

Mitigating Measures

It would be hard to imagine that remedial measures can be suggested point-by-point to mitigate the adverse impacts of tourism on culture in Nepal or anywhere else. In a normal process, culture change is slow and cumulative in effect. It is a result of many things that happen to a society as the winds of change blow in from many directions over a period of time. The nature of culture change can be diffuse as well as pervasive. Culture has no visible pressure points on which one could exert force to bring change about in the desired directions. In many cases, it may be already too late to do anything about the impacts. There should be a concern for preserving culture, even if it is through symbols and its external forms and when it may no longer be possible to preserve it as living rituals. In many countries, people have rediscovered and returned to their cultures belatedly, through revival. Festivals long forgotten, or enfeebled through lack of resources, can be revived for their colour, gaiety, and external splendour, if not for their true religious fervour. Art (sculptures and paintings) can be placed in galleries and museums, if they are languishing *in situ*; architectural works (temples, stupas, monasteries, and old palaces) can be treated as monuments and restored, if not used as objects of living faith. Art can be mass produced commercially for its aesthetic value. But whatever is done should be done properly. Art reproductions should be of a high quality. Museums and their displays must be properly kept. Monuments must be well-preserved. Core cultural areas must be protected from modern constructions, and their cultural environment must be preserved intact. Arts and crafts' centres in a new urban milieu should be supported. All parties involved in the tourism trade, such as the government, the private sector, and the NGOs, should have the good sense to keep themselves well-informed about the cultural sensitivity of the community, so as not to offend it or wilfully destroy things in the pursuit of one's trade. Those whose task it is to guide tourists must inform them about people's cultural traditions so that they behave in deference towards them. Tourism educational materials on the cultural sensitivity of the community in an area might be a good idea. Also, members of the host country, at various levels, must be taught to deal with tourists with deference, self-respect, and dignity, becoming of their cultural pride. Good results can be obtained just by putting some of the existing ground rules relating to environmental degradation, garbage-piling, and roadside-littering to more effective use. Effective measures could be taken to prevent art thefts. The youth of the country in various cultural communities must remain meaningfully preoccupied in productive work or have gainful employment. It is the idle and the unemployed among them who hang around tourists and become transmitters of negative cultures. It is necessary to strengthen

institutions, such as the drug rehabilitation centres, to help the youth who have been victims of drug abuse. It is not possible to be any more specific than this in suggesting mitigating measures here.