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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION: RHETORIC OR REALITY?

A quantitatively based case study of Nepal

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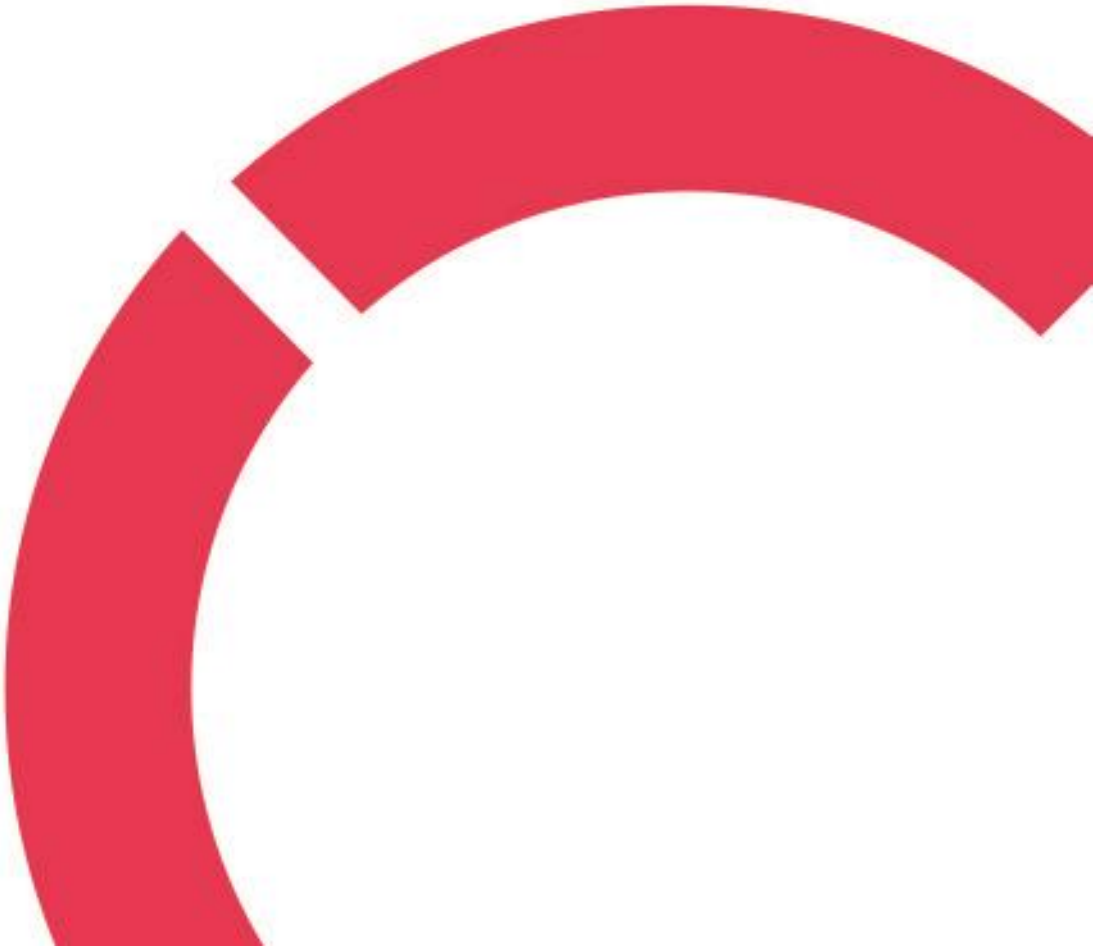

ABSTRACT

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Comprehending tourism-poverty linkage is paramount if tourism is to be adopted as a tool for alleviating poverty cases. While it is generally agreed that tourism has the potential to stimulate an economy, the link between tourism and poverty remains unclear based on the available empirical evidence. There is an ever-growing body of literature on the issue of poverty alleviation, courtesy of the tourism sector, which contains several studies examining the correlation between the two. Several studies have shown the positive effects of tourism on reducing poverty, whereas others have found no such link. Furthermore, the potential function of sustainable tourism in reducing poverty has been given less attention in prior research. Therefore, an extensive study was needed to ascertain whether the promotion of sustainable tourism development aids in reducing poverty.

The tickle-down theory and planned behaviour theory were used to comprehend the impact of sustainable tourism development on poverty alleviation campaigns and to evaluate intentions about visiting Nepalese tourist sites. A total of 147 responses were collected via an online survey questionnaire. The empirical result found a moderately positive impact of sustainable tourism development in alleviating poverty cases in Nepal. Central tendency statistics were implied and found that sustainable tourism development has a moderate effect on societal development, economic level, livelihood condition, educational training, and health care facilities. Political instability and widespread corruption were the main impediments to alleviating poverty cases in Nepal.

Based on the findings of this study, policymakers should encourage the expansion of sustainable tourism to benefit the local population and the national economy. First, there must be a promise of zero tolerance for corruption and the promotion of political stability, both of which are essential to sustainable tourism growth.

Key words
Poverty alleviation, sustainable tourism development

CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

PBC- Perceived behavioral control
MLR- Multiple linear regression
STS- Sustainable tourism sites
GDP- Gross domestic products
TPB- Theory of planned behavior
UNWTO- United Nations World Tourism Organization
IUCN- International Union for Conservation of Nature
UN- United Nations
NGO- non-governmental organizations

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1 INTRODUCTION

Poverty alleviation, inclusive growth, and sustainable development are indivisible, and poverty alleviation is the inducement for sustainable development (Taghizadeh-Hesary, Panthamit & Yoshino 2021). Poverty alleviation in all its dimensions remains one of humanity's most daunting challenges. The United Nations` (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a heroic commitment to combat what initiated and eradicate poverty in all dimensions and forms by the year 2030 (Taghizadeh-Hesary et al. 2021).

Mostly in developing Asian nations, rapid economic expansion in countries and sub-regions, for instance, China, India, and the Southeast Asian region, has waived millions of inherent out of the poverty circle (Asian Development Bank 2020). It could be claimed that almost all developing economies, particular China, Vietnam, Nepal, and Thailand, have successfully alleviated poverty; however, the success is uneven (Asian Development Bank 2020). In southeast Asian developing countries, more than 610 million people were pulled out of extreme poverty between 2005-2015, measured on the international poverty line of 1.90 USD a day, based on 2011 purchase parity power (Asian Development Bank 2020). A large percentage of these people, around 80% were from China (234 million - 38.5%) and India (253 million- 41.5%); however, still more than 260 million are in extreme poverty, and most of these are inside the South-Asian region holding 202 million -78%people (Asian Development Bank 2020).

Though over a billion people from Asian countries have emerged from the crisis of extreme poverty since 1990, there are still many millions of people living between 1.90 USD and 3.2. USD based on purchase parity power a day as of 2015 (Asian Development Bank 2020). Many people are at threat of poverty due to economic turmoil and recession, inequality, corruption, environmental and climate change, and, more importantly, limited governance and limited institutional capabilities (Taghizadeh-Hesary et al. 2021). Notably, with the emergence of the Covid-19 global pandemic and economic recession, the development of poverty reduction is more retarding, as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis risks inverting decades of progression in the struggle against poverty. It's not just pushing back millions of people back into the trap of poverty; it also bought more added challenges to alleviate poverty. According to Sumner (2020), due to the global pandemic, Covid-19, global poverty could rise as much as half a million- which is around 8% of the total earth’s human population. This becomes the first time poverty has intensified everywhere in the last 30 years, i.e., since 1990 (Sumner, Hoy & Ortiz-Juarez 2020).

In Nepal, the proportion of the employed population under 1.9 USD purchase parity power is 3.4% as of 2021 (ABD 2022). This, in a sense, is progressive as its gross domestic product increased by 2.3% after being shrunk by 2.1% in 2020 (ABD 2022), but the overall country's debt in the last five years has tripled and accounts for more than 40% of the overall GDP (Shrestha 2022). It shows how sustainable Nepal's poverty alleviation campaigns and programs will be when the country's GDP relies heavily on foreign debts and aid. Given this situation, Nepal's roadmap to end poverty through sustainable development goals by 2030 seems more dreadful unless the change and some improvisation on its strategies are seen with immediate effect. Therefore, more sustainable actions and plans that bring a more competitive edge to the Nepalese economy must be addressed. For this to be accomplished, effective utilization of tourism can be the most viable options to bring sustainable economy and environment, especially to the destination region (Bhandari 2022; Nepal 2022).

In the present era, more attention to sustainable tourism has been seen by academic researchers than ever (Mohamadi, Abbasi & Askarifar 2022) Sustainable tourism does not necessarily need to hold a certain niche tourism segment. It is an aspiration concerning the impacts of all forms and dimensions of tourism to be sustainable for subsequent generations (Mohamadi et al. 2022). In Nepal, tourism is considered a significant source of income for the Nepalese economy. In 2019-20, the tourism industry accounted for 6.75% of the overall GDP collection and 6.9% of the country's overall employment, with 834 million USD generated through external tourism alone (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021) .Nepal has embraced tourism since the early 1950s (Kc et al. 2021). In 2015, the United Nations introduced sustainable development goals (SDGs) to alleviate poverty, zero hunger, environmental protection, etc. Researchers such as Rasoolimanesh, Ramkrishna, Hall, Esfandiar and Seyfi (2020) and Scheyvens (2018) have highlighted the linkage between sustainable tourism development and poverty alleviation in various contexts. The SDGs have been globally applied to all member nations, including Nepal, where poverty alleviation has been a highlighted goal since the 2000s with the first introduction of Millennium development goals (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021).

As an emerging nation, Nepal has a significant potential to achieve the SDGs goal through utilizing tourism. However, Nepal is struggling to harness the considerable potential of tourism, especially using tourism as a poverty alleviation mechanism has been only limited to the academic world. Therefore, this research is intended to provide the potentiality of tourism to alleviate poverty cases in Nepal. Furthermore, I aimed to find this linkage's relationship and magnitude between sustainable tourism development

and poverty alleviation in Nepal. Furthermore, this research helps to shed light on whether this linkage is just rhetoric or reality in a practical world.

Though Nepal has tremendous potential for tourism development, still the actual development of tourism could not be as effective as it has been in some nations with abundant touristic destinations. Many researchers have carried out substantial efforts in the academic field on the overall tourism development of Nepal, yet the efforts do not satisfy all dimensions of tourism development, particularly the impact of tourism on combating poverty cases in Nepal. Given the abundant literature related to tourism and poverty reduction, it is paramount to understand the relationship and magnitude between tourism and poverty (Winters, Corral & Mora 2013) because the prior literature within this field is insufficient (Winters, Corral & Mora 2013; Oviedo-García, González-Rodríguez & Vega-Vázquez 2019). Oviedo-García et al. (2019) have indicated that insufficient empirical evidence has been produced to support this relationship and required more sophisticated modeling to comprehend this linkage. Furthermore, Winters et al. (2013, 184) have mentioned that to shed light on the role of tourism in economic activities, especially poverty reduction, more sophisticated econometric modeling is utterly required to understand its relationship and magnitude. In the context of Nepal, to the best of the author's knowledge and research, there is a paucity of research on this linkage, especially on alleviating poverty through using sophisticated econometric modeling. Therefore, given these antecedents, the purpose of this research is to accomplish an empirical assessment of the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation. The intention is to produce empirical testimony on the magnitude of this tourism-poverty alleviation linkage, so that the findings from this research will help to shed light on whether this linkage is just a rhetoric or a reality.

Therefore, the major purpose of this research is to investigate the potential of sustainable tourism development in Nepal and measure whether sustainable tourism development in Nepal has positively impacted the poverty reduction campaign. Now have come to these research questions, to what extent does sustainable tourism bring a positive impact on bringing positive living standards to, particularly, destination-based indigenous peoples of Nepal? And what approaches help to maximize maximum tourism's impact on poverty alleviation with keeping a close eye on sustainability? To find the answers to these questions I have come to these objectives, to comprehensively understand the linkage between tourism and poverty alleviation through different theories. And to understand the role of sustainable tourism development and its impact on poverty alleviation.

Structure of the research

First in the introduction, the connection between general tourism and the reduction of poverty will be highlighted and discussed in this chapter. It will talk about the state of the tourism industry and how it has affected the eradication of poverty in Nepal and other places. The study questions, objectives, and justification will be highlighted in the final section of the introduction chapter. In the literature review, chapter will highlight the relevant concept and prior scholarly findings related to sustainable tourism and poverty reduction, the understanding of sustainable tourism, and tourism as a mechanism for combating poverty in Nepal. And finally, it will highlight the theory of trickle-down concerning tourism availing trickle down to the poor's followed by the hypothesis formulation.

In the methodology section, it will highlight the implied methodologies and the justification for using each methodology among its counterparts. Results and discussion will comprise empirical findings extracted from the sample. The findings will be aligned with the research questions and end up testing as mentioned in the literature section. Finally in conclusion, it will summarize and answer the stated research questions. The research will end up by stating the limitations of the research and suggestions for further study.

2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Since the 1980s, the notion of sustainability has been of growing importance for the tourism industry (Joo, Seok & Nam 2020). In the 1990s, sustainable tourism meant safeguarding a tourism site by restraining the industry's overdevelopment, which risks harming the environment and another biodiversity. However, in the contemporary era, these concepts have widened into several perspectives. The conception of sustainable tourism development now contradicts these two concepts; environmental issues and tourism (Nicolaides 2020). The literature has now broadened into three symbolic pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It implies sustainable economic growth in each stratum of society in a low cost-effective way, acquiescence to basic human rights, and equal respect to cultural diversities with equitability of accesses and opportunities to all people (Umurzakov, Tosheva & Salahodjaev 2022). Though tourism is strongly considered a changemaker of development, the question arises about its impact on its host communities' peoples' living standards and environment. The acquaintance of sustainable development was early discussed in United Nations (UN) conference on the human environment in 1792. Progressively, this concept distended the international union for conservation of nature (IUCN) to encompass indigenous peoples' rights and duties toward protecting the environment for succeeding generations. Right after the establishment of the world commission on environment and development in 1983, the interpretation of sustainable development as "development that incorporates the present without adversely affecting the succeeding generation to addressing their needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Through this interpretation, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as "full consideration of its present and future social, economic, and environmental impacts, considering the needs of tourists, tourism industry, environment, and host communities and peoples" (UNWTO 2005, 12). The UNWTO also highlighted some objectives to ascertain sustainable tourism, which includes preserving tourism resources with positive benefits to the host society, reducing environmental, cultural, and social damages in such destinations, assuring high tourist satisfaction, and, more importantly, distributing tourism benefits to the host societies (UNWTO 2005).

Tourism is considered a smokeless industry (Sati 2020) because, unlike other industries which produce actual goods within their economic structure, which accumulate pollution or smoke as a by-product, tourism does not produce actual goods and is thus considered a smokeless industry. Sustainable tourism development can be attained when all sorts of natural, cultural, environmental, and economies are adequately contemplated and practiced optimally from a comprehensive perspective (Sati 2020). Therefore,

sustainable tourism accounts for recent and future consequences on society, the economy, and the environment and sustains such issues (UNWTO 2005). Sustainable tourism manifests in all aspects; nature protection and conservation, the well-being of the locals and indigenous, cultural protection, sound economy, and the guests' overall satisfaction. About ecological theory and sustainable development, the sustainable tourism theory specifies that the overall augmentation of sustainable tourism has to be equally beneficial to its three-dimensional system: social-ecological-and economical (Zhang, Ji & Zhang 2015). It utterly mandates tourism to form organically planned activities with nature, culture, and people's well-being. The generality of sustainable tourism development must contain fair-mindedness, commonality, and sustainability for its all-around success. However, the applicability of sustainable development to tourism has been found scattered as different scholars have contrasting views on the same issue. For instance, Alarcón & Cole (2019), Scott (2015) and Wassler & Fan (2021) asserts the applicability of sustainable development to tourism is less sustainable because it brings more challenges to get the right balance on social-economical-and environmental dimension. Sharpley (2020) alleges that sustainable tourism development is an unfeasible objective. In contrast, Mondal & Samaddar (2021) and Roxas, Rivera & Gutierrez (2020) claim that sustainable tourism development is viable as many travellers and stakeholders are becoming more aware of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, increasingly practicing sustainable consumption and behaviors by tourists and stakeholders have been seen in the recent decade.

2.1 Tourism as a poverty reduction strategy

Tourism plays a pivotal role in poverty reduction. However, far more improvements are expended in fostering it in rural, regional areas with ethical conduct. Tourism is an essential economic development industry as it relates significantly to economic activities and growth (Zhang 2015). However, it is paramount to understand the tourism-poverty linkage before placing tourism as a poverty reduction mechanism (Winters, Corral & Mora 2013). Tourism practice is expanding promptly around the globe. It is progressively seen as a potential driver of economic growth and a mechanism for reducing poverty in emerging countries. This agenda has been emphasized by the United Nations World Trade Organization, which states that ‘the power of tourism, which is one of the most vibrant economic activities of our time, can be more competently mobilized to address the issues of poverty more significantly’ (UNWTO 2017).

While there is a widespread consensus on tourism’s potential to address poverty reduction, the problem identified in the literature lacks empirical evidence of this linkage's extent (Winters, Corral & Mora

2013; Cooper 2018). Although the potential mechanism has been explored through which tourism can reduce poverty, the magnitude of this link is still less explored. For instance, Ashley & Mitchell (2010) identified three possible ways tourism can positively contribute to poverty: direct, indirect, and dynamic effects. Yet, they indicated that insufficient investigation had been conducted in this area. Likewise, Oviedo-García, Gonzalez-Rodriguez & Vega-Vazquez (2019, 13) found that more sophisticated modeling is required to comprehend the tourism-poverty link. Their findings show that income from tourism has not reduced poverty and failed to minimize inequality in wealth distribution. Critical of the roleplay is that the tourism industry can bring many opportunities for economic development to the hosting nations. However, the problem of profit leakage and inadequate local people participation: colossal capital and human resources requirements prevent poorer nations from actively participating in tourist activities (Oviedo-García, González-Rodríguez and Vega-Vázquez 2019). According to Oviedo-García et al. (2019), despite potential tourist attraction possibilities, developing nations find it difficult to hold their profits within themselves as foreign companies repatriate them.

Several prior scholars have researched the utilization of tourism as a means of economic growth. However, the trade-economic growth theory is mostly used in tourism and economic development relationships. According to this trade-economic relationship theory, three hypotheses are commonly used to identify the relationship between tourism and economic growth; economic-driven tourism growth, directional relationship, and tourism-led growth (Aratuo & Etienne 2019). The development of the tourism industry plays a crucial role in the country's economic development, especially in its local economic expansion. This local economic expansion is only possible when tourism growth gets attracted and encouraged enough to attract business travelers, human capital, and infrastructure development, mostly to health, education, and transportation, to access the destination in the most convenient way (Aratuo & Etienne 2019). Tourism is considered a cyclical industry, which is greatly sensitive to economic situations, having a peak and off-season times; therefore, a balanced macroeconomic composition helps maintain a favorable environment for tourism operations. The prospect of the tourism industry is more connected to macro-economic status, where the industry's expansion activities impact the overall development of tourism enterprises by raising tourists number, occupancy rates, employment rates, and other corresponding rates, thereby expanding the sales ratio of tourism enterprises (Khan, Bibi, Lorenzo, Lyu & Babar 2020). Also, the development of the tourism industry has significance on the business environment of tourism enterprises, and it indirectly affects the scale of tourism businesses. However, it is not extensive enough to evaluate the impact of macroeconomic operations and the advancement of the tourism industry through the scaling of tourism business operations.

Oviedo-Garcia et al. (2019) assert that the interconnection between tourism and poverty alleviation is related to economic growth and trade. This relationship is potentially more crucial to developing economies since tourism remains one of the important economic sectors in most places that suffer from extreme poverty. If it is accepted that economic growth has reduced poverty cases and that tourist activities generate that growth through employment creation, positive trade balance, and advancement of tourism-related businesses, then it is also true that tourism activities help reduce poverty (Croes 2014). Similarly, Alieva and Usmonova (2021) highlighted that tourism expansion is more suitable for the economic growth of such countries which are emerging in nature.

Medina-Munoz, Medina-Munoz & Gutierrez-Perez (2015) highlighted that, compared to other economic sectors, tourism has greater potential to combat poverty in developing to least developed countries due to a favourable activity to poor for rural poor's and coastal sites with few other possibilities for growth; It is considered as labor-intensive activities where locals involvement is comparatively high and also involves woman, young adults, and less-qualified people (greater percentage from poorer levels from the society); and it inrush of more tourists invites a wide array of business opportunities at the destination.

2.2 Tourism and sustainable development goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agenda has highlighted tourism's role in accomplishing these interlinked goals between tourism and poverty alleviation, as tourism reports $1/10^{th}$ of the world's gross domestic product. If managed appropriately, tourism can foster economic, social, and environmental development and accelerate the SDGs (WTO and UNDP 2017). Tourism has a particular role in attaining decent work and economic growth, as indicated in SDG: 14 (WTO and UNDP 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al. 2020). Moreover, tourism has a pivotal role in contributing to the attainment of other goals, such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and environmental protection (WTO and UNDP 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al. 2020).

The adequacy of tourism to conduce to the attainment of the SDGs has been discussed in many tourism-related studies. For example, Trupp and Dolezal (2020) asserted the importance of tourism to economic growth in the Southeast Asian region and elaborated on its potential to facilitate the attainment of SDGs, mainly to its poverty reduction agenda. In contrast, Scheyvens (2018) argued that poverty alleviation is a daunting challenge if the multidimensional nature of poverty is contemplated, as structural inequalities

might persist, which can hinder people's overall development. According to Scheyvens and Hughes (2019, 1075), “tourism players must enhance peoples to access to resources and maintain their strength; empower poor people and assist them to provide their necessary rights, and offer more opportunities for poor and to engage in decision-making related to the development of tourism.” However, some scholars, such as Manyara and Jones’s (2007) case study of Kenya, found that regions with abundant touristic activities also found considerable poverty. Scheyvens & Hughes (2019) contented that even pro-poor tourism is incapable of reaching the actual poorest of the poor.

According to Trupp and Dolezal (2020, 5), “tourism linked with and contribution to SDGs is more challenging to grasp, given the considerable role of tourism in earlier times need not necessarily to be of a compassionate humanitarian nature, with their health, education, economy, or gender equality frequently seen as aftertastes of tourism intrusions.” From pedagogical settings, Slocum, Dimitrov & Webb (2019, 34) alleged that “sustainable tourism is deeply attached with SDGs of worldwide awareness and transformation, and consolidation of SDGs through higher education entails a responsibility to offer to the continuing success of these goals.” A thorough comprehension of this complexity is essential, and more importantly, shared responsibility needs to be inculcated among all relevant stakeholders.

Movono and Hughes (2022) drew attention to the importance of upbringing the association between stakeholders and developing robust partnerships toward attaining the SDGs. Likewise, in the context of Nepal, Hall (2019) stressed the relevance of fostering collaboration between relevant stakeholders to maximize tourism potential and contribute to accomplishing SDGs. The Nepalese perspective on the planning process has historically more of a top-to-bottom approach without collusion from top tourism stakeholders (NPC 2017)

2.3 Sustainable development goals as a catalyst for sustainable tourism development in Nepal

Nepal is a member state of both the UN and UNWTO, and was involved in the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and later also joined SDGs, which commenced after the end of MDGs with a commitment “to eradicate extreme poverty, gender, and income inequalities, combat all dimensions of injustice, climate change, and laying the suitable foundation for the enhancement of all mankind, planet, peace, and prosperity through an alliance to accomplish by the year 2030” (WTO and UNDP 2017, 5). This underlying accentuation of the SDGs is meant to guide and master sustainable development that

enables balanced social, economic, and environmental elements. As a tourist destination, Nepal has attained many forms of sustainable tourism practices, including community-based tourism, pro-poor tourism, eco-tourism, agrotourism, mountain and adventure tourism, and so on.

The tourism policy of Nepal in 2008 emphasized generating more job opportunities, especially for common people, via diversification and tourism expansion by utilizing rural tourism and eco-tourism, and also to supporting preservation and sustainable use of natural resources and environment while advancing essential tourism infrastructure (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021). The Nepalese government looks more committed to accomplishing SDGs through proper policies and planning implementations. For instance, in the context of mountaineering and other adventuring tourists and associated teams in Nepal, it has been clearly stated that "no one shall not damage, harm, misuse, and force other to destroy any botanicals, cultural and aesthetic heritage, environment and other related things in the adjoining or particular route of its adventure expedition" (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021, 5). In addition, the team should not engage in activities that might be contrary to that area's social, cultural, and religious aspects. Moreover, regulations and provisions for all kinds of recyclable, reusable, reusable, and destroyable wastes need to be scientifically and systematically managed by the expedition teams so that minimal to zero damage occurs to the destination (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021). The mountaineering royalty disbursement and implementation manual declare that the Nepalese government reimbursed 30% of its total mountaineering royalties to the destinations' indigenous community for developing and maintaining essential tourism products, services, and hospitalities (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021). This has been an overwhelming initiation that helps attract tourists to the destination as local people are given priority for decision-making and implementation campaigns (Kc, Dhungana and Dangi 2021).

To promote the rural economy, the Nepalese government has initiated detailed guidelines to develop, maintain, promote, and regulate homestay tourism by introducing the homestay-operation-directive (Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021). Nepal's national parks and wildlife conservation also encourage homestay programs in protected areas, especially community-based homestays; eco and Agri tourism ventures are highly encouraged in these protected areas settings, with routine help from the World-Wildlife Fund (WWF). These programs are designed to satisfy the dual goals of preserving the environment and supporting indigenous peoples' living standards. This initiation generates more monetary flow to rural communities to meet their family's daily basic expenses and educational expenses, promote gender equality, and also to conserve the natural environment and cultural sites (Kc 2021; Nepal 2022). Few protected areas have been flourishing, attracting a decent number of tourists, whereas other protected areas are

struggling to encourage tourism. For instance, the successful protected areas are the Annapurna conservation area project, Chitwan national park, and Sagarmatha national park, which Annapurna conservation area project is often cited as one of the best ecotourism in the whole world's models. The communities residing in the periphery of the zone of the protected area rejoice in the revenue shared by the protected areas. This buffer zone management directives specify that investment needs to be adjudicated in these five different perspectives: conservation and community development program (60%), income generation and skill & vocational development program (20%), conservational educational campaign (10%), and administrative appropriations (10%) (Min 2020; Kc, Dhungana & Dangi 2021).

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, two theories will be extensively highlighted: the trickledown theory and the theory of planned behavior. The trickle-down theory will be used to understand the influence of tourism on economic activities and the viability of poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, the theory of planned behavior will be implied to understand different factors that predict the intention to visit sustainable tourism sites.

3.1 Trickledown theory: do tourism avails trickle down to the poor?

The trickle-down theory has been cited in tourism literature as the phenomenon where the economic advantages of tourism are naturally dispersed to reach the actual poor (Pleumarom 2012). This theory is mostly utilized in politics, where the belief emerges that benefits will trickle down to the community by cutting down taxation and rendering other priorities to firms, businesses, and rich individuals (Pleumarom 2012). Scholars of this theory claim that economic growth pursues a top-to-bottom approach, which will indirectly benefit people who are not directly recipients of changing political strategies (Kakwani & Pernia 2000, 2). The capitalist economist has mostly advocated this theory to justify its economic vitality since the mid-20th century (Mowforth, Charlton & Munt 2007). Nevertheless, as stated earlier, the income level between different groups or classes widened more from the mid-1960s to 1995, meaning that progressive economic growth in advanced countries has caused more poor people (Mowforth et al. 2007). This also indicates that the problem of income inequality might be as relevant as poverty (Mowforth, Charlton and Munt 2007). For this reason, advanced economies have attempted to develop livelihood program that penetrates poor individuals and microfinance activities that help assist small-scale business (Kotler, Roberto & Leisner 2006).

Although these economic benefits might seem meager individually, it has a collective and noticeable impact on local people's living standards. It has also been presumed that through this trickle-down strategy, local people and communities will be able to reap the benefit of employment or through the economic impact of spending in such touristic places (Pleumarom 2012). The tourism has thus been measured and evaluated based on total visitors, devoted expenditures, contributions to their national GDP collection, and employment rates (Muganda, Sahli and Smith 2010). This theory discussion suggests that the liberal approach is mostly implied by tourism advocates, development agencies, and institutions who favor marketization and private sector development as the effective instruments of tourism growth

and, consequently, lower poverty cases (Pleumarom 2012). The liberal assumption is also the key component behind the rationale for using trickle-down theory. Pro-poor tourism is a banner in which the real aspects of economic goals are concealed. And this might be the reason why the poverty cases, its causes, and the voice of the poor's have got minimal attention in the extant tourism and economic development literature (Pleumarom 2012).

3.2 The theory of planned behavior

Ajzen (1991) commenced the framework known as the theory of planned behavior (TPB) not to estimate but to comprehend human behavior. The TPB started as the theory of reasoned action (TRA) in 1980 to estimate the humans' intention to indulge in a specific behavior at a particular period and place. The theory was designed to understand all behaviors over which humans can strive for self-control. The component of this model is behavioral intent, in which the behavioral intention is impacted through attitude about the likelihood that the behavior brings the expected results and subjective judgment of the risks and advantages of the possible outcome (Ajzen 1991).

The attitude factor of the TPB model refers to the degree to which a human (a consumer, student, worker, or visitor) has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of certain behaviors or interests. The subjective norms carry the motivational factors which determine a certain behavior depending on what surrounding factors bring to the intention to perform the behavior. The perceived behavioral control factor is determined by an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of controlling certain behavior of interest, which can vary depending on the situation and the actions (Ajzen 1991).

The TPB has been extensively used to predict and understand wide ranges of behavioral health intentions, for instance, smoking and drinking, utilization of health services, elections, pro-environmental behaviors, organic food consumption, green consumption, and many more. This theory has been equally validated and utilized in tourism; for instance, Quintal, Lee and Soutar (2010) utilized the TPB model to study tourist intention to visit Asian tourism. Sparks (2007) used the TPB model to predict the factors influencing tourist behavioral intention. The TPB model was implied to see if tourists would like to consider another wine trip within the next year of their last visit. Sparks (2007) divided the attitudinal factor into emotional attitude and attitude towards experience; the findings depict that apart from emotional attitude, all other TPB factors directly influence the intention to experience the wine trip.

Similarly, Jalivand and Samiei (2012) utilized the TPB model to predict the impact of electronic word of mouth on tourism destination selection. The author found that word of mouth has become more digitalized, and its effects were amplified, making more impact on choosing a tourism destination. Jalivand and Samiei's (2012) findings suggest that e-WOM had a direct and positive impact on attitude, subjective norms, and behavioral controlling factors.

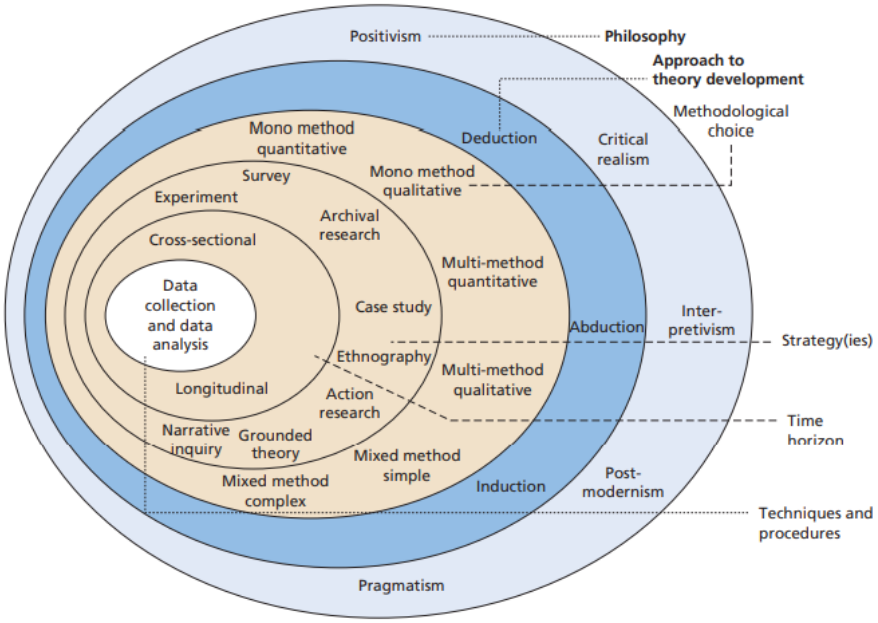
Since the TPB model is growing more interest in general tourism, scholars have been more interested in adopting this model to study sustainable tourism. For instance, Kuo and Dai (2012) explored low-carbon tourism behavior through the TPB model. Meanwhile, Lee and Jan (2018) carried out a theoretical framework to examine eco-tourism behavior by comprising four theories, of which the TPB was one. Eom and Han (2019) utilized the TPB model for community-based tourism, which has social-cultural sustainability. The study investigated the visitor's intentions toward tour programs with moderating effects of age and gender. Therefore, through reviewing the literature, the TPB model has been employed extensively towards understanding tourists' behaviors, intention to visit, sustainable tourism practices. In such, this research will also imply the theory of planned behavior to investigate the perception towards sustainable tourism and how effective it can be to combat the poverty cases in the context of Nepal.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this section, the adopted approach to the empirical workout will be provided, which includes the implied philosophy, theory development, data collection method, strategies, sampling method, and data analysis technique. Furthermore, the justification for using these approaches instead of other alternatives will also be provided.

4.1 Introduction

A crucial part of any research is mentioning and understanding the knowledge through which the choice of research methods, design, and strategy are interconnected. Though philosophical beliefs and assumptions often influence the way any research is carried out, they might not be explicitly indicated or might even taken for granted (Crotty 1998). Simplistically, the general views that depict the research paradigm are characterized by the basic views, beliefs, and assumptions about the world, which are characterized by the answer rendered to the basic questions (Crotty 1998). These beliefs are pivotal for any researcher as these assumptions consequently shape the researcher's understanding of research questions, methods, and the interpretation process (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). Thus, a pre-planned consistency of beliefs and assumptions leads to credible research which brings more meaning to the selection of different approaches required for the empirical part of the thesis. Therefore, in this thesis, the author will follow Saunders et al (2016) – 'Research Onion Model' for choosing different methods as required in this thesis.



PICTURE 1. Research Onion model (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016, 124)

4.2 Research philosophy

While writing research, a clear understanding of research philosophy indicates full awareness of the formulation and effectiveness of beliefs and understandings about the real world. The selection of research philosophy depends on its practical implications, the nature of the research, and the organization of research questions and literature. To be more precise, there are significant philosophical discrepancies between the research that focuses on quantifiable-based (objective-based) and qualitative-based (subjective-based). These two philosophical standpoints, "positivism" and "interpretivism," are commonly implied in scientific and social research (Collis & Hussey 2003). From a positivist philosophical stance, the beliefs and assumptions are relied on objective-based realities, in contrast to subjective-based realities in the interpretivism philosophical stance.

The positivist philosophy relies on quantified-based studies as it believes in logical-based reasoning, and the theory develops by bringing relationships between variables identified within the literature (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). Positivist philosophers believe in contemplating premises through which the knowledge is observed and evaluated as authentic, in which scientifically proven methods based on logical coherence are taken to test the hypothesis (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). Since

the nature of the research question, as mentioned in the introduction, is more answerable through objective-based realities, i.e., through quantifiable findings, positive research philosophy best suits this research. According to Saunders et al. (2016), positivist philosophy provides the inclination toward quantitative research, which are an objective-based reality and has generalization power. Thus, instead of gaining comprehensive insights into the phenomena through a subjective stance, this research will utilize prior researchers' findings, theories, and models to understand and deduce them through its theoretical framework. As such, the relationships between different variables or measures such as sustainable tourism, poverty alleviation, and economic potential will be assessed and will draw suitable findings.

4.3 Research approach

According to Saunders et al. (2016), if research begins by emphasizing theories, often accumulated from the literature, and the strategy is to draw and test the theory, then the deductive approach is highly requisite. Deductive-based reasoning owes much to what is esteemed as scientific research (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). It ponders establishing theories that are later subjected to hypothesis testing by utilizing a series of prepositions; as the results tally with the pre-supposed criteria, then it will be accepted as true otherwise fail to become acceptable (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). One of the main advantages of the deductive approach is that it can shed generalizability power.

Since this research has already utilized prior researchers' findings, opinions, theories, and models as an essential part of our literature-theoretical findings, deductive-based reasoning is more applicable. Furthermore, it will allow us to understand the relationship between sustainable tourism development and its impact on poverty alleviation campaigns. Quantitative-based data collection is more suitable as it helps to understand the statistical phenomena through which the significance between sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation will be measured, and it is only successful through a deductive-based approach. In addition, deductive-based reasoning is more suitable when abundant literature is available on the research topic (Collis & Hussey 2003). Also, it helps lessen the bias factor as researchers' involvement in the empirical process is omitted and full access to perform research quantitatively.

4.4 Data collection method

The first methodological choice for any research investigator comes with a quandary of whether to take both quantitative or qualitative methods (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). This quantitative or qualitative data collection method brings different elements to accomplish coherence in the research process. The nature of the data collection method influences the research strategy, time horizon, and efforts. Since the quantitative research method is mostly associated with a deductive-based approach, in which the main focus is to utilize data to test the theory or model (Saunders et al. 2016, 165). Quantitative-based data collection method allows for analysis and evaluates the possible causal relationship between variables through statistical analysis. For instance, the relationship between sustainable tourism on poverty alleviation campaigns. Furthermore, the quantitative method of data collection also enables the collection of data from a large sample and can later be used for generalizing the population using different statistical methods corresponding to the theory being utilized.

The quantitative data collection method seems more relevant to this research because the nature of the research questions is more tilted towards quantified-based answers. The researcher can access the large sample size by utilizing a questionnaire-based strategy. Moreover, the primary agenda is to test the adopted theory, which is possible via a quantitative method that enables statistical analysis to measure whether the adopted theory can be accepted. Moreover, the quantitative research method takes less time and has less bias than the qualitative method (Lash, Fox, MacLehose, Malando, McCandless & Greenland 2014).

4.5 Research design

Following Crotty (1998) research design comprises the background for the execution of the empirical workout of the research. It provides a general guideline for gathering and evaluating the data Crotty (1988). For meaningful research, the relevancy of empirical workout enables the researcher to settle the research problems and questions within the allocated time, resources, and effort. There are mainly three types of research design: descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016).

This research will adopt a descriptive-based research design as it enables comprehensive experiments of an event or circumstances, or topics despite caring about specific types of data collection methods. This way, descriptive research design also enables answering research questions that emerge from

which, what, how, when, and where (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). In the case of the researcher relying on a quantitative data collection method, the researcher's goal is to find the causal relationships between different variables. For instance, the impact of sustainable tourism on poverty alleviation missions. However, it is first necessary to define the measurements and rectify the target population clearly so that the data collection and evaluation process best resembles the true behaviors of the population.

4.6 Research strategy

Selecting an effective research strategy is always paramount for accomplishing good research; however, it depends on the nature of the research questions and problems (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). Therefore, the researcher strategy allows an avenue to collect sample data in the best chronological way by incorporating other adopted research methodologies. As such, the research questions always become useful in choosing the appropriate research strategy. According to Saunders et al. (2016), a survey research strategy is mostly implied when answering what, who, where, and how-related research questions. The survey research strategy is also associated with deductive-based reasoning, making the method more practical and enabling it to follow a cohesive approach.

A survey strategy using a questionnaire technique is commonly implied to gather standardized data extracted from a large population with fewer costs and brings comparison characteristics between respondents' responses. Moreover, the survey strategy is taken as authoritative as participants find it easy to understand compared to interview-based questions (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). The adopted descriptive research design is also best incorporated with the survey research strategy (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). Therefore, the researcher will adopt a survey questionnaire as the only research strategy to collect the sample size.

4.7 Sampling technique

Sampling means the selection of the respondents (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2016). Although the quantitative-based data collection technique best incorporates with probabilistic sample technique, the actual population size is unknown, and therefore non-probability sampling is more competent for this

research. Therefore, this research will adopt non-probabilistic sampling, precisely “convenience sampling,” to extract the potential respondents, as these techniques follow no particular sampling principles and guidelines. Besides, convenience sampling is less costly, takes minimal time and effort, and, more importantly, this technique needs no particular protocols to follow as a researcher can even access participants from any groups, events, or categories. Since this sampling technique is more flexible with no pre-stated protocols, therefore, chances of selection bias also become higher with this method (Kothari 2004). Therefore, the researcher is fully aware of this disadvantage and becomes more cautious when reaching the potential respondents.

4.8 Data analysis

The collected responses will be divided into three structures: respondents or demographic profile, descriptive statistics, and relationship measurement, which could be through correlation and some specific regression analysis. Since the gathered responses require some statistical methods to extract precise information, the collected data will be processed through Microsoft Excel. Before extracting data from this software, any responses with duplicate or incomplete responses will be eliminated as it will bring counterfeit findings. Descriptive statistics will be given more priority in this research, where statistics such as mean, median, and standard deviation will be used to understand responses behaviors. Additionally, graphical presentations such as histograms, pie charts, bar diagrams, line graphs, etc., will be implied to provide respondents' responses in the best meaningful way.

4.9 Summary of the adopted methodologies

Table 1 presented below shows the adopted approach used in each method. The use of each approach is interconnected with each other; therefore, each approach is arranged in a sequential order.

TABLE 1. Summary of the adopted methodologies

S.N.	Methodologies	Adopted approach
4.1	Introduction	Research onion

4.2	Research Philosophy	Positivism
4.3	Research approach	Deductive based reasoning
4.4	Data collection method	Quantitative
4.5	Research design	Descriptive based
4.6	Research strategy	Survey questionnaire
4.7	Sampling technique	Convenience method
4.8	Data analysis	Microsoft Excel

5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section will provide information related to respondents' demographic profiles, their households' economic situation, barriers and primary beneficiaries of tourism benefits, and descriptive statistics related to the overall socioeconomic development of participants and their behavioral factors. A total of 147 responses were collected using an online survey questionnaire to Nepalese people. The survey was carried out through social media channels for one week. The findings from 147 responses are presented as follows.

5.1 Respondents' demographic profile: age & gender

Table 2, as presented below, represents the cross-tabulation between age and gender relationship based on 147 respondents; 46% (*N=68)* were female, 52% (*N=76)* were male, and two respondents preferred not to reveal their gender. Similarly, the majority of respondents were found young; 34% (*N=50)* were aged between 20 to 25, 29% (*N=42)* were aged between 26 to 30, and 13% (*N=19)* were aged between 31 to 35; altogether, 76% (*N=111)* respondents aged between 20 to 35.

TABLE 2. Participants' demographic profile between gender and age

Gender/Age	below 20	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	56 or above	Grand Total
Female	6	26	20	9	5	2			68
Male	*9*	23	22	10	7	3	2		76
Prefer not to say		1			1				2
(blank)								1	1
Grand Total	**15**	**50**	**42**	**19**	**13**	**5**	**2**	**1**	**147**

5.2 Participants profile: marital, income, and occupational status

The Table 3, as presented below, depicts participants' profiles based on marital, income, and occupational status. Based on 147 respondents, 59% (*N=87)* were unmarried, followed by 38% (*N= 56) who*

were married. Similarly, 70% of respondents had a monthly disposable income of Nepalese rupee below 60,000; 32% (*N=45)* had below 20,000 NPR, 23% (*N=33)* had between 20,001 and 40,000 NPR, and 15% (*N=21)* had between 40,001 and 60,000 NPR as their monthly disposable income.

TABLE 3. Participants' profile: marital, income, and occupational status

Profile	**division**	**frequency**	**total responses**
Marital status	Married	**38%**	147
	Unmarried	**59%**	
	Divorced	**1%**	
	Prefer not to disclose	**1%**	
Average disposable income	below 20,000	**32%**	142
	20,001 - 40,000	**23%**	
	40,001 - 60,000	**15%**	
	60,001 - 80,000	**6%**	
	80,001 - 1,00,000	**8%**	
	1,00,001 or above	**16%**	
Average disposable income	Agriculture	**7%**	147
	Forestry	**2%**	
	office-jobs	**25%**	
	tourism and services	**8%**	
	Unemployed	**16%**	
	Others	**42%**	

5.3 Participants' household economic condition

I asked 147 participants to relate to their current household economic situation. Based on their responses, figure 1 presents 147 participants' current household economic condition, out of which 79% (*N=116)* were neither rich nor poor, 10% (*N=15)* considered themselves rich, and 8% (*N=11)* agreed to call themselves as poor followed by just 2% (*N=2)* were found very poor.

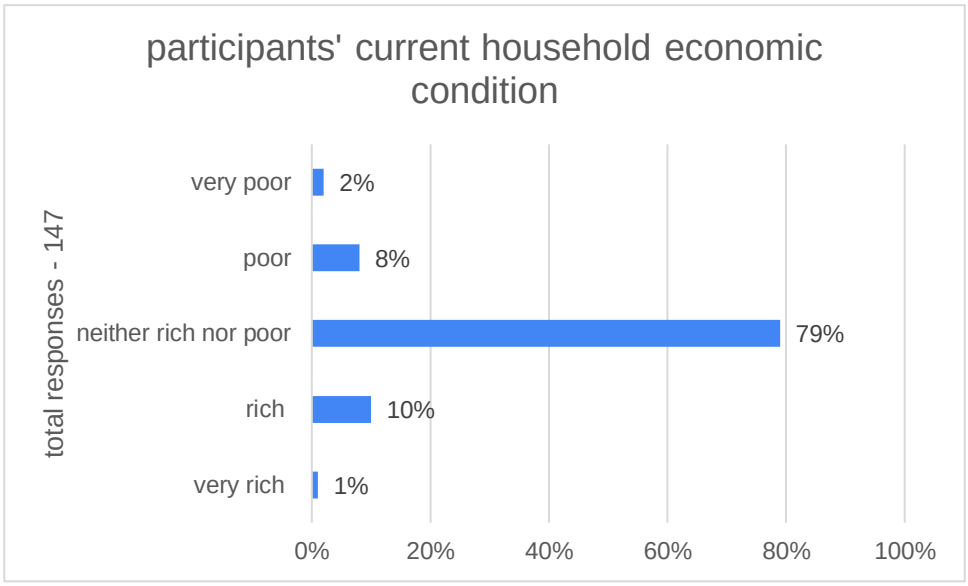


FIGURE 1. Participants` current household economic condition

Overall, almost 80% of participants´ responded themselves as a middle-class household, who were neither poor nor rich.

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5.4 Prominence of sustainable tourism development to reduce poverty

Figure 2 indicates respondents' perception of the importance of sustainable tourism in combating poverty in their respective localities. Based on 147 responses, 43% (*N=63)* respondents responded, 'extremely important,' 19% (*N=28)* respondents responded important, holding 63% (FIGURE 2) altogether.

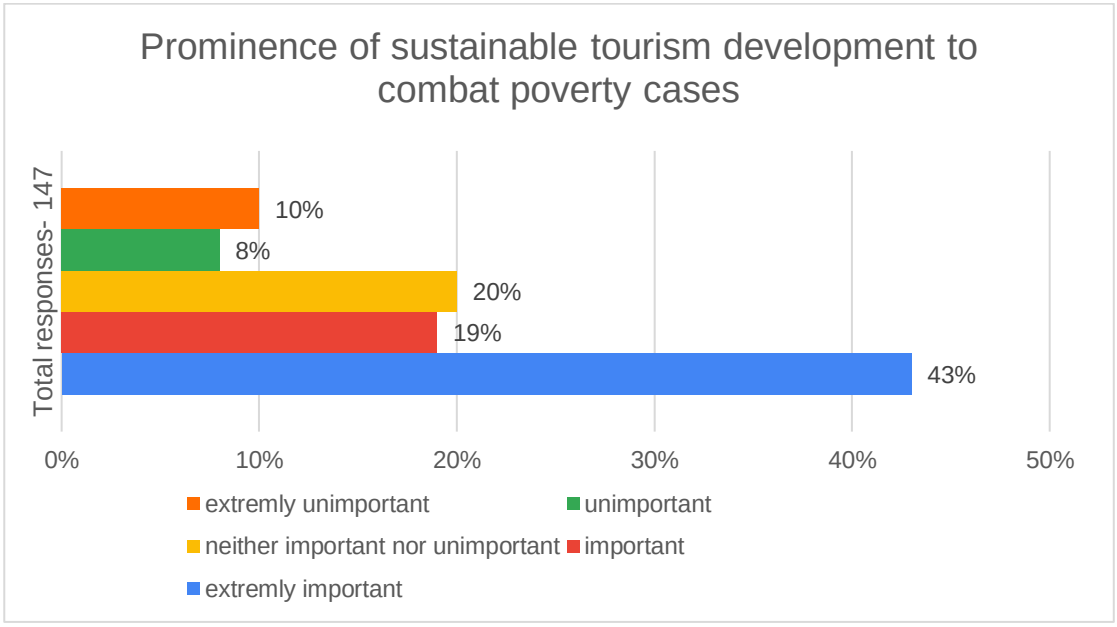

FIGURE 2. The prominence of sustainable tourism development to reduce poverty.

Overall, most participants found sustainable tourism development important to alleviate poverty cases in Nepal.

5.5 Primary beneficiaries of tourism benefits

Figure 3 shows respondents' responses about the primary beneficiaries of tourism benefits in their respective localities. Through 147 responses, only 18% (*N=26)* respondents agreed as tourists' actual beneficiaries are local poor people, and 39% (*N=57)* respondents agreed as tourism's primary beneficiaries are local tourism businesses. Similarly, 16% (*N=24) of* respondents found tourism benefits to the government and local authorities.

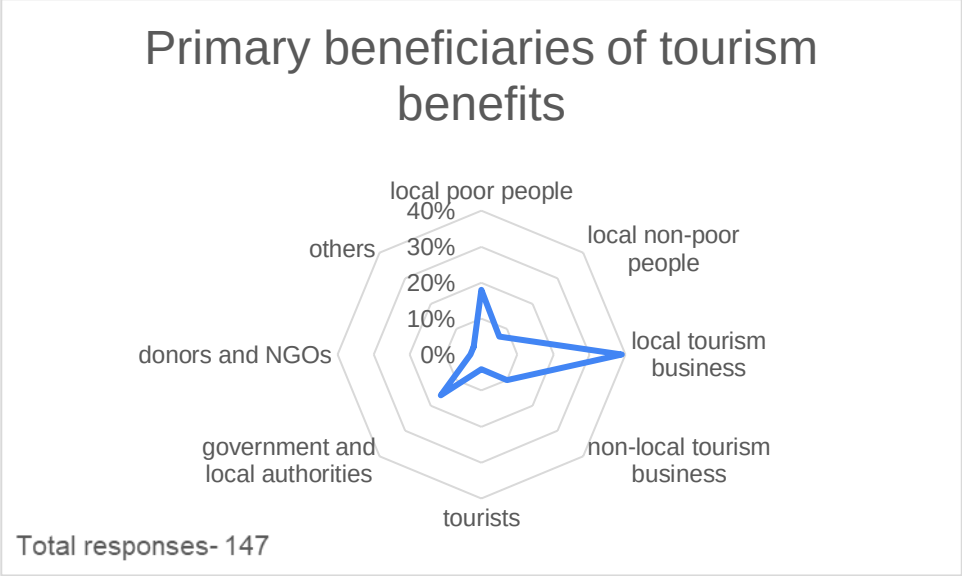

FIGURE 3. Primary beneficiaries of tourism benefits

Most respondents responded that the primary beneficiaries of tourism development are local tourism businesses rather than the actual poor people.

5.6 Barriers to combat poverty alleviation campaign

Figure 4 shows 147 responses about the barriers to combat poverty alleviation campaigns. The majority of the respondents, 52% (*N=77),* blamed political instability and corruption as the major reason behind combating poverty cases, followed by 22% (*N=32)* who blamed insufficient infrastructure, 19% (*N=28)*

felt insufficient marketing and promotion of tourism behind the failure of poverty alleviation campaign, and 7% (*N=10)* of the respondents felt a lower level of local participation is the reason behind the barriers to combat poverty cases.

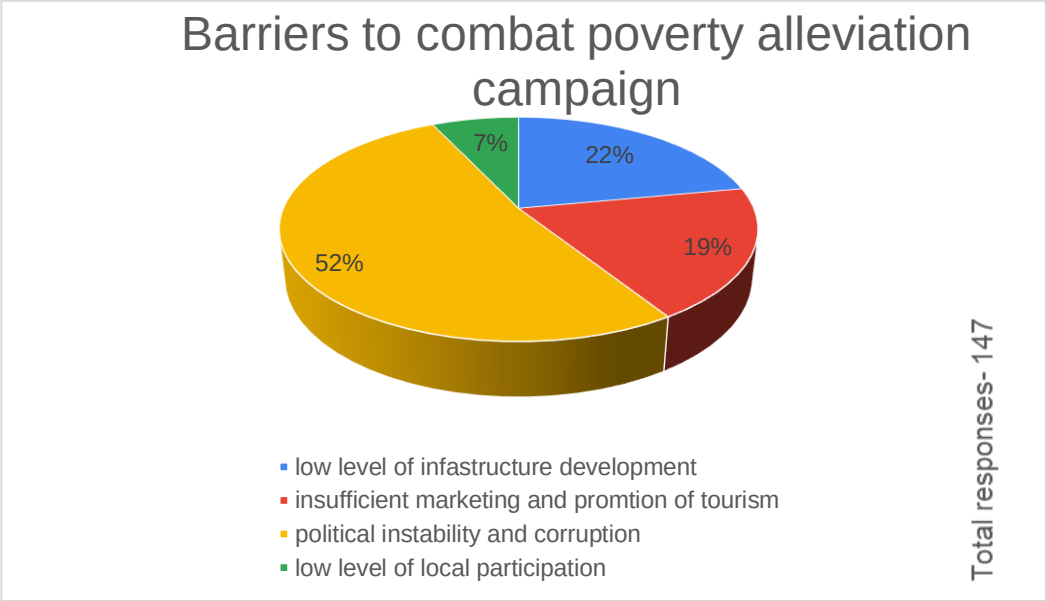

FIGURE 4. Barriers to combat poverty alleviation campaign.

Overall, it was found that political instability and corruption is the major reason hindering the combat poverty situation in Nepal.

5.7 Descriptive statistics

Table 4, as shown below, portrays descriptive statistics based on 147 responses about respondents' perception of sustainable tourism relevance on different factors. A 5 scale Likert-based questionnaire was implied to find respondents' responses on these mentioned factors in table 5. The 5-scale Likert questionnaire was arranged from strongly agree, denoted by 5, to strongly disagree, denoted by 1.

Based on 147 responses, the aggregate responses on sustainable tourism's impact on societal development, economic level, livelihood condition, educational training, and health care were found positive as the aggregate response was between 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'agree.' The median responses indicate a similar interpretation as 50% of responses were found between 'agree' and 'strongly agree.'

Likewise, the three factors of the 'theory of planned behavior'- attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control- were utilized to know respondents' intentions toward sustainable tourism destinations. Table 4 shows that respondents have a positive attitude toward sustainable tourism destination; the mean value of 3.69 represent agreeableness. The subjective norms and perceived behavioral control toward visiting sustainable tourism sites indicate a similar interpretation. Averagely, response to visit was found positive as the mean value of 3.5, tilting towards agreeableness. Lastly, the standard deviation, as observed in table 4, indicates that the dispersion of responses was more compacted to its concerned mean value, where responses related to 'attitude' factors were more dispersed (ranging to 1.14 to either side of the normal distribution curve from its mean value of 3.69) and 'livelihood condition' being more compacted within its mean value of 3.40.

TABLE 4. Descriptive statistics

Factors	**Mean**	**Median**	**St. dev**
Societal development	3,35	3,50	1,09
Economic level	3,42	3,33	1,05
Livelihood condition	3,40	3,50	0,97
Educational training	3,57	3,67	1,05
Health care	3,38	3,33	1,07
Attitude	3,69	4,00	1,14
Subjective norms	3,54	3,50	1,04
Perceived behavioral control	3,55	3,50	1,04
Intention to visit	3,50	3,00	1,13

Note: The overall descriptive findings are presented in table 4. Aggregately, the observed central tendency statistics show positive responses in a 5-likert scale survey questionnaire.

5.8 Reliability test

Table 5 presents a reliability test for measuring the reliability of questionnaires in each factor segment. The Cronbach alpha test was adopted to test the internal consistency between the questionnaires. Cronbach alpha is mostly used to find internal consistencies of a set of scales, providing the overall strength of that consistency (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis 2016). Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measure of the reliability of an aggregate scale comprised of individual surveys. Cronbach alpha is a statistical test for measuring internal consistencies of respondents' responses to a set of questions combined in a certain scale (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis 2016). The Cronbach alpha value closer to 1.0 indicates

greater internal consistencies of the variables used in the scale, and values above 0.7 are considered acceptable, and the questionnaire implied have better reliability function (Howard 2016). Therefore, a questionnaire used in all factors was found reliable except the questionnaire used in the perceived behavioral control factor.

TABLE 5. Reliability test

Factors	**Cronbach alpha value**
Societal development	0,76
Economic level	0,83
Livelihood condition	0,82
Educational training	0,83
Health care	0,87
Attitude	0,86
Subjective norms	0,75
Perceived behavioral control	0,68

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will summarize the empirical results, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for further study. The empirical part was carried out by collecting quantitative data through an online questionnaire survey. The survey consisted of two parts- participants' demographic characteristics and core questions related to sustainable tourism development and poverty alleviation. Altogether 147 responses were collected in which the gender male & female participation was fairly equal. However, the survey was dominated by young participants, accounting for 76% (N=111) of respondents. It is probably because the author used an online survey delivered via social media platforms where the targeted population is mostly young. Though it shows what young people in Nepal think about sustainable tourism and its impact on poverty alleviation, it fails to highlight the other age groups, especially the adulthood (30-39), middle age (40-59), and early elder (60-80) age group of population. This thesis aims to comprehend how sustainable tourism development helps alleviate poverty cases in Nepal. For that, the penetration to actual poor people would have best identified their current poverty situation. However, the total respondent who identifies as poor is just 10% out of 147 respondents.

Regarding the importance of sustainable tourism development to combat poverty cases, this thesis has found that it has the courage and ability to defeat poverty cases in Nepal, as 62% (out of 147 respondents) agreed on it. However, it has been found that the actual beneficiaries of tourism benefits are not the local poor people; the primary beneficiaries based on 147 responses were local tourism businesses. Similarly, on the barriers to combat poverty alleviation campaign, political instability and corruption were the major culprits; 52% (out of 147 respondents) agreed.

Sustainable tourism development was found to moderately influence societal development, economic level, livelihood condition, educational training, and health care facilities. The mean and median values, as presented in table 4, are between 3 to 4, indicating that participants moderately agreed on a 5-Likert scale questionnaire. These factors are crucial for a household as improving these scales lowers poverty. Similarly, the components of the theory of planned behavior were utilized to understand respondents' intention to visit sustainable tourism sites. The attitude factors were the most influential behavioral component for visiting sustainable tourism sites. It was found that respondents holding positive attitudes towards sustainable tourism were found more intended to visit such sites. The observed mean value of 3.54 and 3.55 on subjective norms and PBC interpret the same meaning. Societal factors or subjective norms were found to mediate what individuals think about sustainable tourism sites. The observed mean

value of 3.54 of subjective norms shows what people closer to respondents think about sustainable tourism sites and what action the respondents should take. The PBC mean value of 3.55 indicates that respondents have decent control over their activities and actions when planning to visit sustainable tourism sites.

In comparing this research's findings with prior researchers' findings, this research supports the findings of Manzoor 2019, as they found that tourism brings positive economic activities to the country, particularly GDP collection and job opportunities. The findings of Joo, Seok and Nam (2020) found subjective norms and perceived behavior control were found to have a greater effect on the intention to visit the sustainable rural tourism destination; meanwhile, the findings show subjective norms and perceived behavioral control has minimal impact compared to the attitudinal factor. Therefore, this research partially supports Joo et al.'s (2020) findings. Oviedo-García et al. (2019) found tourism has not elevated poverty cases and has failed to minimize the unequal distribution of wealth. This thesis found a moderate effect on alleviating poverty cases; therefore, these research findings contradict the findings of Oviedo-García et al. (2019).

6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, even though it is well acknowledged that tourism may play a significant role in boosting a country's economy, the available empirical data on the relationship between tourism and poverty is inconclusive. The relationship between tourism and poverty has been the subject of extensive study, which may be found in the expanding canon of literature on poverty reduction brought about by the tourist industry. While some research suggests that tourism may positively impact poverty alleviation, other studies have shown no correlation between the two. The impact of tourism on families of varying incomes has been hardly touched upon by academic research. For the most part, earlier empirical research has supplied tourism's positive impact on the impoverished is supported by strong data. To be fair, sustainable tourism's potential role in alleviating poverty has received less consideration in the literature. A comprehensive investigation was required to determine whether promoting sustainable tourism development genuinely helps reduce poverty. Somehow, this study has added little to our understanding of this topic. According to author study, sustainable tourism has a modest impact on reducing poverty in Nepal. Sustainable tourism's impact on reducing poverty was analyzed concerning five different factors: societal development, economic level, livelihood condition, educational training, and access to healthcare facilities. The survey questionnaires from 147 participants showed that, on average,

people only somewhat agreed that sustainable tourism helps relieve poverty. Political instability and widespread corruption are the main impediments to alleviating poverty in Nepal. Moreover, the author discovered that the real poor are not the major recipients of tourism benefits in their respective localities.

A moderate effect was found to answer the research question, “to what extent does sustainable tourism bring a positive impact on bringing positive living standards to, particularly, destination-based indigenous peoples of Nepal?”. Furthermore, the trickle-down approach was found to be the appropriate approach to the research question, “What approaches help to maximize maximum tourism’s impact on poverty alleviation with keeping a close eye on sustainability?”. The tourism literature often refers to the trickle-down hypothesis as the phenomenon through which the economic benefits of tourism are organically spread to reach the real poor. Politicians often use this idea, reasoning that if they help corporations and the wealthy in other ways (such as lowering their taxes), those gains will eventually trickle down to the rest of society.

6.2 Limitations and recommendation

This research has some limitations, and these shortcomings can bring better research. Firstly, this study has applied only the quantitative research method; meanwhile, a mixed data collection method would have bought more meaning to this research; different individuals perceive sustainable tourism development differently. Therefore, including qualitative-based results, such as interviewing different stakeholders would have made this research more appealing. Similarly, the participants in this research survey were mostly dominated by young individuals; therefore, this research has missed what other age groups peoples perceive about sustainable tourism development and its effect on poverty reduction campaigns. Lastly, the sample size was just 147, which is too small to generalize the Nepalese population. On the recommendation side, the tourist industry needs skilled workers, loyal governmental activities, and advanced facilities to thrive. This research concludes that the government should foster sustainable tourism growth to generate jobs, money 'cash cow,' and revenue for the local population and the country's economy. By investing in the tourist industry with fundamental infrastructures like a well-developed public transit system, well-maintained roads, large airports, and tax breaks for businesses involved in the tourism industry, the government can help the sector grow (i.e., hotels). It will allow for better economic growth and show a better image and reputation in the global tourism market if political stability is restored. The government also must create sustainable tourist rules and guarantee zero corruption tolerance. This would assist in alleviating indigenous poverty by ensuring a consistent demand for tourism

in the nation. Encouragement and motivation to develop their sites to their maximum extent are felt when locals are encouraged to participate in sustainable tourist development campaigns.

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APPENDIX

An online survey questionnaire to Nepalese people. The survey was carried out through social media channels for one week. The respondents need around 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. Respondent privacy is most importance, and all responses are kept confidential. The purpose of the survey is to understand about people's perceptions of sustainable tourism development and the alleviation of poverty. The survey is running for educational purposes. The questionnaire focuses on determining how sustainable tourism development improves Nepal's poverty cases. I would like to appreciate all those who take time and did my survey.

what is your age in years?

- ○ below 20
- ○ 20-25
- ○ 26-30
- ○ 31-35
- ○ 36-40
- ○ 41-45
- ○ 46-50
- ○ 51-55
- ○ 56 or above

what is your marital status?

- ○ married
- ○ unmarried
- ○ divorced
- ○ prefer not to disclose

what is your average disposable income (in Nepalese rupee)?

- ○ below 20,000
- ○ 20,001 - 40,000
- ○ 40,001 - 60,000
- ○ 60,001 - 80,000
- ○ 80,001 - 1,00,000
- ○ 1,00,001 or above

what is your main ocupation?

- ○ agriculture
- ○ foresty
- ○ business
- ○ tourism and services
- ○ unemployed
- ○ others

How would you best describe your current household economic condition?

- ○ very rich
- ○ rich
- ○ neither rich nor poor
- ○ poor
- ○ very poor

After section 1 Continue to next section

Section 2 of 3

Sustainable tourism and its influence in poverty alleviation.

Description (optional)

To what extent, do you feel the importantance of sustainable tourism development to reduce poverty cases from your locality?

	1	2	3	4	5	
extremely important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	extremely unimportant

In your opinion, what are the main barriers to poverty allevation in your locality?

- ◯ low level of infastructure development
- ◯ insufficient marketing and promtion of tourism
- ◯ political instability and corruption
- ◯ low level of local participation

In your opinion, who have been the primary beneficiaries of tourism benefits in your local regions?

- ○ local poor people
- ○ local non-poor people
- ○ local tourism business
- ○ non-local tourism business
- ○ tourists
- ○ government and local authorities
- ○ donors and NGOs
- ○ others

Sustainable tourism has developed our community economically

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism has contributed to protecting our traditional culture

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism has contributed to raising our living standards

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism has primarily benefited the poor people in our community

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism has bought more positive benefits than adverse effects

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism improves family income

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism increases the level of consumption

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism improves housing condition

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism promotes water and electricity conditions

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism increase life durable products

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism aggrandizes training opportunity

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism promotes educational infrastructure

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism help enhance the cultural quality

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism help improve medical care condition

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism help increase the opportunity for free health treatment

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Sustainable tourism helps promote the medical campaign and medical insurance

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	stronly agree

Practising sustainable tourism is good and valuable

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Going to practice tourism sites sustainably is beneficial for the economy, environment, and society

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Most people who are important to me agree with me about going to asustainable tourist destination

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Most people who are important to me think I should better go to a sustainable tourist destination

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I am confident that, if I want to, I can go to sustainable tourism sites

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I have enough resources, time, and opportunities to go to sustainable tourism sites

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I will make an extra effort to travel to sustainable tourism sites from now onwards

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	strongly agree