

Mountain Tourism and Hazards: An assessment of Nepalese Himalaya

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the major contributors of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product. The World Bank projected approximately 3.6 percentage of contribution to the national GDP from tourism industry while providing more than one million direct and indirect jobs in 2019. Nepal's tourism history goes back to 1950s when foreign mountaineer came for the summit which gradually established Nepal as a premier destination for mountain tourism. Therefore, mountains are inseparable from tourism of the country. However, these mountains are one of the first and severely affected from the ongoing global phenomenon of rise in temperature, change in precipitation, melting of glaciers and other unprecedented and unpredictable extreme events like Glacial Lake Outburst Flood, debris flows, landslides which pose threats to not only mountains but equally to the tourists and the communities residing there whose livelihood is directly and indirectly dependent on the Mountain tourism. There is an urgent need to assess and understand the processes and components of mountain ecosystem to eventually make the area safe and sound to the visitors and the local communities. In this study, with the objective of presenting possible recommendations for future implications to minimize the risks in the mountain region and to ensure safety of the visitors and the local communities. For this, we have reviewed most of the recent incidents for the last few decades in the mountain region of Nepal. Further, rigorous discussions and assessment of scenario of the diverse group of tourism stakeholders and local community, review of extreme events, situation analysis and key policy recommendation based on Policy Gap Assessment were done to suggest the approach of Trekking and Mountaineering Trail Risk Assessment. Further, the paper poses questions to the major stakeholders including the policy makers and scientific community regarding the possible modality of sustainable land use planning and trail modality and has emphasized the need of joint effort for the preparedness on glacier and mountain hazard to maintain the safety of entire mountain tourism community.

Keywords: *Mountain Tourism, Hazard, risk assessment, trekking, mountaineering*