

Evaluation of Ecotourism Practices: A Comparative Study of Lowlands and Mountains of Nepal

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Abstract

This research provides valuable insights into tourist profiles, market demand, attractions, motivations, amenities, and satisfaction levels in Chitwan National Park (CNP), the lowland park, and Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA), the park in the mountains of Nepal. Through qualitative and quantitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, and field observations, this study compared the current state of ecotourism practices in the protected areas (PAs). Though both the PAs showed consistent growth in tourist flow, ACA exhibited signs of saturation, suggesting the need for strategic management. Attractions differed in the PAs; natural scenery and photography draw visitors to ACA while wildlife and cultural experiences attract tourists to CNP. Disparities in amenities highlight areas for improvement, particularly in ACA. Community engagement is always an added benefit to any tourism development. Overall, satisfaction levels are satisfactory, but challenges such as overcrowding, decreasing quality of tourism, environmental degradation, and accessibility constraints require attention for sustainable tourism development. Collaborative efforts can address these issues and ensure the long-term viability of ecotourism in CNP and ACA while preserving their natural and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Annapurna; attractions; Chitwan; ecotourism; tourist satisfaction

Introduction

Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas to enjoy and appreciate nature and associated cultural features (IUCN, 2023) and an ethical journey to natural areas the byproduct of which is benefit to local communities and protection of the environment (TIES, 2015; Cheia, 2013). It aims to promote conservation, minimize visitor impact, and actively involve local communities in beneficial socioeconomic activities. The people who follow ecotourism are called Eco-tourists. Hijriati and Mardiana (2014) emphasize the positive impacts on local communities, environmental preservation, and socio-cultural heritage, fostering a sense of empowerment and pride among residents as cited by Fionasari, 2024. Over 45% of tourists visiting Nepal are drawn to the country's rich natural assets, including snow-capped mountains, plentiful rivers, and sub-tropical forests (World Bank 2022). So, the government of Nepal has established various protected areas, including national parks, wildlife reserves, buffer zones, conservation areas, and cultural heritage sites, to preserve wildlife and promote ecotourism, as Baral et al. (2012) outlined. The main motive for establishing the protected areas is to support conservation efforts to meet local demand and reduce negative sentiments (Thapa, 2014).

Nepal's extensive network of Protected Areas, including 12 National Parks, 1 Wildlife Reserve, 1 Hunting Reserve, 6 Conservation Areas, and 13 Buffer Zones, covering 23.39%

of the nation's land (DNPWC, n.d.), not only contribute significantly to in-situ conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity but also offer immense potential for ecotourism development, attracting over half of Nepal's international tourists (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018; Shrestha et al., 2023).

Although two-thirds of tourists visit protected areas, they are concentrated in only four out of the 20 protected areas (World Bank, 2022). While ecotourism plays a significant role in the sustainable development of buffer zones within protected areas and the livelihood around, its focus remains largely concentrated on selective destinations such as the Annapurna Conservation Area, Chitwan National Park, Manasalu Conservation Area, and occasionally Bardiya National Park (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018; K.C. et al., 2015; Nepal, 2002), consequently limiting the benefits derived from tourism activities. The country faces a lower benefit ratio for tourism than others due to underdeveloped and under-maintained tourism infrastructure, including trails, bridges, activities, and lodging. Factors such as the appeal of specific attractions, accessibilities, the adequacy of site infrastructure, market demand, available capacity, and socioeconomic connections to biodiversity are critical determinants of ecotourism potential (Hariant et al., 2020).

Though many researchers have unveiled socioeconomic risk, potential, impacts, and perception towards national parks and conservation areas individually, there lies a significant gap regarding direct comparisons between PAs in amenities, potentiality, demand, and motive of tourists. The comparison of these aspects can help policymakers and tourism stakeholders to plan and execute the plans for better service and tourism promotion. Hence, the research compared Annapurna Conservation Area and Chitwan National Park to shed light on their respective strengths, weaknesses, and potential synergies in promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism.

Material and methods

Study area

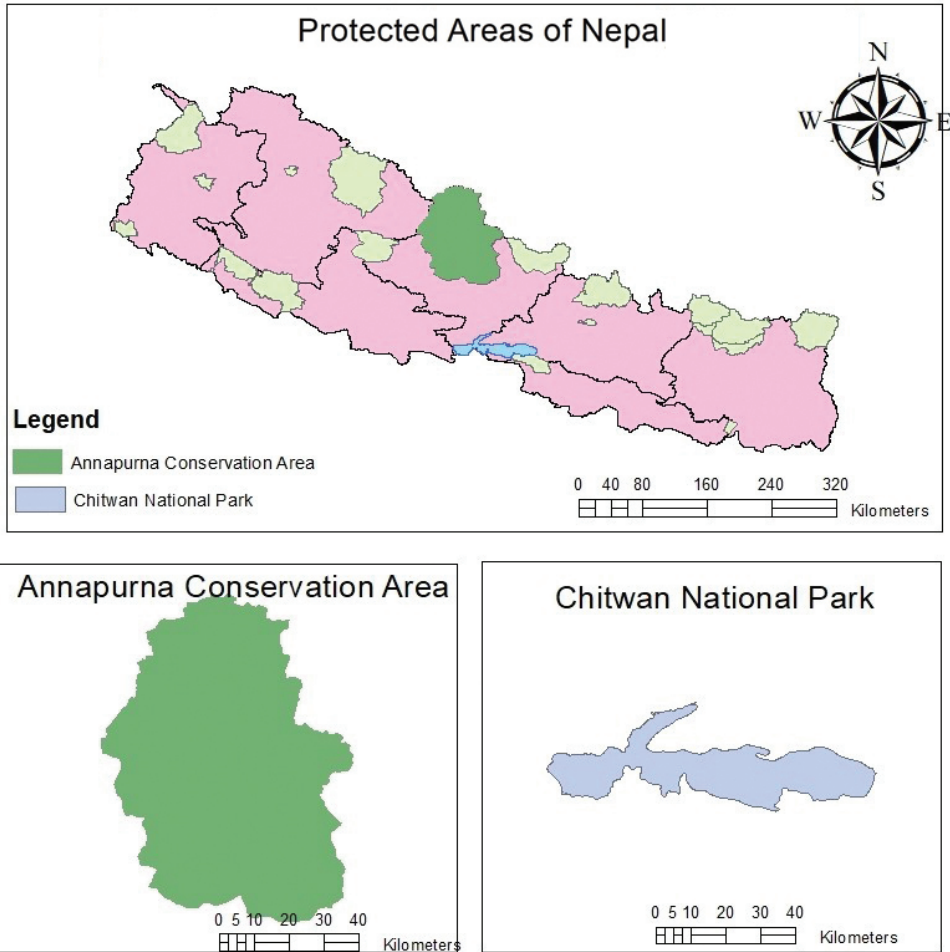
This study was conducted in Chitwan National Park (CNP) and the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) (Figure 1).

CNP, established in 1973, initially adopted a centralized management model of Fine and Fence, supported by the Nepal Army led to conflicts with local communities over land rights and resettlement (Michael et al., 2016). ACA emerged as a pioneering solution, representing Nepal's first foray into community-engaged conservation initiatives. ACA aimed to harmonize conservation objectives with the socio-economic needs of resident communities. Remarkably, both CNP and ACA collectively attract a substantial majority, nearly 51%, of total tourists visiting protected areas, since FY 2060/61 underscoring their pivotal role not only in biodiversity conservation but also in driving the nation's tourism sector.

Since its establishment in 1986, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) has been Nepal's flagship project of the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC). It is the country's largest Protected Area and the beginning of the Conservation Area initiative. ACAP, which spans 7,629 square kilometers, is home to a population that is more than 100,000 people and exhibits a mosaic of linguistic and cultural diversity with Gurung and Magar communities dominating the southern terrain and Thakali, Manange, and Loba communities prevailing in the northern reaches (NTNC, 2022).

Figure 1

Map of study area



ACAP is known for its exceptional biodiversity and hosts a diverse range of flora and wildlife. ACA has become Nepal's most popular trekking destination, drawing the interest of a sizable percentage of the country's trekking lovers. The growing tourist industry has become a vital part of the local economy, as seen by the growth of more than 1,000 lodges, tea shops, and other related businesses that meet the various demands of trekkers, pilgrims, and the support systems that go along with them (NTNC, 2022). ACA is the home to the famous Dhaulagiri range and Annapurna Range including Mt. Dhaulagiri (8151 m asl.), 7th and Mt. Annapurna I (8091 m asl.), 10th highest peak in the world (Prajapati et al., 2020; NTNC, 2022; Michael et al., 2016). To maximize the effectiveness of conservation efforts, ACA has been divided into seven-unit conservation offices. This division allows for the implementation of customized conservation plans that are specific to the natural dynamics of each area (NTNC,2022; Nepal et al., 2022).

UNESCO designated CNP as a World Heritage Site in 1984, highlighting its exceptional value to humanity. CNP hosts a diverse ecosystem of wildlife, boasting 68 mammalian

species, 544 avian species, 56 herpetofauna species, and 126 fish species (CNP, 2022; Pandit et al., 2015). Embracing a holistic approach to conservation, CNP established a buffer zone encompassing 750 square kilometers of surrounding inhabited areas in 1996. This buffer zone initiative aims to foster participatory conservation by engaging local communities in collaborative efforts with park authorities to manage and protect the park's ecological integrity while promoting sustainable development initiatives.

CNP stands out as one of Nepal's premier protected areas, attracting significant attention from both domestic and international visitors. Moreover, CNP's commitment to community engagement and participatory conservation is evident in the transfer of 68 Buffer Zone Community Forests (BZCFs) to local communities for management and utilization. This initiative, covering a total area of 13,418.85 hectares, benefits a substantial population of 42,886 households and 223,555 users. Despite challenges posed by population migration and growth, CNP continues to uphold its reputation as a world-class destination for wildlife-based safari tourism, earning distinction as the foremost safari tourism destination in South Asia (Kandel et al., 2020).

These two parks in the lowlands and mountain regions of Nepal with diverse attractions, amenities, and offerings were selected for the research. Comparative study in two types of protected areas in diverse geography is the unique aspect of the research.

Methodology

Data collection was conducted in April and October of 2023 in Annapurna Circuit Trail (Besisahar to Tatopani) including the Ghorepani and Poon Hill of ACA and in Sauraha and Kasara in January and November of 2023 of CNP. Purposive sampling was performed and the locations were chosen based on popularity, tourism demand, and the major attractions of the PAs. Altogether, questionnaires were conducted with 136 respondents (ACA: n=79, CNP: n=57). Both the closed and open-ended questions were employed to gather insights on demographics, amenities, motivational factors, satisfaction levels, experiences, key attractions, and tourism impacts. 27 key informants (ACAP, CNP, NTNC officials, and locally elected local representatives) were interviewed. The snowball sampling method was applied to select the KI to make the work holistic and comprehensive. The sites were visited to validate the information provided by the respondents and informants. Likert scale was used to evaluate attitudes, perceptions, and opinions. Informal conversations with the local hotel owners, trekking guides, nature guides, residents, and respondents in the trail and fields were done to further validate the discussions with the respondents. In addition, the secondary data were collected from various reports and scientific articles.

Market demand analysis was done based on statistical analyses, including growth rate calculations and correlation assessments, which were performed to understand trends and relationships in tourist visits, revealing an overall annual increase in total protected areas and highlighting specific patterns in CNP and ACA with correlation coefficients. It shows the changing dynamics in tourism of both the parks compared with the rest of the PAs and reflects the socioeconomic impacts on the localities in the park premises. The average comparison of tourist ratings on five aspects of ACA and CNP, analyzing responses to identify key attractions, motivation, and amenities experience examining the impact of these attractions on tourism quality, length of stay, and visitor loyalty was quantified with the help of the Likert scale in the range of standard deviation. The study utilized questionnaire surveys

and interviews to evaluate socio-economic factors, visit frequency, and trip-related variables to understand their impact on visitor satisfaction, focusing on parameters such as trail conditions, amenities, budgets, accessibility, and cultural experiences, with results compared against existing literature and previous research.

Results and discussion

Demography of respondents

There were more male respondents (68%), most were in the age range 18-39 (52%), most of them were Asians (39.7%), and most of them (76%) opted for organized tours. Most of the respondents stayed. Tourists stayed less in CNP (3.95±0.44 days) than in ACA (12.35± 0.42 days). It is less than the average time spent by tourists who visited Nepal (13.1 days on average in the year 2022) (MoCTCA, 2023) (Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic background of respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	93	68%
	Female	43	32%
Age Group	0-18	6	4%
	18-39	71	52%
	40-59	42	31%
	60+	17	13%
Region	Asian	54	39.7 %
	Europe	47	34.6%
	Other	35	25.7%
Mode of Travel	Organized	104	76%
	Self	32	24%
Length of Stay	ACA	3.95 ± 0.437	
	CNP	12.35 ± 0.424	

Market demand

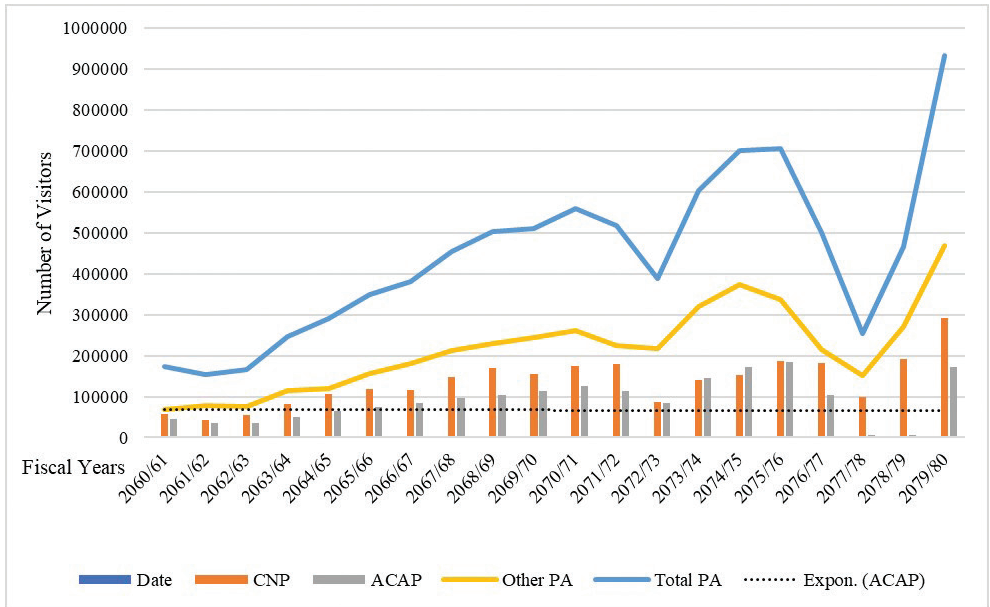
There is an increasing trend of tourists flowing in both the PA with an exception in FY 2015/16 (because of a massive earthquake in Nepal) and FY 2019/20 (because of Corona Pandemic). The tourist flow in PAs increased at the rate of 9% per annum from 2003 to 2023 and plunged to 6% per annum in the year 2013 to 2023. For the last 10 years, the growth rate of tourists in CNP and ACA was 5 % and 3 % respectively which is lower than the amount tourists visited in PAs of Nepal.

The visitor count in other PAs was correlated with the tourist count in all PAs, with a correlation coefficient of 0.95, while that of ACA and CNP was 0.59 and 0.89, respectively. Though the tourist flow in all the PAs and CNP is highly correlated with the total tourist count in the nation, the correlation with ACA seems to be decreasing each year. This might be because the tourists visited other PAs that offered equivalent attractions in a similar budget and amenities to that of ACA. It can be further demonstrated by the flat exponential trendline

of the ACA, indicating the saturation limit of the ACA.

Figure 2

Trend of tourist flow in CNP and ACA



Data Source: DNPWC, n.d.

All the PAs, including CNP, created the successive highest tourism flow after their highest count in FY 2076/76, except the ACA. For the nation, it is always good to have diversified sites of attractions but big questions about the economic activities uncertainties in ACA is something the stakeholders need to concentrate on. Regarding the concerns of KII in ACA, there is big doubt about the risk of being a destination of mass tourism at the cost of natural capital due to the depletion of the cultural aspects, commercialization, and lack of interest in the youth. They seemed worried about the days of stays and average expenditure which has been depleting since the last 10 years in the major trekking routes of ACA.

According to Noonan (2022), cultural attractions such as landmarks, museums, and concerts positively influence tourism demand. The tourism industry stakeholders should be conscious of crafting recovery strategies post-pandemic by identifying the key cultural amenities that drive visitor interest and strengthen the quality of tourism to influence the demand for tourism. Proper research on the potential products that can act as add-on products to the destination's core product can elongate the duration and quality of a tourism stay. Though the divergence in tourism was seen and anticipated for ACA and CNP for the coming FY, the stakeholders should be concerned about improving the quality of tourism promoting and sustaining the region's livelihood. The success of tourism should not be judged based on the arrival of the visitor counts in Annapurna as suggested by Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002).

Attractions

The respondents mentioned that they visited ACAP for natural scenery, similar to findings in earlier research (Phuyal & Poudel, 2016) and for wildlife and birding in CNP (Upadhaya et

al., 2022) (Table 2). Aryal et al. (2019) underscore megafauna, birds, and Tharu cultures as the main tourist attractions of CNP while mountain range, snow leopard, blue sheep, and Gurung culture are highlights of ACA. It also aligns with the study by the World Bank Group in 2022 that natural assets captivate around 45% of the total tourists (World Bank, 2022).

Table 2

Attractions of study area

Location	ACAP	CNP
Natural scenery	4.42 ± 0.06	3.88 ± 0.07
Trekking and adventure	4.20 ± 0.08	3.04 ± 0.12
Wildlife and birding	2.87 ± 1.12	4.25 ± 0.07
Cultural immersion	2.94 ± 0.13	4.15 ± 0.06
Nature photography	4.34 ± 0.76	3.10 ± 0.79

Table 2 compares the Likert scale ratings of the tourists on 5 different aspects of the ACAP and CNP expressed in an Average Likert scale of 5 with standard deviation. Visitors are attracted by the natural scenery and photography followed by the adventurous trek in the lap of the Himalayas in ACA while wildlife and cultural activities are the major highlights in CNP. Though the wildlife and cultural aspects play a vital role in visitors of ACAP, the pull factors seem natural splendor and scenery of the snowcapped mountains. For CNP, a significant portion of tourists were present only to witness certain species of megafauna, and the cultural performance of the indigenous Tharu community. A notable portion of travelers seek to see wild flora and fauna on the trail of ACA. All of the hotel owners (3) in Yak Kharka and the majority of the hotel owners in Manang have administered the increasing trends of the tourists staying in the hotel to witness the snow leopard. An owner also added due to conservation, witnessing Snow leopards in Yak Kharka has been easier than in the past. Often, they can see it every 3-4 days a week during the season.

The scenery seems the first option for the visitor followed by the adventure and photography for the ACA coherent (Phuyal & Poudel, 2016) which revealed that 23% of travelers were primarily attracted to visit Nepal by its scenic beauty, followed closely by 21% seeking adventure, with pilgrimage, work, and nature escape each accounting for 16.5% and 11%, respectively. Numerous research and government reports justify natural and cultural treasures, diverse landscapes, climates, rich flora and fauna, numerous temples and shrines, hot springs, and so on are the major attractions in Nepal (MoCTCA, 2023; Dhakal, 2014). The major attractions of Chitwan National Park (CNP) include its diverse wildlife, opportunities for community engagement, and immersive experiences in Tharu culture, art, lifestyle, and traditions (Upadhaya et al., 2022) and our survey revealed similar outcomes. It also aligns with the study by the World Bank Group in 2022 that natural assets captivate around 45% of the total tourists (World Bank, 2022).

Key Informant Interview (KII) of ACA also agreed that natural scenery is the most important luring point to tourists while KIIs of CNP felt that wildlife and local cultural settings attract tourists. Local representatives in Manang and Chame agree on the bitter truth of decreasing cultural traditions and interest in youth for cultural preservation while it was reversed in Ghandruk. Though natural scenery and landscape are the gems of ACA, cultural aspects and faunal sightings can add value to the tourism of ACA increasing the quality of the tourism

and remediating the decreasing length of stay in ACA. Similarly, according to hotel owners and nature guides; adventures like jungle walks, elephant feedings, and Tharu dance have been increasing in the last 5 years contributing to the length of stay, quality of the tourism, and loyalty in visitors towards CNP. So, it is pivotal for the stakeholders to work in the weak rating area to improve the quality of the tourism and loyalty of the tourists.

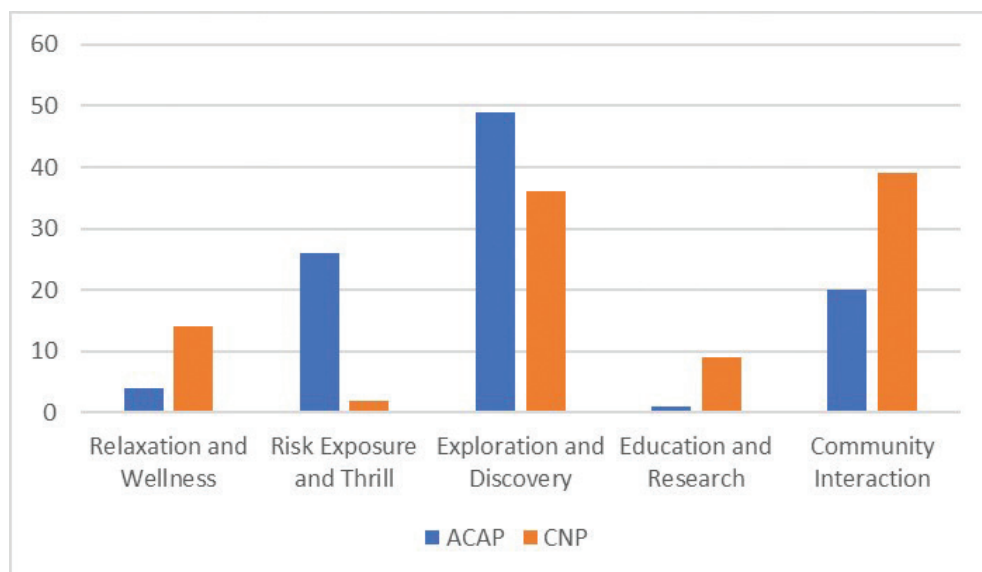
Motivation

Almost half of the respondents visited ACA for the exploration of nature, landscape, and the mighty Himalayas while slightly more than one-third of visitors go to CNP to explore diverse nature, cuisine, and culture as illustrated in Figure 3. About a quarter of tourists are excited about the thriller experience and risk in the high altitude and Himalayan Pass though the majority of the visitors agree the Thorong La Pass (5,416 m asl.) is the main highlight of their treks. A minimal chunk of the tourists was found engaged in research or education as the motive of their visit to both protected areas. This might be due to the selection of foreigners as the majority of the samples for the study.

Physical relaxation doesn't seem to be the motive of the visitor in Nepal, the trekkers in ACA are willing to take risks and challenges which is quite similar to Holden & Sparrowhawk (2002) that almost 60% of trekkers in Annapurna try to test their abilities. In the same study, almost 87% of visitors desired to get connected to nature which is coherent to the motive of visitors of both of the destinations in our study.

Figure 3

Factors of motivation in visitors



Interaction with the community and cultural shows motivates significant portions of the visitors of CNP than in ACA. The popularity of CNP for culture and community interaction may be due to the priority and interest of the local community towards ecotourism and cultural preservation as supported by research (Upadhaya et al., 2022). The main purpose of a visit to the CNP was recreation followed by education and official visits in 2005 (Saha &

K.C., 2005). Results are coherent with the results of Saufi et al. (2014), Community involvement is crucial for accessing the benefits of ecotourism, yet it also involves granting them a voice in regulating the development of ecotourism. The sense of ownership and perceptions of ecotourism within host communities are significant factors in its development. The study is consistent with a study in 2016 that implies 51% engaged in trekking activities during their time in Nepal, while 41.5% took part in cultural events (Phuyal & Poudel, 2016). The findings also imply exploration which includes trekking, safari, and other exploration means motivates around 50 % of the tourists while community interaction and culture attract roughly 40% of the visitors.

Research indicates that tourists' reasons for visiting a destination are closely linked to the appeal of the destination itself and may differ from one place to another (Amuquandoh, 2017; Paudyal et al., 2020). Demographic parameters have greatly influenced visitors' motives regarding the destination, specifically thrill seekers and pleasure aspirants. Similar research by Baniya et al. (2021) in the Gaurishankar Conservation Area indicates that tourists' motivations differ significantly in their socio-demographics, travel patterns, satisfaction levels, recommendations, and travel profiles.

Amenities

Food and hospitality received the highest perceived rating as satisfactory in ACA whereas accommodation received the satisfactory rating for CNP. The tourists praised the freshness of the food and hospitality of the hosts in ACA. Many tourists complain about the accessibility and transport to the ACA reflected by below-average ratings in Table 3. It is partially according to the research on tourist satisfaction in Nepal which implies the discomfort of tourists on transportation and accessibility (Phuyal & Poudel, 2016).

The hospitality and community engagement in the service of the visitor seems poor in CNP compared to ACA. This may be influenced by the selected sampling site of CNP or due to the commercial settings of the Sauraha. The response towards accommodations has improved drastically compared to similar research in 2005 (Saha & K.C., 2005) while the road and transport seem similar enduring for almost 2 decades.

The residents and KII of the ACA have mixed opinions towards road and transport; some accept the condition of the road is setting back tourism and development while others argue the road is decreasing the length of stay of tourists in their area and shrinking the economy of the locality. Some of the local representatives complain about the objections of ACAP during the construction of the road and development activities. Unlike another parameter, quite diverse views were obtained from the tourists in the ACA region and CNP.

Table 3
Amenities of study area

Rating scale	ACAP	CNP
Transportation	2.89 ± 0.12	3.06 ± 0.13
Food	4.31 ± 0.01	3.07 ± 0.10
Accommodation	3.011 ± 0.12	4.52 ± 0.27
Hospitality	4.06 ± 0.08	2.97 ± 0.31
Community engagement	3.37 ± 0.89	2.75 ± 0.14

Community engagement is always the ace in the hospitality and tourism industry for any destination as it is the key matrix to increase the loyalty, satisfaction, and repetition of the tourists to the location, also noted by Baniya et al. (2021). Numerous studies have explored the fundamental concepts of community involvement, engagement, and significance in the context of tourism development (Salazar, 2012; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). The research on homestays also suggests that cultural aspects and lifestyles are crucial for sustainability and satisfaction, among the all-important parameters like amenities and safety, reception, local cuisine and accommodation, local lifestyle and costumes, and cultural performance. A comparative study in Annapurna, and Yunnan, China (Nyaupane et al., 2005), justifies the degree of host engagement in management, coupled with the quantity and characteristics of tourists, elucidated the diverse levels of economic outflow, local authority, and socio-economic disparity across these destinations (Biswakarma, 2015). This is consistent with K.C. et al. (2015) findings, whereby it reflects the need for awareness and education for the locals to increase the length of stay of guests. It is supported by the findings of a study in India that limited community ownership within the realm of ecotourism has been identified as one of the constraining factors preventing communities from realizing their full potential in ecotourism development (Patricia et al., 2021). On the other hand, ecotourism is a great source of economic empowerment for the locals (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). However, some research contradicts the findings as unmanaged and mass tourism brings negative effects on society and ignores the heterogeneity of the community. Residents express disappointment as they have grown reliant on ACAP for training, development opportunities, and financial benefits (Michael et al., 2016).

Adequate infrastructure plays a crucial role in supporting biodiversity conservation, enhancing livelihoods, and fostering tourism development. The facilities built for conservation, like roads, emergency health posts, trails, forest roads, embankments, artificial lakes, picnic areas, and watchtowers are common for locals and tourists and are utilized by local communities (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). Environmental elements such as accessibility and amenities significantly impact tourist satisfaction, being vital for their visits equally as the socio-cultural factors like cultural heritage, local wisdom, and socio-cultural tolerance (Fionasari, 2024).

Satisfaction

The majority of the tourists were found satisfied with the environment setting of the ACA unlike that of the CNP though respondents responded to the average conditions of the environment as shown in Table 4. The parameters for it were the condition of the trails, trash bin, signboard, toilets, and other amenities. Accessibility was found poor in ACA compared to CNP. The cultural experience in CNP was found to be far better compared to ACA. The cost of the facilities was cheap in both of the destinations.

Other research on tourist satisfaction in Nepal also evidenced high satisfaction with the hospitality and natural beauty of the destination (Phuyal & Poudel, 2016) which is coherent with our findings but foreign visitors in CNP and ACA don't show dissatisfaction towards the cost of amenities, unlike that research.

Table 4*Satisfaction parameters in visitors*

Satisfaction parameter	ACA			CNP		
	Good	Ok	Satisfied	Good	Ok	Satisfied
Cultural immersion	24	47	29	9	23	68
Cost and budget	17	25	58	23	56	21
Accessibility	21	66	13	12	37	51
Unique and quality of experience	23	29	48	31	32	37
Environmental quality	4	3	93	19	74	7

Various socio-economic, frequency of visits, and trip-related factors influenced visitors' assessments of ecotourism within the ACA (Baral et al., 2012). Overall, the satisfaction scale was found okay for both of the parks which coincides with the findings of Baral et al. (2012). Visitors generally expressed satisfaction and positive evaluations of ecotourism in the ACA, yet repeat visitors tended to voice criticisms. Declining cultural engagement and waning youth interest in cultural activities pose significant threats to the durability and excellence of tourism within ACA. According to Joshi and Dahal (2019), visitors expressed high satisfaction with the tourism activities, as well as with the conservation and development efforts at ACA but our study shows average satisfaction of visitors towards parameters of development and accessibility. However, it is in line with our study of anticipated challenges shortly including perceived crowding, congestion, and cultural degradation.

Conclusion

This research offers important insights into the dynamics of tourism practices in relevance to conservation, competitiveness, and visitor satisfaction of Chitwan National Park and Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal. While both destinations witness steady growth in visitor numbers, ACA faces the challenge of saturation, crowding, and poor quality due to mass tourism requiring strategic management interventions. Motivations for visits, including nature exploration, adventure, and cultural immersion, highlight diverse visitor interests in different parks. Tailored marketing, preferences, and development strategies are necessary due to the differing attractions of the two destinations. Despite fair satisfaction levels, challenges such as overcrowding, declining tourism quality, environmental degradation, and accessibility constraints require urgent attention to ensure sustainable tourism development in ACA. Cultural aspects and youth interest in culture are found declining, which is creating threats to the quality and sustainability of tourism in ACA. Improvement in cultural assets can increase the number of days of stay of visitors, so learning from CNP's success in promoting culture to strengthen cultural aspects in ACA and promoting the growing demand for jungle walks in CNP can enrich the tourism offerings of both destinations. The two destinations complement each other's strengths and weaknesses in amenities, hospitalities, attractions, and motivations. Stakeholders can create a master plan integrating adventurous activities in mountain parks and relaxing/cultural activities in lowland parks for holistic tourism development. Collaboration is crucial to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism in Himalayan and lowland parks, preserving natural and cultural heritage.

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