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Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development in Nepal

A Case Study of Phewa Lakeside, Pokhara

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Preface

The present report is the result of a series of studies conducted as part of the second phase of the NORAD-funded project entitled Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development. One of the major objectives of the Project was to develop training modules and materials on mountain tourism for local community development for policy-makers, programme managers, private sector agencies, and local community-based entrepreneurs and impart training to these audiences on a pilot basis. As part of the Project several of thematic studies and manuals have been prepared.

This Discussion Paper is the second of three case studies from Nepal that focus on the concerns of mountain tourism and its promotion for local community development in Upper Mustang, **Phewa Lakeside in Pokhara**, and Syaphrubesi, Langtang. These three studies throw light on the problems as well as the prospects of mountain tourism for local development in three different ecozones of Nepal. The Phewa Lake study brings out the need and importance of a participatory institutional framework to deal with common property resource problems, namely those of pollution of the lake and the problems of encroachment and incompatible land use, all related to the development of tourism in the area. Phewa Lake is a prime tourist asset for Pokhara, but it is rapidly deteriorating due to the lack of a focal institution responsible for the management of the environmental resources of the area. The Upper Mustang case (the first study in MEI 98/1) highlights the problems of environmental, economic, social, and infrastructural linkages of tourism in an area where high-yielding tourism is being promoted under the aegis of a non-government organization and where tourism could play a leading role in the integrated development of the area. Syaphrubesi, in Langtang (the third study in MEI 98/3) is an area in which the initial impacts of tourism are becoming evident. The Syaphrubesi study primarily assesses the programmes introduced under the Quality Tourism Project that help improve the environmental, economic, and human resource development linkages with tourism, and it provides a number of lessons of relevance to other areas. In all cases, the attempt is to highlight the scope for community action that would contribute to local development through the promotion of environmentally friendly tourism. The studies were carried out as part of the development of training material for different target audiences under the Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development Project.

We would like to thank the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CREST), our collaborating institution in the Mountain Tourism for Local Community Development Project in Nepal, particularly Dr Kamal Banskota and Bikash Sharma, for undertaking this study.

On behalf of ICIMOD, Dr. Pitamber Sharma is the Project Coordinator as well as the technical editor of this paper.

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Abstract

This case study examines, the 'tragedy of the commons' as it is played out in the case of Phewa Lakeside, which is rapidly deteriorating through an excess of exploitation, and because there are too many actors planning its future at cross purposes. This interesting and enlightening narrative assesses the current deteriorating structure and lack of focus and provides valuable insights and recommendations for the future of tourism in this picturesque spot. It examines all the unfortunate happenings to this lake both naturally and human-induced, as well as services provided to tourists in the context of quality. Several conflicts are apparent conflicts which, if not tackled with alacrity, could culminate in another environmental disaster and the end of a very valuable natural asset.

Table of Contents

Preface
Acknowledgements
Abstract

PART ONE INTRODUCTION AND STUDY METHODOLOGY

Introduction 3
Objectives 4
Case Study Areas 4

Phewa Lakeside 4

Methodology 5

Sustainable Development 5
Carrying Capacity 8

Internalising the Perceptions of Stakeholders in Mountain Tourism 10

Government 10
Entrepreneurs 11
NGOs/INGOs 11
Local People 11
Visitors 12

Training Needs 12

Conceptual Orientation 12
Institutional Process 13
Actions 13

PART TWO CASE STUDY OF PHEWA LAKESIDE, POKHARA

Introduction 17

Introduction 17
General Background and Tourist Assets of the Study Area 19

The Present Situation 21

Introduction 21
Use Values 22

The Stakeholders in the Environment of the Phewa Lake	23
Major Problems and Issues	25
Analysis of the Problems of Phewa Lake	33
Carrying Capacity Assessment and Recommendations	38
Introduction	38
Carrying Capacity Assessment	38
Review of the IUCN Action Plan and Recommendations	44
Assessment of the IUCN Action Plan and Further Recommendations	51
Bibliography	55
Annex	58