

## **Lodge Survey Results**

A structured format was used to collect information on various issues related to lodges: visitors, energy use, import leakages, and perceptions about community development. Altogether 40 lodge owners were interviewed for the case study, out of which the survey included 22 lodges from Ghandruk (60%) and 18 from Ghorepani (40%). This section summarises the different responses.

## *Lodge Ownership, Capacity, and Employment*

About 95 per cent of the lodges in Ghorepani and Ghandruk are owned by people from these villages, and only about five per cent are owned by people who migrated to them. Although most (87%) of these lodges are operated by the owners themselves, some have been rented out as well (8% in Ghandruk and 5% in Ghorepani) (Table 4.17).

Most of the lodges are of a permanent nature (78%), being open all year round. Of the 22 per cent of the lodges that claimed to be temporary, 88 per cent (i.e., 8) were in Ghandruk, and the remaining 11 per cent were in Ghorepani. The average number of rooms in the lodges in Ghorepani is 8.72, and in Ghandruk it is 7.27. Likewise, the number of beds per lodge in Ghandruk is 15.94, and it is 17.27 in Ghorepani (Table 4.18).

An average lodge in both the areas provides employment to 7.5 people each year, with 4.2 persons being employed during the peak season. Females comprise about 55 per cent of the employees in lodges. The bulk of lodge employment (75%) is taken up by family members, and local labour is hired (25%) to fill the gap (Table 4.19).

## *Volume and Rates' Charges*

The 40 lodges surveyed in Ghandruk and Ghorepani put up a total of 14,721 (72%) tourists during the last peak season (October to April) and an additional 5,601 (28%) tourists during the slack season (Table 4.20). Lodges in Ghandruk put up 46 per cent of the visitors, and lodges in Ghorepani 54 per cent. During the slack season (monsoon season) more tourists (61%) visited Ghandruk than Ghorepani, perhaps due to Ghandruk being relatively more accessible. The total number of visitors put up by the lodges in the two areas is almost 50 per cent of all the trekkers that visit the ACAP area in a year. The average length of stay in a lodge is about one night per visitor in both the areas.

Lodge owners in Ghorepani and Ghandruk were asked to provide the rates charged per tourist for various items. Results have been summarised in Table 4.21. The rates charged for different items in the two areas show variations across the areas as well as within and across the season within an area. For example, in Ghandruk the cost of renting a room was Rs 75 last season, which is slightly higher than the rate that prevailed in the previous season (Rs 70). In Ghorepani, the current season's room rate was lower (Rs 50), and it had not

changed since last season. On an average, prices are higher in Ghandruk than in Ghorepani, as can be seen in Table 4.21. Based on these rates, a trekker requires about Rs 260 in Ghorepani and Rs 357 in Ghandruk per day to pay for accommodations and meals. This rate is a minimum rate and does not include the cost of porters and other expenses.

### *Energy Use*

Energy originating from forests, namely firewood, is the main energy source for lodge owners in Ghorepani and Ghandruk, although in Ghandruk the availability of substitutes appears to have reduced firewood consumption. The average annual rate of firewood consumed per lodge in Ghorepani is almost six and a half times greater than that in Ghandruk (Table 4.22). Ghandruk lodges have access to other energy sources, and the price of firewood in Ghandruk is relatively higher (15%) than in Ghorepani, which may have encouraged additional consumption in Ghorepani.

Kerosene, although available in both areas, is more widely consumed in Ghandruk than in Ghorepani, and again the relatively lower price per litre of kerosene and the availability of a kerosene depot run by the ACAP may partly explain of the higher consumption of kerosene in Ghandruk. Furthermore, Ghandruk appears to use other energy sources, such as LPG gas, electricity, and solar heaters, which also helps explain the lower firewood consumption there.

Additional information was also collected that sheds light on this issue of energy consumption. Availability of alternative energy sources has enabled lodge owners in Ghandruk to use a variety of appliances that do not depend on firewood, whereas lodge owners in Ghorepani have not been able to use all these devices because of the lack of alternative energy and other factors. For example, solar heaters that require solar energy were not reported in use by the lodges in the sample. This indicates that either they cannot afford to install these technologies or they are not fully aware of them. Furthermore, inaccessibility increases transportation costs and thus these technologies are less affordable in Ghorepani, which explains the lower use there of these conveniences (Table 4.23).

Ownership of back-boiler heaters is higher in Ghorepani than in Ghandruk. Back-boiler heaters in Ghorepani depend entirely on firewood, so that their use is seen to be lower in Ghandruk. Over 45 per cent of the lodge owners surveyed in Ghandruk reported use of solar heaters for heating water. In

Ghorepani, no lodge owner surveyed reported such use. Cooking rice uses up a considerable amount of energy, and, with electricity available in Ghandruk, 68 per cent of the lodge owners surveyed reported use of rice cookers, thus saving on firewood. Ghorepani currently does not have electricity, and hence the use of electrical appliances is out of the question. Also, the percentage of lodges using kerosene is substantially higher in Ghandruk (91%) than in Ghorepani (22%), and here the relative price in the two areas helps explain why fewer lodges in Ghorepani use kerosene (Table 4.23).

Use of technologies can be constrained by their prices, that is, whether lodge owners can afford them. Lodges owners were therefore asked about their perception of the various appliances and energy types used, as well as their prices (Table 4.24). Most of the appliances are perceived by lodge owners to be inexpensive and efficient. Note that 75 per cent of the lodge owners in Ghorepani perceived the price of kerosene to be expensive, a much higher figure than in Ghandruk.

In both areas, a large percentage of lodge owners indicated that firewood consumption has been decreasing over time, although a small percentage (8%) indicated its use has been increasing. About 25 per cent of the lodge owners in Ghorepani reported that kerosene use has increased over the years. In Ghandruk, where other energy types are also used by lodge owners, only 19 per cent reported increasing use of kerosene and 33 per cent reported decreasing use of it.

Lodge owners were also asked to give their opinion on the supply situation of the different energy sources, lodges, water supply, and whether space to build more lodges would be adequate or not if tourism in their areas were to double. Firewood supply was perceived to be adequate in both areas (Table 4.25). About 68 per cent of the lodge owners thought electricity would be in short supply in Ghandruk. Lodge owners also perceived that energy would be in short supply, more so in Ghandruk (27%) than in Ghorepani (6%). In general, some of these basic facilities required for tourism expansion, although not currently perceived by lodge owners to be seriously constraining factors, nevertheless need to be monitored if tourism is to further expand in the area.

Another question that was asked of the lodge owners was their opinion regarding deforestation and whether tourism had induced it. In Ghorepani, about 72 per cent of the lodge owners gave an affirmative response, while in Ghandruk only 36 per cent agreed. Likewise, when lodge owners were asked if tourism had brought them benefits, an overwhelming 100 per cent in

Ghandruk and 94 per cent in Ghorepani indicated such to be the case (Table 4.26).