


Karnali Tourism: Natural Attractions

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Abstract

“Karnali Tourism: Natural Attraction” is a general literature review of referenced sources. It is the collection of facts of pristine or virgin tourism attractions of Karnali province of Nepal. Its natural attractions accommodate a wonderland to visit and enjoy the life. The paper is focused on the natural attractions of Karnali Province. To generalize the facts of Nature of Karnali from tourism perspective the study has been conducted. It is the scientific but descriptive literature review of available sources. The paper will be a guideline for field researchers of tourism in Karnali. Nepal is one of the pristine center of tourism attraction. Nepal’s most beautiful natural attraction is Karnali. Karnali tourism is a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of the society. It encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, literature, music, and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions of Karnali. Karnali is the one of the most beautiful landscape. It is still virgin in many aspects of exploration. It is one of the must visiting place in life.

Keywords: Attraction, Karnali, Nature, Tourism,

Introduction

“It is better to travel than arrive”- Buddha. It is better to travel, because travelling is simply the learning process. Travelling is an exploration of new destination, its arts, culture, geography and society. Nepal’s striking geographical features include snowcapped peaks of high Himalayas,

lower mountains of *Mahabharat* range, mid hills of *Chure* and *Bhawar*, and fertile plains of *Tarai* with tropical jungle. It is popularly known as *Himal Pahad*, and *Tarai* in Nepal.

Rocking with Deuda -local song, every traveler has to start the Karnali trip. Tourism industry is the industry of happiness. In tourism industry, trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing, boating, mountain biking, jungle safari, hunting, mountain flights, rafting, hunting, and expeditions are the main attractions of the natural adventure tourism. These units are the points of human happiness. Nepal occupies 44.74% forest area; 23.39% protected area system within 20 protected areas including 12 National Parks, one Wildlife Reserve, one Hunting Reserve, 6 Conservation Areas, and 13 Buffer Zones. In addition, there are 10 wetland sites of international importance – the Ramsar Sites; and 37 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (Chaudhary, et al., 2020). Among these most of the options are available in Karnali Province (Dhakal, 2019). Karnali is geographically the largest and demographically the smallest province of Nepal. One of the must visit site of the globe.

It is one of the pristine natural landscape, still a natural paradise or a peace of heaven, provides mesmerizing lifetime experience. It is a natural storehouse of natural flora and fauna. The most importantly Karnali is the origin of Nepali *Khas* civilization. The identity of Nepal was emerged from Karnali. It is known as *Khasan* zone, the origin of native Nepali language (Joshi, 2077). It is the land of snowcapped mountains in North, and challenging forests with certain hilly region. It is the land of lakes, Rara and Phoksundo (the largest and deepest lakes of Nepal enlisted as Ramsar), Syarpu Tal, Kubhinde Daha are the famous as well. Visiting Karnali gives the lifetime experience of magnificent natural beauties. The paddy variety, known as Jumli Marsi, is a popular variety cultivated in Jumla district. The mesmerizing reminiscence take back to childhood when one visit Karnali. Karnali region covers the upper watershed of the Karnali river, namely, Humla Karnali, Mugu Karnali and Sinja Karnali that drainage the area of Sinja valley and Tila rivers.

From the historical perspective, during the Gorkha conquest in the 1790s, Jumla, which was the largest among the 22 principalities in the west, covered much of the Karnali watershed. This became the administrative district of Jumla after unification and remained so throughout the subsequent periods. The reorganization of districts in 1962 placed the four districts of Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Tibrikot under the Karnali zone. In 1972, Dolpa district to the east was included under the Karnali Zone in 1975, Tibrikot was renamed Kalikot with some boundary readjustments (Bhattarai & Katwal, 2020). Under the federal dispensation Karnali is now a province encompassing large areas of the middle hills, *Siwalik* range and the traditional upper watersheds of the Karnali river.

The tourism components access, accommodation, attractions, and amenities are considered the most important factors for tourism development (Camilleri, 2018). From tourism perspective, it is denoted that access and amenities are ‘sense-making’ and attractions and activities are having exploratory attributes. If these sense making and exploratory factors are adequately developed

tourists perceive the wellbeing and engage through positive word of mouth about the destination which tourism planners and destination developers must consider (Reitsamer & Sperdin, 2017). Thus the components of Karnali tourism of course in its virgin status of attractions. The attractions of Karnali is spectacular.

Attractions are important elements of any destination which motivate tourists to visit and fulfil recreational demand. Attractions can be in any form which fulfils the utility of tourists or visitors at the destination. It includes, culture, mountains, community, scenic beauty, gastronomy and many others (Reitsamer & Sperdin, 2017). Tourists seldom travel to any place just for staying at any particular accommodation facility rather travel to any destination to see the key attractions, enjoy and do the unique experiences. So the any particular feature of the destination which motivates a traveler or tourists towards it is attraction. Attraction could be; natural wonders, man-made attractions, special events, cultural or historic sites, arts and crafts, sport, music or dance, unusual or unique flora and fauna, and night life (Camilleri, 2018). Tourism attraction is anything that creates a desire in any person to travel in a specific tourist destination. Karnali is one of the most beautiful attraction from natural perspective.

For Karnali tourism development, the relationship of various components e.g., tourism infrastructure, travelling resources -accessibility, preparedness of tourism -attraction, internal and external factors- accommodation and amenity, which are important to be considered at planning period. In tourism development and available tourism potentials at destination(Karim, Latip, Marzuki, Shah, & Muhammad, 2021) the local governments must take initiations. The provincial government has the slogan of tourism promotion. It is "Nepal-the World's Tourist Destination, Karnali- Nepal's Tourist Destination" (GoKP, 2020). Whoever travels in Nepal must visit Karnali. However, the study is focused on attraction attributes of tourism development of Karnali. Tourism attractions can be divided in two categories, they are natural and cultural attractions. National parks and wildlife reserves, high-altitude wetlands, rivers, mountains, and indigenous culture are among the major natural attractions in Karnali. Communities, Temples, Festivals, Monasteries, etc. are the major cultural attractions.

Climate is the gift of nature. Happy mind, happy environment, generate happy life. Climate change is also a major issue in tourism development. Mountaineering tourism is very sensitive to snow cover and favorable climatic windows. Projected warming-induced snow cover loss and an uncertain climate could negatively affect mountain tourism. Temperature increases could also increase costs for tourism entrepreneurs because they will need to invest more in cooling systems in lowland areas (Chapagain, Dhaubanjari, & Bharati, 2021). Thus tourism development must go coincide with climate change mitigations. The maintenance of originality of Karnali is the best option of climate change and tourism attractions. The major attractions of Karnali Province are described below.

Objective and Method

Karnali is one of the most beautiful and adventurous landscape It is the scientific but descriptive literature review of available sources. The paper would be a guideline for field researchers of tourism in Karnali. The paper would be a perfect guideline for field researchers of tourism in Karnali. These attractions/products of Karnali tourism relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual, natural and emotional features of a society that encompasses Nature and Culture. Karnali is highly potential cultural tourism zone of Nepal yet to be explored in many ways.

Review

Natural Attractions of Karnali

Nature is the gift of nature. Nature is the base of life. Nature shows the way of living and directs the happiness. The pristine Karnali is the bestow of Nature. Karnali is the land of happiness and if heaven exists, it exists in Karnali. It is the way of Kailash- Mansarovaer. Karnali has a run-off river-type hydropower potential of 15,661.16 MW because of the major rivers and steep slopes in the highlands. Nearly 127 projects, including some of the country's largest hydropower and irrigation projects, are in various stages of development in the basin. Karnali is also a biodiversity hotspot, with approximately 14% of the area under protection, and is comprised of four national parks, one wildlife reserve, one hunting reserve, two buffer zones, and three Ramsar sites. Overall, Karnali remains largely rural, with sparse communities relying heavily on nature-based livelihoods, rich biodiversity and natural resources, and untapped hydropower potential spread throughout the basin (Chapagain, Dhaubanjari, & Bharati, 2021). Thus Karnali is naturally beautiful. Naturally Karnali is one of the must visiting destination of nature lovers. The most significant natural attractions of Karnali are presented and analyzed below.

High Himalayas:

High Himalayas are the emblem of the pride of human life in Nepal. Karnali province is endowed with scenic mountain ranges and peaks(Himalayas) such as *Panchamukhi*, *Saipal*, *Puyu*, *Chala*, *Kanjiroba*, and *Koikee* offer an excellent nature experiences to trekkers, visitors and mountaineers. Similarly, the rich floral and faunal diversity make Karnali a well-placed for nature-based tourism, where domestic and international tourists could rejoice the wilderness experience including snow leopard expedition. Karnali has high mountains, i.e. Mt. Kanti (6859 m), Mt. Gorakh (6088 m) and Mt. Changla (6563 m). Himalayan peaks like Kanjirowa, Dolpa (6883 m), Lachma, Humla (6721 m), Kande Himchuli, Jumla (6627 m), and Changla, Humla (6563 m) are the major peaks that can be promoted for tourism industry in the province (KPPC, 2020). The Province is geographically disadvantaged due to large area of rugged mountain and difficult terrain: Almost 79 percent of the land area in the province lies in the high mountains and Himalayas while rest of the area falls on the hilly area. The governments must have different plans and projects to use the unique land in tourism and can earn billions of dollars.

Flora and Fauna

Topography and biodiversity with abundance of endangered species in flora and fauna have made the Karnali, it is absolutely rich in nature. Pristine nature, cool climatic conditions, adventurous geographic terrain, and far remoteness contribute to its exotic quality to the larger extent. Karnali has nature and culture as it is strong to attract tourists. The pristine lake Rara and rare and endangered wild animals such as red panda, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, and Himalayan trout are the nature wonders to attract the tourists in Karnali. Yarshagumba (*Ophiocordyceps Sinensis*), Guchi Chyao (Morchella Conica), Jhyao (Lichens), Jatamasi (*Nardostachys Drandiflora*), Chiraito (*Swertia Chiraita*), Kutki (*Neopicrorhiza Scrophulariflora*), Timur (*Zanthoxylum*) and Dalchini (Cinnamon), are major medicinal plants found in the Province (KPPC, 2020). Karnali must be able to capitalize the natural assets. The Karnali boasts great ecological diversity on land and biological diversity in its waters. The Karnali river flows through almost every ecological zone found on earth. The river supports over 79 species of fish, including the endangered golden Mahseer, giant catfish and other aquatic species of global significance such as the Ganges river dolphin and crocodile. In addition, multiple wildlife species depend on the stream flows and riverine habitats created by the Karnali. Few other rivers in the world support this biological diversity or flow through such great ecological diversity in such a short distance. The Karnali, as a free-flowing river, can serve as a reference library to help to understand climatic changes under natural conditions. Protection of this resource aids global biodiversity (NRCT, 2019). The Karnali stakeholders must be able to present the issue in global platforms.

Mysterious Dolpa

One can experience Mysterious "hidden land" Dolpa. It is situated in 29°10'N 83°4'E, biggest district of Nepal with elevations ranging between 1525 m to 7754 m above sea level. Dolpa holds temperate, cool-temperate and alpine climatic zones and is spread across an area of 7889 sq. km with a population of 36,700. Dolpa district had the highest area of shrub/grassland as well as barren area. Dolpa district has the least forest area after the China part (Shrestha, Ye, & Khadka, 2019). Practice of various religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Bonposim etc. make Dolpa rich in culture while the presence of more than 33 mammals, 260 birds species, 529 useful plant species make Dolpa a biodiversity hotspot. Phoksundo Lake 3660 meter is designated as a high altitude Ramsar site, further underlining the international recognition of the importance of this region (Upadhaya, 2017). Dolpa is mysterious and hidden land like a heaven must be utilized for tourism development.

Yak Caravan

Karnali is the land of Yak Caravan. Yak is one of the most popular domestic animals in upper Karnali- it has many essential roles in daily life of the natives. Yak is used for different purposes like transportation, ploughing fields, riding and sometimes they are used to open the trail when it is covered with snow. It is also a good source of nutrients in the highland. Its milk and meat are

lifesaving diet. In the Himalayas a life without yaks is close to impossible. Yak farming in northern mountains are unique and it attracts tourists more.

Yarsagumba Caravan

Karnali is the land of Yarsagumba Caravan. The Yarshagumba harvesting contributes to new cultural developments in the mountain regions of Nepal. Because of this, other activities such as farming have become secondary, although most of the Yarshagumba collectors are traditionally farmers. During the harvesting season, virtually all socioeconomic activities come to a halt: schools are closed, government offices of these mountainous districts become less functional, and social life is severely affected. Thus it is a remarkable caravan of entire community. Upper Karnali is the land of Yarsagumba Caravan (Karki, et al., 2020). Ecotourism is a nature based tourism which directly or indirectly promotes and supports sustainable economic development leading towards the development of local infrastructure and enhances the rural economy through the demand of essentials required for accommodation purpose.

Mid Mahabharat Hills-

If the base of development and prosperity is tourism, organic agriculture and local cottage industries, then the Karnali River is as good as Everest in the east, Annapurana and Dhaulagiri in the central region and the Janaki temple and Lumbini in the south. We must protect this gift of the nature. If the man made Great Wall of China can generate over ten million tourists, the Karnali, as a wondrous gift of nature, can attract millions of visitors to explore this Sacred River Corridor. Karnali is already world renown for rafting and kayaking, considered among the five best whitewater rivers in the world. If the entire corridor is branded well and environmentally sound infrastructure developed to retain the natural character of the area, the entire Karnali corridor could be world renowned as a jewel of Nepal (NRCT, 2019). We must be able to sell it in global tourism market.

Mid Mahabharat Hills are Middle Mountain (1300–2700 m) and High Mountain (2700–4000 m) are significant. Forest, agriculture, waterbody, and the built-up area is highest in Surkhet district. Dolpa district has the least forest area after the China part (Shrestha, Ye, & Khadka, 2019). The scenic beauty of Rhododendron forest, orchid flower rocky hill and garden are pristine natural landscape that can be observed. The population of Karnali is concentrated in the mid hills and *Siwalik* zones to the south of the province with considerably lower density in the mid mountains and extremely sparse population in the high mountains along the border with China. Developing growth points along the Karnali and Bheri corridor; Mid hill and Madan Bhandari highway further targeting the destination up to Kailash Mansarovar via Surkhet Hilsa fast track will definitely develop the tourism. Resource assessment of *Kutki*, *Jatamansi* and *Yarsagumba* in highlands and *Setakchini* and *Guchi-chyau* in the mid hills have high values. Mid hill districts of Rukum, Salyan, Surkhet, Dailekh and Jajarkot produce vegetable seeds, ginger, bee-honey, soybean and oranges. While the mountain districts of Dolpa, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu and Humla produce apple, walnut, beans, potato and vegetable seeds. Buckwheat, maize, millets, wheat and

barley are the major cereal crops while paddy are planted in the irrigated land in river basins and low lands (KPPC, 2020). Hill cultural tourism, agro tourism, rural tourism and eco-tourism can be flourished in the hillside.

Inner Terai (Chure/ Bhawar)

Siwalik zone is normally known inner Terai (Chure/ Bhawar). Politically Karnali missed Banke, and Bardiya districts. Strategically, it seems that politics of Nepal want to divide Tarai and Hill, is most misfortunate. Now the Karnali is out of the Tarai although Karnali flows down. Many scholars argue, Nepal's number one tourism attraction "Trekking routs of Kakre Bihar parikrama" is one of the most popular agro-tourism based activities in Surkhet (Dhakal, 2019). The participatory approach involves people in management of resources in a sustainable manner meanwhile providing aid in different socioeconomic developmental activities for the communities. Surkhet district has initiated the participatory approach. Assistance to communities for socioeconomic developmental activities is an important factor that motivates people in turn to be involved in management of resources (Aryal, Niroula, & Ghimire, 2019), and it is only possible from participative tourism. The population of Karnali is concentrated in the mid hills and Siwalik zones to the south of the province with considerably lower density in the mid mountains. These zones are significant for cultural and agro tourisms. The participatory approach of tourism development is one of the most viable notion of Siwalik Tourism in Karnali.

The Kailash - Karnali Sacred River Corridor can be developed for pilgrimage, culture, and eco-adventure tourism. within the Sacred River Corridor, sections of the Karnali would be protected as "Wild and Scenic Rivers". These protections would bring prominence to the area and would ensure that the outstanding natural and cultural values of the river are protected into eternity. The Karnali River is at a cross road. Hydropower development is planned in the lower river with four main stem dams already licensed, though construction has not yet begun. Hydropower licenses have already been issued for 6510 MW production on Karnali tributary streams (NRCT, 2019). Inner Terai will be the best landscape to develop dam and beautiful water parks.

Rivers:

The Karnali river, central attraction, main river of the province, emerges from the Mount Kailash region. It is a holy region that is sacred to Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain and Bon religions and a sacred pilgrimage site for hundreds of thousands of tourists. The Kailash region is the source of four life-giving rivers supporting billions of people, a) the Brahmaputra flows to the East, b) the Indus to the North, c) the Sutlej to the West and d) the Ganges and Karnali rivers flow South. The Karnali river flows over 1080 kilometers through China and Nepal to India where it merges with and supplies the greatest flow of all tributary streams to the holy Ganges river. The Karnali is the last free-flowing and most pristine river of this group and the last free-flowing mainstream river in all of Nepal. As rivers are the arteries of earth, we need to protect them to sustain our human civilization. As such, the Karnali is truly eligible as a World Heritage Site (NRCT, 2019) but not yet registered.

Rivers around the world are the origination of civilizations. Karnali, Sinja, or Khas civilization is closely associated with Karnali River. The Khas civilization was originated in Karnali river basin. Karnali is the longest river of Nepal that flows freely from north to south through deep gorges creating a unique geographic landscape. It flows from the southern part of Karnali province through Humla and Mugu. It is the largest tributary of the Ganga in India. Similarly, Bheri river originates from Dolpo situated in the eastern part of Karnali province and passes through Jajarkot, Rukum, Pyuthan etc. The Karnali starts in the High Mountains at an altitude covering 5500 m up to 7726 m, with the headwater lying at about 230 km North from Chisapani (mainstream Karnali River length). The Mohana River, lying in south of the Karnali Basin, descends from the Churia range, flows through the Tarai plain and meets with the Karnali River at the Nepal-India border (Pandey, Sharma, Dhaubanjari, Bharati, & Joshi, 2019). It is 507 km long and it covers 50 thousand sqkm of watershed land. It is known as Ghagra in India. Like others, it has seven tributaries- Saptakarnali.

There are Se-phoksundo, Rara, Khaptad and Bardia national park and Dhorpatan hunting sites in its watershed area of Karnali. Thousands of rivulets, lakes and waterfalls are there in its area. The main tributaries of Karnali river are seven so it is also known as Saptakarnali as follows: a) Sanibheri, b) Thulibheri, c) Tila, d) Mugukarnali, e) Humlakarnali, f) Budhiganga, and g) Seti rivers.

- A) *Sanibheri begins from Swargadwari hill and the water of Himchuli mountain. It is 98 km long and it covers 2300 sqkm land in its watershed area.*
- B) *Thulibheri river originates from Araniko Chuli of Dolpa district. Having 3300 sqkm watershed area, it is 136 km long.*
- C) *Tila originates from the eastern part of Jumla. The watershed area of Tila is 2400 sqkm and the length is 99 km.*
- D) *Mugukarnali, which is originated from Gautam and Kanti mountain. It is 384 km of length and watershed area of this river is 6100 sqkm.*
- E) *Humlakarnali originates from Tibet and the water of Chandi and Gorakh Himal. Main and the longest branch of Karnali river is Humlakarnali. It is 528 km long and it covers 6100 sqkm in watershed.*
- F) *The shortest branch of Karnali river is Budhiganga. It has 1700 sqkm watershed area and its length is 84 km.*
- G) *Seti is another branch of Karnali River which is originated from Chandi and Gorakh Himal. It flows from the western side of Karnali River. It is 202 km long and its area is 7500 sqkm (Dahal, 2021).*

There is a well-established but not true myth that the Karnali River flows from *Rakshastal* on the Tibetan Plateau. The flow of the Karnali River does not come from *Rakshastal* but instead the

headwaters of the Karnali River comes from the meltwater of glaciers on the north side of the Himalaya in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. The *Machakabab*- Mouth of Peacock, Spring, sacred to Tibetans, contributes to the flow of the Karnali along the way. There are ten major tributaries of the Karnali that contribute to the volume of water and sediment being transported throughout the system (NRCT, 2019). Thus Karnali is holy river as pure as Ganga originated from the glacier of Kailash Mansarovar area.

Lakes:

Rara and Phoksundo lakes: Rara lake is the largest lake, enlisted as Ramsar site in Karnali Nepal. Phoksundo is the deepest lake enlisted as Ramsar of Dolpa Karnali. Chhangbo Lake originated from Halzi glacier. Lake, Humla, Sarphutal in west Rukum, Kupindedaha in Salyan add values to the lake tourism of Karnali and beyond in Nepal. Rara and Pohksunda lakes have become major tourism destinations and also contribute to tourism of surrounding areas. These lakes, associated rivers and tributaries irrigate the downstream valleys and has become the life supporting systems in terms of irrigation, drinking water, fisheries, water recreation and operating traditional water mills etc. Rara Lake serves as an important halting station for migratory waterfowls across the Himalayas. Regarding fish species, out of six species of endemic fishes of Nepal, three species of snow trout are found in lake Rara. Other significant lakes are presented below.

Bulbuletal: This is the well-known lake in the district named by Bulbule Udhyan speeded in 52 Bighas of area. The lake has the religious importance. Many pilgrims and tourist from far and wired visit this lake every year. Almost monthly 30,000 tourists and local people are visiting this Bulbule park to see the Bulbuletal. There is separate bathing place for male and female managed by King Birendra.

Syarputal: Syaprutal is a major tourism attraction, 1.5 km far from Bafimkot rural municipality office of west Rukum. It covers 2.6 sqkm. It is equipped with modern boats and water play stations.

Kubhindedaha: Kupinde (Kubhinde) lake, a popular tourist destination in Salyan district of Karnali province. Around 24 km west of Khalanga, lies Kupinde village. A temple dedicated to Barahdev is located adjacent to the lake where devotees come to pay respect twice every year, once during February and the other time during April. It covers around 25 hectares.

Jajuradaha: Though, it is not big in size but has a unique geographical location and religious and cultural significance. Jajuradaha is in Panchapuri Municipality, a beautiful lake of considerable size situated between human settlement in the hill side. This is located western part of Surkhet district and province headquarter.

Simrikkhanidaha: This is 30 km. far from Birengranagar is also known as Baharatal. There is an interesting story that there is no human settlement near the lake. According to the people's belief if anybody stays near the lake he/she will die soon. The local people are afraid of visiting

the lake in the evening. With the belief that they get frightened and feel pulled towards it by an unknown and invisible power. But the name of the rural municipality is associated with the Tal, 'Baharatal Rural Municipality'.

Gupti Tal: This lake lies in the western part of the district in Panchapuri Municipality. This lake is inside the cave. Thousands of tourists visit the pond on winter and summer season (Dhakal, 2019). Thus Karnali is the land of lakes and rivers under unique topography.

Waterfalls:

Enclosed by the snow-capped mountains and the landscape views of lush-greenery, Nepal is the "roof of the world". This Himalayan nation is a paradise for the nature buffs and the adventurous souls who are looking for an escape to the nature's lap. The Pachal waterfall is one of the highest waterfalls located at the Kalikot district of Karnali province of Nepal. This hidden gem- a wonderful tourism site, is settled in the remote area of Nepal and falls from a height of 481 meters. The view of the gigantic waterfall and gushing sound of the water falling from the enormous height is just magical and worth to capture says Priyanka Benarjee in her Blog. Another is Chachar Jharana of Mugu, lies on the way to Yalban and numbers of other waterfall.

Protected areas:

Rara National Park: Rara National Park was established in 1976 AD. It is famous for blue pine, fir, birch Rhododendron, alpine meadow of Karnali Province. It covers 90 % part of Mugu and 10% part of Jumla. Rara National Park, 81° 59'54" to 82 ° 8'27" E, 29° 26'28"to 29° 33'11" N, with elevations ranging from 2754 to 4097 m, was established on 1976 and its buffer zone was declared in 2006. The total area of the park is 106 Sq. Km and buffer zone covers the area of 198 Sq. Km. Major portion of the park lies in Mugu district while a fraction of area lies in Jumla district. Rara Lake, which is the largest and deepest lake of Nepal is the major attraction of the park. The lake extends about 5 Km in length, 3 Km in breadth and is 167 m deep and the area is 10.65 Sq. Km. The Lake was listed as a Ramsar site in 2006.

The climate of Rara National Park has Alpine climate and experiences very cold winters during the months of December to March. Temperature falls below zero degree Celsius mostly and accompanying heavy snowfall causes blocking of the high passes. High passes become accessible only after the temperature rises up from the months of April to June till the monsoon enters from June to August. The months of September and October with excellent weather conditions provide ideal conditions for the park visit (Aryal, Niroula, & Ghimire, 2019). The park is home to 51 species of mammals. Some of the mammals found in the park are Himalayan Black Bear, Himalayan Tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*). Altogether 272 species of birds have been reported from the park area including the national bird of Nepal i.e. Danphe (*Lophophorus impejanus*). Rara Lake and the coniferous forest surrounding

the lake serves as a habitat for different migratory birds. The Lake is home to three endemic species of fishes and one endemic frog species has been reported from the park area.

Shey-Phoksundo National Park: Shey-Phoksundo National Park was established in 1984 AD. It is famous for oak, blue pine, spruce, fir, birch, junipers, alpine meadows of Karnali Province. Shey-phoksundo National Park is situated in the Trans-Himalayan region of northwest Nepal. It is Nepal's largest National Park covering an area of 3,555 sqkm. It was established in 1984 to preserve a unique Trans-Himalayan ecosystem with a diversity of flora and fauna. The Park's climatic differences, altitude variations, and different zoo-geographical regions support a diverse range of biotic systems. In 1998, an area of 1349 sqkm surrounding the park was declared as buffer zone, which consists of forests and private lands. The buffer zone is jointly managed by the park and local communities. Together they initiate community development activities and manage the natural and cultural resources (DNPWC, 2021) (Chaudhary, et al., 2020). The Shey Phoksundo National Park has one of the highest altitude settlements with active agriculture and animal husbandry. As the animal husbandry is the major source of income, in average a household owns 6 yaks, two jhoppa, 2 horses and 20 goats (Upadhaya, 2017). Thus Karnali is the land of mind blowing natural national parks.

Herbs:

Karnali province is very rich for herbs like *Padmachal*, and *Pakhenbed*, the lower parts of the region have popular herbal plants such as *Kurilo*, Orchids, *Amala*, *Harro*, *Barro*, the natural vegetation, various kinds rhododendron forests. The above mentioned flora and fauna are not only the means of attractions but also subjects of research for the tourist. Natural vegetation, forest, rhododendron, different types of herbal plants, conservation area are the main attraction of the tourism of the area (Dhakal, 2019). Resource assessment of *Kutki*, *Jatamansi* and *Yarsagumba* in highlands and *Setakchini* and *Guchichyau* in the mid hills have high values.

Valleys:

Natural Beauty/ Leisure near Jumla (Sinja Valley) -Rara, Jumla Limi Valley, Great Himalayan Trail are the most fascinating destinations. The Karnali river systems have created mesmerizing landscape such as Upper Dolpo valley, Limi Valley, Sinja valley, Rakam Valley and Surkhet valley.

Upper Dolpo valley:

Upper Dolpa, also known as inner Dolpa or Dolpo is geologically part of the sedimentary Tibetan-Tethys zone. It is surrounded by Himalayan mountain chains including the Dhawalagiri with 8,172 meters and Kanjirowa 6,883 meters' height, where Dhawalagiri is the sixth tallest mountain in the world. These cloud walls the climate and cause a semi-arid weather, with annual precipitations of less than 500 millimeters. The region is historically divided into four valleys (Bauer, 2004):

1. Tsharka ("good growing-place"-Chharka),
2. Tarap ("auspicious excellent" - Dho),
3. Panzang ("abode of monks" -Tinje), and
4. Nangkhong ("innermost place"- Saldang)

They constitute four of the seven village that were created in 1975. The valleys south of the watershed drain into the Bheri River. The northern valleys between the watershed and Tibet drain westward by the *Langu River*, a tributary of the Karnali River via the *Mugu Karnali*. Agriculture is possible at heights of 3,800 to 4,180 meters Dolpo makes up the greatest part of the area of the Dolpa District, but the district's population is concentrated in the lower southern parts, where also most of the villages are located (Bauer, 2004).

The Limi valley:

The Limi Valley, in upper Humla, is the hidden land, located between 3500-5340 msl. Limi is the home to diverse wild flora and fauna ranging from wild ungulates, predator, fauna, flowering plants, alpine meadow etc. It is called Hidden Shangri-la due to its breath taking panoramas, stunning wilderness and unique Buddhist culture and tradition. These valleys including Limi with diverse climatic conditions, forest ecosystems, alpine meadows, soil types, micro climate and permafrost support unique high value medicinal plants and herbs, alpine pasture, vegetation and, are and endangered wild animals including snow leopards, red panda, Himalayan bear, musk deer, Himalayan thar etc.

Sinja valley:

Sinja Valley contains the archaeological evidence of the capital city of the well organized and influential Western Malla or Khasa Kingdom of the 12th and 14th Century. After the 14th Century the Khasa Kingdom split into the Baise or Twenty-Two Kingdoms which existed until the unification of Nepal in the late 18th Century. Excavations have revealed the remains of old palaces, temples (Kanak Sundari, Tripura Sundari) and the old settlement. A remarkable ring of huge monolithic stone columns was found surrounding the ruins of the ancient settlement with a Malla gateway and steps. Earthen pipes were excavated testifying to an elaborate water supply system. Across from the Hima River there are caves with ancient votive ritual Buddhist chaityas and cliff inscriptions. Even today the ancient rites of the Masto (Shamans) are practiced in many of the stone Dewals or temples. The Sinja Valley was where the Nepali language originates from and the earliest examples of the Devanagari script from the 13th Century were found on the cliffs and in nearby Dullu (UNESCO, 2021). Sinja valley, which is considered once the ancient kingdom of Nepal, is located in Jumla district. It is the place where Nepali as a language originated. Sinja Valley was the ancient capital city and powerful town of the Khasa Kingdom.

Rakam Valley:

Rakam Karnali is located in Athbis village. Karnali river flows from the west of Dailekh district makes the Rakam plain, ideal place for water based adventure tourism (rafting, fishing). Raute ethnic community -Nomad people nearby Guras area and Raute expects to other district only after dancing in Dailekh. Badi, Gandarva, Magar, Majhi ethnic communities Spread in Dailekh district. Dailekh district is a home to ethnic people with their unique sociocultural characteristics most notably Raute, semi-nomadic ethnic people who rely mostly on forest resources (GoKP, 2020). Sattalla, Sigaudi, Rakam Karnali, Pipalkot, Singasain and Tilepata Village development committees were Incorporated to form this new municipality. The headquarters of the municipality is situated at Rakam Karnali. Demography of the Rakam Karnali shows that Dalits are 26 %, Thakuri and Kshetri are 68%. Seven traditional fishing communities live within the Middle Karnali watershed, though they are few in number in terms of population (1,587 people). These groups include Majhi (36%), Badi (27%), Kumal (26%), Tharu (9%), Rajbhar (1%), Nuniya (1%), and Sonar (1%) (USAID, 2019).

Surkhet valley:

Surkhet Valley is one of the inner Terai valleys of Nepal. It borders, Achham district of Sudurpashchim, Dailekh and Jajarkot districts to the north, Salyan district to the east, Banke and Bardiya districts of Lumbini and Kailali of Sudurpashchim to the south, and Doti district of Sudurpashchim to the west. Surkhet has a more moderate climate. Winter temperatures drop to about 5 °C and in summer it goes up to 38 °C. Monsoon brings sufficient rainfall during the rainy season. Surkhet ranks low in overall change in climatic condition. 42% covers with plain fertile land and 43% of Mahabharat Range. Rest in Siwalik range rich in forest resource. At the time of the 2011 Nepal census, Surkhet District had a population of 350,804. Of these, Khas Arya were the largest grouping. 31.62% were Chhetri, 11.53% Hill Brahmin, 4.74% Thakuri, and 1.71% Sanyasi. Of Khas Dalit, 18.29% were Kami, 4.50% Damai and 2.33% Sarki. Janajatis were the third-largest group: Magars were 18.88% of the population, while Tharu were 1.96% and Gurung 1.32% of the population.

Tourist attractions are places like Kakrebihar temple, Bulbule Lake, Deutibajai temple, Mangalgadhi, Gothikanda, Ghantaghar, Bheri river and others with religious as well as historic value. Kakrebihar is the remains of an old Buddhist Monastery (palace), which is in the list of national heritage sites in Nepal. Bheri river is a common destination for rafting and paragliding has been recently started in Surkhet. Birendranagar is one of Nepal's few cities built under a master plan. It is popularly known as "Gateway to Karnali". Rara (biggest lake of Nepal), Shey phoksundo lake, five religious sites inside Dailekh, Kubinde lake (Salyan) and several terrains can be taken into account through roadway Ratna Highway (named after queen Ratna) and Jumla Highway. Surkhet is open to Tourist connecting way to Kailash Mansarowar Tibet through Flights and helicopter charter from Nepalgunj or roadway Surkhet. Shortest fast track of Nepal that connects Chinese and Indian border

Organic Agriculture & Livestock:

The most important thing is that Karnali province is declaring the province an organic agricultural province. Marshi Rice is the highest elevation grown rice grown in Jumla, Nepal. Similarly, apples from Jumla are very famous. Livestock, a main source of income, is the major component of subsistence farming in the highland mountains of Nepal. More than 68% of the total households' main occupation is animal husbandry, which is more popular in the northern part of the province. Pastoralism and transhumance system of grazing livestock is one of the important traditional practices, which is under practice for centuries. Trade probably the barter system, with Tibet used to be the dominant form of local economy. About 91% of the total households are involved directly or indirectly in agriculture and animal husbandry. But their agricultural production is not enough for more than three months. Therefore, high value crops like Marsi Paddy, Jumli Apple, various herbs, animal farm house, and walnuts farming, relating with sustainable tourism with modern technology are recommended.

The following table summarizes the major natural attractions of Karnali Province.

Major Natural Tourism Attractions

SN	Districts	Major Attractions
1	Surkhet	Karnali River, Bheri River, Forests, Bulbule Jajura, Baraha, Gupti lakes, Sattale, Madale, Shiva caves, Giddedanda, Gothikanda
2	Dailekh	Forest, Karnali River, Herbs, Rakam Valley, Majhi and Raji community
3	Kalikot	Mountasin grazing land, Pachal Waterfall (483m need access of around 30km), Karnali River
4	Salyan	Forest land, Sarada river, Kuvinde lake, Kachuwa lake, Mokhlebaje cave, Kumakh (2537m), Jathak heights
5	Rukum West	Sisne Himal, Syarpu, Kamal, Pupal, Sun, Gupta, Shital, Sampe lakes, Dhorpatan Wild life Reserve, Deurali cave, Jharmare height, Naudhari, Simechari, Gumja falls,
6	Jumla	Patrasi Himal, Hot Spring (Tatopani), Hudke, Giri, Jogini, Guthichaur, Sankha lakes, Batalgothala falls, Dansndhu dobhan Pandav cave, Bira cave
7	Humla	Karnali river, Wildlife Snow Leopard, Naur
8	Dolpo	Shey-Phoksundo National Park, Phoksundo Lake (650m deep) Suligadh, Khaliban, Ghadekhola, Laini, Tipla, Khorkhola falls, Shaulagiri range, Churen Himal, Putha Hiunchuli, Arniko chuli, Byas cave
9	Mugu	Lake to lake trek from / Rara – Phoksundo Rara National Park

10	Jajarkot	Precious stone processing, Pristine Landscape
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(KPPC, 2020)

Naturally Karnali is the basket or a garland enwoven by pristine Karnali river and its adventurous landscape. Karnali tourism is a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of the society. It encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, literature, music, and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions of Karnali (Badal, 2021) are also really significant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Karnali is the one of the most beautiful landscape. It is still virgin in many aspects of exploration. It is one of the must visiting place in life. “It is better to travel than arrive”- Buddha. It is better to travel, because travelling is simply the learning process. Travelling is an exploration of new destination, its arts, culture, geography and society. Nepal’s striking geographical features include snowcapped peaks of high Himalayas, lower mountains of *Mahabharat* range, mid hills of *Chure* and *Bhawar*, and fertile plains of *Tarai* with tropical jungle. It is popularly known as *Himal Pahad*, and *Tarai* in Nepal. Travelling Nepal is traveling such a mesmerizing topography of life time achievement. Finally, draw a map and set out for Karnali trip! Good Luck! Happy Journey!

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