

## **Nepal as a tourist destination- Finnish travelers´ perspective**

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## Abstract



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The tourism industry in Nepal is the most important industry, as it is the largest source of revenue and foreign currency for the country. Yet, only small percentages of Finnish travelers travel Nepal, which is why this paper aims to focus on Finnish travelers and the research question "What is the image of Nepal as a tourist destination in Finland?" will be examined.

Destination marketing is the 21<sup>st</sup>-century tourism marketing approach that promotes a specific place in order to increase the percentage of tourists visiting that place. To make destination marketing successful, the authorities should first identify and target the markets and the customers and then identify their needs and wants. They should also analyze their competitor's activities to bring uniqueness to their services. Different online tools and social media marketing should be used to attract more and more tourists.

A destination Image is the perception of a tourist of a particular place. Personal factors, geographical location, climatic conditions, travelling duration, travel mediators, and stimuli are the six factors that impact directly on the person's expectations.

This thesis aims to assess the perspective of Finnish travelers related to tourism in Nepal. Surveys were conducted among the residents of Finland regarding Nepal as a tourism destination. Questionnaires were distributed in Nepalese restaurants in major cities of Finland such as Helsinki, Turku, Porvoo and Kuopio and also in online platforms such as Facebook and travel blogs. Travel agencies in Helsinki were contacted via email and phone call. Valuable information was also collected through social media and desktop research. The results showed not only positive responses by Finnish tourists who want to travel to Nepal and think of Nepal as an all in one travel destination but it also showed some suggestions by (non-satisfied) Finnish tourists regarding pollution and political instability which are worth paying attention to in order to increase the number of tourists. The gathered data can be used for the promotion of tourism in Finland, with the additional hope of increasing the number of tourists coming from Europe.

**Keywords**

Destination marketing, Destination image, Destination branding, Nepal promotion, Finnish travelers, Mixed research method

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# 1 Introduction

This chapter provides the readers with the understanding of the thesis topic while covering its depths. The purpose of the research is to benefit the author's country's tourism sector, which is elaborately explained in the chapter. The relevance of the topic to the present context and its need in this time will also be clarified.

## 1.1 Background

It would not be wrong to say that tourism is one of the essential economic activities in every country. It has both direct and indirect impacts on the financial condition of the nation. The direct impacts are related to internal spending, citizens doing business linked with tourism and government spending on tourism. Whereas the indirect impact is associated with the investment department of the tourism industry, which includes creation of jobs, building new resorts, beautifying tourist spots. Government spending on tourism for providing better tourism services such as marketing, advertisement, security, cleanliness, etc. is also the part of indirect impacts of tourism on the economy.

Nepal is situated in Southeast Asia between two countries, China and India. Nepal is a small country, but scenic beauty doesn't depend on how small or big the country is but depends on where the country is located. Eight out of ten highest mountains in the world are in Nepal including Mount Everest. Nepal is just a perfect place to visit for mountain climbers, rock climbers and all those people who love to do an adventure. Due to its rich culture, natural beauty, and religious diversity it has a lot of potentials to make the best use of tourism, which is the largest source of revenue for the country. Unfortunately, maximum advantage of this industry is not being availed due to lack of strategies, lack of effective plans and lack of efficient utilization of resources. However, improvement in the tourism board can be seen now. All the tourism activities are handled by the Tourism Board of Nepal (NTB) which has developed the brand named as "NATURALLY NEPAL, Once is not enough." Moreover, the tourism board is putting significant efforts in promoting Nepal as a tourist destination. NTB gives a stage to the vision-drawn administration for Nepal's tourism segment by incorporating government responsibility with the enthusiasm of private part. NTB is advertising Nepal in the residential and global market and is moving in the direction of repositioning the picture of the nation. (Nepal

Tourism Board, 2017). NTB is working hard in terms of promoting the country through social media, summits, workshops and participating in tourism programs, travel and tourism fairs, around the globe.

The government of Nepal announced back in 2016 that it will observe the year 2018 as 'Visit Nepal Year – 2018' with the objective of increasing the tourist flow by millions in the country. The decrement of tourist flow due to the earthquake of 2015 in Nepal is one of the reasons for the development of this plan. The government said to do different promotional activities before 2018 and also announced to upgrade the existing tourist destinations, identify new destinations and develop the infrastructures in new areas and market new tourist destinations for the preparation of tourism year. The 10-year National Strategic Tourism Plan would also be implemented to attract tourists from neighboring countries (Republica, 2016).

As a part of 'Visit Nepal – 2018', Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) launched a program beginning from January 2017 in Europe to promote Nepal with hopes of increasing tourist flow from European countries. NTB said the campaign would develop the necessary groundwork for promoting the country's tourism all over the world in the year 2018 as part of 'Visit Nepal Year 2018' that the government had announced recently. For this activity, the tourism board has designed programs such as photo exhibition, talk on mountaineering, 'Send a friend to Nepal' campaign, tourism promotion through Nepali restaurants in Europe, Buddha Jayanti and Everest Day celebration in Europe, FAM trips for travel tour operators and media, and training for Nepali diaspora to promote Nepal's tourism, among others. (The Himalayan Times, 2017)

According to statistics, 2,276 Finnish travelers traveled to Nepal in 2011 and 2464 \ in 2012. Whereas the number decreased considerably in 2016 as only 1,938 Finnish travelers traveled to Nepal. So, this thesis targets Finnish travelers who seldom travel to Nepal. ("Nepal-Finland," n.d.)

## **1.2 Research question**

The purpose of this Thesis is to study the scope of Nepal as a tourist destination in Finland as well as to promote the destination image of Nepal among Finnish travelers in order to attract them. The main question that will be researched is:

"What is the perception of Nepal as a tourist destination?" This research question aims to achieve the following goals.

- Identifying Nepal as a tourist destination and the image of Nepal among Finnish travelers.
- Attracting the Finnish tourists by creating a positive brand image.
- Increasing the number of Finnish tourists traveling to Nepal.
- Helping the government of Nepal to promote tourism efficiently and effectively.

The investigative questions (IQs) of the thesis are as follows:

- IQ 1: What information do Finnish residents have about Nepal as a tourist destination?
- IQ 2: Have Finnish tourists heard or seen the tourism promotional activities of Nepal in any media?
- IQ 3: What appropriate steps should be taken in order to further promote Nepal as a tourist destination by the government or tourism organizations of Nepal?
- IQ 4: What are the challenges and solutions that the government of Nepal should focus on in order to promote tourism in Nepal among European people?
- IQ 5: Would the Finnish residents be willing to visit Nepal during their vacation?

### **1.3 Demarcation**

Since the research is carried out in a short period, most of the data that the author will be analyzing is the secondary data, which might affect the result. Moreover, it is difficult to carry out field research all over Finland to assess precisely Finnish customer habits in tourism.

### **1.4 Risk analysis**

Time has been one of the biggest limitations for the author as the research has been conducted in a short period, i.e., two months. There were few risks in researching this topic. One reason being the limitation of old research papers and articles. The author has found very few journals, articles or writings on this subject or a similar one. The ones he found are either based on specific locations of Nepal or other countries. The second risk has been the reliability of the data and information that the author found. However, the author did his best to make sure the data are correct and valid. To avoid all these risks, the author contacted the local authorities in Nepal via email and received the right information. As well as raw information that is not published yet were obtained from the commissioning company. The author first created survey questions and questionnaires for an interview and had them checked. Some questions were added, and some were removed as per the instructions before conducting the survey and interviews. The author was not able to collect data from lots of people since not everyone was willing to do the survey

and not everyone filled the survey with dedication. To avoid such things, the author tried to be present wherever possible during survey filling and talked to those respondents in giving the authentic and genuine answers.

### **1.5 Benefits**

Case company: The Thesis will help the commissioning company to evaluate the current situation of Finland in terms of tourism scope and provide them with the necessary data to plan and promote “Visit Nepal 2018” campaign in Finland in a systematic manner.

Other stakeholders: The travel and tour company in Finland and Nepal can come up with a suitable travel package that meets the needs of the traveler from Finland. This need and behavior can be studied from the data collected.

### **1.6 Key concepts**

The keywords that would be used in this thesis as major key concepts are promotion, tourism, destination marketing, destination image, destination branding, Nepal and market analysis. Destination marketing is considered to be one of the most influential means of attracting tourists and encouraging them to visit a destination (Blum and Fallon, 2002; Cortes-Jimenez et al, 2009). Destination marketing is done through using various marketing tools with efficient management in order to target the right people (Zupanovic 2007). Whereas, destination images are considered to be very important for tourists when making a decision for going on vacations (Baloglu & McCleary 1999, 868). The destination image should be simple, unique, attractive and realistic (Kotler & Gertner 2004).

### **1.7 Case company**

Nepal Tourism Board is a national organization established in 1998 by an act of Parliament in the form of partnership between the Government of Nepal and private sector tourism industry to develop and market Nepal as an attractive tourist destination. NTB provides a platform for vision-drawn leadership for Nepal’s tourism sector by integrating Government commitment with the dynamism of private industries. NTB is promoting Nepal in the domestic and international market and is working toward repositioning the image of the country. It also aims to regulate product development activities. (Nepal Tourism Board, n.d.)

## **1.8 Structure of thesis**

The structure of thesis starts with the introduction of Nepal as a tourist destination. It includes the evolution of tourism in Nepal. Famous destination sites and activities in Nepal have also been discussed in this section. After that tourism, destination marketing, destination image and destination branding has been discussed along with promotional ways and the role of social media in making destination marketing successful. The research section of this thesis includes results of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which consist of surveys, questionnaires, and interviews with the tour operators. Blogs, research papers, articles, and various books were also studied as part of a desktop research. Finally, the thesis ends with a discussion, which consists of analysing the findings, and recommendation of what improvements can be done in order to attract more Finnish travelers to visit Nepal as a tourist destination along with a conclusion.

## 2 Tourism in Nepal

### 2.1 Evolution of tourism in Nepal

The tourism industry changed its gear after 1951 when Nepal became a democratic country. The country got international recognition in 1953 when Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzin Norgay Sherpa conquered Mount Everest. Since then the country has obtained great attention from the mountain climbers. After this, Nepal only saw progression in the travel and tourism industry. In 1957, tourism development board was created, and in 1959 they joined the World Travel Organization. In 1963 Nepal joined the Pacific Area Travel Association, and finally, in 1998, Nepal Tourism Board was developed. (Gurung, 2015)

For the last five decades, the travel and tourism business of Nepal has been completely evolved. Different elements have added to the progressions that have happened in the travel and tourism business. One of those factors is the increased number of tourists who visited Nepal. Another example of massive development in the tourism industry is that in 1966, eight hotels of Hotel Association Nepal were built which now has exceeded to approximately 1000 hotels. (Sharma, 2017)

Appendix 1, shows the number of tourists' arrivals by air and land as well as their duration of stay and annual growth rate from 1964 to 2016. It shows the drastic increase in the number of tourists over a period. It can be seen that the number of tourists increased from 1964 to 2000 with a slight decrease in 1981, 1984 and 1993. The years 2000 to 2006 were the years of a downfall for the tourism industry as the country had to face many problems such as insurgency, the massacre of the royal family, and downturn in the global travelling and instability in the political conditions (Nepal tourism suffers another setback", 2002). The table shows that the number of tourists started to rise in 2006 because of the political stability after the peace treaty signed by major political parties. However, natural disasters hit the country in 2014 and 2015, which disturbed the flow of tourists.

In early 2014 and 2015, Nepal suffered from various disastrous events incorporating landslide, making blockage in Sunkoshi waterway, a massive avalanche in Mount Everest and snow storms and heavy landslides in Annapurna Circuit that hampered the tourism business of Nepal as well as influenced the life of citizens who earned through tourism. After these natural disasters, the misfortune and harm in human life and also in the infrastructures were to be

confronted quickly in 2015 as a result of a major earthquake on Saturday, 25 April 2015. (Raj Kunwar & Limbu, n.d.)

After the tragic events of 2014 and 2015, 2016 became the year of relief for Nepal and its tourism industry. The country managed to attract 40% more tourists in that year in comparison with 2015. The earthquake became one of the reasons for developing a “Visit Nepal Year-2018” program by the government of Nepal in order to increase the number of tourists visiting Nepal.

Appendix 2, shows the number of tourists visiting Nepal with different purposes. Purpose of visiting a country is one of the major indicators for the tourism industry in order to assess the share of tourists in financial and social sector of the country. It also helps to plan new programs, develop new infrastructure and to improve other services, likewise. (*NEPAL TOURISM STATISTICS 2016*, 2016). The table shows that from 1993 till 2016, a larger number of tourists came to Nepal for holiday, pleasure and mountaineering and tracking. From 1993 till 2002, people visiting Nepal for the business purpose were more than the people visiting Nepal for pilgrimage purpose, but from 2002 onwards number of people visiting Nepal for pilgrimage purpose increased drastically as compared to the business purpose. The number of people visiting Nepal for pilgrimage purpose only decreased in 2015 because of the earthquake. It can be said that the others and not specified purposes can be to visit Nepal for educational purpose, to meet friends or to visit for medical reasons.

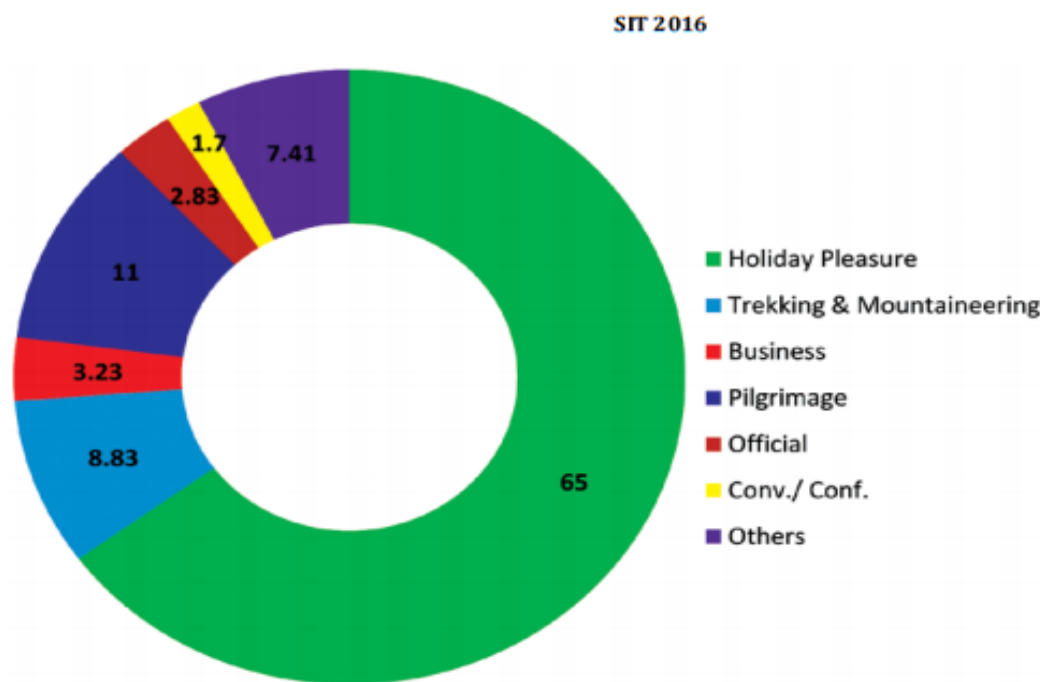


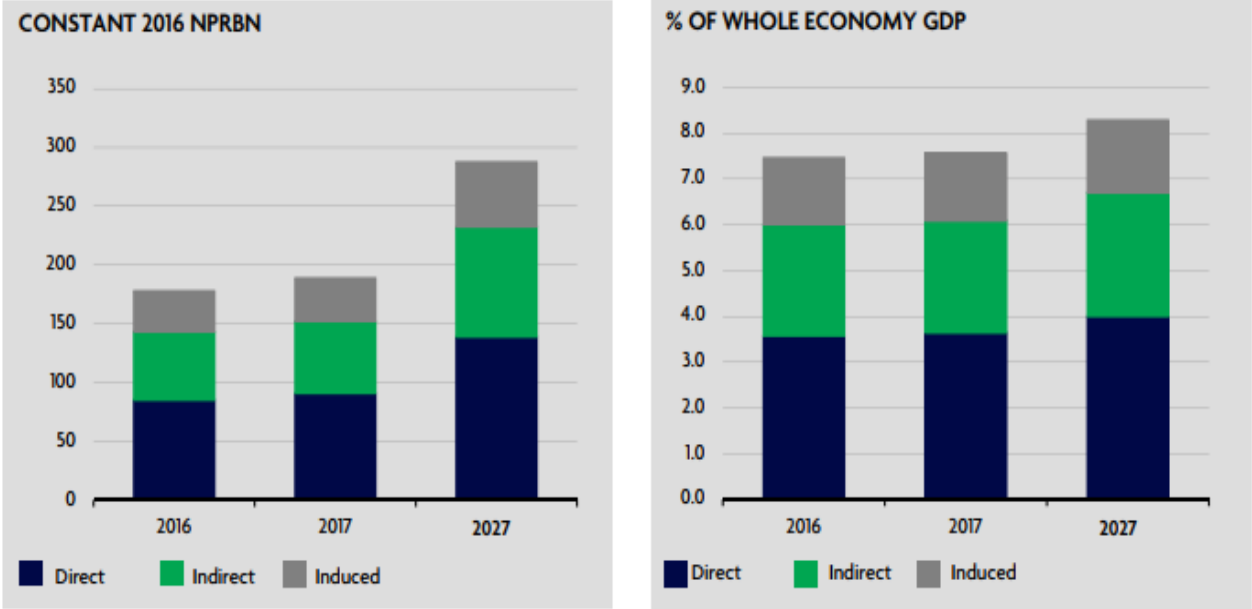
Figure 1. Purpose of visit 2016 (Nepal Statistics 2016)

## 2.2 Tourism market of Nepal

The whole area of Nepal is about 1, 47,181sq Km and populace of 27.8 million, which consists of 125 castes and 123 different languages. Nepal is considered to be "...garden of flowers of different species." Distinctive religions can be found in Nepal such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Nepal is home to 10 UNESCO world heritage sites. Due to the birth of Buddha, Nepal has a very significant place in the hearts of the believers. (Barahi, Fan, Hung, Malla & Yeung, 2017)

Tourism market of Nepal is one of the essential markets of Nepal because of the fact that this industry has contributed Rs. 177 billion into the economy in 2016 alone. The tourism industry has contributed a lot for making the unemployment level low. "The hotel industry has provided employment opportunities to more than 500,000 people," states Hotel Association Nepal President Shakya. (SHARMA, 2017). The economic report shows that the industry has created more than 427,000 jobs in 2016. According to the Travel and Tourism Economic Impact (2017),

the total contribution of travel and tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 7.5% in 2016 and is expected to increase the contribution in GDP by 8.3% in 2027. The below table shows the direct, indirect and induced contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP:



<sup>1</sup> All values are in constant 2016 prices & exchange rates

Table 2. Nepal: Total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP (Travel and tourism economic impact 2017)

Direct, indirect and induced contributions are explained in the appendix.

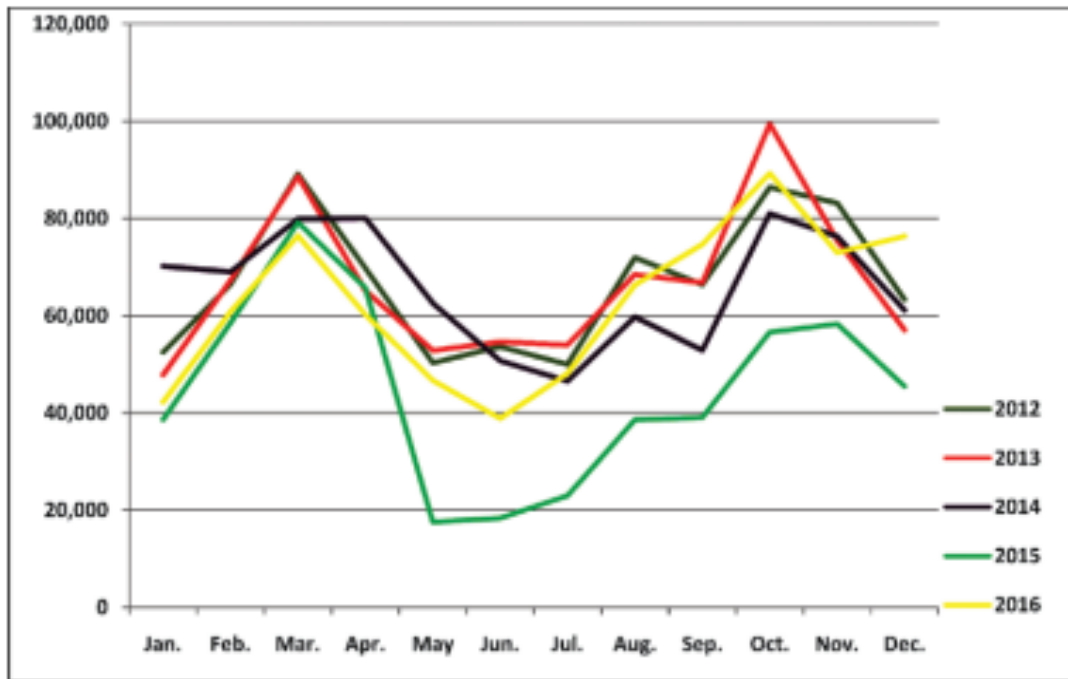


Figure 3. Tourist Arrival by Month, 2012-2016. (Nepal Statistics 2016)

This figure shows that higher number of tourists visits Nepal from October to January. The highest number of tourists arrived in October in 2013. The number of tourists visiting Nepal decreases from July to September. However, the number of tourists visiting Nepal, of different nationalities, varies from season to season. For an example, it can be seen in the diagram below that in a low season more tourists from Spain visited Nepal because of the holiday season in the country.

Nationality	Year	Month												Total
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
Spain	2014	652	539	648	1,345	758	417	1,327	3,085	1,210	1,427	1,084	618	13,110
	2015	288	423	850	902	241	179	364	793	578	926	767	430	6,741
	2016	412	454	818	630	499	404	1,347	2,092	1,555	2,013	1,285	746	12,255

Figure 4. Spanish tourist Arrival by Month, 2014-2016. (Nepal Statistics 2016)

According to the Nepal tourism statistics (2016), Indian tourists are on top of the list, and the second is the Chinese tourists. Sri Lankan and American tourists are on the third and fourth place respectively, and finally, British tourists are on the fifth spot, making these nations the top five countries in terms of tourist arrival of nationalities in Nepal.

Nepal Airlines has seen a dramatic drop in global travelers in a recent decade as it has cut a few courses and frequencies in its residual markets. In 2001, it was the biggest global bearer in Nepal, with an almost 30% offer of the market. However, in recent years Nepal Airlines has started thinking responsibly astoundingly well and has possessed the capacity to support its piece of the pie on worldwide courses to 10.76 percent. Nepal Airlines climbed to the second spot in the world traveler carriage, denoting a huge turnaround after years in the wilderness. ("Nepal Airlines take second place in massive turnaround," 2016) As well as in 2016, Nepal Airlines was ranked on the top of the list of tourist arrival in Nepal by major airlines. (Nepal tourism statistics 2016)

The number of hotels (star and non-star), as well as hotel rooms and beds in Nepal, has increased enormously with the passage of time. In addition to this, the number of travel agencies, tour guides, trekking agencies and trekking guides has also increased enormously in order to provide tourists an enjoyable vacation. (*NEPAL TOURISM STATISTICS 2016*, 2016) Overall, the travel and tourism business has turned into the best speculation road in recent years. According to the Department of Industry, the aggregate number of enlisted tourism segment organizations remains at 1,302 with venture totaling Rs 90.96 billion, giving work to 53,613 individuals as of FY 2015/16. According to the WTTC, Nepal is the 29th appealing destination on the planet for interest in travel and tourism business. (SHARMA, 2017).

However, tourism includes components of vulnerability and unpredictability that have continuously been on a route on some portion of its fascination. Distance travelling involves dangers, but due to the advancement in technologies, people are alarmed before about the prediction of natural disasters. (Moreira, 2007). It can be said that earthquake and tsunami are two of the most deadly natural disasters if escape plans are not developed and rehearsed. However, on a small scale, avalanches and landslides can be no-escape disastrous events (NEND). (Haun, Beaman & Shelby, 2004).

The land area of Nepal is by all accounts both the blessing and reviled by nature. At a certain point, the beautiful magnificence draws in numerous vacationers, which prosper the tourism

industry of Nepal and it is by all accounts the endowment of nature to Nepal. Be that as it may, opposing to it, the land area appears to act as the scourge of nature to Nepal. Along these lines, the tourism industry of Nepal is by all accounts bobbing forward and backward in this session of nature. After the major disasters of 2014 and 2015, Nepal should pro-actively deal with such crisis in future in order to provide safety to the tourists. (Raj Kunwar & Limbu, n.d.)

### **2.3 Nepal as a tourist destination**

With its pleasing beauty, tremendous natural and cultural assorted variety, from the Himalayas, high slopes and Terai fields, Nepal has kept up its excellent reputation for being one of the world's go to nations for a long time, frequently acquiring guests to wonder about what the country brings to them because of which Lonely planet has voted Nepal as top five countries to visit in 2017. (SHARMA, 2017)

The principle tourism division incorporates wild tourism, which covers exercises, for example, biking, bungee jumping, rock climbing and mountain climbing, trekking in various uneven and bumpy locale of Nepal, mountain flights, ultra-light flying machine flights, paragliding and hot air expanding over the mountains of the Himalaya, investigating the channels by raft, kayak and wilderness safaris in Terai districts. ("Tourism in Nepal," 2017). Another tourism part incorporates religious tourism. Nepal is amongst an essential travel destination for world's Hindu and Buddhist religion. There are numerous sanctuaries and destinations of various gods and goddesses, which is accepted to be sacred spots for both Hindu and Buddhist religion. Lumbini, the origination of Gautama Buddha is the most sacrosanct place in Buddhist religion. Swayambhunath, the monkey sanctuary, Muktinath valley are other vital religious locales for both Hindu and Buddhist religion. Capital Kathmandu is otherwise called the city of sanctuaries and rich in social legacy. The exhibition halls in Kathmandu have an accumulation of archaeological, chronicled and beautiful displays of craftsmanship and curios. ("Tourism in Nepal," 2017) Moreover, seven out of ten UNESCO world heritage sites of Nepal are located in Kathmandu. (Go Nepal Tours, 2015)

### **2.4 Famous activities**

Nepal is invested with stunning scenes, mountains, lakes and national parks. 8 of the world's tallest mountain on the planet, incorporating Mt. Everest are in Nepal. These attractions have pulled in many visitors as well as the trekking and experience exercises have included another flavour in the tourism segment of Nepal.

### **2.4.1 Adventure and Mountaineering:**

Trekking is one of the most famous activities in Nepal. Hiking has been completely changed today if you compare it with 1960's. Almost every facility, such as food and accommodation, is provided to the trekkers in all the main trekking areas. Moreover, the trails are maintained very well and are signposted. (Naturally Nepal 2017)

The three main and the most easily reachable trekking areas are the Everest, Langtang and the Annapurna regions. Moreover, Annapurna and Langtang can be accessed through roads as well. Other than this, Great Himalaya Trails and different trekking regions are reachable through domestic flights. For reaching the higher mountain areas, trekkers have to trek for a few days. (Naturally Nepal 2017)

With the passage of time, Nepal is developing and introducing new activities in order to attract more tourists. One of those activities is Skydiving. Skydiving in Nepal helps the tourist to view the Himalayas at 360 degrees, making skydiving a very exceptional experience. The plane or chopper drop's the tourist from the world's highest dropping area, i.e., Gorak Shep Kala Patthar. Skydiving is done in front of Mount Everest. However, if anyone doesn't want to jump from the highest drop-in zone than he/she can try it at Pokhara too. Skydiving is very safe here because of experienced staff. Both the options, solo jump or in tandem, are offered here. (Naturally Nepal 2017)

Bungee Jumping is also one adventure activity to do in Nepal. It was designed by New Zealand's top expert and is operated under the top bungee jumping experts. 166 m wide steel suspension bridge has been placed over the Bhote Koshi River from where the jump takes place. The view of this place is very breathtaking. In addition to this, tourists can stay overnight and can also do rock climbing and rafting as well. (Naturally Nepal 2017)

Nepal is located in the most challenging mountain range region at approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the country lies above the altitude of more than 3500 meters. Nepal is not only a home for the world's highest peak, i.e., Mount Everest but also for 8 of the 14 worlds highest mountains, such as Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, and Annapurna. (Naturally Nepal 2017)

Nepal has a broad history of mountaineering with the early travelers being baited into the deep valleys and lofty mounts by the difficulties of untrodden summits. Today Nepal has developed a significant service industry around mountaineering with numerous services being provided to

assist foreign expeditions in accomplishing their desires and objectives among the dwelling of snow. (Naturally Nepal 2017)

Nepal now offers the surge of extraordinary zip flying being the first of its kind in the entire Asia. Zip flying in Nepal isn't merely just like other zip lines; it is the longest in the world, steepest and quickest zip-line to give you a definitive adventure experience. Since 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012, Zip flying has been in operation in Nepal. Security is the main criteria, and the framework by Zip-flyer TM LLC, USA is outlined with the latest technologies and has become one of the best zip lines in the world. So tourists should prepare themselves to experience a definitive adrenaline surge! (Naturally Nepal 2017).

#### **2.4.2 Nature**

As mentioned above that Nepal is home to the highest mountain ranges in the world, so it is very understandable that the majority of tourists come here to see the beauty of the snow capped mountains. However, not every tourist is a mountaineer or a trekker so Nepal offers another option for such tourists so that they don't miss the beauty of these mountain ranges and can look at the highest peaks of the world. That option is Mountain flights (Naturally Nepal 2017).

The tourists can have a glimpse of the spectacular mountain ranges and closer view of these summits. Major domestic carriers operate mountain flights; tourists take a domestic flight from Kathmandu and fly for an hour around the Everest zone to witness the breathtaking views of the highest peaks, lakes, and glaciers. Moreover, for the ease of passengers and for making sure that every passenger enjoys the view, each passenger will be provided a window seat. In case of unfavourable weather, the tickets will be refunded or the next date of the flight will be announced (Naturally Nepal 2017).

Nepal is not just a home for the highest mountain ranges but also is a home for the best-preserved wildlife area in the entire Asia in which huge variety of animals roam freely. Chitwan National Park and Bardiya National Park are two main wildlife parks, which are home to two of the endangered species; the one-horned rhinoceros and the Royal Bengal tiger. The safari lodges in these parks also provide outstanding services to guests such as food, accommodation and wildlife activities (Naturally Nepal 2017).

Far from any noise and disturbances of city life, there is incredible peace in listening to the sound of birds and other animals in jungle. Jungle discovery is best for those who want to relax their minds as greenery and birds' chirping soothes one's soul (Naturally Nepal 2017).

Nepal has been blessed with almost everything any country would wish for. Nepal offers wonderful destinations to see beautiful species of butterflies such as Great orange tips, Purple sapphire, and Oakblues. According to the statistics, there are 651 species of butterflies in Nepal, which is approximately 3.72 % of all the butterflies in the world. If you love butterflies and you want to go for butterfly watching, the best season to come would be late March/April, mid-May/mid-June and late August/September (Naturally Nepal 2017).

### **2.4.3 Culture**

Regardless of whether you are in the Southern jungle, the cultural valleys or you are up on the mountains of Nepal, if you tour the villages you will come to know what Nepal's traditional life looks like. It is a captivating chance to find Nepal through the locals. (Naturally Nepal 2017) A trip to village gives the tourists an outstanding event to appreciate real Nepal. Tour to village is a chance to comprehend foundations of the way of living, traditions, practices, and way of life of Nepali individuals. According to the statistic, more than 75 % Nepal's populace depends on agriculture, animal farming, and fishing, which bodes that most of the Nepal's populace, live in rural areas (Naturally Nepal 2017).

Group homestays are being offered in certain trekking districts to encourage guests to visit and appreciate the life of village. The guest gets an opportunity to look into the rural life in Nepal, some of which consist of cultural projects, indigenous melodies, and dances performed by the young locals (Naturally Nepal 2017).

There are decidedly fewer places on earth with such an amicable mix of cultures as Nepal. Nepal's cultural environment is as different as its natural beauty. Be that as it may, Nepal - now - is a self-governing republic nation, which consists of 101 ethnicities and secures each religion views and practices (Naturally Nepal 2017).

#### **2.4.4 Spirituality and pilgrimage**

The Kirateshwar Sangeet Ashram is a musical institute founded in 1991 AD (2048 BS). They provide teaching services of classical music, vocals, how to use musical instruments, etc. to the students. They organize music competitions and are responsible for hosting concerts, especially, the full moon concert. The winner of the contest gets an opportunity to participate in the full moon concert and receives a scholarship of one year along with a cash prize. The full moon concert gives a chance to many people to show their talent to others (Naturally Nepal 2017).

The full moon concert is held every month, since last 25 years. The full moon concert used to take place at the time of political instability, unrest and curfew too. The entry tickets of the shows are free of cost as well as for the enjoyment of audience international classical musicians, along with national classical musicians, are invited. The environment of the concert is very peaceful and relaxes your mind so one should plan his/her tour accordingly in order to have a mesmerizing experience (Naturally Nepal 2017).

Pashupatinath is something beyond a religious destination. It is a mix of art, religion, and culture. It spreads peace and religious zeal. It is a huge temple that almost covers 246 hectors of an area and consists of various temples and testimonials. The sanctuary spread cross-wise over 246 hectors wide, is copious with shrines and testimonials. Several customs are performed here consistently. The temple is open for all. Since 1979, this national pride has been recorded as UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site (Naturally Nepal 2017).

In addition to this, Pashupatinath is an exceptional place for art historians as it demonstrates various designs of temples such as Pagoda style, Dome style, Shikhara style, etc. Along with this, the temple also demonstrates multiple statues which are made of metal, stone, and wood and sculptures (Naturally Nepal 2017).

### **3 Destination marketing**

One of the early and fundamental studies scoping on tourism marketing and tourism destination marketing was that of Wahab et al. (1976). The authors suggest that tourism destination marketing is “the management process through which the national tourist organizations and/or tourist enterprises identify their selected tourist, actual and potential, communicate with them to ascertain and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels and to formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of achieving optimal tourist satisfaction thereby fulfilling their objectives” Wahab et al. (1976, 24).

#### **3.1 Tourism marketing**

According to tourism society (1979) tourism is referred as an activity that includes short-term movement of people going away from their residence to different places, e.g., outside the country or inside the country and the activities that they do over there (Middleton & Clarke 2002, 3). Moreover, the five sectors that are considered to be important in the tourism industry are travel, transport, accommodation, attraction, and destination sector. Furthermore, the two categories that are deemed to be important in the tourism industry are international and domestic tourism (Middleton & Clarke 2002, 5-11).

As marketing has 4P's; product, price, place, and promotion similarly tourism marketing has 7P's; product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process. The product in tourism market is referred as combination of different products and services, price is referred as manufacturing cost of tourism goods and services, administration and marketing cost, pricing so on and so forth, place is regarded as tourist destination or anything which the tourist comes to see, promotion is referred as different methods through which tourism is promoted, people are referred as tourists or the ones providing tourism services and process is referred as distribution service (Shu 2009, 14-16).

### 3.2 Destination marketing

Destination marketing is increasingly becoming extremely important and competitive on a global scale. Buhalis (2000) emphasizes innovativeness, differentiation and flexible specialization of tourism products by destinations as exceedingly crucial for destination marketing for tourism regions to attract 'intentional demand' from tourists. Above all, partnership between the public and private sector and close cooperation between all suppliers is at the center to any destination to sustain their market attractiveness by steadily offering quality products and also considering consumer expectations, and cooperate rather than compete (Buhalis 2000).

Kotler et al. (2006) state that those charged with tourism planning more often pay very little attention with respect to retaining and preserving the attributes that attracted visitors to the destination in the first place, rather they concentrate more on the developing the destination. Thus, there is vast literature on the development of a tourist destination while the management and marketing of tourist destinations are only gaining research focus in the recent past, thus the latter forming a key part of this study and its theoretical framework. Tourism is among the last sectors to assume a marketing approach focusing on the consumer, and therefore marketing researchers have been concerned about the identification of key trends in tourism marketing only since the last decade. Hence this sector has received less academic research over the years (Bigne et al. 2010).

Other studies also indicate that relevant literature on destination marketing and illustrations of destinations, as an experienced provider for tourists and locals had been scanty and neglected and only increasing within the last two decades. Much of the research on destinations has been focused on the planning and development facilities, often leaving the management and marketing of destinations to industry people and consultants, thus increasing the complexity and competitiveness nature of destination market (Buhalis 2000).

Marketers have developed models to clarify this procedure of basic leadership. The least difficult and most generally utilized is "AIDA": Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. Promoting the goal will move the purchaser from being unconscious, both of the item or goal, or a specific brand or bundle, to settling on a buying choice. Before picking an occasion, the customer should know about the goal. This, for the most part, involves acquiring data about the place, regularly from books and printed writing, yet progressively the web empowers complete research about goals. The shopper needs to build up favorable position towards specific goals

and turn out to be adequately dedicated to one over different decisions, previously heading off to the following stage, which for the most part will include choosing what kind of occasion they need at that place. (Heredge, 2006)

### **3.3 Destination image**

Destination images are considered to be very important for tourists when making a decision for going on vacations (Baloglu & McCleary 1999, 868). The image of the destination and expectations related to it are significant factors for deciding to visit a place because their expectation can be good or bad which may depend on their experiences or the presentation (Chon 1990, 2; Marshalls 2008, 6). Destination images are compelling as they have the power of benefiting a country or putting an adverse effect. While promoting tourist destinations, the tourism board should keep in mind the destination image as positive destination image will not only attract more tourists but it will also give them a competitive advantage. (Chon 1990, 2; Marshalls 2008, 6). So the destination image should be simple, unique, attractive and realistic (Kotler & Gertner 2004). According to Kotler & Gertner (2004, 42), destination image is:

The sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about place. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place.

There are various definitions of destination images but many of the researchers have described it as perception and impression of a place.

Marshalls (2008) states that six factor has a direct impact on the person's image or expectation. Those six factors are personal factor, geographical location, climatic conditions, traveling duration, travel mediators, and stimulus. Personal factor includes person's analysis, values, and norms, character, qualification, psychological and social factors. Geographical factor refers to accessibility, political relations with other countries or the tourist's country, economic conditions, political stableness and whether the country fulfills the demands or needs of the tourist, e.g., a tourist wants to visit a beach but that country doesn't have any beach so intentionally or unintentionally this thing will create a negative impression. Climatic conditions refer to the climate that the country offer, e.g., people who live in hot places prefer to visit cold places in their vacations. Travelling duration is an essential factor, as people with children prefer to visit

places that are near their home country. Travel mediators refer to a person or a group of people who interact face to face with the customers. It is very important for the travel mediators to provide the right information because it affects the customer's image a lot. Stimulus refers to other factors that influence the perception such as safety and security (Marshalls 2008, 24-27).

### **3.4 Destination branding**

Destination branding is considered to be one of the most influential marketing strategies. Destination branding is linked to a logo, name sign or any word as well as it promises the tourists that they will have the best and memorable travel experience (Holloway 2004, 144). Such graphics creates uniqueness and makes it easy for the tourists to differentiate destinations. Destinations are just like products. Customers won't be attracted towards the product if companies don't brand its product. Just like this, if tourism board doesn't brand the destinations efficiently they won't be able to attract more tourists (Ekinci 2003, 22; Blain, Levy & Ritchie 2005, 328). For making the destination branding successful, it is important to keep in mind two factors, and that are logical/rational characteristics and emotional characteristics.

### **3.5 Promotional ways**

Nepal has a considerable measure to offer visitors in terms of scenic beauty, culture and social legacy. The sorts of sightseers that have the potential to get attracted towards Nepal as a tourist destination are those looking for action, adventures vacations, social and religious attractions and for natural beauty. Specifically, the "new" vacationer will probably be intrigued to visit, while booking through travel agency or as an independent traveler. (Heredge, 2006)

Due to the geographical location of Nepal and mainly after the major natural disasters of 2014 and 2015 many tourists would not want to risk their lives as well as foreign tour operators won't take responsibility if any problem occurred. Hence, Advertising needs to concentrate on how the hazard components can be limited. Exhortation about which place should be avoided in which season would make tourists feel good as they will think that the tourism board is guiding them correctly. Insurances should be provided to cover any event of mishap. Enhancing the comprehension of the circumstance and keeping individuals educated can diminish a considerable lot of questions that are raised from absence of data. (Heredge, 2006)

Ordinarily, foreign travelers are occupied with coming to Nepal either to go trekking or to visit the social and authentic destinations in the Kathmandu Valley or other major cities. For the last

mentioned, understanding that Kathmandu and other major cities, which are, generally issue free and tranquil can be useful in urging travelers to visit. (Heredge, 2006)

Travel agencies have a vital part to play in speaking with abroad organizations. By giving reliable and updated information on the circumstance in Nepal, outside agencies will be in a superior position to survey the dangers associated with sending their customers to Nepal. It is imperative that the Nepali operators give exact data, and develop trust with the abroad specialist. Advancing the administrations given by travel offices is crucial in the travel organization's operation as it is principally through notices that the objective clients will be mindful of the new bundles in the tourism advertise. (Heredge, 2006) The travel agencies must contribute to publicizing efforts to expand Nepal's destination image in the Finnish tourism market.

Social media being the most popular, effective and efficient way of promoting something, should be focused a lot while promoting Nepal as a tourist destination. Facebook and Twitter act as a method for notice for some vacationers by increasing more insights about tourism goals. These online means can pull in Finnish individuals to visit snow capped mountains of Nepal. (Sthapit & Khadka, 2016)

### **3.4 Role of social media in making destination marketing successful**

Social media, as one of most powerful Internet networking tool, has been coordinated into a piece of social and monetary life in the genuine world. Its utilization as the methods for showcasing travel-related administrations has additionally expanded remarkably in the current circumstances. New web technologies of social networking give license to social media users to make and send their substance and data and also post their remarks or input immediately. These advantages have pulled in many travel specialists and middle people to make utilization of web-based social networking in their advertising endeavors. Online networking has offered new ways in which customers of travel business connect socially, by incorporating data and correspondence innovation, social cooperation, and the development of words, pictures, recordings, and sounds. (Sthapit & Khadka, 2016)

Throughout the years tourism has depended vigorously on free advertising; it used to be our loved ones who enlivened and helped in arranging the tours guided by tourism aides, magazines, and travel offices. Be that as it may, today with the rise of the advancement in

technology, the verbal data has stretched out past a restricted gathering to the whole world. Online networking as separated by the digital innovation upset now interfaces travelers to the suppositions and suggestions of a large number of individuals, incorporating companions in their informal community and similar traveler they have never met. (Mukherjee & Nagabhushanam, 2017)

Online promotion can be considered as a reliable instrument to promote tourism and friendliness industry in any nation. Živković, Gajić, and Brdar described web-based social networking, as minimal effort and predisposition free and it would speak to favorable position for showcasing interchanges. (Živković, Gajić & Brdar, 2014). Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Blogs and numerous other online web-based social networking stages affect the sightseers about their choice of picking a destination. Linked-in, Instagram, and YouTube are some more examples of social media websites and apps. Travel mediators in Nepal have worked their sites where clients can produce their substance, from short movies on YouTube and Facebook announcements to re-posting join on Twitter; and even purchasing tickets on the web (Sthapit & Khadka, 2016).

Web-based social networking is getting plainly ordinary among travelers who seek online discussions and offer their assessments or request proposals about their vacation goals. The Tourism associations should take advantage of this stunning innovation by increasing the marketing of the destinations on Social Media with the sole point of coming out to the majority (Mukherjee & Nagabhushanam, 2017).

## **4 Research methods**

The data are mainly gathered from the people living in Finland, as they are the main targeted customers and also through tour and travel operator who are one of the most important aspects of tourism business. Apart from that, secondary data are collected through the commissioning company and desktop research done by the author himself. The scientific data analysis compiled through various sources helped the author to find out the present situation regarding the Destination Image of Nepal, which in turn will act as a secondary data for the commissioning company to formulate new plans to help in destination branding of Nepal in Finland. The author spent two months in gathering as much response as possible and used online platforms, face-to-face interviews, and email interviews to collect the needed data.

### **4.1 Methodology**

Research is divided into two methods; qualitative and quantitative. The difference between qualitative research and quantitative research is that the strategy, information and the connection with the concept in both the research methods differ from each other. There is difference in their design. Quantitative research contains a model that is made before doing the empirical research and a qualitative research contains a design, which emerges along the way. Quantitative analysis mainly has numbers as an outcome, whereas qualitative research mainly contains words. Lastly, quantitative research has a more rational process and procedure, while the process and method of qualitative are more intuitive. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 8).

It can be said that for this thesis a quantitative research method is more suitable rather than qualitative research method. As the thesis is about the perception that the Finnish tourists have of Nepal as a tourist destination, the higher the number of respondents, the better the outcome will be. However, the author used both the methods to gather information from travelers as well as tour operators. For data collection, the author has used survey for the quantitative research method and for qualitative research method the author has used interviews (online), face-to-face interaction and discussion. While on the journey of doing all this research, the author has made direct observations, which he has used in the report in order to keep the research on the line.

The survey questionnaire has collected the necessary personal information about the respondents such as age, sex, information regarding their knowledge of Nepal. Their thoughts of Nepal as a tourist destination, their willingness or unwillingness to visit Nepal, etc. were also

collected. The author received 175 survey answers. Furthermore, the informational part about people visiting Nepal from Finland, the numbers of people opting for Nepal rather than other places, comparison of tourist visiting Nepal before and after the 'Nepal Earthquake 2015', tourists view on Nepal before going to Nepal and after returning from Nepal has been covered in interviews and interaction part. The author has collected three responses out of ten tour operator companies contacted. In the meantime, the author has also interviewed and discussed with the customers who visited the tourist office about their travel destination and purpose of travel in order to gain some insights about the tourist behavior.

## **4.2 Tourism market of Finland**

Finnish travelers are one of the most prominent travelers in the world. As indicated by statistics of Finland 2015, Finnish people between ages 15 to 84 managed to make a million trips a year. Ten years back, Finnish people between 15 and 74 made 3.1 million visits abroad with an overnight stay in the destination nation. In 2016, the number of outings for people of the age group 25 - 84 was almost 5.4 million. These excursions incorporate remote recreation trips, household trip and also business and expert tips. As indicated by statistics Finland, abroad trips came to 2.5 million in 2015 which for the most part were bundled visits (Statistic Finland 2015). The stable economy of Finland including abnormal state of wage and lower joblessness status of the general population add to visit outbound voyages. The nature of the Finnish people can be described as friendly, social, open, honest and warm. (World Atlas book 2016).

According to the Maslow's hierarchy needs, more established sightseers go about accomplishing self-realization while more young visitors go about accomplishing mental requirements when travelling (Woodside & Martin, 2008). As per the travel career ladder, tourists' needs and inspirations are characterized in a stepping stool with satisfaction being the most critical part and unwinding being the least one. Traveler set out changes as per their travelling experience. (Woodside & Martin, 2008)

The number of trips heading outside Europe expanded to the American continent. 70% of these tours were made in the United States. Conversely, Asia lost some of its prevalence as a relaxation goal for Finns. (Statistics Finland). The table below shows the decreased number of Finnish tourists travelling to Nepal in 2017.

Country	Jan-17		Feb-17		Mar-17		Apr-17		May-17		Jun-17		Jul-17		Aug-17		Sep-17		Oct-17		Total (Oct)	
	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	arrival	Departure	arrival	Departure	arrival	Departure	arrival	Departure	arrival	Departure
Finland	163	181	133	83	293	263	191	264	126	149	148	137	54	124	100	74	218	112	400	300	1,826	1,687

Table 5: No of tourist arriving and departing Nepal from January 2017 until October 2017

Figure 6 shows that the number of departures increased with the passage of time and one of the main reasons for the increase is the awareness of learning English (the absence of information of English among numerous elderly individuals in Finland makes a dialect obstruction for them to go to different nations).

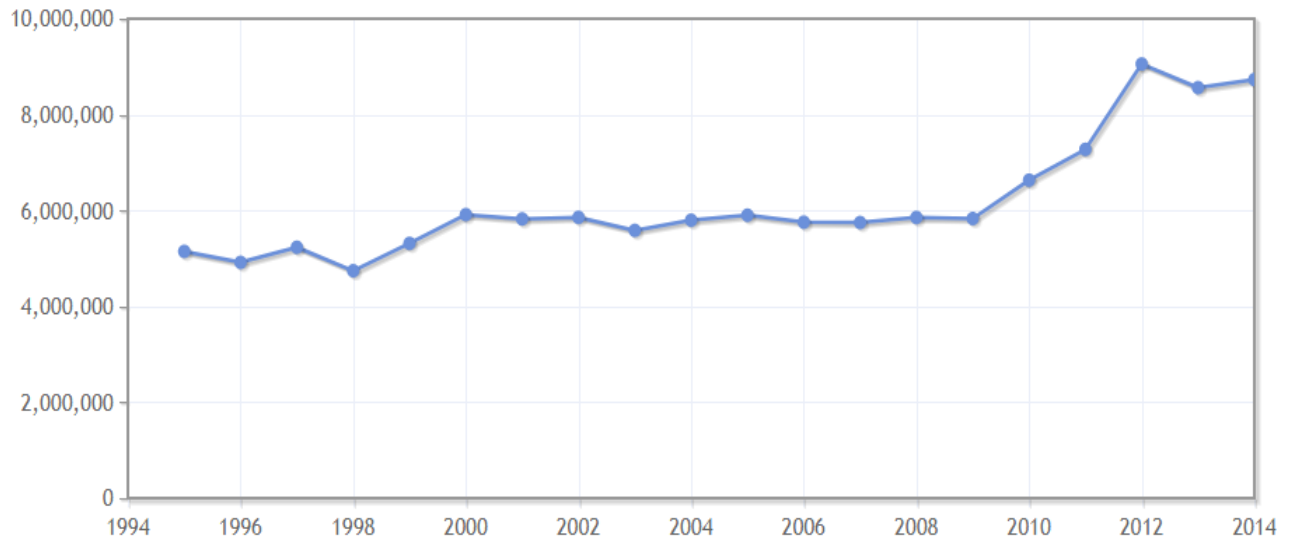


Figure 6: International tourism, number of departures (index mundi 2016)

The primary purpose of Finns to travel to other countries is for enjoyment or visiting families and friends. Figure 7 shows that approximately 8.2 million (highest number as compared to other purposes) Finnish tourists made leisure trips in 2016 alone.

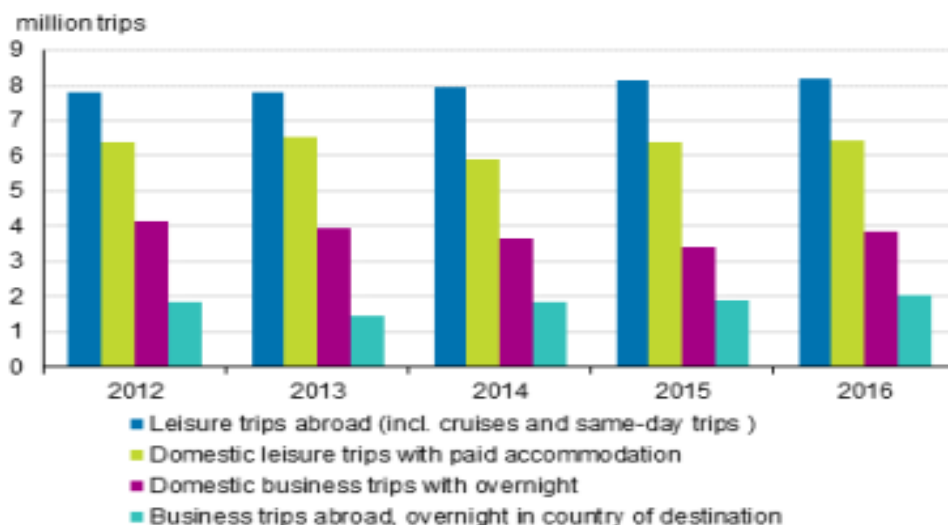


Figure 7: Finnish residents travel in 2012 to 2016 (Statistic Finland)

Local business trips have tumbled from 2011 to 2015 because individuals are travelling less amid the recession but as compared to 2015, domestic business has increased slightly. Finnish people are travelling abroad for business purpose, which has brought about a minor increase in overnight business trips abroad. The financial downturn along these lines has an immediate impact on the tourism showcase where individuals are travelling less or spending less on travel. (Goburdhun-Bhurtun, 2016)

As mentioned above, Finnish tourists are making more trips to the American continent and are making fewer trips towards Asia. The most popular destinations for Finnish tourists since 2014 are Estonia, Spain, and Sweden. However, fewer outings than in 2015 were made to Estonia in 2016, yet it kept up its unswerving best position as a travel goal for Finns. Overnight travels to Estonia expanded yet day travels lessened. Figure 8 shows the most popular destinations for Finnish travelers. (Statistics Finland)

### Finnish residents' most popular destinations for leisure trips with overnight stay in the destination country in 2016, 2015 and 2014

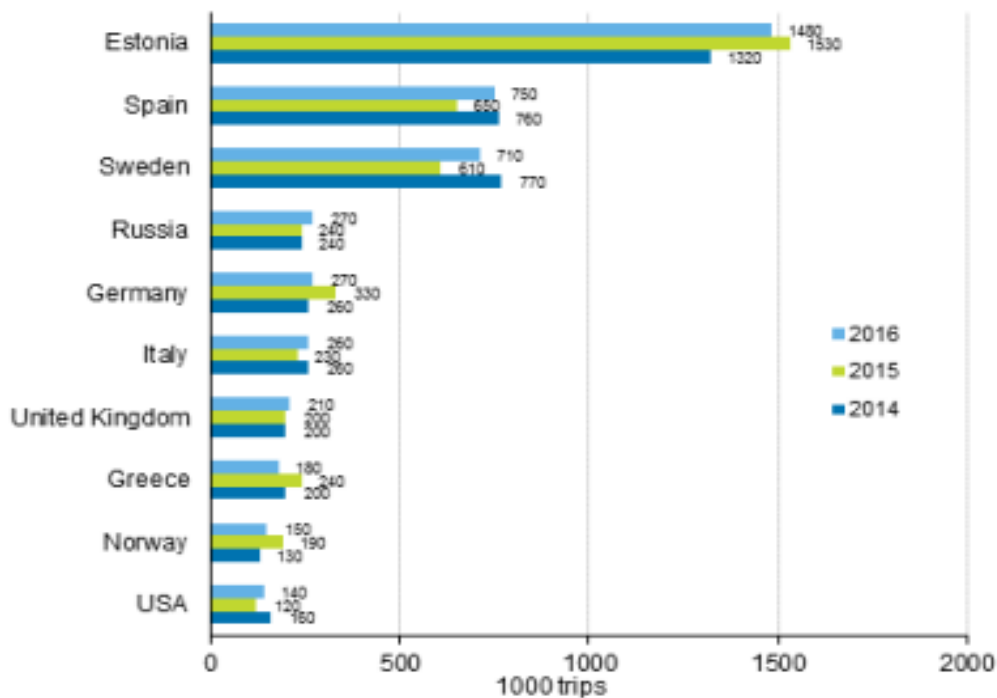


Figure 8: Finnish residents' most popular destinations for leisure trips (Statistics Finland)

#### 4.3 Finish perspective

Upon interviewing a tour operator, Mr. Tatu Kullberg, about the Finnish perspective of Nepal, he said “although Nepal is seen as an adventurous and emerging country, many Finns have visited Nepal and also worked there, as Nepal is one of the bigger receivers of Finnish development cooperation and foreign aid. He further added that even though the earthquake in Nepal had slowed things down its getting better again. According to him, there are two major profiles of Finnish travelers. One being young backpackers visiting the country as a part of a bigger trip or for volunteering who stays a long time in the country and other being the typical customer of 40-60 years old, who are interested in trekking or/and the culture and stays for a few weeks.” As per him “The main reason for travelling Nepal is trekking, culture, and religion; Hinduism and Buddhism. Finns see Nepal as an exotic country in the middle of the Himalayas. He further added that many know Nepal from the famous Finnish mountaineers, Veikka Gustafsson and

Samuli Mansikka however; the general knowledge of Nepal is insufficient which means that more homework should be done for promoting Nepal. As Finnish tourists like to do trekking and mountaineering, with proper and efficient promotion and tour management the tourism board of Nepal can attract a good number of Finns. However, they need to focus more on the airline, air routes and ticket prices as Tatu told that “ Even though, the tours are very cost effective, flying to Nepal can sometimes be harder. Qatar and Turkish Airlines have some nice routes, but no smooth connection every day. Flight tickets in Nepal are expensive for the service and Mountaineering permits are crazy expensive.” When asked about the obstacles to visit Nepal Mr. Tatu answered “Earthquake, and it is sometimes considered dangerous with all the airlines on the EU blacklist, bad road conditions, and sometimes difficult weather patterns.”

*\*Appendix 1*

*Interview questions: “Nepal as a tourist destination- Finnish travelers’ perspective.”*

#### **4.4 Results**

The author collected 175 responses out of which 70% men and 30% women filled the survey and approximately 50% Finnish people filled the survey. The majority of people who filled the survey belonged to the age group of 25-34. After analyzing quantitative survey, the author found that, in recent times, a majority of people know about Nepal through traditional media and from family and friends as well as they wanted to visit Nepal because of beautiful scenic natural places. Many people who have visited Nepal stayed there for more than a month and as data collected through surveys suggest, people have enjoyed their stay (refer figure 9). There is a lot to see and enjoy along with doing trekking and mountaineering, so it is preferable to stay there for more than three weeks in order to enjoy fully and to know about Nepal and its people.

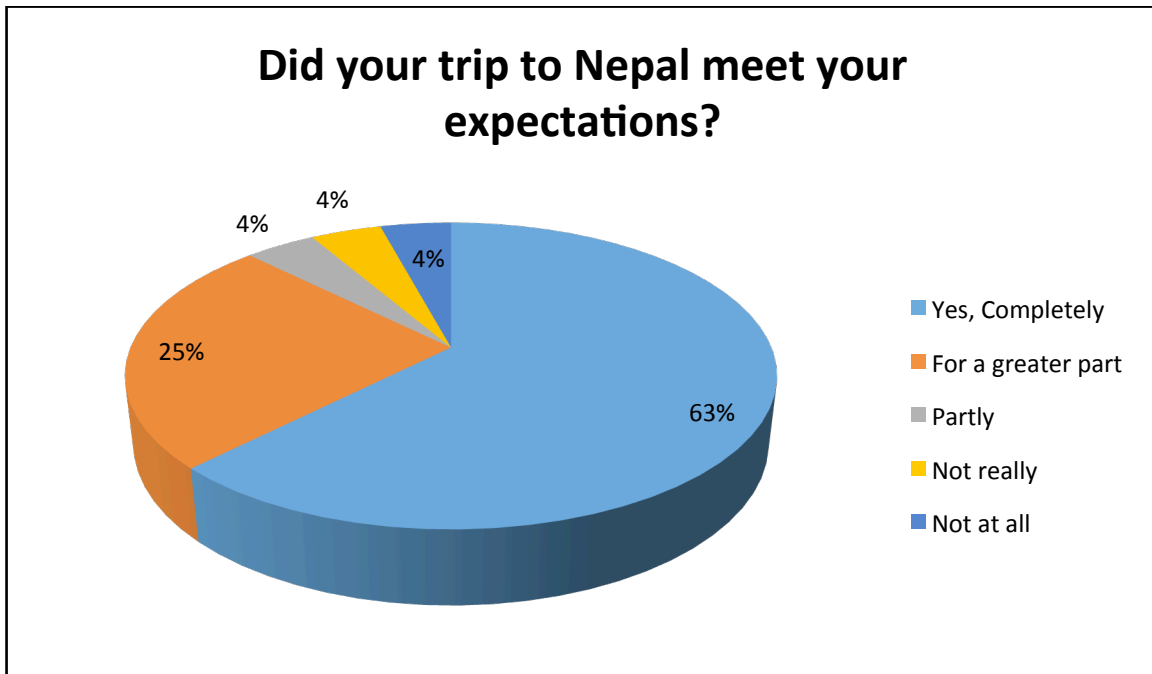


Figure 9: Statistic on how Finnish tourists find their stay in Nepal (Source: Surveys conducted)

The majority of people rated their travelling experience in Nepal as 4.5 out of 5 as they were delighted with each and everything; facilities, tour guides, Nepalese hospitality, etc. They also said that they would like to revisit Nepal because of the scenic beauty, cultural diversity, religious diversity, hospitable nature of the Nepalese and wildlife. Very few people rated 3 & 2 out of 5, as they didn't have a good experience because of flight hassle, bad weather conditions unstable political condition and pollution. They loved the place, but they were not satisfied with the way things were getting managed. They also added that Kathmandu airport should maintain its standard accordingly because it does not make a good impression on the new tourists as it is very much crowded, it is not up to date, and the management over there is inefficient. They said that they would love to revisit Nepal if facilities and management get better.

Most of the people said that there are many attractive parts of Nepal, which is why they specified that Nepal as a whole is wonderful. On the other hand, many people had a same point of view that political instability is the most unattractive part of Nepal. They need to focus on making the political condition stable, and once the political condition becomes stable, all the other factors such as lack of infrastructure and facilities will become better, automatically.

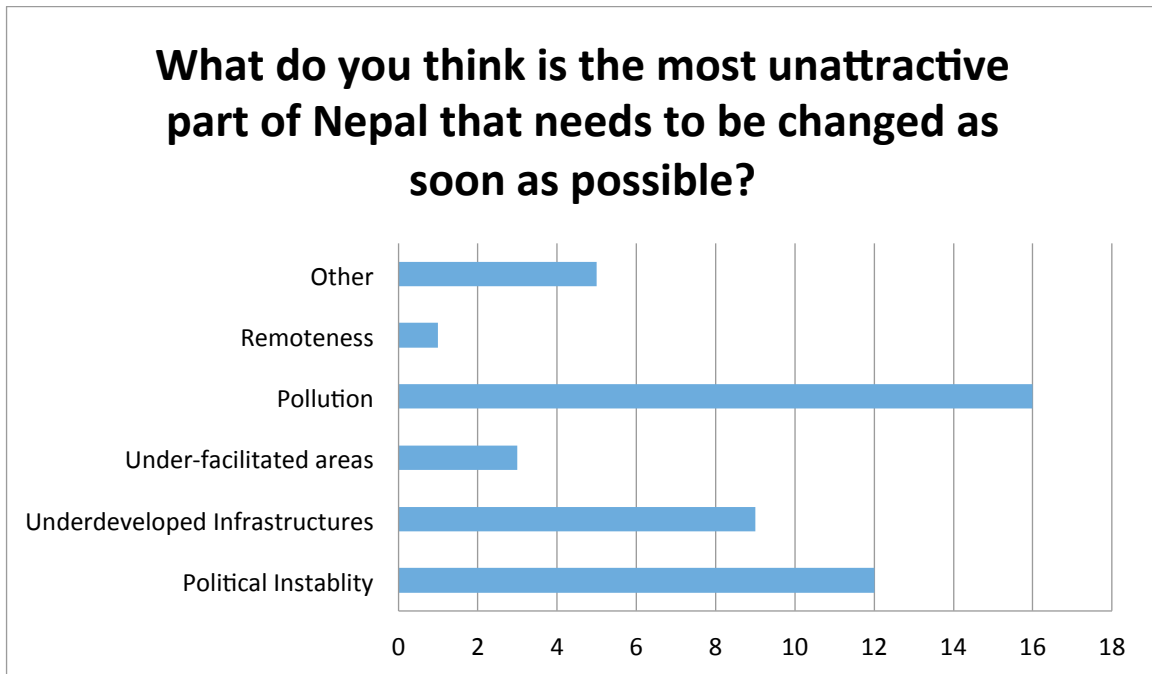


Figure 10: Statistic on what changes are needed in Nepal to increase its tourism (Source: Surveys conducted)

Among the people who have not visited Nepal, a majority of them wanted to travel Nepal for holiday purpose, and few of them wanted to visit for a business purpose. These people are expecting different lifestyles of Nepal in comparison to the western lifestyle as well as many are also planning to see the geographical terrain. Majority of them selected personal safety and security as a challenging problem that they would face in Nepal. The main reason for choosing this was natural disasters; earthquake, landslides, etc.

Upon analyzing the elements of tourist destination, the author came to know that the existence of every aspect is essential as all of the people rated every element, i.e., personal safety, overall cleanliness of the destination, unspoiled natural beauty and natural resources, favorable climatic condition, diversity in cultural and historical attraction, quality of accommodation, friendliness and hospitality, well managed transportation system, local cuisine at 4 and 5 except nightlife and entertainment and shopping malls. Furthermore, the people who have visited Nepal are very much satisfied with the availability and existence of the elements other than political stability, underdeveloped infrastructure, and pollution.

*\*Appendix 2 Survey questions: "Nepal as a tourist destination- Finnish travelers' perspective."*

## 5 Discussion

In this chapter, research questions and investigative questions will be discussed.

“What is the perception of Nepal as a tourist destination?”

As mentioned in chapter 3, destination image is the perception and expectation of tourists regarding any destination. Nepal is not only a home of world’s most significant mountains, but it is also a home for wildlife and old and historical Buddha temples. The author has found that the perception of Nepal as a tourist destination is very positive. Finnish tourists see Nepal as all in one destination because it offers a variety of places to visit, various activities to do and many cultures to see. Nepal is perceived as a friendly country because of its welcoming citizens. Their hospitable behaviour has won hearts of millions of tourists. Despite positive image, there are two to three factors that portray a negative image of the country. Due to its geographic location, Nepal lies within the earthquake zone, so, through the findings, the author came to know that tourists hesitate to visit Nepal because of safety and security reasons. The earthquake of 2015 has left a negative impression on the minds of tourists as the authorities were informed beforehand that such an event might take place, but no serious precautions were taken which resulted in immense damage and loss. Had they taken it seriously, they wouldn’t have to do so much hard work now for making the tourists believe that the country is safe to visit. The tourism board of Nepal should create a plan and make a short video or publish a statement in which they should show what caused the event, what changes they have made, what precaution and safety measures they have if anything as such happens in the future and how will they provide safety and security to the travelers in such situation. The board should make sure that this plan is used in every promotion and every travel intermediaries should explain about this plan to the customers in order to make the customers safe and secure to visit Nepal. Another negative point that creates hesitation in the tourists from visiting the country is the nation’s political instability. When there is political instability in any country, it is perceived that there is no peace. People go on holidays in order to relax and take a break from their busy routines, so they select those countries, which are peaceful. To grab the attention of tourist, it is vital for the tourism board to offer peace. Furthermore, Nepal desperately needs to complete the construction of the Pokhara airport. Kathmandu airport is very crowded and tourists like hassle free and peaceful trips as mentioned above.

What information do Finnish residents have about Nepal as a tourist destination?

Finnish residents know about Nepal as a tourist destination, but don't have much knowledge and information about it. It is imperative for the tourism board to provide information about the history, tradition and diverse culture of Nepal as well as it is also very important to provide the right and relevant information so that they don't lose the tourists' attention when presenting it in tour fairs. Short films, documentaries, and photo exhibitions can help in increasing the information to the Finnish people.

Have they heard or seen the tourism promotional activities of Nepal in any media?

After the 2015 earthquake, the tourism board has been very efficient and is participating in almost every tour fair. Their social media promotion has improved as well as ads on television can also be seen due to which Finnish people have heard and seen the tourism promotional activities in Nepal. Many locations in Nepal have also been featured in movies and television drama, which is also an efficient way of promoting as it gives people a quick view of Nepal.

What are the challenges and solutions that the Government of Nepal should focus on in order to promote tourism in Nepal among European people?

According to the findings, the challenges that the government of Nepal should focus on in order to promote tourism in Nepal among European people are dangerous airlines, dangerous road conditions, expensive flight tickets and costly mountaineering permits. As trekking and mountaineering is the most popular activity among Finnish people, the government of Nepal should offer discounts and packages on the permit and flight tickets not only in off season, but in peak season as well in order to promote tourism in Nepal among European people. Furthermore, the government of Nepal should strictly monitor the performance of airlines in order to provide the best services to tourists. Good infrastructure is critical to gain the attention of European tourists. Hence the Government of Nepal should improve the infrastructure of the country so that the tourists don't have any problem while travelling by road from one place to another.

Would the Finnish residents be willing to visit Nepal during their vacation?

The finding from the survey shows that Finnish people are willing to visit Nepal during their vacation. The primary activity they like to do is trekking and mountaineering and no country other than Nepal offers such kind of trekking and mountaineering as Nepal is a hub to not only

the tallest mount of the world, i.e., Mount Everest but eight tallest mountains. Finns being such adventures wouldn't miss the amazing experience.

## **5.1 Recommendation**

In spite of being a beautiful nation, there are numerous social, financial and political challenges, which are threatening for the tourism business of Nepal. Poor foundation, human asset imperatives, financial administration issues, poor venture condition, an absence of government authority and political flimsiness are the dangers for promoting Tourism.

The basic expectation of an effective tourism recuperation program isn't only reestablishing or returning to where things were before the natural disaster hit the country, but to build back enhanced. This is intended to bring about a more attractive destination, business and to improve infrastructure to the point that if a similar disaster took place in near future, there would be less destruction. (Raj Kunwar & Limbu, n.d.)

The earthquake of 2015 has given the tourism board of Nepal a chance to re-image the business. The board should highlight and focus on the neglected or ignored areas, which can be beautified and can be created as a new destination. The palaces that were built during the ranas and kings regime can be developed as a new avenue for the tourists, which will demonstrate colonial style architecture. As Finns are very exploratory, these neglected areas should be highlighted in the promotion so that it creates an urge among the Finns to come and explore the beauty of the country.

As the travel operator, Tatu told the author that the mountaineering permit is costly, the tourism board should offer discounts on the permits according to the situation, i.e., tourism season. As well as prices of domestic flights for tourists should be affordable so discounts should be offered on the ticket prices in order to attract more tourists. Moreover, who will miss the tour if free value-added products are being offered to the tourist, for example, complimentary mountain flight tickets to first ten tourists of the month, free entry ticket to the traditional / cultural festival for all the tourists visiting in a specific month, etc. The board should make such arrangements to make every single tourist feel special, such as souvenirs should be given as a thank you gift for coming to our country or an extraordinary welcome so that this hospitality brings them again to Nepal.

As Finns have been cooperating with Nepal for many years, the tourism board of Nepal can dedicate a whole year or at least a month for Finnish tourists in order to thank Finland for its support in the areas of education, forestry, water, industrial, energy, human rights, poverty improvement and what not. The board can reduce the prices of destination accommodation. Different activities like visit to energy plants and school can be arranged in order to attract more Finnish tourists as well as to show the Finns that their projects are running successfully. This will make the relationship of Nepal and Finland even stronger; politically, emotionally and economically. Moreover, this will create an excellent image of Nepal in the whole world.

The tourism board should consider sending its delegation to “Matka Travel Fair” which happens every year in Helsinki. The tour operators of Nepal should also participate in it directly or indirectly coordinating with NRN Finland in order to promote Nepal by providing every single information since Finns are not well informed about Nepal.

Transportation is one of the most critical sectors, which plays a vital role in the development of tourism sites as well as attracting the tourists. Due to the geographical location, weather patterns and inefficient management of the authorities the transportation sector is in a dangerous condition. The terminals of the international airport in Kathmandu are a mess, and credit card facility is not available at the airport. Heavy rainfall damage the roads which make it difficult for the tourists to reach their destination, flying in Nepal is expensive and much more. Due to this, many Finnish tourists, including other tourists think that it is not a safe destination. So Nepal should focus on the maintenance of the transportation sector. They should upgrade its airports with the latest technologies, online tickets booking process should be developed and should open new airport of Pokhara as soon as possible. The maintenance of the road should frequently be checked, and if any road is under construction, alternative routes should be informed to the tourists beforehand so that they don't have to face any difficulty.

Electricity is also one of the main sectors, which plays an important role in the development of tourism sites as well as attracting more tourists. People coming from abroad, usually European and American get very upset when the electricity goes since they are not used to it. It is a big drawback for the tourism department. The government should reduce the shortage of electricity as soon as possible through constructing dams or, buying from the third party at a cheaper rate. Apart from other factor that gets affected when there is no light, one of the most significant factors in the past few years is Internet access. When the electricity goes off, the access to the Internet is also gone if there is no generator or backup. For attracting more number of tourists, the tourism board should make the availability of Internet access 24/7 with fast speed. Despite

the fact that the Internet is available at every destination; the speed is slow and can disappear at any time. The uploading of pictures at that moment, live streaming, and putting stories on Snap chat is a way of an excellent promotion which the tourist does itself. So better the speed of the internet and access to the Internet is, the better the reviews and the promotion will be.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Nepal is a country where one can find every beauty, i.e., from high mountain ranges to wildlife, cultural diversity, religious tolerance and so on and so forth. Thus this report demonstrates that Nepal has great potential to attract tourist from Finland with the help of effective and efficient promotional strategies. The data collected from the surveys show that even though Finnish inhabitants knows Nepal as a Country, they don't know much about Nepal due to lack of promotional ways. To get a higher Finnish tourist turnover, it is very important to make Nepal recognized among them so that they are well informed of how prosperous Nepal is in terms of beauty and culture. Moreover, the result shows that by developing new destination places and activities and promoting all the tourism stuff through social media more Finns will be attracted toward Nepal. The board should publish a detailed report about how the country is safe to visit, what improvements have been done, how capable will its crisis management team will be if they face a natural disaster in future, how they will ensure tourists safe escape from the catastrophe, etc. As one of the biggest discouraging factors for Finns is natural disaster, the report can help them be secure about Nepal and will make them satisfied that their visit to Nepal will be safe and sound.

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## Appendix

**TOURIST ARRIVAL AND AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY, 1964-2016**

Year	Total		By Air		By Land		Average Length of Stay
	Number	Annual Growth Rate (%)	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1964	9,526	30.9	8,435	88.5	1,091	11.5	NA
1965	9,388	-1.4	8,303	88.4	1,085	11.6	NA
1966	12,567	33.9	11,206	89.2	1,361	10.8	NA
1967	18,093	44.0	15,064	83.3	3,029	16.7	NA
1968	24,209	33.8	19,717	81.4	4,492	18.6	NA
1969	34,901	44.2	28,130	80.6	6,771	19.4	NA
1970	45,970	31.7	36,508	79.4	9,462	20.6	NA
1971	49,914	8.6	40,369	80.9	9,545	19.1	NA
1972	52,930	6.0	42,484	80.3	10,446	19.7	NA
1973	68,047	28.6	55,791	82.0	12,256	18.0	NA
1974	89,838	32.0	74,170	82.6	15,668	17.4	13.20
1975	92,440	2.9	78,995	85.5	13,445	14.5	13.05
1976	105,108	13.7	90,498	86.1	14,610	13.9	12.41
1977	129,329	23.0	110,180	85.2	19,149	14.8	11.60
1978	156,123	20.7	130,034	83.3	26,089	16.7	11.84
1979	162,276	3.9	137,865	85.0	24,411	15.0	12.02
1980	162,897	0.4	139,387	85.6	23,510	14.4	11.18
1981	161,669	-0.8	142,084	87.9	19,585	12.1	10.49
1982	175,448	8.5	153,509	87.5	21,939	12.5	13.33
1983	179,405	2.3	152,470	85.0	26,935	15.0	11.53
1984	176,634	-1.5	149,920	84.9	26,714	15.1	11.55
1985	180,989	2.5	151,870	83.9	29,119	16.1	11.30
1986	223,331	23.4	182,745	81.8	40,586	18.2	11.16
1987	248,080	11.1	205,611	82.9	42,469	17.1	11.98
1988	265,943	7.2	234,945	88.3	30,998	11.7	12.00
1989	239,945	53.7	207,907	86.6	32,038	13.4	12.00
1990	254,885	6.2	226,421	88.8	28,464	11.2	12.00

**1964-2016 (contd.)**

Year	Total		By Air		By Land		Average Length of Stay
	Number	Growth Rate (%)	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1991	292,995	15.0	267,932	91.4	25,063	8.6	9.25
1992	334,353	14.1	300,496	89.9	33,857	10.1	10.14
1993	293,567	-12.2	254,140	86.6	39,427	13.4	11.94
1994	326,531	11.2	289,381	88.6	37,150	11.4	10.00
1995	363,395	11.3	325,035	89.4	38,360	10.6	11.27
1996	393,613	8.3	343,246	87.2	50,367	12.8	13.50
1997	421,857	7.2	371,145	88.0	50,712	12.0	10.49
1998	463,684	9.9	398,008	85.8	65,676	14.2	10.76
1999	491,504	6.0	421,243	85.7	70,261	14.3	12.28
2000	463,646	-5.7	376,914	81.3	86,732	18.7	11.88
2001	361,237	-22.1	299,514	82.9	61,723	17.1	11.93
2002	275,468	-23.7	218,660	79.4	56,808	20.6	7.92
2003	338,132	22.7	275,438	81.5	62,694	18.5	9.60
2004	385,297	13.9	297,335	77.2	87,962	22.8	13.51
2005	375,398	-2.6	277,346	73.9	98,052	26.1	9.09
2006	383,926	2.3	283,819	73.9	100,107	26.1	10.20
2007	526,705	37.2	360,713	68.5	165,992	31.5	11.96
2008	500,277	-5.0	374,661	74.9	125,616	25.1	11.78
2009	509,956	1.9	379,322	74.4	130,634	25.6	11.32
2010	602,867	18.2	448,800	74.4	154,067	25.6	12.67
2011	736,215	22.1	545,221	74.1	190,994	25.9	13.12
2012	803,092	9.1	598,258	74.5	204,834	25.5	12.16
2013	797,616	-0.7	594,848	74.6	202,768	25.4	12.60
2014	790,118	-0.9	585,981	74.2	204,137	25.8	12.44
2015	538,970	-0.32	407,412	75.6	131,558	24.4	13.16
2016	753,002	40	572,563	41	180,439	37	13.4

Table 1. Tourist Arrival and Average Length of Stay, 1964-2016 (Nepal Statistics 2016).

### TOURIST ARRIVAL BY PURPOSE OF VISIT, 1993-2016

Year	Holiday Pleasure	Trekking & Mountai- neering	Business	Pilgrimage	Official	Conv./ Conf.	Others	Not Speci- fied	Total
1993	170,279	69,619	19,495	10,429	15,812	5,367	2,566	-	293,567
	(58.0)	(23.7)	(6.6)	(3.6)	(5.4)	(1.8)	(0.9)		(100.0)
1994	168,155	76,865	23,522	5,475	20,431	5,361	26,722	-	326,531
	(51.5)	(23.5)	(7.2)	(1.7)	(6.3)	(1.6)	(8.2)		(100.0)
1995	183,207	84,787	21,829	5,257	20,090	5,272	42,953	-	363,395
	(50.4)	(23.3)	(6.0)	(1.4)	(5.5)	(1.5)	(11.8)		(100.0)
1996	209,377	88,945	25,079	4,802	20,191	6,054	39,165	-	393,613
	(53.2)	(22.6)	(6.4)	(1.2)	(5.1)	(1.5)	(10.0)		(100.0)
1997	249,360	91,525	27,409	4,068	24,106	5,824	19,565	-	421,857
	(59.1)	(21.7)	(6.5)	(1.0)	(5.7)	(1.4)	(4.6)		(100.0)
1998	261,347	112,644	24,954	16,164	22,123	5,181	21,271	-	463,684
	(56.4)	(24.3)	(5.4)	(3.5)	(4.8)	(1.1)	(4.6)		(100.0)
1999	290,862	107,960	23,813	19,198	24,132	5,965	19,574	-	491,504
	(59.2)	(22.0)	(4.8)	(3.9)	(4.9)	(1.2)	(4.0)		(100.0)
2000	255,889	118,780	29,454	15,801	20,832	5,599	17,291	-	463,646
	(55.2)	(25.6)	(6.4)	(3.4)	(4.5)	(1.2)	(3.7)		(100.0)
2001	187,022	100,828	18,528	13,816	18,727	0	22,316	-	361,237
	(51.8)	(27.9)	(5.1)	(3.8)	(5.2)	(0.0)	(6.2)		(100.0)
2002	110,143	59,279	16,990	12,366	17,783	0	58,907	-	275,468
	(40.0)	(21.5)	(6.2)	(4.5)	(6.5)	(0.0)	(21.4)		(100.0)
2003	97,904	65,721	19,387	21,395	21,967	0	111,758	-	338,132
	(29.0)	(19.4)	(5.7)	(6.3)	(6.5)	(0.0)	(33.1)		(100.0)
2004	167,262	69,442	13,948	45,664	17,088	0	71,893	-	385,297
	(43.4)	(18.0)	(3.6)	(11.9)	(4.4)	(0.0)	(18.7)		(100.0)

**TOURIST ARRIVAL BY PURPOSE OF VISIT, 1993-2016 (contd.)**

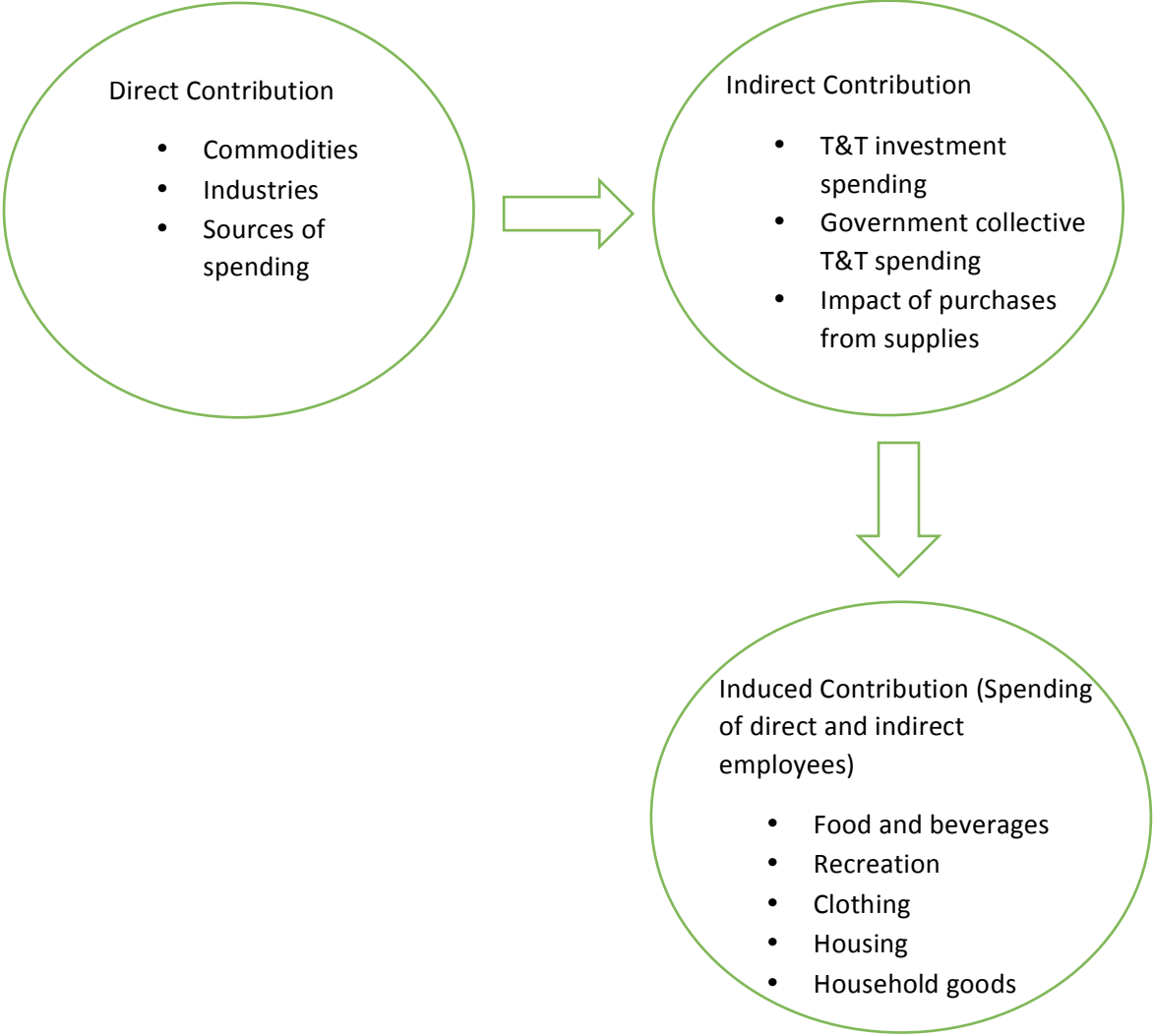
Year	Holiday Pleasure	Trekking & Mountaineering	Business	Pilgrimage	Official	Conv./ Conf.	Others	Not Specified	Total
2005	160,259	61,488	21,992	47,621	16,859	0	67,179	-	375,398
	(42.7)	(16.4)	(5.9)	(12.7)	(4.5)	(0.0)	(17.9)		(100.0)
2006	145,802	66,931	21,066	59,298	18,063	0	72,766	-	383,926
	(27.7)	(12.7)	(4.0)	(11.3)	(3.4)	(0.0)	(13.8)		(100.0)
2007	217,815	101,320	24,487	52,594	21,670	8,019	78,644	22,156	526,705
	(41.4)	(19.2)	(4.6)	(10.0)	(4.1)	(1.5)	(14.9)	(4.2)	(100.0)
2008	148,180	104,822	23,039	45,091	43,044	6,938	99,634	29,529	500,277
	(29.6)	(21.0)	(4.6)	(9.0)	(8.6)	(1.4)	(19.9)	(5.9)	(100.0)
2009	140,992	132,929	22,758	51,542	24,518	9,985	87,134	40,098	509,956
	(27.6)	(26.1)	(4.5)	(10.1)	(4.8)	(2.0)	(17.1)	(7.9)	(100.0)
2010	263,938	70,218	21,377	101,335	26,374	9,627	52,347	57,651	602,867
	(43.8)	(11.6)	(3.5)	(16.8)	(4.4)	(1.6)	(8.7)	(9.6)	(100.0)
2011	425,721	86,260	17,859	63,783	24,054	10,836	37,311	70,391	736,215
	(57.8)	(11.7)	(2.4)	(8.7)	(3.3)	(1.5)	(5.1)	(9.6)	(100.0)
2012	379,627	105,015	24,785	109,854	30,460	13,646	48,540	91,165	803,092
	(47.3)	(13.1)	(3.1)	(13.7)	(3.8)	(1.7)	(6.0)	(11.4)	(100.0)
2013	437,891	97,309	30,309	40,678	39,881	15,952	62,214	73,381	797,616
	(54.9)	(12.2)	(3.8)	(5.1)	(5.0)	(2.0)	(7.8)	(9.2)	(100.0)
2014	395,849	97,185	24,494	98,765	32,395	13,432	53,728	74,271	790,118
	(50.1)	(12.3)	(3.1)	(12.5)	(4.1)	(1.7)	(6.8)	(9.4)	(100.0)
2015	3,86,065	9,162	20,876	14,996	21,479	9,038	77354		5,38,970
	71.63	1.70	3.87	2.78	3.99	1.68	14.35		(100.0)
2016	489,451	66,490	24,322	82,830	21,310	12,801	55,797		7,53,002
	65.0	8.83	3.23	11.0	2.83	1.7	7.41		100

Table 2. Tourist Arrival by Purpose of Visit, 1993-2016 (Nepal Statistics 2016).

Figure 2. TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL & TOURISM TO GDP. (Source: Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2017).

Direct, indirect and induced contribution refers to:

(Source: Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2017).



Haaga-Helia University of Applied Science,  
Program in International Business Management,  
Global Customer Relationship Management and Communication  
Bachelor`s Degree Program

A questionnaire on “*Nepal as a tourist destination- Finnish travelers` perspective*”

Researcher- Manjeet Shrestha

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Your opinion and experience will act as a guideline for completion of this research work.

Basic information about the Company.

- Name of the Tour Operator
- Contact Person
- Designation of the Respondent
- How long this company has been operating tours?
- Is this Company operating tours in Nepal? How long?
- How do you get up to date information about tourism in Nepal?

Finnish Market for Nepal.

- What is Nepal`s image as a tourist destination among the Finns? Should this be improved? How? To what direction?
- What is the preferred source of information for the prospective tourists to Nepal? Please list three most important sources. Your suggestions for new sources of information are most welcome.
- What is the typical profile of Finnish tourists travelling to Nepal?
- Main reasons for them to travel to Nepal?
- What methods Finns prefer to use when booking a trip to Nepal? List three most important methods.

- What is the Average length of Stay in Nepal?
- What are their accommodation preferences like?
- Is there any new type of tour packages that are in demand in Finland?
- What is your suggestion about pricing and cost for tourism in Nepal?
- Which factors discourage Finns to travel to Nepal? Any competing destination to Nepal among Finnish markets?
- What are the typical feedbacks about the Customer`s experience in Nepal?
- What types of Support are needed for tour operators like you from Nepal?
- Which factors would need improvement to promote Nepal as a tourism destination in Finland?
- Do you have any advice to the Nepalese stakeholders on how to approach international tour operators like you?
- Any other issues or suggestions that you would like to raise?

Thesis Survey Questions:

Hi, my name is Manjeet Shrestha, a Bachelor degree student at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Science. I am conducting a Survey to find out how Nepal is perceived as a Tourism Destination In Finland and how can it be improved and developed. Your answers to this Small questionnaire will make a great difference and help me Complete my Bachelor Degree Program. I can assure you that your responses will be Confidential and anonymous. Please kindly place a cross (x) to indicate your choice of answer and/or opinions.

\* Required

Gender \*

Male

Female

Nationality \*

Finnish

Other:

Age \*

15-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55+

How often do you travel? \*

Once every two-year

Once a year

Twice a year

Thrice a year

Other:

How do you prefer to travel? \*

By Yourself

Through Travel Agencies

Personal freelance Guide

Other:

What is the primary purpose of your travel? \*

Holiday

Business

Family

Other:

Do you mostly travel within the Country or outside the Country \*

Within the Country

Outside The Country

If you travel outside the country, of which region do you prefer to visit? \*

European

Asian

American

African

Australian

On an average, how much do you spend during your travel (including tickets, hotels, food, travel, etc.)? \*

500-1000 Euros

1000-2000 Euros

2000-3000 Euros

3000-4000 Euros

Other:

Have you ever heard of Nepal \*

Yes

No

If yes, from what source or from where or whom?

Traditional Media

Social Media

Travel Agencies

Family or Friends

Tourist Fairs

Have you travelled to Nepal \*

Yes

No

Would you prefer to travel Nepal for your next vacation? \*

Yes

No

Maybe

If you were to visit, what might be your purpose of visit to Nepal?

Holidays

Business

Friends And Families

Other:

If you don't want to visit Nepal, what might be the reason?

Your answer

What would be your expectations during your visit to Nepal? \*

A unique lifestyle contrasting from western lifestyle

A unique geographical terrain

A unique culture, tradition, religion and Climatic Condition

A unique food and language

Never have before imagined place with everything fascinating

Other:

What do you think is going to be the challenging problem you would face in Nepal? \*

Communication problem

Quality of Service

Pollution

Personal safety and Security

Other:

Below are listed some elements that you might consider when you chose a tourist destination. I request you to indicate HOW IMPORTANT is each of these elements to you when you chose any tourist destination (in general) (rate them on a scale »1« -completely unimportant to »5« - very important).

Personal safety \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Overall Cleanliness of the Destination \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Unspoiled natural beauty and natural resources \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Favorable Climatic Condition \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Diversity in Cultural and Historical attraction \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Quality of Accomodation \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Friendliness and Hospitality \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Well managed transportation system \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Local Cuisine \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Night life and entertainment \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Shopping Malls \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important

Sports and recreational activities \*

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Very important