

Mountain Tourism in Nepal

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I. Background Information

Mountain tourism has a prominent place in the overall development of tourism in Nepal. This is because tourism in Nepal had started with mountain tourism. At present, mountain tourism occupies the second highest rank among the tourists coming to Nepal. The concept of mountain tourism is wide-ranging. In fact, mountain tourism is a part of adventure tourism based on mountain. Mountain tourism includes mountaineering, trekking, rafting, skiing, mountain biking, rock climbing, horse back riding, study of the culture, social and economic reflection of the mountain people/ community and so on. In the context of Nepal, mountaineering expeditions and trekking are the main activities covered by mountain tourism. This article is focused particularly on these aspects of mountain tourism of Nepal.

Mountaineering Expedition

Mountaineering expedition is among the main facets of mountain tourism, which is highly adventurous and risky. In general, climbing rocky and snowy mountains is called mountaineering. It starts from the base camp up to the peak of a particular mountain.

According to Tourism Act 2035 of Nepal, " Mountaineering Expedition means an act of expedition on any peak of the mountain range, by any team with the intention of reaching the summit"(Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2062: 66) Mountaineering is a tough and very dangerous sport which can only be commenced by experienced and professional mountaineers. Therefore, mountaineering is defined as a pre-planned technical art of climbing mountain peaks. Although mountaineering is a tough and dangerous activity, mountaineers are encouraged to take part in mountaineering activities due to the enjoyment, glory and fame that is derived from it.

Trekking

Trekking is a journey undertaken on foot from one area to another for sightseeing purposes in places where modern transport system is not normally available. It means foot travel on mountain trails for durations ranging from one day to several days. Trekking can be said to be a gentle walk on mountain trails to explore the village,

villagers, valleys mountains and its interiors to get the maximum enjoyment with minimum discomfort. Trekking may be for religious, cultural, natural sightseeing and other purposes. However, the purpose of trekking must be adventure and enjoyment but not economic gain. While trekking, trekkers get an opportunity along the way to observe villages, villagers' lifestyle, customs, cultural aspects, natural sceneries, landscape, jungle, river, waterfalls, birds, flora and fauna etc. Trekking is one of the major aspects of mountain tourism. Nepal is popular for trekking tourism because of its immense natural beauties. Moreover, trekking in Nepal offers the opportunity to see and enjoy the deepest gorges, snowy peaks, glacier moraines, waterfalls, rocky as well as green hills, national parks with beautiful scenic view. There are high potentials and prospects of trekking tourism in Nepal. No other country in the world offers such special features within a short trek. So, trekking has gained popularity and the number of tourists/trekkers coming to Nepal from different parts of the world is increasing.

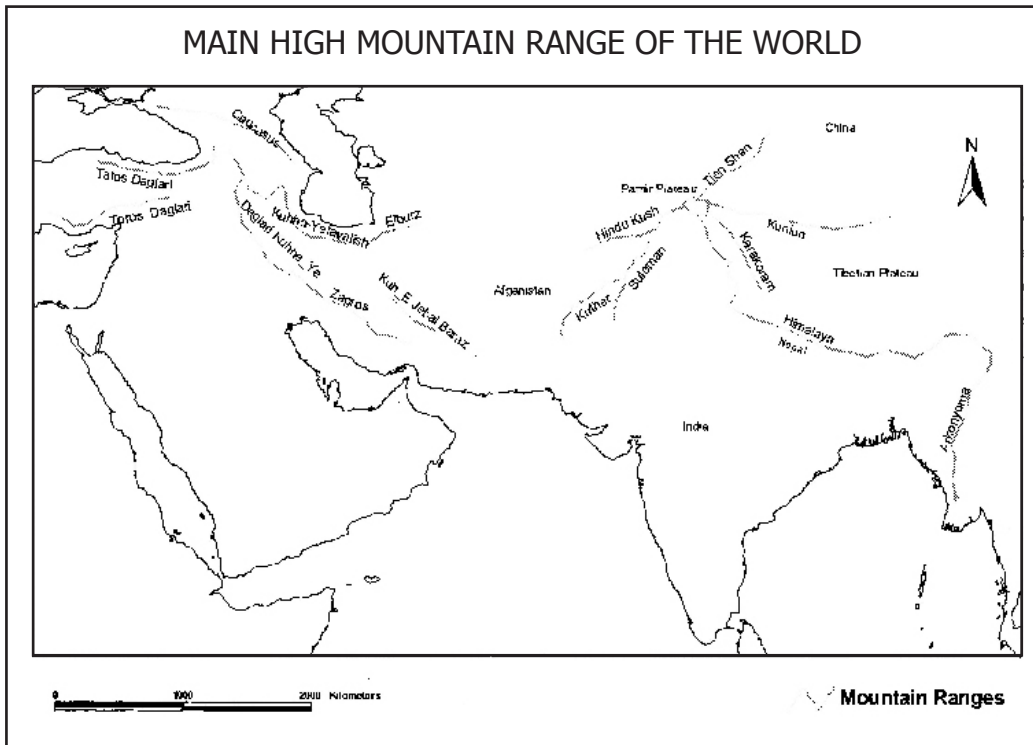
Everest Region, Annapurna Region and Langtang Region are the main destinations for trekking activities in Nepal. Moreover, trekking around Manaslu and Gorkha, Lower Dolpa, Upper Dolpa, Mustang, Upper Mustang, Rara lake, Dhorpatan circuit, Kanchanjunga, BC and trekking around Kathmandu valley are also popular.

The Asian continent is the biggest playground in the world for mountain tourism because of the renowned and highest mountain peaks that are located here in Nepal, India, China, Pakistan, etc. Among the world famous countries for mountaineering, Nepal has special importance. Nepal is the important destination for mountaineering because it has a long range of the Himalayas with the highest peak in the world and multitude of other high peaks. Nepal has got the opportunity to be the leader in the field of adventure tourism and prominent among them is trekking and mountaineering. Therefore, mountain tourism is of vital importance to Nepal.

Tourism is a major foreign exchange earner, particularly trekking and mountaineering. In comparison to Nepal's other competitors in mountain tourism like India, China and Pakistan, the royalty fees for mountain expeditions in Nepal is very high. Yet, mountaineers have been showing keen interest in Nepal's peaks for their expeditions. This is the reason that has seen a regular increase in the number of mountaineers coming to Nepal for their expeditions, and as a result, the foreign exchange earnings has also increased. Besides, increasing the length of stay of the tourists in Nepal would be very beneficial. Generally speaking, the length of stay of visitors who come for trekking and mountaineering to Nepal is satisfactory and of benefit to the country. From the perspective of employment generation, trekking and mountaineering are big contributors. High altitude workers, low altitude workers, local porters, etc. have benefitted from the development of the mountain tourism sector.

Mountains are the main source of attraction for many tourists, trekkers and mountaineers. There are numerous famous low, middle and high mountains in Nepal, Therefore there are great scopes for developing mountain tourism in Nepal.

(Shrestha, 2008:2) Asia has been referred to as the 'Continent of the Highest Mountains'. The Hindukush, Himalaya, Karakoram and Pamir are the highest and largest mountains in Asia. Among them, the Himalaya are a gigantic mountain range stretching 3000 km. west to east (Mountaineering in Nepal Facts and Figures, 2007:1) through northeastern Pakistan, north India, southern Tibet of China and northern Nepal. In Nepal the Himalaya is the longest and the highest range occupying 800 km. across with 8 peaks over 8000m. including the highest



peak of the world- Mt Sagarmatha (8848m.) (Mt. Everest) . So, it is fortunate to say that the youngest, longest and highest Himalaya is located in Nepal.

Along with Mt. Sagarmatha the 14 snow topped mountains over 8000 m. in height. 8 peaks – Kanchanjunga (8585m.), Lhotse (8516m.), Makalu (8463m.), Cho oyu (8201m.), Dhaulagiri (8167m.), Manaslu (8163m.), and Annapurna I (8091m.) are located in Nepal.

Moreover there are 1310 peaks above 6000m. in Nepal. It has been indicated that there are 3310 peaks along the Himalayan range of Nepal. The government of Nepal has opened a total of 326 peaks for mountain activities among its numerous peaks and there are still 120 unclimbed peaks in Nepal (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2007:121- 133). Apart from the high Nepal possesses some of the most beautiful peaks in the world, viz. Mt Amadablam (6,812m.) and Mt. Machhapuchhre(6,993m.).

The Government of Nepal has authorized Nepal Mountaineering Association to issue permits and manage for 33 peaks out of 326 peaks open for mountaineering and rest mountain peaks are managed by Tourism Ministry.

Table No 1 : Over 8000m Peaks of Nepal

	Mountain	Height		First to Summit	Date	Nationality
		Metres	Feet			
1	Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest)	8,848	29,028	Edmund Hillary Tenzing Norga Sherpa	29-May-53	New Zealand, Nepalese
2	Kanchenjunga	8,586	28,169	George Christopher Band Joe Brown	25-May-55	British, British
3	Lhotse	8,516	27,940	Earnest Reiss Fritz Luchsinger	18-May-56	Swiss Swiss
4	Makalu	8,463	27,766	Jean Couzy Lionel Terry	15-May-55	French French
5	Cho Oyu	8,201	26,906	Herbert Tichy Joseph Joecheler Pasang Dawa Lama	October 19,1954	Austrian Austrian Indian
6	Dhaulagiri	8,167	26,795	Ernest Forrer Kurt Diemberger Peter Diener Albin Schelbert Nawang Dorge Sherpa Nima Dorje Sherpa	May 13,1960	Swiss Austria German Swiss Nepalese Nepalese
7	Manaslu	8,163	26,781	Toshio Imanishi, Gyalzen Norbu Sherpa	May 9,1956	Japanese Nepalese
8	annapurna I	8,091	26,545	Maurice Herzog, Louis Lachenal	June 3,1950	French French

Source : Mountaineering in Asia UAAA Past and Present 2007, UAAA, Japan.

In Nepal, the origin of tourism in the modern sense started only in 1950s. In fact, tourism in Nepal began with mountain tourism. Nepal first opened its door to climbers in 1949. After the successful ascent by French nationals Maurice Herzog and Louis Lachenal of Mount Annapurna I (8,091m) on June 3, 1950, many mountaineers were attracted to Nepal. It was the first successful ascent among the 14 over 8000m of the world. The ascent of Mount Annapurna I is very significant in the history of mountaineering in this respect. Three years later, in 1953, after the successful conquest over Mt. Sagarmatha (8848m) by Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa of Nepal, Nepal was publicized and introduced all over the world (Lama,2003:1). Similarly, all the other 6 peaks over 8000 m. located in Nepal were successfully summited by different nations' climbers within the 1950s.

It is interesting to note that government of Nepal had made the decision to mark the Golden Jubilee Celebration of all the peaks over 8000m. located in Nepal in this decade in recognition of the first successful ascent of those peaks. Mt. Sagarmatha Golden Jubilee Celebrations was the first one in the series of such event. Great preparations went into the making of the event and it turned out to be a grand success which was unprecedented in the sense that a lot of mountaineers, mountain lovers, conservationists and media persons gathered in Nepal for the event. Nepal Mountaineering Association, designated by the Government of Nepal as the implementing agency for the Golden Jubilee celebration, fulfilled its role successfully. The celebrations began from June 2002 with it culminating successfully on May 29, 2003. In the last week of May, 2003 the gathering of the Everest summiteers generated international media focus which helped to promote tourism of Nepal. There were various programs and facilities to honour famous mountaineers gathered in Kathmandu from all over the world. The presence of one of the Everest conquerors namely Sir Edmund Hillary attracted media glare. Similarly, the presence of other Everest summiteers Ms. Junko Tabei, the first woman to scale the highest peak, Reinhold Messner, Peter Habler, Jamling Tenzing Sherpa, Tashi Tenzing Sherpa and other distinguished Everest summiteers were also memorable. On this occasion, the then Prime Minister of Nepal presented the honorary citizenship of Nepal to Sir Edmund Hillary, and 180 Summiteers of different countries were presented with Mount Everest Golden Jubilee medals. Similarly, the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Mt. Cho Oyu on October 19, 2005, Mt. Makalu on May 15, 2005, Mt. Kanchanjunga on May 25, 2005, Mt. Manaslu and Mt. Lhotse on December 11, 2006 was organized. Though the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Mt Annapurna I was not marked, it was decided to celebrate its 55th anniversary on June 3rd 2005 in Pokhara. Many distinguished mountaineers, mountain lovers and media persons were gathered on these celebrations. (Shrestha, 2007: 232-244)

Similarly, trekking has been there since ancient times for religious purposes in Nepal. Commercially, trekking started since mid-1960s. It was Colonel Jimmy Roberts, a Gurkha Officer and a mountaineer from, who introduced trekking in Nepal. He established Mountain Travel, the first trekking agency, in 1965. So Colonel Jimmy Roberts is known as the "father of trekking" in Nepal. At present, there are 977 trekking agencies (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2009: 77) working in the field of managing trekking and mountaineering field in the country.

Major Trekking/Mountaineering Concentrated Areas

Among the tourist who come to Nepal for trekking and mountaineering are specially attracted towards Annapurna, Sagarmatha and Langtang regions. Hence, they are regarded as the principal regions for mountain tourism. Among the three main attractions, Annapurna area commands the greatest number of incoming trekkers and mountaineers. The statistics for 2007 show that Annapurna area attracted 59.5 percent of the trekkers and mountaineers while it was 26.2 percent for Sagarmatha area, 8.1 percent for Langtang area, and only a meager 6.2 percent of the total visited other areas.

Earlier, a prospective visitor had to get a permit from the Immigration Department paying the necessary entry fees for Annapurna, Sagarmatha and Langtang areas, but since 1999 entry into the said areas is free of charge. On the contrary, regions like Mustang,

Table 2 : Trekkers in Different Trekking Area of Nepal

Year	Annapurna, Manang and Jomsom Area	Sagarmatha Area	Helambu, Langtang Valley	Controlled Area							Total	Anapurna Growth Rate Percent
				Others	Mustang	Lower Dolpa	Upper Dolpa	Humla	Manaslu	Kanchan- junga		
1980	14,332	5,836	4,113	3,179	-	-	-	-	-	-	27,460	
1985	18,960	8,347	4,610	813	-	-	-	-	-	-	32,730	
1990	36,361	11,314	7,826	5,386	-	585	-	-	-	620	61,472	
1995	50,012	14,997	8,427	8,291	840	500	185	191	677	667	84,120	
2000	76,407	26,683	10,917	1,022	1,069	1,069	121	509	617	375	118,414	
2001	65,313	22,029	9,148	984	922	488	119	337	798	690	100,138	
2002	38,642	13,982	4,798	243	536	0	119	339	428	478	59,644	
2003	40,668	18,812	3,119	757	572	0	369	223	645	402	65,721	
2004	42,347	20,051	3,020	801	825	329	77	577	682	458	69,442	
2005	36,224	19,522	2,735	293	661	200	81	782	544	167	61,488	
2006	37,901	20,693	4,562	663	248	225	92	1,256	561	335	66,931	
2007	60,237 (59.5%)	26,511 (26.2%)	8,165 (8.1%)	1,080	1,282	419	198	1,542	895	404	101,320	
2008	69800	-	-	NA	838	709	383	1065	1443	1490	520	

Source : Nepal Tourism Statistics 2008, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu.

Lower Dolpa, Upper Dolpa, Humla, Manaslu, Kanchenjunga, etc. have been declared restricted areas by the Government of Nepal, and every trekker or mountaineer has to obtain a permit to go there. However, the number of trekkers and mountaineers visiting the areas is negligible. To attract more visitors to the said areas, joint efforts by both the government and private sector is deemed as necessary.

II. Royalty Rate of Mountaineering Expedition

In the year 2008, the Government of Nepal had revised the royalty rate of different mountains of Nepal to make mountaineering royalty fee competitive among the neighboring countries and promote mountains lying in remote and less privileged areas of the country. This royalty are effective from 16 July, 2008. Recent royalty fees and size of expedition fee are as follows:

Table No 3 : Royalty Fee of Mountains in Nepal

Name of Mountain: Everest (8,848m)

(Climbing Route: South East Ridge (Normal Route))

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	25,000	12,500	6,250
Two	40,000	20,000	10,000
Three	48,000	24,000	12,000
Four	56,000	28,000	14,000
Five	60,000	30,000	15,000
Six	66,000	33,000	16,500
Seven	70,000	35,000	17,500
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	10,000	5,000	2,500

Name of Mountain: Everest (8,848m)

Climbing Route: All Routes except South East Ridge (Normal Route)

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	15,000	7,500	3,750
Two	21,000	10,500	5,250
Three	27,000	13,500	6,750
Four	33,000	16,500	8,250
Five	39,000	19,500	9,750
Six	45,000	22,500	11,250
Seven	50,000	25,000	12,500
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	10,000	5,000	2,500

Height of Mountain: All Mountains above 8,000 m (except Mt. Everest)

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	5,000	2,500	1250
Two	6,000	3,000	1500
Three	7000	3,500	1,750
Four	8000	4000	2000
Five	8500	4250	2125
Six	9000	4500	2250
Seven	10000	5,000	2500
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	1500	1000	500

Height of Mountain: All Mountains above 7,501m to 7999m

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	2,000	1000	500
Two	2400	1200	600
Three	2800	1400	700
Four	3200	1600	800
Five	3600	1800	900
Six	3800	1900	950
Seven	4000	2000	1000
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	500	400	200

Height of Mountain: All Mountains above 7,000m to 7500m

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	500	750	375
Two	1800	900	450
Three	2100	1050	525
Four	2400	1200	600
Five	2600	1300	650
Six	2800	1400	700
Seven	3000	1500	750
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	400	250	150

**Height of Mountain: All Mountains above 6501m to 6999m
(Except Mt. Amadablam)**

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	1000	500	250
Two	1200	600	300
Three	1400	700	350
Four	1600	800	400
Five	1800	900	450
Six	1900	950	475
Seven	2000	1000	500
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	300	200	100

Name of Mountain: Amadablam (6812m)

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)	
	Spring /Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	1000	500
Two	1200	600
Three	1400	700
Four	1600	800
Five	1800	900
Six	1900	950
Seven	2000	1000
Per Extra Climber		
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	300	200

Height of Mountain: 6,500m or Below

No. of Climbers	Mountaineering Royalty Fee (In US \$)		
	Spring	Autumn	Winter/Summer
One	400	200	100
Two	500	250	125
Three	600	300	150
Four	700	350	175
Five	800	400	200
Six	900	450	225
Seven	1000	500	250
Per Extra Climber			
(One Expedition Team has 15 members in maximum)	200	100	50

Source : Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of Nepal

The Government of Nepal has authorized Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) to issue permits and collect royalty for 33 peaks. Those 33 peaks are categorized in two groups. Under Group A there are 15 peaks and 18 peaks under Group B. The royalty fee structure and size of expedition team are as follows.

**Table No 4 : Royalty fee of NMA Peaks
Group A**

S.N.	Name of the peak	Height	Region
1	Mt. Cholatse	6440 m.	Khumbu
2	Mt. Machermo	6273 m.	Mahalangur
3	Mt. Kyazo Ri	6186 m.	Mahalangur
4	Mt. Phari Lapcha	6017 m.	Mahalangur
5	Mt. Nirekha	6159 m.	Mahalangur
6	Mt. Langsisa	Ri 6427 m.	Jugal
7	Mt. Ombigaichen	6340 m.	Mahalangur
8	Mt. Bokta	6143 m.	Kanchenjunga
9	Mt. Chekigo	6257 m.	Gaurishankar
10	Mt. Lobuje West	6145 m.	Khumbu
11	Mt. Larkya Peak	6010 m.	Manaslu
12	Mt. ABI	6097 m.	Mahalangur
13	Mt. Yubra Himal	6035 m.	Langtang Himal
14	Mt. Chhukung	Ri 5550 m.	Khumbu
15	Mt. Yala Peak	5732 m.	Langtang
Fee Structure for Group "A" NMA Peaks			(In US \$)
Royalty for up to seven members (U.S. Dollars)			500.00
Royalty for each additional member upto 12 person (U.S. Dollars)			100.00

Group B

S.N.	Name of the peak	Height	Region
1	Hiunchuli	6441m	Annapurna Himal, Gandaki
2	Singu Chuli (Fluted peak)	6501m	Annapurna Himal, Gandaki
3	Mera peak	6654m	Khumbu Himal, Sagarmatha
4	Kusum Kangru	6367m	Khumbu Himal, Sagarmatha
5	Kwangde	6011m	Khumbu Himal, Sagarmatha
6	Chulu West	6419m	Manang District, Gandaki
7	Chulu East	6584m	Manang District, Gandaki
8	Imja Tse (Island Peak)	6160m	Khumbu Himal, Sagarmatha
9	Pharchamo	6187m	Rolwaling Himal, Janakpur
10	Lobuje	6119m	Khumbu Himal, Sagarmatha
11	Ramdung	5925m	Rolwaling Himal, Janakpur
12	Pisang peak	6091m	Manang District, Gandaki
13	Tharpu Chuli (Tent Peak)	5663m	Annapurna Himal, Gandaki
14	Khongma Tse (Mehra peak)	5849m	Khumbu Himal Sagarmatha
15	Ganja La Chuli (Naya kanga)	5844m	Langtang Himal, Bagmati
16	Pokhalde	5806m	Khumbu Himal, Sagarmatha
17	Mardi Himal	5587m	Annapurna Himal, Gandaki
18	Paldor Peak	5896m	Langtang Himal, Bagmati

Fee Structure for Group "B" NMA Peaks

Group Size Rate US\$ Additional P/P US\$

1-4 Persons 350.00 Only

5-8 Persons 350.00 Plus 40.00 (Per person)

9-12 Persons 510.00 Plus 25.00 (Per person)

Note : Maximum number of members in a team is 12.

Garbage Deposit for all 33 NMA Peaks

An amount of US\$ 250.00 should be deposited to NMA as garbage deposit to get permit to all 33 NMA peaks. The refund shall be made as per the provisions made by NMA.

Source : Nepal Mountaineering Association

Trends

Trekking and mountaineering contribute significantly to the tourism market of Nepal. Though most tourists come to Nepal with the purpose of holiday/pleasure, the increasing trend of visitors coming in for trekking and mountaineering is evidence that the attraction for Nepal as a destination for mountain tourism is developing. Whatever that may be, the tourists coming here for holiday/pleasure and trekking/mountaineering are the pillars of Nepal's economy. The table No. 5 given below highlights the figures of tourists coming to Nepal for different purposes, and it depicts portrays the part covered by in the development of Nepal's tourism.

Table No 5 : Comparison of Tourist Arrival in Nepal by Purpose of Visit

Year	Holiday/ Pleasure	Trekking & Moun- taineering	Business	Pilgrim- age	Official	Convention/ Conference	Raft- ing	Others	Not Speci- fied	Total Arrivals
1980	130,600 (80.2)	19,302 (11.8)	5491 (3.4)	-	4,654 (2.9)	-	-	2,850 (1.7)	-	16,2897 (100.0)
1985	128,217 (70.8)	28,707 (15.9)	10,416 (5.8)	-	9,230 (5.1)	-	-	4,419 (2.4)	-	180,989 (100.0)
1990	161,839 (63.5)	3,999 (15.7)	11,728 (4.6)	6713 (2.6)	26,574 (10.4)	2,838 (1.1)	-	5,190 (2.0)	-	254,885 (100.0)
1995	183,207 (50.4)	84,787 (23.3)	21,829 (6.1)	5257 (1.4)	20,090 (5.5)	5,272 (1.5)	-	42,953 (11.8)	-	363,395 (100.0)
2000	255,889 (55.2)	118,780 (25.6)	29,454 (6.4)	15,801 (3.4)	20,832 (4.5)	5,599 (1.2)	-	17,291 (3.7)	-	463,646 (100.0)
2001	187,022 (51.8)	100,828 (25.9)	18,528 (5.1)	13,816 (3.8)	18m727 (5.2)	0 (0.0)	-	22,316 (6.2)	-	361,237 (100.0)
2002	110,143 (40.0)	59,279 (21.5)	16,990 (6.2)	12,366 (4.5)	17,783 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	-	58,907 (21.4)	-	275,468 (100.0)
2003	97,904 (29.0)	65,721 (19.4)	19,387 (5.7)	21,395 (6.3)	21,967 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	-	111,758	-	338,132 (100.0)
2004	167,262 (43.4)	69,442 (18.0)	13,948 (3.6)	45,664 (11.9)	17,088 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	-	71,893 (18.7)	-	385,297 (100.0)
2005	160,259 (42.7)	61,488 (16.4)	21,992 (5.9)	47,621 (12.7)	16,859 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	-	67,179 (17.9)	-	375,398 (100.0)
2006	145,802 (38.0)	66,931 (17.4)	21,066 (5.5)	59,298 (15.4)	18,063 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	-	72,766 (19.0)	-	383,926 (100.0)
2007	217,815 (41.4)	101,320 (19.2)	24,487 (4.6)	52,594 (10.0)	21,670 (4.1)	8019 (1.5)	65 (0.0)	78,579 (14.9)	22,156 (4.2)	526,705 (100.0)
2008	148,180 (29.6)	104,822 (21.0)	23,039 (4.6)	45,091 (9.0)	43,044 (8.6)	6938 (1.4)	243 (0.0)	99,391 (19.9)	29,529 (5.9)	500,277 (100.0)

Source: Nepal Tourism Statistics 2008, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of Nepal.

In the 1960s, 90 percent of the tourists came with the purpose of holiday/pleasure, but in 2008, it shrunk to 29.6 percent of the total arrivals. Similarly, tourists coming for trekking and mountaineering in 1960s was only 1 percent of the total visitors, but as figures for 2001 show, it increased to 27.9 percent. The decline started in 2002, but since 2007 the numbers have been increasing. In 2008, the number of visitors coming with the purpose of trekking and mountaineering was 104,822 which was 21 percent of the total arrivals. This shows that the attraction of Nepal as regards mountain tourism is increasing, and there is ample scope for its development

Table No. 6 depicts the Mountaineering activities of overall activities like the number of expedition teams, successful expedition teams, total number of mountaineers, casualties, size of employment, royalty paid to the government, expenditure of the teams, etc. The mountaineering expedition teams coming to Nepal show a fluctuation of 10 or 15 teams but since last year the total number of teams have increased. From the viewpoint of successful expeditions, only about 50 percent of the teams are successful. From the employment point of view, the mountain expeditions are considered to be important, as every year they provide work to various types of manpower like high altitude workers, low altitude workers, local porters, etc. Despite the increase in the number of expeditions teams and mountaineers, the employment opportunities for such type of manpower is showing a decline. The reason for this is that equipment and tools, food stuffs have become lighter and easily portable, together with the transportation of all expedition material and equipment to the Base Camp is done by helicopters.

Table No 6 : Overall Activities of Mountaineering Expenditure Expedition

Year	Total No. of Team	Successful Team	Total No. of Mountaineers	No. of Casualty	Total No. of Person Employed	Royalty Paid (Government Rs. in '000)	Total Expenditure of the team (Rs. In '000)
1980	64		639		7,639	843	15,827
1985	91		824		8,835	3,298	17,870
1990	120	56	972	9	14,179	7,345	68,368
1995	91	53	624	5	5,123	37,257	116,600
2000	132	79	773	8	11,587	119,893	498,513
2001	112	66	836	12	6,203	127,396	552,033
2002	134	83	913	9	10,599	128,030	600,000
2003	152	90	1080	9	14,838	181,360	630,000
2004	140	87	1042	9	9,362	127,072	494,494
2005	128	72	940	9	636	156,240	400,137
2006	133	78	986	18	4,344	145,612	423,895
2007	162	86	1128	7	4,823	169,830	966,637
2008	267	NA	2018	NA	4,231	253,583	1,588,969

Source : Nepal Tourism Statistics 2008, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation Government of Nepal, Kathmandu. Economic Survey, Fiscal year 1994-95, 91995) Ministry of Finance, HMG/Nepal, Kathmandu.

Note : Above mentioned data of the years 1980 to 1995 is based on Economic Survey (1994-95) and 2000 to 2008 based on Nepal Tourism Statistics 2008.

It is found that the expenditure that the expedition teams make and the revenue that the government earns have been showing a regular increase. Moreover, the increase in the foreign exchange rate in the 1990s has led to great increase in the total amount that the expedition teams spend in Nepal and the royalty paid to the government.

iii. Problems Vs Suggestions

Concentration in Limited Areas

The majority of the trekkers and mountaineers coming to Nepal are specially concentrated in the Annapurna, Sagarmatha and Langtang regions despite the fact that the other areas of the country are equally attractive. To make the other trekking friendly areas attract to trekkers, the government must make the restricted areas of Mustang, Lower Dolpa, Upper Dolpa, Humla, Manaslu, Kanchenjunga, etc. more accessible by making the restriction loose and reduce the trekking fees for them, and also go for their promotion through aggressive publicity campaigns. The other trekking destination also must be identified and promoted.

Liaison Officer

The complaints against the Liaison Officers deputed by the government to accompany the expeditions from the trekking entrepreneurs and trekkers is not new. The usual complaints regarding the Liaison officers is that they bargain for allowances and equipment, arrive late at the fixed destinations, return without staying the whole period, lack knowledge of the necessary information, etc. There is a provision for deputing one liaison officer in the context of the restricted trekking areas and each mountaineering expedition team. According to a well-known adventure tourism entrepreneur¹, as Himalayan peaks lie in the border area, in the beginning many tourists would cross the border which was illegal as well as undesirable, therefore to check this and provide the necessary information to the expedition teams liaison officers were deputed to accompany them. But in the present context, this provision does not hold good. In fact, the mountain guides who accompany the expeditions teams can provide the necessary information and act as interpreters.

The Chinese government appoints only one liaison officer for one peak in Tibet. In Nepal, if there are 40 expedition teams then 40 liaison officers are deputed.

It would be better if the provision of appointing liaison officers is removed, and if the necessity exists for important or sensitive areas then one liaison officer would suffice for one peak. Moreover, the necessary allowances, and equipment must be borne and arranged by the government itself, and for this the government can collect the amount required from the expedition concerned.

1. Based on conversation with Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, Managing Director, Asian Trekking (P.) Limited, Kathmandu.

Bureaucratic Hassles

Bureaucracy in Nepal is responsible for the delay and hassles in getting expedition permits and permission for the expedition equipment. The expedition teams have to contact various ministries for the purpose. The Communications Ministry and Customs Department have to be contacted for communications equipment, for security the Home Ministry and the Chief District Officer, and the Tourism Ministry for expedition permit. The tourists have grievances about the process for all this in Nepal. Compared to this, one government outlet undertakes all the works of the tourists who come for expeditions in Tibet. In Nepal also it would facilitate the tourists if the various works like supervision, evaluation, issuing expedition permits were done under one single umbrella which would simplify the whole process.

Development of Infrastructure and Environment

The development of trekking and mountaineering in the hills and the Himalayan regions compulsorily requires the development of the infrastructure. Small airports, aid posts, restaurants, lodges with toilets, etc. should be developed at places according to the needs.

Special attention must be paid to keep the camp sides and Base Camps of the peaks clean and hygienic. For this there arrangements of toilets should be made to keep the areas clean, and they should be maintained through regular clean-ups. The concerned agency should take up the responsibility for cleanliness along the trekking routes and constant vigilance is necessary in this regard. There are complaints from the mountaineers regarding the dirty state of the expedition routes due to human waste. Complaints have been reported about the filthy environment created by human waste even in the expedition routes of Annapurna I, Sagarmatha, Ama Dablam, etc. Mountaineers report that they have to melt ice for cooking or drinking purposes, but they find snow at many places mixed with human waste which creates a big problem. It may be worth mentioning that the human waste in ice does not decompose and remains as it is for a long time. For example, in one season around 600 to 700 people go for Sagarmatha expedition, and they spend at least one and half months for this in the mountain. One can imagine the amount of human waste generated by 600/700 people during a period of one and half months. No arrangement has been made for the collection of human waste at specified locations and brought back for safe and hygienic disposal. Therefore it is necessary to make the necessary arrangements for the collection and safe disposal of human waste so that the Himalayan environment remains clean and hygienic.

Royalty Fee

In the context of Mountaineering expedition, Nepal's principal competitors are China, India and Pakistan. Compared to those countries, the royalty fees for expeditions in Nepal are very expensive. The expeditions for Cho Oyu, Sagarmatha, Lhotse, Makalu, which are situated on the border, takes place from both Nepal and Tibet sides. For Kanchenjunga, expedition teams can make their attempts from Nepal or India. The royalty fees for Nepal peaks are very high as compared to China or India. For other peaks also the royalty fees are very costly in comparison to those charged in China, India and Pakistan. Furthermore,

the ground operation cost is very low in other countries. In Tibet, trucks can reach the Sagarmatha Base Camp itself, and vehicles can reach the Cho Oyu Advanced Base Camp. Even in Pakistan and India, the Base Camps are not far from motorable roads. As a truck can carry 5/6 tons the ground operation cost in those countries is very low. Because the royalty fees are very cheap and the ground operation costs are low, the mountaineers are more attracted to those countries. In Nepal, the surface transport is not developed so it requires porters to carry the goods and equipment to the Base Camp. Mountaineers can fly to Lukla, and 10 to 12 days of trekking to reach the Base Camp of Cho Oyu and Sagarmatha. It is a 10-14 days trek to reach the Kanchenjunga Base Camp from the nearest road. Mountaineering in Nepal is very expensive because of the exorbitant royalty fees and high ground operation cost. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust the royalty fees in Nepal taking into consideration the fees in the other countries. In fact, recently Nepal has decided to slash royalty fees by 50 percent for winter and summer expeditions, and 75 percent reduction in autumn expeditions, but the royalty fees for the spring season remains the same. For expeditions for the peaks in the Mid- and Far Western Development Regions, no royalty fees is to be charged for five years. Now, instead of 12 members for an expedition team it has been increased to 15.

Despite the cuts made in the royalty fees in Nepal, it still remains high in comparison to the other countries. Nepal's principal competitor is Tibet, and the mountaineering season falls at the same time in both places. According to entrepreneurs, compared to Tibet the royalty fees are about 4 times more expensive in the spring season while it is 50% more in the autumn. Furthermore, an expedition that takes a month in Tibet requires one and half month in Nepal. Expeditions to peaks in the Mid and Far West Development Regions is almost nil because of the very high ground operation costs. Besides, the Base Camps are very far from the nearest roads, there is no security, and relevant information is lacking. Considering all these, it is necessary to reduce the royalty fees for spring season expeditions too. Infrastructural development and aggressive marketing, promotion and publicity must be made to attract mountaineers to the peaks in the Mid and Far Western Development Regions.

iv. Promotion and Marketing

The Himalayas of Nepal are world famous but the foreigners are concentrated only in the chief and limited peaks and regions. The need is for Nepal to engage in promotion and publicity campaigns in tourist generating countries for popularizing the other peaks and regions of Nepal. There are many peaks in Nepal that have not been opened for expeditions while there are many border peaks which are open for expedition from Tibet and India but remain out of bounds from Nepal side because of official restrictions. The restriction on such peaks should be lifted and they should be promoted. The reduction in royalty fees alone will not attract mountaineers, the need is also to promote and provide adequate publicity to the peaks and regions, and at the same time provide the necessary security and facilities by developing the infrastructures. The peaks and regions of the Mid

and far Western Development Regions have not received due promotion and publicity to attract tourists despite the 100 percent reduction in royalty fees. Therefore, necessary marketing efforts must be taken up for both the popular peaks and regions but also for the new peaks and trekking areas.

V. Conclusion

Trekking and mountaineering remain the principal attractions of Nepal's tourism, and Nepal is receiving the opportunity to lead in this type of tourism. Nepal has encouraging potentiality for mountain tourism and gains have also accrued but the optimum utilization has not been achieved as yet. Tourism products and the potential are not enough, they have to be introduced in the world through marketing, and the government has failed in this Endeavour. Our marketing efforts are disorganized, and the majority of the marketing efforts have been done by the private sector and the foreign tour operators. In every country, the government has the chief role in tourism marketing, but in Nepal the government initiative in this direction is not encouraging and the budgetary allocation for the same is very little. Therefore, for the appropriate development of tourism in Nepal, the joint participation and efforts of the government, private sector and the foreign tour operators is necessary. As tourism is a very sensitive and competitive sector, infrastructures must be developed according to the times and requirement, reforms have to be made with the royalty fee structure, necessary reforms and environmental needs must be given the due attention. If measures in this direction is initiated, the great potential of mountain tourism can provide benefits to all from the government to the local inhabitants of Nepal. And it will also provide the ground for Nepal to continue as the undisputed leader in the trekking and mountaineering sector in the world.

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