

산악관광을 통한 지역개발 방향에 관한 연구 - 히말라야지역을 중심으로 -

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산악관광은 독특한 자연환경과 문화를 기반으로 모험추구레저와 다양한 문화를 체험할 수 있는 대안관광으로의 가치와 의미를 부여할 수 있는 특성을 갖고 있다. 특히 산악관광의 대표적 목적지인 히말라야산맥의 관광대상지에서는 지역개발의 최고 목표이자 최적의 수단으로 인식되고 있으며 많은 관심과 개발이 진행되고 있다. 하지만 물리적인 접근성이 미약하고 문화적인 수용력이 매우 낮은 산악지역의 관광 및 레저개발은 단기적으로 지역경제활성화 및 지역 인프라 확대에는 많은 기여를 하고 있지만 실질적인 지역소득연계나 사회, 문화, 환경적으로 부정적인 영향도 간과할 수 없는 상황이다.

본 연구는 히말라야산맥의 대표적인 산악관광지로 발돋움하고 있는 네팔과 북부 인도지역을 중심으로 산악관광을 통한 지역개발 현황과 문제점을 제시하고 이에 대한 대안을 모색하는데 있다.

문명의 개발로부터 소외되었던 히말라야산맥 지역의 관광개발은 지역소득과 고용효과에 대단한 성장추세가 지속되고 있고 관광산업에 대한 신뢰와 희망 또한 매우 높은 편이다. 하지만 단기간의 개발에 따른 관광개발의 부정적인 현상들이 현실적으로 나타남에 따라 보전과 보호 및 개발의 관계성에 대한 인식이 높아지고 있으며, 지속가능한 개발의 필요성을 각인하게 되었다. 결국 생태계 및 문화유산 보호와 지역개발의 두 가지 목적을 성취하는 개발방안의 논의와 구체적이고 실천적인 방향성의 제시가 요구된다. 특히 NGO를 중심으로 복합적인 산악관광협의체를 설립과 액션플랜이 관건이다.

I . Introduction

Development is a critical component in a rational understanding of sustainability notion(Singh, 2008). The natural mountain region sustainable development is one of the important topics of discussion in world tourism in present days. The importance of mountain has been discussed by several scholars especially for its bio-geographical areas liable to land degradation, having variable climates, heterogeneous habitats often with the unique fauna and flora, important resources mainly the sources of fresh water that originate from mountain region (P.M, Godde, M.F. Price and F.M. Zimmermann: 2000, UN Agenda 21, 1998).

Mountain destination plays a vital role in satisfying the demand of natural tourism products, provides exclusive leisure, adventure and unique cultural experience. The Himalayan region includes some of the most biologically diverse habitats on Earth as well as homes to a bewildering variety of culture(Sarkar, 2007). The purpose of this study is to figure out the mountain tourism as a tool of sustainable development and explore the tourism destination development strategies with case study of Himalayan area.

II . Methodology

The methodology of study is constructed on the basis statistical data collected from Himalaya region's related organizations and literatures, especially Nepal and India government such as the Regional Tourism Department, Regional Mountain Development Corporation, primary information available in websites of Dept. of Tourism, and related areas journals and broadcasting systems. Furthermore, this study strongly focused on Sikkim region in India, because the state of Sikkim is not only one of the fastest developing region in India, but also succeeded in preserving the natural resources, different ethnicities and culture of the region. Although, there are

various impact and problem because of complexity of Mountain and the region situated on young rocks belt of Eastern Himalayas.

III. Importance of Tourism and Mountain Regions Development

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world economy. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) predicts that by the year 2010 international tourism will involve 1billion visitors and will contribute 11.6 percent to the global GDP(WTTC, 1999). Similarly, it is estimated that by 2010 roughly 250million people will be employed in the tourism industry and 10.6 percent of total capital investments will be made in the tourism sector(WTTC, 1999). This estimate does not take into account the value of domestic tourism, so the real economic value of global ecotourism is much greater. Although in the light of recent international events such predictions are unreliable, the significant impacts and implications of global tourism and ecotourism cannot be ignored. WTO suggested that the global turnover of ecotourism in 1997 was US\$20billion(WTO, 1998).

It is estimated that mountain tourism constitutes 15 to 20percent of global tourism(Mountain Agenda, 1999). Although this figure may sound high, it should be borne in mind that mountains in developed countries(particularly in western Europe) are destinations for mass tourism, in which high volume and high output are the norm. For example, in Austria, where tourism contributes more than 6percent of the GDP and annual per capita income from tourism is roughly US\$1more than 75percent of the total sales in tourism is generated by the alpine tourism industry (Smeral, 1996).

Tourism in Mountain region has grown in popularity as an attraction for the natural scenic beauty, purity of resources and leisure tourism. Mountains provide a diverse resource and arebase of great importance to the tourism industry(P.M Godde, M.F. Price and F.M. Zimmermann 2000). The development of destination improves the economic condition, creates awareness in the rural society, it helps to conserve the euthenics, environmental viability and to produce or preserve various natural products of ecosystem for the purpose of

promoting tourism. The development of mountain region is reported to bring economic growth to host community(G. B. Nyaupane, D.B. Morais, L. Dowler 2006).

IV. Regional development of Himalayan regions and state Sikkim

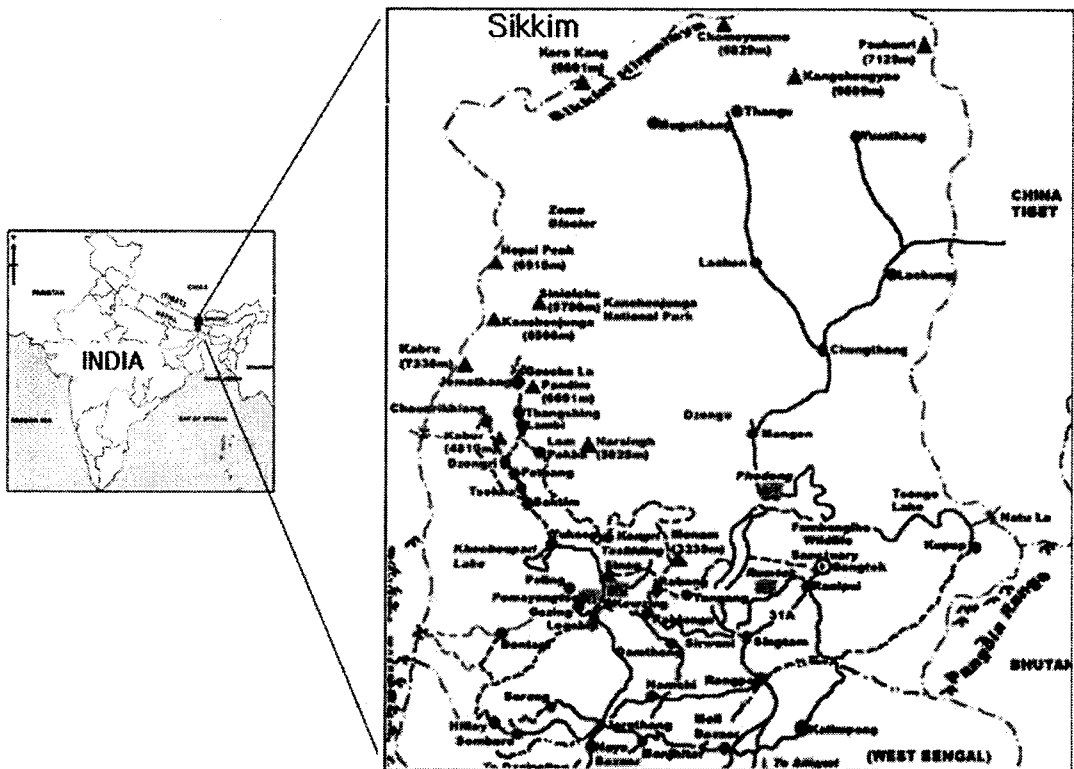


Fig.1: Area of study: Major tourist spot and conservation area of Sikkim

4.1 Protected area network in Himalayan region

Mountain areas include more than 475 protected areas in 65 countries covering more than 264 million hectares. Additionally, 140 mountain areas have been designated as biosphere reserves by the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO). Protected areas include national parks where tourism is encouraged and promoted. In conservation areas in Nepal, as in game and wildlife reserves in many southern African countries, sustainable forms of tourism are encouraged as a means of promoting wildlife conservation and meeting the livelihood needs of local people(Nepal, 1997).

In Nepal, mountain tourism constitutes between 20 and 25percent of total volume of tourism, but it is a significant income source for numerous people living in and around popular mountain destinations such as the Everest and Annapurna regions(Nepal, 1999). Most tour operators in Nepal promote mountain tourism as adventure and ecotourism; if visitors to national parks and wildlife reserves are considered, then it appears that 40 to 50 percent of all visitors to Nepal participate in some form of ecotourism; it is thus a major draw for international visitors to the country.

Given the current trend in nature-based tourism and the popularity of mountain destinations for nature tourism, it is reasonable to assume that many mountain regions will experience a significant growth in both international and domestic tourism. However, exposure from tourism can leave mountain communities vulnerable to severe environmental consequences and disruption of local culture and traditions, as has happened in many mountain destinations around the world. Thus, it is essential that mountain tourism be based on the principles of sustainability, which emphasize sound environmental practices, equity and long-term benefits for all stakeholders.

4.2 Area location and its natural environment in State Sikkim.

Sikkim is one of the Eastern Himalayan states of India. It nestled at the foot hills of Mount 'Khanchendzonga', world's third highest peak(8586m/28156 ft. Sikkim at a Glance 2001) is encircled by the Lesser Himalayas, Central Himalayas and the Tethys Himalaya. The population of state is 5,40,493 peoples according to 2001 census mostly inhabitants by ethnic groups called 'Lepcha', 'Bhutia', Nepali and 'Limbu'. They differ from each other in their food habits, dresses, and living styles (Sundriyal, Manju and R. C. Sundriyal, 2004)). The Sikkim's tradition, vibrant culture, myriad monasteries of ethnic culture, pilgrimage and migrants from planes of India add more color to the

region. The smallest Indian Himalayan state is said to have its feet in the ocean and head in the sky. It has an area of 7,096 sq. km, measuring approximately 114km north to south, 64 km east to west, lies between 88°00'58" and 88°55'25" east, longitudes and 27°00'46" and 28° 07'48" north latitudes. The level of elevation is from 270m to 8500m in height(Physical features and Eco-system of Sikkim). The tiny state is bounded by foreign nations on three sides viz. Nepal in the West, Bhutan and Tibet in the East and China in the North and shares national border with hill station 'Darjeeling' and 'Kalimpong' of West Bengal, India.

Major rivers 'Tista' and 'Rangit' originate from 'Cholamu' Lake and 'Rathong' Glacier respectively that separates the Sikkim with other Mountains of India. The only National Highway 31A is constructed through the banks of these rivers. In between 1960-1980, nearly 562km of new roads were built in Sikkim(Pradyumna P. Karan, 1989). The roads are narrow and twisting, one side bordered by natural mountain walls and another by river, which offer tourist a rare leisure experience of fresh air, beautiful scenery, and view of fast floating rivers, during the journey.

Average number domestic leisure tourists visit the region to experience the adventure tourism, divergent weather and biodiversity of nature. The state enjoys five seasons: viz. winter, summer, spring, autumn and a monsoon season with variable temperature ranging from 0°C to 28°C in winter to summer respectively. In Rainy season State receives an average annual rainfall of 2000mm to 4000mm which results in infrastructural damage(Physical features and Eco-system of Sikkim).

4.3 Importance of Tourism in Sikkim

Himalayan region of Sikkim has special identity for its biodiversity of nature and cultural heritage. Sikkim recently opened its doors to large scale tourism. The Indian government, non governmental Aid and other international projects give an effort to develop the infrastructure of the state. The establishment of 'Khanchendzonga National Park' in 1977 helped to promote and preserve the natural resources which in turn supported the ecotourism in the state. The abundant natural beauties bestowed with the Himalayan glaciers, Mountain

peaks, fast flowing rivers, falls, hills, lush valleys, forest, the snow clad mountains, the lakes, the rich flora and fauna, cultural heritage and tradition. Tourist enjoys the nature's beauty along with adventurous tourism. The region also satisfies the religious tourists who want to experience Buddhism and Tibetology. Donovan Webster, (2006) described the region as "A Place of lofty elevation, with the numerous Buddhist monasteries, or the regal patina of the buildings, a place apart a mysterious world wrapped in clouds."

4.4 Background of the State, Leisure and Adventure tourism in area.

The Himalayan Region of Sikkim had great potentiality to add the economic of State by contributing towards Natural conservation measures. British stepped in Sikkim through 'Darjeeling' in 1810's and constructed silk road for trade through 'Nathula pass', which was closed in 1962 due to Sino-Indian War, was reopens on 2006(History of Sikkim). The State and center government made the special laws to develop the infrastructure and to protect the natural resources, culture and tradition of Sikkim(Economic Survey 2005-2006).

Sikkim Himalaya develops diverse leisure activities and made remarkable progress in terms of putting tourism infrastructure all over the State. The local government holds leisure activities fairs and festivals regularly such as 'Khanchendzonga festival', tourism festival, flower festival etc. region has diverse natural attractions such as, panoramic mountain viewpoints, valleys, waterfalls, natural lakes, alpine vegetations, historic caves, ethnic villages. Also the adventures tourism trekking, river rafting, mountain biking, mountaineering, paragliding, Yak riding are most popular among the tourist visit in Sikkim. The natural high hill green mountain and hot springs at 'Phurchachu (Reshi)', 'Yumthang', 'Borang', 'Ralang', 'Taram-chu' and 'Yumey Samdong' with average temperature of 50°C have special value of medical and therapy, which attracts domestic tourist of country. The state unique conservation places such as 'the National Parks of Khanchendzonga', 'Rambong Lho Wildlife Sanctuary', 'Singba Rhododendron Sanctuary', 'Maenam Wildlife Sanctuar'y, 'Varsey Rhododendron Sanctuary' are major attraction tourist every year(flora, fauna and avifauna of Sikkim). The Sikkim Himalayas region offer a multitude

of biodiversity with different species of 5000 Flowering plants, 515 Orchids, 36 Rhododendrons, 16 Conifers, 23 Bamboos, 362 Ferns and Ferns allies, 60 Primulas, 11 Oaks, over 424 medicinal plants, 150 Mammals, 552 Birds, over 690 nos. of Butterflies and also 28 nos. of Mountains/Peaks, 21 Glaciers, 227 High altitude lakes & wetlands and over 104 rivers and streams(Agriculture Department (Soil), Government of Sikkim).

V . Tourism Development and its Operation in State

On 1975 Sikkim recognized as an Independent state of India, with very little space of development in an area. The state government accelerated path of eco-friendly sustainable development by empowering the people through education, employable skill and building the requisite infrastructure and amenities including roads, communications and recreational facilities in crucial location. Although, the state primarily concerned about the conservation and protection of natural resources and historical monuments, the actual development of eco-friendly tourism started only after the Green Mission project introduced by State Government. The State government invested \$4, 72,400.00 for the plantation in different phases in 2006-2007 to create green belt zone in country, beautify the area for tourist attraction and to promote economy, leisure tourism in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner(Green Mission, 2006). In 1977 bio-diversity and ecotourism project has implanted the 'Khanchendzonga National park' to conserve Sikkim's rich natural resource and cultural heritage. Sikkim succeeded in attracting nearly 100,000 tourists in 1996, including 10,000 foreigners in National Parks of Sikkim(Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism Project 1995-1998). Eco tourism promotes conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of an area, and simultaneously improves the living standard of host region's inhabitants(Boo, 1990, Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993).

Over the few year the new trekking route from 'Uttaray' to 'Zongri' and 'Khanchendzonga' base level camp has been innovated and the infrastructure of old tourist destinations are developed in various places. Responsible NGO's in Tourism and environment sector helps to regulate the activities of locals

and tourists. Various private agencies such as, the Eco-tourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim(ECOSS), 'Khanchendzonga' Conservation Committee(KCC) and Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim(VHAS) actively work in mountain communities the Mountain Institute, G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development and the local organization Travel Agents Association of Sikkim(TAAS) play pivotal role in the field of conservation of bio-resources and to uplift the economy of community. ,

Sikkim is now one of the important places of ecotourism, which is developed through the moment of awareness in community, education and tanning of the local community. Accordingly, the state government introduced Tourism and Travel Management studies in State Collage from 1997 to promote well trained human resource and provide various program and orientation camps for travel guides and travel promoters.

To promote the village tourism, several tourism resorts, destination and the Bungalows or village huts of ethnic groups of Sikkim were constructed in different districts of the state within past few years. The tourism department itself collected the revenue of 87.1% in 2006-2007 in state(Annual Report of Tourism 2006-2007). The popularity of traditional crafts like carpet weaving, cane and bamboo crafts, spinning wool, handmade paper and 'Thanka paintings' of Sikkim gets priority for attracting tourist in region.

The State economic growth(8.3%) per year is impressive, and second highest in the country after Delhi(Economic of Sikkim, 2005). The opening of the border trade through 'Nathula Pass' in 2006 with trade value of around 600\$ increased to 2,400\$ per day in 2007-2008. The flow of business tourist is extremely high in present days. (Nathula Trade 2006).

The tourism is the only fastest growing industry in Himalayan States of India. Yearly, the growth rate remains at International 15% p.a and Domestic tourist 20% p.a(Annual Report of Tourism 2006-2007). The most popular growing activities are trekking, mountaineering, river rafting, mountain biking, medical and therapeutic tourist in hot spring area etc. Beside the ecology, culturally rich about 200 different monasteries or gompas belonging to 'Nyingma' and 'Kagyü' who demonstrates their ancient rituals in practice in daily routines are of great attraction for tourist.

Fig. 2 Yearly Arrival rate of Domestic Tourist from 1998-2007 in Sikkim

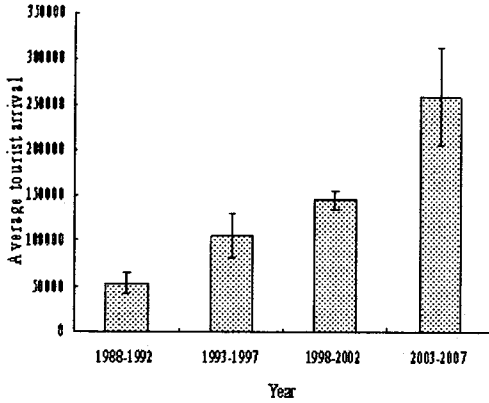
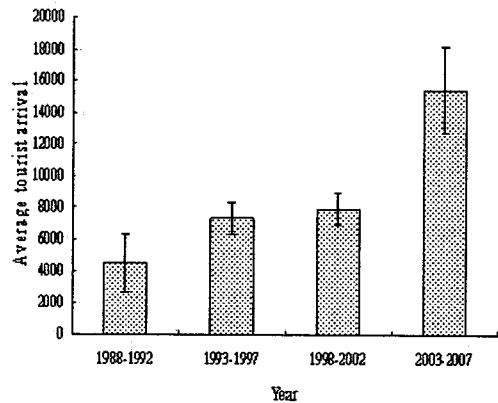


Fig. 3 Yearly arrival rate of International Tourist from 1998-2007 in Sikkim



Source: Department of Tourism, Govt. of Sikkim

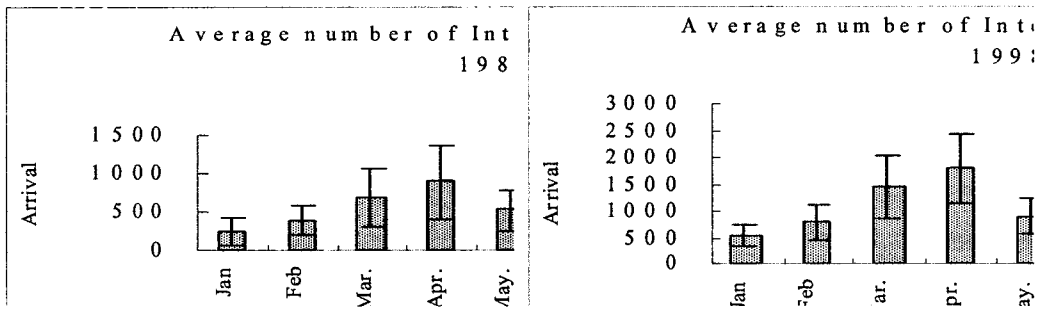
The growth in tourist arrival has been inclined rapidly for the both the domestic and the international tourist by the instance appeal of the Sikkim's natural beauty and cultural heritage. With the increase in tourist numbers, government and private sectors developed the necessary infrastructure such as log huts and water supply system at several places in Great Himalayan area.

As a result, tourist numbers started to soar gradually from 1988 to today(fig; 2&3). The major increase in tourist inflow has been noticed after the successful launching of green mission project by state government in 2004. The peak seasons of tourist arrival usually occurs between March to May and in autumn's months from October to December(fig: 4&5). Throughout the year, April is taken as better performing month owing to good weather, greenish, and spring flowers and several festivals. Even though, the date of international tourist arrivals shows some seasonal variation. However, an average tourist arrival is low in the summer months because of heavy monsoon rainfall that cause land slides and blockage of road, lack of good weather for trekking and risk by increase water level in rivers.

In contrast, the number of domestic tourist arrival inclined dramatically after 1996 (fig: 2). By 2007, with the joint effort of government and private sector to develop the convenient infrastructure of region and improved

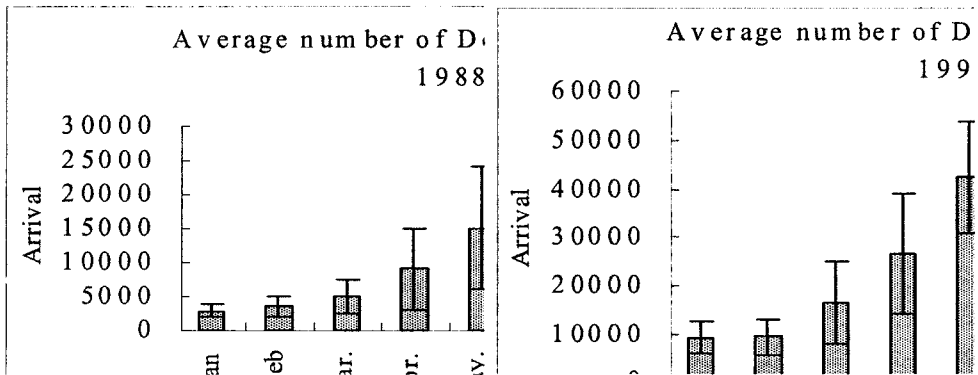
communication, the arrival of domestic tourist number had reached about 0.3million (331263). Recently, the state started daily helicopter services from 'Bagdogra' to 'Gangtok' and also connected to the major tourist destination of state by helicopter services which could further improve the tourism in Sikkim.

Fig4: Average number of International Tourist arrival on monthly basis from 1998-2007 in Sikkim



Source: Department of Tourism, Govt. of Sikkim

Fig5: Average Number of Domestic Tourist Arrival on monthly basis from 1998-2007 in Sikkim.



Source: Department of Tourism, Govt. of Sikkim

VI. Environmental and cultural effect of Mountain tourism.

The increase in tourist number can add additional pressure on resources and the local residence due to increase in its demands. The chances of migrant are high in area. The 50% population in an area grew due to migration in Sikkim during 1971-81(S.N Nandy and K.S. Roa, census 2001). It cause deterioration of natural environment including deforestation, or erosion, landslides, destruction of natural habitats and destroy the alpine vegetation. Also, it affects local cultural and tradition that negatively affect the local residents and social harmony. Moreover, poorly managed and unguarded Himalayan treks can severely damage the flora and fauna of the region. In the recent year the tourism sector has become a boon for both government and local people to uplifttheir economy. Therefore, in order to have healthy and sustainable tourism, the proper maintenance, conservation of natural and ethnic culture and heritage of Sikkim must be ensured.

VII. Problems and Implications for Himalayan Region Development based on sustainable tourism

If tourism is based on principles of sustainability and equity, it can be instrumental in improving the livelihood conditions of mountain communities and increasing their stakes and interests in local, regional and national policy issues. Sustainability encompasses ecological, economic and social components. In the context of tourism development, this means that both the types and intensity of tourism activities in the mountains must have limits, and that benefits must reach a larger community. Thus it is clearly necessary to monitor, regulate and control activities that may jeopardize the resource base on which mountain tourism depends. Economic and social monitoring isalso important to ensure that differences in income and employment from tourism do not create social friction or disharmony. Ecotourism plans should not only focus on resource conservation but should also address issues of equity, community development and social harmony.

Sustainable mountain tourism encompasses three basic components: conservation of natural resources on which tourism depends; improvement in the quality of life of the local population; and enhancement of visitor satisfaction. For these to be realized, effective policies and control mechanisms, strong local and regional institutions and sound management capabilities based on both modern and traditional knowledge systems are necessary. Without these essential elements, mountain tourism could easily be a short-term boom-and-bust enterprise.

Without adequate local control, self-reliance and strong participation in decision-making, tourism is likely to benefit only a few rich individuals, often outsiders, at the expense of a large, poor section of the community. Mountain communities are often limited in financial, technical and managerial resources, that hinder their ability to develop and market tourism attractions effectively. It is often the outside stakeholders such as tourism developers, entrepreneurs and tour operators who have the knowledge and the resources to make tourism a competitive business. Thus, mountain tourism policies must carefully balance the interests of local communities with those of outside stakeholders. Government institutions with the necessary capacity to plan and implement projects are crucial for the sustainable development of the highland regions.

As recent international events have indicated, tourism is vulnerable to outside forces, and it is risky to rely too much on tourism as the only economic development opportunity. Mountain tourism must be planned as part of integrated regional economic development; tourism should encourage investments in other activities. In the mountain context, this means diversifying the local economy through the integration of tourism with agriculture, livestock development and other forms of small scale enterprise that will keep the village economy sustainable in the event of declining tourism activities. Mountain tourism policies should focus on enhancing and strengthening such linkages.

Opportunities from mountain tourism are great, not only in the Himalayas but all over the world as long as plans and policies are in place to ensure that tourism does not pose an environmental and social threat. This threat calls for a judicious use of natural(tourism) resources, community planning, local awareness and reliance, strong local institutions and policies and a vision

for the long-term sustainability of tourism projects. Mountain tourism in the Nepalese Himalayas represents the dilemma of conservation and development that is currently being debated in the context of sustainable development. If the mystical, spiritual and wilderness image of the Nepalese Himalayas is to be restored and capitalized on, then there must be concrete efforts towards tourism development that is sustainable in ecological, economic and social terms. The Nepalese experience in mountain tourism offers valuable lessons for international mountain communities.

Also the Himalayan state Sikkim faces natural and territorial problems. The region situated in young eastern Himalayas, where rock types is not favorable for region, cause natural destruction like land slide and rock falling are also the cause for major accident and the blockage of roads and transportation problem in 31 A National High Way. The state does not have rail and air link with other part of country. Therefore, the necessity of air and rail services to connect the state with country is an important factor to flourish tourism sector.

The flow of tourists in Sikkim is major town oriented. In order to strengthen the economy through tourism in the state, a larger number of alternative sites, with proper facilities and physical infrastructures are must. Although, the State Government is aware with mistake of aggressive tourism activities of Nepal Himalayas, it is necessary to control the tourist traffic according to area's capacity and to create awareness about the ecological effect by miss-management of garbage and sanitary system among the local and visitors. Therefore, a proper preservation of environment, historical and cultural heritage like ancient caves, stone curved ancient monasteries, unique flora and fauna of Sikkim and ethnic cultural activities must be given emphasize to develop eco-friendly tourism.

Increase in the number of foreign tourist is depends upon the activeness of government or non government agencies in conducting programs and cultural festivals in regular basis and hospitality towards the tourist. Finally, the lack of regional tourism promotion and marketing can be fulfill by encouraging private sector and foreign investors to develop infrastructure of tourism on collaboration basis for healthy tourism. Beside this, an extensive promotional campaign of tourism programs within the country and abroad, can

increase the number of tourist arrivals in the state.

VIII. Conclusion

In this study, we recognized the importance of tourism for the isolated developing communities, for which, tourism provide the way of developing its economic and society. It also generates new opportunities of employment and change the socio-economic environment of region. The hilly terrain of the state lacks reliable transportation infrastructure, therefore tourism is the only industries to support the economy and to uplift the standard of living for the people of Himalayan region. The region has large potential in the natural and cultural based tourism. The tourism development of the state may have cultural and ecological impact in future. Therefore, the planning and successfully promoting long-term policy and developing more sustainable tourism is important.

Several authors have reached the conclusion that the environmental and social carrying capacities of tourism in the Nepalese Himalayas have already been exceeded (Brown *et al.*, 1997; Shackley, 1996). However, this author does not support this perspective; it is not based on detailed analysis of the positive and negative effects of tourism, and carrying capacity is subject to various interpretations. Although tourism in the Himalaya region has not been overwhelmingly positive, positive changes for the livelihoods and the environment of the mountain dwellers are slowly taking place and will gain momentum given the right institutional and political setting in the country and support from the international community(Nepal 1999, 2000). Remote regions such as Everest and Annapurnawould have lagged behind in economic development had there been no potential for tourism development. Today, these are among the most prosperous highland areas in the Himalayas.

Tourism has had profound negative impacts on the environment, as illustrated above; however, as a result of increased awareness of the harmful effects of tourism and appreciation of its potential to benefit local livelihoods, issues related to tourism and the environment have become a central concern

of local communities. Tourism has provided the necessary platform for policy-making and the incentives for local communities and organizations to address not only tourism induced negative environmental impacts but also broader concerns for environmental management and sustainable development.

For example, tourism has resulted in a change in local people's attitudes towards nature and wildlife conservation. Many villagers(at least those who have benefited from tourism) now support wildlife conservation efforts. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) has successfully demonstrated that conservation is possible if programmes are developed that suit local needs and conditions. In the previously poor village of 'Ghandruk', for example, ACAP's pilot project in integrating conservation and development resulted in the establishment of excellent community facilities including a model high school, a community health post, a well maintained drinking-water supply system, a 'Gurung museum', a women's cooperative shop and a community-owned and managed electricity distribution system. All households have toilets, village paths are paved and most households are relatively affluent. Much of 'Ghandruk's' barren land has been planted with trees(Thakali, 1997).

Through *Amatol*(mother's group) programmes in 'Ghandruk and Chomrong' villages in Annapurna, women actively raise funds from tourists and locals through cultural events and festivals, and invest the money in community activities such as trail repairs, village clean-ups and literacy programs raising women's profile from ignored housewife to a powerful presence in village development activities. Mountain tourism has given strength and legitimacy to several formal and informal village level institutions. Traditional institutions have been revitalized, for example the traditional forest guardian system prevalent among the 'Khumbu Sherpas', and new institutions such as SPCC have been established to improve environmental conditions. Tourism in the Mountain areas such as Himalaya region has become a conservation tool, a social catalyst and an income and employment provider.

Innovative programmes such as ACAP, collaborative arrangements between the government and various non-governmental agencies for tourism-related projects, policies in favour of strengthening local level capacity to resolve local issues and greater involvement of women in conservation and

development projects have succeeded in bringing positive changes in the Himalaya region.

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A Study on the Regional Mountain Tourism Development: Focused on Himalayan Region

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Abstract

Mountain destination plays a vital role in satisfying the demand of natural tourism products, provides exclusive leisure, adventure and unique cultural experience. The Himalayan region includes some of the most biologically diverse habitats on Earth as well as homes to a bewildering variety of culture. The purpose of this study is to figure out the mountain tourism as a tool of sustainable development and explore the tourism destination development strategies with case study of Himalayan area.

In this study, we recognized the importance of tourism for the isolated developing communities, for which, tourism provide the way of developing its economic and society. It also generates new opportunities of employment and change the socio-economic environment of region. The hilly terrain of the state lacks reliable transportation infrastructure, therefore tourism is the only industries to support the economy and to uplift the standard of living for the people of Himalayan region. The region has large potential in the natural and cultural based tourism. The tourism development of the state may have cultural and ecological impact in future. Therefore, the planning and successfully promoting long-term policy and developing more sustainable tourism is important.

Key Words : Mountain Tourism, Sustainable Development, Community