Tourism for Local Community Development in Mountain Areas: Perspectives, Issues, and Guidelines

Proceedings of the
Hindu Kush-Himalayan Regional Workshop on
Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development

Edited by
Pitamber Sharma

Organised by
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
with support from
NORAD - Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

**June 19-21, 1995
Kathmandu, Nepal**

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Cover photograph: Background plate: Manslu Peak (Nepal, 8156m)
Inset right: Lho Village (Nepal) with a veil of morning smoke - courtesy
T.B. Shrestha
Inset left: The Regional Workshop, June 1995

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Foreword

The Hindu Kush-Himalayas cover a region of immense natural beauty and a high level of cultural and biological diversity. It is also a region of deep-rooted poverty for its 120 million inhabitants, for whom the environment is rapidly deteriorating under the pressure of an increasing population and the consequently increasing demands on the natural resource systems. The search for sustainable livelihoods under these conditions has to build on the natural comparative advantages in such a way that, while promoting alternative, gainful income and employment opportunities, the issues of poverty, environmental degradation, and empowerment of local communities can be addressed simultaneously. In this task, mountain tourism provides an opportunity as well as a challenge. It is an area of significant concern in integrated mountain development.

In the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, tourism is already a source of considerable income for the government as well as the private sector. The impacts and implications of tourism, for the fragile physical and social environment of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and for the development of mountain communities, therefore, need to be assessed, so that strategies, policies, and programmes can be developed to make tourism an environmentally and economically sustainable sector in the mountains. The Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development Project was initiated to address these issues and develop guidelines for sustainable mountain tourism.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) was established with the objective of promoting the development of an economically and environmentally sound ecosystem and improving the living conditions of mountain communities. Therefore, mountain tourism is an area of priority attention for ICIMOD.

A Hindu Kush-Himalayan Regional Workshop was organised by ICIMOD to share the research findings of the project with a larger and relevant audience of policy-makers, researchers, programme managers, representatives of NGOs, and the private sector. The Workshop brought together participants from seven of ICIMOD's eight Regional Member Countries and was immensely successful in articulating the issues and concerns of mountain tourism.

On behalf of ICIMOD, I would like to express my sincere thanks to NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, for providing the financial support to undertake the studies and organise the Regional Workshop. I also express my sincere appreciation to our collaborating institutions from

India, Nepal, and Pakistan for joining hands with ICIMOD to undertake the studies, and to all the Workshop participants for their contributions to the deliberations.

On behalf of ICIMOD, Dr. Pitamber Sharma, coordinated the Project as well as the Workshop. This report was prepared by him with the help of Hubert Trapp, Sugandha Shrestha, Jeanette D. Gurung, and Sameer Karki, who acted as rapporteurs for different sessions of the Workshop.

Thanks are due to everyone involved in organising the Workshop and preparing this Report.

Egbert Pelinck
Director General
ICIMOD