

A Case Study of Khaptad Tourism – by Bhim Bahadur Khadka and Jibaraj Bhattarai

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Abstract

Nepal is one of the most beautiful country in between two big countries China and India. It is also known as the third pole of the earth, because of having world's highest peak Mt. Everest. Culturally it is the land of emblem of peace- Lord Buddha. Furthermore, it is the land of spectacular mesmerizing nature and unique culture among the world. However, it is sacred and mysterious land and still remains to explore thousands of issues. Among them the Ecotourism is one of the prominent issue. Thus to find out the socio economic status of ecotourism with the reference to Khaptad National park the case study on non-participatory approach in data collection have been conducted. Scenic Attraction, Pleasant Climate, Vegetation, Flora and Fauna, Buki Daha, Danfekot, Patan and Panoramic View, Nagdhunga or Lokhada, Khaptad Daha, Khapar Mando, Sahasra Linga, Upper Triveni River, and the Ashram of Khaptad swami are the basic centre of ecotourism in Khaptad Zone.

Keywords: Case Study, Ecotourism, Khaptad,

Introduction

By the Quebec Declaration of Ecotourism (QDE) and the International Ecotourism Society (IES), ecotourism is “ Conservation of natural and cultural heritage via ecosystem protection; Empowerment and provision of financial benefits for local communities and indigenous people via participation in ecotourism activities; Minimal environmental impact and ecotourism is often optimized on a small-scaled basis; and Environmental and cultural education and respect for travelers (Honey, 2008), (Er, 2010). The perfect conservation of nature by the local people with dignified livelihood based on tourism is ecotourism. Nepal has designated 23% of its total land mass as protected areas, and approximately 29% of the country's forestland outside protected areas are designated as community forests, managed sustainability by local communities (Bashyal, et al., 2022). Khaptad National Park (29.37°N, 81.15°E; Image 1) is situated in Province 7 of Nepal that covers an area of 225 km² with an elevation range 1,000–3,276 m (GoN/ MoFSC 2014). It is

the only national park in mid-hill to lower Himalayan region in western Nepal and represents a unique and important ecosystem.

Objective

To find out the socio economic status of ecotourism with the reference to Khaptad National park.

Materials and Method

We employed open-ended questionnaires to households in various villages in the buffer zone of KNP using the snowball sampling technique. We collected data on five major topics including general socio-economic information of respondents, crop-raiding incidents, livestock predation, animal attacks, and attitude towards wildlife. We took prior informed consent of respondents (generally head of the family) before administering questionnaire. We gathered information on conflict incidences.

Non participant observation

Observation is systematic recording of observable phenomena or behavior in a natural setting. Observational research requires the researcher to have more specialized training on how to observe, what and how to record the data, how to enter the field and leave it, and how to remain detached and involved at the same time. It needs to plan the overall project, review the literature, and determine who will be studied and when and where (in what locations) the observations will take place. Human sense in data collection makes an observation a more holistic (Baker, 2006).

The quality and quantity of the information secured probably depend far more upon the competence of the interviewer than upon the respondent. A complete participant develops relationships and frames of reference which yield a different perspective of the subject matter than that which any of the other field work roles would yield. These subjective and objective factors come together in the fact that degree of success in securing the level of information which a field role makes available to a field worker is largely a matter of skill in playing and taking roles in the specified field (Gold, 2017). Observation is used as a research method in two distinct ways – structured and unstructured. The when, where and how of constructing field notes have many theoretical as well as practical implications. These need to be considered both when initiating an observational study and throughout the course of that study (Mulhall, 2003).

In non-participating observation, a researcher has opportunity to get closer to the field of research while retaining the position of an outsider or a guest. Non participant observation is an observation from an outsider perspective without interacting with subjects of an observation. The researcher may take the position of an “alien” from a different planet or reality in order to achieve a distance from the well-known. Useful when observing a well-known reality, for example, a public place, and there is a need for regarding it from a totally new perspective (Ciesielska, Bostrom, & Ohlander, 2018). The observation of time, space and people in a specified field is field observation.

Case Study Research

The case study approach in human geography is useful in both research and teaching, particularly when an in depth investigation is needed. The study of a single place, a particular group, or a specific issue in one location is helpful in narrowing down research topics. Thus, the scope of the case study is bounded and the findings can rarely be generalized, but the case study can provide rich and significant insights into events and behaviors (Badal, 2020) in a case study of Bhaktapur Tourism. It can contribute uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena (Yin, 1994). Case study provides descriptive details about how our workplaces function, and can increase understanding of a particular phenomenon (Brown, 2008). Therefore, the study has incorporated non participatory approach to develop a case study of Khaptad national park in tourism development.

Results and Discussion

Scenic Attraction, Pleasant Climate, Vegetation, Flora and Fauna, Patan and Panoramic View, Nagdhunga or Lokhada, Khaptad Daha, Khapar Mando, Sahasra Linga, Upper Triveni River, and the Ashram of Khaptad swami are the basic centre of ecotourism in Khaptad Zone.

Scenic Attraction

The basic attraction of Tourists is good weather, natural scenery, cultural features, amenities, accessibility and accommodation. KNP is endowed with all the physical and cultural features of tourist attraction. Good weather almost throughout the year, the greenery, the panoramic view of Api and Saipal Himalayan range, and Khaptad Daha etc. are the most praised attractions of Khaptad National Park Area. Khaptad National Park a present’s outstanding scenic beauty and graceful charm. The top of KNP commands exhilarating views in all directions. These places are

remarkable for enduring loveliness and blend of scenery. The hills mountains, Himalayan ranges and rolling plateaus surround rivers. The view of the sunrise and the sunset, green forests with terraces lands, herbaceous plants and colorful wild flowers, and wild life exert a strong fascination for the tourists. The panoramic view of the Himalaya peak like Api and Sapial can be observed rarely closely from Khaptad area. The natural scenic beauty of Khaptad national park varies from time to time and area to area. In the early morning, the scene of the sunrise from the eastern mountain is the main attraction. At this moment the sun spreads orange color rays over the sky and the northern Himalayan Peak appears lovely (Upadhyaya, 2009).

Pleasant Climate

Climate is one of the basic elements for the development of tourism in any tourist destination. KNP has very pleasant and healthy climate throughout the day which is the ideal for holiday making there are four well defined seasons. 1. Spring (March to May) 2. Summer/ Monsoon (June to August) 3. Autumn (September to November) 4. Winter (December to February) It is stated that KNP has got more favorable climate compared with the other tourists receiving center. Most of the months of the year have bright sunshine and blue sky attracting the tourist. Tourists want fine weather and warm sunshine. A good weather is important because it plays an important role in making holiday pleasant (Upadhyaya, 2009).

Vegetation, Flora and Fauna

For the students of science, KNP can be taken as one of the best site in the world where one can find 16 forest types, 260 species of bird, 40 species of wildlife, 567 varieties of flowering plants and about 400 herbal plants within 225 sq. km., or within one day's walking distance. Therefore, KNP is called a living museum for national history, and a natural botanical and herbal garden. The park is a highly important heritage present for the lovers of wild animals like the wild dog, blue sheep (Nawaor), snow leopard and musk deer found at the northern region of KNP. The population of such endangered species is considerably high in militancy. Wasteland, vastness and feeling of isolation are most exciting in the northern region of KNP, which can attract trekkers very much.

Patan and Panoramic View

Patans are located at the altitude ranging about 1500 to 2000 in above the sea level. Khaptad area reflects the transparency of Himalayas dense blue forest of coniferous trees, beautiful green hills and most notably the Patans to green flowering grass. This scenic beauty is capable of arousing one's personal boundless feelings of joys and emotions. This area has its own originality and most places are still untouched and are still virgin (Upadhyaya, 2009).

Nagdhunga or Lokhada

On the way to Nag Dhunga, one can climb a small hill at the highland to reach Lokhada. This place is situated at an elevation of 3152 meters, from where once a see the panoramic view of holy Mt. Malika in the east and Mt. Api in the northwest and north. Nagha Dhunga is a very interesting place with fossilized serpentine formation. From the religious point of view, these serpents like forms are regarded as various Nag duties. Likewise, this place also holds the religious significance. It is west from the headquarters and takes about 2 hours to reach there. It is also very interesting site for the students of geography, for geologist and archaeologist. Nagdhunga and its surrounding is an ideal site for hind water lings (Upadhyaya, 2009)

Khaptad Daha and Khapar Mando

Khaptad Daha (lake) and Khapar Mando (Temple) seem to be of supreme importance from mythological point of view. On the way from hillock of Balla Jodi, one can observe a panoramic view of Himalayan peaks in the north and foothill plains in the south at the same time. The enchanting view really touches the trekkers' heart. Khaptad Daha is east from the headquarters and takes about 1 hour to reach Khaptad Daha is an important place of mystery. The depth of the lake is unknown. Local people are fearful about its mysterious beings. They believe on its mythological or religious importance. However, the dense forest canopy at the southwestern side of the lake is full of the chirping of varieties of colorful birds (Upadhyaya, 2009).

Kedareshwor

The unique white and black rock about 30 ft. tall looks like a Lingam. It is quite possible that Lord Shiva and Parvati were married near this area and not in Kedarnath in Garwal, as popularly believed. Skandha Purana, Himabata Khanda, Nepali P-148 mentions of Khaptad area to be within

Kedara Chhetra. As Lord Shiva had waited in Baidyanath before marriage and as he had stayed for a longer time in Shaileshwori Chhetra in Chandan Parbat. It is logical to think that this great marriage ceremony took place in Kedara Chhetra of Khaptad (Khanal, 2010).

Sahasra linga

Sahasralinga is located southeast from the headquarters and takes about 3 hours to reach. Sahasralinga is the dwelling place to God "Sahasresowre Mahadev" founded by colonel Bharat Keshri Singh and his wife, being inspired by the late Khaptad Baba in 2040 B.S. It is located in between two large rocks. There is a small hole in the rock. It is believed that if a person can throw a coin in the hole in a single effort her/his wishes are fulfilled (Upadhyaya, 2009).

Buki Daha

On the way back to camp from Ghoda Daune Patan, one can see a small but enchanting lake named Buki Daha. This lake is called Baka Sarobar in Puranas. It is said that many Gods and Goddesses used to live here in the form of Khe-Chara (birds). Probably Ghoda Daune Patan was called Chandrasthala and was Lord Indra's favorite place.

Danphe ko Kot

This place is very important from archeological point of view. Danphe ko Kot means the fort of Danphe (King of the birds) Khechar in Sanskrit also means the one who travels in the sky. Much research is needed to know why this place was called Danphe ko Kot. As this place is located at the highest point in Khaptad – 3275 m, after clearing some bushes, a view tower can be constructed in Danphe ko Kot. Although, Sahasralinga is even higher, this place should not be disturbed from the religious point of view. From the proposed view tower, the famous temple and peak of Mt. Malika can be seen. It is worth exploring, whether one can have a Darshana of Mt. Kailash from this spot. The other peaks in the north are Api Nampha, Surma Sarobar, etc. Some archeologically important items in Danphe ko Kot have been found. A serious archeologically study can reveal much historical and even pre-historical information. It takes about one hour to reach lower Tribeni from Suki Daha and another thirty minutes to reach Ganesh temple and yet another fifteen minutes to Danphe ko Kot. Sahasralinga is about 15 minutes climb from Danphe ko Kot. The trails need to be cleared and improved. If one wants to go to Chaukhutte post in Achham district, it will take four-hour walk (Khanal, 2010).

Upper Triveni River

Triveni River lies south west of the KNP headquarters and takes about 15 minutes to reach. Three rivers Kalika, Parvati and Chedipaterm Khola meet at Triveni. There is a big temple, surrounded by many small temples. Every year on the "Ganga Dashahara" local people organize a fair and celebrate organize traditional and cultural programs retiring from the hardships of daily life and enjoying the fair and warm seasons. The Triveni river area is triangular. The area is 10 m in breath and 9m in length. There are five temples from the right and they are temples Ganesh Annapurna Devi, Shiva, Kumar, and Sadya or (Basha) respectively (Upadhyaya, 2009).

The Ashram of Khaptad Swami

The Ashram of Khaptad swami is a famous spiritual site. The hermitage of the late Khaptad swami (Baba) is preserved in "core zone" of KNP. All the visitors of KNP usually visit the hermitage and experience the spirit and the power of the place. The Khaptad Ashram area is located near the park headquarter. The late Khaptad Swami moved to the area in 1940's to meditate and worship. He spent some 50 years living there as a hermit and became a renowned spiritual saint. On the way to park headquarters are Tribeni, the confluence of three rivers, and a Shiva temple. There are also other historical temples surrounding the Shiva temple. Ganga Dashahara is celebrated there during Jestha Purnima. Many pilgrims visit the park. Another religious site is Sahashra Linga at 3,200 m above the sea level. There are several types of flora and fauna many types of old trees several Patan grassland. Khatad is famous for Khaptad Swami cave and many other natural and socio-cultural things. The Ashram of Khaptad swami is a famous spiritual site. The hermitage of the late Khaptad swami (Baba) is preserved in "core zone" of KNP. All the visitors of KNP usually visit the hermitage and experience the spirit and the power of the place (Upadhyaya, 2009).

Conclusion

Only tourism is the chance of development to uplift the living standard of the people of Nepal. Thus Khaptad is one of the most favorable tourism spot of western Nepal. Scenic Attraction, Pleasant Climate, Vegetation, Flora and Fauna, Buki Daha, Danfekot, Patan and Panoramic View, Nagdhunga or Lokhada, Khaptad Daha, Khapar Mando, Sahasra Linga, Upper Triveni River, and the Ashram of Khaptad swami are the basic centre of ecotourism in Khaptad Zone. Thus these

points must be developed and preserved for ecotourism promotion to the economic and social development of the people.

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