

**Nabin Khadka**

**MARKETING OF EXTREME TOURISM IN NEPAL**

**Case study, Bhotekoshi**

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## ABSTRACT

<b>Unit</b> Kokkola/Pietarsaari	<b>Date</b> February 2016	<b>Author</b> Nabin Khadka
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<p>The main aim of this thesis was to find out the role, and the opportunities for development, of extreme tourism through marketing and evaluating its importance. It also focuses on tremendous possibilities of extreme sports in developing places and impact of marketing in the tourism industry. The case study was about Bhotekoshi; Nepal was the main focus point of the research.</p> <p>For this report, the author has used a secondary data collection method. Basically, the report was divided into three different parts. The first part dealt with the theoretical framework which accounts the key elements associated with extreme tourism and how it was managed, pull factors of extreme sites, marketing and promotion methods. The report also dealt with the support and sustainable elements in extreme tourism on a long run basis and how to maintain the quality performance development. The second part of the report illustrated the interview undertaken to find out the facts about the case study that was used for writing this report. And the final part of the report discussed the findings of the case study and gave a recommendation for how to manage in a more appropriate and feasible way to keep extreme tourism alive on demand in the future.</p> <p>The case study introduced the extreme tourism destination which is Bhotekoshi Nepal. The author focused on the measures taken to develop the place and for the collection of accurate data and information the qualitative research method was chosen and a structured interview method was used.</p>		
<b>Key words</b> Bhotekoshi, extreme, marketing, promotion, tourism		

## **ABSTRACT**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Extreme tourism, also referred to as shock tourism, is one of the most challenging and spectacular experiences that involves travelling to dangerous places and experiencing something uncommon. All activities involved in extreme tourism include an element of risk and a lot of physical exertion. The major attractions in this type of tourism associate extreme sports such as river rafting, rock climbing, canoeing, bungee jumping and paragliding and ice diving. This type of tourism is gaining a huge popularity in many places of the world and places that were undiscovered or ignored in the past have become a point of attraction for many visitors throughout the world. Many travellers have experienced enough travelling their holiday in nature for a long time. So, they started making a trip worth visiting and somehow challenging and daring. This is where extreme tourism comes in. Also, it is a matter of fact that the tour companies have also realized that people are ready to pay a lot of money for an extreme holiday package to become an extreme tourist. Becoming an extreme tourist and visiting Antarctica is one of the best examples of this. From the business investment point of view, extreme tourism also requires a very low level of investment to jump-start a business. In other ways, extreme tourism can also be taken as a part of an adventure travel package that involves exploration with perceived or pre-assumed risk and potentially requiring specialized skills. In an overall understanding, tourism of such nature demands travelling and experiencing the coldest, hottest and driest and most extreme travel destinations of the world.

The tourism industry, in general, is escalating with its popularity in each and every sector. The consequence of which is drawing attention from more and more tourists to explore new places and thereby make some profit-generating channels that support the local economy. Extreme tourism is highly associated with adventure tourism, the purpose of which is to offer the sense of adventure or physical danger. The traveller himself/herself or the travel company can arrange the trip. However, the fact at the bottom line is that this type of tourism draws its thrill or even risk depending on the nature of the specific destination. There are numerous destinations in the world that have been regarded and ranked from moderate to extreme level of unsafe. Such places have been identified by the tour organizers and they have been creating several extreme sports focusing on those destinations. The main aim of inviting or attracting any tourist to a destination is the safety

issues. Therefore, when organizing sports or any kind of travel related activities in such places, safety has been considered the most important issue and the organizers have been able to maintain it in the best possible ways.

Travelling can be a hobby or passion for anyone. So is how people deciding to make a trip to a destination on their own or by following a travel company. A recommended good way to make such a trip is to follow a tour organizer. The tour organizing companies also provide additional supplements like a guide, translators and professionals who can guide the travellers well and give them enough instructions of does and don'ts. However, the critics oppose supporting the tourism activity of such nature, provided the fact that it can destruct the natural habitat of a certain destination. Environmentalists and scientific researchers presume that this type of tourism can lead to pollution of the continent or invasion of the foreign organisms that can threaten the purity of the existing ecosystems.

Not only in the advanced and developed countries of the world, but also in underdeveloped or developing countries, extreme tourism has become a good source to attract a huge number of tourists. Nepal is one of the best examples of it and the case study of Bhotekoshi, Nepal will be further discussed in this report. Tourism of such nature has resulted in support of the local economy and local businesses which ultimately results in the overall tourism economy of the nation. Extreme tourism activities that have lead to the start of the local economy and to the national economy uplifting is something that has been remarkable in the case of Nepal. Travelling to the mountains, Everest base camp and rocks were meant for adventure and extreme experiences. Now, the country has discovered some places such as Bhotekoshi that are offering extreme and challenging tourism experiences with a number of different options such as bungee jumping, white water rafting, swing, high ropes and canoeing. The report will also discuss how extreme tourism is gaining popularity in Nepal and also the way it is supporting the economy of the nation.

The main aim of this report is to identify how extreme tourism can be an essential sector for the holistic tourism industry. The objective of this report is to deal with the progressive and successive marketing and promotion strategies to make extreme tourism a popular sport. The case study of a small area of Nepal named Bhotekoshi is accounted in this report. The place offers several extreme sports for which hundreds of tourists visit every

year. Hence, the report will also show how these typical tourism sports are helping to enhance the economy of the locals and nation as a whole.

This report is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the theoretical aspects which account the key elements associated with extreme tourism, how it is managed to pull visitors to extreme sites. The marketing and promotion methods that sustain the extreme tourism on a long run basis, maintain the quality performance in fostering extreme tourism and the future of it. The second part of the report illustrates the interview undertaken with tourism experts to find out the facts concerning the case study that is used for writing this report. The final part of this report discusses the findings of the case study and give a recommendation on how resource could be managed in a more appropriate and feasible way to keep extreme tourism alive on demand in the future.

## **2 TOURISM IN AN EXTREME ENVIRONMENT**

Tourism has been an integral part of enjoying leisure time activities for humankind since the beginning of civilization. Tourism used to be enjoyed by making a trip for relaxation and luxury in the past. Time went by and people started looking for something extraordinary and challenging since the luxury and fun holidays no longer was the choice for all. Here came the birth of extreme tourism when people realized the importance of visiting and experiencing places of extremities. Looking back into history, the fact is that people have been travelling to extreme places to experience physical isolation, the extreme climate or see some remarkable wilderness. Travelling was not that easy in the early stage in such places. However, the advancement in technologies blessed such areas with ease of access and reach in terms of transportation. This is how the massive popularity in extreme tourism began to rise in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Shedden 2010, 1.)

### **2.1 Reasons for making an extreme tourism trip**

Extreme tourism itself demands some level of risks to experience it. The purpose or the reason people travel to make an extreme trip varies in their nature. Some people make it for research with the purpose of finding facts about the geographical layout of the landscape and others make it an extraordinary experience in their life. The travellers from this 21<sup>st</sup> century are making extreme trip to different parts of the world for their lifetime experiences. These include activities where one is willing to do something adventurous, a holiday with an element of risk involved, to see the scenery that cannot be seen anywhere else and also the wildlife that is rare in common places. In addition, the improvements in transportation systems in many such places, for instance, Antarctica have made access a lot easier than it used to be. So, this is also helping to make the trip a lot quicker. The television and media are other sources that have created a widespread appeal for the viewers. They, indeed, reveal the facts associated with the places of visit and the challenges that need to be accepted concerning to the trip beforehand. Like how it is said “seeing is believing”, people have started making up their mind to accept the challenge of a wild experience of visiting such extreme destinations. (GCSE Geography, 2015.)



## **2.2 The motivation and fact behind the escalating demands**

Demands are the pull factors for any destination. Tourism in itself has become a competitive business when taking into consideration its different sectors of attraction. Out of them, seasonality, pricing and destination also play a vital role for raising demands of extreme tourism. Many adventure lover tourists seek to visit a destination; however, at some point price and season matters to them. These factors are important for tourists to make their move. Nowadays extreme tourism has been an issue of interest for any adventure lover tourist. Thus, many of the places throughout the world where they are offering tourists such extreme destinations have made it easy for the tourists from both a pricing and seasonality point of view. The changing mind of tourists to experience new things is one factor that has put some demand for extreme tourism experiences. On top of that, the cost of travelling, the hosting offered at the destination and the services provided for the tourists are other factors that have been the main reasons for the escalating demands of extreme tourism. (Baldachhino 2006, 52.)

### **3 MAINTAINING A QUALITY TOURISM EXPERIENCE**

Quality in the tourism industry normally is defined as an element that includes delivery of services in accordance with the expected standards. Delivering the quality service is one of the most challenging sectors that ultimately require professionalism and it also helps to improve the tourism success. Quality comes first among all aspects of planning a trip. On top of that visiting an extreme site always demands adequate quality and safety assurance. Quality does not only primarily require a guarantee when it comes to aspects such as food and lodging. Besides that, quality needs to be maintained in terms of transport, proper guidance, adequate information and assistance when needed. In other words, organizing a trip and hosting a quality-assured guarantee is much easier to define in the comfort of one's home; however, it is much more difficult when it actually has to be provided at the site. Meeting the standard and providing the best quality service is a never-ending business. However, quality of the service provided has to be done at its best so that it leaves a positive feeling to the tourists. (Kapiki 2012, 53.)

#### **3.1 The concept of risk management**

Extreme tourism, in itself, demands a certain level of risk. Risks could be, both a pull factor as well as a push factor for tourists. Risk management is also related with quality assurance in the sense that quality is presumed to be attainable when there is less risk when visiting a site. This is the expectation of every tourist travelling in such extreme zones who define quality as a less risky opportunity. "Human security is not a concern with weapons - it is a concern with human life and dignity". (United Nations Development Program 1994:22-23; quoted by: Nunkoo & Smith 2014, 86.)

The focus has to be paid in every single sector of extreme tourism business that possibly might have some drawbacks. For instance, managing the risk while maintaining the predominantly independent quality, hiring a local guide as well as developing own formal or informal guidelines covering the responsibilities of an own group could be a good option. Most risks in adventure tourism like extreme tourism focus on physical risks. Both

the tour operators as well as the tourists should recognize that risks are inevitable facts for tourism of such nature. (Swarbrooke; Beard; Leckie; Pomfret 2011, 180.)

### **3.2 Channel of trust and loyalty**

Trust is the first and the foremost thing any traveller looks for while deciding on a trip with a travel company. Trust, safety and loyalty issues accompany elements such as openness of the offerings, direct communication, insurance in case of program failure, control of payments, secure payments, truthful reviews by real travellers and support and assistance provided. In tourism, the issues of trust and loyalty have been receiving an escalating popularity in recent years. Many fake advertisers are dragging people's attention into a blurred atmosphere where consumers are not able to decide whether the trip they advertise with is authentic or not. Such irrelevant and irrational activities lead people to the likelihood of destination avoidance. Therefore, environmental, social and economic issues are now recognized as an underlying contemporary understanding of security. (Nunkoo & Smith. 2014, 86.)

### **3.3 Security and safety**

The idea of security and safety in the extreme tourism industry is of vital importance globally. Especially after the incident of 9/11, both academics and practitioners have started to look on the safety and security issues seeking a workable solution in order to mitigate the negative impacts of such issues into the tourism industry as a whole. Extreme tourism is a part of the overall tourism sector; however, it is also raising the tourism economy of each nation by offering numerous extreme tourism destinations. Therefore, to bring out such tourism into the market and publicize it, the security and safety issues depends a lot to make travellers convinced to make their trip. (Mansfeld 2005.)

The traveller of extreme tourism is more likely to travel to rural places or remote areas and perform risky activities, which are totally different from other tourism activities. In this age of internet and web, the word of mouth means as much as the government advisor for travellers. Extreme traveller wants to know both ways of getting information before

booking a package for a holiday trip. For this, the destination marketing should provide current safety, security tools and information by using the real-time current tools such as the internet to provide a message for the tourist. (UNWTO, 2014.)

The travel insurance does not cover all types of extreme activities or destinations. For example, one of the travel insurance providers called World Nomads does not provide insurance for those travellers who take part in running of bulls in Spain. Insurance provider must take special care to make insurance available for this type of activities. This helps to attract more adventure travellers. (UNWTO, 2014.)

The tourists need to feel safe and secure in the time of their travel. For the safety of the travellers, the adventure travel organization has to provide an international level of safety and security method to make the travellers feel confident during their travel time. In an absence of the global safety and security provided by the global regulating bodies to the extreme travellers, the travellers hesitate to choose a certain destination for their extreme activities. Thus, safety and security of the traveller are the key factors during travel which makes the travellers safe to perform any types of extreme work. Safety and security not only deals with the injury but also deals with the insurance and diseases. (UNWTO, 2014.)

## **4 MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF EXTREME TOURISM**

Both marketing and promotion are essential factors that not only help to expand the popularity of any specific kind of tourism but also result in curiosity among the international travellers to get motivated to make their trip. Investing a large amount of budget on creating an extreme destination could be a very good idea; however, without marketing and promotion of the very destination, the expected success cannot be attained. The current trend shows that adventure lover travellers are comparatively younger than the non-adventure lovers. At the same time, the popularity of extreme sports that lately has taken the form of extreme tourism is exponentially increasing among the young travellers. The key fact behind this success is the adequate marketing and promotional strategies that have been effectively used. In addition, marketing and promotion also help any traveller to make a pre-trip research about the destination. This is possible via communicating in the travel blogs or the official websites where several kinds of marketing are done and people share their experience through public comment options. This is how marketing and promotion help in further fostering the extreme tourism. (Adventure Travel Trade Association & George Washington University, 2013.)

### **4.1 Implication of effective marketing tools**

Marketing of any product or any specific destination requires usage of effective tools that help to disseminate overall information about it. Tools like brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, hoarding boards, media publications, television advertisement, newspaper advertisement, internet websites, and direct mail marketing to customers, exhibiting trade shows and information on local and national information stations are the best possible options. As a matter of fact, the modern generation travellers tend to be relying more on internet. The continuous communication and comments made on service providers' official kinds websites convince them more to make their trip to a certain destination. These marketing tools can be regularly updated and improved depending on the interests and needs of the targeted group of customers. Updating and improving the promotional tools can also be done after looking at the previous success of the tools that have been used. (Steele & Connell 2006. 51-76.)

## **4.2 Seasonality-based promotion**

Many adventure activities are highly seasonal, mainly those that are outdoors and rely on weather patterns. For instance, white water rafting and canoeing require a high level of rainfall in order to provide its extreme sports taste. It is also important to consider that at certain times of the year some of the destinations are not accessible because of bad weather and no transport facilities. Seasonality affects pricing and volume of the demand for the travellers. Many tour operators also consider the marketing and promotion of any destination focusing on the seasons of the year because marketing requires a good amount of budget for investment and its aim is to attract the tourists to that destination. For example, Bhotekoshi, the case study used in this report, offers several extreme sports at several destination points.

However, some of the activities such as white water rafting, kayaking and canoeing are primarily focused on during the rainy season and bungee jumping has no seasonal restrictions. Another example for seasonal fluctuations can be climate and social calendar events. The best reason behind this can be seen in the Himalayas. Winter is the best and peak season for trekking in the extreme Himalayas destinations as the weather is fine and clear. However, it would not be a good timing for mountaineering during winter. (ACS Distance Education 2015.)

## **5 THE FUTURE OF EXTREME TOURISM**

Adventure tour operators also play a key role in contributing to a sustainable vision for the sector through their selection of service providers, vendors, the activities they promote and the facilities they choose to utilize. As the world is moving with a massive technological development, people are finding it easy to access things that they want. The trend of touring and travelling has left behind so many interesting stories which fascinate people of the modern era and motivate them to make their trip to different destinations. In this competitive race, adventure tourism is gaining a huge popularity and the tourism service providers are setting up extreme sites in the form of extreme tourism sports destinations. Moreover, the travellers are also comparatively more enthusiastic than in the past in experiencing different tourism forms, such as extreme tourism. It gives a clear vision that the sustainability of extreme tourism is going to be more popular in the future. For instance, many of the developing countries like Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia and India have already started to attract travellers in a mass with their extreme sports destinations. (World Tourism Organization 2014, 33-34.)

### **5.1 Widely accepted and focused form of tourism**

Extreme tourism is not only a form of tourism that offers extreme sports, rather, it also engages local people into such sports in the form of guides and supervisors. On one hand, it supports an overall tourism industry. On the other hand, the locals are also benefited from it, especially in the case of a developing country such as Nepal. There are things that are unseen or unnoticed but one way or another this form of tourism is also helping to uplift the economy of the nation. The more the extreme destinations are created, the more flow of people will visit it. This channel keeps up the pace of raising the national economy. (Global Report on Adventure Tourism 2014.)

Adventure and activity based holidays are showing significant growth within the tourism industry. The trend towards experiencing over materialism has taken over the traditional forms of vacation on the beach or by a pool. The only problem for the service providers, in this case, is that the customer wants luxury, challenge and activities all at a minimum price

level. This could be a constraint for booming up extreme tourism sports. Such places are a bit more expensive in terms of visiting compared to other forms of tourism. For instance, extreme destinations require much more attention for maintaining a risk-free environment. The cost for the staff and guides could also be a bit more expensive. However, these forms of extreme sports are gaining popularity only because they are extreme in nature to experience. For example, the cage death of Australia, cliff base jumping in Norway, Iguazu boat ride in Argentina and Brazil, volcano bungee in Chile, and kayaking with whales in Alaska are places that provide a huge extreme experience for a lifetime. (Greenwood 2007.)

## **5.2 The growth of an adventurous trend**

Extreme tourism, which is a part of adventure tourism, also involves travel package with a mix of cultural exchange and interrelation with nature. It also attracts people from all sectors like professionals, family, romantic couples or sporty individuals who travel and enjoy the thrill and daredevil forms of activities. In addition, major international airlines have also noted an upward trend in the number of flight bookings targeted for adventure travel. A very concrete example can be seen as the entertainment sports such as Disney hubs have as well accepted the idea of attracting and accommodating visitors by offering them adventurous excursions and activities. Similarly, well-renowned international hotel chains like Marriott, Rosewood and Starwood, and Hyatt have also extended themselves to adventure travellers. This is the clear example that tourism sub-sectors like extreme tourism have a secured place for growth in the future. (Picard 2014).

Extreme tourism is a broad term, which includes all the commercial outdoor tourism and recreation with a refreshing element of excitement. Extreme tourism is especially related to the natural based tourism places, which focuses on the doing of difficult stunts while travelling. Extreme tourism is specially related to the hard adventure tourism. It develops all stages of the economic situation of the different places of the world. (Buckley 2010.)

There are many opportunities to flourish the extreme tourism by providing different goods and services. Especially, the extreme tourist would like to travel in a group, which is in large scale or sometimes in small scale. They travel to fixed places and want facilities,



while doing their extreme work. For example, the traveller interested in paragliding searches for the good tourism organization to get the better secure material, good trainer for his safety and also a better package. (Buckley 2010.)

Nowadays, extreme tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism industries of the world. It combines all types of adventure tourism connected to the different places of the world and gives positive outcomes for the economy, culture and nature. There is also an era in travelling driven by the geographic and political aims as the European nations are more likely to search out new places of the world. Because of this result, there are more commercial extreme tourism industries that provide multiple kinds of equipment, opportunities and services of extreme activities at different times and in different places. For example, the white water rafting in eventual forms after the Second World War use the army to ride the pontoons for rafting. (Marsh 2000.)

## **6 EXTREME TOURISM IN NEPAL**

Nepal is a landlocked and mountainous country. Its landscape offers an irresistible platform for thrill lovers who would like to have a lifetime experience. The kingdom of Nepal has also been renowned as one of Asia's most amazing adventure tourism destinations in the world. Unidentified and unnoticed places of extreme tourism activities in Nepal have been notified by some of the best travel organizers in the world and they have started making travel packages to such places and have started offering the visitors a wide range of extreme sports activities. The activities in an extreme environment include white water rafting, downhill mountain biking, bungee jumping 160 meters above a rising river, and paragliding. The most interesting part of this package adventure trip in Nepal is that the travellers are divided in a groups with others who dare to participate in it. In addition, a well-trained and professional guide is also present in each group to take care of the travellers and guide them when needed. (Simm 1998.)

### **6.1 Mountaineering**

The world most spectacular mountains are found in Nepal, including eight of the world's tallest peaks. To conquer one of these giants it is a challenging and exhilarating experience. There are many expeditions happening every year. However, for any traveller before deciding on climbing up these monster mountains, permits from the Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation are required, and the Nepal Mountaineering Association is responsible for issuing permits. (Nepal Mountaineering Association 2015.)



GRAPH 1. Mountaineering (Source: Nepal Mountaineering 2005)

## 6.2 Trekking

Nepal's outstanding trekking routes are one of the most popular trekking route in the world, which offers breath-taking scenery and exotic wildlife. It is important to hire a Sherpa guide while doing trekking in Nepal because they are good in trekking. Nepal Trekking tours is governmental tourism organisation which gives permission to go exploring independently, either camping or staying on a lodges in mountain route; or join an organized expedition with a travel company. Treks of varying lengths and difficulty are available, with professional guides and porters. Pokhara and Kathmandu valleys are taken as easy trekking route because they have good trekking route. (Nepal Mountaineering Association 2015.)



GRAPH 2. Trekking (Source: Trekking in Nepal 2015)

### 6.3 Paragliding

Recently paragliding has been introduced in Nepal. Depending on the weather, people interested in paragliding can fly in the month of October and March. Pokhara valley is the city where you can fly paragliding enjoying the view of Annapurna range. There are many agencies working for paragliding but Blue Sky Paragliding is the best agency in Nepal which offers paragliding in two place Pokhara and in Bandipur. Travellers interested in Paragliding need to learn to fly and they have to take a tandem flight with an experienced pilot t, after released from a helicopter. (Nepal Mountaineering Association 2015.)



GRAPH 3. Paragliding (Source: Paragliding in Nepal 2010)

## **7 MAJOR ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES AT BHOTEKOSHI**

Bhotekoshi is one hidden paradise where travel seekers can prepare themselves to negotiate with differing grades of canoeing. Bhotekoshi is about a three-hour drive from Thamel, Kathmandu. The visitors are offered a one night stay at the Tibetan Link Resort and this is the best place to see several tributaries mixing with Bhotekoshi and the river flowing down. When it opened in 1999, the Bhotekoshi was the second highest suspension footbridge in the world after the Niouc bridge in Switzerland. In 2006, it moved into 3rd place when Japan's Kokonoe "Yume" Otsurihashi bridge opened. Conceived from the start to be a bungee jumping bridge, the owners of Bhotekoshi scouted several locations in the region around Kathmandu. In 2004, a canyon swing was introduced. The bridge site is called The Last Resort and also encompasses hiking, rafting and mountain biking as well as overnight stays in a tent. The bridge is located approximately 35 miles northeast of Kathmandu, Nepal and requires a five-hour round trip drive. (Highest Bridges 2009.)

### **7.1 White-water rafting**

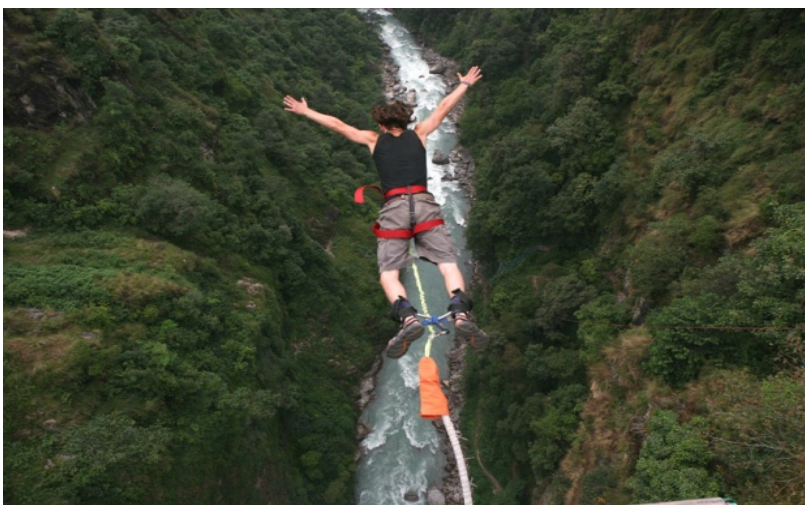
White water rafting is a great way of experiencing ultimate thrill ride in the country side of Nepal enjoying the nature and wildlife. Trisuli river which passes through The Royal Chitwan National Park, is one of the most accessible rivers suitable for all types of white water rafting in different levels. Sunkoshi River is the top ten destination for river rafting in the world and offers the most challenging ride within 235 kilometres. Himalayan River Exploration works for the river rafting and operates rafting trips for major rivers, of Nepal. Rafting Trips last one to nine days, which is a package made for the travellers according to their interest and it includes gentle floats with mild rapids to extreme white water. People are combined in a group or can take part in trekking or a jungle safari. (Himalayan Humanity 2008.)



GRAPH 4. White water rafting (Source: Bhotekoshi river rafting 2014)

## 7.2 Bungee Jumping

Bungee jumping has been the biggest thrilling sport as an extreme sport in Nepal. Since the sport has been introduced in the country, it has been attracting the international tourists in a huge number. For those who want to experience a real thrill in life, they would love to try bungee jumping in Nepal. Bungee jumping in Nepal is located in a district called Bhotekoshi, which is close to Kathmandu valley about 80 kilometres. Bungee bridge is a steel suspension bridge over Bhotekoshi and the height of a bridge is 525 feet. It is Nepal's only privately owned bridge and it has been specially made for bungee jumping. (Himalayan Humanity 2008.)



GRAPH 5. Bungee jumping (Source: Bungee jumping in Nepal 2014)

### 7.3 Canoeing

Canoeing in an unexplored white water of Nepal is a different feeling and a great achievement. Wild rivers in Himalaya of Nepal is an adventure sport that involves traveling down creeks or streams within a canyon by a variety of means including hiking, scrambling, wading, boulder hopping, rock climbing, abseiling and rappelling using safe techniques. As many true adventure seekers have discovered, the most exciting spot for swimming begins at the very edge of a 45m waterfall. At the end of the excursion, the last jump submerges participants into a pool. (Himalayan Humanity 2008.)



GRAPH 6. Canoeing (Source: Sundeen 2013)

### 7.4 Rock climbing

Rock climbing is a challenging sport for outdoor lovers. Most of the areas for rock climbing are situated towards the north of Kathmandu in the Nagarjun forest and Shivapuri National Park. However, Bhotekoshi also offers rock-climbing destinations among its territory. Many nationals and international tourists come to visit and want to have an experience of rock climbing in this place. Along with rock climbing, travellers get opportunities for various other activities such as hiking, bird watching and nature tours. Hence, a trip to these places can be combined with hiking, bird watching, nature tours and other activities. (Himalayan Humanity 2008.)



GRAPH 7. Rock climbing (Source: Blaze Mountain Adventure 2012)

In Pokhara, an artificial climbing wall named after the French alpinist Maurice Herzog, the first mountaineer ever to summit an 8,000 m peak – Annapurna I – in 1950, is open at the Mountaineering Museum. It is 23 meters tall. (Himalayan Humanity 2008.)



## **8 RESEARCH METHOD AND FINDINGS**

The Bhotekoshi is the upper river course of the Sunkoshi, known as Poiqu in Tibet. It is part of the Koshi River system in Nepal. A western tributary of the upper Dudhkoshi is also called Bhotekoshi. It is a three-hours ride from the Kathmandu valley. The Bhotekoshi is without a doubt the most action-packed short white water in Nepal. The river drops steeply offering stretches of white water. Besides white-water rafting, the destination also offers a wide range of other extreme sports such as canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing and the thrilling bungee jumping. Nepal is a country that relies mostly upon activities based upon tourism for its economy and tourism has also been the major source of foreign currency exchange. Hence, sports like this and tourism of such a nature are expanding in a country like Nepal nowadays.

### **8.1 Qualitative research method**

The writer uses the qualitative research method and the structured interview format. The qualitative way of research provides a wide range of options including structured interview, semi-structured interview, unstructured interviews, informal interviews and focus groups. A semi-structured interview is usually carried out when there is less possibility of interviewing the respondent more than once and when several interviewers are sent into the field to collect the data. On the part of unstructured interviews, the researcher still remains open to having his or her understanding of the area of inquiry open to revision by respondents. It means that the researcher's understanding is still evolving. The case of informal interviews requires the researcher to conduct the interview on the field informally and jot down the notes while doing so. The researcher's engagement in fieldwork is the most important thing in an informal interview. Another form of the qualitative research interview method is focus group interviewing. This is actually a data collection method moderated by a group leader. This is generally used to collect data on a specific topic. Out of all the interview methods, the structured interview method has been found the most suitable for this thesis topic of the report. The main reason for selecting this form of interview is because the same series of questions will be created for the respondents prior to the interview and it will often have a limited set of response

categories. Since, the writer will be interviewing the respondents straight from Finland to Nepal the questioning will be standardized and ordering and phrasing of the questions will be kept consistent from interview to interview. A set of the self-administered questionnaires with close-ended questions will be created which will allow a great opportunity for the researcher to find out the factual information about the research topic chosen.

## **8.2 Methods of data collection**

The thesis relates with the marketing of extreme tourism in Nepal. The expertise and professionals working in different agencies like tour operators and travel agencies were chosen for the interview. A total number of four interviews were conducted at four separate dates depending on the convenience of the interviewees. Out of four interviews, two of them responded in the English language and the rest of them in the Nepali language. The interviews were carried out with Nepalese candidates. As an interviewer, it was necessary and important to give the interviewees an option of choosing the language option for the interview to make them feel comfortable to share and deliver a wealth of information based on facts. The opportunity given to the interviewees to choose the language not only helped them to come up with the flow, rather they felt more participate and energetic in the interview. The participants were informed in advance about the research project and purpose of the interview. The need for recording the interview was the most important thing and it was done via Skype and audio recording accessories. Before the interview was conducted, the ethics of confidentiality was clearly mentioned to the interviewees.

The interviews took place at different occasions. Two of the interviews were conducted in the month of September 2015 and October 2015. The remaining two interviews were conducted on the first day of November 2015. All the interviews were conducted depending on the convenience and given time flexibility of the interviewees. The writer was able to conduct the interview with all of the interviewees in a professional manner which was also a good thing for the research of his thesis. The interview lasted 25 to 30 minutes for each of the respondents. All the participants involved in the interviews were male. The first interview was carried out with the marketing manager of the Last Resort on

1 September 2015 through Skype. The second interview was conducted with the managing director of Mountain Monarch Adventures on 18 October 2015. The writer was able to conduct both the last two interviews on 01 November 2015. Both interviewees were working for a tour company which was an advantage for the researcher in collecting the information related to the tourism field. These two interviews were done with the help of audio recording tools.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date and place</b>	<b>Length of the interview</b>
The Last Resort	A	General Manager	1/9/2015 via Skype	25 minutes
Mountain Monarch Adventure	B	Managing Director	18/10/2015 via Skype	31 minutes
The Last Resort	C	Staff	01/11/2015 via Voice recorder	25 minutes
The Last Resort	D	Sales Manager	01/11/2015 via Voice recorder	34 minutes

**Table 1. Interviews**

### **8.3 Planning of the interview**

The interviews were intended to be conducted with different professionals working in the related industry. The selection of the individuals was also crucial for this research. Therefore, different professionals holding different positions of the work area were chosen. Since the thesis focuses on the marketing of extreme tourism in Nepal, the interviews were also conducted with those who were working in different organisations that look after the promotion and service providing facilities for extreme tourism. Sales manager, staff, managing director and general manager of two respective organizations were chosen for the interview at different dates. Contacting with them was done via email. After getting a response of interest from them, certain dates and times were agreed. The most important thing to be taken into consideration was to explain to the interviewees the codes of

confidentiality and it was clearly planned to mention to them when the emails were sent. The mode of communication for interview session was planned which is Skype and Voice recorder to be given them as an option for the interviewees what suits them best to get available with. Henceforth, Skype video and audio recording tools were collected as service assistance modes for the interview.

#### **8.4 Analysis of the interview**

The researchers usually carry out a research project to present the report and findings of the research and problems associated with it. Therefore, the writer can only anonymously deal with the information shared by the interviewees while maintaining the codes of confidentiality without breaching the information until and unless the participants want to do so. Therefore, the participants are mentioned as A, B, C and D as presented in table 1. The thematic analysis approach is applied to report the information that was shared by the participants. Each participant's work and thought are demonstrated in each theme.

##### **8.4.1 Theme one: extreme tourism, its attraction and target groups**

Theme one describes the question about the extreme tourism concept, its attraction in a country like Nepal and how the travel agencies are taking up steps in targeting customers for extreme adventures.

Interviewee A gave the response:

Basically, extreme tourism concept is new in Nepal. In places like Last Resort, this type of tourism is getting wide popularity nowadays. So, places situated in uphill and extreme point are chosen as a spot for turning them into extreme tourism point in Nepal. Sports like bungee jumping, canoeing and white water rafting are the major source of attraction as an extreme sport. Mainly, customers of the middle-aged group are targeted who should be over 20 years. They also provide training to them if needed. These sports are strictly prohibited for someone having a heart problems or having a fear of height. So, special attention is given while targeting customers for this sport.

Interviewee B replied:

The extreme tourism concept is new in Nepal and it is attracting many tourists from all over the world. People are enjoying doing adventure thing rather than just going on a trek and visiting sites. Nepal has many locations where extreme sport can be organized and government and private bodies are looking after it. On the part of targeting customers, we target youths rather than old people because such sports are best suited for young people.

Interviewee C responded:

The concept of extreme tourism emerged when Last Resort came into existence. Before people were just travelling around in different corners of Nepal enjoying trekking and base camp walks. But after the opening of Last Resort, many other investors also realized the importance of extreme sports and how it attracts people from all around the globe. In the country like Nepal, I think this sport has a value because we have so many locations like Last Resort. Nepal is full of adventurous locations. So, I think it is good to have places like this for extreme sport. The travel agencies mainly target young people for such sport. There are not any fixed steps for targeting people, it is all about who suits best for such extreme sport.

Interviewee D replied:

Extreme tourism is a wonderful concept for Nepal. They should have places like Last Resort in all those places where such sports could be arranged. It is also good for the economy of the nation. Job opportunities are the main attraction for the locals when such places are opened. I think the travel agencies are targeting both national and international tourists for this sport. There is no doubt almost all the adventure lover traveller would love to try these extreme sports once they are in Nepal.

Extreme tourism is one of the emerging factors for tourism in Nepal. The past tourists came to Nepal to see the mountains, for trekking, to see different historical places and enjoying their holidays by visiting natural sites. But according to the time and interest of the people adventure place are made Bhotekoshi is one of the places which is made for extreme sports. The Last Resort is one of the main adventure-based companies, which focuses on adventure activities and accommodation. Bungee Jumping, white-water rafting and canoeing are the main attractions of Bhotekoshi. National and international tourists, especially young healthy people, are the main target groups of extreme tourism. According to interviewee A, B, C and D, extreme tourism is a new concept in Nepal. Different tourism organisations are working to make extreme tourism destinations in different parts of Nepal. Training and information are provided to local people for establishing a good tourism destination and increasing job opportunities for them. Although Nepal is an

excellent place for extreme sports, but there are certain drawbacks according to the structure of the landscape such as infrastructure of roads, modern facilities and skilled manpower. Due to low national income and an economically backward nation making such extreme sports are challenging and needs more capital and investments. If we could make such extreme sports like Bhotekoshi in other places the economy of the nation would grow and the living standard of local people would increase.

#### **8.4.2 Theme two: infrastructures, transport modes and safety measures**

Theme two describes the question about the infrastructure of the place that is Bhotekoshi and the transportation system used to reach that place also deals with safety and safety measures provided to the extreme travellers.

Interviewee A gave the response:

Well, after an opening of the Last Resort, many other places of Nepal have been pointed to create an extreme tourism point. This is actually good because if such places are made then the hotels, accommodation for the tourists and guesthouses will be established in nearby places, which is also good for the locals to have job opportunities. The basic transport mode would be the bus and taxi service that is available anytime. But, of course, if you want to book a cab for a package trip to different spots like this, then that is also possible. Safety for the customers is guaranteed in sports like this. We do not take life risk of any of our customers.

Interviewee B replied:

I have noticed many good and well-furnished hotels and lodges have been built now. The development in road construction and cleaning the nearby areas have been regularly done and regulated with strict actions. I see a great importance of building such places for the sake of infrastructure development. The basic transport mode is either bus or taxi. You can choose depending on your preference. I would say, safety would be guaranteed.

Interviewee C responded:

Infrastructure development is the main thing I have seen since I started working here. You know in the country like Nepal, developmental works in remote places like this is not that easily done. However, after the establishment of places like Last Resort, I saw things happening so quick and fast and for me, the place does look like something I have never seen before in that area. Transport is the main thing to access to such points. I would say

private cabs and taxis would be better if you want quick service. On the part of security, it is guaranteed. The visitors do not need to worry about it.

Interviewee D replied:

The development on the roadside, building new hotels and lodges and other facilities like laundry services, malls and fast food corners, everything is available in such areas now. I think it is very good to have such places for infrastructure development in a quick speed. The mode of transport would be bus and private taxi. It also depends on what the traveller wants to travel in. Unfortunately; we do not have flight access to those points. The issue of security is not a problem. I mean, you are safe and secured and it is always guaranteed.

Basically, infrastructure at Bhotekoshi well-furnished lodges, hotels and resorts are made for the extreme travellers and according to the demand and flow of tourist's extreme tourism sports are going to make good infrastructure facilities in the future. It is very good to have such facilities in extreme tourist palaces where tourist's can rest and enjoy their leisure time and it also provides job opportunities to locals. Interviewee C has further explained that the development of transportation and infrastructures are quite difficult in Nepal because Nepal is a country of big hills and mountains and the economy is in the low range. To make other good infrastructures proper homework and planning should be done without affecting the environment and cleanliness. According to four interviewees A, B, C and D road transportation is the main means of transport in which travellers can choose their means depending on their preference to reach their destination. Buses, private taxis and cabs are main options for travellers. For safety and security, all four interviewees have given their guarantee which means safety and security measures are well organised at such extreme places.

#### **8.4.3 Theme three: marketing strategies, expected goals and future plan**

Theme three is a question about the marketing strategies used by the different tourism organisation for extreme tourism, their expected goals from their investment and future plans of the organisation.

Interviewee A gave the response:

Internet marketing is the best marketing tool that is in use at the moment. However, within the country, we are arranging different campaigns throughout the year and also we visit different schools and colleges and organize some programs for them. All we do is to reach out to people and let them know what we have now in our country as an extreme tourism sport and make them understand what it is all about. We expect to go further beyond our expectations because you know the investment in creating places like this is beyond a normal thought. For that reason, we would certainly love to grow more and more in future. We guarantee in our service and we have a future plan to build up more and more places like this in Nepal to give facilities to every single national and the internationals who are interested in it.

Interviewee B replied:

We have strategic planning about how we could reach to people all over the world and how to make them know what we offer here in Nepal. We have our own official website where you can see the details of our services. Internet marketing is what it is in use, I have to say. Besides, within the country we are doing some sponsors for different other sports and activities that gathers youth where we can also share about our organization to them. Personally, we do not have a wide expected goal. What we are offering is what we could do for now. Well, in future we expect to expand if our customers are satisfied with our service. Definitely, we would love to make some more spots like this in future.

Interviewee C responded:

We are currently doing marketing through the internet and through friends and visitors who have already been to our place. Actually, marketing is not a big question but convincing people about its safety is something difficult at times. Those who haven't seen this before or haven't tried it before feel like keeping a distance from it, I have seen it personally. Despite this, we are still reaching out to people and trying to market about us the best way we can. We would definitely expect to grow in future. This is literally a new concept in Nepal. So people are getting to know about it. I believe this will have a good future.

Interviewee D replied:

I would say, marketing is a big challenge at the moment. You know the political disturbances in the country and the recent earthquake. This is somehow bringing a negative image among the visitors from abroad. Of course, we are trying to market it via internet websites and social networking sites. Within Nepal, we organize and sponsor different activities to gather people and explain to them what it is all about. Still, marketing is a bit of tricky, I have to say. Well, when every problem that is hitting the nation at the moment will be resolved, then in future this extreme sport has a great scope. I can say one shouldn't hesitate to invest on if they are interested in extreme sports. On the part of safety measures, it is undoubtedly safe and guaranteed.



Marketing is the most essential part in the tourism industry. Without it, the tourism industry is incomplete. There are various things to be considered while doing marketing such as one should keep in mind the seven Ps (product, promotion, place, price, packaging, positioning and people) and four Cs (clients, cost, communication and convenience). But, tourism is the business that does not need all of them to do marketing and of course sometimes we follow only a few of them. Interviewees A, B, C and D explained that internet marketing is the best marketing tool because no one can go to such places and observe on their own but through internet marketing people know about the place and go to visit that place according to their interest. Marketing is also conducted by organising some programmes and conferences in different places of the world. Local and global publicity is made through official websites of organisations, via social networking sites, television, advertorial articles, press releases, news distribution and video marketing. The profit of the tourism organizations is expected to grow a large amount in the future. These organisations are planning to build new extreme places in the future as Nepal has high scope to make extreme sports centres in different places. However, the latest natural disaster (earthquake 2015) may have some negative impact on the extreme travellers, which is one of the disadvantages and causes less inflow of travellers to these destinations.

### **8.5 Findings and conclusion**

The research carried out examined an in-depth study of the extreme tourism sports in Nepal, how the sports are regulated, safety measures and issues associated with it, what a traveller can expect when going there and how it is changing the look of the entire locality. The findings also said that tourism sports like these are vital for attracting people from within the nation as well as from abroad. In addition to this, the marketing tools and strategies that have been in use, the future of such sports in a country like Nepal, the easily accessible modes to reach out to such places and what an investor should think of prior to investing in extreme sports were also discussed and clearly justified.

Though the country is small, it is gifted with so many mountains and hill stations. Therefore, extreme tourism has a bright future in Nepal. All it takes to raise this tourism into peak depends on marketing strategies and effective tools used for marketing. When

marketing is done effectively, a person gets more and more interest in it and that is how the whole world comes to know about it one day. Both the government and private bodies should show interest in developing and investing in creating extreme tourism sports. This is not only good for the investors, rather it directly or indirectly supports the overall economy of the entire nation.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If looking back at the theoretical approach and the research done and its findings, then it is very clear that extreme tourism is one kind of tourism that has a bright future because travelling for fun, luxury and some good time vacation has already become an old concept. People nowadays love to try something adventurous and new that they have not done before. Under such circumstance, extreme tourism is one among many other interesting aspects of the tourism sector that easily drags people's attention in no time. Trying to perform extreme sports could also be a person's lifetime achievement or memory. Thus, this sport is gaining popularity in many ways these days. In a country like Nepal where the locations such as hills and mountains are available in most of the destinations, such sports could bring out a new shape for the entire nation. The development of infrastructure, transportation, facilities and services, employment opportunities and alignment of a new shape of cities and villages is possible only when such places are created.

Bhotekoshi is one of the important hubs for the extreme travellers seeking risky stunts in nature. It is popular all over Nepal and somewhat outside Nepal. It has got high possibilities to attract tourist as it has different interesting extreme sports in the same place. Through marketing and promotion, it is possible to introduce the place to the extreme sports lovers all over the world. Moreover, local people, governmental and non-governmental organisations and tourism agencies have the main role in developing Bhotekoshi as a popular extreme tourism destination.

However, building up new sports in new spots does not always help to give the locality a new shape. Safety, security and guarantee in service facilities also count much in terms of giving satisfaction to the visitors. Therefore, crucial factors to be taken into account would be marketing as the major priority along with all other things. It encompasses within the territory of extreme tourism sports from creating a spot to desirable and satisfied service to the customers. Marketing is the most important aspect of fostering this type of tourism in Nepal and strong strategies should be followed while marketing it.

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**Request sent to the participants**

Dear Sirs,

I am Nabin Khadka, a student at one of the European universities of Finland. The university I am studying in is Centria University of Applied Sciences and I am a student of tourism faculty. I am currently working on my final academic thesis which is a mandatory part of my studies. For my thesis project, I have defined a title which focuses on extreme tourism sports and its marketing in Nepal. My case study is Bhotekoshi.

I have decided to send this e-mail with a hope to get some valued information about my thesis project from you. If it is possible for you then it could be arranged through an interview and I believe skype would be the best choice to organize the interview. The interview will last for 20-30 minutes. I am intending to get information about the extreme tourism sports in Nepal, especially in Bhotekoshi, which is my case study for this research. I would be highly privileged for your kindness and support if you could manage some time for this interview. I am planning to make the final presentation of my thesis in my University and depending on your interest the details of your tour company and its services will be mentioned as a good source of reference for this research. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon

Best Regards,

Nabin Khadka  
Student  
Centria University of Applied Sciences  
68600, Pietarsaari, Finland

**Enclosure: Interview for structured interview**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEW****MARKETING OF EXTREME TOURISM IN NEPAL****Case study, Bhotekoshi****Theme 1:**

1. How do you define last resort according to adventure (extreme) tourism?
2. What are the main attractions in this site? Could you explain some well-defined services that you provide for those particular attractions?
3. What are your target groups? From which country are the most visitors coming here?

**Theme 2:**

4. Is infrastructure such as hotel and accommodation sufficient for travelers? How many tourists can this place host at a time?
5. Which mode of transport can you provide to reach this place?
6. What are the safety and security measures you provide to the travelers? Are those safety measures enough?

**Theme 3:**

7. What are your marketing strategies to reach your goal that you have set?
8. How do you sell your products through web sites or other agencies?
9. What kind of feedback does customer give back? How do you respond to the customer's feedback?
10. Are you able to reach expected goals from your investment? What are your new strategies and future plan for the further development of your agency?
11. How would you define the future of such extreme tourism business in country like Nepal? Can a widespread marketing of places like Bhotekoshi make extreme tourism popular worldwide?