



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**TREKKING USE PATTERN AND PERCEPTION OF USERS AND
RESIDENTS TOWARDS TREKKING TOURISM IN THE
ANNAPURNA SANCTUARY TRAIL, NEPAL**

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RESIDENTS TOWARDS TREKKING TOURISM IN THE
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By

SURESH K. SHRESTHA

**Thesis Submitted in the Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in the Faculty of Forestry,
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DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED FATHER AND MOTHER



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	=	Annapurna Conservation Area
ACAP	=	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
AST	=	Annapurna Sanctuary Trail
BC	=	Bramin and Chetri
DOT	=	Department of Tourism
KMTNC	=	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
MFSC	=	Master Plan for Forestry Sector
NTMP	=	Nepal Tourism Master Plan
RSA	=	Rintis Santuari Annapurna
WDR	=	Western Development Region



**Abstract of thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Pertanian Malaysia
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SEPTEMBER 1993

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The study assesses trekking use pattern and perception of trekkers and residents towards trekking tourism in the Annapurna Sanctuary Trail (AST) which is one of the most popular trekking areas in Nepal. Two separate questionnaire surveys, one representing 135 randomly selected trekkers and another involving 110 randomly selected households were conducted. The overall perception of trekkers was measured by a composite index developed from their opinions for six different attributes of the journey in the AST, where 1 represented most favourable perception and 4 represented most unfavourable perception. Likewise, residents' opinions on support for tourism, perception towards tourism's impacts and opinions for progressive tourism management statements were used in measuring the overall perception of residents, but in this case 1 represented most negative perception while 4 denoted most positive perception.

It was found that the characteristics of the trekkers and pattern of use of the AST were not much different from other wilderness areas in the world. The per day expenditures of the trekkers in the AST was NRs. 222.2. They also spent large sum of money on trekking fees and porters and guides. However, this



money is not retained in the area. Although the trekkers expressed somewhat unfavourable views towards litter condition and a few services, they in general showed positive view towards all attributes of the journey in the AST. It was noted that there were significant differences in the perceptions of trekkers towards various attributes of the journey in the AST; and area features was the most important factor in explaining the perception of journey in the AST.

Residents' survey indicated that tourism contributed greatly to the family income of AST residents but there were large disparity in the distribution of tourism's income among the residents of different categories, particularly among the caste. On overall, the residents expressed highly favourable perception towards trekking tourism and among the various relationships tested, several individual, situational and interactional factors were found related with the perception of residents. The most prominent factors were caste, income class and benefits from tourism. In evaluating tourism's impacts on their community, the residents gave higher priorities on issues related to community development and environmental conservation.

This study suggests the development of an appropriate strategy which should give priorities on community development, environmental conservation, allocation of facilities and services at proper places and proper distribution of economic benefits of tourism among the residents of different socio-economic classes, particularly to the low income groups. It is also recommended that the huge amount of leakage could be possibly reduced by encouraging the use of local resources and involvement of locals in trekking related occupations through financial support and trainings.

**Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Pertanian
Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan ijazah Master Sains**

**POLA PENGGUNAAN RENTASAN, PERSEPSI PENGGUNA DAN
PENDUDUK TEMPATAN TERHADAP PELANCONGAN RENTASAN DI
RINTIS SANTUARI ANNAPURNA, NEPAL**

Oleh

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SEPTEMBER 1993

Pengerusi: Dr. Wan Sabri Wan Mansor

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Kajian ini menilai pola penggunaan rentasan dan persepsi perentas dan penduduk tempatan terhadap pelancongan rentasan di Rintis Santuari Annapurna (RSA) yang merupakan satu daripada kawasan rentasan yang terkenal di Nepal. Dua soal selidik yang berasingan, satu mewakili 135 perentas dipilih secara rawak dan yang kedua melibatkan 110 isirumah yang juga dipilih secara rawak. Persepsi keseluruhan perentas telah diukur dengan indeks komposit yang berasaskan pendapat mereka tentang enam ciri perjalanan di RSA, di mana 1 mewakili persepsi yang paling positif dan 4 mewakili persepsi yang paling negatif. Begitu juga, pendapat penduduk tempatan terhadap pelancongan, persepsi mereka terhadap kesan-kesan pelancongan dan pendapat mereka terhadap pengurusan pelancongan yang progresif telah digunakan untuk mengukur persepsi keseluruhan penduduk tempatan, tetapi di dalam kes ini 1 mewakili persepsi paling negatif sementara 4 paling positif.

Kajian mendapati bahawa ciri-ciri perentas dan pola penggunaan RSA tidaklah begitu berbeza daripada kawasan alam semulajadi di tempat-tempat lain



di dunia ini. Perbelanjaan sehari perentas di RSA ialah NRs. 222.2. Di samping itu, mereka membelanjakan sejumlah besar wang mereka untuk yuran rentasan dan bayaran untuk pengangkut barang dan pemandu pelancong. Tetapi wang ini tidak diperolehi oleh penduduk-penduduk tempatan. Walaupun perentas melahirkan pandangan yang agak negatif terhadap kebersihan kawasan dan beberapa jenis perkhidmatan, mereka pada amnya menunjukkan pandangan yang positif terhadap semua ciri-ciri perjalanan di RSA. Terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam persepsi perentas terhadap pelbagai ciri perjalanan di RSA; ciri-ciri kawasan adalah merupakan faktor yang paling penting di dalam menjelaskan persepsi mereka terhadap perjalanan di RSA.

Tinjauan penduduk tempatan menunjukkan bahawa pelancongan memberi sumbangan besar kepada pendapatan keluarga penduduk tempatan di RSA tetapi terdapat ketidakseimbangan di dalam agihan pendapatan pelancongan di antara penduduk tempatan dari kategori-kategori yang berbeza terutamanya antara kasta. Pada keseluruhannya, penduduk tempatan melahirkan persepsi yang sangat positif terhadap pelancongan rentasan dan di antara pelbagai hubungan yang diuji, beberapa faktor individu, situasi dan interaksi didapati ada kaitan dengan persepsi penduduk tempatan. Faktor paling menonjol adalah kasta, kelas pendapatan dan faedah daripada pelancongan. Dalam menilai kesan-kesan pelancongan ke atas komuniti mereka, penduduk tempatan memberi keutamaan yang lebih tinggi kepada isu-isu berhubung dengan pembangunan komuniti dan pemuliharaan alam sekitar.

Berdasarkan hasil kajian, pembentukan satu strategi yang bersesuaian adalah dicadangkan. Strategi ini mestilah mengutamakan pembangunan komuniti,

pemuliharaan alam sekitar, peruntukan kemudahan dan perkhidmatan di kawasan-kawasan yang sesuai. Keuntungan ekonomi juga mestilah diagihkan dengan adil kepada penduduk-penduduk dari latar belakang sosio-ekonomi yang berbeza, terutamanya kepada golongan yang berpendapatan rendah. Untuk mengurangkan limpahan keuntungan keluar yang besar, adalah disarankan supaya penggunaan sumber-sumber tempatan digalakkan. Penduduk-penduduk tempatan juga perlu digalakkan untuk melibatkan diri di dalam pekerjaan yang berkaitan dengan rentasan, melalui bantuan kewangan dan latihan.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of Nepal

Nepal is a small Himalayan Kingdom landlocked between two Giants, India and China. Its location in the Central Himalaya makes Nepal one of the most unique and scenic natural areas in the world. Total area of the Kingdom is 147,181 square kilometres (sq km) which consists of a length of about 885 km extending from east to west and a breadth of 240 km to 144 km from south to north. The altitude of the country rises up from 90 metres (m) in the south to 8848 m in the north, above the mean sea level.

Currently, the population of Nepal is 18.4 million; a majority of which live in hamlets scattered across the country. Nearly 36% of the people are literate and agriculture accounts for the livelihood of about 90% of the population.

Tourism in the Context of Nepal

Although Nepal followed an open door policy in the tourism sector since the advent of democracy in 1951, it was the conquest of the Mount Everest on May 29, 1953, by Mr. Tenzing Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary which brought the world's attention towards Nepal. Subsequently a tourism industry began to grow in the country. Appendix A (Table 47) shows that there is a substantial increase in the number of foreign visitors to Nepal and a majority



of them are pleasure seekers and adventure tourists such as mountaineers, trekkers and white water rafters.

In the recent years, tourism has emerged as an important sector in the economy of Nepal. It contributes approximately 3.7% to the National GDP (DOT, 1989) and originates 20% of the total foreign exchange (EIU, 1991). Tourism also gives support to small businesses in rural areas through trekking tourism. Besides, there are thousands of Nepalis who are engaged in this sector. There are 11,176 people employed directly in tourism sector among which 62% are unskilled and semi-skilled (EIU, 1991).

For the first time, Department of Tourism (DOT) was established in 1972 and a Nepal Tourism Master Plan (NTMP) was formulated. It adopted the concept of tourism market development through infrastructural facilities development, setting up of organizational bodies, international publicity and relating it to sight-seeing, trekking, Nepal style tourism, recreational tourism and international pilgrimage. Emphasis were given on conservation of natural and cultural resources and preservation of historical monuments and sites and the policy was based on the thought that if there is no conservation of natural and cultural environments there would be no tourism in Nepal (DOT, 1972).

The Tourism Act of 2035 B.S. (1979) has brought into force regulations on some important sectors of tourism and outdoor recreation such as travel and trekking activities, hotel and mountaineering. They are implemented directly by the Department of Tourism and Ministry of Tourism. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) followed by the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997) embodied some major programmes on development of tourism which included

trail management, socio-cultural and ecological conservation and communication development. The important features of the trail management are; fixing the trekking route, fixing the number of trekkers, garbage cleaning, maintain ecological balances, develop consciousness among the residents about the mountain tourism and protection of environment, improve economic condition of people residing in remote areas, open fuel depots, provide maximum services to the trekkers, improve safety and communication services and open up new potential trekking areas. In this sector investment from private sector is highly encouraged, therefore, most of the tourism-related enterprises are owned by the private sector while the Government is standing just as a supportive body.

Many rules and regulations although are set out to maintain a balance between tourism development and resource impacts, it is however not clear how and when these plans and regulations will be implemented. Those plans which are launched have suffered enormously due to the lack of money and poor implementation of rules and regulations. As a result, many desired and undesired impacts have been reported from popular trekking areas. On the positive side, it contributes in uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the people through their involvement in tourism-related small entrepreneurships and increased opportunities of employment in the tourism sectors. For example, operations of small hotels and lodges, working as porters and guides, selling of firewood and agricultural products and renting of camping sites (Jefferies, 1982; MFSC, 1988; Fisher, 1991). In the Mount Everest Area, the local Sherpa Community has been engaged in the trekking and mountaineering related professions since the last 20 years (Fisher, 1991).

One of the serious issues related to the development of trekking in Nepal is deforestation and the resulting ecological degradation. The other negative impacts include cultural disorientation, litter problems, increase in cost of living, crowding during peak season and conflicts of manpower between trekking and traditional economic activities (Jefferies, 1982; Schweinfurth, 1983; Cullen, 1986; Baumgartner, 1988; Gurung, 1989; Mishra, 1989; Bhandari, 1990; Fisher, 1991; Yadav, 1991). As a possible solution, the government has declared some trekking areas as conservation areas and sought the help of non-governmental organizations in their management, for example, the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA). Although there are serious arguments concerning the future growth of tourism in the country, the government and the private sector are still keen to maximize benefits from it.

Statement of Problem

Tourism development is receiving increased recognition throughout much of the world including Nepal, as a relatively simple and quick strategy for solving the economic problems of under-developed areas. Further, it is well suited to the current rural policy emphasis on locally owned entrepreneurial development and small business assistance programmes adopted by Nepal. Tourism is often sought as one of the effective media of international understanding, cultural exchanges and conservation of cultural patrimony and historical sites.

Many countries in the attempts to optimize economic benefits have placed little regard for two of the most important communities who play critical roles in tourism development: they are, the tourist community and the resident community.

The entire picture of tourism is made up of those individuals who are motivated to travel, hence the perception of tourists play key roles in the marketing and development of a tourist area. A positive perception of tourists towards an area reflects that they are satisfied with the various attributes of the area and indicates that the demand of that area would increase (Goodrich, 1977 and 1978; Chubb and Chubb, 1981; Wan Sabri, 1987; Allan, 1988)

On the other hand, it is also true that if a tourist based economy is to be sustainable, the residents must be willing partners in the process because increased tourism activities often bring about several undesirable changes in the host environment. In order to earn the support of residents, local people must be included in the tourism planning; they must be informed and consulted about the scope of the development and their perception towards tourism must be assessed (Pizam 1978; Rothman, 1978; Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Allan, 1988).

A thorough tourism planning then must attempt to optimize not only the economic but also the social and environmental benefits of tourism while minimizing its deleterious effects. Above all, it must be able to satisfy the tourists' needs and the residents' needs as well.

The ACA is the most popular trekking area in Nepal where more than 35,000 international trekkers visit each year. This area has been reported to be largely affected by growing activities in the trekking sector. The trend shows that trekking tourism in the ACA and other areas in Nepal will increase in the coming years. In a situation like this, to make trekking tourism sustainable and keep its impacts at a desired level, it is important that the trend of use of

trekking areas be evaluated and the trekkers' perception of the trekking areas and residents' perception towards development of trekking tourism be assessed. Moreover, the policy emphasis on local community's participation in all rural developmental activities adopted by the government makes the community perception studies of utmost importance.

To date, not a single study in Nepal has attempted to examine the perception of trekkers towards trekking areas and the perception of residents towards development of trekking activities in their areas. Against these backdrops, the present research was conducted in the Annapurna Sanctuary Trail (AST) within the ACA.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the research are to find out the trekking use pattern and assess the perception of trekkers and residents towards trekking tourism in the AST. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. to find out the pattern of trekking use in the AST;
2. to investigate the perception of trekkers towards the AST and available facilities and services;
3. to examine the variations in the perceptions of different attributes of the journey in the AST;
4. to determine the perception of residents towards development of trekking tourism in the AST; and
5. to assess the relationships of individual, situational and interactional factors with residents' perception towards trekking tourism.

Significance of the Study

The outcomes of the research should be helpful in understanding the present trend of use of the trekking areas and in identifying the wants and needs of residents and trekkers. Such information should help the planners and policy makers in deciding better allocation of available resources and also formulating future strategy for sustainable development of trekking tourism, specifically in the AST and in general in Nepal.

In specific terms, the results should give an insight of the social carrying capacity of the trekking area both from the users' and residents' point of view. These information might be beneficial in fixing the number of trekkers so that the trekkers' satisfaction and residents' support to the development of the trekking could be guaranteed. It also should help to identify the priority areas of action and add sufficiently in deciding where and what steps should be taken to improve the quality of services and to help local people in maximizing their benefits from tourism with a minimum harm to the environment.

Its theoretical contribution can be viewed in many ways. Firstly, the study is the first of its kind in Nepal that examines the perception of trekkers towards trekking areas and takes the opportunity to learn the perception of residents towards development of trekking tourism. Secondly, earlier studies measured the residents' perception by assessing either level of support for tourism or by examining perception towards tourism impacts but this study assesses the residents' perception by a composite scale which includes support for tourism, perceived impacts of tourism and opinions for progressive tourism management statements. A Scale like this should provide a wider and more comprehensive understanding of residents' perception.