

## **Ecotourism in Changing the Lives of Bufferzone People: The Case from Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park, Nepal**

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**Abstract:** This study was aimed to ascertain the livelihood enhancement opportunities brought in the wake of ecotourism development in Mulkharka settlement of Shivapuri-Nagarjuna National Park, Kathmandu District. The survey follows the post-positivist paradigm and has been explained through the theories of sustainable development and ecotourism. In terms of socio-economic impact, the survey has revealed that the participation of the female in the tourism business is quite impressive. The increased tourism activities have reduced the number of people going to abroad for working. They have begun some innovative income generating works in the tourism sector at their place. They seem aware of the socio-economical, environmental and cultural impacts of the tourism industry and have expectations from the local government to lead on minimizing the possible hazards, which could hamper their livelihood activities shortly. Likewise, the local people have a concern that their government should be proactive in minimizing the possible environmental hazards due to the excessive flow of the tourists in the region. The study has high implications in the sector of improving the lives of the community people residing in the buffer zones of the national parks through the tourism business. The local government development priorities should encompass the positive impact of ecotourism and community benefit systems for promoting the sustainable rural livelihood of the local people living around the buffer zone of Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Buffer zone, Sustainable livelihood, and Local government

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism means to travel and travel-related jobs that aim to provide entertainment to the visitors and create economic opportunities for the hosts. In developed countries, tourism considered the largest growth industry with no sign of slowing over the long term (World Trade Organization [WTO], 1998). For example, since 1980, tourism has increased worldwide by an average of 9 percent annually, reaching 940 million in 2010 and is expected to grow to nearly 1.4 billion by the year 2020 (WTO, 2015). The tourism sector successfully created 945000 employments (39th position in global rank) and contributed 6.2% of GDP (43rd position in global rank) in the world out of all the economic sectors (WTTC, 2017).

Least developing country Nepal opened its doors to tourism in the early 1950s Hillary Tenzing first climbed Mt. Everest in 1953. Since then the visiting trend of international tourists has been increasing. The latest data shows that 11, 72,073 foreigners visited in 2018 that generated NRs 2.876 billion and created employment to the 427,000 people. GDP contribution of tourism was 2.9% in 2012 and increased into 7.5% in 2018 (MOCTCA, 2016; NTB, 2019). This figure indicates that tourism is becoming an emerging sector of the Nepalese economy. As it is also identified lead sector of economy by federation, provincial and local government (LGOA, 2017). The Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality of Solukhumbu district (i.e Everest Region) collected 44.61 million US\$ from 22,330 tourists in three months (October, November, and December) of 2017 (Village Level Profile, 2018).

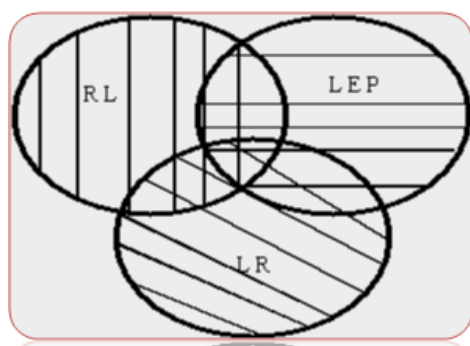
Nepal is strongly positioned as a preferred nature, culture, adventure destination in the world tourism map with a range of products to offer visitors. However, this study gave more focus on livelihood impacts (i.e. social, economic and environmental) of ecotourism that has been managing under the provision of the buffer zone. A buffer zone, an area of 2km in the vicinity of the park provisioned by fourth amendment of the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act in 1992. Buffer zones of 12 protected areas of Nepal covering a total area of 5602.67 square kilometers of 27 districts and benefiting over 0.9 million population. The idea is to mobilize local people for the conservation of wildlife, natural environment, and natural resources, biodiversity, and forests with development purposes (Buffer Zone Management Regulation, 2052).

Empirically this study is conducted in Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park (SNNP) is located on the northern fringes of Kathmandu Valley. The elevation range is 1350 m to 2732 meters and covering an area of

159 km<sup>2</sup> and is surrounded by Kathmandu, Nuwakot, Dhading, and Sindhupalchowk Districts (DNPWC 2002). SNNP is primarily composed of Chirpine forests and mixed hardwood forests. The park is home to many endangered or threatened species, such as clouded leopards, orange-billed leaf birds, and relict Himalayan dragonflies. In July 2016 to June 2017, 16539 foreigners and 193178 Nepali visitors visited the parking area (Ministry of Forests and Environment, 2017). Particularly, this study was conducted in Mulkharka and Sundarijal settlements of Gokarneshwor Municipality of Kathmandu District only. The municipality has 9 different wards with an area of 58.5 sq. km. It has a total population of 1, 07,351 (Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, 2019).

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Insights**

Research issues related to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, their involvement in buffer zone management and tourism activities and their impact on their livelihood also have been reviewed conceptually and theoretically. Conceptually, rural tourism means the intersectional relationship between local resources (Lr), receptive or readiness of locale (RL) and interests of extravagant people (Lep) can help to develop and promote potentiality of village tourism (Sharma, 2008, p. 15) (See in figure 1). National level as well as local level policies, plans and projects are needed for promoting the concept of village tourism. Therefore, village tourism must come up with local needs and the typical interests of the local people. Sustainability and charm cannot remain high forever. Naturally, it cannot originate from a vacuum. A tourist visits such a place where his/her desires or interests are quenched by its attractions, provided facilities and service delivery system like food, shelter, local hospitality, heritages of knowledge gain, the happiness of ultimate eternal peace, thirsts of youth (Sharma, 2008, p. 15).



**Figure 1.** *Conceptual Meaning of Rural Tourism*

Theoretically, this study generated ideas form sustainable rural livelihood and ecotourism. A livelihood is sustainable when people cope with and recover from shocks and crises (eg. seasonal, environmental and economic) and can maintain or enhance their capability and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. The concept of 'sustainable livelihoods' (SL) is an analytical framework that emerged from existing studies of rural livelihoods systems, agrarian change, and community development going back to the work of William Cobbett, Karl Marx, Karl Polanyi, Amartya Sen, and several influential households and micro economists. Ian Scoones at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in the UK was also one of the key players. He wrote a short working paper that set out a succinct approach to understanding livelihoods, which he hoped would also be amenable to scrutiny by influential development economists, who believed poverty could best be tackled through utility maximization and modernization paths. It emphasized the economic attributes of livelihoods as mediated by social-institutional processes. Chamber and Conway (1991) designed a well-known diagram showing how capital, assets, and resources lead to certain types of livelihood strategies and outcomes, influenced by a set of contexts and institutional processes. This diagram has given more focus on five development assets like; human capital, social capital, financial capital, physical capital and natural capital.

Eco-tourism simply means eco-efficiency in tourism activities that principally aimed to foster socio-cultural, economic and environmental development through tourism activities. Ecotourism is good tourism, ethical and eco-citizenship, which aims to limit the human pressure on the environment while contributing to its development (Villepontoux, 2013). Originally, the term ecotourism is invented in the 80s by biologists who were concerned by environmental degradation caused by the development of tourism practices. Since the 2000s, the World Tourism Organization makes the first campaigns of communication on ecotourism introduced as the new alternative development model for sustainable tourism. From this period, the suffix "eco" plays on the

double logic "ecology and economy" to show that it is possible to make "good tourism" and reconcile the imperatives of ecology and economy. The concept of ecotourism also has been implementing in Nepal especially in national parks, conservations areas, and buffer zones. At the same time conservation fund also has been allocating for the administrative cost (10%), conservation-related awareness-raising training (10%), income generate activities (20%), community development (30%) and physical infrastructure development (30%) as well (Pradhan & Gradon, 2008). Owing to that from this theoretical gaze researcher will explain about eco-tourism activities (i.e. respect to rural ecology and economy) in general and changing the lives of the local people living around Amaltari buffer zone areas.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the social, economic and environmental impact of ecotourism on the lives of local people living around Mulkhark and Sundarijal settlements in Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park
- To analyze the relationships between socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the impacts of ecotourism

## III. METHODOLOGY

The study designed under the post-positivist paradigm for analyzing the impact of ecotourism (Creswell, 2014). Hence, under the quantitative approach, the researcher chose the survey as a research strategy. More specifically, the study applied a sample survey method to collect the data from a large group of populations to reduce the cost implication to go for the census. The information collected from the samples has been used to make inferences about the population as a whole. Survey research design describes the nature and features of existing conditions, identifies standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationships that exist between specific events (Cohen, Menon & Morission, 2007).

The study is based on the primary data which was based on the questionnaire and interview with randomly selected 152 local villagers (sample number) who are directly and indirectly benefit from the buffer zone in general and ecotourism in particular. The sample number was selected from 264 households or sample population (Municipality Profile, 2018) which is generated with a 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent marginal error by using sample size determination formula\* (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). All the quantitative results were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Subjective information was also generated through informal communications with key persons such as (Ward representatives [R. Manandhar, B.M. Tamang, A. M. Tamang], entrepreneurs [M.K. Shrestha, B. Tamang] and National Park Staff [S. pokhrel]). Collected data and information have been analyzed by following descriptive, analysis and interpretation methods (Yin, 2013).

### **The Results: Social Demographic Characteristics**

The changing lives of buffer zone people have been explained in four indicators (i.e. social demographic characteristics as well as social, economic and environmental impact of ecotourism) in this section. The variables such as age, gender, caste, religion, lingual group, and landholding status tried to analyze the social/cultural picture of the study area. Out of a total of 152 surveyed households, 127 (83.6%) are direct beneficiaries offering tourism services and 25 are (16.4%) getting tourism benefit indirectly. Both direct and indirect beneficiaries have been developing a large knowledge system regarding the hospitality sector. However, there is no formal mechanism to document the learning and their experiences from the governmental line agencies or tourism-related organizations. "Knowledge Management can transform organizational new levels of effectiveness, efficiency, and scope of operation, using advanced technology, data and information are made available to users for effective productivity" (Dhamdhare, 2015, p. 168). This unexplored sector has a high potentiality to develop the tourism sector in Nepal.

Nearly 62% of the respondents' age group falls between 21-35 years and one-fifth of them were from the age group above 50. In Nepal, the economically active population is 15-64 years old and the study area comprising such a large number of populations has more chances of getting economic activities in the region (UNFPA, 2017). The surveyed settlement comprises nearly 73% of the male 27 % of the total population were female. The respondents are belonging to three language-speaking people; Tamang (47%), Nepali (37%) and Newari (16%). As per the 2011 census, Nepal has 126 castes and ethnic groups speaking as many as 123 languages. And 90 percent of these languages are spoken by Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples in Nepal have distinct cultures, languages and belief systems (CBS, 2011).

Around 85% of the respondents have at least 10 Ropani (nearly 1 hecter) land-holding sizes. 55% of respondents engaged in tourism-related activities are newcomers still involving in farming activities. They have experience of a maximum of 3 years only. Interestingly, 31.3% of them have working experiences of 5 to 9 years. The land system is an important adjunct of the economic, social or political structure of an agriculture country such as Nepal (Chalise, n. d). These figures show many possibilities of enhancing the livelihood of the

people through a massive agricultural transformation through the proper utilization of land size in the study area.

### **Social Impact of Ecotourism**

This section dealt with the occupation, formal education, vocational training, child education, job satisfaction, and reproduction of family occupation-related variables. These variables tried to explain the social impact of ecotourism in the study area. Almost, three-quarters of the respondents replied that their primary occupation is tourism. It was visible during field visits as the settlements were covered with small shops, tea cafes, restaurants, guest houses, home stays, and many tourist recreation centers. However, local people are equally involving in different sectors such as tourism, agriculture, local shop, job, remittance and wage labor for improving their daily life and livelihood.

Agriculture found the primary occupation of the 9.7% respondents that is followed by remittance (3.7%), government job (3.7%), pensioner (3.7%), and other business (3%) as well. Owing to foreign employment 28.4% of households, whose members have a flight from the village and 27% of the households in the study area have none of its members gone for overseas work.

The less migration of youths in foreign employment and more contribution to the tourism economy in the study area show the encouraging picture of tourism activities in changing the lives of the people living there. Despite these facts, every surveyed household was found engaged in small to big tourism-related activities in the study area. However, in Nepal, more than half (57%) of the population of working age is reported economically active and among them, 81 percent are engaged in agricultural activities. The contribution of non-agricultural activities is gradually increasing in the GDP (FAO, 2019).

Majorities 56% of the respondents have passed the lower secondary level that is followed by 31% secondary level and 13.4% higher secondary level. Similarly, 71% of respondents have received at least one training like; hospitality/cooking, trekking and guide, crafts, and farming. The data shows that the majority of people in the study area have received hospitality management, cooking and trekking/guide related training. The learned skills have helped them to create many opportunities in the study area. This is somehow linked with vision of Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training in Nepal which has envisioned on "Skilling Nepal for People's Prosperity-Vision 2030"(CTEVT, 2016, p. 1) .

Nearly 83.6% of them have said that they are direct beneficiaries and operating homestay (28.4%), Guesthouse (31.3%), Resort (13.4%), Teashop (13.4%) and Restaurant (13.4%). Additionally, the registration of the tourism-related services shows promoting figure that almost 58% of them have been legally registered. The data indicates that after government jobs, tourism is the most secure and sustainable ways of earning. To our dismay, 60% of the respondents offering tourism services are supplying local products to the guests. As tourism is consumed at the point of production, it is allowing local businesses and communities to benefit by selling goods and services directly to visitors in local destinations and with assets to offer such as culture, art, music, natural landscapes and wildlife (Shrestha, 2018).

Further, tourism as an economic activity produces various direct, indirect and induced impacts in the economy. Rural tourism activities have been creating self-employment and employment opportunities and increasing the income of rural people (Gautam, 2011). Still, most of them are not yet registered. It could be predicted that a large amount of money that could be formally deposited in the government's account from the local entrepreneurs have been not collected through formal channels. The local ward offices should keep an eye on this because the legal provisions have given full authority to local governments regarding these (GoN, 2017).

Most of the respondents are enrolling their children in public schools. This figure counted to 42.7%. One-fifth of the households are studying in private schools. The Census 2011 reports that, among 5-16-year-old children, 80 percent of boys and 76 percent of girls were attending school (CBS, 2011). This situation is more servers in ethnic communities (Acharya, 2017). Along with quality parenting, 57% of the respondents, whose primary occupation is tourism said that they have positively counseled their children to carry out with tourism-related professions. However, 43.1% do not like to see their children in this profession. During the informal conversation, most of them reveal that the newer generation should go to Australia or Europe and should settle there for a secured livelihood. Records from the Ministry of Education show 16,504 students had acquired the No Objection Letter in the fiscal year 2013-14 while that number increased fivefold last fiscal year, with 62,800 students going for studies in 72 countries. Among them, some 32,200 students acquired the letter to study in Australia and 15,500 for Japan. Nepal is currently the third-largest contributor of international students to Australia (Ghimire, 2019). This is one of the bitter examples of the brain drain from Nepal.

From the sustainability point of view, 72% of respondents are satisfied with the profession on which they are engaged. Likewise, 67% of the respondents, whose primary occupation is tourism, do not want to change their current business but 31.4% of them want to change. Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which an employee feels self-motivated, content & satisfied with his/her job. Job satisfaction happens when an

employee feels he or she is having job stability, career growth and a comfortable work-life balance (Human resource term, 2019). Thus a large number of people satisfied in the tourism sector symbolizes the good economic return of the tourism industry in the study area.

The respondents have proposed different cultural reform/preservations measures to be initiated by local governments for mounting social benefits. Some of them suggested establishing cultural museum (14.9%), conducting tourism trade fairs (13.4%), financial support to the indigenous cultural institutions (17.2%), focusing on religious tourists (14.2%), video shooting/documentary making (13.4%), focus on cultural tourists (13.4%) and also suggested following cultural code of conducts to the tourists (13.4%).

Cultural highlights are both tangible and intangible. Social linkages may include social group interactions, social and religious gatherings (rituals, games and dances, rites, and religious activities) visiting and kinship patterns, donations to traditional institutions, population movements (short and long term migration, the journey to work), and land tenancies (Pradhan, 2004). These all are promoting the cultural diversity of an individual as well as the community.

The relationship between caste/ethnicity and family occupation is one of the indicators for assessing the social impact of tourism. For this, the null hypothesis was set as: there is no relationship between these two variables. Likewise, the alternative hypothesis was set as: there is a relationship. To test the above-mentioned hypothesis, a chi-square test was done. For this, we have set alpha value =0.05. In this respect, we got p-value =0.613. This value is more than the alpha value =0.05. Here, statistical data fail to reject the null hypothesis. It means there is no relation between caste/ethnicity and choosing the family occupation. In other words, tourism enterprise in the Markha settlement does not belong to only ethnic communities, but also of others as well. Under the fundamental rights and duties section, the constitution of Nepal has mentioned the freedom to practice any profession, carry on any occupation, and establish and operate any industry, trade, and business in any part of Nepal (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015).

### **Economic Impact of Ecotourism**

To analyze the economic impact of ecotourism, this section dealt with microeconomic related variables such as access to financial institutions, investment in the business, family income and expenditure. Field data shows that majorities (85%) of the respondents, whose primary occupation is tourism, have a bank account. The less interest in the opening of the bank account by most of the respondents is possibly due to their engagements in informal capital collection and loan mechanism. These types of groups are nowhere registered and they do not have the status of the bank. The awareness of banking procedures and benefits should reach in every household of the settlements. Some benefits of an opening bank account are convenience and security, interest earned on savings, access to ATM, online banking service, merchant outlets through pos terminals and for online commerce and any branch banking service (Standard Charter, 2019).

For operating tourism-related services, 14% of the respondents have invested money less than 50,000 to begin the business. Mainly small teashops and group homestay related businesses fall under this category. Nearly 60% of the people, who have invested more than 5,00,000 to start the tourism-related business like a guest house, resorts, homestays and so on. High investments are observed in buying food, buying electronic accessories and jewelry. Even though, investment in the business has a relationship with the earning as well. Besides, proper management and good planning are essential to make any business successful. The term business administration also refers to the management of a business, i.e., management in all aspects. This includes finance, marketing, human resources, and accounting. It also includes business operations (Market business news, 2019). Thus, proper investment also needs proper planning and administrative management in the tourism sector.

The respondents engaged in the guest-house and resort business have earned money from range NRs 6,00,000 to 10,00,000 in a year. Comparatively, the earning from home-stay is not satisfactory, as all the respondents have earned the money in the range of 51,000 to 1,00,000 per year. The home-stay businesses are doing impressive earnings in other parts of Nepal like Sirubari, Ghalegaon, etc. But the picture here is quite depressing. As a culturally rich country, Nepal has great prospects in homestay tourism. Tourists who are interested in experiencing culture, tradition, and lifestyle of different ethnic groups of Nepal form the clientele of home-stay business. The way Nepalis live and take care of their guests touches tourists. This is why they prefer to live in home-stays (Sunuwar, 2019).

The respondents with earning category other than 51000-100000 have invested good money in their child education. Likewise, 80 respondents have invested money to purchase fixed assets like land, house, cattle by utilizing their earning. In the category 31000-50000, the expense of the food is nil. For more economic benefits respondents are seeking the support of the local government mechanism to intervene in reforming the various sectors like advertisements of the tourism product of the region locally and globally (41.8%), establish division office for tourism (17.2%), offering off-season package (13.4%), promote organic farming (14.2%) and

facilitate in establishing new hotel and resorts (13.4%). Amongst all, the respondents want help from their local government authorities in the massive advertisement of their place.

Nepal Tourism Board (2009) in consultation with industry partners has produced Nepal Tourism Vision 2020, to guide tourism development throughout the country. The vision complements the national endeavor of economic reform and incorporates a spirit of inclusiveness for a broad-based enabling environment that sets the pace of gradual but focused change in the tourism sector. For this different focus of the local governments is required to grasp the socio-economic benefits.

For explaining the significant relationship between educational status and promoting the local tourism products, we did the chi-square test. For this, the null hypothesis was set as there is no relationship between these two variables. Likewise, the alternative hypothesis was set as there is a relationship. To test the above-mentioned hypothesis, a chi-square test was done. For this, we have set alpha value =0.05. In this respect, we got a p-value of =0.000. This value is less than the alpha value =0.05. Here, statistical data reject the null hypothesis. It means there is a relation between, is between the educational status and promoting the local products. Interestingly, the respondents, whose academic qualification is less than 10 are more conscious of this matter. They want to please the tourists by locally grown agriculture, dairy products, and ethnic food, costumes, and dresses. For a developing country, the domestic production of goods plays a vital role in its economy. Whether it is in terms of improving trade positions, creating employment or improving the overall outlook of the economy, domestic production plays a crucial role. Encouraging domestic producers, is, therefore, more important for Nepal's developing economy (TNM team, 2017)

Likewise, for analyzing the significant relationship between religions and motivating them to continue the parental profession, the chi-square test was done. In this regard, our calculated value p (0.000) found less than the alpha value (0.05). Here, statistical data reject the null hypothesis. It means there is a relation between the religion of the participant and the motivation of the children in continuing their parental profession. Interestingly, the people belonging to the Buddhist community (Tamang and Newar), have a high percentage of motivation rate to encourage their younger children to continue their family occupation related to tourism. Nepal is a multicultural country. Nepal has hundreds of castes, religions and ethnic group and the whole of them have their cultural significance. The culture of Nepal is a unique one in the world. One can explore our cultures in different places with different tastes. Especially, Brahmin Culture, Gurung Culture, Tamang Culture, Tharu Culture, Maithili Culture, Tibetan Culture, Sherpa Culture, Thakali Culture, and Newari Culture are popular in Nepal. These Cultures give you cultural taste and experience in different parts of Nepal which are still alive (Adventure land Nepal, 2019).

### **Environmental Impact of Ecotourism**

This section presented perceptions of the respondents (i.e both direct and indirect beneficiaries) on climate change, its impact on tourism activities and the impact of tourism on the local environment. The idea is to analyze the environmental impact of ecotourism in the study area. The perceptions of the respondents on environmental impact have been analyzed by applying a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree-5, agree-4, disagree-3, strongly disagree-2 and I cannot say-1). Regarding the perception of the beneficiaries on the negative impact of the climate change on tourism was agreed by 56.60% of the respondents. Likewise in the rest of the views, most of the respondents are not satisfied with the effectiveness of climate change-related training, investment in tourism infrastructure development and local community development projects. However, environment conservation fund mobilizing by buffer zone committees has been satisfying to the respondents. The fund is investing in income-generating activities as well as road and drinking water projects.

We also analyzed perceptions of the respondents (i.e. both direct and indirect beneficiaries) about the impact of tourism in the environment. Out of this, 56% of the respondents agreed that tourism activities harm the environment and 13.2% disagreed on the statement. On this, the majority of views on the negative impact are from direct beneficiaries. To test this result statistically, hypothesis testing was done. We calculated the p-value (0.000) that is less than the alpha value (0.05). The statistical data reject the null hypothesis which indicates there is a significant difference in the respondent's category (direct or indirect) and their perception regarding the negative impact of the tourism on the environment. The direct beneficiaries, who are large in number and who are doing different business like a homestay, guest house, restaurants, paying guest, resort-teashop, restaurants have more concerns about the gradually deteriorated environmental conditions due to the increased tourism activities in the region. In this regards, the literature Walde, Huy, Tappeiner and Tappeiner (2019) have explained that "The ongoing loss of biodiversity, degradation of ecosystems and subsequent reduction in goods and services is one of the greatest global challenges faced by governments and civil society" (p. 176).

Similarly, the respondents concerned that their government should be proactive in minimizing the possible environmental hazards due to the excessive flow of tourists in the region. They have focused on promoting eco-tourism to protect wild flora and faunas (16.4%), water-processing center (11.2%), park people

harmony (24.6%), assess agricultural impact of climate change (14.2%), organic farming (3.7%), integrated farming (11.9%) and focus of environmentally friendly activities of the tourists (17.9%). The effect of expanding tourism services is responsible for creating less of more damage to the environment. The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructures such as roads and airports, and tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses, and marinas. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends (UNEP, 2011).

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

Ecotourism activities have brought positive changes in changing the lives of people living in the buffer zone areas of Shivapuri - Nagarjun National Park. Besides natural beauties, the study area has several social and cultural features to attract tourists. The settlement comprises several ethnic residents like Tamang and the Newar community. These indigenous groups have their own culture, traditions and local farm productions to impress the new people coming to the area. They have inborn good hospitability characters. Also, most of the people there have years of long experience. The participation of the female in the tourism business is quite impressing.

Buffer zone approach becomes effective while conserving wildlife, natural environment, natural resources, biodiversity and forests with community development purposes. The environment fund also has been investing in conservation, climate change, and vocational related capacity and skill development training. The fund is also investing in physical infrastructure and community development projects. However, they have some concerns like advertisements of their local identity and tourism services in the national as well as international market, preserving the natural habitat from the excessive increment of the tourism-related activities, reviving the cultural organizations to preserve the cultural identity of the indigenous communities and promoting organic farming in the region. The local governments like the ward office and municipal office should take lead on making the lives of people better, who are residing there and promoting the local as well as national economy through the tourism business. The serious concerns of the people on the negative impact of environmental degradations on the tourism business and vice versa should not be undermined. Similarly, the locals have a concern that their government should be proactive in minimizing the possible environmental hazards due to the excessive flow of the tourists in the region. The direct beneficiaries, who are large in number and who are doing different business like a homestay, guest house, restaurants, paying guest, resort-teashop, restaurants have more concerns about the gradually deteriorated environmental conditions due to the increased tourism activities in the region.

The sustainability of livelihoods becomes a function of how men and women utilize asset portfolios on both a short and a long-term basis. Sustainable livelihoods are those that are able to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses such as drought, civil war, policy failure through adaptive and coping strategies. One can describe a 'livelihood' as a combination of the capabilities and resources people have (including social, human, financial, natural and material assets) and the activities they undertake in order to make a living and to attain their goals and aspirations (Chambers & Conway, 1991). The people living in the Markha settlement has sustainable livelihood due to the many livelihood opportunities created by the tourism sector followed by the agriculture productions. People have created many living options like selling of their organic products to the tourists, offering home stay services, showing different cultural events to attract more number of tourists, livestock rearing and selling of dairy products to the visitors. However, they have some concerns like advertisements of their local identity and tourism services in the national as well as international market, preserving the natural habitat from the excessive increment of the tourism related activities, reviving the cultural organisations to preserve the cultural identity of the indigenous communities and promoting organic farming in the region. The local governments like ward office and municipal office should take lead on making the lives of people better, who are residing there and promoting the local as well as national economy through tourism business. The serious concerns of the people on the negative impact of environmental degradations on the tourism business and vice versa should not be undermined.

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