

## POTENTIALITY OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM OF KARNALI GATEWAY SURKHET

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### Abstract

*This research paper has analyzed potentiality of sustainable rural tourism of Karnali gateway Surkhet. The study mainly based on data obtained from field survey 2021 provides with the different tourist, potential areas, infrastructure development, socioeconomic impact and problems of tourism. The study is based on primary data gathered from the local people, visitors, tourism experts and the local bodies through the random sampling based on quota sample method. Altogether sixty local people of major attractive site, forty visitors were taken samples for this study. The study is of both qualitative and quantitative. The finding has revealed that in the study that Surkhet has huge potentiality of tourism as in other destinations of the country. Surkhet even being rich in natural, archeological, religious and cultural assets at the gateway center of entire Karnali region the flow of tourist is very low. Due to the low flow of tourist the socio economic impact upon local people is found negligible. Due to the lack of coordination among concerned agencies, poor infrastructure and marketing strategies, the development of tourism has been found over shadowed in Surkhet.*

**Keywords:** sustainability, tourism, socio-economic impact, infrastructure

### INTRODUCTION

Nepal is a landlocked mountainous Himalayan Kingdom located between the people's Republic of China along the northern border and India to the south, east and west. It has a total area of 147,181 sq km. Nepal is extended from east to west with a length of 885 km and with a width of 145 km from north to south. It comprises of three parallel ecological regions– the high mountain or Himalayan, middle hill belt and the southern plains the Terai. Nepal one of the most unique exotic and remote destinations in the tourism map of the world is unquestionably a country deemed with countless natural wonders and exhilarating tourism products. The treasury of its product potentiality is endless. It's not only the highest peak Mt. Everest and the deepest gorge Kali Gandaki but there are other innumerable natural cultural and never-to-be found elsewhere features in this land. Once visited, one is tempted to visit Nepal again.

Nepal is a hotplate for such type of tourism that can offer the visitors an opportunity to experience the closeness of nature and traditional culture with unique life style of the local people. Besides all of that, it can be important source of foreign exchange earning industry creating employment opportunities and generating economic growth of the country.

Rural tourism product is anything that can be offered to a tourist for attraction, acquisition or consumption. Nepal's unique geographical setting and outstanding natural beauty has created an exceptional tourist attraction. Present need of tourism is sustainable rural tourism. The term sustainable in tourism implies that the natural, cultural and other resources of tourism are conserved for continuous use in the future, while still bringing benefits to the present society.

Birendrangar, Surkhet, the capital city of Karnali province is located at the attitude of 665m from sea level and is surrounded by Banke, Bardiya, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Salyan, Achham and Kailali districts. It is 600 km. far to the North West from the capital city Kathmandu. The district is also inhabited by

mixed casts people like Brahman, Chethri, Magar, Gurung, Tharu, Newar and Raji. Different tradition and cultures of different ethnic people are its unique features. Casual appearance and temporary settlement of Raute (The nomadic tribe) in Surkhet is another feature of Surkhet district.

Apart from above, Surkhet district is not only capital city of Karnali province but also and lies at the Gateway centre of entire Karnali region. Karnali region, the most backward region of the country has also huge potentiality of rural tourism. This region is rich both in nature and culture. In Karnali there are 5 districts: Humla, Jumla, Muga, Kalikot and Dolpa. Humla has potentiality of rural tourism. Since being this district rich in natural and cultural resources. It is also the gateway to 'Mansarover' the famous Hindu pilgrimage which is in Tibet the autonomous region of China. Hence, Surkhet can be benefited from the rural tourism of Karnali Region because of being Gateway to that region. The visitors visiting Karnali Region may stay for few days in Surkhet and they can support to make rural tourism of Surkhet sustainable. In such a way rural tourism of surkhet can highly be promoted and become sustainable.

## MAJOR ATTRACTIVE PLACES OF SURKHET

### Kankrebihar

Kankrebihar, a unique landscape with acchacological cultural and ecological value, derives its name from Kankre (meaning seed of cumber) due to its shape, it stands tall amidst the flat rounded Surkhet valley. The elevation ranges from 624 to 724 metres from sea level. The artefacts of so believed Buddhist monastery lies at the pinnacles of this tiny hill surround by sal and pine forest. It is located in Latikoili of Surkhet district, 4 km southeast from Birendranagar Municipality and covers 167.16 hectares of land.

The historic saga of Kankrebihar is still mystery. The artefacts excavated reveal the silent history of ancient times. The beautiful ruins only show its existence and lot of prediction with no conclusions.

According to Ghimire, Kankrebihar was built in between 1264 and 1375 B.S. by one of the descendent of Renowned khas king of 12/13 the century.

The excavation of Kankrebihar led by National Department of Archaeology with the co-ordination of local people, NGO and Rural municipality in 2057 reveals that it was "shkhar style" temple which resembles the stone temple in Kumau/Gadhwal of India.

### Deuti Bajai Temple

The famous temple of Deuti Bajai is located at ward no 2 (Pipira village) of Latikoili of Surkhet. The visitors can reach Deuti Bajai temple after 2-3 minutes vehicle ride from Birendranagar Bazar. It is nearly 2.5 Km from Birendranagar Bazar. Local vehicles are regular to Deuti Bajai temple from Birendranagar Bazar.

There are different sayings of Deuti Bajai. A Virjin lady found in the fishing net of Raji at Bheri River, a Brahman Virgin lady, the spirit of an old Brahimin lady got suicide in the accusation of witch, a Devi established by Rajis (The ethnic tribe) is the name of Deuti Bajai. The spirit of the lady is being worshiped since the time of 'baise choubise state'. She is regarded as the symbol of belief of local people. The people give the name "Surkhet KI Deuti Bajai" (goddess of Surkhet). The temple has been famous in and around Surkhet district. The Domestic visitors visiting Surkhet once use to go at Deuti Bajai temple to worship.

### Bulbule Tal and Park

Bulbule Located Latikoili of Surkhet (named after its water bubbling character) is nothing but water spring that has been very famous for picnic cum bathing/washing spot.

Visitors can enjoy the bath in the warm spring, relax in green natural floor, go for a picnic, and enjoy bathing. Bulbule is 15 minutes walk from Birendaranagar Bazar. It has covered 31-11-8.8 bighas of land. Bulbule has 10 tapes. 5 for male, and 5 for female which are consistently flowing.

There is another pond which is used for boating for the visitors. the floral garden is another attraction of Bulbule. Different species of flora and fauna can be watched inside the park. The park has beautifully planned garden which can be wonders for the nature lovers. Chautaras have also been built within the park where visitors can get relaxed. A rich paddy field can also be eye sighted around the park. Bulbule was for the first developed in 2023 B.S with only 4 bighas of land and now has been extended to 31-11-8.8 bighas, of land. The domestic as well as international visitors use to visit this park. Especially agro-forest students are highly attracted to visit this park. the best visiting time in this park is oct-march.

### **Mangal Gadhi**

Mangal Gadhi is located Latikoili of Surkhet district not far than 200 metre from Birendranagar Bazar under the army protected area. A Mangal Gadhi is believed to have been built during 22/24. Principalities by Dhulikote King (according to archaeological department). it is also believed to be fort of that period. Inside mangal Godhi. There is slightly elevated land surrounded by water. Which is believed to be the fort of that period. Inside it there is a stone carved statue of half sized women. The statue of half sized women can be compared with the maya Devi statue of Lumbini. The book entitled "Nepal, The Kingdom of Himalaya" by Dr Toni Hagen the geologist from Switzerland born; 17 August 1917, Lucerne, Switzerland. B.P. Koirala wrote foreword to the first edition 'Hegen will assuredly be a good eye opener not only to our foreign, but to our less traveled compatriots too. Hagen has traveled widely all over Nepal. He is a gifted observer and patient analyst. Hagen, a true friend of Nepal, is the only foreigner who has seen so much of it.' Hagen said that when the door of tourist open in Nepal from that period increasing number of tourists have borne witness to Nepal's extremely varied attraction and also contributed to growing hard currency income for the country (Hagen 1998: 227). According to Hagen cultural heritage, natural build up science and diversity are important for underdeveloped country because now the concept of globalization need to huge invest to compete with international market. For example and expedition team is being charged US\$ 70,000 to climb the Mount Everest (Hagen 1998: 227).

According to Richter, tourism is not always an unmixed blessing. Tourism policies frequently fail, especially in developing nations it terms of contributing to genuine development of the country (Richter, 1989: 18).

Nepal has the cultural and religious heritage as it has the combination of elements to attract the attention of visitors and provoke a visit by them. This combination represents the supply of Nepal tourist market. Nepal is not only a geological mosaic but also a human mosaic (Yajna Raj, 2000: 65).

International tourists want a change visiting any destination, quite different from their own home country. So, it is the traditional architecture, arts, ideas and products that the foreign tourist are searching for. So tourism industry has become a positive factor in the protection and preservation of indigenous culture. (Yajna Raj, 2000: 121)

Tourism has been defined in different ways by various authors and concerned organizations and, yet, there is no universally accepted definition of Tourism. Herman Von Schullard (1910), the Austrian Economist gave the first definition of Tourism. He defined tourism as the 'sum total of operations, mainly of economic nature, which directly related to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region.

According to Swiss professors Huziker and Krafts "Tourism is the totality of the relationship and phenomenon arising from the travel and stay of strangers, provided the stay does not imply the establishment of a permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerated activity." (Bhatia: 1995:34)

Frederick, (1992) Tourism has many potential benefits for rural areas. Tourism can be an

important source of jobs for non-metro communities, especially for those that are economically underdeveloped. Because jobs in the tourist industry often do not require advanced training, local residents with few skills can readily work as food servers, retail clerks, and hospitality workers. Tourism also not only offers business opportunities to local residents, but it can serve as a vehicle for marketing a place to potential residents and firms, as today's tourist may return later to retire or start a business locally.

Dangi (2019) mention that 'the mountains are a single entity with a multi-faceted utility. They are a home of the spirits, protective frontier, origin for rivers, theatre of adventure, icon of national identity, a source for inspiration for a fit and health world and an engine of tourism attraction of Nepal.

Pradhan (2018) Nepal has many tourist attractions in the form of snow-capped mountain peaks, excellent trekking and rafting opportunities, interesting wild life, significant religious sites, and unsurpassed historical and culturally important sites. These have well-placed Nepal for tourism development.

It seems that the tourism development has become just a nation but the implementation aspect is very weak (Khanal, 2020). In Nepal, 85% of its population lives in rural settings and its major part is covered with hills, mid hills and mountains. Tough topography, lack of infrastructure and political instability hindered the growth of rural economy for a very long time pushing people towards poverty (Gautam and Adhikari, 2005). Tourism in Nepal is like a sudden rainfall. It is not started with many national interests and efforts. Though the government taking a step to promote tourism in Nepal, however they are seemed as inadequate & unsatisfied (Ranjit, 1984).

These days promotion is mostly done through website. However, brochures and flyers are also used increasingly. Regular update on packages and offers is very important for correct dissemination of information about the country. Different tourism entrepreneurs have been offering various packages to attract tourists in the country. Promotions are also concentrated on local level. Based on season too promotion matters are changed. Targeting different markets different programs are organized by the hotels. These different medium of promotion has been considered effective too (K.C., 2017).

Nepal offers to the world the natural beauty, the ruggedness of the mountains and the people, ancient temples, monuments and places with its national parks and rare wildlife. It is an established fact that Nepal is a country with fabulous cultural richness. The valley of Kathmandu is known as the living museums of ancient arts, monuments and architectural masterpieces, which eloquently speak of the rich urban culture of the past. Besides three cities of Kathmandu valley, there are several places of cultural attractions scattered throughout the country. Nepal is famous for its scenic grandeur and natural panorama. There are several quiet and beautiful spots in the proximities of Kathmandu for rest and relaxation. National parks and wildlife with its rare and endangered species of animals and birds offer quite an interesting tours and travel for tourist coming to Nepal (Satyal, Y.R., 2005).

There is a wider prospect of developing village tourism because all villages have something new and unique to offer tourists. At the time, when the world is converging into global Village, the impervious culture added by unique geographical location, altitudinal variation and rich biodiversity can offer unique experience for tourists who come to see adventure in Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. Thus, we can develop model ecotourism, which would ultimately benefit the local people.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study entitled 'Potentiality of sustainable Rural Tourism of Karnali Gateway Surkhet is based on exploratory and descriptive design. In this study qualitative analytical as well as descriptive have been employed together. Besides above, some quantitative information has also been collected which has been described and analysed according to their nature.

### Sources of Data

For the study, both primary and secondary source of information have been collected. The primary data was collected from interview with the visitors visiting Surkhet, Local people, tourism experts, Rural Municipality and Municipality heads of Surkhet. Secondary data was collected from Surkhet District, Latikoili, Birendranagar Municipality of Surkhet district, Tourism Board and Central Bureau of Statistics.

### Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling on the basis of quota sample method has been adopted to interview to select the respondents. Forty visitors including foreigners, sixty local people and nine tourism concerned people were selected for interview.

### Data Collection Techniques / Instruments

Principally the structured questionnaire has been applied to collect the data. The questionnaire was interviewer assisted structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was in the form of English and was translated to the respondent in Nepali by the researcher. Visitors' survey and observation were the techniques of data collection and questionnaire, checklist were the tools of data collection. Different types of books, related, research paper have been used as instruments.

### Data Collection

To achieve the goal of the study primary data have been taken from 40 visitors visiting in Surkhet 60 local People, 9 tourism experts living that place using interview and field observation. Secondary data have been taken from Surkhet, Latikoili, Birendranagar Municipality, Regional Museum Surkhet, Sustainable Development Facility Fund Surkhet, Tourism Board and Central bureau of Statistics.

### Presentation and analysis of data

Surkhet is easily accessible through a black-topped road of 3 hours by vehicle ride from Kohalpur (Banke district). On the way to Surkhet different attractive natural scenes and sceneries and ever green forest area can be eye sighted. The scenic beauty of Babai river valley is also on the way which can be over viewed from viewpoints which have been built in different places. Different traditional villages located along the road side and life style are other major attractions of Surkhet. Before reaching to tradition villages a great spot of blue water flow with expression of great welcome through its hum of current has added the beauty of the place. Sightseeing to tribal villages, colourful festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Holi, Janai Purnima, Lakhe jatra, Shiva ratri Parva add other attractions of Surkhet.

Thus we can say that Surkhet remains largely an unexplored area with a maximum potential for promotion of tourism which have been discussed in detail in following lines.

### Man Made Assets

Surkhet is also rich in terms of man made products as follows.  
Archaeological ruins

### Main Bazar

Main Bazaar is the settlement of mixed castes of People. The houses in main Bazaar are both traditional and modern typed. Most of the streets have been black topped and pavement has been paved by slate stones. On the both sides of the road of the bazaar Ashok trees have been planted which have added the beauty of Bazar.

### Regional Museum

Regional Museum Surkhet is located at ward no 9 of Birendranagar municipality of Surkhet district. It started its functioning in 2057 by making exhibition. The collections found in different

parts of Nepal have been preserved for the exhibition. This museum consists stone covered statues found from the excavation of Kankrebihar. The statues collected in museum from Kankrebihar can be compared with the statues of Khajuraho India. The regional museum Surkhet also exhibits many masterpieces in stone, wooden and metal. The major attractions of Regional museum are 22 stone carved statues collected from Kankrebihar (of different gods and Goddesses like Buddha, Shiva, Ganesh, Saraswati, elephant and others). Other attractions are wooden material of Raute (the nomadic people), picture of social life style of Magar community, ornaments of Tharu community, ancient pots of different castes and tribes, Traditional Baja (dram), ornaments representing major and Tharu ethnic people, Traditional cloth, Mana pathi of mediaeval period, Diarama, Coins of the great king Prithivinarayan Shah's period.

### **Temples**

Shiva, Ram and Ganesh temple of Bazar, Shiva temple of Uttarganga, Kalika temple and Krishan temple.

### **Ghantaghar (Clock Tower)**

With the assistance of Chinese government Ghantaghar (clock tower) has been built in 2045 at the cost of Rs 70,79,540. It has adorned the beauty of Birendranagar Bazar. It has four big clocks in all the four sides of the Ghantaghar which work with the help of solar energy.

A children park has also been developed in and around Ghantaghar with beautiful garden. An area occupying 30 bighas of land near to Ghantaghar named Kuinepani is also being developed as a tourist destination by Birendranagar municipality by making park in it. If these areas are developed properly by making proper plan and policy, it will certainly attract visitors in more number.

### **Gothikanda**

Gothikanda is situated at Gadhi of Surkhet district at the hill top of Surkhet valley from where all the Surkhet valley and the river of Bheri can be viewed. This can be developed as a view point of Surkhet valley.

### **Jajura Daha (Lake)**

Jajura Daha is located at ward no. 8 of Vidyapur of Surkhet district. This Daha occupies 3 bighas of land with clean and pure water. It has depth of 18 ft. The level of water in the lake always remains the same. A water mill has also been run with the water of south outlet of the lake.

This lake being situated in natural setting and panoramic view possesses potentiality of rural tourism. Two boats have also been used there for boating on the lake for the visitors.

### **Bheri River**

Half an hour bus ride from Birendranagar will land at the great spot of blue water flow with expression of great welcome through its hum of current. We can catch the glance of Bheri on the way to Surkhet valley. The rafting tourists use this river for rafting purpose to reach to Karnali chisapani.

### **Confluence of Bheri and Karnali River**

Watching the synergy of big two river flow can be an enthralling moment to nature lovers, three hours bus ride to Babiyachour and 3 hours walking will get from Birendranagar to reach the grand sight of confluence.

### **Baraha Tal (Lake)**

Barah lake is situated at ward no. 6 of Taranga of Surkhet. It is the biggest lake of Surkhet districts occupying approximately 16 bighas of land. This lake has been named in the name of third incarnation of God Bishnu.

This Barah lake is fascinating and has panoramic view surrounded by hills in a natural setting. It takes 3 hours walk from Hudke situated on the way of Karnali Highway.

### **Gupti Daha (Lake)**

Gupti Daha (lake) is situated at Vidyapur of Surkhet district. The water flowing under the earth can not be seen from outside. there is 15 m long tunnel at the entry point of the lake. After getting entry through the tunnel with the help of light the lake can be viewed. There is no any health problem in entering the tunnel. The lake has an area of 15×15m. with clean blue water. If this lake is properly preserved and developed, it can also play additional role in promoting rural tourism of Surkhet.

### **Natural Assets**

Surkhet is naturally gifted area having scenic beauty and others nature gifted assets which are not the results of human efforts.

### **Scenic Beauty**

Surkhet is a naturally gifted area having outstanding scenic beauty and graceful charm. Scenic beauty exerts a strong fascination for the tourists.

### **View of Beautiful Mountains/Hills**

Another attraction of Surkhet is the panorama scene of Beautiful Mountains. Mahabarat Range is the finest attraction for tourist, which is clearly seen from Surkhet valley.

### **Jungles**

Surkhet is considered one of the richest districts of Nepal. All around the valley there are even green jungles. The forest has occupied 71 percent of the total land of Surkhet.

### **Pleasant and favorable Climate**

Since Surkhet located between Mahabharat and chure rage at an altitude of 665 m., the weather is cool and dry all the year round. The average temperature in winter is 10 degree centigrade and in the summer season, the average temperature is 33 degree centigrade. Annual rainfall is 1500 m.m.

Because of favourable climate Surkhet can be attraction for international as well as domestic tourists. Basically, people from hot places like Nepalgunj can enjoy the summer vacation and people from cold places like Karnali can enjoy the winter vacation in Surkhet.

### **Wild Life**

Tiger, bear, Leopard, deer, butterflies, birds and flowers are the prime attraction for tourists in Surkhet.

### **Colorful Festivals**

People in Surkhet celebrate numerous festivals and festivals, which are very specific than other parts of Nepal are mentioned.

1. Gai-Jatra
2. Ropain Jatra
3. Bagjatra,
4. Lakhejatra
5. Tharu dance (Nach)
6. Gurung dance (Nach)
7. Magar dance (Nach)

Besides these, festivals of national character like Phulpati, Sivaratri, Holy, Teej, Krishnastami, Fagu Purnima, Dashain, Tihar etc also widely observed by the locals of Surkhet.

### **Traditional Ceremonies**

Different type of traditional rites and rituals may be of great interest mainly for the foreign tourist as given below:

1. Childhood Ceremony: Birth, Naming, Feeding
2. Adulthood Ceremony: Bratabandh, Gufa, bibah
3. Marriage Ceremony
4. Old-age Ceremony: Chaurasi Puja
5. Death Rituals

### **Tribal Villages**

Raji, Tharu, Magar and Gurung tribal villages of Surkhet may be of great interest for visitors. Their living-style, settlement pattern, culture etc are totally different from others.

## **TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN SURKHET**

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation is an important ingredient as well as key and essential component of tourism. The demand of accommodation away from home has become an important function of tourism. It is comprehensive term and includes all the facilities such as hotel, motels, lodges, bungalows, camping sites etc. Tourism is to great extent, development on the types and quantity of accommodations available. The demand for accommodations varies according to the social class, price that the guests are willing to pay. Level of prices and similar other consideration expansion of tourism inevitably brings about the development of accommodations.

In Surkhet there is no any highly comfortable star hotel but the small affordable and medium standard with air conditioning hotels are also available in and around Birendranagar Bazar.

### **Catering Facility**

Most of the lodges have restaurant facility in Surkhet. But these hotels and paying guesthouses commonly offer Nepalese dishes. Food like meat, fish, fruits and cold drinks are easily available in these hotels.

### **Security**

Another factor needed for the promotion of Rural Tourism is security. Security is an essential factor for tourists. It plays a vital role in tourist flow. Nobody wants to go and stay there where security is lacking. Condition of insecurity is created by robber, thieves and also by wild animals. Event of Murder and disappearances of tourists would discourage the other travelers to visit such destination. Viewed in this way, Surkhet may be regarded as peaceful and fearless place.

### **Water Supply**

It has an old water supply project. The water is supplied from Itram area of the north-eastern part of the main Bazar. It has a natural source of water. Brihat Jhupra water supply programme has launched a big project of more than 3,00,000,00 amounting to bring drinking water from Jhupra river to meet the need of whole Surkhet valley.

### **Transportation/Accessibility**

Transportation is the key factor for the development of tourism. The transportation need must be met. The transportation facilities make it possible the travel from one place to another. The means of transportation decides the volume of tourist. The tourist spends about half of their total holiday money on transport and travel and other half on accommodation and other activities. It is estimated that travel costs are typically about 40 percent of total holiday expenditure. It shows that the importance of transportation in tourism.

Daily regular bus and micro bus services are available from Nepaljung, Dang and Mahendranagar. From Kathmandu daily one day and one night buses leave for Surkhet. 2 small medium sized



micro-buses have also been recently started from Kathmandu to Surkhet. For Birjung daily from Surkhet one night bus service is regular

### Road

In surkhet there are different types of road in different condition surkhet is easy accessible area linked to East-west Highway. The road to Surkhet from Kaholpur (Banke district) is almost black topped. The road condition of Surkhet has been catagorised as black topped (50.23km) gravel (178.94 km) and Rough (101.32 km) (Bureau of statistics Surkhet, 2062/63)

### Air Services

Surkhet airport is infact considered to be one of the busy airports of Nepal. The aeroplane and Helicopter services are almost regular to the districts of Karnali zone.

From Kathmandu there are two flights of RNAC in weak. Due to the rough runway of airport private airlines were not attracted.

From the year 2063 the runway of Surkhet Airport is being blacktopped. After the completion of black topping, it is hoped that the number of flights to Kathmandu will increase and the private airlines too may be attracted to start their services regularly in Surkhet.

### Electricity

All the localities of Surkhet valley has almost been electrified. The district has been attached to national grid line. The electricity capacity of this district is 3/4 M.V.A (Mega Volt Ampere)

Till Jestha 2063 total 11289 electricity lines have been distributed in Surkhet (Electricity Authority Surkhet, 2063)

### Communication

Communication facilities are in the state of progress in Surkhet. There are facilities of telephone, fax, E-mail and internet. All total 2525 telephone lines have been distributed in Surkhet. Since 2062 mobile phone service has also been started in the Place.

### Health Service

Surkhet has a regional hospital with trained nurses and doctors. We can also find medical shops in the market area and every type of medicine is available there. In case, if necessary there are 3 ambulances to take patients to Nepalgunj, Kathmandu and Lucknow (India).

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN SURKHET

Socio-economic impact generally means either positive or negative change in the locality from tourism.

Socio economic impact of tourism brings change in the social life structure like fashion, understanding, conflict, occupation, employment and living standard.

Tourism industry in Surkhet is not developed yet. Only very few number of visitors visit this place. Especially domestic visitors due to their official purpose use to visit this place. The international tourists are found in a very few number by the purpose of visit only. The potentialities of tourism of this place are not yet explored. Since tourism being in blooming stage in Surkhet, its socio economic impact could not have been studied till now. It has brought neither positive nor negative change upon the local people. Most of the local people can not easily understand the concept of tourism in Surkhet. Tourism has brought no any significant change in the life of Surkhet. Only few hotel entrepreneurs are benefited from limited number of visitors. The locals of tourists destination sites are very far from the benefit and cost of tourism. Hence, it can be frankly said that there is no any socio-economic impact of tourism in Surkhet since this place being in blooming stage of tourism.

## **PROBLEM OF TOURISM IN SURKHET**

Proper management and marketing are necessary to increase tourist arrival in Surkhet. In spite of the huge potentialities of tourism in Surkhet it could not develop rapidly. Surkhet is located at the Gateway centre of Karnali region. Karnali region also has huge potentialities of tourism. Though Surkhet stands at the Gateway of Karnali, It could not have drawn the attention of tourists as in other places of Nepal. Very few number of tourists visit Surkhet. They stay only for 2-3 days whereas average stay of tourists in Nepal is about 12.4 days. The major problems of tourism development in Surkhet are as follows.

It is necessary to give adequate attention towards infrastructure. The major problems of tourism infrastructure in Surkhet are supply of water, sanitation, facilities of local transportation, parks, recreation and health care facilities. In summer season there is always scarcity of water in Surkhet even for drinking. The problems are summarized as follows:

### **Local Transportation**

Transportation is inevitable component of tourism. There is problem of local vehicles to reach conveniently to the archeological site and other destinations of Surkhet. It has been found necessary for the visitors to run vehicles to those sites.

### **Toilet**

In and around market area, there is not a single public toilet, which makes tourists inconvenience feel during their rolling in Birendranagar Bazar.

### **Drainage System**

The drainage system has not been properly managed. It has been left open which gives bad smelling of waste things.

### **Parks**

There is no nice and attractive park in Surkhet. If there is such a park, visitors will stay longer and local people get benefits.

### **Star Hotels**

There is not a single star hotel in Surkhet. The visitors have found inconvenience of comfortable accommodation. It has also been found that some visitors returned to Nepalgunj for better comfortable accommodation.

### **Lighting System**

In and around the major attractive sites like Bulbule and Kankrebihar lighting system has not been managed. The visitors can be attracted in those sites till late night and business can be run if proper management of lighting system is managed.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Trained Manpower**

To create the congenial environment for visitors, trained manpower should be available. It can satisfy the need of visitor visiting Surkhet. Unfortunately there is lack of trained manpower especially who have knowledge of archeological and cultural sites.

### **Trained Hotel Entrepreneur**

To create the homely environment for the visitors, trained hotel entrepreneur are necessary. In the absence of this the visitors are not getting hospitality from the entrepreneurs. The hospitality of the entrepreneur increases the length of stay of the visitors.

### **Effective Administration**

The absence of improved, effectiveness and co-ordinated administration unit is another mentionable problem for making Surkhet better place for visitors.

### **Local Guide**

Local guide is another problem for tourist. Due to the lack of trained local guide the visitors are not getting the free information about the archaeological, religious and cultural sites of Surkhet.

### **Security System**

The security of the visitors in Kankrebihar and Bulbule park is lacking. In the absence of security, the visitors will not visit those places.

The study has been carried out with a view of developing Surkhet as a tourist destination. So, main focus of the study is given to different books, Surkhet mirror Published by DDC Surkhet, souvenir of Birendranagar Municipality and other Secondary information collected from central bureau of statistics.

The evaluation of the tourism scenario in Surkhet has been conducted on the perceptive basis as well as secondary data and information. In this chapter an attempt has been made to assess the potentiality of tourism development on the basis of views and perceptions collected through the questionnaire and by conducting depth interview with local people, visitors and tourism experts.

### **FINDINGS OF SURVEY ON EXPERTS**

An attempt was made to present the survey findings of tourism experts hereunder. An in-depth interview was conducted with tourism experts, who included tourism professional, government officials and businessmen to identify present tourism situation and problems, weaknesses and the efforts made by DDC Surkhet and Birendranagar Municipality.

### **Present Situation in Surkhet from the Perspective of Tourism Development**

An attempt has been made to assess the present situation of Surkhet from the perspective of tourism development in Surkhet. No any development has been done by any concerned agencies for the development of tourism in Surkhet. The district had to do a lot for fully exploiting the huge potential that the district has. The experts were of the view that the lack of vision among the policy-makers and the lack of awareness among local masses are the principal hindrances.

### **Efforts Made by Local Bodies**

DDC Surkhet and Municipality had to play a vital role to promote tourism in Surkhet. Most of the experts and tourism related respondent were not satisfied with DDC and municipality when they were asked about the efforts made by DDC and Municipality. The DDC and Municipality should have a clear-cut vision and a strong commitment to translate its words into genuine works. But these local bodies have neither vision nor any systematic plans, strategies and budget allocation for the development of tourism in Surkhet. Slogan alone can do nothing, if it cannot do anything meaningful on its own for making Surkhet a tourist destination. The local bodies could have done nothing for the preservation of archaeological sites and the development of other destinations. These bodies should have encouraged the private sector in developing necessary infrastructure for the purpose. In view of the experts, Surkhet is an attractive place with favourable climate and beautiful geographical location. But this place has not been given emphasis by the local bodies as well as central government. So, for making Surkhet a tourist destination proper policies and strategies should be developed and the participation of the local people made.

### **Weakness**

The respondents mentioned many weaknesses. They have lack of vision among the policy-makers, from the local to the highest levels, is the greatest drawback. The bureaucrats are neither sensitive

nor serious on the matter. The lack of awareness among the local populace is the second major hindrance. The self-centered or selfish attitude of the political leaders is another obstacle on the way.

## CONCLUSION

The study has analyzed potentiality of sustainable rural tourism of Karnali gateway Surkhet. The study mainly based on data obtained from field survey 2018 provides with the different tourist, potential areas, infrastructure development, socioeconomic impact and problems of tourism. The study is based on primary data gathered from the local people, visitors, tourism experts and the local bodies through the random sampling based on quota sample method. The finding has revealed that in the study that Surkhet has huge potentiality of tourism as in other destinations of the country. Surkhet even being rich in natural, archeological, religious and cultural assets at the gateway center of entire Karnali region the flow of tourist is very low. Due to the low flow of tourist the socio economic impact upon local people is found negligible. Due to the lack of coordination among concerned agencies, poor infrastructure and marketing strategies, the development of tourism has been found over shadowed in Surkhet.

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