

ROLES OF TRAVEL AGENCIES OF NEPAL IN PROMOTING ECOTOURISM

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| Abstract <p>The topic of the bachelor thesis was roles of travel agencies of Nepal in promoting ecotourism. The main objective of this research was to find out the roles of travel agencies in the promotion of ecotourism of Nepal. The research will be a source of support to the tourism entrepreneur to plan better strategies, students to widen their knowledge and for researchers to use as a reference.</p> <p>Qualitative research method was used in the research. In this regard, four different travel agencies best suited were selected and four individual interviews with open ended questions from these organizations were commenced. The interviews were taken during September 2011 and February 2012. For the data analysis part, content analysis was used and collected datas were segregated in different topics.</p> <p>The result of the research displayed that there were continuous efforts made by travel agencies of Nepal in promoting the ecotourism may it be on their individual level or with the help of various governmental and non-governmental organization. Some of the most highlighted issues during the entire study were to create awareness to the local people as well as the visitors and a light of hope for reliable and strong support from the government authorities to the travel agencies.</p> | | |
| Keywords Nepal, ecotourism, travel agencies, flow chart of tourism bodies, open ended interviews, content analysis | | |
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1 INTRODUCTION

Nepal, a country of natural beauty, adventure, liveliness, diverse culture, friendliness and amazing hospitality is also commonly known as the Kingdom of Himalayas. Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak including eight other highest peaks, also lies in Nepal. It is the birth place of Lord Gautama Buddha, Pashupatinath Temple, one of the most revered holy shrines of the Hindus, the Flora and Fauna. Similarly, the religious and simple life styles of the people here have added to the attraction of Nepal as a popular tourist destination. According to BBC holiday, Nepal is one of the best 50 destinations to visit before you die (Things to do, 2012). Therefore, it has tourist from different corners of the world, which is an added benefit to the tourism industry of Nepal.

According to the Nepal Tourism Statistics (2010a, 8), the provisional report states that tourist arrivals by major nationality visiting Nepal, people from China, Japan, USA, UK, France and Germany were the most numerous visitors during the year 2009-2010 (Table 1).

Nepal also offers a possibility for numerous activities such as trekking and mountaineering, pilgrimage visit, jungle safari, white water rafting, bungee jumping, canoeing and others. Besides, people also come to Nepal for business and official purpose. When comparing the data from 1991 – 2010, it was found that in the past two decades the number of tourist arrivals had more than doubled (Tourism Statistics, 2010a, 24) (Table 2).

The Tourism Industry is vague. It includes many bodies which are directly and indirectly related to the industry for the development of tourism. Some of the most important bodies are the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation,

Nepal Tourism Board, Travel and Trekking Agencies, Hotels and Resorts and others. Among these bodies, in Nepal, the travel agencies are the most active organization that plays a vital role in the development of ecotourism. Due to the environmental degradation in the mountains caused by trekking and traveling, in the form of deforestation, maximum usage of plastic materials and garbage from the tourists, and increasing transportation, the tourism industry of Nepal has been greatly affected.

The main concern in the present context in the field of ecotourism of Nepal has been to create awareness in the native people as well as the tourists about the environment and its importance. In this respect, travel agencies in Nepal have been putting a continuous individual effort on making everyone alert right from the start by giving information through their official webpages (Great Wall Nepal Pvt. Ltd, a).

1.1 Motivational approach for the study

In the past, being involved with a travel agency and the tourism sector for about two years, the author have had an opportunity to realize the roles of travel agencies in promoting ecotourism in Nepal. It was then, the author learned that travel agencies with the joint effort of the government, associations and other tourism bodies were working towards the promotion of ecotourism. So, in order to get a larger picture of the roles of travel agencies, the author chose this topic for bachelor's thesis.

1.2 Objectives of the research

The main objective of the research is to find out the roles of travel agencies in the promotion of ecotourism of Nepal. The author's main part of the work during the thesis was to arrange interviews (based on the research questions) with the travel agencies of Nepal.

Research questions:

1. What kind of activities do travel agencies have in promoting ecotourism of Nepal?
2. What kind of cooperation do travel agencies have with the different authorities?

From this thesis, the tourism entrepreneurs, student and researchers will get the picture of the roles of travel agencies involved in promotion of ecotourism of Nepal. The tourism entrepreneurs are then able to plan better strategies, the students can deepen their knowledge and the researcher can use it as a reference.

2 ECOTOURISM AND ITS CONCEPT

According to IUCN (recently called World Conservation Union, 1996), Wood (2002a, 9) defines that ecotourism is traveling to praising the beauty of nature economically benefiting the bounded society and their high amount of participation.

As International Ecotourism Society (1991), Wood (2002b, 9) argued in one of the first definitions, ecotourism is travelling responsibly for the purpose of

enjoyment and appreciating the nature, causing minimum damage to the environment and promoting the local people and the host economy.

According to Australian department of tourism 1994 cited in Page & Dowling (2002a, 58), ecotourism includes three different branches, nature based, environmental education and sustainable management.

As IUCN defined in Ceballos-Lascurain (1996), whenever we plan for a travel, we have to assure that we are definitely going to make the best out of our leisure time and tour, but as being good citizen, we have to make sure that we are affecting the minimum to the environment and benefit the local people in the best way (Page & Dowling, 2002b, 58). Ecotourism is a part of the process of sustainable tourism focusing at cultural tourism components. The goal of Ecotourism is to derive the best sustainable results. This is not easily possible, all the tourism based movements whether it is business trip, meeting, leisure or a gala trip should be well organized, planned and developed. Similarly, the cultural, environmental and socio economic factors should be well focused in terms of marketing (Woodc, 2002, 9).

From the above definitions and concepts, ecotourism includes preserving the nature, educating the travelers and the local people, raising the economic status of the host nation (Canadian Environmental Advisory Council 1991, 25).

2.1 Ecotourism principles and benefits

According to environmentalists, ecotourism has been a matter of great concern since 1980. The main aim of Ecotourism is to arrange tourism in protected areas, to provide education to the tourist, develop the national economy, and respect the different cultures causing minimum harm to the environment (Josip, 2011).

Wood (2002d, 10) thinks that ecotourism commits to the preserving of biodiversity. It promotes the local people economically and socially, emphasizes on high amount of host participation. It also involves analysis, comprises of efficient and effective action from the travelers and the tourism industry ensuring minimum use of non-renewable energy.

Blamey stated in Weaver (2001a, 5), the term Ecotourism had been firstly originated by Hetzer (1965). He emphasized on the four principles for travelling responsibly. It included reducing the natural effects on the environment, admiring and following the recipient's culture and tradition, increasing the level of economy both to the native people and the nation and raising the level of satisfaction of the visitors. According to Honey (1999) & Blamey in Weaver (2001b,5), the developing countries started to feel that international currencies could be well generated only if Tourism would focus more on the environment causing less and less damage to the resources. Wight (1993) argued in Weaver (2001c, 6) that all the governmental, nongovernmental and tourism related bodies started to realize the fact that Ecotourism could only be able to get continuity only if a genuine principle and an effective management plan is implemented.

Further, Shrestha and Walinga (2003) discussed in state of ecotourism, (2009a) that the principles of ecotourism as stated by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) that one of the initial need of ecotourism is to educate the visitor regarding the necessity of protecting the environment and behaving in such a way so as to create minimum damage to the environment, culture and tradition of the host nation. They have insisted the maximum use of the local resources ensuring high amount of earnings, avoiding deforestation, preserving plants and wild animals, reducing use of water, electricity and fuels.

Blamey, Dhakal & Dahal (2000) added that promoting ecotourism is going to benefit all the concerned bodies for example native people, resource and the tourism industry as a whole. Ecotourism should help in realizing the significance of establishing the interrelation between the government and non-government bodies, researcher, students and the regional people. While carrying out the principles of ecotourism, it should not cause false effect in the resources that support for the promotion of ecotourism but should be prepared in a wise way. Besides, the principles of ecotourism should improve every related party's individual concern, responsibilities and their actions (State of ecotourism, 2009b).

Ecotourism creates economic or environmental benefit to the host nation may it be direct or indirect. . According to the National Ecotourism Strategy by the Common Wealth department of tourism (1994) in Betton (2000a, 7), it allows the local people to offer its products and services to the visitors, promoting of ecotourism generates employment opportunities to the local people and the community. It also helps to develop the standard of the local people and the community as a whole which at the end of the day is drawing more visitors. Betton (2000b, 13) further stated that ecotourism greatly emphasizes the preservation of wild habitants and the natural resources. It also provides a

possibility for the interaction between the tourist and the local people about culture as well as the environmental factors.

Ecotourism is a need of the world and it is not only the rights and responsibilities of Travel Agencies to protect the environment but of every single citizen. It is creating awareness, benefiting the local host economy, causing minimum harm to the environment and creating better world to live.

2.2 Advantage and disadvantage of ecotourism, a case study in Costa Rica

A case study done by Dasenbrock (2002a), states that among the developing countries of Central America, Costa Rica is one of the most successful countries in benefiting from the implementation of ecotourism. It is a country rich in natural resources, beautiful places, attractive wild habitats and volcanoes. Dulude (2000) in Dasenbrock (2002b) mentioned that the yearly income from the tourism industry is 1 billion US dollars (approx.) which is generated by 1 million visitors. Though, being a small country in size, the tourism in Costa Rica has grown rapidly due to its wide range of species, and numerous national parks, which covers a large area of the nation. As Costa Rica is located close to the USA, about 49% of the tourists there are North Americans. Traditionally, Central America, it has a well-known record of crime, political instability and insecurity but this scenario has now changed in Costa Rica. Today it is regarded as a nation with the fewest number of crimes, great political stability and good social security. According to Weaver (1993, 83) in Dasenbrock (2002c), its beauty has even been compared to Switzerland. This has not been possible without the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the United States which have been the major supporters of Costa Rica in this success.

Weaver (1998, 24) in Dasenbrock (2002d) said that due to the advantage of having dense forest and nature, Costa Rica has the possibility to provide the local resources for foreign countries for various purposes such as medical study and research. The amount of money yielded by these activities could be directly used for the promotion of the ecotourism in the nation. It also provides the education and refreshments for the travelers and motivates them to preserve the natural resources of their home countries. Egan (2001) discussed in Dasenbrock (2002e) that the concept of using less land to build tourist lodges where natural resources are minimal used was first introduced in Costa Rica by architects like Anderson.

There is no doubt that the number of tourists in Costa Rica is constantly increasing. Due to this massive entry of tourists, the wild habitants, plants and species are greatly affected because of tourist walkways across the plants, haphazardly feeding the wild animals and others. There has also been a great confusion with the national park stakeholders regarding the rare plants and animals and the visitors. The question aroused is whether to allow the desperately interested visitors enter the park by charging them for their visit or to protect the endangered plants and animals for the future. Dapin (London Times, April 21, 2001) discussed in Dasenbrock (2002f) that it is a very sad situation that although the organizations are greatly prioritizing the importance of ecotourism, some individuals, for example tour guides, who are representing their organization and leading the tour could sometimes give a false impression to the clients and the environment. This is because of the lack of strict prohibition to enter the protected areas. For example a guide, along with travelers broke into a protected area disturbing a turtle and its habitat.

According to Weaver (1998, 62) in Dasenborck (2002g), there is no transparency in the flow of investment made in regard to ecotourism due to mistrust, miscommunication and insufficient education among the related parties.

Hicks (2001) and Weaver (1998, 26) in Dasenbrock (2002h) argued that the main problem of all the developing nations is that they do not have enough money to create a good foundation. This forces them to seek for international financial support. This is where special consideration needs to be taken, to make sure that a large involvement by international supporters may not lead to the outflow of the cash earned through hard work. Costa Rica has implemented the best control measure to maximize the concentration of development on small scale industries rather than large scale industries.

3 STATE OF NEPALESE ECOTOURISM

Nepal is a small yet beautiful country which in the globe looks like a sandwich between the two giants of the world India to the South and China to the North. Unique and Rich in natural resources, wildlife, culture, tradition, religion, heritages, Himalayas and the best in hospitality have been major source of attraction for the visitors all over the world. Nepal has an area of 147,181 sq. kilometers (About Nepal, 2012). According to Federal Research Division (A country study: Nepal, 2005a, 6), Nepal is divided into three major region The Himalayas, The Hills and The Terai. The Himalayas to the north, is covered fully by the highest peaks of the world including Mt. Everest, the world's tallest mountain with a height of 8850 meters (Rosenberg, 2012).

The Hilly region consists of beautiful hills in fact Kathmandu the capital is a valley completely surrounded by hills with moderate climate whereas the Terai is a plain region with hot climate, which is very good for agriculture, farming because of its fertile soil.

The Himalayan region consists of famous peaks of the world, people from all over the world come to Nepal in large numbers annually for short and long trekking purposes. Some just come to have a quick peak of the Himalayas range from the airplanes using the mountain flights. Nepal is a landlocked country stated by Federal Research Division (A country study: Nepal, 2005b, 5-6), the Hilly region has numerous small and big hills. It also consists of beautiful forest, rivers and lakes. Tourist come to these places to enjoy the hiking and the neighborhood village home stays, adventurous activities like bungee jumping, canoeing and experiencing caves. National Parks and industrial sector are present in the Terai region. Therefore, due to this unique geography, climate and each region differentiating among each other, Nepal stands out among the rest of the countries.

Residents

Nepal has different ethnic groups and each ethnic group having their own identity including culture, language they speak and their tradition. But the common national language is Nepali. The population of Nepal is 28,951,852 (July 2010 estimation). Since more than 80% of the Nepalese follow Hindu religion, Nepal is also regarded as the Hindu kingdom. At the same time there are also Buddhism, Islam and other religions who are respected and treated equally well. The literacy rate of Nepal is 48.6%, this is in an increasing trend every year. The estimated life expectancy in 2010 rate in average for a Male is 64.62 and female is 67.05 in Nepal (Nepal People, 2011).

Tourism is one of the major sources of government revenue in Nepal. Tourism in Nepal in the early days was only focused on the capital and the other urban areas. But as Gurung (1995), thinks that the tourism players today have centralized even on the untouched areas and villages for nature and activities and this kind of practice which is taking place in Nepal is already ecotourism. As the visitors in Nepal are increasing, the basic structures of the country which includes roads and transportation, communication, heritages, wildlife, jungles and parks should be improved accordingly for the better future of the tourism industry. The increasing rate of political conflicts in Nepal has an adverse effect in the tourism industry of Nepal. Even, the visitors today are having second thoughts on making trips to Nepal because of the safety concern (State of ecotourism, 2009c). The only light of hope for the people of Nepal and the tourist is peace in Nepal.

The status of ecotourism of Nepal in the present context is seem to be based on the ongoing projects which needs active involvement of the people while making plans and implementing and conserving as well as protecting the available resources (State of ecotourism, 2009d). Every tourism related organization is directly and indirectly benefited from the promotion of ecotourism. For example the entrance fee in the parks for both the locals and the internationals add to the conserving of the wildlife and the maintaining and renovating of the premises.

K.C, Minister for Tourism and civil aviation presented on The World ecotourism summit (2002a, 2) that the country's Ninth Plan, its policies and action consists of various ecotourism programs including remaking the villages from the tourist point of view and advancing new trekking areas. Likewise, the tenth plan has aimed to focus on revising the policies and

improving the fundamentals in under developed areas for the promotion of the ecotourism of Nepal. The government as being aware of the rising problems and pressure in the environment has assured that all tourism related organizations continuously implement environmental awareness programs and educate the employees, local people and the travelers. Besides the government, the main aim of all the nongovernmental is to stay and keep clean. Nepal will use its knowledge in Ecotourism as a tool for improving low economic condition, generate employment opportunities and preserving the environment.

An article published in the main dailies named ekantipur, Sharma (2012a), the planning and monitoring manager in the NTB, had described the seven strategies in the ecotourism and the marketing program. It includes using ecotourism of Nepal as a tool for benefiting the industry and the nation, establish networking at different levels, collaboration between tourism organization and preservation bodies, encouraging the private organizations for sincere and active participation, advancing tourism sites , revise the rules of trekking and mountaineering and creating effective marketing programs. As people have their own perspectives in the ecotourism field, it is very obvious for big or small conflicts to arise between them. For example, let's talk about Royal Chitwan National Park, one of the popular destinations of Nepal. Due to the misunderstanding in the perception of ecotourism, a dispute has been found between the park authorities and lodge entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, Sharma (2012b) also mentioned that Nepal has been also making sincere efforts towards the promotion and conservation of environmental resources and wildlife. For instance, they celebrated a 'Zero Poaching Year' on January 3, 2012 as there was not even one- single- horned

rhinos killed over the past year. Similarly, a community named Shiva in Bardia made genuine efforts in adjusting themselves in peace with wildlife by using green mint leaves and daisy like white chamomile flowers to keep rhinos away from their livelihood. Also two new well paid cash crops were introduced. Along with this, it is a matter of great pleasure for Nepal to be listed in the BBC World Challenge 2011, in which Shiva community forest project was announced to be the most successful projects in the world. Further, certification of ecotourism would allow tourism related bodies to follow the set standards. It would also allow exchanging views among entrepreneurs, qualified and related people at the STN (Sustainable Tourism Network) located at the Nepal Tourism Board.

3.1 NETIF in affiliation with Suomen Latu, Finland

According to Nepal Environment and Tourism Initiative Foundation (NETIF, 2008a), it is an organization established in cooperation with native people and International partner in 2006 and got registration in 2008. Its main objective is to uplift the village tourism, where culture and tradition is still alive and has the potential to lure travelers around the world. Additionally, fulfilling all the possible requirements of the visitors, it also helps to preserve the environment taking special consideration. The foundation targets to create a strong backbone for the better future of the tourism industry of Nepal. In affiliation with Suomen Latu, an organization financially supported by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are together running program for the advancement of sustainable tourism in and around the capital emphasizing importance of the local people and their active participation and the health and fitness issues of the visitors.

3.2 Accomplishment of NETIF within 3 years

Necessary funds were collected and kept aside for managing the environment. Several plates regarding protection of the environment had been placed along the traveling areas. For the waste management purpose, several bins were allocated, rest rooms were built where necessary, special education is provided to the local inhabitants in promoting their handwork and crafts, organic farming, various sanitation programs had been launched, tree plantation programs, dams were constructed to prevent from landslide. After performing these activities, the result obtained was satisfactory. The level of awareness progressed, travellers were provided with improved services, the art of hand work expertized. Further strategies, plans and policies were prepared for the next three years (NETIF, 2008b).

3.3 Difficulties in the environment

Nepal is suffering from a large number of environmental problems. Water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, deterioration of forest and land are some examples. Here, the improper management of the waste and chemicals from various industries, smoke and fuels from burning woods and industries, the increasing transportation, random cutting of woods for the purpose of construction, landslides, soil erosion and floods due to deforestation, mismanagement of waste disposal, garbage and drainage creating bad odour, hunting of wild habitats in spite of restrictions and improper ways of preserving the rare plants and herbs have generated serious environmental problems in the country (A country study: Nepal, 2005c, 7).

According to Shrestha & Walinga (2003) in *State of ecotourism*, (2009e), present tourist, have also been interested in visiting delicate areas for instance mountains where special measures are to be taken in the course of trekking. But this has not been organized in a systematic manner as some tourists travel on their own. During the time of reproduction of wild habitats, a large number of travelers visit the place causing disturbance in their normal behavior.

Although the government of Nepal has been making sincere efforts in order to reduce these problems, it has not resulted satisfactorily due to the poor planning and policy making, lack of smooth relation between the government and the public, inadequate financing and the political instability.

3.4 Issues in the society

In Nepal, the number of visitors is increasing day by day. Because of this, Gurung (1995) stated that the local people and the society have been influenced by the western culture, especially the youngsters. They are fading away from their own tradition and culture. For example, use of excessive junk and can foods, the way of dressing, exposing and others are directly and indirectly affecting the native people and their culture. During the time of interaction with the visitors, some local people makes direct connection with them for the purpose of working to a foreign land, which results in the loss of the manpower of the country. Besides, use of drugs and alcohol, crime also has an adverse effect in tourism (State of Ecotourism. 2009, f).

Some tourist also use tents in the course of traveling and consume huge amount of plastic bags, bottles, cans and garbage which are carelessly thrown around the spots. Drinking, dancing and music during the nighttime create a

lot of disturbance to the local people, who follow the early to bed and early to rise tradition. Due to the added numbers of fully equipped hotels and lodges in the remote areas, where village home stays is highly admired, the local people nowadays are in a great problem because the little money they use to make from the visitors by providing them basic lodging and food is not possible today as the tourist are directly transferred to those concrete buildings. Also, the culture, tradition, handicrafts promotion are in a state of dilemma.

Therefore, while traveling, a traveler should have adequate knowledge of the socio-cultural factors of the destiny first. Each traveler has to respect the culture and tradition, without affecting the local culture. They should be equally concerned in neat and sanitation of the environment as well. Similarly, the tourism affiliated organizations should encourage the tourist to opt for traditional village homes rather than the modern hotels. And government should introduce strict rules and regulations timely to ensure that the organizations are not only profit motive but also socio- initiative.

Responsible tourism bodies in Nepal

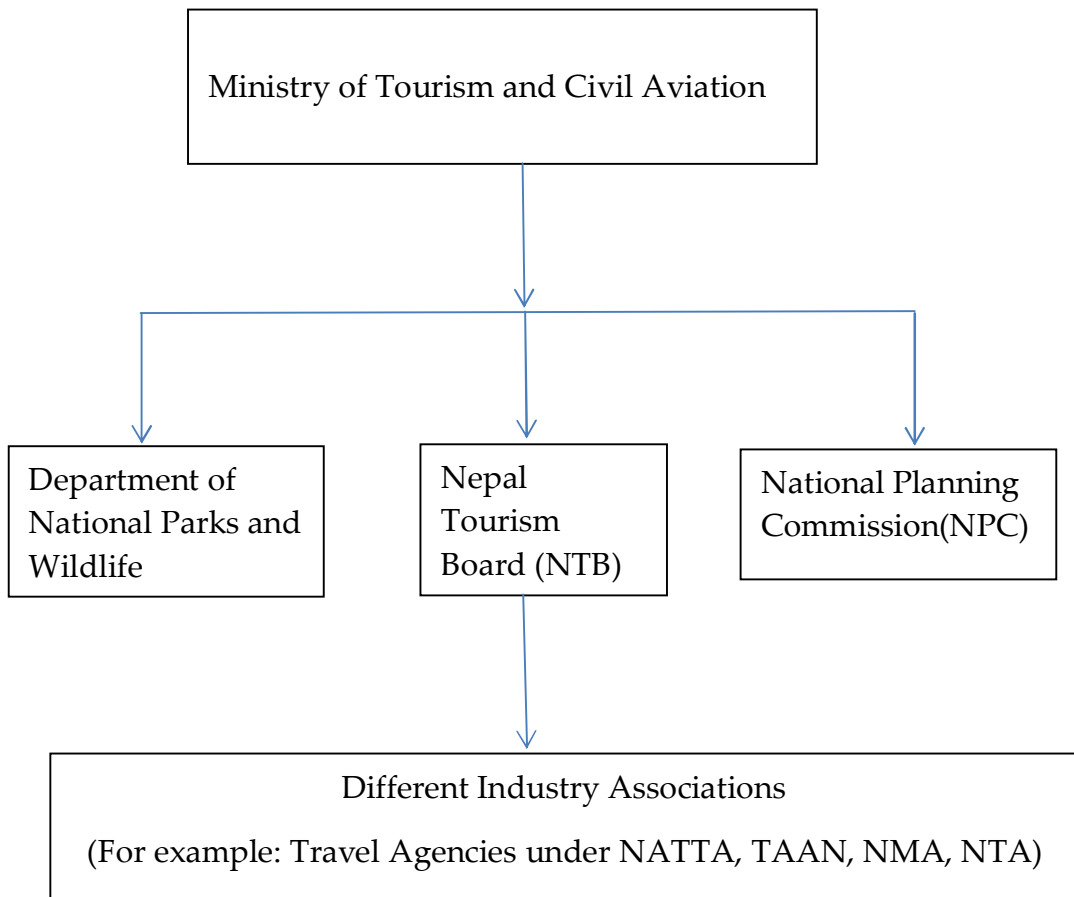
In the context of Nepal, the number of travel agencies is huge. Travel agencies are growing like mushrooms. Some of them have also been nationally and internationally recognized with sound academic and experienced professionals whereas some are just profit motive. K.C, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation also presented on The World ecotourism summit (2002b, 2), that the entire tourism industry of Nepal is governed by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA). It makes plans, strategies, sets rules and regulations and makes changes whenever and wherever necessary, also grants license to the tourism associations.

NTB (Nepal Tourism Board) conducts tourism survey and studies, advances national and international bond and cooperation, assists MoCTCA in providing advices and suggestions.

In the same way, NPC (National Planning Commission) is the authorized body to implement the five year plan for the fostering tourism in Nepal. Department of National Parks and Wildlife reserve is solely and wholly responsible for managing the parks in a better way, issue a system of charging the visitors in the park, which in return is going to be used for the preservation and conservation of the park and the wildlife. There are 20 different associations who are working for the bright future of the tourism industry. For instance, NMA, NATTA, TAAN, NTA, NEAT and others. Additionally, there are also many domestic including government and non-government and foreign organizations like IUCN, KMTCN, KEEP, WWF, TMI, who have been running various projects and are actively working in protecting the nature and the environment (Figure 1).

A progress report submitted by Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal, in a 3 year plan discussion committee (2008) stated that they have conducted a survey in collaboration with a Korean Company named Landmark Worldwide, to find out the possibilities for establishing the second international airport in the Bara District of Nepal. The survey has resulted satisfactory but the final decisions are yet to be taken. The need has been realized due to the increasing visitors and to provide them with better comfort. Thus, it is good news for all the Nepalese and also the visitors to have an alternate airport. This helps to develop not only the major cities but also promotes other areas and benefits the tourism sector.

FIGURE 1. Flowchart of responsible tourism bodies in Nepal



(Source: K.C, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. Ecotourism in Nepal: A National Overview. The World ecotourism summit 2002, 2)

4 TRAVEL AGENCIES IN NEPAL

The super advancement of communication and technology has made a great impact on the tourism industry. Today the internet has further modified the behavior and attitudes of the traveler. Visitors, no matter inexperienced or experienced can better organize their trip by visiting the place in advance. They are more concerned about their tour plans, though they are already able to generate a lot of information from various medias such as the internet, newspapers, publications, TV, radios and magazines with some the starters in particular using the services of travel agencies.

According to Greygory (1993a, 4), a travel agency is a complete package of touring including pre hand information on the destination, ticketing, lodging and fooding, transportation, communication, tour packages to make a guest's stay enjoyable right from the time of their arrival to their day of departure. It has the authorization and has the capacity to reply to the travelers' questions in the best possible way and make their holidays perfect.

According to the definition of a travel agent provided by Abel (editor and publisher of Travel Trade) in Greygory (1993b, 2), a travel agent is an approved body who follows the rules and regulation set up by the tourism industry meeting the imposed criteria. In this regard, it should consist of a personnel having adequate knowledge of and a suitable background for the tourism field.

Currently, the travel agencies are facing a lot of competition in the open market. This is due to the increasing number of tourism experts and entrepreneurs. On the other hand, this could be an added advantage to the traveler as they have the numerous options to choose from. Similarly, the

travel agents should be able to manage these challenges and survive to win the customers they need.

A successful travel agency is the one who is able to win a customer for life by fulfilling their imaginative wishes to a reality, who could then also serve as a word of mouth in promoting the goodwill of the organization. According to SARC (System Analysis Research Corporation) in Greygory(1993c, 57), in order to establish a strong and powerful travel agency, it should appoint a qualified team of professionals, who are able to carry out the three major roles, firstly, to fulfill all the requirements of the visitors, secondly, to perform the role as a mediator in emphasizing the essentials and thirdly, to keep the organization fit in order to survive in the business world.

4.1 Roles of travel agencies in promoting ecotourism

Travel agencies in Nepal are actively and largely involved in the promotion of ecotourism of Nepal. They are working in their individual levels and also with the government to some extent. Promotion in any field needs back up of finance, which has been a major problem to the country. There is no doubt that the government also receives funds from foreign countries for the advancement of ecotourism. But, the money is not being mobilized accordingly as expected. In spite of this, travel agencies have performed major roles in promotion of ecotourism in their own efforts as well as coordination with various environmental organizations.

Providing Education

The most important aspect in traveling today is educating oneself about the destiny. In this regard, the traveler look upon a reliable and authorized source called Travel agency. In Nepal, most of the travel agencies nowadays are very trustworthy as they have decent amount of knowledge and experience in the related field. They have been educating the travelers from every corner of the globe regarding the tourism scenario of Nepal. Some travel agencies are making each visitor aware of the ecotourism promotion steps taken in Nepal, which is also mentioned in their official webpage. In addition, local people are also provided workshops, group discussions and environmental awareness classes from time to time (The Explore Nepal P. Ltd.).

Uplifting the local community

Nepal as being a country of diverse culture and tradition, each community has their own individual culture and identities. The economy of some communities especially in the Himalaya areas and remote areas, depend heavily on the tourist visiting the place. They earn decent amount of money by selling goods with their art of handwork such as handicrafts, thanka art, baskets, carpets and services including lodging and fooding, sightseeing. Travel agencies are the ones who arrange the tour and travel packages for instance trekking, sightseeing, village home stay programs, traditional dance and music programs in such areas for the traveler. This has triple impact in the tourism, one for the tourist refreshment and satisfaction and second for the benefit of the local people and lastly for the promotion of tradition and culture, all of which resulting in the promotion of ecotourism of Nepal (Great Wall Nepal Pvt. Ltd, b).

Cleaning programs

It is a matter of great concern that Nepal is suffering from more and more pollution day by day. This starts right from the capital, which is the first landing place for any tourist to the other major cities and towns as well. One of the prominent reasons for this is the unorganized system of dumping the garbage. Travel agencies in this situation have been continuously launching cleaning campaigns together with other agencies as well as environmental projects such as KEEP (Kathmandu Environmental Education Project), they are also time and again out in the streets along with local people in cleaning their areas.

Due to urbanization, the major cities have become overcrowded. As a result, due to the poor management of the drainage and the sewage system, safe drinking water pipes and water sources like river have been largely affected. Because of this numerous water - borne diseases is invited. This has created a negative impact in the visitors coming to Nepal, which is of course a pitiful situation for the tourism industry and the nation. Taking into special consideration of the issue, K.C (2002) argued that travel agencies in cooperation with governmental and NGOs, organizes several river cleaning campaigns (State of ecotourism, 2009g).

When organizing trekking tours and hiking, village visits, rafting and others, large amount of garbage such as plastic bottles, cans, food are scattered in an around the areas. Travel agencies have also kept an eye in this matter. In the present context they have assured that they leave each used places neat and clean. They also advise the local inhabitants as well as the travelling team to segregate the degradable and non - degradable waste and dump it only in a proper place.

Efforts in preservation and conservation of wildlife, national parks and heritage

Preservation and conservation of wildlife is very essential. If it is not performed continuously, the existence of wild habitants will be endangered, thus causing a disturbance in the entire ecosystem. Further, the environment of the national parks should be well maintained and preserved for the adaptation of the wild animals. Sanitation in and around the parks is necessary for the welfare of general public, visitors and park members and the wildlife itself. According to K.C (2002c, 2), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation is the one who provides accurate information to the visitors regarding rules and regulations of the parks, for example compulsorily paying of the entrance fees, restriction of feeding the wild animals, special attention to the warning plates around the parks which sometimes includes photography restrictions, no poaching, no camping inside the jungle, proper waste disposal and others.

According to Nepal (2012), Nepal is very famous in the world for its heritage and culture. It is renowned for having some of the world heritage sites such as Pashupati Nath, the biggest Hindu temple in the world, Changu Narayan temple, Buddhist stupas of Swoyambhu Nath and Boudha Nath and durbar square of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan, Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, Royal Chitwan National Park and Sagarmatha National Park including Mount Everest. The travel agencies arrange sightseeing tours in these places, provide necessary details of the place to the traveler, thus enabling and supporting the concerned authorities to gather some amount of money which could be used for the purpose of heritage site maintenance and cleanliness.

Consultation with higher authorities

In regard to promotion of sustainable tourism, a station was established named STN (Sustainable Tourism Network) for researcher, student and qualified local and international people to come and meet, share and discuss issues in the environmental prospect in tourism sector of the country. STN along with NTB and different travel agencies jointly organize workshops, programs, discussions from time to time. As travel agencies are the ones who come into direct contact with the tourist and have a better understanding of the needs and wants of the visitors coming to the country, they are able to assist in preparing strategies, plans and policies (STN, 2011).

4.1.1 Great Wall Nepal Pvt. Ltd.

According to the official webpage of Great Wall Nepal Pvt. Ltd. (2012c), it is a sustainable tour operator of Nepal. It arranges different kind of travel packages such as mountaineering, mountain biking, sightseeing, city tours and affiliate with many institution for the highlighting the need of promotion in main areas like health, education and environment. It also offers a platform for the visitors to experience the real Nepali culture and lifestyle of the Nepalese by offering village home stay program and camping in remote areas. It has prioritized the demand and needs of customers where customers can make necessary changes as per their requirement to the itinerary provided to them. Though, a beginner in the field, Great Wall Nepal has been making numerous contributions in the tourism and the native sector. They have announced that every 20% of the earned profit from a customer goes for the upliftment of the social and environmental sectors.

4.1.2 The Explore Nepal Pvt. Ltd

The Explore Nepal group is an organization which is established in completely focusing ecotourism and reducing the community, nature and traditional damage. It is one of the leading eco tour operators backed up by a qualified and experienced line of staff members. With the aim of conserving the environment, they put a complete ban on plastic bottles during the tours, tree plantation in the name of each visitor, maintaining the Himalaya routes by arranging cleaning program. From the staff job satisfaction point of view, they are paying good salary and allowances and also providing special training in relation to environmental importance. They have also launched various campaigns for the heritage preservation. Even in their own official premises, to decrease the use of energy, they have introduced a policy to avoid electric lift, air coolers instead maximized use of solar for heating purposes. The company has also won lot of prestigious awards like Abraham Conservation Award 2002 by World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Kathmandu Environment Award 2001, Association of German Travel and Tour operators (DRV) International Environmental Award 2003, Nepalese Ministry of population and environment (MOPE) and PATA Environmental Award 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2004 (The Explore Nepal P. Ltd.).

4.1.3 Nakshatra Travel and Tours P. Ltd.

Nakshatra Travel and Tours not only works as a travel friend but it also comprises of different related organizations such as Airlines, Hotels, tours and others. It is a dedicated customer oriented organization and is available around the clock to render its services. Similarly, they are not just a profit motive organization but assure to create a love and passion for nature and its preservation. This travel agency concentrates mainly on maximizing the benefits of the local people and boosting the host economy. They offer various opportunities for the visitors ranging from Trekking, City Tours, Sightseeing, Hiking, and Jungle Safari to some of the biggest national parks of Nepal to the extreme sports like rafting, mountaineering, paragliding and bungee jumping. They also assist to Students, Excursion group, Photographers and the researchers by providing all the necessary supports in achieving their goals. Likewise, they also offer a possibility to experience the real Nepali way of living for the interested clients (Nakshatra Travel and Tours P. Ltd., 2011).

4.1.4 Tibet Family Tours and Travels

Tibet Family Tours and Travels is a company which delivers the services starting from Nepal to other neighboring countries, with a highest concern of the traveler and their needs. The company is supported with well qualified team, besides the regular services like hiking, biking, trekking, this company also offers a possibility of helicopter ride across the mountains and for religious visits located at high altitudes. During the course of any mis happenings, they also provide a 24/7 immediate assistance for its clients. They also pay a special attention in the health related matters of the traveler making

sure that they are stress free and enjoy their trip to the fullest. From the environmental aspect, this organization educates its clients ensuring that the traveler is responsible enough to handle the waste products and its proper disposal (Tibet Family Tours and Travels, 2010).

5 RESEARCH METHOD

5.1 Data collection

As the purpose of the study is to deal a few travel agencies, a qualitative approach was selected for the data collection.

Qualitative research is a method of retrieving wide range of information related to subject matter from limited number of participants via numerous collecting ways which includes for example interview, case study, life story, visual text (Handbook of qualitative research, 1994, 2). Patton (2002,21) added that qualitative research includes personal feelings, thinking, background and attitude of the participants which is a major resource of basic data and is extracted from oral interview or drafted in the paper form during the process of analyzing.

Qualitative research is well suited for the topic because this type of research describes the participants' knowledge, experience, background and their personal perspectives on the matter.

An interview is regarded as one of the best tools for the data collection. Therefore, interviews with open ended questions were chosen. Accordingly the author was surfing on the Internet to locate travel agencies in Nepal and chose the four travels and tour operators of Nepal. There were four

participants from each organization who agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted during September 2011 and February 2012. The difference in the time period of the interviews was because of the time management problem and busy schedules of the entrepreneur, most of all because this had to be arranged by the author from abroad.

First of all, the written interview questions had to be prepared beforehand (Appendix 1). English was chosen as the mode of language during the interviews. The internet was the best possibility for the conduction of interviews recommended by almost everyone offering many possibilities, the author went with Skype. The duration of each interview was 15-20 minutes. All the interviews were recorded on the mobile phone.

5.2 Data analysis

The data analysis was done during February 2012. The content analysis was chosen as the data analysis method. According to Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000, 134a), content analysis can be considered as a tool used to evaluate the composition of documents in an organized way. As Krippendorff (1980, 21) argued in Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2002, 135b) that it is a research method to rewrite and genuine interpretation from the raw material to their text.

The author first transcribed the recorded material. The researcher read and re read the collected information and then took a couple of months to analyze the data. Likewise, each participants interviewed were jotted down on separate sheets of paper and each of them were segregated according to different topics (Patton, 2002, 7).

5.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability is all about producing the same outcomes in a research no matter who the researcher is and how many times it is performed (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton, 2000, 28c). According to Neuman (2003, 388), Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, 53a) thinks reliability is based on the knowledge, perceptivity and the questions of the researcher. In the time of the data collection, well prepared interview questions were asked verbally to all the candidates. As all the interviews were conducted in English as medium of language, clear and almost the same results were achieved from them. This research can be said reliable in the sense that even if other researcher repeatedly carried out a similar research with the same member of the organizations, the same results are going to be derived.

Validity is a form of providing trustfulness and assurance to the reader that the research performed is a valid one (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, 48b). As the entire participant organizations, which are fully certified by the government have been directly involved in the promotion of ecotourism of Nepal at their individual levels. They have also been accolade by a number of prestigious awards such as PATA, MOPE and Kathmandu Environmental Awards, Abraham conservation award and some have also labeled as a sustainable tour operator .This is the reason that the information collected from those organizations is true to a great extent.

This study has been commenced following all the norms of a research, the reader has an added advantage to use the material as a valid source for their individual purpose.

6 RESULTS OBTAINED AFTER INTERVIEW

During data analysis, categories have been made and each category contains topics under it. Each category represents the highlights of the interview questions. The researcher has paraphrased their answers in small paragraphs whereas he has also included the direct quotations of the interviewees in Italic form within inverted comas (“”) which is interviewees words as it is. Each of them has been explained well and clear.

When talking about the activities performed by travel agencies in promoting ecotourism of Nepal, awareness related programs and sufficient support of the government was expected from the researcher.

6.1 Educating communities

Two of the participant organizations stressed on the involvement of local people in preserving the environment and benefiting they themselves. For this, travel agencies are making contacts with the village development committees.

“We work together with village development committees and local clubs.”

Create awareness

Travel agencies have been educating its visitors, staffs and the local people by their official websites where most of the important things were highlighted regarding ecotourism promotion.

The topic of creating awareness was a common issue among all the participants. They stated that Government and Nongovernmental organization/association has been implementing various awareness programs like river cleaning campaigns, waste management, heritage and cultural prevention, tree plantation, environmental awareness and others. If any organization is willing to create awareness it should take place right from they themselves.

“..... continuously making its employees, guests and general public aware on the importance of environmental and cultural heritage preservation.”

Tradition and cultural prevention was also a major topic in one of the interview. One of the participant stated that tradition is something which must be preserved and treasured. New high tech buildings has been discouraged rather old traditional lodges has been encouraged.

“Promoting the ecofriendly lodges and resorts and discouraging ones which are not ecofriendly”

“Standard must be set about new constructions (at least) in the Conservation Areas. This should be followed by strict inspection.”

6.2 Nature activities

Resources and waste administration

Participants stated that they have well-structured ways of managing resources and waste.

"In our own office we use energy saving lamps, we produce compost from our wastes which we use in the garden, and our sewage system is scientific which flows out only after filtration."

"Using solar for its energy use."

The agents also boast that they bury all bio degradable products nearby the camping grounds and all the non- degradable products like plastic bottles, cans, glasses etc. are carried back to Kathmandu and handed over to the recycling plants.

"It's our responsibility to leave the camping grounds exactly as it was."

Organizations should make sure that they try to minimize the waste production at first place and then should monitor that the waste produced is segregated and not carelessly thrown in the land fill sites.

"Only if the bio degradable waste is segregated from the non-degradable waste, the problem of the landfill sites will be decreased by more than 50 percent."

One of the participant also stated that one of a major area of the capital which was separated as a dumping site, had been converted to a beautiful community park. This was not an easy task and was only possible by the initiative of the travel agents and sincere community participation.

Exterior nature movements

Various organizations seem to run various campaigns and one of the participant claimed that they have also been recognized with various awards for working towards the welfare of the environment.

“For our environmentally sustainable activities and contribution to the society we have been recognized by the various awards.”

At the same time, they further added that they have also extended hand and launched campaigns in collaboration with the heritage preservation by renovating priceless religious places, historic parks, public areas and picnic spots.

Another participant stated that every year they take part in environmental awareness campaigns like tree plantation, river cleaning to some organizations who have planted a tree for every guest who books a tour, ban on plastic bags, cleanup of trekking and mountaineering routes.

“We donate and actively take part in such campaigns.”

Also one participant said that they extend assistance to various environmental development programs.

“We support sustainable development program.”

While measuring the effectiveness of the attempts taken by travel agencies, positive results were expected by the researcher. This means that they have successfully performed their activities.

6.3 Effectiveness

The efforts made by one organization showed that the attempts to promote ecologically and traditionally built resorts and tea houses are very essential. These efforts are the ones which need to be collectively done by all the travel and trekking agents so as to act in a responsible way.

"The effort may not seem very effective alone."

According to a participant, the issue of bringing awareness to the general public seemed to have proven very effective and successful.

".... our staffs and visitors have made really positive results."

In launching activities of travel agencies in promoting ecotourism, the researcher had expected that the travel agencies had to go through many difficulties and needed to struggle to overcome the same.

6.4 Difficulties and obstacles

One of the Organizations aiming at promoting the traditional and ecological resorts and tea houses say, it is not a difficulty as it is their individual effort. But they are very sad with the fact that though there are always a large number of meetings and workshops organized in the subject, difficulty has always been in the implementation part.

"We do what we can and what we think is right."

In activities like tree plantation campaign, one of the organizations stated that though they had planted some trees in the suburbs of Kathmandu valley and left it for the local people to take care, due to lack of proper care it was tarnished.

"All the newly planted trees died out. It really frustrated us."

Another participant stated the less cooperation from the government and public ignorance brings out the frustration in very organizations.

"With continuous efforts results are visible. One cannot just do it once and stop, there has to be continuity to see results."

One of the participant said that there are been a major problem in the waste area management. At the same time, winning the trust of the people in performing social work is really difficult. Community people try to state themselves very busy for these tasks and show very less interest. For this reason, organization should invest money first to assure that things could be done.

".....we have to take that kind of initiation."

As the visitors come to Nepal from different corners of the world, there are sometimes difficulties in preparing the locals for their warm welcoming.

Besides, one participant explained that travel agencies are facing difficulties specially in monetary matters, because of which the activities they run was somehow affected.

" Finance problem is the main problem."

Ecotourism is quite a new phenomenon in Nepal. It is not possible to implement it by an individual person or a single organization. It is the outcome of joint effort by which good results are most likely. Travel agencies may also have cooperation with concerned authorities. The researcher has expected a chain like structure to relate the travel agencies with concerned organizations.

6.5 Affiliation and cooperation

The organizations like NTB, TAAN, NATTA, and KEEP have been responsible for launching different kinds of tourism promoting activities. One of the participants, who is a member organization, said that they keep themselves informed about all the ongoing activities.

"We take part in these workshops, meetings and environmental campaigns."

Another participant organization said that.....

"We work with local public authorities like Kathmandu Metropolitan in some campaigns like cleanup activities."

One participant stated all the travel agencies should be affiliated with Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation and Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). These bodies are responsible for organizing seminars and travel and tour promoting programs.

"Affiliation is necessary with NTB and Ministry. It is compulsory, without that you cannot operate any tour."

"First of all, you have to be confirm in which part of work you want to affiliate"

Nepal has a long way to go in terms of ecotourism. In this regard, the researcher had an expectation that every government and private organizations should have a vision statement and also prepare future long term plans and strategies as per the need of ecotourism promotion.

6.6 Future and long term plans

One of the organizations expressed their willingness even to organize ecological tours on electric vehicles in the near future.

"..... But for now, this is far from our budget."

Other organization promised to keep continuous working on promoting ecotourism by supporting organic farming, using solar for energy, making its employees, guests and general public aware on the importance of environmental and cultural heritage preservation.

One of the participants stated that though Nepal has been organizing "Travel Expo", an exhibition outside Nepal like India. They have a plan to organize such fairs within Nepal so that the opportunity will remain inside the travel agents of Nepal.

".....why not Nepal?"

In presenting a better Nepal in the field of Tourism, the researcher had expected the recommendations and suggestions regarding ecotourism promotion such as introduced rules and regulations should be strictly followed and maintained. More things should be done in reality rather than words. Implementation as well as feedback parts should be well monitored.

6.7 Recommendations and suggestions

Due to presence of many organizations, Government is not able to support every single organizations objective. In this situation, entrepreneurs feel abandoned. One of the participant organization stated, that it's very important that the tourism bodies realize the importance of the cultural and natural heritage of the country and work together and individually towards its preservation.

"Nepal's government is too weak and provides no support in these issues."

Emphasizing on educating the people regarding the importance of ecology and the landscapes, another participant stated:

"...It is our greatest asset, we attract tourists because of this, and we make money from this. This is the first step that people start becoming careful about their own environment."

Likewise, strict rules & regulations must be set by the government and at the same time they must ensure the implementation of those rules, especially regarding domestic and industrial waste disposal, sewage system, and new constructions.

"This should be followed by strict inspection."

"Trekking will carry placards containing phrases of awareness like keep your surroundings clean, don't litter, and so on. When the local people see us carrying their spills together with the foreign guests, it gives them a sense of awareness."

In terms of promoting tourism of Nepal, Government has been actively taking steps in each and every aspect possible. It is also the responsibility of the travel agencies and local communities to show equal contribution. Even little steps they take can make changes.

"They should have a real interest first."

"Small thing can create a big difference."

"Not only government, every travel agency should take the initiation to promote Nepal in every aspect like food, culture, music and tradition."

As travel agencies generally concentrate on environment, they also give priority to the local people and rural area development. In this regard, they have to organize village visit programs in the remote areas.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the interview analysis

It has been seen and realized by every travel agencies that it is their duty to create awareness among the citizens as they are the ones working towards the welfare of the environment. They have provided counseling to people and community by also actively going out in the streets and showing things in practice for example waste management. The internet, being one the fastest means of communicating in the world today, travel agencies has been educating the visitors and locals through their official websites. Furthermore, environmental and cultural preservation have also been carried out by these organizations along with the government.

In terms of community education, one of the organizations claims to have various social policies like skills development, knowledge and job opportunity to communities, establishing strong relationships between workers and the native people, providing tourists with sufficient and needed information to tourists on natural resources and societies.

All the organizations are trying to do their best to minimize the consumption of energy starting from their own working areas. They have tried to do avoid energy consuming things like air conditioners, elevators, to minimize the use of electricity, and to promote the use of energy saving lamps and solar heating systems. But they also realized the fact that simply reducing and managing waste is not a solution to the entire problem. Strict rules and regulations are seemed to be needed regarding the waste management in Nepal which has, today, become a major problem. Likewise, the local people, government, non-government organizations and travel agencies share a need for equal cooperation.

Summary and discussion of the entire study

To put it simply, ecotourism tries to promote tourism without causing minimum damage to the environment and the earth. This is a global need today. It is the duty and responsibility of every single citizen to save the earth. At this moment Nepal, being one of the richest countries in terms of natural beauty, cultural heritage and tradition, seriously needs its ecotourism to be promoted. This effort is not effective alone, but as part of collective efforts, involving the general public, government, organization and international partners.

Organizations feel that the attempts to promote ecotourism on the individual level because of less support from the government. They also claim to have past and continuous activities which have been successful so far, especially in raising awareness among the general public and staffs. In addition, with continuous efforts, results are visible and there has to be a continuity to see the exact positive outcome. It is very important that the tourism players realize the importance of culture and natural heritage of the country and work together as well as individually towards its preservation. They have a light of hope in getting sufficient assistance from the government. Similarly, some also said that they need people like us who are educated, trained abroad and have gained international knowledge and experience to make Nepal a better place to live in.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Research interview questions

1. What are the activities performed by your organization in regard to promoting Eco Tourism of Nepal?
2. How effective and essential the attempts have resulted?
3. In launching those activities, what are the difficulties you had to face and how did you overcome the same?
4. How do you co-operate your organization with the concerned authorities?
5. In presenting a better Nepal in the field of Tourism, what are your recommendations and suggestions in promoting Eco Tourism?
6. What are your organizations future plans in terms of Eco Tourism Promotion?

TABLES

TABLE 1. Tourist arrivals by major nationality 2009 - 2010

| Nationality | 2009 | 2010* | % Change |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Australia | 15,461 | 16,838 | 8.9 |
| Austria | 3,245 | 3,519 | 8.4 |
| Bangladesh | 15,385 | 21,047 | 36.8 |
| Belgium | 4,832 | 5,779 | 19.6 |
| Canada | 8,965 | 10,302 | 14.9 |
| China | 32,272 | 43,119 | 33.6 |
| Denmark | 4,464 | 4,609 | 3.2 |
| France | 22,154 | 24,678 | 11.4 |
| Germany | 19,246 | 23,473 | 22.0 |
| Israel | 5,879 | 4,815 | -18.1 |
| Italy | 7,982 | 10,195 | 27.7 |
| Japan | 22,445 | 23,272 | 3.7 |
| Malaysia | 5,527 | 7,277 | 31.7 |
| Netherlands | 11,147 | 13,673 | 22.7 |
| New Zealand | 2,439 | 2,878 | 18.0 |

| | | | |
|----------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Norway | 2,329 | 2,298 | - 1.3 |
| Pakistan | 3,966 | 4,351 | 9.7 |
| Singapore | 5,344 | 5,544 | 3.7 |
| Sri Lanka | 36,362 | 45,841 | 26.1 |
| Switzerland | 5,281 | 5,629 | 6.6 |
| Spain | 13,006 | 14,158 | 8.9 |
| Sweden | 2,323 | 3,289 | 42.0 |
| South Korea | 16,145 | 20,332 | 25.9 |
| Chinese Taipei | 5,925 | 7,257 | 22.5 |
| Thailand | 27,397 | 25,921 | -5.4 |
| U.S.A. | 32,043 | 37,085 | 15.7 |
| U.K. | 35,382 | 35,539 | 0.4 |
| Others | 49,126 | 63,807 | 29.9 |
| India | 93,884 | 116,321 | 23.9 |
| Total | 509,956 | 602,855 | 18.2 |

Provisional *

(Source: Immigration Office, Nepal Tourism Statistics 2010, 8. Provisional Report, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation)

TABLE 2. Tourist arrival by purpose of visit 1991 - 2010

| Year | Holiday Pleasure | Trekking & Mountaineering | Business | Pilgrimage | official | Conv/Conf | Rafting | Others | Not Specified | Total |
|------|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1991 | 177,370 (60.5) | 42,308 (14.4) | 14,601 (5.0) | 9,103 (3.1) | 37,274 (12.7) | 5,441 (1.9) | - | 6,898 (2.4) | - | 292,995 (100.0) |
| 1992 | 237,711 (71.1) | 35,166 (10.5) | 31,765 (9.5) | 7,219 (2.2) | 20,967 (6.3) | 815 (0.2) | - | 710 (0.2) | - | 334,353 (100.0) |
| 1993 | 170,279 (58.0) | 69,619 (23.7) | 19,495 (6.6) | 10,429 (3.6) | 15,812 (5.4) | 5,367 (1.8) | - | 2,566 (0.9) | - | 293,567 (100.0) |
| 1994 | 168,155 (51.5) | 76,865 (23.5) | 23,522 (7.2) | 5,475 (1.7) | 20,431 (6.3) | 5,361 (1.6) | - | 26,722 (8.2) | - | 326,531 (100.0) |
| 1995 | 183,207 (50.4) | 84,787 (23.3) | 21,829 (6.0) | 5,257 (1.4) | 20,090 (5.5) | 5,272 (1.5) | - | 42,953 (11.8) | - | 363,395 (100.0) |
| 1996 | 209,377 (53.2) | 88,945 (22.6) | 25,079 (6.4) | 4,802 (1.2) | 20,191 (5.1) | 6,054 (1.5) | - | 39,165 (10.0) | - | 393,613 (100.0) |
| 1997 | 249,360 (59.1) | 91,525 (21.7) | 27,409 (6.5) | 4,068 (1.0) | 24,106 (5.7) | 5,824 (1.4) | - | 19,565 (4.6) | - | 421,857 (100.0) |
| 1998 | 261,347 (56.4) | 112,644 (24.3) | 24,954 (5.4) | 6,164 (3.5) | 22,123 (4.8) | 5,181 (1.1) | - | 21,271 (4.6) | - | 463,684 (100.0) |
| 1999 | 290,862 (59.2) | 107,960 (22.0) | 23,813 (4.8) | 19,198 (3.9) | 24,132 (4.9) | 5,965 (1.2) | - | 19,574 (4.0) | - | 491,504 (100.0) |
| 2000 | 255,889 (55.2) | 118,780 (25.6) | 29,454 (6.4) | 15,801 (3.4) | 20,832 (4.5) | 5,599 (1.2) | - | 17,291 (3.7) | - | 463,646 (100.0) |
| 2001 | 187,022 (51.8) | 100,828 (27.9) | 18,528 (5.1) | 13,816 (3.8) | 18,727 (5.2) | 0 (0.0) | - | 22,316 (6.2) | - | 361,237 (100.0) |
| 2002 | 110,143 (40.0) | 59,279 (21.5) | 16,990 (6.2) | 12,366 (4.5) | 17,783 (6.5) | 0 (0.0) | - | 58,907 (21.4) | - | 275,468 (100.0) |
| 2003 | 97,904 (29.0) | 65,721 (19.4) | 19,387 (5.7) | 21,395 (6.3) | 21,967 (6.5) | 0 (0.0) | - | 111,758 (33.1) | - | 338,132 (100.0) |
| 2004 | 167,262 (43.4) | 69,442 (18.0) | 13,948 (3.6) | 45,664 (11.9) | 17,088 (4.4) | 0 (0.0) | - | 71,893 (18.7) | - | 385,297 (100.0) |
| 2005 | 160,259 (42.7) | 61,488 (16.4) | 21,992 (5.9) | 47,621 (12.7) | 16,859 (4.5) | 0 (0.0) | - | 67,179 (17.9) | - | 375,398 (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 (41.4) | 101,320 (19.2) | 24,487 (4.6) | 52,594 (10.0) | 21,670 (4.1) | 8,019 (1.5) | 65 (0.0) | 78,579 (14.9) | 22,156 (4.2) | 526,705 (100.0) |
| 2008 | 148,180 (29.6) | 104,822 (21.0) | 23,039 (4.6) | 45,091 (9.0) | 43,044 (8.6) | 6,938 (1.4) | 243 (0.0) | 99,391 (19.9) | 29,529 (5.9) | 500,277 (100.0) |
| 2009 | 40,992 (8.0) | 132,929 (26.1) | 22,758 (4.5) | 51,542 (10.1) | 24,518 (4.8) | 9,985 (2.0) | 285 (0.1) | 186,849 (36.6) | 40,098 (7.9) | 509,956 (100.0) |
| 2010 | 63,082 (12.4) | 70,218 (13.8) | 21,377 (4.2) | 101,335 (19.9) | 26,374 (5.2) | 9,627 (1.9) | 730 (0.1) | 252,473 (49.5) | 57,651 (11.3) | 602,867 (100.0) |

Figures in the parenthesis represent percentage of the total

(Source: Tourism Statistics 2010, 24. Part II, Tourist Arrival, Ministry of
Tourism and Civil Aviation)

ABBREVIATION

| | |
|---------------|---|
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| FSD | Forest Survey Division |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| KEEP | Kathmandu Environmental Education Project |
| MoCTCA | Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation |
| MOPE | Ministry of Population and Environment |
| NATTA | Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents |
| NEAT | Nepal Economic, Agriculture and Trade |
| NETIF | Nepal Environment and Tourism Initiative Foundation |
| NMA | Nepal Mountaineering Association |
| NPC | National Planning Commission |
| NTA | Nepal Trekking Association |
| NTB | Nepal Tourism Board |
| PATA | Pacific Asia Travel Association |
| STN | Sustainable Tourism Network |
| TAAN | Trekking Agents Association of Nepal |
| TIES | The Interational Ecotourism Society |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |