

Tourism, Importance, Prospects and Challenges

(With special reference to Nepal)

*Mohan Prasad Pant

**Dr. Padam S. Bisht

1- Introduction

Present era is known as industrial era. The all round development of a nation is not possible without industrial development .It plays a crucial role in the process of economic development. It creates jobs, increases output, national income foreign trade etc.

Generally industry is a production process. It comprises those activities which are directed to the production of goods and services. According to Britannica Encyclopedia ,”an industry is the group of production enterprises or organizations that produce or supply goods and service.” Thus the activity making or production of things and providing service as called industry. According to the nature of industries, they are classified into production industries and service industries. Tourism is one of the service industries, which is rapidly growing all over the world. In a large number of developing countries tourism is an important economic force and its study is of increasing academic and practical interest. Nepal is not far away from it.

2- Objective of the study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To provide knowledge about importance and prospects of Tourism in Nepal.
- ii. To indicate the challenges of Tourism in Nepal.

3- Methodology of study

Basically the study has been based on secondary data as a prime source. The data were collected from review of past researches, reports, several journals and official reports of government, NGOs, INGOs, and other related organizations.

4- Meaning of Tourism

An act of travel from one place to another place of country as well as from one country to another country is called tourism. Entertainment, Sight-seeing, Mountaineering, Trekking, Boating, Skating, Rafting etc., are the main purposes of the tourism. Taking political, religious, economic and trade information, exchange of art and culture etc., are other main objectives of tourism.

An activity ensured for necessary arrangement of a tourist is called tourism industry. it includes the all business activities which provide facilities for tourists like hotel, travel agency and other related activities. Thus, tourism is a service providing industry which becomes an important economic force for developing nations. In the case of Nepal it is established as one of the important sector of the economy.

5- Development of Tourism in Nepal

The history of tourism of Nepal is very short. Up to 1951AD, Nepal was absolutely separated from other countries of the world. There was a severe control for Nepalese people to go outside Nepal and for the foreigners to enter into Nepal. The Ranas de facto ruled the country as their fiefdom until they were ousted from power by popular revolt in 1951 and democracy was established in the country. The advent of democracy

*Lecturer ,Janjyoti Multiple Campus, Mahendranagar,Kanchanpur, Nepal

**Professor Department of Economics, DSB Campus, Nainital

was removed the severe control and ambassadorial relations of Nepal began to be established with different countries of the world. Nepal received a membership of international travel association (ITA) in 2008 B.S. The tourism development board and tourism committee were established in 2013 B.S and 2014 B.S. respectively. The tourism development committee was converted into the tourism department in 2015 B.S. The ministry of tourism was established in 2034 B.S. in Nepal. The citizens of Nepal and India began to travel to each other country due to their social, cultural, democratic relations etc. From this process the tourism is started in Nepal. Now days Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) is a national tourism organization of the country. It acts as a model of public-private-Partnership to develop and make Nepal as an attractive tourist destination.

6- Importance of Tourism in Nepal

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries throughout the world. It is an important economic force for developing countries. Its study is of increasing academic and practical interest. It becomes an extraordinary feature of developing countries like Nepal which is indicated by following points:

i. Source of Foreign Exchange

Tourism is a main reliable source of earning foreign exchange in Nepal. It can help in correcting the trade imbalance. During the fiscal year 2010 / 11 total foreign exchange earnings from tourism was Rs. 28.63 billion, which is 5% of total foreign exchanges and 1.6% of GDP.

ii. Increase Jobs

Tourism includes all business activities which provide facilities to tourists. It includes hotels, travel agency trekking agency etc. As the tourism expands these sector are also expands which grasps number of people in it.

iii. Base of Cottage Industries

The art and culture of the country is the base of products of cottage industries. These products are highly preferred by the foreign tourists. Due to it, the cottage industries are expanded all over the nation.

iv. Exchange of culture and concept

Tourism industries help to exchange art and culture between Nepal and rest of the world. When a tourist tours, he carries his concepts and culture with himself. In the same way, the tourist also influenced by the culture of inhabitants of the country destination in this way, tourism industry makes mutual exchange of concepts and culture among the people of different countries.

v. Increase in government revenue

Tourism is an important source of government revenue in the context of Nepal. The government earns revenue from tax, visa, fee, royalty etc. This increases the government revenue.

vi. Help to develop infrastructure

Tourists are interested in sightseeing, trekking, climbing, boating, rafting etc. These activities are related to remote areas. In order to take tourists to the remote areas, infrastructure facilities are necessary. Thus tourism helps to develop infrastructures.

vii. Increase in Consciousness

Tourism makes an easy contact with foreignness it widens the level of thinking and consciousness of people of the country.

7- Prospects of tourism in Nepal

There are great prospects of tourism in Nepal. some important prospects of tourism in Nepal are as follows :

i. Natural Beauty

Nepal is a country with plenty of natural beauties. Nepal a treasure trove of natural heritage, is a relatively small nation of 26.4 million people where climatic zones vary dramatically with a short distance from the low lying Kanchanakalan (67 meter) to mount Everest (8848Meter) the highest point in the earth. The immense diversity in Nepal's flora and fauna is remarkable. Besides, Nepal has numerous Himalayas, plenty of pleasant lakes, attractive dens, pleasant waterfall; rare animals are available in Nepal. All these beauties attract lots of tourists from different part of the world.

ii. Ancient art and culture

Nepal is also called a country of an ancient art and culture. Nepalese arts, artifacts, paintings, sculptors and architecture are quite rich and famous. Our traditions and cultures are also reflected in these arts and paintings. They have deep relations with the various religious and the related gods goddesses and deities. Various temples and buildings of our country reflect specimens of ancient art, culture and architectural knowledge. Tourists from different countries enjoy very much visiting these areas.

iii. Religious Places

In Nepal, there are many religions. Among them , Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Chhristainism are more common .Temple, Stupas, Musjids and Churches and various religious places have become the center of attraction for tourists of different religions. Pashupatinath ,Krishna Mandir, Ram JanakiMandir, Muktinath, Gosaikunda , Swayambhu, Lumbini, etc. are the important religious places of Nepal.

iv. Climatic Variety

Nepal is divided into Himalayan region, Hill region and Tarai region .All these region have different climates. Himalayan region has a very cold climate. Hill region has a temperate climate and a very pleasant climate. Tarai region has a very warm climate. Tourists from different countries can choose climate as they prefer . Thus climatic variety also attracts tourists in Nepal.

v. Cultural Variety

Nepal, with a population of 26-4 million people, is a multi-culture, multi-racial, multi- linguistic and multi ethnic country. Nepal's population represents more than a hundred ethnic groups. Each ethnic group carries its own identity and cultural heritage. Their food dress ornaments ,beliets customs, habits and manners differ from one- another. Their festivities, myths and legends, music and songs are also different which is the part of research and interest of tourists of all over the world.

vi. World Heritage sites

There are four UNESCO world heritage sites in Nepal. Two are in cultural category and two are in natural category. World cultural heritage sites of Nepal are: Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha and seven monument of Kathmandu valleys within the radius of 20 km (together counted as one heritage). The world Natural heritage sites are Chitwan and Sagarmatha National parks.

vii. Bio-diversity

Comprising 0.1% of land area on a global scale, Nepal possesses a dis proportionately rich biodiversity. Of the total number of spaces found globally, Nepal possesses 2.8% plants 3.96% mammals, 3.72%

butterflies and 8.90% birds. The 136 ecosystems is confined to 11 bio-climatic zones and 9 eco-regions that are defined by ecological features, climate and plant and animal communities.

viii. Custom and festivals

Nepal is distinctly known as the world of colorful vibrant festivals celebrated in pretext of socio-cultural heritages. It is said that, In Nepal every other building is a temple and every other day is a festival. Visit to Nepal, no matter which time of the year, promises a colorful and rewarding festive experience.

8- Challenges

Above analysis indicates that Nepal is a unique place for visitors or tourists. Similarly tourism has a great importance in Nepal. Nepal also does have many prospects of tourism development. However, Nepal is not able to sufficiently develop this sector, because there occurs following challenges or problems:

i. Poor Transportation and Communication Facilities

Transportation and communication are two most important pillars of modern physical era. These facilities are required for the development of tourism sector. But there is a lack of modern transportation and communication facility in Nepal. Due to it, tourism sector is not well developed in Nepal.

ii. Lack of recreation facilities

Recreation is an important part of human life. In Nepal; means of recreation like clubs, cinemas theatres, park, huntings, rafting, boating etc. are very limited. Therefore, average length of stay at present of a tourist in Nepal is only about 13 days.

iii. Lack of Development of Tourism Sites

Really speaking Nepal is full of natural and pleasant places. GosainKund, DudhPokhari, Rara, Dhorpatan, Hile ,Shreenagar etc. are the examples. But these places are not yet developed as tourism sites. Thus, tourists visiting Nepal return back to their country by staying only in Kathmandu and Pokhara. So the expansion and development of tourism site is an important challenge of tourism sector in Nepal.

iv. Lack of Tourism Centres and Security

Tourism centres have been established in Nepal only in limited places. These centres provide different tourism services like information about pleasant places, tourism maps ,exchanging foreign currency etc. to tourists. Due to limited tourist centres, there are possibilities of tourists to be cheated. In some places tourists have lost even their lives. Thus the lack of tourism centres and proper security arrangements are a great deterrent to the development of tourism in Nepal.

v. Lack of Quality Hotels

Good quality hotel and lodges are the choices of foreign tourists. But, such good quality hotel and lodges are in limited number in Nepal. Most of these are concentrated only in Kathmandu valley which limits/stops foreign tourists only in Kathmandu valley. Thus the development of quality hotels and lodges in tourist destination areas is an important challenge of tourism in Nepal.

vi. Pollution

Pollution has become rampant in Nepal. There is pollution in air, in water, in space, in roads and everywhere. Solid waste is not well managed and is spreading everywhere in tourism spots. Therefore tourists are becoming hesitant to visit Nepal.

vii. Lack of Publicity and Advertisement

There is a lack of publicity and advertisement of various tourism sites of Nepal in international sphere. If this publicity is increased more foreign tourists may visit Nepal and tourism industry of Nepal will develop.

viii. Lack of Qualified Manpower

Qualified manpower is an important base of tourism. In Nepal tourism manpower is neither well nor adequate in number. Therefore, Nepal is unable to develop tourism industry.

From the above analysis it can be concluded that Nepal is one of the unique destinations for world tourists according to its Natural beauty, climatic and cultural variety ,religious places, multiple biodiversity, very cheap hospitality etc. But the lack of modern amenities like proper hotels and lodges, recreation facilities, transportation and communication facilities, proper security etc. are constraints behind it.

Thus the proper development of modern amenities and security is the best base for the proper development of tourism in Nepal.

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