

HIMALAYAN ECOTOURISM: TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN  
NEPAL'S MOUNTAIN PARKS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

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## ABSTRACT

### Himalayan Ecotourism: Tourism Management in Nepal's Mountain Parks and Conservation Areas

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This thesis will explore the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting sustainable tourism that protects local cultures and the environment. Many research projects have focused on the development of tourism in Nepal, its positive and negative effects and its effects on mountain parks and conservation areas. Few social scientists have studied the role of non-governmental organizations in managing tourists as a user group.

The results of trekkers surveys, on-scene investigations, interviews and secondary research suggest that non-governmental organizations have been instrumental in aiding His Majesty's Government of Nepal in conservation and development efforts. They also play a vital role in Nepal's National Conservation Strategy. Non-governmental organizations have been supportive of ecotourism and sustainable tourism management as mechanisms for linking conservation and development agendas. The efforts of NGO's complement many government projects, but sometimes ineffective communication between the government and NGO's results in duplication of services or a lack of action in some areas. Consequently, conservation, community development and tourism management efforts could be improved by better communication between these entities and with local communities.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACA:	Annapurna Conservation Area
ACAP:	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ADB:	Asian Development Bank
ANGRA:	All Nepal River Guides Association
CREST:	Center for Resource and Environmental Studies
DOT:	Department of Tourism
DNPWC:	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DWET:	Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in Tourism
FITs:	Free Independent Travelers
HMG:	His Majesty's Government
HRA:	Himalayan Rescue Association
ICIMOD:	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IUCN:	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IUOTO:	International Union of Official Travel Organizations
KEEP:	Kathmandu Environmental Education Project
KMTNC:	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
KMUKT:	King Mahendra (United Kingdom) Trust
LDC's:	Lesser Developed Countries
MBNPCA:	Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area
MBNPCAP:	Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area Project
MI:	Mountain Institute (formerly Woodlands Mt. Institute)
MOT:	Ministry of Tourism (HMG)
NATA:	Nepal Association of Travel Agents
NCRTC:	Nepal Conservation Research Training Center
NCS:	National Conservation Strategy
NEMP:	NGO Environmental Management Program

NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
NMA:	Nepal Mountaineering Association
NTJA:	Nepal Tourism Journalists Association
ODA:	Overseas Development Agency
Rs:	Nepalese Rupees: US\$=~Rs 50
SNP:	Sagarmatha National Park
SMZ:	Special Management Zone
SNV:	Netherlands Development Organization
SPCC:	Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee
STOL:	Short takeoff and landing strip
TAAN:	Trekking Agents Association of Nepal
UNEP:	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNDP:	United Nations Development Project
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WMI:	Woodlands Mountain Institute
WTO:	World Tourism Organization
WWF:	World Wildlife Fund

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Justification for this study**

Tourism has been encouraged by His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG) for the promotion of economic and community development. The demands of tourists have placed increasing pressure on natural resources and local cultures. Mass tourism attracts a large number of people, thereby placing greater demands on the environment and local people. It generates a large amount of income, but also requires large infrastructure development. Trekking and other forms of ecotourism are practiced by a smaller number of people, but is ideally more sensitive to the environment and local cultures. It costs less in terms of infrastructure, but also has a smaller revenue return.

HMG is managing trekking and other forms of ecotourism tourism in Nepal's parks and conservation areas, but is not alone in these management efforts. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) operating in Nepal have been instrumental in project development, and conservation and management efforts. NGO's also play a major role in Nepal's National Conservation Strategy (IUCN 1988). Many researchers have studied the development of tourism in Nepal, its positive and negative effects, and the ways in which it has changed local cultures and the environment (Shungel 1985; Baumgartner 1986; Brower 1991; Adams

1992; Sharma 1992; Zurick 1992; Stevens 1993). However, little has been done on the way in which tourism is managed in Nepal, by whom, and how effective this management is. This thesis will examine and discuss government and NGO initiatives for encouraging sustainable tourism and development in Nepal's mountain parks and conservation areas. Innovative approaches for linking conservation and development will also be discussed (Sherpa, L.N. 1985, 1994; Stevens and M.N. Sherpa 1992, 1993).

The integration of conservation and development agendas has become a common approach for projects in the third world. It has been found that if parks and conservation areas are to succeed then they must have the support of local people (McNeely and Miller 1982; McNeely and Miller 1984; Brechin and West 1990; Rao and Geisler 1990; Brechin, Harmon and Kutay 1991, Stevens and M.N. Sherpa 1993 ; Sherpa, L.N. 1985). Nepal has repeatedly modified the traditional national park model to meet the unique circumstances that exist there.

People live within the boundaries of many parks and conservation areas in Nepal. They depend on and exert pressure on the natural environment, but have had traditional management practices that allowed for sustainable use (Brower 1990, 1991; Exo 1990). With the designation of parks and conservation areas, HMG imposed new limitations and management policies which lacked local support and consequently failed, thus leading to some environmental degradation and social disruption (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987; Brower 1990).

The use of heavy-handed force to compel people to obey park regulations will ultimately fail. Many parks in Nepal are still guarded by HMG's Army. This sort of coercive utopianism needs to change if conservation efforts are to succeed.

## 1.2 Objectives

The question for this thesis is not whether Nepal should have tourism, or support it, since Nepal has already decided in favor of it. The question is how can tourism be developed in a sustainable, environmentally and culturally sensitive way so as to bring the most benefits for the environment, local people, the government, and visitors. HMG has management plans, policies and personnel which form the management structure designed to ensure the protection of Nepal's parks and conservation areas. Several departments are responsible for wildlife, tourism and park management in Nepal's parks and conservation areas. I will explore how HMG manages tourism in different mountain parks and conservation areas, and will look at cracks in the existing management structure. These cracks are areas of concern that are not being addressed or are not being adequately addressed by HMG. The role of NGO's in filling these management cracks will then be discussed. The efforts of NGO's and the effectiveness of these efforts will be examined.

The first part of my research focuses on the history of tourism in Nepal and the effects of tourism. Next I examine the history and management efforts in Sagarmatha National Park, the Annapurna Conservation Area, and Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area. Initiatives by HMG, NGO's and the private sector to manage tourism for the greatest good are then explored. Next, I analyze both tourists' perceptions of the areas they trekked in, and how much environmental information they received prior to their trek. Their observations are also used to evaluate the success of HMG and NGO efforts. Finally, I will assess the feasibility of using ecotourism to assist conservation and community development efforts.

### 1.3 Study methodology

I conducted my field work in Nepal from September 18, 1994 to December 16, 1994. I relied on interviews, secondary research, personal observation, surveys, and discussions with locals and trekkers to base my conclusions.

I spent roughly three weeks conducting interviews with government officials and managers of NGOs. I also used this time to search library collections in government and NGO offices, along with Kathmandu books stores for relevant literature.

I studied Nepali for two years prior to my field work and I found that basic knowledge of Nepali was extremely helpful in getting people to relax, both during interviews with HMG and NGO officials, and in discussions with locals. Literature reviews were conducted in English, but small talk in Nepali facilitated the exchange. In Nepal I borrowed books and received information from the following sources: Annapurna Conservation Area Project, Department of Immigration, Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, HIMAL, Himalayan Rescue Association, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu Environmental Education Project, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Tourism, Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area Project, Nepal Tourism Journalists Association, Quality Tourism Project, Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, Travel Agents Association of Nepal, United Nations Development Program, Mountain Institute, and the World Wildlife Fund.

Besides conducting interviews and a literature search, I relied on personal observation as a method for collecting information. Since my thesis focuses on tourism management, I decided to learn more about the activity being studied by being a participant and recording my observations. I went on a guided rafting trip for ten days in eastern Nepal. I trekked in the Everest region for six weeks and for two weeks in Langtang National Park. I also climbed a popular trekking peak. All of

these activities broadened my understanding of the interaction of local people with the environment and with tourists. I witnessed conservation and development projects first hand and saw what management practices are being used in each area.

During my trek in the Everest region I conducted a trekkers' survey. The survey provided the means to quantify demographics, environmental awareness and the practical details of trekking.<sup>1</sup> It was also used to evaluate government and NGO projects. While conducting this survey I found that there are many challenges to conducting research in the third world.<sup>2</sup> I also learned about myself and others as a result of experiences encountered during my research.<sup>3</sup> This thesis will provide valuable information for further research on Himalayan ecotourism. It will be especially useful for a comparison study based on my survey and a similar one conducted in the Annapurna area.

#### 1.4 Outline of this study

Knowledge of the history of tourism and parks in Nepal, and of how this fits within a global context is necessary before current tourism and park management policies can be meaningfully discussed and evaluated. Chapters 2 and 3 provide this historical background.

The first half of Chapter 2 documents the history of tourism in Nepal and why Nepal's tourist industry looks the way it does. The

positive and negative effects of tourism are discussed before looking at ecotourism. Ecotourism is seen by some as integral to sustainable development and conservation efforts and as an alternative to mass tourism.

While I am interested in tourism's positive and negative effects and how it has changed communities in Nepal, that is not the focus of this thesis. It is assumed that tourism can and does have many effects at many different levels in Nepal. The focus of this thesis will be on how tourists as a user group are managed in Nepal for various purposes, by whom, in what way, and with what degree of success.

I am mainly interested with tourism in Nepal's most popular mountain parks and conservation areas. Therefore, my concern is with trekkers in Sagarmatha National Park, the Annapurna Conservation Area, and the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area. The second half of chapter 3 discusses who manages these four areas and how. Current projects are discussed and the primary focus of this chapter is on the efforts of His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of NGO's and the private sector in assisting HMG with the fulfillment of conservation and development agendas. The goals of various NGO's operating in Nepal are discussed along with their current projects. NGO's have been highly supportive of ecotourism and sustainable tourism management. NGO efforts to link tourism with conservation and development agendas will be examined.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of this study and the data used to support those conclusions. This chapter presents the results of a trekker's survey conducted in the Everest region. The results of this survey are then used to evaluate government and NGO projects discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The focus is on how ecotourism is being used as a mechanism for the linking of conservation and development agendas. At this time, the government, NGOs and others believe that ecotourism may hold the key to success. Whether this is just another misdirected western concept applied to the third world, remains to be seen. Many wax eloquent about the potential for ecotourism but, only time will tell if it can achieve these expectations.

## Chapter 2: Tourism in Nepal and the Focus of Tourism Studies

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the history of tourism in Nepal, and efforts to manage and plan for it so as to maximize its benefits and minimize its negative effects. Ecotourism will also be discussed, since this type of tourism is prevalent in Nepal's mountain parks and conservation areas. This will create a framework within which a more enlightened and critical analysis of tourism management plans in various National Parks in Nepal can be explored.

### 2.2 Tourism in Nepal

Nepal is the meeting place of two major continental plates, two civilizations (Indic and Sinic), two major world religions (Buddhism and Hinduism), and two races (Caucasian and Mongoloid) (Karan 1960; Shrestha 1975; Jeffries 1986). It is 147, 181 sq. kilometers in area; and 83 percent of this is mountainous and 17 percent is plains (Agrawal 1986). As of July 1985, the population was estimated at 16.6 million. Among mountain countries, Nepal has one of the highest population densities and a high rate of population growth. Nepal is underdeveloped, has a

rapidly growing population, growing deforestation, and problems of meeting the basic needs of its people. Some people believe that tourism can aid equitable development in Nepal (Suraiya 1990). Tourism is being used in Nepal as a tool for conservation and development. A look also at the history of tourism in Nepal provides the background for a discussion of the current status of tourism in Nepal.

Nepal's experience with tourism varies greatly from other Asian countries because it was never colonized. Consequently, its pattern for national development is different, and Nepal remained isolated from the west until recently.

Nepal is an independent sovereign state and was united by King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Before unification of the country, Nepal's tourism consisted of religious pilgrimages, trade and commerce, and political exchanges. After unification and until 1950 there was little contact with outsiders except for occasional visits of big game hunters to the Terai. However, the Revolution of 1951 marked a new era in Nepal. During 1950 and 1951 the Royal family headed a revolution that resulted in the overthrow of Rana rule. King Tribhuvan took power and began to modernize the country. In 1951 Nepal received its first foreign aid and it has continued to get increasing amounts of aid ever since. Also in 1951, Indian National Airlines started services between Kathmandu and Patna. Motorable roads were then built to India and Tibet. In 1958 Royal Nepal Airlines was established. It connected to several destinations throughout the country and provided access to mountain areas though short takeoff

and landing strips (STOL). Nepal was also opened to outsiders and diplomatic relations were expanded. Nepal gained membership in the United Nations and other world organizations, like the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO), now the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (Satyal 1988).

In 1953 Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay climbed Mount Everest and Nepal has continued to attract a growing number of outsiders ever since. During the 1960's many hippies traveled to Nepal in search of a utopia with a good climate, cheap living, plentiful drugs and experimental philosophies. Their presence helped spark the beginnings for many tourist lodges, restaurants and trekking agencies.

Nepal established the Tourist Development Board in 1957. This was linked to the Ministry of Industry. In 1962 the board became a full-fledged Department under the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications. In 1967 the Department was transferred to a wing of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Nepal drafted a master plan for tourism that was approved by HMG in August 1972. In 1974 Nepal received its first scheduled international air service. With the growing importance of tourism, the Ministry of Tourism was created on February 23, 1977. The Department of Tourism now has its own ministry. This ministry is responsible for formulating policy. The Department of Tourism carries out those policies (Satyal 1988).

According to The Ministry of Tourism, a total of 293,567 tourists visited Nepal in 1993 where as only 6,179 visited in 1962. This dramatic

increase in tourist numbers during the past four decades has brought economic and environmental changes. Forty-three percent of the tourists in 1993 came from Asia, and India has proven to be the largest source of regional tourists. This is important since these tourists come for slightly different reasons than westerners, thus diversifying the industry. They come for pilgrimages, business, gambling, resort style vacations and visit throughout the year. Western tourists are also important. In 1993, tourists from Western Europe accounted for 41.6 percent, North America 8.6 percent and Australia and the Pacific 3.4 percent respectively. (MOT 1993).

Tourism is important to Nepal and is a major source of foreign currency. Tourism-related foreign exchange brought Nepal \$66.3 million dollars in 1993, which represents an 8.6 percent increase over 1992. Tourism contributed about 2.1 percent of the GDP of Nepal and 9.2 percent of the total foreign exchange earnings in 1993 according to the Department of Tourism (MOT 1993). Trekking, mountaineering and other types of ecotourism in Nepal's mountain areas, form only a minor portion of Nepal's tourists and foreign exchange earnings.

The number of climbers pursuing mountaineering in Nepal is small, but the importance of mountaineering to certain sectors of Nepal's economy is substantial. The 730 mountaineers with permits in 1993 employed 5,423 people for their expeditions. Many of these expeditions likely received some help from one of the 250 travel agencies or 302 trekking agencies that existed in 1993. (Ministry of Tourism 1993).

Trekking is a common activity among tourists in Nepal's mountain parks and conservation areas. It is not a wilderness backpacking experience, but a means of transport to get from one place to another through terrain where vehicles can not go. It is different from mass tourism since it does not require a lot of infrastructure and is smaller in scale. It is the only way to see most of Nepal's National Parks and Reserves and it has impacts on the people and environment. According to Ministry of Tourism statistics for 1990, the proportion of trekkers increased from 1 percent of the market in 1970 to 17 percent in 1989. This increase undoubtedly resulted in greater impacts on the environment and people along trekking routes. In 1993, 69,619 people went trekking and 39,764 of these people visited the Annapurna Conservation, while Everest received 17.9 percent and Langtang 13.2 percent of the trekkers. (Ministry of Tourism 1993)

Trekking creates a need for campsites or lodges, and places higher demand on local resources such as fuel and food which may be in short supply. As a result, deforestation may occur in some areas in order to create more farmland or to get firewood, but efforts are being made to stop this. HMG published "Some Provisions Relating to Mountain Tourism in Nepal." in the 1978 Tourism Act to help mitigate environmental impacts. HMG has also made efforts to improve trails and open up routes to new places in order to relieve pressures on some areas. HMG hopes that the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area and other National Parks and Reserves, will take some pressure off the

Annapurna Conservation Area and Sagarmatha National Park (Satyal 1988).

Harka Gurung (1984) states that the answer to this dilemma is not the exclusion of tourism, but the exploitation of tourism as a new resource for development. Cynics state that there are three religions in Nepal - Hinduism, Buddhism, and Tourism. Fortunately, the tourism industry is realizing that environmental protection is the only insurance against killing the goose that lays the golden egg (Mishra 1992).

Since tourism is seen to help the development process, Gurung (1984) feels that it should be pursued vigorously. Shungel (1985) states that tourism plays an important role in the Nepalese economy, and that an increase in the volume of the tourist flow has a direct as well as an indirect impact on the development process of Nepal. Nepal hopes for even more money from tourism, and plans to bring in more visitors and earn more from each visitor by encouraging them to stay longer. It has been argued that by reducing its dependence on imports and using more locally produced goods and services, Nepal can keep more money in the country and stimulate other sectors of the economy (Himal 1988).

HMG and the private sector have responded to tourism-led or market-driven opportunities or problems as they have arisen. Nepal has been reactive with respect to tourism, and vision and planning have not guided this industry or its management much. Little attention has been paid to the management of tourism in this mountain kingdom (Banskota, personal communication 1994; Sharma, personal communication 1994).

### 2.3 Planning in Nepal: Nepal's five year plans

Nepal, like most countries, relies on the use of planning to set desirable goals and policies which it hopes to attain over time. Nepal operates on a five-year plan. Since the Third Five Year Plan (1965-1970), tourism has gained increased attention from HMG.

These plans show that HMG is primarily concerned with the following: protecting natural, cultural, and historical features; expanding infrastructure; discouraging the use of imported goods, and encouraging the use of domestic products; expanding employment opportunities; improving publicity and promotion; increasing the number of tourists and their length of stay; and increasing foreign exchange earnings and fulfilling basic needs of people. These plans seem to subscribe to the belief that more tourists will bring more jobs, money and opportunities. However, is this the best course of action? What will the costs be to the environment, culture, and local communities? How does HMG plan to achieve these goals? There seems to be a lack of detailed and concrete plans to help realize HMG's goals. For example, HMG stresses the need for import substitution as a means of expanding the benefits of tourism across other sectors of the economy, but does not explain how it plans to do this.

Nepal, like many other small countries, has a limited planning capacity. The existing tourism-driven economy is determining the shape and design of projects. Nepal is largely reacting to this industry-led economy as opposed to leading and shaping this sector. A discussion of tourist carrying capacity seems to be lacking in these plans. The focus has been for more, more, more. How many is too much? When will the costs outweigh the benefits? Tourism can have many positive and negative effects, which will be discussed.

Tourism can be a powerful agent for social and economic change, but there are also aspects of tourism that can arrest change. Improved planning and management of tourism is only possible by knowing some of the effects of tourism. Consequently, some of these effects will now be discussed. Tourism development studies have concentrated on economics, locational factors, social and cultural effects, environmental impacts, resources, sustainability and the need for planning. Tourism is neither a panacea for development, as some may think, or a destructive mechanism as claimed by others. It has economic and other benefits, but also has social and cultural effects (Mathieson and Wall 1982).

#### 2.4 Benefits of tourism

Many government leaders see tourism as a means to aid the development of their country, and Nepal is no exception. It is promoted

so as to earn foreign exchange, stimulate investment, attract foreign investment for infrastructure improvements, create jobs both directly and indirectly, and to increase national income and employment (Chand 1978; Pradhan 1979; DeKadt 1979, 1979a; Gurung 1984; Lundberg 1985; Kayastha 1985; Cater 1987; Satyal 1988). Smaller countries that are poor in natural resources may have few alternatives to meet their development goals. Many countries see it as a more viable alternative than manufacturing, distribution, or extractive industries, while other countries may not have any other choice (Smith and Eadington 1982; Cater 1987; Singh 1989). His Majesty's Government of Nepal has been making efforts to help and encourage tourism through various programs and policies to aid economic development (Kayastha 1985).

Tourism can also have many benefits that are not economic. Boissevain (1979) found that tourism can create a sense of identity, pride and a new confidence among the members of a community. Also, young people and women tend to benefit from tourism jobs since they gain more economic independence. This could result in a weakening of the family. It can also lead to an overall improvement in the quality of life by helping people meet basic needs, and by providing housing, clean water, waste disposal, schools and other services (DeKadt 1979).

Tourism can provide a motivational role and cause a renewed interest, appreciation and revitalization in arts, crafts, and local culture. In some places this can renew or reinforce a national or cultural identity. A search for roots and rediscovery can also lead to the creation of new

museums, the revival of old cities, celebration of festivals, dance, drama, song, ceremonies, the creation of new craft centers, and the restoration and preservation of architecture and religious artifacts (DeKadt 1979; Gurung 1984; Lundberg 1985; Cater 1987; Satyal 1988). Also, many people have discussed the benefits of linking tourism and conservation (Pokarel 1994; Jefferies 1988). Gurung (1984) states that native Nepalese and Tibetan handicrafts are experiencing a revival with the advent of tourism. Also, many buildings in the ancient cities of the Kathmandu Valley are being renovated. All of these potential benefits need to be considered when viewing tourism. It may be the most appropriate type of development for an area despite some of its negative effects. In some cases, there is not even a discussion of whether or not to attract tourism, only how and in what way. This seems to be the prevailing approach in Nepal and better planning could play a vital role in maximizing benefits in this case.

## **2.5 Negative impacts of tourism**

Different types of tourism (some labeled as mass, alternative, ethnic, cultural historical, nature, recreational, sports, etc.) will determine the number and quality of visitors, their willingness to adapt to local ways, and the level of impact on hosts (residents) and destination areas (Smith 1977). An abundance of good literature now exists on the non-

economic side effects of tourism (Cohen 1972; Greenwood 1972; Jafari 1974; Thompson 1974; MacCannell 1976; Nunez 1977; Smith 1977; Mings 1978; Pizan 1978, 1986; Boissevain 1978, 1979; Wilson 1979; DeKadt 1979, 1979b; Nash 1981; Graburn 1983; Fürer-Haimendorf 1984; Gurung 1984; Cater 1987; Allan 1988; Singh 1989; Fisher 1990; Weber 1991).

Tourism can transform societies by introducing changes in the value system, tradition and mores, collective lifestyle, creative expression, language, and individual behavior (Pizan and Milman 1986). It can lead to seasonal and unattractive jobs and has been known to lead to inflation when a greater demand is placed on certain items (Gurung 1984; Fisher 1990; Brower 1991). It can also take family members and paid labor away from farmers. The law of supply and demand prevails as the price of basic necessities rises, thus making it more difficult for locals to obtain certain items. Furthermore, tourism can lead to a weakening of traditional community and kinship bonds, an erosion of native culture, ecological deterioration, moral laxity, drug addiction, crime, and prostitution (Gurung 1984; Cater 1987).

It can also play a disruptive role by reinforcing locally unattainable socioeconomic aspirations. It introduces foreign ideologies and ways of life that local people may try to adopt. They may try to demonstrate their modernity, but fail to realize that they may be losing their culture in the process and will be much poorer psychologically as a result (Mathieson and Wall 1982). Furthermore, tourism can lead to a commercialization, cheapening or degrading of culture (Satyal 1988). A

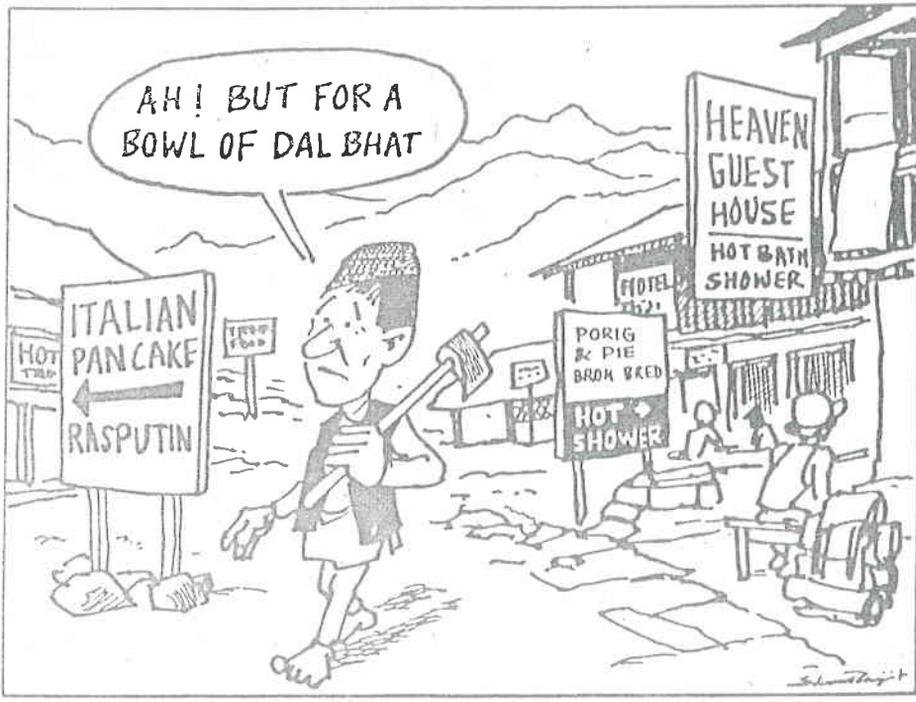
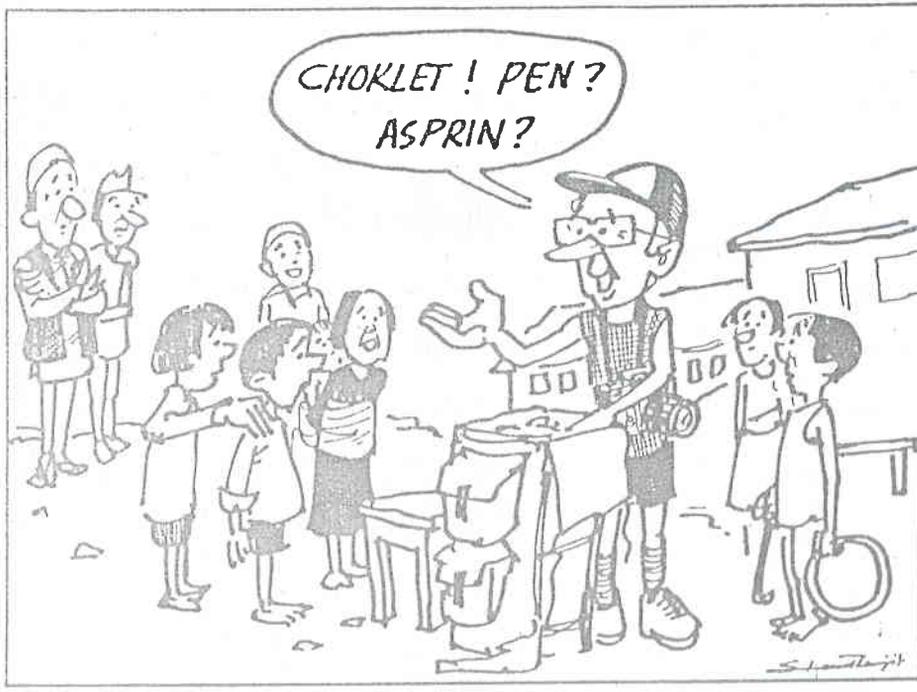


Figure 1. Effects of tourism. These cartoons depict some of the effects of western tourists (Himal 1988).

good example is provided by Greenwood (1972) who studied a Basque community and illustrated some of the effects of mass tourism. He acknowledges that the community and the state benefit from tourism in many ways but it also changed the community. One local ritual event has been trivialized and made into a public spectacle as a result of tourism.

Tourism also has been found to have several impacts on the environment (Boissevain 1978,1979; Gurung 1984; Karan and Mather 1985; Baumgartner 1986; Holder 1987; Allan 1988; Singh 1989; Banskota and Upadhyay 1990, 1990a; Fisher 1990; Brower 1991; Butler 1991; Zurick 1992; Stevens 1993 ). Numerous articles have been written that attribute deforestation, litter, erosion, pollution and other environmental problems to tourism. In some cases tourism may be an important contributing factor, while in other cases its impact has been blown out of proportion. It is easy to be pessimistic about the environmental impact of tourism, but Mathieson and Wall (1982) show that tourism can encourage conservation since there is a need to conserve that which attracts tourists. Mountain tourism can put strains on an already fragile ecology and on scarce natural resources, but can also create a desire to protect that environment (Satyal 1988).

Baumgartner (1986) states that the benefits of tourism are not equally distributed, but everyone has to deal with the negative side effects like inflation, erosion, deforestation, litter, pressure on resources, and foreign influences. There is a need for a coherent policy that looks at the maximum carrying capacity of the area, sets objectives, and leads to

the implementation of a management policy (Baumgartner 1986). Fisher (1990) found that the incomes of Sherpas have increased, but so has inflation. Their diet has become more varied, and they now eat more rice and other imported foods. In a way they are eating their new-found wealth.

According to DeKadt (1979) there is no evidence that any government has assessed the overall effects of various types of tourism in order to promote those types with the greatest social benefits. If tourist facilities are not massive, and if they grow slowly then the socio-cultural effects are likely to be reduced, since this will enable the local population to adjust. A few studies have documented in detail tourism development and some of its effects on Sherpas of the Khumbu region. (Fürer-Haimendorf 1984; Brower 1991; Fisher 1992; Stevens and Sherpa 1992; Stevens 1993) Ecotourism has been suggested as a model for sustainable tourism that is both culturally and environmentally sensitive. It is being pursued in Nepal's mountain parks and conservation areas. Ecotourism presents problems and opportunities that will now be discussed.

## 2.6 Ecotourism

As tourism is often the largest industry in many developing nations, the demands of tourism, directly or indirectly, influence local political, social, economic and environmental policies (Passoff 1991).

All-too-often tourists are regarded as the scourge of the environment, perhaps similar to Mongol hordes or Vikings of ancient time. While there is no doubt that the effects of tourism can be similar to those of a visit from such groups, this should not be inevitable or unavoidable (Butler 1991).

Alternative tourism has become fashionable among those who have become disillusioned with mass tourism (Smith and Eadington 1992). This type of tourism is actually not new but, was unnamed. It was practiced by a smaller number of people in the past. In some places there is not adequate infrastructure nor tourist facilities to support mass tourism so that only alternative tourism can be practiced. In such locations it really is not "alternative" but maybe the only "appropriate" tourism possible. Ecotourism is a type of alternative tourism (Zurick 1992). Ecotourism has been referred to by many other names (See Figure 2).

Tourism is or soon will be the world's largest industry. Ecotourism is growing at a rate of twenty to twenty-seven percent a year, thus making it the fastest growing segment of this industry (Passoff 1991). The ecotourist pays to see wildlife, natural areas and unique natural attractions. Wood (1980) described it as "purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the

environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources financially beneficial to local citizens." Theoretically it is a "win-win" situation consistent with the environmental and human carrying capacity for the area. According to Passoff (1991) "in its ideal form, ecotourism is an activity, philosophy and development and environmental policy all at the same time."

Holder (1987) states that "no other economic activity lends itself to this approach [sustainable development] better than tourism." Many other proponents argue that if done properly ecotourism can be both sustainable and environmentally sound (Wood 1980; Suraiya 1990; Boo 1990; Whelan 1991). This type of tourism can be used to provide much needed income in villages near park borders where the illegal exploitation of park resources would otherwise occur. Ideally this will lead to protection of the environment, but Kenchington (1989) states that three different relationships can result between tourism and conservation: conflict, coexistence, or symbiosis.

Many people have looked at the role of this type of tourism in the third world (Smith 1977; Bulter 1979; Cleverdon 1979; DeKadt 1979, 1979a; Wood 1980; Nash 1981; Mathieson and Wall 1982; Travis 1982; Vanhouts 1982; Gormsen 1984; Cohen 1987; Gonsalves 1987; Singh 1989; Butler 1991; Smith and Edington 1992).

**Figure 2. Names used to refer to ecotourism**

Academic tourism	Integrated tourism
Adventure tourism	Just tourism
Alternative tourism	Local tourism
Appropriate tourism	Low impact tourism
Cottage tourism	Nature-based tourism
Culturally sympathetic	Nature-oriented tourism
Cultural tourism	Nature tourism
Community-based tourism	Nature travel
Defensive tourism	Responsible tourism
Environmental-friendly	Sensitized tourism
Environmental pilgrimage	Small scale tourism
Ethical tourism	Soft tourism
Ecotourism	Special interest
Green tourism	Sustainable tourism
Indigenous tourism	Wildlife tourism

(Adapted from Valentine 1991; Johnson 1993; Johnson 1990 and Singh 1989).

Ecotourism has become popular in Nepal for a number of reasons. Nepal is fairly tolerant of foreigners, contains many of the worlds highest mountains and is blessed with extraordinary natural beauty. Furthermore, its environment and cultures have been extensively studied resulting in numerous articles describing Nepal's diversity and beauty. Many western tourists visit at least one of Nepal's National Parks.

Adventure activities are popular. Of these, trekking is the most common though rafting is also gaining in popularity. In 1987 there were 3,616 rafters, whereas in 1985 only 1,426 people rafted. It is seen as a great way to have a little adventure and see natural and cultural attractions at the same time. In countries such as Nepal, where in some

areas infrastructure is minimal or nonexistent, ecotourism may be the both the only practical and appropriate tourism for some parts of the country. This type of tourism represents only a small portion of Nepal's tourism, but has substantial impacts on some mountain areas.

Many argue that if done properly, ecotourism can be sustainable and environmentally sound (Wood 1980; Boo 1990; Suraiya 1990; Whelan 1991). In some cases, tourism has provided alternative means of employment for Nepalese in the face of other changes. For example, Sherpas traditionally engaged in trade between Tibet and India in addition to agropastoralism. When the Tibetan border closed in 1959, their trade and livelihood were threatened. However, they were able to take advantage of a growing tourism industry. They adapted: the Sherpa still engaged in an approximation of their previous practices. However, instead of carrying goods to be traded they are carrying the supplies of trekkers and climbers (Adams 1992). Culture is not a static entity, and Sherpa culture has not necessarily been "destroyed" or "undermined" as some would argue but has merely adapted to economic changes (Fürer-Haimendorf 1984; Fisher 1990; Brower 1987, 1991; Stevens 1993; Adams 1992; Zurick 1992). Trekking ecotourism can bring many benefits, but can also bring problems.

Ecotourism has been glorified as a panacea for rectifying conservation and development agendas, but ecotourism can cause several problems. For example, problems can occur when monetary and other benefits bypass the local community, when foreign operators fail to use

locals in their operations and when destruction to the natural resource base occurs (Drake 1991). According to Passoff (1991), less than seven cents of every dollar spent by trekkers within the Annapurna region actually stays within the local economies, and this is the most heavily trekked region in Nepal. A study by Whelan (1991) also concluded that the national economy benefits the most, and governments often do not channel money back to the local communities.

However, ecotourism has been deemed to be successful in some cases in preserving unique ecosystems while at the same time providing for local needs (Boo 1990; Whelan 1991; Gurung, C 1992; Sharma 1992; Gurung, D 1994; KMTNC 1993, 1993a). Ecotourism is dependent upon the natural resources that support it. Therefore tour operators need to take measures to protect the natural environment in order to protect their investment. Ryel and Grasse (1991) state that the travel companies, operators and guides must share a conservation ethic that provides a framework within which to operate, in order to ensure a protection of resources. They state that this ethic should include the following key components: increasing public awareness of nature, maximizing benefits for local people, encouraging cultural sensitivity, and minimizing negative impacts on the environment. For the past two decades, some trekking agencies, guides and NGOs have attempted to establish programs to increase tourist awareness and minimize damage (Brower, personal communication 1995)

## 2.7 Conclusion

Many proponents of ecotourism state that a beneficial relationship can be created between tourism and conservation which affords physical, cultural and economic benefits. It is in peoples' best interest to practice conservation measures so as to protect the resource they depend upon. The experience of Chitwan National Park and Rara National Park illustrate that heavy-handed enforcement in protecting resources just creates resentment from the local population and sets the stage for conflict as opposed to cooperation. Local people should be involved in the decision-making process that guides tourism policy, if that policy is to be successful. Their perceptions, attitudes, values and ideas need to be addressed and integrated into any plan or decision. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area (MBNP/CA) are among a growing array of protected areas trying to incorporate local people in many ways so as to engender true cooperation for the management of these areas.

It has been shown that tourism can serve various national socio-economic aims in development. It can be a force in regional development and can provide linkages with other sectors of the economy. It also generates employment and income opportunities and can contribute to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage (Satyal 1988). To maximize its benefits it should be monitored and evaluated.

Diversification is desirable since complete reliance on one industry is risky. Consequently, tourism should not be the only component of a development plan.

Gurung (1984) states that the simple way to avoid the negative effects of tourism would be to do away with tourists. However, he cautioned that this would be a naive and impractical response to an important issue. He states that increased contact and communication with the outside world would inevitably change traditional culture regardless of whether or not tourism is practiced.

Tourism is not perfect and does not manufacture any tangible product, but it does offer a means of improving economic conditions. However, its benefits are not always spread equally as shown by Baumgartner in the Rolwaling Valley in north-eastern Nepal. This has also been shown in the Khumbu. Certain locals in the Khumbu area benefit more from tourism than others. Some traditionally influential families retain economic and political power and a few poorer families may be raised up because of tourism. However, all the people of the region must deal with inflation and the environmental and social disruption tourism brings (Fürer-Haimendorf 1984; Fisher 1990; Brower 1991; Stevens 1993).

Residents near Chitwan National Park have complained of tourism-related inflation. Also, before ACAP only a small percentage of the money spent by trekkers went back into the area. Tourism can bring money into local communities, but if ecotourism is not done properly

then this money could bypass local communities and benefit just a few entrepreneurs (Heinen and Kattel 1992; Gurung 1992)

Many developing countries see tourism as a way to earn foreign exchange and generate jobs. They may have few options and tourism may look like the best alternative. It can provide economic growth without having to industrialize in order to develop. Also, it doesn't require the export of products, and it benefits many parts of the economy. However, tourists require many products and amenities, and if they are not produced in Nepal they will have to be imported. This results in the use of valuable foreign exchange.

Tourism needs to be pursued with caution and should take social and cultural needs of the local population into consideration. Also, its positive and negative effects are not distributed equally. A more effective national and political structure would undoubtedly help in the management of parks in Nepal, but effective, organized local groups could also help solve some of the regulation and management problems currently facing Nepal's parks. If tourism is to be promoted Nepal's parks and conservation areas then it is hoped that efforts are made to make sure that local communities benefit, and the wealth does not leave the area or end up in the hands of just a few.

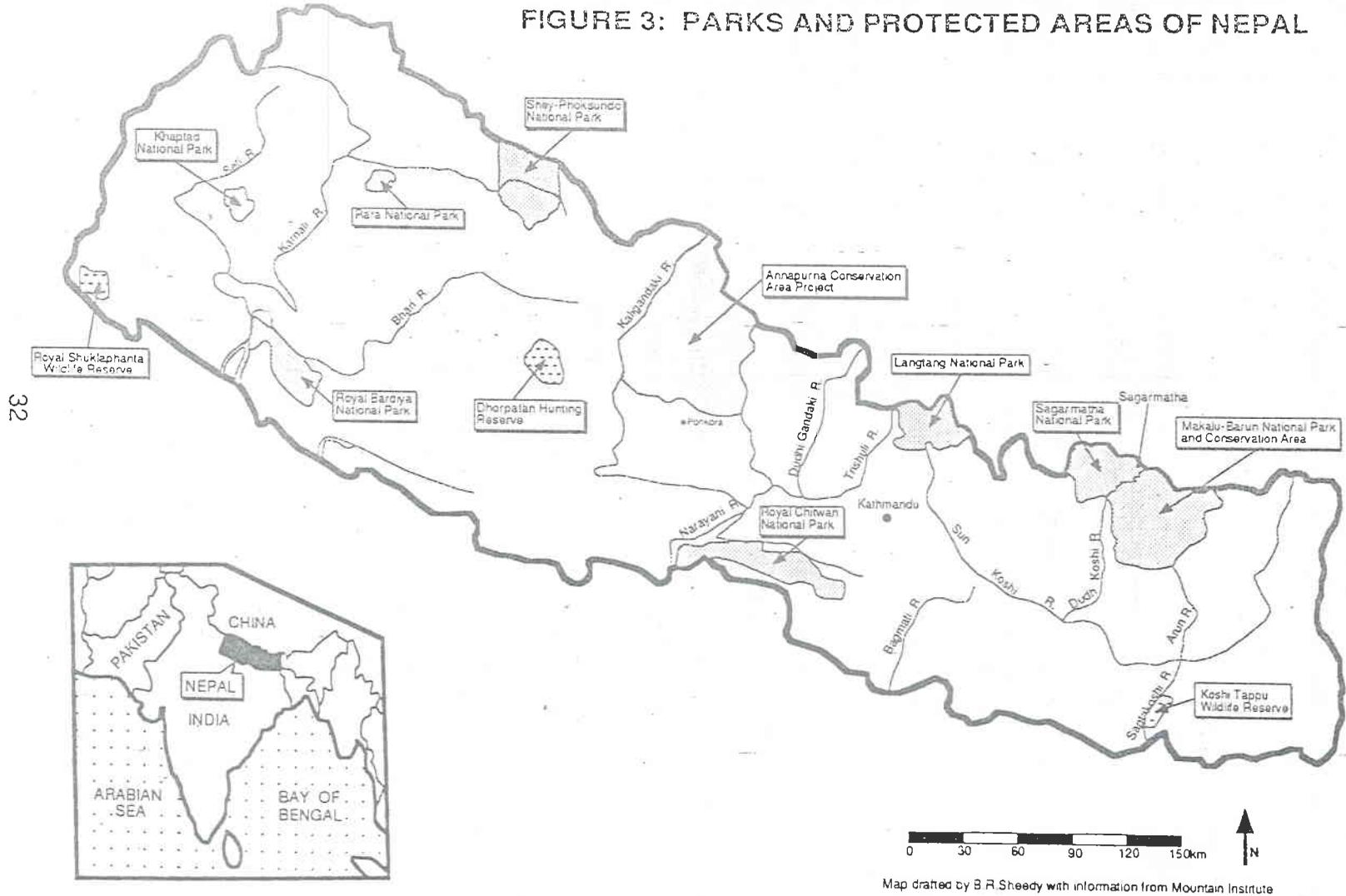
## Chapter 3: Management of Tourists in National Parks and Conservation Areas

The title "national park" is applied to eight of Nepal's protected areas, but the label has a different meaning here. These are not wilderness areas or "pleasuring grounds" for transient visitors, as the original parks were. People live within Nepal's parks and conservation areas, creating special concerns for the agencies that must manage the parks, their residents, and tourist visitors as well. Several different departments with HMG, as well as an array of NGOs are responsible for managing tourism. The government's role in managing tourism and the way tourism management plays out in Sagarmatha, Annapurna, and Makalu-Barun national parks are the subject of this chapter.

### 3.1 The national park concept

The creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872; marked the beginning of a global interest in protecting unique areas (Harroy 1974; Nash 1982; Allin 1990; Brockelman and Dearden 1990; Eyre 1990). The "western model" for a national park, derived from Yellowstone, defines it as an area not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation, where steps have been taken to eliminate exploitation and occupation, and where people are only visitors (IUCN 1971; Eyre 1990). The

FIGURE 3: PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS OF NEPAL



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Map drafted by B.R. Shedy with information from Mountain Institute

"western park concept" emerged as the product of a relatively wealthy society (Harmon 1987). These societies have set land aside that will not be developed. LDC's often create parks in the relatively undeveloped and often poorer sections of their countries where locals are dependent upon these resources. However, once a park is created, "use" of these areas has often been prohibited so as to comply with a western definition of a park (Harmon 1987). This leads to management problems and the need for guards.

In the case of Rara National Park, HMG relocated roughly 650 people from two villages to the Bardia District in the Terai. After removing villagers, HMG initially guarded these areas by force. This approach has changed with the realization that western park models may not be appropriate or effective in Nepal. Since then, His Majesty's Government has avoided moving people out of other National parks, thus over 3,000 people still live in Langtang National Park with almost 17,000 depending upon the area for other resources. Also, roughly 2,500 people, mostly Sherpa, live within Sagarmatha National Park and 32,000 people live within the conservation area of the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation area (Heinen and Kattel 1992; DNPWC/WMI 1990).

Increasing pressure is being exerted upon the nation's parks owing to a growing population, increased tourism, and dwindling resources. There is a growing realization that all conservation efforts will be fruitless and parks will fail if they are not somehow linked to the needs of local

residents. People need to become beneficiaries of parks so that they will have a vested interest in park protection and understand the benefits of conservation (Brower 1991; Whelan 1991; Wells and Brandon 1992). During the Earth Summit in Rio we were also reminded that we need to balance human needs with environmental conservation (Mishra 1992).

Nepal manages its parks differently from western countries. Some innovative approaches have been taken, and I will now discuss the responsibilities of various departments of HMG in managing tourism in these parks and conservation areas.

### **3.2 Management role of His Majesty's Government (HMG)**

HMG's concern for parks and conservation areas can easily be seen by the fact that roughly 10% of the country is protected in such a manner. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation manages this system. The DNPWC was created by His Majesty's Government in 1973 with the passage of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (Heinen and Kattel 1992). Nepal currently has eight national parks and fourteen protected areas (WMI 1992). HMG's concern for development can be seen in its national five year plan. Tourism, particularly ecotourism in the form of trekking and mountaineering has allowed for the marriage of conservation and development. With wise management, parks and conservation areas can provide a scenic,

recreational, and cultural experience for tourists while improving the quality of life for locals by providing a livelihood, and improving education, health and other benefits.

The government recognizes the need to spread out the number of tourists in Nepal by opening up more areas. This is an official policy but, little has been done owing to lack of coordination between the Ministry of Tourism and government agencies responsible for infrastructure improvement. Another government policy has been to encourage more production of the products needed for the tourist industry as opposed to importing them. However, linkages of tourism with the production sector have not occurred yet (IUCN/HMG 1988).

Tourism management in Nepal is the responsibility of several agencies. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation requires permits for trekkers and restricts firewood use by trekkers. Trekking and mountaineering permits are issued through the Department of Immigration, The Ministry of Tourism and the Department of Tourism, thereby providing a regulatory mechanism for management. The Ministry of Industry licenses tour and trekking organizations. The responsibilities of these departments will now be explored.

### 3.2a Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation is responsible for the administration and management of national parks and protected areas. It is also responsible for developing infrastructure inside national parks and reserves, the interpretation of park resources and control of the entry and movement of visitors. The Royal Nepal Army is responsible for surveillance and protection activities. The duties of a national park guard are a combination of the duties of a soldier, a naturalist, a guide, and a public relations officer. There is a rule that all tourists should be self-sufficient in fossil fuels. This can only happen if trekking agencies cooperate with the national park. Better cooperation is needed between these departments. The Department of Tourism could use its influence to enforce rules. (IUCN/HMG 1988)

L.N. Sherpa stated that some of the overall goals for parks are the creation of biodiversity, flora and fauna, culture and to allow for tourism use. "The DNPWC doesn't manage tourists" it just protects tourist resources. Regulating the activities of tourists, giving presentations, and handing out fines are done by western park rangers but are not really part of the job responsibilities of a park ranger in Nepal. Also, providing toilets, trash removal and trail maintenance are not seen as part of its job. These tasks are done but not by the DNPWC.<sup>4</sup>

The main goal of the DNPWC is wildlife and forest protection. Park wardens, rangers, game scouts and the military all help to facilitate

this goal. The army does patrols in all of Nepal's National Parks except for the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area (MBNP/CA) which is the only park without a military presence. A permanent military presence places additional stress on local communities and natural resources in parks.

The DNPWC does not manage land within villages, since this is private land. The DNPWC can only persuade and try to educate people that certain practices are not good or appropriate for the area. Furthermore, the DNPWC has to allow local people to use park resources, and it is not possible to completely stop the harvesting of resources. The DNPWC persuades and educates people to practice conservation, but there are not really any laws or regulations with an accompanying fee structure for offenders (Sherpa, L.N., personal communication 1994).

The DNPWC is currently trying to relieve the burden on forests as a source of fuel wood by providing start up money for kerosene depots in Sagarmatha National Park, and encouraging helicopters to bring in kerosene. A contractor will then sell the kerosene and supply stoves to people in the area, and a committee will evaluate and set fair prices.

The DNPWC is faced with many obstacles and constraints which hinder effectiveness. First it shares responsibility with the Department of Immigration, Royal Nepal Army, Department of Forest, and Department of Agriculture, for managing Nepal's natural resources and user groups. This sharing of responsibilities is necessary, but better interdepartmental

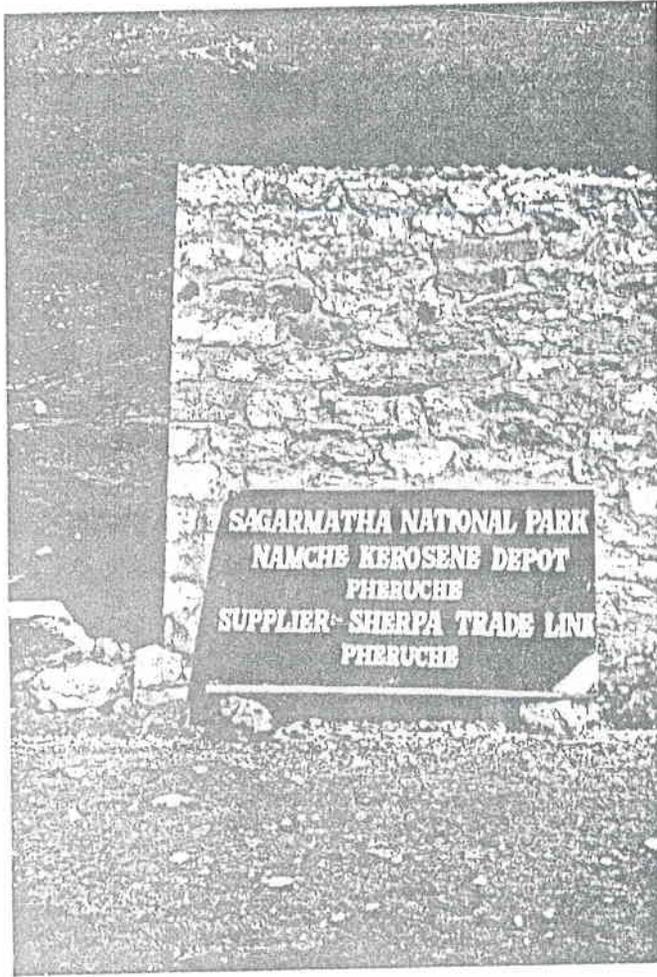


Figure 4. Namche kerosene depot. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation is helping to distribute stoves and kerosene in the Khumbu. Photo by B.R. Sheedy.

communication is needed so as to improve management. Secondly, a lack of staff within the DNPWC makes effective management in parks and protected areas difficult. Also, most parks are in remote locations, where services are limited so it is difficult to fill positions in these areas with qualified people.

Next village conflicts present problems. Wildlife protection in parks and reserves seriously affects some local communities. Every year, there is some loss of human life, loss of livestock, and loss of crops as a result of wildlife. For many villagers access to firewood, wild vegetables, medicinal plants and construction materials within parks is an important concern. Consequently, as stated earlier, locals need to have a vested interest in parks. Their basic needs must be met before conservation can occur. Finally, the DNPWC needs reliable information on which to base its decisions.

### 3.2b Department of Immigration

The Department of Immigration effectively manages some of the actions of tourists through the permit process. It issues permits for all of the parks and conservation areas in Nepal. Trekkers need to have a permit for the areas they wish to trek, and permits cost \$5 per week. A permit is required for tourists whenever they are traveling outside the Kathmandu Valley. All people need a permit and have to go to the

Department of Immigration to obtain their trekking permits. Environmental posters have been posted and pamphlets distributed at the Department of Immigration in the past but have not been available on a continual basis. Some of this information was provided by NGO's, but these organizations are sometimes sporadic in their efforts (Kayastha, personal communication 1994). They may be very visible for a while and then fade away.

### 3.2c Ministry of Tourism and Department of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism regulates rafting, and mountaineering permits and also hotels. It oversees Royal Nepal Airlines, the Department of Civil Aviation, the Department of Tourism, and the Tara Gaun Development Community which runs some hotels, and the Hotel Management and Tourism Training Center.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) is responsible for issuing mountaineering permits and for the development of auxiliary services and infrastructure needed to accommodate the trekkers and tourists who visit national parks. The DNPWC also has responsibilities for developing similar facilities. The programs and policies of these two departments do not always coincide, nor are their respective responsibilities coordinated (IUCN/HMG 1988).

The DOT is responsible for the promotion and management of tourism in Nepal. Its main activities include licensing and supervising hotels and lodges, establishing tourist centers, publicizing Nepal as a tourist destination, and facilitating the entry and departure of visitors.

The DOT has several sections. The Service and Complaint Section informs people about tourism in Nepal and sends information to embassies, consulates, and tour operators. It also looks at complaints of tourism companies and has a tourist police unit consisting of one inspector and six sub-inspectors. The International Promotion Section distributes information at international exhibitions. The Hotel Section regulates the Hotel industry. The Travel and Trade Section regulates travel and trade agencies. Production and Printing promotes Nepal by publishing video cassettes, slides, posters, and other published material and the Account Section serves the internal needs of the DOT (G.C., Bishnu, personal communication 1994).

The DOT is concerned with three main types of tourists: FITS (Free Independent Tourists), guided trekkers and controlled trekkers. FITS plan their own itinerary and travel on their own. They tend to stay in lodges and tea houses along established trekking routes. Sagarmatha National Park, Manag, ACAP, Langtang, MBNP/CA and Rara National Park are popular destinations for FITS. Guided groups also go to these areas, in addition to some areas requiring a little more self sufficiency. Guided trekkers are members of a guided group that normally has a guide, sirdar (staff supervisor), porters and cooks. The group is mostly

self-sufficient, cooks for itself and camps its way through an area. Controlled trekkers are people traveling in more remote and sensitive areas such as Dolpo, Mustang, Manaslu, Humla and Khanchenjunga. The Ministry of Tourism fixes the number of trekkers and rate they are charged. These people must be in groups and the groups have to be completely self-sufficient, including food needs. The activities of group members are also more controlled in these areas.

### 3.2d The Ministry of Industry

The Ministry of Industry, licenses tour and trekking organizations, but has had very little interest in tourism. It has no programs to increase efficiency or professional development of these organizations. The Ministry of Industry has the potential to create many changes by possibly requiring tour and trekking organizations to be more environmentally sensitive. It could make the validity of their licenses contingent upon compliance with the ecotrekking workshop declaration or some other environmental guidelines. This department currently seems uninterested in tourism management which is unfortunate for parks and conservation areas in Nepal.

### **3.3 Case Studies: Tourism management in Nepal's most traveled mountain parks and conservation areas**

Alternative tourism management strategies for Sagarmatha National Park, the Annapurna Conservation Area, and Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area will be compared. All of these areas have people living within their boundaries, but are also dedicated to the protection of natural resources. Nature tourism, that brings jobs and money into the area, is viewed as vital to the protection of these places since people will protect the source of their livelihood. The government of Nepal is using tourism as a tool for encouraging economic development and improving quality of life. Tourism is managed differently throughout the country and I will look at different management policies. The goals, ideology and rhetoric of various park plans will be compared.

#### **3.3a Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) National Park**

Sagarmatha National Park is roughly 1113 sq km in size and is located in the northeast region of Nepal in Sagarmatha zone. It was Nepal's third national park and was gazetted in July 1976. In 1979 the area was declared a world heritage site so as to protect the local culture, flora, and fauna, and the ecosystems of the world's highest mountain.



Figure 5. Sagarmatha. Thousands of trekkers come to Nepal each year to walk the Everest trek. This picture of Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) was photographed from Kala Patar, the end of the Everest trek. Photo by B.R. Sheedy.

This designation enables the park to receive funding from the World Heritage Fund, administered by UNESCO. The park falls under the management of the DNPWC (Jefferies 1986; Brower 1991; Taylor-Ide et al. 1992; Garratt 1981).

Local communities, growing tourism, and mountaineering expeditions, create interesting and complex problems in managing this area. Sagarmatha National Park is occupied by established local communities who depend on the area for agriculture, pastoralism, firewood, and other forest products. Tourism and mountaineering have further complicated management of this area. A major challenge has been that of allowing for the needs of the local population without sacrificing conservation objectives. Sagarmatha National Park was designed to be more sensitive to local people than Chitwan National Park as a result of experiences gained in Chitwan (Brower 1982).

The 1981 Management Plan for Sagarmatha National Park expressed concern for the following: nature conservation, water and soil conservation, indigenous population, religious and historical values, tourism, mountaineering, and adequate energy sources (Garratt 1981; Weber 1991).

In 1979, "The Khumbu Region Tourism Study" was conducted and recommendations evolved from this. L.N. Sherpa (1994) stated that the DNPWC is concerned with protecting tourist resources but managing tourism itself, has not been a high priority of the DNPWC. Also, management of tourism and mountaineering activities have not been a

high priority for the DNPWC, but that is not to say they are ignored. It just happens that the Ministry of Tourism, the Nepal Mountaineering Association and NGO's have taken over in this regard since the DNPWC has not been able to adequately address these issues due to the sheer number of responsibilities it is charged with, and that it is understaffed, particularly in regard to the number of people in the field.

### 3.3b Annapurna Conservation Area Project

ACAP departs from the conventional approach and envisages a multidimensional strategy and maximum people's participation, which stresses conservation for people and conservation to improve the quality of life (*His Royal Highness Prince Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, KMTNC 1993*).

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project hopes to balance the needs of the local population, trekking tourism, and the environment. Hemanta Mishra, Member Secretary of the King Mahendra Trust said that "our philosophy is development through conservation. We cannot keep people apart while trying to preserve the environment" (Himal 1987).

The Annapurna Conservation Area is a multiple use area that was created in 1986 and is roughly 7000 sq km in size. It is managed by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (a non-governmental environmental organization). Its creation marked the introduction of a new concept in protected area management in Nepal. ACAP aims to

blend resource conservation, sustainable community development and the maximization of the economic benefits of tourism to help villagers within the area. It is not a park since such a designation would have prohibited many types of land use. However, conservation of the natural and cultural heritage is a primary goal. Roughly 40,000 people, mostly farmers, live in the region and over 30,000 trekkers visit the area each year, which has led to many environmental problems. Some of these problems are deforestation, water pollution, poor sanitation, litter, and expansion of agriculture to meet tourist needs. A high priority of the Annapurna Conservation Area is to increase local economic benefits of tourism and reduce environmental and social benefits. Lodges and expeditions are required to use kerosene, and fuel wood collection is limited to subsistence use, but there are still problems with this (Bunting et al. 1991; Brandon and Wells 1992).

HMG granted ACAP the right to collect fees from trekkers. ACAP uses this revenue to support local conservation and development initiatives. It has programs in conservation education and extension, sustainable forest management, reduction of fuelwood consumption and community development. Traditional subsistence activities are supported, in addition to small scale conservation and alternative energy projects designed to improve the local standard of living and minimize the negative impacts of tourism. Locals are empowered with technical and financial assistance, appropriate skills, knowledge, and education, so as to improve their quality of life.

ACAP recognizes the impact that unregulated tourism could have on the environment and the culture of the area. Therefore, ACAP has designed tourism-awareness programs and conservation awareness programs for villagers and lodge owners specifically. To promote environmentally sensitive trekking, ACAP began to develop a model in 1993 for an ecotrekking route in the Ghalekharka-Sikles trekking region. The ecotourism development project is proposing conservation awareness, community development, and a heritage conservation program, in addition to developing a sound waste management plan (ACAP 1989; Sowerwine and Shrestha 1994).

ACAP built on the experiences of Sagarmatha National Park and other National Parks in Nepal. It is trying to refine the model for inhabited protected areas with locals and visitors concerned with the natural environment. ACAP has yet addressed the question of carrying capacity. The area receives roughly 40,000 visitors each year, most of whom come during just a few months (MOT 1993). Is this number too great, or is this compatible with sustaining natural and cultural resources of the area? As a result of more publicity, ACAP seems like a success, but how much of this is just rhetoric? Can this area continue to receive more traffic, even if the area is run well?

### 3.3c The Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area

The Makalu Barun National Park and Conservation Area was officially established in the fall of 1991 and is Nepal's newest national park. It is currently being co-managed by the Mountain Institute (an NGO formerly known as Woodland's Mountain Institute) and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. Also, the area is being considered for possible designation as a World Heritage site (WMI 1992). Thirty-two thousand people from a variety of ethnic and caste groups live in the conservation area. They practice subsistence agriculture and pastoralism, use forest products, conduct small-scale seasonal trade, and participate in seasonal migration for other labor opportunities (Taylor-Ide et al. 1992).

A goal of the Makalu Barun National Park and Conservation Area Project is to incorporate local people and traditional management practices, but the extent of this cooperation and recognition remains to be seen. The project clearly sees conservation and development as compatible and even symbiotic. Consequently, tourism which already involves roughly 20% of the local population at some time of the year, will be planned for (Banskota 1990).

The Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area Project established a set of four integrated programs under the categories of park management, community development, tourism management and scientific research. A management plan is being written for each of these

areas, and all of these programs are dependent upon each other and thoroughly integrated.

The Park Management Plan contains the blueprint for how the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area will be run. The Task Force is still in the process of formulating management policies and their implications for the area. Numerous groups are likely to be affected by the plan and their input has been solicited.<sup>5</sup>

The Scientific Management Plan will outline research priorities for the park and elaborate on how research in the area will be conducted. Scientific research in the project area will focus on the needs of park management and local people, and on scientific description of the area and the identification of its role in the regional ecology. A research committee has been established to solicit research projects, evaluate projects, monitor research, publish reports and use the results to aid park management decisions.

The Tourism Management Plan will incorporate the findings of at least four tourism studies that have been conducted in the area (Banskota et al. 1990, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c). The Government of Nepal classifies tourists visiting the hill and mountain regions of Nepal into three groups: trekkers, group trekkers, and mountaineers. Each of these groups has a different impact on the areas they visit. The Tourism Management Plan is intended to mitigate the negative impacts and promote the positive aspects of tourism. Tourist facilities will be planned for and tourists will be encouraged to visit some areas, but will be prohibited from others.

The Community Development Plan will promote sustainable development in the area so that locals can increase their standard of living and also benefit from the park. Numerous development projects have been identified, and income generating activities are being encouraged.

The Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area Project is attempting to balance the needs of local people with the protection of the environment. Conservation and development are viewed as complementary and local people are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. The Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area Project has also attempted to install a sense of responsibility and ownership for the project, in local people.

The "conservation area" concept is growing in popularity and the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area is the newest incarnation of this idea and builds on the efforts of Sagarmatha National Park and the Annapurna Conservation Area. Many policies are still being formulated and implemented on the basis of research being conducted in the park. Consequently, many policies and management structures are still in their infancy and need some ironing out. This area, like the Annapurna Conservation Area, is receiving a lot of hype, but only time will tell if this area will serve as an example for sustainable development and park management for the future.

### 3.4 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to explore how His Majesty's Government is managing tourists through various departments, and how Sagarmatha National Park, Annapurna Conservation Area and Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area are managed. It was found that HMG has established parks and conservation areas with communities within them and has managed for this. Sagarmatha National Park made a greater effort than Chitwan National Park or Rara National Park to involve local communities, rectify conservation and development agendas and utilize and manage tourism for maximum benefits. Annapurna Conservation Area and Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area have further built on this model. However, one of the problems with the management of environmental conservation and tourism in Nepal is that there are too many people explaining what to do and not enough people in the field doing things.

Another problem is poor distribution of environmental information. The efforts of the DOT to publish some environmental information on the back of permits is commendable but much more could be done. The information on the permits could be expanded and updated, permanent signs or posters could be displayed and someone could even give information verbally to people while they wait in line. Many trekkers received environmental information and information about the areas they were trekking, from trekking companies, books,

pamphlets, magazines and other published materials (Survey results 1994). Consequently, the Department of Tourism can have a tremendous influence on the actions and behavior of trekkers by providing environmental information for desired trekker behavior in its brochures and promotional materials.

Furthermore, HMG has divided responsibility for environmental conservation among different departments, ministries and NGOs, in order to further develop conservation efforts in certain areas. Many problems result from this division, and misunderstandings occur as a result of shared responsibilities and poor communication. Also, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation has been not been able to fully realize many of its conservation efforts because of limited financial resources, fragmented policies and insufficient staff in remote areas. It has problems posting qualified staff in these areas owing to a lack of financial incentives and other resources. Many qualified people join the forestry department instead of the DNPWC. They do this for better benefits and to avoid remote locations that have poor schools, health facilities and infrastructure.

Various agencies of His Majesty's Government of Nepal address tourism issues in the country's parks. NGOs, explored in the next chapter, also play a role.

## Chapter 4: Role of Non-governmental Organizations and the Private Sector

Chapter 3 discussed some of the efforts of His Majesty's Government (HMG) to manage tourism in parks and conservation areas. HMG, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), conservationists and local people in Nepal are jointly working to manage tourism for the needs of conservation and development (Sharma 1994). HMG recognizes the usefulness of NGO's in conservation and development projects, and has supported many projects initiated by these organizations. This chapter will discuss some of the NGO's in Nepal and their contributions to local people and environment in parks and conservation areas.

Jefferies (1988) states that much of what tourists in Nepal see and participate in is sponsored, supported, and organized by NGO's. He says that tourism and conservation in Nepal should be integrated and pleads for cooperation between the government and the private sector to avert chaos.

During my three months in Nepal, I met with personnel from many NGO's doing conservation and development work in Nepal's parks and conservation areas. The focus of this thesis is on ecotourism, so I was primarily concerned with NGO's focusing on ecotourism and sustainable tourism management. As a result, the coverage of each NGO discussed in this chapter is not equal and some

NGO's are not discussed at all. Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP), Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), and The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) are relatively new and their impact in Nepal still remains to be seen, but they receive significant coverage. This is not because they are seen as more successful in their efforts or more important to Nepal but because they are concerned with the promotion of ecotourism. KEEP, SPCC and KMTNC are not the first to be concerned with tourist impacts and tourist experiences. They are just the latest in a string of efforts that have been going for two decades. Many guides and trekking agencies have been part of efforts to create a better informed trekker.

I will start by describing some of the efforts of international NGO's and they will be placed in alphabetical order. Next I will describe Nepali NGO's in alphabetical order. After describing all of these organizations, I will explore some of the negative repercussions and shortfalls of these efforts.

#### 4.1 The Himalayan Trust

The Himalayan Trust is an NGO established by Sir Edmund Hillary to provide help to the Sherpa people of Nepal. It is a joint program of New Zealand and Canada, and has established numerous

schools and hospitals in addition to providing many Sherpas the chance to further their education in Kathmandu or abroad. It has initiated many projects to aid the Sherpa people and Sagarmatha National Park. It has been involved in national park planning and helped in the training of DNPWC wardens. Work parties from New Zealand build and repair trails bridges and schools every year. The Khunde hospital is funded and staffed by the trust, which also supports reforestation efforts such as nurseries and plantation fencing. The Himalayan Trust has also been involved in monastery restoration projects and the Tengboche cultural center. The Trust continues to have a major positive impact on the Khumbu region (Bezruchka 1985; Brower 1991).

#### 4.2 International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

ICIMOD is an international NGO headquartered in Kathmandu. Its mandate is to promote economically and environmentally sound development of mountain people and their habitats (ICIMOD 1992). It supports research projects that help it fulfill this mandate. It also publishes occasional papers, books, and occasional documents for HMG or businesses such as the Asian Development Bank.

HMG of Nepal has benefited significantly from the presence of ICIMOD in Kathmandu. ICIMOD conducts numerous research projects in Nepal. For example, ICIMOD Occasional paper No. 9, *Mountain Environmental Management in the Arun River Basin of Nepal*, provided a comprehensive survey and analysis of resources in that region and then discussed ways to improve environmental management in the area (Dunsmore 1988).

#### 4.3 The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)

The IUCN is an international non-governmental organization that has been active in Nepal for many years, and recently established a permanent country office in Nepal with the signing of papers on September 13, 1994. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources has a global mandate to promote sustainable development. It aims to establish a link between development and the environment that will result in an improvement in the quality of life of people all over the world. The IUCN was founded in 1948 and is a network of governments, NGO's, and individuals interested in promoting conservation and sustainable use of resources. It brings together states, governmental agencies, and a diverse range of NGO's in a unique world partnership spread over

126 countries. Nepal has benefited from IUCN's presence in Nepal. Nepal's National Conservation Strategy was prepared by HMG of Nepal in collaboration with the IUCN. Nepal is one of over 800 members of the IUCN and is among more than 40 governments that have been assisted by the IUCN in developing National Conservation Strategies. The National Conservation Strategy for Nepal was completed in 1987 and endorsed by HMG as policy in 1988. HMG then requested the IUCN to aid in the implementation of the National Conservation Strategy in Nepal. The National Conservation Strategy is being implemented under the National Planning Commission/IUCN Implementation Project, through a series of programs in the key areas of environmental planning and assessment, national heritage conservation, education and public awareness. The implementation project is coordinated by the National Planning Commission and involves many local NGO's, and all of the ministries and government departments concerned with environmental issues and conservation (Adams 1962; IUCN/HMG 1988; IUCN 1994).

#### 4.4 The UNDP Project for Quality Tourism

The UNDP became involved in Nepal's tourism sector in 1971 with the assistance of the Hotel Management and Tourism Training

Center. The UNDP also supported the Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in Tourism (DWET) program which gives assistance to women entrepreneurs in rural areas. During an interview with Chandra Gurung, director of the Quality Tourism Project, I found out the following.

"Nepal wants tourists to come.....but we need to mitigate tourists' concerns about the environment." Nepal's image has been tarnished owing to bad publicity claiming uncontrolled population expansion, environmental deterioration, political unrest, waste management problems, and air pollution in Kathmandu. Nepal wants a sustainable tourist industry. Dr. Gurung stated that the UNDP project provides a forum by which HMG of Nepal and the private sector can be brought together to work on issues affecting tourism. This partnership between government and the private sector is a new concept that will, it is hoped, allow pressing tourism issues to be addressed. It aims to raise the quality of tourism in Nepal by coordinating government and private efforts for a common goal. Under this project HMG and the tourism industry in Nepal were working together to design three pilot projects: One project focuses on village tourism with an emphasis on human resources development. Another focuses on providing a model for environmentally sensitive tourism in the Kathmandu Valley. The site for this project is Swayambunath, and the project will focus on a garbage disposal system, sanitation and toilet management, income-generating

activities, and the posting of signs. The third project will focus on promoting and marketing Nepal to the international tourist market. The UNDP hopes that the successful implementation of this project will lead to future collaboration between the government and the private sector on issues of joint concern to quality tourism (Gurung, C., personal communication 1994a).

#### 4.5 Mountain Institute

The Mountain Institute (Formerly Woodland's Mountain Institute) is a non-profit educational and scientific international NGO based in West Virginia. It receives financial support from private individuals, and international, governmental and research agencies in North America and Europe. The Mountain Institute helped establish the Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area and continues its involvement with this project through an agreement with the DNPWC and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. The project also collaborates with the Royal Nepal Academy and the KMTNC. The Mountain Institute is headquartered in the United States, but also operates an office in Kathmandu, across the street from the Nepal Mountaineering Association. Chapter 3 describes the MBNPICA, which has been Mountain Institute's primary focus in Nepal. Mountain Institute provided the initiative, research, trained

personnel, funding and commitment to help make the MBNPCHA a reality. The involvement of the Mountain Institute is an example of the vital contributions that NGO's make towards conservation and community development in Nepal.

#### 4.6 Himalayan Rescue Association

The Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) is a non-profit NGO that operates trekkers' aid posts in the Khumbu and Manang regions, in addition to an office in Kathmandu, near the Department of Immigration. It publishes pamphlets on acute mountain sickness (AMS) and other altitude-related problems. Education provided by HRA has been partially responsible for a decrease in deaths of trekkers due to altitude illness. It relies on donations of supplies, funds, and staffing. The doctors and medical personnel at the aid posts have altitude chambers, gamow bags (portable pressure chambers), and medication for altitude sickness, in addition to standard first aid and medical supplies. The HRA not only saves lives, but helps people better enjoy their time in the mountains by teaching them how to avoid and also deal with altitude sickness. HRA also provides some health care to Nepali's in the vicinity of their aid posts. This is good for locals, tourists and the tourism industry in Nepal (Brower, personal communication 1995).

#### 4.7 The Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP)

It is environmental organizations like KEEP that are instrumental in answering the needs of conservation in the country. *Lord Hunt, Leader of the 1953 British Everest Expedition (KEEP 1994).*

KEEP is very cost-effective and indeed inspired approach to raising environmental awareness amongst visitors. It also has the great advantage of involving local people in its organization and administration. *Chris Bonington (KEEP 1994)*

Some insight to KEEP can be gained by looking at the messages of two of its T-shirts: "Nepal is here to change you. Not for you to change Nepal." "To help minimize the impact of tourism on the environment and culture through education, research, practical conservation and social welfare - KEEP."

The idea for KEEP first started in 1990 when Jo Chitanden from the United Kingdom informed Johnnie Woods (UK) that his fiancée had died in a trekking accident in the Khumbu. She had slipped several thousand feet down a ridge. Jo and Johnnie realized the need to provide information to other trekkers before their departure into the mountains. There were several people in Nepal around this time who were concerned with the negative effects of tourism on local communities and the environment. They felt that unless the cultural and natural heritage of Nepal are conserved, the tourism industry will

suffer. It was found that a lack of sensitivity on the part of travelers, their Nepalese support staff, government officials, and managers of travel and trekking agencies was a major reason for environmental and cultural degradation. It was also recognized that the management of tourism and the environment is a monumental task for government, requiring a large amount of resources and trained people. Therefore, if tourism is to be sustainable, responsibilities need to be shared by all people concerned (Gurung C. 1994)

Jo and Johnnie of the UK with the help of Partemba Sherpa, three times Everest summitter; Wendy Brewer Lama, environmental writer and trek leader; Steve Power, journalist and trek leader; and Chandra Gurung, former director of ACAP and current Project Coordinator for the UNDP Establishing a Partnership for Quality Tourism Project; decided to establish a trekkers' information center. As a result, the Kathmandu Environmental Education Project was started in August 1992. KEEP is an NGO officially recognized in UK and Nepal. It is run by an all volunteer Board of Directors and has hired three full time staff: Yogendra Kayastha is the Executive Director and D.B. Gurung and D.K. Shah are support staff (Gurung C. 1994).

Its main source of support comes from membership fees, donations and sales. It also receives support through the NGO Environmental Management Program (NEMP) with the IUCN and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as

part of the National Conservation Strategy for Nepal Implementation Program (Kayastha, personal communication 1994; KEEP 1994).

The main objectives of KEEP are: 1.) To teach visitors to Nepal how to respect local customs and help preserve both the culture and the environment for future visitors and for the Nepalese themselves; 2.) To provide free information about safe and enjoyable trekking; 3.) To provide eco-trekking workshops and training for managers, sirdars, and support staff; 4.) To create awareness and confidence among Nepalese about their unique cultures and rich natural heritage; 5.) To create a network among those working in the tourism industry, for the protection of Nepal's environment and culture; and 6.) To help the sustainable development of Nepal through the education of tourists and trekkers (Gurung 1994, Kayastha, personal communication 1994).

#### The Activities of KEEP

Since its creation in August 1992, KEEP has been involved in several activities. It has established a Traveler's Information Center and Green-Keepers Coffee shop in Kathmandu. The staff is friendly and gives free information on safety, trekking, culture and the environment to visitors. The center runs a small shop which sells T-shirts, maps, post cards, iodine tablets, biodegradable soaps and shampoos and handbooks. The center also has a small library and a

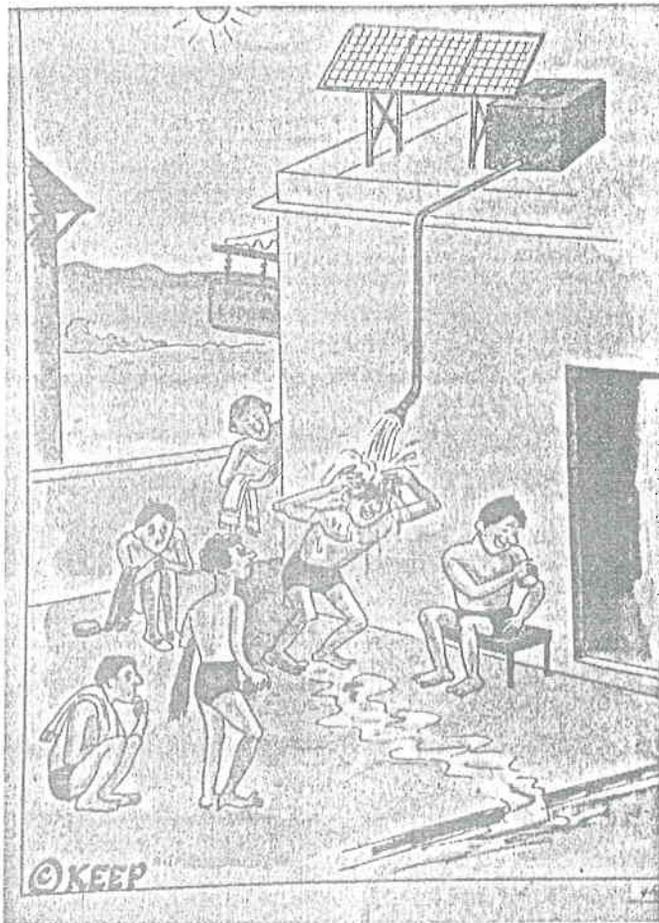


Figure 6. KEEP cartoon. KEEP uses cartoons to convey environmental information to trekkers. This cartoon encourages trekkers to take a shower with water heated by solar energy, kerosene or fuel sources other than wood. Photo by B.R. Sheedy.

coffee shop where travelers can read, socialize and exchange ideas and experiences (Lama 1992; KEEP 1994).

Furthermore, in its goal to educate travelers and locals, KEEP has organized a weekly lecture series with issues ranging from tourism, conservation, development, and travel, to cultural issues and current affairs. At one lecture in the Fall of 1993, Ram Hari Joshi the Minister of Tourism attended, thus showing his support for KEEP (KEEP 1994).

Also, KEEP has been conducting English Training Courses and Altitude Sickness Courses for trekking staff so that they can better communicate with their clients, and identify altitude related illness in themselves and their clients (Kayastha, personal communication 1994).

Another vital training opportunity provided by KEEP is the Eco-trekking workshop. KEEP designed this course to provide training to managers, trekking leaders and sirdars, kitchen staff, wardens, and rangers of national parks. It has been held many times in collaboration with national parks and government agencies. The workshop strives to educate field staff on the principles of responsible "ecotourism" and how to minimize the negative effects of tourism on various cultures and the environment, while maximizing the positive benefits to the local community. The third eco-trekking workshop was sponsored by the MBNP/PCA Project, KEEP and the

Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN) with support from KMTNC. It was held in Kathmandu on September 25-26, 1993, and over 100 people participated including 35 rangers and game scouts from Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area, Sagarmatha National Park, Langtang National Park, Rara National Park, and Shey Phoksundo National Park. Others included trekking managers, guides and cooks, university students, and representatives from environmental NGO's (Gurung 1994; KEEP 1994).

The participants agreed on solutions to many environmental and social issues facing tourism and parks in Nepal.<sup>6</sup> KEEP has been working to educate FITS's - Free Independent Travelers, but is now working to increase the education of group travelers and their guides through efforts such as the eco-trekking workshop. For the Eco-trekking workshop to be successful, it requires the support of trekkers, trekking agents and their staff. An Eco-Trekking Workshop Declaration was made that will have a major impact if fully supported by trekking agencies (Appendix D) (KEEP 1994).

Because of its success KEEP has been asked twice to provide consulting. After successfully sponsoring the first eco-trekking workshop in Nepal, the WWF and the Tourism Department of Bhutan asked the eco-trekking organizers to provide a similar workshop in Bhutan (Gurung 1994). The WWF and the SPCC also asked KEEP to help set up an information Center at Lukla (Kayastha, personal communication 1994).

#### 4.8 King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC)

The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation is striving to demonstrate that non-governmental organizations are viable in third world countries and that "good ecology is good economics and visa versa" (KMTNC 1993b)

The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) is a not-for-profit NGO dedicated to conserving, preserving and managing nature and natural resources in Nepal with a view to improving the quality of human life. "After all, what is conservation if not for the people? It must be viewed only as a means, the end being the improvement of the quality of our existence." (His Royal Highness, Prince Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah 1993b) KMTNC was created in October 1982 by the KMTNC Act. It is named after the late King Mahendra, who helped establish many of Nepal's protected areas. KMTNC is chaired by Prince Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, brother of the king, and operates under a governing board of trustees comprised of people from diverse fields including four non-Nepalese members. The KMTNC is entirely funded by in-country and foreign charitable donations and receives no funding from HMG of Nepal. The KMTNC is working to balance the needs of environmental conservation and local needs in an ecologically fragile and underdeveloped country.

Aims and Objectives of the KMTNC:

1. Applied ecological research to formulate sound management plans.
2. Implementation of soil and water conservation programs.
3. Reforestation.
4. Development and management of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves.
5. Conservation of flora and fauna.
6. Propagation of endangered species.
7. Development and distribution of small and cost-effective alternate sources of energy to minimize fuel wood consumption.
8. Conservation education.
9. Restoration of Nepal's ancient monuments, temples and monasteries in parks and reserves and other protected areas.
10. Involvement of local people in conservation of Nepal's natural and cultural heritage.
11. Supporting Nepal's National Conservation Strategy along the guidelines provided by the World Conservation Strategy.
12. Assisting and complementing the efforts of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and foreign agencies engaged in the field of nature conservation.

(KMTNC 1993b)

## Ongoing Projects of the KMTNC:

### 1. Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP)

This is the oldest and most demanding project that the KMTNC has been involved with. ACAP is jointly funded by the World Wildlife Fund, the KMTNC's United Kingdom Chapter, Netherlands Development organization and other organizations. This project was discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 (Rana 1990, KMTNC 1993b).

### 2. Nepal Conservation and Research Training Center (NCRTC)

The NCRTC was established in 1989 for the purpose of furthering research on wildlife management and ecology as well as for training people in the area of parks and natural resources management. Training courses are conducted for foresters, wildlife personnel, extension workers, university students, and local farmers. The center has conducted numerous research projects on flora and fauna in Nepal and has a herbarium that serves as an information center. Fuel wood and fodder needs of local people are also addressed through buffer-zone reforestation programs.

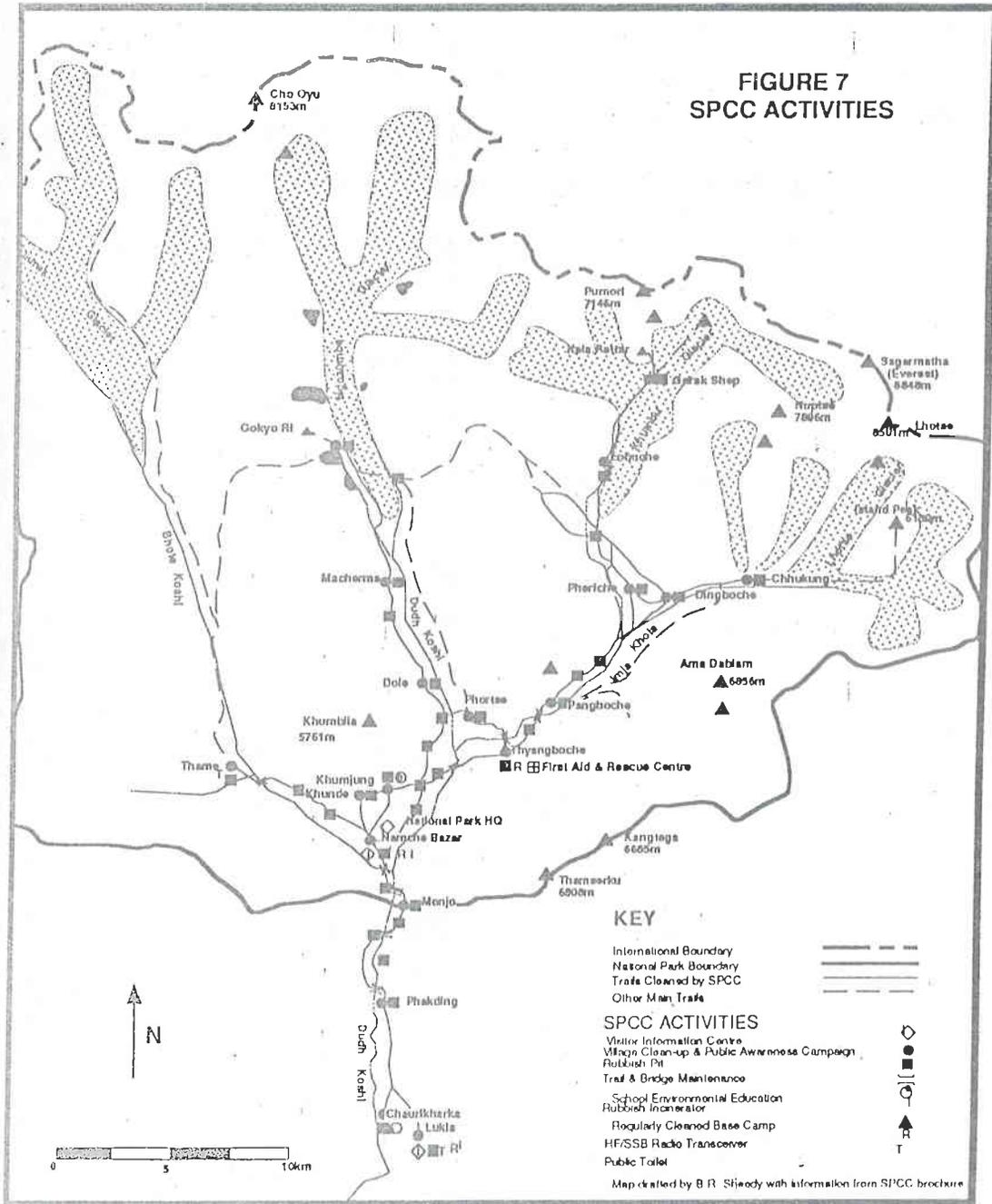
### 3. Arun III: Management of Basinwide Environmental Impacts Study

The KMTNC was commissioned to undertake this study to address environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the Arun III hydroelectric project. The road site and dam site were already chosen and the team did not have the opportunity to try and change these decisions. However, the study could outline potential problems and opportunities and allow HMG to develop initiatives to maximize the project benefits for local people. The study aimed to balance conservation of natural resources with development or economic interests. Much of the study discussed mountain tourism in Nepal and how to direct tourism in the project area (KMTNC 1991).

#### 4.9 The Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee and the World Wildlife Fund

The SPCC was created in July 1991 with the help of the WWF Nepal Programme, the support of the local community, and the involvement of DNPWC. The SPCC is based in Khumbu and the entire committee is comprised of Sherpa people. It is chaired by the Rimpoche of Tengboche Monastery, but its mission was first articulated by Mingma Norbu Sherpa. The WWF initially funded the

**FIGURE 7  
SPCC ACTIVITIES**



SPCC as a pilot project until the SPCC could find alternative funding sources. On December 13, 1993 a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, SPCC and the WWF Nepal Programme at the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. The SPCC was granted Rs 3 million for the fiscal year 1993/1994. It was argued that some of the money generated from peak fees of the region, should be returned to the region (*Rising Nepal*, Dec. 13, 1993).

New rules will allow only one team to climb Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) on any one route while the expedition fee for a team will be increased from \$10,000 dollars to \$50,000 dollars for a five-person team. Up to two more expedition members can be added at \$10,000 dollars per member, but the maximum size of an expedition is seven. This is one way of restricting environmental impact of climbing groups, since fewer groups will climb the mountain each year (*Rising Nepal*, Dec. 13, 1993).

The Rs 3 million grant was an effort to take some of this money from peak fees, and put it back into the region for community projects and conservation efforts. Ngwang Tenzin Jangpo, the abbot at Tengboche Monastery, says that tourism is the economic mainstay of the region and that "for the people here, keeping the place off limits to tourists would mean the end of the world." Consequently, he supported the need for cleanup efforts in the region. He stated "a lot of foreigners showed interest to help us". . . "but how could we ask

others to do this? Clearly this was our responsibility. It had to come from within" (Upadhyay 1994).

Khumbu and other areas in Nepal have become known for uncontrolled development, and popular trekking routes have been degraded. The Everest and Annapurna Treks have been called "toilet paper treks" by some while Mt. Everest has been called "the highest garbage dump on Earth."

The growth of tourism has led to a greater concern for the environment and local people. The SPCC was established for these purposes. Concern for the Everest region led to the establishment of Sagarmatha National Park in 1976 and its declaration as a world heritage site in 1980. Tourism has allowed the Sherpa people to prosper, and it has replaced trade as a major component of the Khumbu economy. By 1985 more than 65% of all Khumbu households had direct income from tourism. Sherpas became active in mountaineering and tourism as it first started in the region and have now established several different types of enterprises. In 1967 the first shop ever set up specifically for tourists opened in Namche, and by 1991 there were 21 such shops in Namche and eight elsewhere along the trail to Mt. Everest. Also, the first Sherpa lodge was opened in Namche in 1971, and by 1991 there were 83 lodges. Lodges are now all over the region. This has enabled the development of individual trekking, which now accounts for roughly half of all the trekking in the Khumbu (Stevens 1993; Upadhyay 1994a).

Tourism development in the region has been demand-led and has been shaped by Sherpas themselves with little help from the government. New Zealand provided some help in early efforts to enhance tourism in the region, but local Sherpas have not only taken over the tourist trade in Khumbu; Sherpas also manage Kathmandu-based trekking agencies and work as their office staff (Upadhyay 1994a).

Tourism has provided numerous opportunities for Sherpas in the region to improve their income, improve their lifestyles, and make large sums of money available. However, there is still widespread poverty, and the wealth has not been spread equally. The SPCC is a grass roots organization, and its success will depend largely on its ability to meet both the needs of local people and the growing needs of tourists. There are many problems SPCC must deal with: building and firewood supply, the size and siting of new lodges, disparity between rich and poor, and the role of women in a changing society, in addition to many environmental problems (Adams 1992).

Many people, including locals, have become concerned with the social, cultural and environmental effects of tourism. The DNPWC has worked to preserve the region's diversity of flora and fauna, but because of a limited budget and staff it cannot adequately cope with rising numbers of tourists in this fragile, high mountain ecosystem. As visitor numbers continue to rise, so do associated management problems. Mingma Norbu Sherpa saw the need for the SPCC and helped to create it. The Rimpoche of Tengboche Monastery provided

further support and inspiration. The SPCC is looking after the park by filling in the cracks of the existing management structure. The SPCC has programs for latrine construction, trail maintenance, health, hygiene and lodge management courses, improving community water supplies, and environmental and cultural education classes in schools, in addition to informational campaigns for first aid and altitude sickness.

The main concerns of the SPCC are:

1. Environmental Conservation
2. Cultural Conservation
3. Community Services
4. Sustainable Development of Tourism

Activities of SPCC:

Since its creation in July 1991. SPCC has been involved in several activities. They are:

## 1. Traveler's Information Centers

The SPCC operates information centers at Lukla and Namche Bazaar. The centers provide free information to tourists on how to respect both the culture and the environment, in addition to providing information on mountain safety and altitude sickness. Tourists are given information on how to minimize their impact on the local culture and the environment.

Almost all of the information provided at the SPCC information centers is the same as at KEEP since KEEP helped set up the SPCC information centers. The SPCC information centers also sell T-shirts, maps, iodine tablets, bio-degradable soaps and shampoos, post cards and informational handbooks. Logos adorning the walls of the information center in Namche Bazaar give an idea on the type of information distributed. A few of those logos are: "The Himalayas may change you. Please Don't change them;" "Take only photographs, leave only footprints;" "Burn or Bury toilet paper;" "Carry it in. Carry it out;" "Please use lodges that use kerosene;" "Drink iodine treated water, not mineral water;" and "We have to treat the mountains with the love and respect they deserve - Chris Bonington."

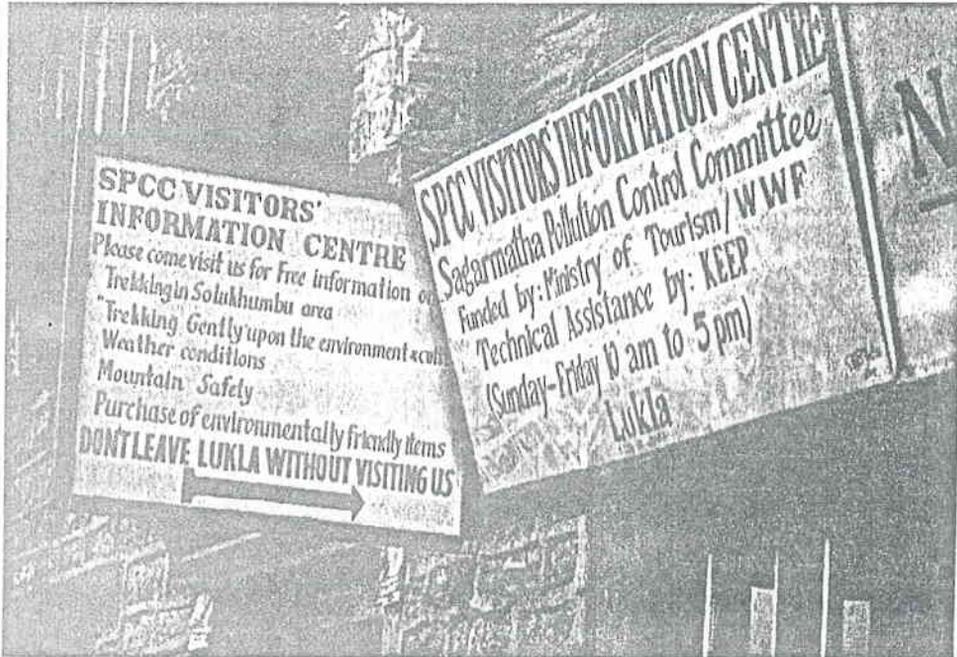


Figure 8. SPCC Visitor's Centre. The SPCC operates visitor centres in Lukla and Namche Bazaar. Photo by B.R. Sheedy.



Figure 9. SPCC can crusher. The SPCC collects cans and bottles in a lot next to the information center in Namche Bazaar. The cans are then crushed with a can crusher before being sent back to Kathmandu.

## 2. Waste Management

The SPCC organizes the disposal of waste in the region. It has public information campaigns urging people to take out what they bring in.<sup>7</sup> It deals with existing trash in the following way: "separate, collect, gather, consolidate, recycle, detoxify." As part of the Sagarmatha Mountain Area Trash Management System, an incinerator was built at Lukla in order to reduce the amount of trash. The Himalayan Adventure trust of Japan (HAT-J) donated the incinerator at a cost of Rs 2 million. It went into operation on April 20, 1994 (*Post Reporter*, May 6, 1994)

The disposal of beer and soda bottles has also been a major problem and the SPCC recently received assurance from Asian Airlines that its helicopters flying into the Khumbu would bring back bottles on their return to Kathmandu. The service would be provided free of cost (*Post Reporter*, May 6, 1994).

## 3. Lodge Owners' Training Workshop

In 1994, sixty-three participants took part in the training organized by the SPCC, WWF and HMTTC (Hotel Management and Tourism Training Center) in Lukla. Another training workshop was also organized in Namche.

#### 4. Conservation Education Program.

The SPCC has created lesson plans for environmental education in local schools.

#### 5. Other SPCC activities:

Village	Activity
Lobuche	Solar public toilet 2 rubbish pits
Thami	Trail maintenance program 3 public toilets 3 rubbish pits Clean-up and public awareness campaign
Namche Bazaar	Visitor information center VHF radio transmitter/receiver Rubbish incinerator (financed by AEIE (France)) Clean-up and public awareness campaign Solar public toilet Market area enlargement Litter bins 10 rubbish bins Can crusher (AEIE)
Chaurikharka	School environmental education classes
Base Camps	Regular clean-up campaigns Expeditions leave a deposit that is returned when their rubbish is removed Twice yearly checks on base camps
Tengboche	First aid and rescue center VHF radio transmitter/receiver 2 rubbish pits
Khumjung	School environmental education classes Cleanup and public awareness campaign 3 rubbish pits

Lukla	Visitor Information Center VHF radio transmitter/receiver Rubbish incinerator (Financed by HAT-J) Lodge Owners Training Workshops Public toilet Clean-up and public awareness campaign 4 rubbish pits Can crusher (HAT-J)
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(KEEP 1994)

#### 4.10 Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA)

I am not sure if the NMA is an NGO, but it does seem to be taking initiative for environmental projects and is conducting more guide training programs. HMG granted the NMA powers to make rules and regulate climbing in Nepal. All people desiring to climb trekking peaks in Nepal must register with the NMA. The NMA has completed the first phase of a Campsite Management Pilot Project Feasibility Study that focuses on pollution prevention and community involvement. The project team says that tourism has created three major problems:

1. Overcrowding of campsites and littering along trails thus leading to sanitation problems.
2. Increased consumption of firewood by trekkers and lodge owners, thereby accelerating deforestation.

### 3. Erosion of indigenous socio-cultural structures and traditions.

(Heintz 1994)

This project's adherents decided to act early in dealing with the impacts of climbing and trekking in Langtang National Park. The NMA has planned the construction of public toilets, porter's sheds and accommodation, kitchen sheds and water supply improvements.<sup>8</sup> It is doing this in anticipation of a growing number of trekkers in Nepal and the spill-over effect from the most popular parks into Langtang.

The NMA created its Basic Mountaineering Training Courses for aspiring Nepali guides and is now working to create the model campsite in Langtang. The NMA is working to involve locals so the project is community-oriented and community-built and operated, thereby giving locals a sense of commitment to preserving the environment that will sustain their needs in the face of increasing pressures of tourism (Parbat 1994).

One member of the study team for the Langtang National Park Campsite Management Pilot Project looked at the NMA mountaineering curriculum and concluded that the Slovenian instruction and class book for the NMA course looked comprehensive in the hard skills such as rope handling, carries, litters, first aid, snow travel, and so on. However, only one page dealt with environmental protection. The Nepali students of the NMA course could be the best

resource for instilling a sound land ethic in tourists and local communities. They certainly benefit from learning hard skills taught on NMA courses, but could even benefit more from learning minimum impact techniques for back country living. These guides could have a major ripple effect and could combine local environmental practices with other practices.

#### 4.11 Other NGOs

A few other NGOs have been active in projects in the Khumbu. UNESCO funded a small hydroelectric installation in Namche and Cultural Survival is involved in a cooperative effort to build a cultural center at the Tengboche monastery. The American Himalayan Foundation, in addition to the Himalayan Trust, provides scholarships to some Khumbu students. Also, Peace Corps volunteers have worked on village water systems, small hydro-electric facilities, and composting toilets in the Khumbu area (Brower 1991).

UNESCO and the World Bank have also been involved in tourism development. UNESCO's involvement has been more indirect and comes mostly in the form of research. The World Bank has lent aid to tourism development by helping finance infrastructure such as roads, water supplies, hotels, and communications.

Furthermore, Nepal has excelled at attracting foreign aid donors; this is one of Nepal's largest sources of revenue. It gets donations from more than eighteen bilateral and twenty multilateral sources. Also, the trend has been for continued expansion of aid and Nepal is heavily dependent upon this aid. It seeks aid for economic development and has used aid to improve transportation and communication, support industry, improve agriculture, and for social services. Almost all of the highways, communication networks, agricultural projects, and rural development projects in Nepal, are the result of foreign aid. This improved infrastructure has enabled the expansion of tourism (Timilsina 1986).

#### **4.12 Role of Business and the Private Sector**

The trekking agents' association of Nepal, trekking and rafting companies and the western press disseminate travel information that colors the perceptions of tourists visiting Nepal, and effects their actions. The trekkers I questioned who did receive environmental information, primarily obtained it from published material gathered prior to their trip. Consequently, trekkers and the environment of Nepal would benefit greatly if the government and NGO's published more information on environmentally sensitive trekking. Lodge owners and tea house owners can also do many things to minimize

the impacts of tourism on the environment. They could use kerosene as opposed to wood when preparing tea or food for tourists. Most tourists will not mind the extra cost. However, there are culinary and cultural reasons for using wood over kerosene. These issues need to be addressed (Brower, personal communication 1995). The DNPWC is supporting a project to provide kerosene and stoves to people in the Khumbu area through a few depots strategically located in the region. Lodge owners could also properly site and maintain restrooms, and encourage trekkers to drink iodine treated water as opposed to selling them bottled water. Local people have a vested interest in park resources and should be encouraged to become teachers of environmental information while also practicing what they preach.

#### 4.13 Conclusion:

NGO's are an important component of Nepal's National Conservation Strategy. His Majesty's Government has been supportive of NGO action and has welcomed NGO and private sector initiatives for conservation and development projects (HMG/IUCN 1988). HMG benefits from the expertise, research, organization, planning and funding NGO's bring with them. HMG has limited resources, and conservation efforts in Nepal would suffer without NGO support (IUCN/HMG 1988). Many NGO's in Nepal have used

tourism as a component of conservation and development programs, thus showing support for ecotourism and sustainable tourism management. Nepal's National Conservation Strategy states that community development, tourism, research, and sustainable development programs in Nepal benefit from organizations like the IUCN, ICIMOD, KMTNC and other NGO's mentioned in this chapter (IUCN/HMG 1988).

Despite all of the good intentions of these NGO's, their actions can have negative repercussions. For example, many try to include locals in project design and implementation. However, how much say do locals really have in the decision making? If they are only allowed input on minor details then resentment could occur. Also, locals just cannot be expected to always stop what they are doing to participate in some NGO project assumed to be more worthy of their time.

Many of these NGO's are working from a top-down development approach. They come in with fairly firm ideas and try to convince locals of the merits of the project. At the same time they are trying to involve locals in minor decisions to engender support and convince them in thinking that everything was their idea to begin with. More projects need to start from the bottom-up. They need to start out as grass-roots in nature if they are to be successful. For example, many of the Himalayan Trust Projects are the response to

local demands. Locals stated projects that they needed and the Himalayan Trust helped support these projects (Brower 1991, 1994).

Another problem is that some of the smaller NGO's spend a large amount of time trying to maintain the infrastructure of their organizations, thus leaving less time for project design and implementation. Large international organizations have fewer problems with maintaining their offices, but are sometimes as slow as many bureaucracies, as a result of numerous rules and procedures.

Some NGO's, like KEEP, HRA, and the NMA seem to be primarily concerned with tourists in their efforts and could possibly expand their programs to benefit more locals. Furthermore, some NGO's actively publicize how much they are including local peoples, when in reality very little true inclusion may be occurring. How much are locals really involved in ACAP and MBNP/CA?

NGO's also suffer from a lack of coordination, and some projects are duplicated because of ineffective communication. KEEP and SPCC have many of the same goals and KEEP helped SPCC in the development of information centers. They seem to be sharing some of their educational and informational materials. However, KEEP and the HRA jointly ran a tourist information center in Kathmandu three years ago, but are now in separate buildings just a few hundred meters from each other. They had a falling out and now everyone suffers. Offices and information centers are duplicated and now many visitors only visit one or the other. This is usually because they do not know

about the other organization or cannot find the office. Also, neither KEEP nor HRA personnel told me about the fact that another information center existed a short distance away, that provided more environmental or health information. They do not necessarily have to be in the same building, but efforts could be better coordinated. Also KMTNC could cooperate with other NGOs in Kathmandu to better distribute environmental information for ACAP (Kayastha, personal communication 1994).

Smaller NGO's are often focused on just one project or area and often fail to address the bigger picture. They could benefit from working more closely with government departments or larger projects. This chapter discussed several NGO's operating in Nepal and projects initiated by these NGO's. All of these NGO's have good intentions and seem to be doing some good work, but the negative repercussions of their actions also need to be considered.

## Chapter 5: Case Study - Sagarmatha National Park

This chapter will analyze and discuss the results of a questionnaire conducted in the Everest region. The questionnaire results provide an understanding of actual and perceived problems of ecotourism in Nepal. The questionnaire documents trekkers' perceptions of environmental problems in the Everest region, their observations of what is being done and what they think should be done. A copy of the questionnaire and a summary of the results is in appendix A and B.

### 5.1 Major objectives of the questionnaire

I chose to conduct a questionnaire to obtain basic statistical information on the background of some trekkers in the region. From this, a trekker profile can be constructed. A better understanding of tourists as a user group was obtained by asking some demographic questions.<sup>9</sup>

The use of a questionnaire in this situation was practical since all of the respondents were from developed countries and familiar with this sort of data collection.<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire was only in English which affects the results of this questionnaire. Because of time constraints and a lack of translators, I was only able to conduct the

survey in English. This places great limitations on how this data is interpreted. Many analyses show a large number of Asian visitors to Nepal but most of these visitors do not trek. However, many Japanese participate in trekking (MOT 1993). Japanese and other Asian visitors were left out of the survey because of language barriers. Therefore, this survey samples only one component of the tourist traffic in Khumbu. This needs to be taken into account when viewing this data. An effort was made to get as many trekkers who spoke English as a second language to fill out the questionnaire. An effort was also made to get an equal proportion of individual and group trekkers to fill out the questionnaire.

The questionnaire had several objectives which will now be discussed. The first was to compile basic information on sex, nationality, occupation and age so as to develop a profile of trekkers in the region.

Secondly, by understanding what the major attractants for tourists are then appropriate management steps can be initiated. The questionnaire asks respondents to rate "mountains, challenge/adventure, wildlife and culture/villages" on a scale according to the degree each attracted them to the area.<sup>11</sup>

Thirdly, several questions were asked in order to assess the environmental awareness of trekkers. These questions provided vital information for assessing governmental and NGO programs for tourist management. These questions focus more on trekker's

perceptions. They were asked how they viewed environmental problems, conservation efforts in the area, the condition of trails, litter, the number of tourists, and environmental information programs. These questions made it possible to assess how aware trekkers are of the impact they have on the environment and local cultures, and what they perceive to be major environmental problems and problems for tourism management in the area. They were also asked what they perceived to be positive and negative effects of tourism in Nepal. Finally, they were asked for suggestions on how to improve the management of the area and, how to improve information distribution. Almost all of the officials interviewed from NGO's and HMG agreed that the distribution of environmental information could be improved. Organizations such as KEEP and the SPCC were receptive to suggestions on how to improve the distribution of information to trekkers.

Fourthly, questions to assess the satisfaction of trekkers were asked. As mentioned earlier, tourism is a major industry in Nepal and is vital to the local and national economy. In 1993, 293,567 tourists visited Nepal and 69,619 people went trekking. Trekking in 1993 represented only 23.7% of the tourism in Nepal. This places it in a minor role both in terms of the number of participants and the amount of income generated. However, it does spread tourism and its positive and negative effects farther into more peripheral regions (Zurick 1992). Questions were asked to find out the satisfaction of

trekkers in regard to food, accommodation and prices. This information can be used to see areas of concern for trekking lodges. For example, the need for better sanitation and hygiene was a frequent comment among trekkers. Consequently, these comments should alert lodge owners that this is a concern that needs to be addressed. A few questions required longer comments; a selection of some of these is included for each question.

Fifthly, several questions were asked to gain some practical details about trekkers. Did they hire guides or porters? How long are they trekking? How much time are they spending in Nepal total? How much money are they spending per day? Have they been to Nepal before? Very little data exists on the economic impact of trekkers. This survey shows the economic contribution of individual trekkers' to the region.

## 5.2 Sampling technique

Five hundred questionnaires were distributed during my trek in the Everest region in October and November of 1994.<sup>12</sup> Four-hundred and twenty out of five hundred were satisfactorily completed and returned. Individual trekkers were solicited at lodges but group trekkers were sometimes difficult to find. I tried to get as many group

trekkers as possible but the results of my questionnaire may be slightly skewed because of this sampling problem.

### 5.3 Survey results

All of the questionnaires were numbered in the upper right hand corner for future reference. The results for the closed, check-the-right-box, questions were relatively quick to compile. Open-ended responses to some questions allowed for more thoughtful investigation of trekkers' ideas and feelings. These are printed in the appendix. The responses of the questionnaire will be discussed in the following categories:

1. Trekker demographics
2. Trekker motivations
3. Trekker environmental awareness
4. Trekker satisfaction
5. Trekker practical details

### 5.3a Trekker demographics

Basic demographic data was collected on the sex, age, nationality, and profession of trekkers. The results are printed in Tables 1,2,3, and 4 in appendix A. Of the trekkers questioned, 64% were male and 36% were female. Table 2 shows the respondents by age. Of the trekkers' questioned 20% were age 18-25, 38% were age 26-33, 18% were age 34-41, 13% were age 42-49, 7% were age 50-57, 3% were age 58-65 and 1% were 66 years old or older.

Table 3 shows the nation of origin for respondents. It was found that 24% were from Britain, 8% were from Canada, 24% were from the U.S.A., 12% were from Australia or New Zealand, 12% were from Germany, 3% were from Switzerland, 8% were from Sweden or Denmark, 1% were from Israel, 4% were from Belgium or the Netherlands, 1% were from France, 1% were from Czechoslovakia, 1% were from Italy or Spain and 1% were from other nations. Many Asians, especially Japanese, also trek but are not represented in the survey results because of the English language bias. Brower (1991) found that the United States provides the highest proportion of visitors to the Khumbu each year, while Japan was a close second. A quarter to a third of the trekkers came from western and eastern Europe. Furthermore, Indian tourists are the most numerous of Nepal's foreign visitors, but represent only a small portion of the trekkers visiting Sagarmatha National Park (Brower 1991).

The occupations of trekkers is shown in Table 4. Twenty-eight percent are employed in business, 18% are in service positions, 10% are students, 10% are teachers, 9% work as engineers, 8% are in the medical field, 5% are in environmental jobs, 5% are in physical science or computer programming jobs, 3% work as artists (artists, musicians, actors, photographers), 3% are unemployed and 1% are retired.

The typical respondent was a 26-33 year old male from Britain or the United States who is employed in either business or a service profession.

### 5.3b Trekker Motivations

Question 6 aimed to find out what motivates trekkers coming to the Everest region. The results are in Table 5 of appendix A. Trekkers rated mountains, adventure/challenge, wildlife and culture. A definite pattern emerged and 73% chose mountains as the number one attraction to the area. Challenge and adventure was the second most popular attraction with culture coming in a close third. Wildlife was the least popular choice with 71% of the respondents.

Mountains are the number one attractant for tourists in the Everest region. Consequently, it should be no surprise that the majority of the trekkers questioned expressed concern about environmental degradation of the area.

### 5.3c Trekker environmental awareness

Several questions were asked to see if trekkers received environmental information, and where they got this information. Trekkers were also asked what they perceived to be environmental problems in the area, and what suggestions they had for improving the management of the area, and the distribution of environmental information. The responses to these questions can be found in Tables 23-31 in appendix A.

HMG and NGO's have undertaken various projects in the region. The goal of these questions was to see if trekkers noticed any of these efforts, and what they think still needs to be done.

Table 23 shows that 63% of the trekkers visiting the region had received some sort of environmental information before their trek began. According to Table 24, 36% of the respondents received environmental information from guidebooks. The "Lonely Planet" guide was one of the most popular guides among trekkers in the Everest region (Wheeler 1993). The next largest source of environmental information was trekking agencies. Eighteen percent of the respondents said they received environmental information

from agencies. The immigration office informed 11% of the respondents, and 8% of the respondents stated that they received environmental knowledge from the back of their trekking permit. Appendix E contains the environmental information printed on the back of many but not all trekking permits. Another 11% said they received environmental information from KEEP.

Trekkers had numerous suggestions for improving the distribution of environmental information in the area. These suggestions are printed in Appendix A. Some of the most common suggestions were to give all people environmental information when they get their permit at the Department of Immigration. Another was to put posters and brochures in all of the places that tourists often have to go to. For example, the airport, police check posts, park entry points, park offices, the immigration office and lodges. Education programs for local people were also highly recommended.

Eighty-seven percent of the trekkers in the region said they were aware of some environmental problems. The majority of the respondents listed refuse or litter as the number one problem (Tables 25,26,27). Deforestation and sewage were the next two largest concerns (Tables 26). Consequently, when respondents were asked to give suggestions for improving the management of the area they were mostly concerned with trash disposal systems, the encouragement of the use of fuels other than wood, improving sanitation standards and improvement in the disposal of sewage. They also stressed

information awareness campaigns, and education for both trekkers and locals. A common suggestion was to return more money generated by fees in the region, back to the region, and that a NGO should run local conservation efforts.

Trekkers were asked if they perceived littering to be a problem and 83% of the respondents said it is a problem (Table 27). Most trekkers disposed of their litter by burning it, putting it in SPCC rubbish bins, SPCC rubbish pits, or by carrying it out. Almost every respondent commented favorably in regard to the SPCC rubbish bins, and just wished that there were more of them.

Of the respondents surveyed, 68% said that they were aware of conservation efforts in the area (Table 29). Tree planting and the SPCC rubbish bins were the most visible conservation efforts cited. SPCC information campaigns, alternative energy projects, water projects, trail projects, Hillary projects, latrines, battery collection programs, use of kerosene, environmental information signs, back boilers, park literature, recycling bins and the existence of two incinerators (one in Lukla and one in Namche) were also noticed (Table 30).

Trekkers were also asked what type of water they drink (Table 31). Eighteen percent of the trekkers in the Everest region said they used bottled water. If this 18% of the annual 12,500 trekkers to the region drank bottled water for two weeks, then 63,000 plastic bottles would be left in the region. They drank bottled water because they feared getting sick. These plastic bottles can not be recycled in Nepal

and do not get carried out of the region. The average trekker needs at least three liters of water a day and these water bottles are 1.5 liters. KEEP and SPCC have been encouraging people to drink boiled or iodine treated water in response to this concern. Both KEEP and the SPCC sell iodine to trekkers. Most of the trekkers surveyed drank boiled water or treated their water with iodine. By using iodine, less fuel is used to boil water, and less plastic water bottles are discarded.

#### 5.3d Trekker satisfaction

Several questions were asked to judge trekker satisfaction (Tables 6-22). Eighty-three percent of the respondents stayed in tea houses or lodges and most were quite satisfied (Tables 6&7). Seventy percent also ate in these establishments and were happy with the service (Tables 8&9). The condition of the trails and the number of tea houses were found to be adequate (Table 14). Eighty-three percent found the pricing reasonable, while 15% felt it was under priced (Table 11). The Everest trek is very popular and many trekkers were seen each day. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents felt there were too many trekkers in the region (Tables 12&13).

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents became sick during their trek and this was attributed primarily to dirty water, contaminated

food, altitude sickness and colds (Tables 15&16). The need for better hygiene and sanitation was a common complaint.

Thirty-four percent of the trekkers surveyed had been to Nepal, and 68% said they plan to return to Nepal, but will probably visit a new area (Tables 17, 18, 20). The respondents found the local people to be very friendly and almost all of the respondents would recommend the Everest trek to friends (Tables 19&21). For the most part trekkers were satisfied and positive, but a number of people said they would not come back to the area and would not recommend the area to others until environmental problems, waste management and sewage are better dealt with (Tables 17&18).

### 5.3e Trekker practical details

Not a whole lot of information exists on the profile of a typical trekker. One third of the respondents had trekked in another region besides Sagarmatha National Park and a majority of these people had trekked in the Annapurna Conservation Area which is by far the most popular area to trek in Nepal (Table 41). A total of 39,764 trekkers visited the Annapurna area in 1993, while 12,475 visited the Everest area (MOT 1993). The average length of stay for the trekkers surveyed was 3-6 weeks. One third stayed 5-6 weeks while roughly one quarter stayed 3-5 weeks. Thirty-five percent of the respondents said that their

trek would be three weeks long, while one quarter said they would be spending four weeks in the Everest region. Hardly anyone stayed for just one week and only 11% stayed for just two weeks (Table 32).

About half of the people were either trekking with one or two other people while the other half trekked with more (Table 34). This has to do mostly with whether or not they trekked with an agency. Of the people surveyed, 43% trekked with an agency (Table 35). This coincides with the Ministry of Tourism estimate of 50%.

Nepal benefits from the income generated by tourism. However, what do trekkers really spend while on a trek? More than half estimated that they spend over six dollars per day in the region not including guide and porter costs (Table 36). Another one-third spent between three and five dollars per day. Furthermore, 49% said they hired a guide and 55% hired porters (Table 37&38). Roughly five to six dollars per day seemed to be common for guides and porters hired by individuals while guides and porters hired by larger groups received much less. Almost 48% of the respondents bought handicrafts during their trek, which puts more money back into the region (Table 39). Also, 68% of the respondents reported experiencing local music and dance, and many people came to experience the Mani Rimdu Festival (Table 40).

Most of the trekkers surveyed said that they would spend 2-4 weeks trekking in the Everest region. Slightly less than half of the

respondents trekked with and agency and most people spent between six and ten dollars per day.

Trekking in Nepal is very seasonal. Most trekkers visit during the Fall or Spring. Few trekkers visit during the monsoon season because of poor visibility and rain. Also, few trekkers visit during the winter because of the cold and snow. Some higher lodges shut down during the winter (Bezruchka 1985). The results of this survey represent the fall season and would undoubtedly change if conducted during other seasons.

#### 5.4 Participant observation

My understanding of how tourism works in Nepal was greatly enhanced by participating in many of the activities that tourists engage in during a trip to Nepal. I participated in rafting, trekking and climbing activities. A ten day guided raft trip down the Sun Kosi River allowed me to see how a guided group operates. There were four Nepali guides and they spoke fairly good English.

Half way through the trip another rafting company passed us and Arun Gurung, the head guide in our group, became extremely angry. He was angry because the other company had five western raft guides and only three Nepali raft guides, which were all in the oar boat (a less prestigious job). Arun is an officer of the ANRGA (All

Nepal River Guides Association) which addressed this issue one week later, because those five westerners were taking away jobs from Nepali raft guides. Arun said there are 175 trained Nepali raft guides working in Nepal.<sup>13</sup>

While on a different trip, I climbed Mera Peak (21,247ft), which is the second most popular trekking peak.<sup>14</sup> Many westerners climb Mera Peak as part of large groups. The average group size is ten westerners with a trekking staff of over twenty people. Many of the Nepali staffs I saw lacked adequate clothing, shelter, footwear and other equipment.<sup>15</sup> Most of the groups I saw did not have tents for their porters and porters would spend the night huddled together under a rock. As a result these porters would make wood fires to keep warm and also to cook on since many groups did not supply their porters with stoves or cook their food. Often porters had to fend for themselves.

An eco-trekking workshop declaration addresses these concerns and more. Many trekking companies said they would adhere to this declaration. However, I did not see many of the principles of the declaration being practiced in the field. Also, there is no enforcement of the declaration and adherence is voluntary. It is more profitable in the short term if porters use wood and degrade other resources, but all agencies must realize that it is in the best interest of the trekking staff, local people, the environment and their agency, if they trek in a more humane and environmentally sensitive manner. Addressing the

basic needs of their staff and using kerosene for everyone in the group is an important first step.

After climbing Mera Peak with my friend Günter Hempen, I trekked by myself in the Khumbu area, and focused mainly on distributing the trekking questionnaire. I never saw a park ranger or game scout during my six week trek except when I out of my way to find them and interview them. Neither I nor any of the trekkers I spoke with, experienced much interaction with park or government officials. About the only time the average trekker meets a DNPWC employee is when they get their permit checked at the gate. The DNPWC, the environment, and trekkers would benefit from a more visible presence of the DNPWC.

I am aware of many of the projects being undertaken by the SPCC and applaud the work they do, but the information centers in both Lukla and Namche could do more to alert visitors of their presence. It seemed that simply standing in front of these buildings and talking about environmental concerns would be an easy way to increase exposure and spread environmental information.

I stayed in many lodges and noticed that a lot of them had kerosene stoves, but still used wood to prepare meals for trekkers. The use of kerosene in trekkers lodges was a rule when L.N. Sherpa was warden of Sagarmatha National Park (Brower, personal communication 1995). However, wood use and not kerosene was prevalent during October and November of 1994. The DNPWC has

already helped establish kerosene depots in the region as discussed in Chapter 4. Is it not time to ensure that kerosene is actually being used in trekkers lodges?

The cooperation and full support of lodge owners is necessary for successful ecotourism in the region. They should feel like partners in conservation projects, and not unwilling participants forced to comply with rules imposed upon them. The owner of the Panorama Hotel in Lukla uses photo voltaic solar power cells to recharge batteries, gets five kilowatts of electricity from a small hydroelectric power project and has a back boiler on his stove to heat water. He also grows tree seedlings in a small greenhouse and is involving local school children in planting seedlings. The SPCC and the DNPWC should encourage this lodge owner and others like him to show and convince other lodge owners to do similar things. The cooperation of lodge owners in effective waste management and sewer management is also vital. However, of even more importance is the need for cooperation in addressing the problem of fuel scarcity in the region.

## 5.5 Discussion and analysis of survey results

Several ideas and suggestions emerged from the survey. The demographic information collected shows that more than half of the trekkers surveyed were between the ages of 18 and 33 and only 36%

were women. Also, over half of the respondents were from Britain or North America. Most trekkers rated mountains as the primary motivation for trekking in the region. The infrastructure needs for this type of tourism are not all that great. However, better waste management and sewage management in the region is needed. This is more of a trekker's concern, but should be addressed because of the importance of trekking to the economy of the region. Appropriate but modest infrastructure development of this sort will need to occur.

The environmental awareness questions showed that distribution of environmental knowledge for trekkers can be improved. Most of the trekkers surveyed wanted to find ways to trek in an environmentally and culturally sensitive fashion, but sometimes were just not sure what was the best thing to do. This is where education programs come in. Also, most tourists will not mind paying more for food, soft drinks, trekking permits, if they know that they are not contributing to environmental problems. Another frequent comment was that almost all signs were in English. The distribution of environmental information in several languages by means of brochures, posters, signs, demonstrations, and talks would be appropriate. It was suggested that this information be available at the Department of Immigration, airport, park offices, park entry points, police check points, lodges and hotels, SPCC, KEEP and along trails. Of the respondents surveyed, 14% had received environmental information from KEEP and 4% from the SPCC. These percentages are

much lower than one might expect when looking at all of the information distributed by these organizations. This may be due to the fact that the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) and KEEP used to work together thereby enhancing the exposure of each other. The new KEEP office is down a narrow side street near the Department of Immigration in Kathmandu. Only a small sign on a street post tells people that it is down that small street.

Many other people only find out about it because it is mentioned in the Lonely Planet guidebook. KEEP has a lot of environmental and cultural information for trekkers, and could reach more people by improving its exposure. The fact that such a large percentage of people get environmental information from guidebooks should alert the government and NGO's that it is worthwhile to convince guidebook authors to discuss environmental problems, recommendations for trekkers, ongoing projects and places to get more information. The SPCC is not mentioned in two of the more popular guides (Bezruchka 1985; Wheeler 1993). Both KEEP and the SPCC could work on being more visible in order to get their information across.

Survey results show that 83% considered littering a problem and 68% were aware of conservation efforts. Trekkers were unaware of an agreement between one of the helicopter services and SPCC. The helicopter service has volunteered to carry back beer and coca-cola bottles to Kathmandu. This has been going on since at least the

summer of 1994 and is alleviating rubbish disposal problems in the Everest region.

Respondents were asked to give suggestions for improving the management of the region. Many suggested that more money generated by fees in the region should go back to the region, and that a NGO should run local conservation efforts. This is already being done by the SPCC, but more people need to be made aware of this and other projects. The government should tell people what it is and is not doing in the region, and why it is not doing certain things like latrine construction and environmental awareness programs. Many respondents wondered why the government was not building toilets, dealing with waste and sewage management, and educating trekkers. They do not know that the government is supporting the SPCC to do these tasks with a grant from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. This grant and a memorandum of understanding between the WWF, SPCC and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation was discussed in detail in Chapter 4. There is a unique sharing of responsibilities between the government and NGO's in Nepal to accomplish environmental management goals.

The questionnaire also tried to address the satisfaction of trekkers. Trekkers were generally satisfied with lodge accommodation and food, prices, and the condition of trails. However, many expressed concern over the number of trekkers in the area, and about sanitation and hygiene. Fifty-eight percent of the trekkers surveyed became sick

and most of them attribute their sickness to dirty water and contaminated food. Sanitation and hygiene in tea houses and lodges needs to be improved through more concern to this topic at the annual SPCC Lodge Owners Training Workshop in addition to possible inspections. Determining the carrying capacity for tourists in the region and restricting the number of tourists accordingly, should be considered.

The questionnaire also tried to find practical details on trekkers in the region. It was found that 49% of the respondents hired a guide and 55% hired a porter. The average trekker spent between three and ten dollars per day not including guide and porter fees. About half of the respondents purchased handicrafts during their trek and the average trek was two to four weeks in length. All of these activities contribute to the national and local economy in Nepal.

This chapter showed that non-governmental organizations have aided the government in the management of ecotourism in Nepal. Many NGO efforts, such as reforestation projects and rubbish bins have been noticed by locals and trekkers'. NGO's such as the SPCC are concerned with local needs and community development as well as the conservation of the resources upon which residents depend.

KEEP and SPCC address many trekkers concerns such as littering and toilets, but do not address major environmental and local concerns. Yes, they have some programs directed towards locals, but

could do more. They seem to put most of their efforts into waste control, latrine construction and hygiene issues. Fuel scarcity is an important concern that deserves more attention. Using iodine treated water or filtered water can reduce demands on fuel for boiling drinking water and can also reduce the amount of discarded bottles in the area. However, more needs to be done to address this issue. Also, many of KEEP's recommendations lack cultural sensitivity. For example, KEEP recommends iron flag poles. Prayer flags are hung on juniper and fir poles because those are auspicious. Also, many Sherpas prefer to use wood for cooking because they believe wood is easier to cook on and that food cooked over wood is better for you and tastes better. If KEEP and other NGO's are to be successful; they need to be more culturally sensitive (Brower, personal communication 1995).

The ideas of "minimum impact" and "trekking lightly" have gained popularity in the West during the past decade and the fact that these ideas are being transplanted to Nepal is not that surprising. However, at what cost will this be? Brower (1990) and others have discussed the costs of misdirected western intervention. These programs mean well and appear to the western observer to be just what Nepal needs, but they can have negative effects. For example, during the creation of Rara National Park many people were dislocated for an idealistic and seemingly greater purpose (the establishment of a national park.) The consequences of this action

were enormous and from the experience of this park, HMG decided not to relocate people from future national parks. Nepal has been experimenting with management of tourists and locals within protected areas for many years. The use of ecotourism for blending conservation and development agendas is just the latest tool in these experiments. Table 30 showed that many of the conservation efforts noticed by trekkers are NGO projects. This shows the importance of NGO's in aiding HMG in Nepal's National Conservation Strategy.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to evaluate and discuss tourism management in Nepal's parks and conservation areas. The thesis looked at what HMG does and does not do in managing tourism in the parks and conservation areas under its control. His Majesty's Government of Nepal benefits from the expertise, research, organization, planning and funding NGO's bring with them. HMG has limited resources and NGO's help complement government programs. NGO's are also an integral part of Nepal's National Conservation Strategy.

The author was familiar with park management strategies in the United States and was eager to see how the national park concept was being modified to suit the special circumstances and needs of

Nepal. The author was also curious to see how the special management problems of resident populations and a large number of tourists was dealt with in a park in the third world.

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) is promoted as an innovative approach to managing a protected area for the benefit of both the environment and local people. It is using tourism as a vehicle to make this happen. The Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area is building on ideas from the Annapurna Conservation Area and Sagarmatha National Park.

Himalayan environmental degradation is the result of many factors: high population growth, poverty, lack of basic needs, overgrazing, lack of alternative energy sources, lack of coordination, lack of ecological consideration in development efforts, and the influx of trekkers. Effective government and NGO programs need to address all of these issues in an integrated manner. The needs of local people, goals and objectives of environmental conservation, and proper tourism management need to be combined. Both tourists and locals need to be aware of conservation and development efforts, if these efforts are to succeed (Gurung 1992).

The first chapter dealt primarily with my methodology while chapters two and three brought together literature on tourism and park management. They attempted to show how Nepal's tourist industry evolved and document Nepal's history of experimenting with park management. Trekking in Nepal can be classified as

ecotourism and this may be the only appropriate type of tourism for many parts of the country. It does not require large infrastructure development and is motivated by adventure, mountains, scenic beauty and cultural attractions. However, it can potentially degrade the culture and environment upon which it depends.

Chapters two and three attempted to show that the basic needs of local people need to be met before conservation can proceed. Also, local participation is vital to any sustainable development project and ecotourism is being used to link conservation and development in Nepal.

Chapter four discussed the management strategies of HMG and NGO's, and projects that they have undertaken. Chapter five contained the results of the trekkers survey conducted in the Everest region. The results were used to evaluate the effectiveness of HMG and NGO projects.

NGO's in Nepal have been vital to sustainable development programs and conservation efforts in Nepal. There are many ways that they can improve their effectiveness and all of the NGO's I spoke with were actively engaged in efforts to improve. NGO's reach out into rural areas of Nepal and get involved with locals. They complement government efforts for conservation and development. Nepal is unusual in that a supportive government and an empowered indigenous population provides an ideal setting for NGO action. In other regions of the world the setting is less ideal and more NGO

involvement in other third world countries should be carefully evaluated. This type of partnership will not work everywhere, but in Nepal, NGO's influence and initiate many projects, and this has been welcomed by HMG. Elsewhere this type of action could be resented or seen as a usurpation of power, but this thesis has tried to show that this is not the case in Nepal.

## End Notes

1. The survey conducted for this thesis is very similar to a survey conducted in the Annapurna Conservation Area in 1993. However, very little comparison between these two regions has yet been done because of the need to keep this thesis manageable in size.

2. Research Challenges - If I had conducted my research in the United States, many things would have been simpler. I would already be familiar with the language, culture, local and national political systems, systems for obtaining information, education, and how to conduct meetings and interviews. Conducting research in a third world country poses many challenges for the researcher. I had to learn about the political system and culture of Nepal and found that it may take several days to get the opportunity to interview one person since there are many festivals and holidays in Nepal which results in offices being closed frequently. Government offices are usually only open from 10:00am - 4:00pm and then people take long lunch breaks. Also, on Fridays, government offices are only open for half of the day. There is electricity in Kathmandu, but it is not reliable and there are frequent scheduled and unscheduled blackouts, that prevented me from using copy machines on several occasions. I also found that phone numbers were not always correct, and sometimes I would get bad connections.

Furthermore, transportation is difficult and I used a mountain bike or auto rickshaw to get around Kathmandu and Patan, to visit offices and interview people. The traffic in Kathmandu is bad and on several occasions I felt that my life was at risk. To get to and from National Parks, I usually went by local bus. These buses sometimes do not operate on certain festival days, which had to be factored into my travel plans. They are cheap but also crowded, and I ended up riding on the roof of buses a few times. I spent 14 hours on top of the roof of a bus from Kathmandu to Jiri and 12 hours on the top of a bus from Kathmandu to Dunche. I was just glad that it was not raining on those days.

Staying healthy is another difficulty in conducting research in a third world country. I was sick for about two full days each month and ended up getting giardia and also pin worms, in addition to what ever else my doctor discovers next. I was also bitten by a dog in eastern

Nepal while killing a chicken for dinner. I then ended up spending extra time in Kathmandu getting several rabies shots.

3. The Inner Journey - Just as valuable as the information gathered for my thesis, was the experiences I had that taught me about myself, others and some of life's little mysteries. The following are a few of the experiences I had during my field research.

At 5:00am I woke to the sound of light rain. I was staying at my friend Benj's house in Seattle. It was still dark outside when I took the airport shuttle to SEATAC, but I was eager to begin my trip. I felt growing anticipation in my gut, and was overjoyed that all of the trip planning was now over. Finally, I was going to Nepal! I had studied Nepali for two years and learned as much as I could about the park system there. My flight on Alaska Airlines to LA, Flight 554 left at 7:50am and arrived at 10:24am.

Everything was going well and at 1:00pm I boarded Thai Flight 771 to Bangkok. We taxied out to the runway, throttled up and sped down the runway. I was not expecting anything out of the ordinary, but just as we were about to take off the entire plane shook violently and I knew that something was wrong. We were at the end of the runway and had to take off despite knowing that something was wrong. Over 300 people were on that flight and we all feared the worst. The plane shook so bad that the speakers in the ceiling near me popped out and were dangling by their wires. Then from the dangling speaker came a message from the head stewardess, but I still didn't know what was going on since the message was in Thai. After that message came a short message in English: "We are experiencing technical difficulties and will be returning to LA." I almost wanted to laugh when I heard this message, but this was no longer a laughing matter.

The plane then turned back towards LA set up for a landing and at the last minute pulled up. I couldn't figure out what was going on, and then noticed that we were heading back high over the ocean and that all of the fuel for the flight to Seoul was being unloaded. I later learned that the fly by over the airport was done so that ground crews could look at the plane and see what was wrong. They confirmed to the pilots that the plane had blown two front tires. The pilots then prepared for an emergency landing, and one of the preparations was to unload all of the fuel. This took one hour and then we returned to LA and landed.

The landing was actually fairly smooth, but the lack of rubber on the front tires resulted in deep grooves in the runway that ran for about 1/4 mile. When the plane finally stopped, it just stopped. We didn't taxi or do anything. Then I noticed that eight medevac helicopters were in the air, over a dozen fire trucks came rushing after us and there must have been over half of the police force along with numerous airplane officials in suits and ties everywhere. There were also TV crews filming the landing live and people were lined up along a fence near the airport for as far as I could see. Since it took us an hour to unload fuel, the people in LA had plenty of time to get ready for the crash, but luckily everything went well.

Portable stairs were brought out to the plane and we got on to shuttles and were taken to the Holiday Inn. We spent two days in LA while our plane was being repaired and then left on the same plane. I knew that I would probably have some excitement on this trip, but I did not expect it to start during the flight, and hoped that I wouldn't have any more excitement while on planes.

The rest of my flight to Nepal went fine, but nothing could really prepare me for the sights, smells and confusion that I was about to experience. In Kathmandu as in many other large cities, you can see and experience the best and worst of a country. I experienced frequent blackouts and the air in Kathmandu is full of fumes, dust and pollutants so I and many others that ride bicycles or motorcycles, had to wear face masks. I enjoy riding mountain bikes, but in the streets of Kathmandu a bicycle ride can be a death-defying act, as you dodge cows wandering the streets and bike down narrow roads lined with wet and rotting garbage, and choke upon the stench of decay mixed with the searing vapors of black automobile and motorcycle smoke. I encountered the occasional traffic light, but saw that no one heeds the existing lights or the police.

In Thamel, where most of the tourists stay, the traffic is fairly bad. The narrow streets are clogged with cars, vans, auto-rickshaws, bicycle rickshaws, motorcycles, mountain bikes, carts, tractors and anything else that has wheels. The streets are also dirty in Thamel, but not bad as bad as elsewhere in the city. The garbage disposal system is nearly nonexistent, and much garbage is burned by city residents who thereby further compound air pollution in the city.

A black market exists in Kathmandu which exchanges foreign currencies into Nepali rupees for a better rate than the banks, but this is illegal. Carpet shop owners constantly ask "change money?" while

street children and others beg for money "one rupee?" If you walk just a few blocks you will likely hear the following "carpet, change money, hashish, one rupee, pen, chocolate, bonbon?" Kathmandu is a city with a huge economic disparity which makes one really appreciate the existence of a large middle class in the United States. This disparity could potentially lead to class conflict.

The intense nature of my flight to Nepal resulted in a bonding experience with other flight members who then became good friends. Bob Schuh from Carmel Valley, California was in the Peace Corps in Nepal in the 1970's, but now operates an import business and guides trips in Nepal. He is 50 years old, but is in great shape and we hung out together for a few days. He introduced me to Chodak Tsering and his family in Kathmandu. Chodak is Tibetan and is almost 80 years old. He fled Tibet with the Dali Lama in the 1950's and was one of the Dali Lama's guards. He told me a very sad story about a man whom he escaped with. They were being pursued by the Chinese military and a man and his son were with them. The man's son was shot by the Chinese in the leg and could not run fast enough to escape. His capture was eminent and his father knew this. The father walked a little away and cried for a few minutes. This man then went to his son, knelt beside him and shot him in the head, so as to prevent his son from being captured alive and tortured by the Chinese. I was struck by his honesty, sincerity and willingness to share his life with me.

Nepal is a place with beautiful mountains and even more amazing people. I went there to travel and also collect information for my masters thesis. I expected to see beautiful mountains and meet interesting people, but I did not expect the number of intense thought provoking experiences that I encountered. I contemplated my own mortality on my flight to Nepal that almost crashed. I helped some Nepalese slaughter a chicken, and contemplated what it means to be an omnivore. I also got bit by a dog and had to get rabies shots. In the search for a place to get these shots I visited many hospitals and saw sick and dying people in deplorable conditions and could not help but be affected.

I was also lucky to see the miracle of birth while on a bus back to Kathmandu, after trekking in Helambu. The bus just suddenly stopped and a woman got off and gave birth on the side of the road. I guess she was on her way to Kathmandu to have the baby, but the baby just could not wait. I learned a lot about tourism, Nepal and other

people, but I learned far more about myself. In the process of exploring this culture I came to appreciate what I have been blessed with and explored my own heart and soul. I learned about myself and learned from others around me, how to be a better person. There is a common saying in Nepal that people come to Nepal for the first time because of the mountains and they return because of the people. There is a lot of truth to this. The people are kind, genuine, friendly and intelligent and if you open your mind and heart, you may find more than you ever bargained for.

4. Before I went to Nepal I read as much about the parks and conservation areas there as I could. I knew that the parks would be run slightly differently, but I was shocked by how different things were. I expected to meet park rangers or other people who would educate me guide my behavior. I expected the DNPWC to be involved in trash collection, toilet construction, trail maintenance and just have a general presence, but I found none of this.

I was also curious where the entrance fee went. The Rs 650 park entrance fee goes to the national treasury and some of this comes back to the DNPWC in its annual budget appropriation. The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act passed in 1992 states that 30%-50% of the revenue generated in a park must go back to that park but L.N. Sherpa, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Protection Program Officer, was not sure if this includes peak fees. The details have not been worked out and no money is flowing back to parks as a result of this act yet. It is still being determined what this money should be used for (Sherpa, L.N. 1994).

5. The following groups are involved in the current discourse: HMG's Wildlife Committee, Ministry of Forests, Department of National Parks, Sagarmatha National Park, Zonal Commissioner, District Offices, Royal Army, Ministry of Local Development, Ministry of Education, Roads and Electricity Authority, Arun III Project, Tourism Department, Pasture Development Office and Department of Agriculture, Trekking and Tourism Organization, Royal Nepal Academy (ICIMOD, KMTNC), Mountain Institute Board of Directors, Donors to Wilderness Mountain Institute for Project, World Bank, Task Force Members, Local Institutions, Local Panchayat, Informal Leaders, Rastriya Panchayat Member, Local Religious Leaders,

Traditional Leaders, People of the Makalu-Barun Area and Different Ethnic Groups (Davis 1990).

6. Recommendations of the eco-trekking workshop:

Litter and Pollution

1. Local "environmental codes" should be followed by local people and visitors alike.
2. Campsite locations should:
  - a.) not be too close to villages.
  - b.) have a clean toilet
  - c.) have a trash burning pit
  - d.) have safe disposal site for bio-degradable wastes
  - e.) have a storage site to recyclable materials.
3. Non-biodegradable trash such as plastics, tin, glass, etc. should not be left along trails or at campsites but should be brought back to Kathmandu or disposed of at proper places.
4. Everyone should shoulder the responsibility for litter and pollution control, including trekking agencies, trekkers, local people, government agencies, NGO's and INGO's.
5. Greater awareness of problems and solutions should be developed through workshops in local areas, periodic clean up campaigns and in school curricula.
6. A strong monitoring and evaluation system should be developed with government, NGO and local people involvement.
7. Neither trekkers nor staff should bathe or wash clothes where soapy water will flow directly into rivers.
8. During the hot, dry season, cigarettes and matches should not be thrown where they might cause forest fires.

(KEEP 1994)

Reduction of Fuel  
Wood Use

1. As much as possible, the same food should be prepared for trekkers and staff at the same time to reduce fuel use, whether cooking at camp or in lodges.
2. Back-boiler systems should be installed in lodges to heat water while food is being cooked. Chulos or smokeless ovens should be encouraged to reduce fuel use.
3. Firewood should not be used for entertainment campfires.
4. To prevent use of trees and vegetation as fuel, stoves and kerosene, or cooked food, should be provided for porters in high altitude areas.
5. Team leaders, tourists, rangers, guides, and officers should all use alternative fuel to wood (note: including national park staff posted within national parks)
6. Small hydro-electric facilities should be installed to supply energy needs for trekking wherever possible.
7. Fuelwood should not be used in cheese factories.
8. Iron poles should be used for Buddhist prayer flagpoles.

(KEEP 1994)

6. Recommendations of the eco-trekking workshop:

**Safety, Education / Briefings and Porter Welfare**

1. Warm and safe shelters and warm clothes should be provided for porters.
2. TAAN should fix porter wages specific to trekking areas.
3. Groups should provide medicine for porters.
4. All porters should be insured against accidents.
5. Important points to cover during group briefings are:

Before trek begins:

- Introduce staff and review itinerary.
- Review health and medical concerns. Trek guides should bring a medicine kit on the trek, especially to remote areas.
- Check members' equipment and personal gear.
- Any special dietary needs? Describe typical meals.
- Any special interests? Points of interest on the trek.
- Cultural and religious customs: do's and don'ts.
- Environmental concerns: How to dispose of litter, no campfires, stay on trails, don't pollute water sources, etc.
- Modes of transportation, schedules, potential delays.
- Rescue operations: Cost deposit.
- Insurance for members, staff, porters.

During trek:

- Daily trek activities, next day's agenda.
- Campsite location, points of interest.
- Lunch spot: where, how far, water available for washing?
- Check members' health: anyone sick?
- Community benefits: respect private property, etc.
- Donations to local schools, tipping of porters, staff.

(KEEP 1994)

**Putting Money Back into  
Trekking Areas and  
Benefiting Local People  
Through Tourism**

1. National park entry fees should be used for the development of tourism and raising the living standards of local people.
2. Organized trekking groups should purchase locally grown food and vegetables.
3. Training should be provided in local areas to encourage the employment of local peoples.
4. Handicraft, cottage and village industries should be encouraged to produce items for sale to tourists.
5. The best use of government collected royalties, national park fees, and other fees should be determined with input from local peoples, tourism related organizations and government.
6. In tourism training, special emphasis should be given to women's training and environmental issues.

(KEEP 1994)

## 7. SPCC recommendations for trash disposal

### SPCC recommendations for trash disposal

1. All parties holding expedition permits from the government of Nepal are requested to dispose of their garbage in accordance with the expedition regulations issued by the government.
2. Separate the trash that is produced while climbing and trekking into burnable and non-burnable trash.
3. Separate the burnable trash into the following categories [A], [B], [C] that can be burnt at the Lukla incinerator and carry it to the Lukla incinerator. You will find signs indicating the location of the incinerator in Lukla.
4. Please place items [A], [B], and [C] in the separate containers at the Lukla incinerator.
5. For raw garbage, please dig a deep hole in the ground and bury it. If it is shallow it will be washed up by heavy rain or dug up by wild dogs.
6. Among the non-burnable trash, please return the glass bottles to the lodge or batti that sold it.
7. Please carry out metal products such as empty cans, batteries and broken glass.

Please make sure Sherpas, guides, cooks, kitchen staff and porters understand the above.

(SPCC/HAT-J 1994)

### Items that can be brought to the Incinerator

[A] waste paper, used toilet paper, cardboard, wooden chips, bamboo baskets, egg shells, food scraps, plastic wrapping material, Styrofoam packing, fleece jacket, underwear.

[B] nylon cloth, polyester cloth, tent, sleeping bag, mat, down clothes, rain gear (Core-tex), gloves, socks, empty mineral water bottle, plastic cup

[C] vinyl sheet, vinyl bag, agricultural use vinyl bag, vinyl sheet for substitute window glass use, rubber goods.

(SPCC/HAT-J 1994)

8. The NMA has planned the following construction works for Langtang:

No.	Location	Type of Construction	Remarks
1	Thulo Sayabru	2 public toilets with septic tanks  Water supply improvement	Though there are about 18 hotels with toilets, there are no public toilets for porters and others. The existing water supply system is a free-flow type and insufficient. If it is modified to a controlled system with a reservoir then it would be enough.
2	Bambo Hotel	Porters shed and improved stone paved plate form, 1 toilet with septic tank	Many porters eat lunch here or stay the night, since it is almost mid way between Thulo Sayabru and Lama Hotel.
3	Lama Hotel	Campsite improvements, kitchen shed, porter's shed and 2 toilets with septic tanks. (Model campsite)	It is quite and an ideal spot for a campsite between Saybrub and Langtang. So it is recommended to develop the area as a model camp site by providing the said facilities
4	Bisaune odar	Improvement of the cave.	It is situated on the way between Lama Hotel and Goratabela. It is recommended that this shelter and rest spot be improved for porters and tourists.
5	Kanging Gumba	2 Public toilets	There are no public toilets currently at this site.
6	Gosain Kunda	Porter's shed or Dharma Shala, 4 toilets	Since the Kunda catchment is already crowded by existing buildings and polluted by solid waste, it is recommended that no more settlements be added there. It is felt that an insufficient number of shelters exist there for peak periods. Therefore, at least 2 sheds and 4 toilets should be added outside of the Kunda catchment, as shown in the project sketch.

(Wagle 1994)

9. During the literature search and interview stage of my field work I discovered that Louise Johnson, a master's student at the University of Surrey, conducted a questionnaire directed at tourists in the Annapurna Conservation Area in May of 1993. Her thesis focused on the role of tourism in community development in the Annapurna Conservation Area.

Since Johnson asked many of the types of questions I was interested in, I realized that by using a very similar questionnaire a comparison study between the two regions could be conducted in the future. Therefore, I asked Louise Johnson if it would be fine for me to use many of the same questions. She was enthusiastic and supportive of this idea, and is eager to see my results.

10. The Questionnaire - The questionnaire consisted of forty-one questions. Most of these were a matter of simply checking the right box, but a few more open-ended questions were asked towards the end. This enabled tired trekkers, or those who had only a basic understanding of English to fill out most of the questionnaire quickly. Those with a little more motivation were able to elaborate on some of their thoughts in some of the longer questions at the end.

The questionnaire was four pages long and printed on two pieces of paper on the front and back. I had five hundred questionnaires made and this was a test of patience and persistence. I asked a Nepali friend if I could borrow his computer and he said that I should come back the next day at 11:00am. The next day I showed up at 10:30am and waited around until after 1:00pm. I later found out that he had forgotten and went on a trip to Baktapur. I tried to find a computer or typewriter that I could rent or borrow, but all of the rental places were closed for a five day holiday and my trek would be starting before then.

It seemed like almost every day was a festival of some sort and you never knew when banks, buses, post offices or other businesses would be closed because of this. This made it very difficult to conduct interviews and also made it very difficult to produce a questionnaire. I finally found a typing service that could type my questionnaire, but the typist did not have a strong command of the English language, and typed with only two fingers on an archaic typewriter. He used a lot of white out and made several spelling mistakes, but would not let me touch the machine. After about three hours, he finished the questionnaire and all I had to do was photocopy it.

Well, I was about to learn that my problems had only just begun. I took the questionnaire to Nepal Color Labs and they said they could do the job but their copier kept breaking down and only did half of the job. I ended up taking the questionnaire to four other copy places spread around Kathmandu, but every machine broke down. They would jam up, overheat, get too dark or too light. It was a

photocopy nightmare, but I eventually got 1000 pieces of paper copied on both sides to make a total of 500 questionnaires. It only took one entire day and five copy machines, but that is par for the course in Nepal.

I had it printed front and back to save on paper, and also to reduce the amount of weight I had to carry on my trek. Still this was a lot of weight to carry along with a notebook, pens and a drawing pad. I made a effort to get back every questionnaire that I handed out since I only had a limited number and wanted to get at least four hundred completed questionnaires, so as to have more statistically valid results. Four hundred is just over one percent of the annual trekking population.

11. Only a few components are rated in this scale in order to make the question simpler for the respondent and also easier for tabulation. Similar categories were used in Johnson's (1993) study. Consequently, the results of this questionnaire can be used to compare Sagarmatha National Park and the Annapurna Conservation Area.

12. During some parts of the trek, like between Jiri and Lukla, only three or four were filled out per day, while in larger villages like Lukla or Namche Bazaar, ten to twenty were filled out in a day. It was found that morning was not a good time to solicit respondents since most people just wanted to eat breakfast and start their hike for the day. During the day no one really wanted to stop and fill it out either. However, dinner time proved to be an excellent time to get people to fill out questionnaires. Around this time many trekkers sit around a few benches or tables and talk, play cards or write in their journals while waiting for dinner. This provided a great atmosphere for discussions and many people completed questionnaires during this time. Questionnaires were dropped off at a few different lodges and picked up in the morning. This made it relatively easy to get questionnaires from independent trekkers but getting group trekkers to fill out questionnaires was slightly more difficult.

13. Arun loves the rivers of Nepal and has become concerned with keeping them clean, but not all Nepalis' share his concern. He said that garbage from Kathmandu occasionally gets dumped in the Sun Kosi River and he once got a local village to support him and stop one truck from dumping a load, but who knows where they dumped it

after he turned them away? Arun feels that only about one-third of the rafting guides care about this issue of trash in rivers. This trash is just part of a much larger waste management issue that Kathmandu must address.

14. It is not very technically difficult and is pretty much just a glacier walk at high altitude. Climbing this peak required purchasing a \$300 dollar trekking peak permit from the Nepal Mountaineering Association. I did the climb with a Swiss friend. We hired two porters since we had to go through an agency to get the permit for us. The agency insisted that we hire at least one or two people through them. We fed, clothed and rented necessary gear for these porters and in the end they ended up just carrying their own gear and supplies (tent, cloths, fuel, stove, food).

15. They often had only light jackets and all their clothing was cotton, which is inappropriate attire for the mountains. It is common knowledge that wet cotton clothing contributes to hypothermia which kills many hikers around the world every year.

# APPENDIX A

## TREKKER DEMOGRAPHICS EVEREST REGION OCT.-NOV. 1994

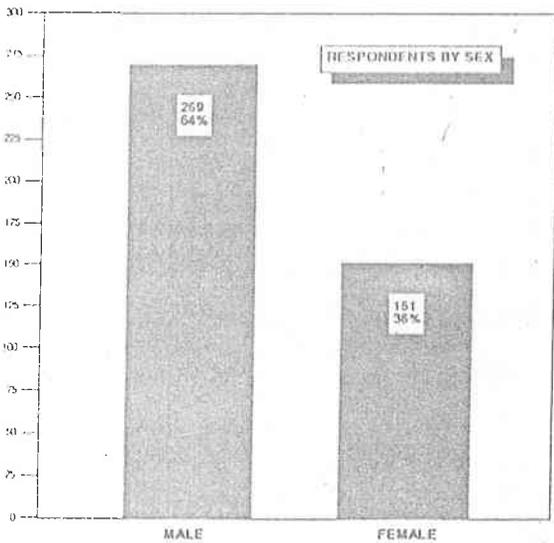


TABLE 1  
RESPONDENTS BY SEX

	Respondents	%
MALE	269	64
FEMALE	151	36
TOTAL	420	100

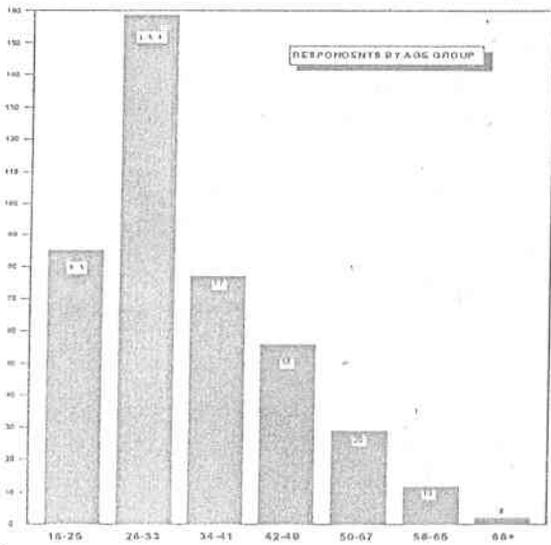


TABLE 2  
RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age	Respondents	%
18-25	85	20
26-33	159	38
34-41	77	18
42-49	56	13
50-57	29	7
58-65	12	3
66+	2	1
Total	420	100

TABLE 3  
RESPONDENTS BY NATION

Nation	Respondents	%	
BRITAIN	101	24	
CANADA	34	8	
USA	98	24	
OTHER	5	1	
AUS/NZ	49	12	(Australia and New Zealand)
GERM	49	12	(Germany)
SWISS	13	3	
SW/DK	32	8	(Sweden & Denmark)
ISRAEL	6	1	(Israel)
BEL/NTH	18	4	(Belgium & Netherlands)
FRANCE	6	1	(France)
CZECH	4	1	(Czechoslovakia)
IT/SP	5	1	(Italy and Spain)
TOTALS	420	100	

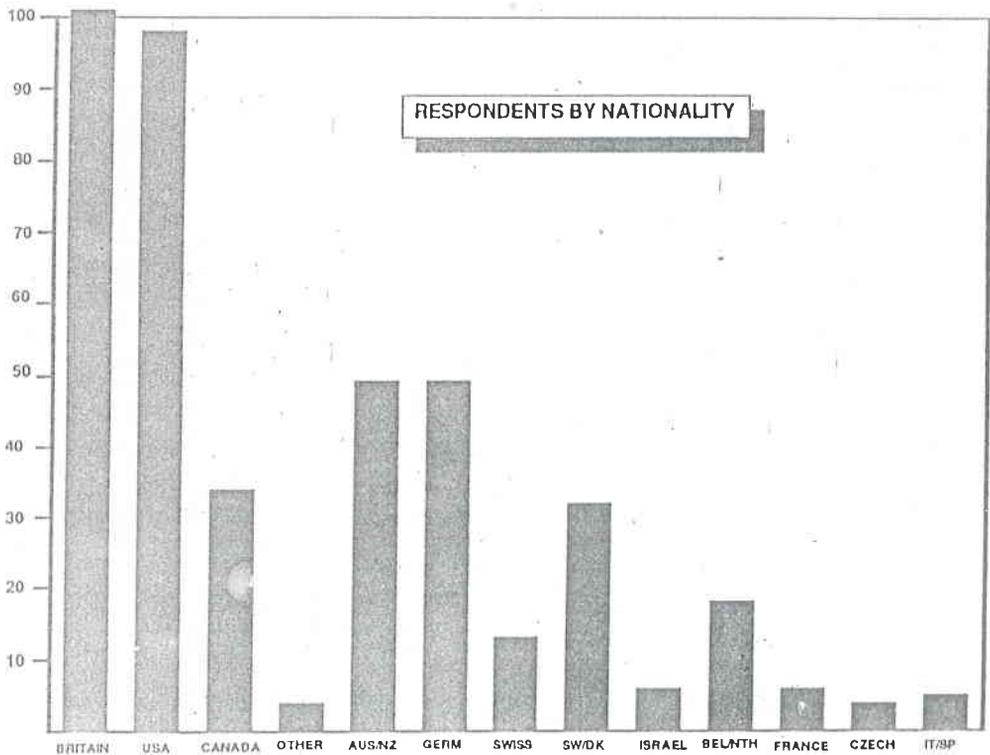


TABLE 4  
RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

	Respondents	%	
BUSINESS	107	28	(Finance & Accounting, insurance)
SERVICES	71	18	(Hotels & catering, social work)
STUDENT	40	10	
TEACHING	39	10	
ENGINEER	34	9	
MEDICAL	33	8	(Doctors, nurses & specialists)
ENVIRO	19	5	(Park management, landscaping, conservation)
SCIENCE	19	5	(Physical sciences & computer programming)
ARTIST	13	3	(Artists, musicians, actors, photography)
UNEMP	12	3	
RETIRED	2	1	
Totals	389	100	

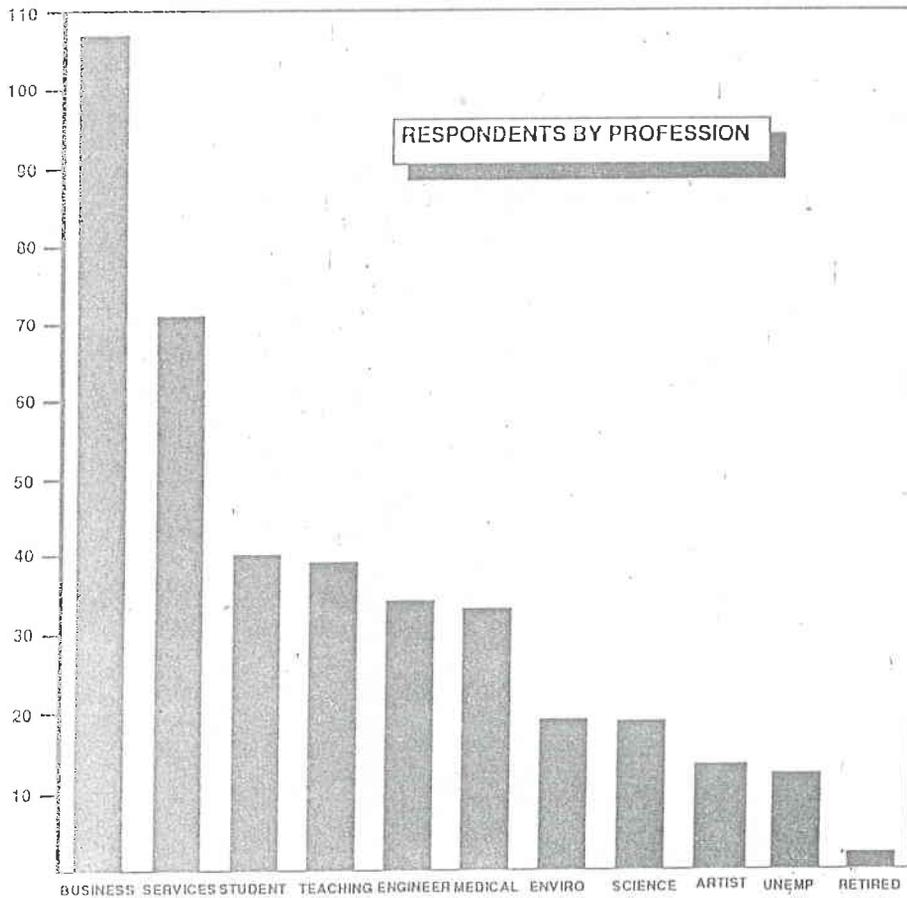
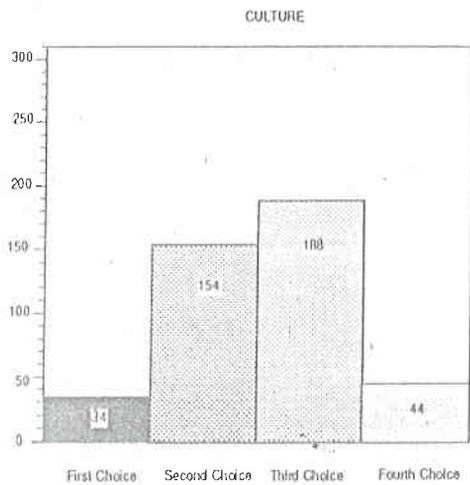
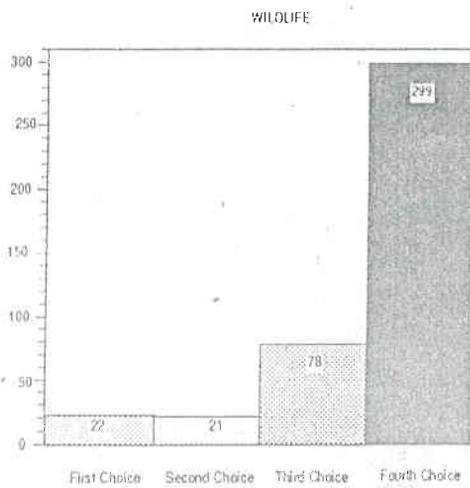
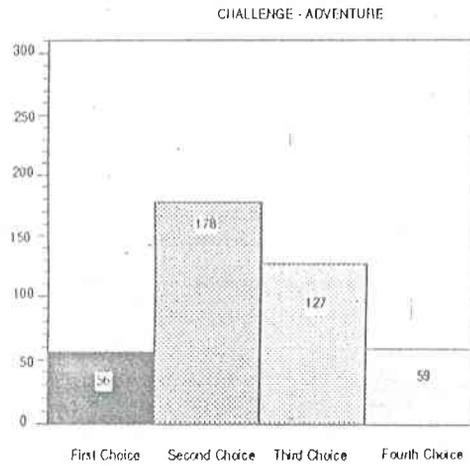
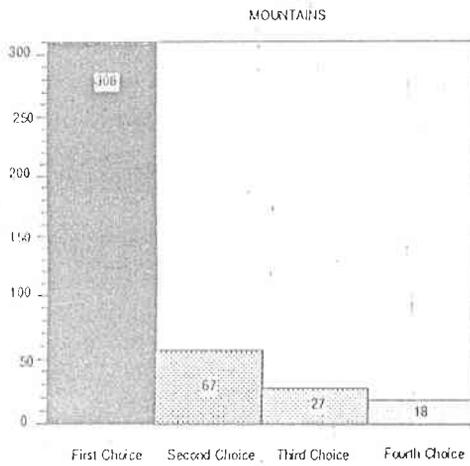


TABLE 5  
RESPONDENTS BY PREFERENCES

RATING	1	2	3	4
MOUNTAINS	<u>308</u>	67	27	18
CHALLENGE ADV	56	<u>178</u>	127	59
WILDLIFE	22	21	78	<u>299</u>
CULTURE	34	154	<u>188</u>	44



# TREKKER SATISFACTION

TABLE 6  
Questionnaire Qu. 7

STAYING IN TEA HOUSES OR LODGES	# OF RESP.	%
YES	347	83
NO	73	17
TOTALS	420	100

TABLE 7  
Questionnaire Qu. 7

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	# OF RESP.	%
VERY SATISFIED	153	44
QUITE SATISFIED	178	51
NOT AT ALL SATISFIED	16	5
TOTAL RESPONSES	347	100

TABLE 8  
Questionnaire Qu. 8

EATING IN TEA HOUSES OR LODGES	# OF RESP.	%
YES	333	79
NO	87	21
TOTALS	420	100

TABLE 9  
Questionnaire Qu. 9

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	# OF RESP.	%
VERY SATISFIED	148	43
QUITE SATISFIED	189	55
NOT AT ALL SATISFIED	6	2
TOTAL RESPONSES	343	100

TABLE 10  
Questionnaire Qu. 29

NUMBER OF TEA HOUSES	# OF RESP.	%
TOO MANY	54	13
ADEQUATE	349	85
TOO FEW	10	2
TOTAL	413	100

TABLE 11  
Questionnaire Qu. 7

PRICING OF ACCOMMODATION	# OF RESP.	%
OVER PRICED	8	2
REASONABLE	284	83
UNDER PRICED	49	15
TOTAL RESPONSES	341	100

TABLE 12  
Questionnaire Qu. 24  
(Some people checked more than one)

HOW MANY TREKKERS HAVE YOU SEEN PER DAY?	# OF RESP.	%
5-10	77	17
11-20	80	18
21-30	100	23
31-40	69	16
41+	114	26
TOTAL	440	100

TABLE 13  
Questionnaire Qu. 25

NUMBER OF TREKKERS IN THE AREA	# OF RESP.	%
TOO MANY	160	38
ADEQUATE	260	62
TOO FEW	0	0
TOTAL RESPONSES	420	100

TABLE 14  
Questionnaire Qu. 11

WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE TRAILS?		
	# OF RESP.	%
VERY GOOD	147	35
ADEQUATE	240	57
POOR	33	8
TOTAL RESPONSES	420	100

TABLE 15  
Questionnaire Qu. 20

BECAME SICK DURING TREK	# OF RESP.	%
YES	245	58
NO	175	42
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 16  
Questionnaire Qu. 20

POSSIBLE CAUSE OF SICKNESS	# OF RESP.	%
DIRTY WATER	77	19
CONTAMINATED FOOD	109	27
ALTITUDE SICKNESS	79	19
FLU / COLD	104	26
PHYSICAL TREKKING INJURY	18	4
INFECTION	19	5
TOTAL RESPONSES	406	100

TABLE 17  
Questionnaire Qu. 37

PLAN TO RETURN TO NEPAL	# OF RESP.	%
YES	285	68
NO	95	23
DO NOT KNOW	40	9
TOTAL RESPONSES	420	100

TABLE 18  
Questionnaire Qu. 37

PLAN TO RETURN TO EVEREST AREA	# OF RESP.	%
YES	43	18
NO	136	56
DO NOT KNOW	65	26
TOTAL	244	100

TABLE 19  
Questionnaire Qu. 38

RECOMMEND EVEREST TREK?	# OF RESP.	%
YES	393	94
NO	19	4
MAYBE	8	2
TOTAL RESPONSES	420	100

TABLE 20  
Questionnaire Qu. 32

PREVIOUS VISITS TO NEPAL	# OF RESP.	%
YES	142	34
NO	278	66
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 21  
Questionnaire Qu. 18

THE LOCAL PEOPLE	# OF RESP.	%
FRIENDLY	225	89
INDIFFERENT	18	7
HOSTILE	9	4
TOTAL	252	100

TABLE 22  
Questionnaire Qu. 19

MADE SOCIAL CONTACT WITH	# OF RESP.	%
GUIDES/PORTERS	253	42
LODGE OWNERS	254	42
LOCALS ON TRAILS	102	16
TOTAL	609	100

## TREKKER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

TABLE 23  
Questionnaire Qu. 15

ENV. KNOWLEDGE	# OF RESP.	%
YES	265	63
NO	155	37
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 24  
Questionnaire Qu. 15

SOURCE OF ENV. INFORMATION	# OF RESP.	%
BOOKS	116	36
AGENCY	57	18
MAGAZINES	4	1
WORD OF MOUTH	13	4
KEEP	34	11
SPCC	14	4
HRA	7	2
IMMIGRATION OFFICE	35	11
TREKKING PERMIT	25	8
TELEVISION	5	1
PARK ENTRANCE	4	1
SUMMIT CLUBS	9	3
TOTAL	323	100

TABLE 25  
Questionnaire Qu. 12

AWARE OF ENV. PROBLEMS?	# OF RESP.	%
YES	365	87
NO	55	13
TOTAL RESPONSES	420	100

TABLE 26  
Questionnaire Qu. 12

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?	# OF RESP.	%
DEFORESTATION	112	23
SOIL EROSION	66	14
REFUSE/LITTER	201	42
SEWAGE	102	21
TOTAL		100

TABLE 27  
Questionnaire Qu. 13

IS LITTERING A PROBLEM?	# OF RESP.	%
YES	349	83
NO	71	17
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 28 (Qu.13)  
(Some checked more than one)

HOW DO YOU DISPOSE OF YOUR LITTER?	# OF RESP.	%
TEA HOUSE/LODGE	99	22
BURNT	118	27
CARRIED OUT	91	20
RUBBISH PIT	16	4
RUBBISH BIN	94	21
GAVE TO STAFF	14	3
BURIED	14	3
TOTAL	446	100

TABLE 29: Questionnaire Qu. 14

AWARE OF CONSERV. EFFORTS	# OF RESP.	%
YES	287	68
NO	133	32
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 30: Questionnaire Qu. 14

WHAT ARE THESE?	# OF RESP.	%
TREE PLANTING	138	34
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY	15	4
RUBBISH PITS	38	9
SPCC RUBBISH CANS	87	22
SPCC INFO.	36	9
SIGNS	16	4
KEROSENE	22	6
LATRINES	5	1
BATTERY COLLECTION	7	2
WATER PROJECTS	8	2
HILLARY PROJECTS	5	1
TRAIL PROJECTS	13	3
PARK ENT. LIT.	4	1
BACK BOILERS	3	1
RECYCLE BINS + INCINERATOR	4	1
TOTAL	401	100

TABLE 31  
 Questionnaire Qu. 13  
 (Some people checked more than one)

WHAT TYPE OF WATER DID YOU DRINK?	# OF RESP.	%
BOTTLED	95	18
BOILED	170	33
TREATED WITH IODINE	181	35
FILTERED	61	12
OTHER (MICROPUR, ROMIN, CHLORINE)	11	2
TOTALS	518	100

### TREKKER PRACTICAL DETAILS

TABLE 32  
 Questionnaire Qu. 30

LENGTH OF STAY	# OF RESP.	%
1 WEEK	0	0
2 WEEKS	4	1
3 WEEKS	49	12
4 WEEKS	57	14
5 WEEKS	140	33
6 WEEKS	30	7
7 WEEKS	31	7
8 WEEKS	13	3
9 WEEKS	48	12

TABLE 33  
 Questionnaire Qu. 31

LENGTH OF TREK	# OF RESP.	%
1 WEEK	4	1
2 WEEKS	45	11
3 WEEKS	147	35
4 WEEKS	107	25
5 WEEKS	52	12
6 WEEKS	24	6
7 WEEKS	18	4
8 WEEKS	15	4
9 WEEKS	4	1

10 WEEKS	13	3
11 WEEKS	6	1
12 WEEKS	1	.5
13 WEEKS	14	3
14+ WEEKS	2	.5
RESIDENTS	12	3
TOTAL	420	100

10 WEEKS	3	.75
11 WEEKS	0	0
12 WEEKS	1	.25
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 34  
Questionnaire Qu. 35

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TREKKING WITH	# OF RESP.	%
0 PEOPLE	35	8
1 PEOPLE	131	31
2 PEOPLE	57	14
3 PEOPLE	18	4
4 PEOPLE	22	5
5 PEOPLE	9	2
6 PEOPLE	22	5
7 PEOPLE	7	2
8 PEOPLE	10	2
9 PEOPLE	17	4
10 PEOPLE	19	5
11 PEOPLE	14	3
12 PEOPLE	24	6
13 PEOPLE	13	3
14 PEOPLE	12	3
15 PEOPLE	6	2
16 PEOPLE	4	1
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 35  
Questionnaire Qu. 34

TREKKING WITH OR WITHOUT AN AGENCY	# OF RESP.	%
WITH AN AGENCY	180	43
WITHOUT AN AGENCY	240	57
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 36  
Questionnaire Qu. 22

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE	RESP.	%
US\$ LESS THAN 3	36	9
US\$ 3-5	124	29
US\$ 6-10	213	51
US\$ 11-20	25	6
US\$ 21+	22	5
TOTALS	420	100

TABLE 37  
Questionnaire Qu. 39

DID YOU HIRE A GUIDE?	# OF RESP.	%
YES	208	49
NO	212	51
TOTAL RESPONSES	420	100

TABLE 38  
Questionnaire Qu. 40

DID YOU HIRE A PORTER?	# OF RESP.	%
YES	229	55
NO	191	45
TOTAL	420	100

TABLE 39  
Questionnaire Qu. 22

RESPONDENTS BUYING HANDICRAFTS	# OF RESP.	%
YES	201	48
NO	219	52
TOTALS	420	100

TABLE 40  
Questionnaire Qu. 23

RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING MUSIC/DANCE	# OF RESP.	%
YES	284	68
NO	136	32
TOTALS	420	100

TABLE 41  
Questionnaire Qu. 5

WHAT OTHER AREAS BESIDES EVEREST HAVE YOU TREKKED	# OF RESP.	%
ANNAPURNA CONSERVATION AREA	96	70
LANGTANG NATIONAL PARK	25	18
MAKALU-BARUN NATIONAL PARK AND CONSERVATION AREA	17	12
OTHER	0	0
TOTAL	138	100

**SELECTED TREKKERS SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING  
INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION**

Questionnaire Question 16

RESPONDENT 54

Make posters in and brochures available in English, Nepali and other languages. Put signs on trails and at lodges.

RESPONDENT 28

Print up "model trekker" handout on the back of the trekking permit.

RESPONDENT 41

Trekking agencies should do more to inform clients.

RESPONDENT 66

Distribute at airport in different languages on arrival.

RESPONDENT 69

Lectures/information to porters. They drop litter and can also influence others.

RESPONDENT 84

More posters and brochures in lodges.

RESPONDENT 93

Involve locals in "awareness raising." Higher profile rubbish dumps and recycling programs. Ensure all visitors get information regarding conservation.

RESPONDENT 95

Have slide shows at national park headquarters on cultural, religious, historical, natural history aspects of the region to attract people to attend. Then also cover environmentally responsible trekking. Most people would not bother going just to learn about the latter.

RESPONDENT 139

Pre trek lectures at or near permit offices.

RESPONDENT 152

Last year the trekking permit office had prominent information signs to read while waiting in line. Need signs, posters and brochures at Kathmandu Immigration Office.

RESPONDENT 155

Hand out list of battery and metal disposal sites when trekking permit is issued.

RESPONDENT 158

A central effort in educating sirdars, porters, guides and trekking staff should be initiated.

RESPONDENT 308

Place brochures at key points that trekkers always go to rather than just places they have to go out of their way to get to. Put them at National Park checkpoints, immigration and lodges in addition to SPCC offices.

RESPONDENT 335

More information about projects in the area should be available at lodges trekking and travel agencies and at hotels in Kathmandu.

RESPONDENT 304

Give a pamphlet with the permit or better yet, make people or encourage them to read environmental material as part of the permit process.

RESPONDENT 176

Issue free leaflets via the Nepal Tourist Association and The Nepalese Embassy. Television awareness programs in home countries of tourists and slide shows in Kathmandu.

RESPONDENT 180

Seminars with tourists in this area. More information about the influence of tourism.

RESPONDENT 183

Is information the problem or enforcement? Information could be distributed to trekkers with trekking permit in more detail in their native language.

RESPONDENT 190

Education in schools on the importance of conservation. Show the benefits and advantages of conservation efforts that positively impact local communities.

RESPONDENT 200

By radio in the form of an appealing commercial.

RESPONDENT 236

Target outdoor magazines more.

RESPONDENT 262

Include more information in popular trekking guidebooks.

RESPONDENT 303

Perhaps more advertising in guest houses and at the immigration office.

RESPONDENT 29

Hand out brochures at immigration. Put up posters at immigration office, lodges and park offices.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE  
MANAGEMENT OF THE AREA**

Questionnaire Question 17

RESPONDENT 5

Park fees could go directly towards building toilet facilities and for waste management.

RESPONDENT 8

Park rangers need to be in more populated areas to keep an eye on peoples behavior. Otherwise rules are ignored.

RESPONDENT 17

The management should not be an official state management but should be headed by the inhabitants because they are more interested in protecting their way of life, their culture and their natural environment.

RESPONDENT 22

Advertise at the entry point to the park and at the beginning of the trek. Everyone who enters the park should get some environmental information.

RESPONDENT 23

Establish minimum training and health standards for lodge owners.

RESPONDENT 28

Distribute more information to trekkers, discourage folks from taking hot showers with wood heated showers, let a private NGO run the local conservation effort.

RESPONDENT 31

More talks and information posts.

RESPONDENT 32

Annapurna has a damn good system. It is much better than Everest.

RESPONDENT 37

For the good of all, I think that the number of trekkers needs to be limited. Make the maximum number of people per group around eight not twenty-eight.

RESPONDENT 42

Trekker awareness, solar power, raise Nepali's awareness of personal hygiene, benefit of proper trash disposal, importance of clean water and proper sewerage.

RESPONDENT 44

Composting toilets and limits on the number of tourists. More finance to first aid stations.

RESPONDENT 71

Make kerosene stoves mandatory for trekkers lodges. Build proper toilets in villages.

RESPONDENT 100

Limit the number of trekkers and improve toilet facilities.

RESPONDENT 102

List the names of lodges not using firewood.

RESPONDENT 112

Improve the distribution of kerosene so that people do not use wood for cooking.

RESPONDENT 131

More toilets and rubbish bins along the trail. Make it easier for lodges to get kerosene.  
Have more trail maintenance and improvement.

RESPONDENT 151

Education about littering for locals and porters as well as travelers.

RESPONDENT 158

As a tour leader I'm frustrated with the problem of garbage handling. Often the staff says yes when you ask them to do this and that with garbage, but in reality they do not see a problem and do whatever they

find appropriate - throwing away, burning, burying. It seems to be stupid to bring garbage back to Kathmandu, when you see and know that it doesn't get handled well there (shit everywhere). A central effort in education is needed.

RESPONDENT 248

Take the money from the park permit and trekking permit and put it towards educational programs for locals.

RESPONDENT 263

Impose penalties for groups violating park rules (e.g., burning wood).

RESPONDENT 296

Support hydroelectric projects and use of kerosene. Subsidize kerosene.

RESPONDENT 306

Encourage HMG to increase the money flow back into the region.

RESPONDENT 335

Involve locals in all aspects of ecotourism. Distribute information on more efficient systems for heating water and cooking. Stress hygiene more.

RESPONDENT 358

Training on sensitivity in disposing of waste among the Nepalese, better assigned areas for proper disposal. Education about deforestation and soil erosion.

RESPONDENT 402

More park wardens. Better inform lodge keepers. Lectures not just about altitude sickness.

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM TREKKERS ON POSITIVE EFFECTS  
OF TOURISM THAT THEY HAVE SEEN**

Questionnaire Question 27

RESPONDENT 2

Good for the economy. Raises the living standard of local people but damages the environment.

RESPONDENT 4

Provides needed hard currency and employment for locals.

RESPONDENT 14

Children have better medical and educational opportunities.

RESPONDENT 27

It builds good relationships between the tourist and local people. Cultural exchange.

RESPONDENT 28

The permit money should go back to the local areas. Tourism provides a good source of income for local people, provides better schools and helps to improve infrastructure.

RESPONDENT 32

Encouragement of conservation and ecological awareness.

RESPONDENT 42

Although there have been some negative aspects, I think tourism has brought some good changes: money into the area and electricity that helps reforestation projects. Also, we have talked to many porters and guides who have had their education paid for by trekkers. For example, the Himalayan Trust has really helped local communities (hospital in Kunde, school in Khumjung, bridges, etc.). The Himalayan Rescue Association also provides medical help for locals.

RESPONDENT 52

Employment and more opportunities for women. A change in understanding of their contribution to erosion and a means to avoid it.

RESPONDENT 75

Upgrading of important monuments.

RESPONDENT 207

Better education through the Hillary schools, higher standards of living, exposure to many countries.

## SELECTED COMMENTS FROM TREKKERS ON NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TOURISM THAT THEY HAVE SEEN

Questionnaire Question 28.

### RESPONDENT 4

Environmental cost. Creation of a dependent attitude by children (begging).

### RESPONDENT 5

A trail of plastic mineral water bottles along the way. They are non biodegradable and in Nepal they are not recyclable.

### RESPONDENT 9

Litter. Burning wood for tourists.

### RESPONDENT 12

Trekking areas become westernized.

### RESPONDENT 17

Children as beggars, increasing criminality, increasing environmental degradation.

### RESPONDENT 27

Arrogant westerners. Sometimes there is not enough respect for local people (like when taking pictures).

### RESPONDENT 82

Children begging whether for a rupee or pen. It's still begging. This is promoted by several guidebooks. For example, the Lonely Planet guidebook promotes the giving of pens. Creates greed in local people.

### RESPONDENT 89

Litter, erosion, deforestation and negative western influences. Inflation.

### RESPONDENT 101

Negative western influences. Excessive packaging leads to more litter and more sweets leads to tooth decay.

RESPONDENT 176

Social disruption: young people leave their families to work in the tourist industry. Also, increases the price of food.

RESPONDENT 206

Exploitation of porters by trekking companies.

RESPONDENT 213

Threatens their culture and value systems.

RESPONDENT 303

Adoption of western culture at the expense of their own. West is best attitude.

## SELECTED GENERAL COMMENTS FROM TREKKERS

### Questionnaire Question 41

#### RESPONDENT 4

Park entrance fees should be spent improving park facilities (i.e., guiding and day to day maintenance of toilets, notice boards at beginning of trek and in problem areas such as Lobuche with its sanitation, litter and sewage problems.

#### RESPONDENT 12

Information about altitude sickness was well spelled out in guide books and posted in lodges along the way. Most people seemed to take this quite seriously.

#### RESPONDENT 20

Felt guilty about contributing to deforestation.

#### RESPONDENT 271

The toilets are revolting.

#### RESPONDENT 24

I wonder where all the fees for trekking permits, national park entrance fees, etc. ends up? Most infrastructure projects seem to be financed from abroad.

#### RESPONDENT 42

I think there could be improvement in the trekking agencies. It seems that a lot of times they take advantage of the local, especially the porters and the area for their own benefit. We ran into a few cases where we felt that the porters were not being fed enough and there is absolutely no excuse for that and many times we saw porters for large agencies cooking over wood. They could afford one or two more porters to carry a stove and kerosene. We have seen people on arranged treks who get hot water morning and evening. I guess they paid for it but it sure uses a lot of fuel, usually wood. I think that if the ways of the trekking agencies were improved there could be a lessening of the impact on the area since it seem that so many people go through them.

RESPONDENT 48

Even though a lot of firewood is used for heating and cooking for tourists, the locals are to blame as well. Perhaps education for Nepalese is necessary.

RESPONDENT 53

Despite advice, far too many tourists encourage the children by giving pens, chocolate, etc. Most local parents do seem to discourage the children but the amount of begging says that they are not always successful.

RESPONDENT 176

Nepalese agencies should give warm clothes, wind pants, boots, tent and sleeping bags, etc. for all staff who go high. As well as saving time, it would save lives.

## APPENDIX B

### DURING-POST TREK QUESTIONNAIRE

Brien Sheedy from the University of Texas at Austin, USA, kindly asks for your cooperation in completing the following questionnaire. The answers will provide invaluable information for his final thesis on tourism and conservation in Nepal.

Thank you very much for your participation

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Please answer all the questions, mark an "X" in the boxes where appropriate:

1. Is the respondent:

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your nationality?

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3. What is your profession?

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4. Which of the following age groups are you in?

1-18 \_\_\_\_\_

26-33 \_\_\_\_\_

34-41 \_\_\_\_\_

42-49 \_\_\_\_\_

50-57 \_\_\_\_\_

58-65 \_\_\_\_\_

66+ \_\_\_\_\_

5. In which area are you trekking or have trekked in?

(You may mark more than one?)

Annapurna Conservation Area \_\_\_\_\_

Sagarmatha National Park \_\_\_\_\_

Langtang National Park \_\_\_\_\_

Makalu-Barun National Park \_\_\_\_\_

and Conservation Area \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Please rank the following from 1-4 according to the degree to which it attracted you to the area. (1 is the most attractive, 4 is the least, use each number only once.)

- Mountains \_\_\_\_\_
- Challenge / Adventure \_\_\_\_\_
- Wildlife \_\_\_\_\_
- Culture/Villages \_\_\_\_\_

7. If you have been staying in tea houses/trekkers lodges:  
How satisfied have you been with the standard of tea houses / accommodation?

- Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Quite satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Not at all satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, is accommodation ...

- Over priced \_\_\_\_\_
- Reasonable \_\_\_\_\_
- Under priced \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you been eating food prepared in tea houses?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

9. If yes, how satisfied were you with the standard?

- Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Quite satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Not very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

10. What kind of water have you been drinking?

- Bottled water \_\_\_\_\_
- Boiled water \_\_\_\_\_
- Treated with iodine \_\_\_\_\_
- Filtered \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. In your opinion what is the physical condition of the trails?

- Very good \_\_\_\_\_
- Adequate \_\_\_\_\_
- Poor \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you noticed any particular environmental problems in the area?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe these:

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13. In your opinion is littering a problem in the area?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

14. Have you been aware of any conservation efforts in the area? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what have you noticed?  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Did you receive any environmental information before you started your trek? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, where did you get this from?  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you have any suggestions for how information distribution could be improved?  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you have any suggestions for improving the management of the area?  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. In general, have you found the local people ... Friendly \_\_\_\_\_  
Indifferent \_\_\_\_\_  
Hostile \_\_\_\_\_

19. Which group of local people have you had most contact with? Guides/Porters \_\_\_\_\_  
Lodge owners \_\_\_\_\_  
Local people on the trail \_\_\_\_\_  
None \_\_\_\_\_

20. Did you become sick or injured at all during your trek? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what could have been the cause? Dirty water \_\_\_\_\_  
Contaminated food \_\_\_\_\_  
Altitude sickness \_\_\_\_\_  
Flu / cold \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical trekking injury \_\_\_\_\_  
Infection \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

21. Approximately how much do you think you have spent per person per day?  
(Excluding porter / guide fees)

- US \$ Less than 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- \$3-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- \$6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- \$11-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- \$21 + \_\_\_\_\_

22. Have you bought any locally produced handicrafts during your trek?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

23. Did you have the opportunity to experience local music and dance?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

24. Approximately how many trekkers did you meet on the trails per day?

- 5-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20-30 \_\_\_\_\_
- 30-40 \_\_\_\_\_
- 40 + \_\_\_\_\_

25. In your opinion is the number of trekkers in the area:

- Too many \_\_\_\_\_
- Reasonable \_\_\_\_\_
- Too few \_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you think tourism is good for Nepal?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your answer

27. What is one positive effect of tourism that you have seen?

28. What is one negative effect of tourism that you have seen?

29. Did you find the number of tea houses:

- Too many \_\_\_\_\_
- Adequate \_\_\_\_\_
- Too few \_\_\_\_\_

30. How long in total are you staying in Nepal? \_\_\_\_\_ Days

31. How many days total will you trek? \_\_\_\_\_ Days

32. Have you been to Nepal before?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

33. If yes, how many times? \_\_\_\_\_ Did you go trekking?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

34. Did you organize your trek with an agency?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

35. How many people are you trekking with? \_\_\_\_\_

36. How many rest days have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

37. Do you plan to return to Nepal?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, would you come back to this area?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

38. Would you recommend this area to other people?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

39. Did you employ a guide in your group?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

40. Did you have any porter with your group?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

41. Do you have any other comments about your trek?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

## APPENDIX C

This "Model Trekker" information is printed on the back of KEEP and SPCC advertisements.

### The Model Trekker



Cooking dal bhaat takes less fuel. Order the same meals at the same time as other trekkers.

Bring adequate warm clothes so as not to depend on fires for warmth. See that staff and porters are properly outfitted.

Please don't give to begging children. Pay fair prices for food, lodging and services. Buying local products benefits hill economies, but buying antiques and artifacts robs Nepal of its culture.

Carry a plastic bag for litter. Pack out all non-biodegradables and burn papers discreetly.

For women a mid-calf length skirt or loose pants, and for men pants or knee-length shorts (long pants in monasteries) are respectful of local customs.

Use your head. Don't hike too high too fast. And don't trek alone (women or men). Register your name with KEEP or your embassy / consulate.

Be respectful when photographing people. Always ask first, try to establish a friendly rapport, and please don't pay money.

Burn all toilet paper, and be careful to avoid sacred places when relieving yourself.

No nudity when bathing please. Women should wear a loongi (sarrong) covering them from chest to knees. Don't put soaps (even bio-degradable) in streams. Throw soapy water away from streams.

Take hot showers only when the water is heated by non-wood or fuel-saving stoves.

Don't buy bottled water on trek. Instead, use a canteen or water bottle and add iodine to treat drinking water.

Stick to main trails to prevent erosion.



## APPENDIX D

### ECO-TREKKING WORKSHOP DECLARATION

WE COMMIT TO FOLLOW THESE PRINCIPLES OF ECO-TREKKING

1. PREPARE PROPERLY FOR EACH TREK
  - a. Warm clothing and shelter will be provided for porters and staff on high altitude treks.
  - b. A first aid kit will be sent on each trek. First aid training will be made available to staff.
2. ASK GROUP MEMBERS TO HELP
  - a. Group members will be properly briefed before trek on proper dress, bathing attire, respect for religious sites, to give money/gifts only through monastery/temple caretakers, schoolmasters or local health workers.
3. COOK ON STOVES
  - a. Every effort should be made to provide kerosene or meals to porters.
  - b. Kerosene will be used in every trekking area. Stoves, spare burners, parts and tools will be sent on treks.
4. PRACTICE PROPER HYGIENE
  - a. Staff will be informed of the importance of washing hands before touching food and using clean towels for washing dishes.
  - b. Drinking water will be boiled for at least two minutes.
5. USE TOILETS AND EXISTING CAMPSITES
  - a. Toilet tents or existing campsite toilets will be used.
  - b. Toilet tent holes will be filled in to look as they did before digging.
  - c. Rain trenches around tents will only be dug in an emergency.
  - d. New campsites will be used only when existing sites are not available.
6. LEAVE ALL CAMPS AND TRAILS CLEAN
  - a. Campsite rubbish will be separated into burnable (paper), food garbage and non-biodegradables (tins, bottles, metal-foils, batteries and plastics.)
  - b. Only paper products will be burned in an old fire site not a new one.
  - c. Vegetable waste will be scattered out of sight well away from the campsite.
  - d. All non-biodegradables will be carried out.
  - e. Porters and staff will be encouraged to clean up after others and not to litter.

## APPENDIX E

Information Printed on the back of a trekking permit issued at the Department of Immigration.

### NOTE:

1. Trekking permit should be kept along with the trekkers at all times.
2. Trekking permit should be shown to Immigration authorities or police on demand.
3. Trekkers are not allowed to trek in areas previously known as restricted.
4. Please kindly surrender this card at Immigration Department or at any port of exit, after the completion of trekking.
5. Deviation from the prescribed routes in the trekking permit will be treated as a violation of law.
6. Let the Himalayas change you - do not change them. So remember, while you are trekking:
  - (a) Protect the natural environment.
    - Leave the campsite cleaner than you found it.
    - Limit deforestation - make no open fires.
    - Burn dry papers and packets in a safe place.
    - Keep local water clean and avoid using pollutants.
    - Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment.
    - Help your guides and porters and follow conservation measures.
7. Respect local traditions, protect local cultures, maintain local pride:
  - When taking photographs, respect privacy.
  - Respect holy places.
  - Refrain from giving money to children since it will encourage begging.
  - Respect for local etiquette earns you respect.
8. Filming in restricted or notified areas without permission is strictly prohibited.

Thanks.

- Department of Immigration

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