

Chapter 3

Overview of Tourism

This chapter covers

- Concepts, definitions, and types of mountain tourism
- Trends in international tourism, the role of mountains in tourism, and the impacts and some major issues and constraints in sustainable mountain tourism

Introduction: Concepts and Definitions of Tourism

All tourism includes some travel but not all travel is tourism. The characteristics of tourists and their behaviour provide the basis for the conceptualisation of tourism. It is important to classify tourists into different categories, as each type of tourist has a different impact which can be either positive or negative (or both). Adequate understanding of the impacts generated by different types of tourism is essential for formulating policies that benefit a country, the communities visited by the tourists, and the environment. Some of the characteristics of tourism are as follows.

- Tourism arises from the movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations.
- The journey to, and stay in, the destination includes activities at the destination.
- The journey and stay take place outside the normal place of residence and work; hence, tourism gives rise to activities that are distinct from those of the resident and working populations of the places through which tourists travel and in which they stay.
- The movement to destinations is temporary and short-term in character, with the intention to return within a few days, weeks, or months.
- Destinations are visited for purposes other than taking up permanent residence or employment remunerated from within the places visited. Hence, the purpose of the visit is also an important characteristic of tourism.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)'s definition of a tourist is: "a person travelling outside his or her usual environment for a specified period of time with a purpose of travel that is other than an activity remunerated from the place visited."

This definition has several issues related to space, time and duration, and activity.

- 'Usual environment' is intended to exclude trips within the areas of usual residence and also frequent and regular trips between the domicile and the workplace and other community trips of a routine character.
- 'A specified period of time' is intended to exclude long-term migration.
- 'An activity remunerated from the place visited' is intended to exclude migration for temporary work only.

Tourists have different types of impacts on the areas they visit (e.g., income and employment, cultural, and environmental). Governments may have different regulations for each group, and this has implications for the local economy. Clearly, how the various terms are defined is crucial to the measurement of tourism demand and for international comparison. In order to improve the collection of statistics and understanding of tourism, it is essential to differentiate between the various types of visitors. Some of the following categories are useful.

- **International tourist** – A visitor who travels to a country other than that in which he or she is usually resident for at least one night, but not more than one year, and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited.
- **International excursionist** – A visitor who travels the same day to a country other than that in which he or she has his or her usual residency for less than 24 hours without spending the night in the country visited and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited (e.g., a cruise ship visitor).
- **Domestic tourist** – A tourist who travels internally within his or her own country for not more than six months.

For analytical purposes tourism has also been classified into different categories, such as:

- Event tourism and gastronomic tourism (world cup football, cuisine)
- Health and recreational tourism (traditional healing, sightseeing)
- Children's and youth tourism
- Individual tourism
- Business tourism
- Nature-based or ecotourism (wildlife viewing, fishing, birdwatching)
- Adventure tourism (skiing, white water rafting, mountaineering)
- Pro-poor tourism
- Community-based tourism (homestays, cultural programmes)
- Heritage tourism (archaeological sites, cultural heritage)
- Pilgrimage tourism (monasteries, temples, sacred sites)

As explained in the introduction to this Resource Book, the term mountain tourism refers to any tourism activity that takes place in mountain areas in a sustainable way and includes all tourism activities for which mountains manifest a comparative advantage such as trekking, mountaineering, white water rafting, cultural tourism, and pilgrimages. In the Himalayan region, the most important forms of mountain tourism may be grouped into three types; namely, FITs (free independent travellers), group tourists (organised groups), and mountaineers. While the first two groups come to enjoy the rich environmental and cultural resources that abound in the Himalayas, the third group is primarily interested in climbing Himalayan peaks. The three types of mountain tourists are defined below.

- **FITs** – FITs can be defined as 'free independent travellers' who carry their own backpacks or hire a guide or porter to assist them and who eat and sleep in local mountain lodges or 'tea houses' (or tents).
- **Group tourists** – This category consists of tourists who come on a scheduled trip or join up with friends for a customised, self-contained trek, organised by an overseas' adventure travel company or with a local trekking agency. The full service includes all camp services and equipment such as sleeping bags, dining and toilet tents, cooking gear, meals, guides, cooks, and porters.
- **Mountaineers** – Mountaineers are special types of tourists who visit the Himalayas to climb peaks. This type of tourism requires considerable skill and is generally very expensive.

Tourism: Dynamism and Growth

The substantial growth in tourism activities clearly marks tourism as one of the most remarkable economic and social phenomena of the past century. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world. The number of international arrivals has increased worldwide from a mere 25 million in 1950 to an estimated 760 million in 2004, corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 6.5 per cent. Box 3.1 gives an indication of how this quantitative growth links to broader qualitative tourism trends.

Box 3.1: International Travel no Longer a 'Luxury' but a Right

One of the key conclusions of a recent study on the main drivers that affect consumers in key travel markets, and that will shape the future of the global travel industry in 2020, is that international travel is no longer seen as a luxury. Instead it is considered a 'right' by today's increasingly affluent society, and holidays are becoming increasingly accessible to lower income families. Recent research (Eurobarometer/16,000 respondents aged 15+) shows that when asked to consider lifestyle factors that are perceived to be 'absolutely necessary to live properly today' 84 per cent stated 'sufficient leisure time and means to enjoy it'. In 1990, when asked the same question, only 40 per cent viewed this factor as important.

Source: Cendant 2005

In 2004, the 760 million international arrivals generated a total of US \$622 billion in receipts worldwide. Predicted growth rates remain high and, although patterns have fluctuated from year to year (most recently due to terrorism, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and bird flu, and natural disasters) tourism has shown a strong and rapid ability to recover.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is predicting that international arrivals will more than double to over 1,500 million by 2020. In terms of regional growth, the strongest relative growth is expected to occur in developing countries. The contribution of tourism to developing economies is huge. Tourism accounts for more than two times the cash transfers from rich to poor countries than governments give in aid. Although Europe, the Americas, East Asia, and the Pacific will account for 80 per cent of total arrivals, and thus continue to dominate in terms of volume, international tourists to South Asia are forecast to grow by more than six per cent, compared to a world average of just over four per cent. International tourist arrivals from 1950-2004 are depicted in Table 3.1.

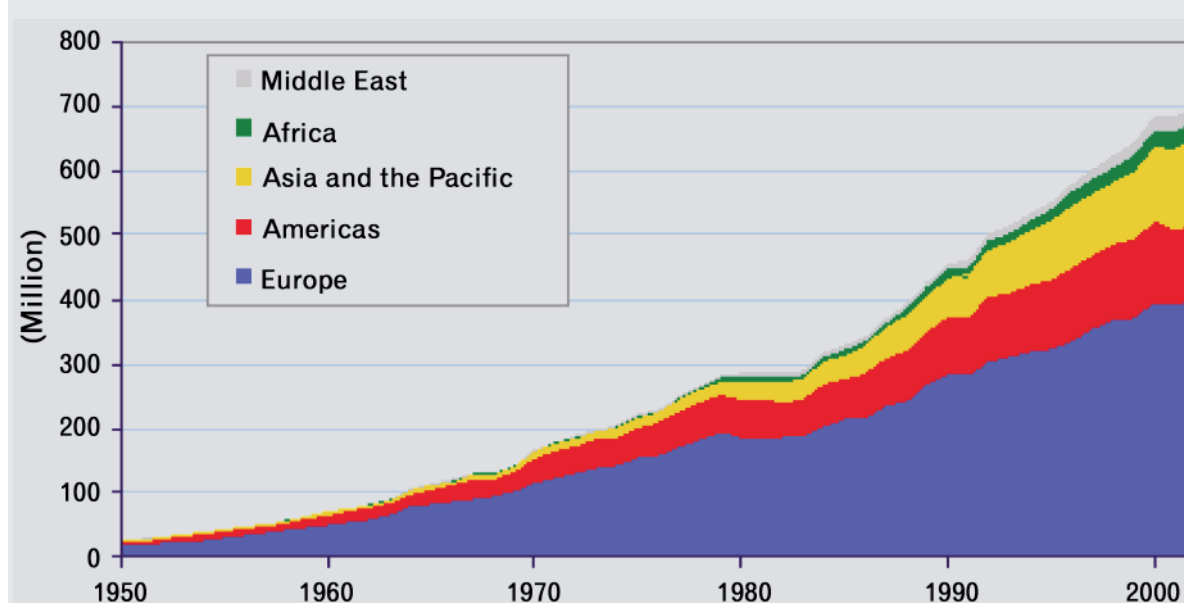
Mountains are very important to the tourism industry. It is estimated that mountains account for roughly 15-20 per cent of the global tourism market, generating between 70 and 90 billion US dollars per year (FAO 2005). After coastal regions, mountains are thought to be second in global popularity as tourist destinations. Recent trends indicate a surge in the number of visitors to ecotourism destinations, mainly located in the mountains. Hiking, camping, mountaineering, rock-climbing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and other forms of non-consumptive recreation are in growing demand (Nepal 2003).

Tourism is also a major provider of employment and supports an estimated 74 million jobs directly and 215 million jobs (8.1% of the world total) indirectly. The industry has a gross turnover of about US \$4,218 billion (about 10% of the world's total gross domestic product).

International travel is only one aspect of tourism. In many countries, domestic tourism outweighs international arrivals in terms of volume and income generated (e.g., Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan). Domestic tourism is also predicted to grow strongly.

Table 3.1: International Tourist Arrivals, 1950-2004*

	World	Africa	Americas	Asia and the Pacific	Europe	Middle East
1950	25.3	0.5	7.5	0.2	16.8	0.2
1980	278.2	7.3	62.3	23.6	177.5	7.5
1990	441.0	15.2	92.8	57.7	265.3	10.0
1995	538.1	20.4	109.0	85.0	309.3	14.3
2000	680.6	28.2	128.2	114.9	384.1	25.2
2001	680.4	28.9	122.1	120.7	383.8	25.0
2002	700.4	29.5	116.6	131.1	394.0	29.2
2003	689.7	30.8	113.1	119.3	396.6	30.0
2004*	763.2	33.2	125.8	152.5	416.4	35.4
Average Annual Growth (%)						
1950-2000	6.8	8.3	5.8	13.2	6.5	10.2
1950-1960	10.6	3.7	8.4	14.1	11.6	12.3
1960-1970	9.1	12.4	9.7	21.6	8.4	11.5
1970-1980	5.3	11.7	4.0	14.2	4.6	14.9
1980-1990	4.7	7.6	4.1	9.4	4.1	3.0
1990-2000	4.4	6.4	3.3	7.1	3.8	9.7
2000-2004*	2.9	4.2	-0.5	7.3	2.0	8.8



Source: UNWTO 2005

Overview of International Tourism

Growth in tourist arrivals

International tourist arrivals reached an all-time record of 763 million in 2004, which was an 11 per cent growth since 2003. Growth was common to all regions, but was particularly strong in Asia and the Pacific (+28%) and in the Middle East (+18%) followed by the Americas (+11%), Africa (+8%), and Europe (+5%) (Table 3.1). Asia and the Pacific gained almost half of all new arrivals, over 33 million. Europe came second with an increase in arrivals of 20 million. The only two subregions that did not break their previous records were North America and Western Europe, respectively falling 6 million and 1 million short of the volume recorded in 2000. In 2004, the majority of international tourists travelled for leisure, recreation, and holidays (about 52% or 395 million). Business travel accounted for some 16 per cent of the total (120 million) and another 24 per cent travelled for

other reasons, such as visiting friends and relatives, religious purposes or pilgrimages, and health treatments (185 million). About half of all international tourists arrived overland by road (45%) or rail (4%). Air transport represented 43 per cent of arrivals, and transport over water accounted for seven per cent.

Growth in tourism receipts

International tourism receipts grew in 2004 at a rate slightly lower than that of international tourism arrivals, namely nine per cent, after declining for the three previous years. International tourism receipts grew by an exceptional 25 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, following the 10 per cent loss experienced in 2003 on account of SARS. The fastest growing subregion was Northeast Asia (+30%). Growth was also particularly buoyant in the Middle East (+22%). Africa posted more modest growth (+5%), constrained by the results of Sub-Saharan Africa (+3%) after having been the star performer for the previous three years. The United States (US \$74 billion) continues to lead the table of the world's top tourism earners and saw a strong comeback in 2004, followed by Spain (US \$45 billion), France (US \$41 billion), Italy (US \$36 billion), Germany (US \$28 billion), United Kingdom (US \$27 billion), and China (US \$26 billion).

The year 2004 was definitely the year of full recovery in Asia and the Pacific as the region achieved a growth of 28 per cent and an estimated volume of 153 million tourist arrivals. International tourist arrivals to Northeast Asia grew by 30 per cent with major SARS-affected destinations fully recovering the losses of 2003 in terms of both arrivals and tourism receipts. In China, a recovery in inbound tourism was fully accomplished with a 27 per cent increase in tourist arrivals to a total of almost 42 million, thus amply surpassing 2002 figures. Destinations in South Asia (+17%) maintained momentum, after the already sound results obtained in 2003 (+10%). Tourism to the subregion grew to a total of approximately eight million arrivals for the first time, driven mainly by results registered in India (+24%), Sri Lanka (+13%), and the Maldives (+9%). International tourist arrivals to Oceania grew by 13% to more than 10 million.

World's top tourism destinations

In 2004, the top 10 tourism destinations in terms of arrivals accounted jointly for 363 million international tourist arrivals, or nearly half of the 763 million arrivals reported worldwide. In the ranking by receipts, the picture is similar with the top 10 world tourism earners representing more than half of overall tourism receipts (US \$321 billion). France maintains the leading position as the world's most visited destination with 75 million tourist arrivals in 2004. Spain ranks second with close to 54 million arrivals, followed by the US with 46 million arrivals, and China achieving an all-time record of almost 42 million tourist arrivals, with the number of tourists to the Tibet Autonomous Region expected to grow rapidly due to the opening of a new railway (see Box 3.2). The United

Box 3.2: Effect of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway on China's Inbound Tourism

The opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway brings good opportunities for tourism development in the Tibet Autonomous Region. The railway removes the traffic 'bottleneck' that restricted tourism. Since 1 July 2006 when the railway was put into operation, Tibet tourism has boomed. Statistics show that from 1 July to 31 August 2006, 9.13 million domestic and international tourists visited Tibet, an increase of 54 per cent compared to the same period the previous year. Among them, 47,000 were inbound tourists and 866,000 were domestic tourists, an increase of 47.5 per cent and 54.4 per cent respectively. Foreign currency earnings reached US \$20.48 million (an increase of 34.7%), with domestic tourist revenues reaching 782.45 million Yuan (an increase of 53.7%). The total tourism gross revenue reached 943.22 million Yuan, and increased by 48.6%. (US\$ 1 = 7.55 Yuan in 2007)

Source: Tibet Tourism Bureau 2006

Kingdom maintained the sixth position with almost 28 million arrivals in 2004 (+12%). Hong Kong (China), Mexico, Germany, and Austria follow in the remaining positions with volumes of around 20 million tourists each.

Tourist Arrivals in the South Asian Region

Table 3.2 presents tourist arrivals in the Asia-Pacific region. Northeast Asia accounted for about 57 per cent of the 153 million tourists to this region in 2004. South Asia's share was about five per cent or 7.5 million tourists (Table 3.2). The number of tourists to this region in 1995 was about five million, which increased gradually to about 7.5 million in 2004 at an average growth rate of about 6.5 per cent (1995-2004). India accounts for more than 50 per cent (3.4 million) of the tourist arrivals to South Asia; all other countries in the subregion reported less than a million tourists in 2004.

The share of receipts also shows a similar pattern (Table 3.3). South Asia accounts for only about six per cent (about US \$7 billion in 2004) of the total tourism receipts, with India having the largest share. The results clearly indicate that the scope to earn more tourism income in South Asia is vast, given the huge potential of this region in terms of natural and cultural heritage.

Table 3.2: International Tourist Arrivals in Asia-Pacific by Country of Destination												
	International Tourist Arrivals ('000)						Market Share in the Region		Change%		Average Annual Growth%	
	1990	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004*	1995	2004*	03/02	04*/03	90-95	95-00
Asia & the Pacific	57,740	85,024	114,863	131,108	119,255	152,503	100.0	100.0	-9.0	27.9	8.0	6.2
North-East Asia	27,969	44,115	62,525	74,127	67,595	87,576	51.9	57.4	-8.8	29.6	9.5	7.2
China	10,484	20,034	31,229	36,803	32,970	41,761	23.6	27.4	-10.4	26.7	13.8	9.3
South-East Asia	21,469	28,592	37,006	42,015	36,189	47,252	33.6	31.0	-13.9	30.6	5.9	5.3
Myanmar	21	117	208	217	206	242	0.1	0.2	-5.3	17.7	41.0	12.2
Oceania	5,152	8,085	9,247	9,133	9,045	10,175	9.5	6.7	-1.0	12.5	9.4	2.7
South Asia	3,150	4,233	6,086	5,833	6,427	7,501	5.0	4.9	10.2	16.7	6.1	7.5
Bangladesh	115	156	199	207	245	271	0.2	0.2	18.4	10.6	6.3	5.0
Bhutan	2	5	8	6	6	9	0	0	12.5	47.6	19.1	9.6
India	1,707	2,124	2,649	2,384	2,726	3,371	2.5	2.2	14.4	23.6	4.5	4.5
Iran	154	489	1,342	1,585	1,546	1,659	0.6	1.1	-2.5	7.3	26.0	22.4
Maldives	195	315	467	485	564	617	0.4	0.4	16.3	9.4	10.1	8.2
Nepal	255	363	464	275	338	360	0.4	0.2	22.7	6.5	7.3	5.0
Pakistan	424	378	557	498	501	648	0.4	0.4	0.6	29.4	-2.3	8.1
Sri Lanka	298	403	400	393	501	566	0.5	0.4	27.3	13.1	6.2	-0.1

Source: UNWTO 2005

Long-term prospects

UNWTO's Tourism 2020 Vision forecasts that international arrivals will reach over 1.56 billion by the year 2020, of which 1.18 billion are expected to be intraregional and 377 million long-haul travellers. The forecast is that by 2020 the top three receiving regions will be Europe (717 million tourists), East Asia and the Pacific (397 million), and the Americas (282 million). East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa are forecasted to record growth at rates of over five per cent per year, compared to the world average of 4.1 per cent. The more mature regions, Europe and the Americas, are forecast to show lower than average growth rates. China will have 100 million outbound travellers and is expected to become the fourth largest source of outbound travel in the world by 2020.

Table 3.3: International Tourism Receipts in Asia-Pacific by Country of Destination

	International Tourism Receipts (USD million)						Market Share in the Region		Change %		Average Annual Growth%	
	1990	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004*	1995	2004*	03/02	04*/03	90-95	95-00
Asia & the Pacific	46,667	81,988	90,383	99,069	94,855	124,960	100.0	100.0	-4.3	31.7	11.9	2.0
North-East Asia	23,001	38,017	46,030	51,721	47,104	63,565	46.4	50.9	-8.9	34.9	10.6	3.9
China	2,218	8,730	16,231	20,385	17,406	25,739	10.6	20.6	-14.6	47.9	31.5	13.2
South-East Asia	14,479	26,696	26,004	27,643	24,335	31,752	32.6	25.4	-12.0	30.5	13.0	-0.5
Myanmar	9	151	162	99	116	136	0.2	0.1	17.2	17.2	75.8	1.4
Oceania	7,158	13,871	13,844	14,461	17,605	22,311	16.9	17.9	21.7	26.7	14.1	0
South Asia	2,029	3,405	4,505	5,243	5,811	7,332	4.2	5.9	10.9	26.2	10.9	5.8
Bangladesh	11	25	50	57	57	67	0	0.1	0	17.9	17.8	14.9
Bhutan	2	5	10	8	8	2	0	0	4.3	50.0	20.1	14.9
India	1,513	2,582	3,168	2,918	3,533	4,769	3.1	3.8	21.1	35.0	11.3	4.2
Iran	61	67	467	1,357	1,033	1,074	0.1	0.9	-23.9	4.0	1.9	47.5
Maldives	89	211	321	337	402	479	0.3	0.4	19.2	19.1	18.8	8.8
Nepal	64	177	158	103	199	...	0.2	...	93.2	...	22.6	-2.2
Pakistan	156	110	81	97	136	186	0.1	0.1	39.8	36.9	-6.7	-5.9
Sri Lanka	132	226	248	363	441	513	0.3	0.4	21.5	16.3	11.4	1.9

Source: UNWTO 2005

Tourism and the World Economy

Tourism demand depends strongly on the economic conditions in major generating markets. As disposable incomes increase, so will the demand for tourism. Likewise a tightening of the economic situation will often result in a decrease or trading down of tourism spending. In 2003, international tourism receipts (Table 3.3) represented approximately six per cent of worldwide exports of goods and services (expressed in US\$) (Table 3.4). When considering service exports exclusively, the share of tourism exports increases to nearly 30 per cent.

It is interesting to note the relationship between changes in the world GDP growth and tourism growth. When the world economic growth exceeds four per cent, the growth of tourism volume tends to be higher (see Figure 3.1), and when GDP growth falls below two per cent, tourism growth tends to be lower. In the period from 1975-2000 tourism increased at an average rate of 4.6 per cent per year.

Table 3.4: World Exports of Merchandise and Commercial Services

	US \$ billion	Share (%)	Share (%)
Total	9089	100	
Merchandise exports	7294	80	
Agricultural products	674	7	
Mining products	960	11	
Manufacturers	5437	60	
Other	223	2	
Commercial Services	1795	20	100
Transportation	405	4	23
Travel	525	6	29
Other	865	10	48

Source: World Trade Organisation, UNTWO 2007

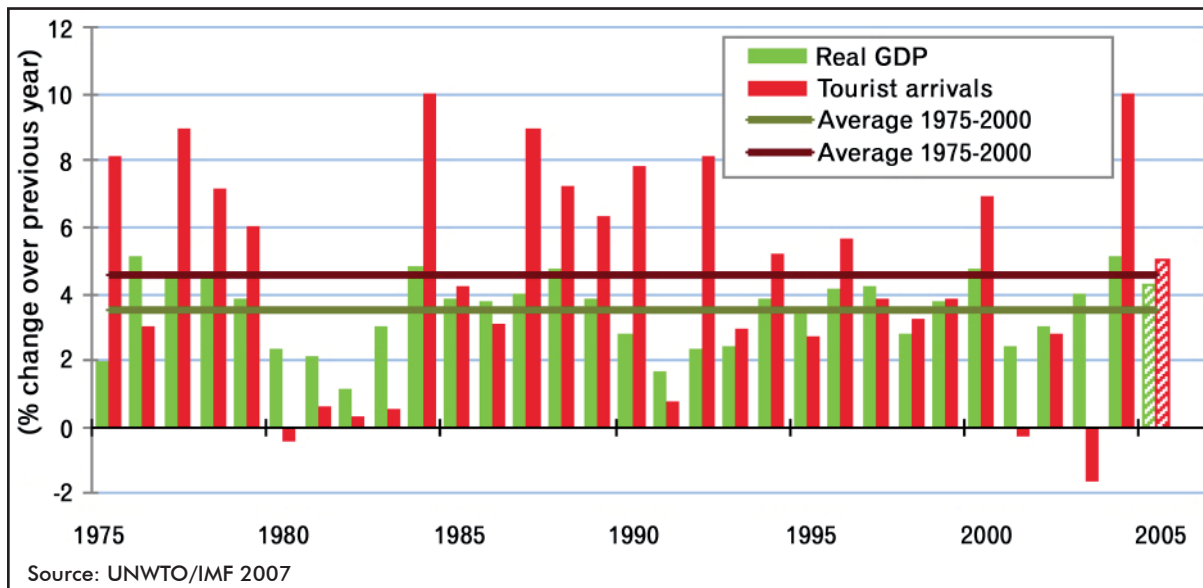


Figure 3.1: Economic growth (GDP) and international tourist arrivals

Impacts of Tourism

While discussing the impacts of tourism, the focus here will be primarily on mountain areas, specifically the Himalayas. Tourism generates employment and income opportunities for local people. Local jobs are created through opportunities to work for instance as guides and porters, in lodges, selling food items and general supplies to tourists, renting mules, yaks, and camp grounds, and performing cultural shows and so on. These often create many opportunities for women as well. A major concern though has been the negative impacts of tourism on the environment (deforestation, pollution of water sources, littering, and so forth). Some scholars also argue that tourism has had negative impacts on local culture and values. Some of the specific impacts of tourism in mountain areas cited in the literature are discussed briefly below.

Environmental impacts

Pollution, littering, land-use change

Mountain tourism has impacts on pollution and littering and can cause land-use change.

- More land is used to build lodges, tea stalls, and camp grounds.
- Land is left fallow to rent out as camp grounds.
- Trekking trails and surrounding areas are littered with plastic, paper, and bottles.
- Aesthetic beauty is adulterated by unpleasant signboards (e.g., for Coca Cola, Pepsi, instant noodles).
- Water is polluted for local people as well as tourists by unmanaged toilets.
- The amount of waste, both biodegradable and non-biodegradable, is increasing.

Forests and firewood

Tourism also has impacts on forests and firewood in the mountains; for instance, in the following ways.

- Tourists outnumber local people in some mountain areas, and the increase demand for firewood leads to deforestation.
- Although group tourists are expected to use alternative energy sources, FITs depend on lodges that continue to use firewood, and the porters who accompany both types of tourist also rely on scarce firewood.

- Growing seasons (crops and trees) in the mountains are extremely short and, hence, the replenishment of firewood requires extremely long periods.
- Selling firewood to tourists has become an occupation for some people.
- Use of firewood and timber in some mountain areas is greater than the natural growth of local forests.

Economic impacts

Tourists spend a great amount of money to visit mountain areas. They have to purchase an air ticket and visa and, after arrival in the host country, pay for accommodation, food, and other services. Mountaineers pay royalties to climb certain peaks. Some of this expenditure accrues as income to the government and some to different service providers. The government also benefits from taxes paid by tourists when they consume different goods and services. In mountain areas, tourism generates income through trekking fees, park entrance fees, mountain climbing permits, and directly when purchasing food (fruit and vegetables or poultry), lodging, and guiding and portering services in the area.

However, per capita tourist expenditure remains low and the contribution of tourism revenue to GDP has remained below five per cent. A large part of the income earned from tourism in mountain areas leaks out while providing goods and services to the tourists. The leakage of tourism income in mountain areas is substantial. In Nepal, for example, mountain lodges purchase many food items from Kathmandu, Pokhara, and other large centres to generate tourism services. Many items, such as rice, vegetables, milk, eggs, and meat, which are available locally, are purchased from outside the community and thus increase the leakage of tourism income. Although not all leakages can be stopped, they can be minimised if some items are produced locally for sale to the tourism sector. Developing greater complementarity between tourism and the community is one sure way to enhance sustainability. Tourism can benefit mountain areas substantially if it is integrated into the local production system.

Sociocultural impacts

The impacts of tourism on local cultural traditions and values are difficult to assess. In the short run, impacts may be observed to be negative (or positive) and in the long run these impacts may be positive (or negative). It is not easy to separate precisely the impacts of tourism on cultural practices as people also travel, educate themselves, trade, watch TV, listen to the radio, and are connected to the outside world through the Internet, all of which can bring about change in the community. Furthermore, sociocultural impacts are often hard to disentangle from wider processes of development or globalisation. Changes in people's behaviour, dress, lifestyle, family and social structure, and values and expectations; the decline in local support for local traditions and institutions; people's preference for tourist-related jobs over education; the pollution of sacred places; and changes in traditional architecture are generally cited as instances of negative impacts of tourism on mountain culture. On the other hand, there are also many positive impacts. Tourism can increase pride in local culture and traditions and provide an incentive to conserve important cultural and heritage sites and traditions. It can also contribute to the wider development and awareness of communities. Tourism has given some local people a basic understanding of another language (mostly English) and has in some cases promoted awareness about health and hygiene.

Infrastructural development

Tourism has promoted infrastructural development in some remote areas. The construction of airstrips, bridges, and trails in some parts of the Himalayas has been driven by tourism development. Tourism can also lead to voluntary giving of resources by tourists for the construction of communal infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, or toilets, which benefit the poor and the community as a whole.

Impacts on women

Many women are employed in lodges and tea houses. In fact tourism has created a wide range of formal and informal employment opportunities for women as can be seen from developments in Nepal. Many mountain lodges are managed by women and perhaps, in mountain areas, more women than men are employed in this sector. Women have also benefited significantly from tourism through micro-enterprise development, e.g., in the form of producing handicrafts, weaving, selling honey, agro-processed products, and tea stalls.

Tourism has also helped women to undertake highly specialised and skilful activities such as climbing Mt. Everest, which undoubtedly has improved their position in society. Furthermore, tourism often allows women to carry out new roles for themselves and their families, both at home and within the local power structures (community-based organisations [CBOs], local governments, and non-government organisations [NGOs]), and to become increasingly involved in the decision-making process.

Women from the Sherpa community and other mountain communities have been trained as doctors and increasing numbers of women from mountain areas are enrolling in higher education. Perhaps the full impacts of tourism on women are just beginning to be seen.

Who benefits and who bears the costs of mountain tourism?

As tourism is seasonal in mountain areas, so are the benefits. At the same time, because of the low level of development in mountain areas, a large part of the income earned by local people leaks out while purchasing items (from outside the region) to produce goods and services for tourists. It is important to realise that not all economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts (positive or negative) are evenly distributed among the mountain population. Unfortunately, many of the burdens of tourism are borne by the more disadvantaged in society, notably the poor and women. Estimates from the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation in Nepal suggest that, on average, only six per cent of tourist expenditure actually goes to rural areas (Touche Ross 1990). Studies by SNV show an even less rosy picture for the remote countryside, estimating that of the 57 million USD per year spent by trekking tourists visiting rural areas in the hills and mountains of Nepal, less than 10 per cent is spent locally, with remote districts receiving less than one per cent of the total tourism revenue (SNV 2003b). A review of 24 case studies in Asia indicated economic gains for all sections of the community, but with those better off gaining the most (Shah 2000). Some of the main reasons why the poor seem to have been unable to benefit much from tourism are that the linkages between tourism and the local production system are weak and supply-side planning and management have been poor and, in some cases, even completely ignored (Kruk and Banskota 2007).

Major Issues and Constraints

Research has shown that mountain tourism often has different constraints that prevent benefits from reaching local people and which leave negative imprints on the social, natural and cultural environment, and economic structure (CREST 1995). To promote the benefits of tourism among the wider mountain community, while at the same time minimising negative impacts, the following issues and constraints need to be addressed.

- A clear policy perception is needed of what and how tourism is expected to play a role in local and regional development in the mountains.
- Destination planning should be carried out with a strong supply side orientation to develop strong links between tourism and the local production system so that local people are able to retain a larger share of tourism revenue locally.

- Carrying capacity concepts should be operationalised for an appreciation of the critical environmental, economic, social, cultural, and managerial factors affecting carrying capacity (see also Tool 2, Volume 2).
- Sustainable generation and equitable sharing of revenue from tourism are essential.
- Local-level institutions should be established as a means of linking tourism with development. This is also the first step towards initiating a process of participatory planning of tourism and local development. It becomes extremely important to involve all the stakeholders in planning from the very beginning of the development process.
- An information base on the demand side of tourism (such as the size and composition of visitors, their interests and expenditure patterns, willingness to pay, expectations, and the quality of their experience) should be established in order to understand what factors attract visitors. Such information is virtually non-existent in the region. Periodic visitor surveys are essential.

Training in lodge management, hygiene, cooking, housekeeping, and local guiding skills, both related to culture and nature, should also link with local employment opportunities. For this, however, training and manpower needs have to be identified discretely in terms of real requirements and opportunities at the local level.