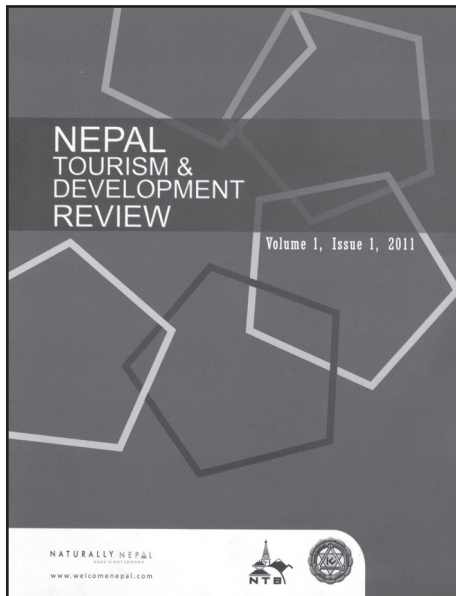


BOOK/JOURNAL REVIEW

On Research for Tourism Management

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Background: Nepalese Tourism and Research

Nepal's potential for tourism development is tremendous. The potential of tourism industry to contribute to the national coffers, economic development, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings is also highly significant. Therefore, a great many tourism development plans and programmes tourism have been launched through both government and private initiatives.

The Tourism Vision-2020 introduced in May 2009 has valued tourism as the major contributor to a sustainable Nepalese economy, and envisaged to make the country an attractive, safe, exciting and unique destination through conservation and promotion, leading to equitable distribution of tourism benefits and greater harmony in society.

Also on the same line, encouraged by the tourism trend of 2008 and 2009, the government observed Nepal Tourism Year-2011 (NTY-2011) as a national campaign (NTB, 2011). Development of tourism industry is also an important component of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the World Bank (IMF In Focus, 2005).

Undoubtedly, Nepal has a strong comparative advantage in tourism. The tourism industry performance, however, has not been far from satisfactory. For a few years now, the tourism sector contribution to Nepal's GDP has ranged between 3 to 5 percent and accounted for about 8-10 percent of total foreign exchange earnings. It is disheartening that Nepal's per capita tourist earning is the lowest in South Asia. Measured in terms of

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tourist arrivals, Nepal's share in the world tourism industry has only remained nearly 0.04 percent (Sharma, 2009).

The major constraints for the growth of tourism are political instability, limited infra-structure, inadequate promotion and marketing efforts, and shortage of competent human resources. There is an imperative need to promote the PPP model of public-private partnership for which research works in sustainable development of tourism could offer invaluable inputs and decision-making framework for policy making and execution.

However, there is a big dearth of research initiatives in Nepalese tourism. A tourism research journal has recently come from the Nepal Tourism Board in collaboration with the Kathmandu University.

Contents and Issues

The articles and other write-ups have showcased a wide range of pertinent issues of tourism and its sustainable development. The publication comprises three sections: *Research Articles, Issues and Research Notes*, and *Book Review*; there is an appendix section on Nepal Tourism Year 2011 as an NTB promotional dossier.

In his paper, Sanjay K Nepal has sought to highlight the threats of climate change to mountain tourism and assessed a few adaptive strategies in the context of Himalayas in Nepal. His analysis— albeit having no research methodology specified there in the paper—could ring a warning bell to the policymakers and mountain tourism entrepreneurs.

Pranil Upadhyaya's article has envisaged a framework to forge lasting peace through tourism. His proposition is likely draw adequate attention of the readers, as he has dealt with two case studies linking the goal of peace-building with politico-industrial disputes including trade-union problems and armed conflict. His field-based report on Machhapuchhre Model Trek (MMT) looks into the platform in which the scientific actors (like researchers) as well as academic and non-academic actors (like local communities, local government, tourism practitioners and tourists) put up an integrated effort to transform local tourism initiatives to peace-promoting and conflict-mitigating ones. The paper could also offer some good academic insights.

In view of the impact of trekking and tourism on fragile nature-based environments, Martin Trandberg Jenson's paper has proposed a new typology to define a number of 'environmental ideal types' within trekking. Based on ethnographic research approach, the study has discovered the unsustainable consumption pattern of trekkers. Their behaviours characterised by the constant strive for having Western comforts and commodities even in the trekking zones are very likely to pose threats to the environment. The author has exhibited good nuance of using interview-based qualitative data (from open-ended questions) to churn out useful findings.

Bhim Subedi's article assesses tourism development in Upper Manang by using tourist arrival and growth in hotels in the area as the key indicators. On the basis of secondary data from the line Ministry, local police check-posts and hotels as well as some interview-based primary data, the paper emphasises the need of infrastructure and

tourism promotion efforts in Upper Manang that boasts of having parts of world famous trekking route of the Annapurna Circuit.

Of the four articles contained in the Section of Issues and Research Notes, Ram Chandra Sedhai's paper has studied the tourist accommodation facilities in the major tourist centres of Nepal on the basis of the NTB's research carried out in 2010. Going by the format and content, readers could find it worth placing in the first Section of Research Articles.

Another interesting article is one of Rabi Jung Pandey. His study has taken stock of the HRD and capacity building initiatives in community based tourism development in Nepal, an issue very much relevant and important in developing Nepal's overall tourism. Lack of competent human resources at both macro- and micro- industry levels is largely identified as one of the biggest obstacles to tourism development in Nepal. Based on secondary data, the article has stressed the need for designing more customised training programmes.

Lisa Choegyal's write-up presents an introductory note on the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) that has tremendous potential of being a new tourism product for Nepal. The article also has sketched an outline of the product with a trek marketing and development rationale, though making no reference whatsoever to the previous literature review.

Maria Boyd's article is basically a descriptive note on the need for attracting Chinese tourists. The issue is of utmost importance to tourism stakeholders the world-over, as the *Super-Rich*, a new social class, is said to have emerged in China. There are over 0.87 million Chinese with personal wealth of more than \$ 1.5 million by 2010 (Hurun Wealth Report, 2011), marking an annual growth of 6.1 percent. Such people take an average of 16 days as holidays and three foreign trips a year.

In the book-review Section, Sunil Sharma has a few interesting stories to retell the readers about the book by Peter Potterfield, a highly acclaimed award-winning American writer who has a passion for adventure travel.

Pros and Cons

The publication of Nepal Tourism and Development Review as a tourism research journal is highly commendable. It should be like a lacuna-filler in the literature of tourism research. The journal has come at a time when the Tourism Vision 2020 has also envisaged two goals: a) to increase annual international tourist arrivals to Nepal to two million by 2020, and b) to augment economic opportunities and increase employment in tourism sector to one million.

The publication has rightly sought to focus on 'sustainable tourism development' and other relevant and related issues like accommodating the voice of people at grass-roots, poverty alleviation, climate change and HRD in tourism.

In particular, the authors deserve big accolades, as they have put up hard work in their papers. In a majority of articles, the authors' presence and perseverance is much felt. To their chagrin, however, it is extremely difficult for the readers to find any significant

editorial contribution in the whole journal; thanks to many editorial inconsistencies.

To a great extent is the journal 'let down' by the editorial quality of article format, bibliography, content and language editing and article categorisation. Most surprisingly, there is no editorial in the journal. An editorial is indispensable to manifest the rationale and policies of the editors' team and the publication.

There is enough room for improvement in making the article format uniform: a research article by rule must have basics of *statement of the problem*, *study objectives*, *literature review*, *research methodology* and *data analysis*, among others. Some of the articles have too long 'abstract,' while others have no abstract at all. By a universally accepted rule, it is customary to keep an abstract within 150-200 words.

There is no uniformity in the bibliographic format, as it has not complied with any of the established international practices of citations like APA, Chicago, MLA and Author-Date.

Some articles have done without mentioning any keywords, whereas others have them. Even a couple of papers enshrined in the Section of Research Articles have no specific research methodology, let alone the empirical tests and analyses on the data, and comparison of results with previous research works and literature.

It is always advisable for the journal articles to base their analysis on latest secondary data. Papers with the latest data of 2006 or 2007 had better update them. Doing so secures credibility and veracity of the research publication.

Likewise, it would be appreciable if the journal mentioned each author's institutional affiliation and other personal credentials.

Since the journal has resulted from the collaboration of NTB with an academic institution, it is desirable to obtain an ISSN by getting it duly entered into international cataloguing of publication.

Had it purged such editorial and other shortcomings, the journal would have become a more presentable and valuable property in the circuits of academia, researchers and interested learners.

The printing and paper quality is good. For giving a decent and reader-friendly look, the publication should better use bigger fonts, since use of smaller fonts and non-varied styles in text and tables has made them somewhat illegible and resulted in eye-sores. There is also a room for improvement in graphic designing and page-formatting.

Word of Appreciation

Finally, kudos should go to the team behind the publication for accommodating a wide array of issues of tourism and sustainable development into a single publication. It should prove instrumental to the concerned policy-makers, academicians, researchers and other ardent readers.

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