deeper insights into regional tourism challenges.

2. Regional Imbalance: Due to the focus on central regions with substantial data, the study may not fully represent the needs and experiences of rural areas. Limited available data on these regions could lead to an incomplete understanding of the broader impacts of tourism campaigns.

3. Campaign Disruption: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the anticipated Visit Nepal 2020 campaign, resulting in an 80.7% decline in tourist arrivals due to global restrictions. This disruption affected the comparative analysis of tourism growth and hinders evaluation of long-term outcomes.

Conclusion

The tourism campaigns Visit Nepal 1998, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and preparations for Visit Nepal 2020 have played a pivotal role in raising Nepal's profile as an international tourist destination. These initiatives successfully increased tourist arrivals and generated substantial foreign exchange, positioning tourism as a crucial sector in Nepal's economy. However, the distribution of these benefits has been uneven, with central regions like Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan receiving the majority of investments and infrastructure development, while peripheral and remote areas, such as Karnali and the Far West, continue to lag behind.

The study, relying on published secondary data and cross-sectional study reveals that although these campaigns significantly boosted tourist numbers and economic contributions, the regional disparities in tourism benefits remain a major challenge. Infrastructural improvements, such as the expansion of airports and hotels, were largely concentrated in established tourist hubs, limiting the potential for inclusive growth in less-developed regions. This uneven focus has restricted the ability of local communities in

remote areas to benefit from the economic opportunities created by tourism, reinforcing regional imbalances.

To ensure that future tourism campaigns, including Visit Nepal 2020, contribute more equitably to national development, a shift in focus is needed. Greater attention must be given to promoting tourism in underdeveloped regions, accompanied by targeted investments in infrastructure such as roads, accommodation, and accessibility. Additionally, sustainable tourism practices should be prioritized to preserve Nepal's natural and cultural assets while promoting long-term economic growth. By addressing these gaps and fostering more balanced tourism development, Nepal can not only enhance the overall tourism experience but also ensure that the benefits of tourism are shared across all regions, supporting inclusive and sustainable national development.

Recommendations

1. **Promote Lesser-Known Regions:** Future tourism campaigns should prioritize marketing and promotional efforts for remote regions like Karnali and the Far West. Highlighting these areas' unique cultural and natural attractions can help diversify tourist interest and reduce overreliance on central hubs.
2. **Targeted Infrastructure Investment:** Allocate resources to improve transportation, accommodation, and other basic amenities in underserved areas. Investments in road networks, regional airports, and quality accommodations can make these regions more accessible and attractive to both domestic and international tourists.
3. **Inclusive Tourism Policy:** Implement policies that encourage equitable distribution of tourism benefits across regions. Government incentives for private investments in underdeveloped regions, alongside public-private partnerships, can foster more balanced growth and economic impact.
4. **Adopt Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Emphasize sustainable

development by integrating eco-friendly practices and engaging local communities in tourism management. Initiatives that protect natural and cultural heritage will help maintain the long-term appeal of these areas while providing stable economic benefits for local residents.

5. Comprehensive Data Collection: Encourage the collection of primary data from tourists and stakeholders in both popular and remote regions to better assess regional needs and experiences. This approach will enable future studies to provide more comprehensive insights into the socio-economic impacts of tourism across Nepal.

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