PEACE TOURISM IN POST PANDEMIC ERA

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Abstract

Nepal is the land of peace emblem lord Buddha. Peace tourism is the tourism in absence of war or conflicts. At this point of time Nepal is in post war era but fighting with COVID-19 pandemic. New days new hopes are coming that Nepal must be able to manage post pandemic era of peace tourism development. To determine the concept, application and future of peace tourism in post pandemic era the paper has been developed. The study has adopted the qualitative method. It is a review paper is to analyzes the scope and development procedure in tourism industry of Nepal and try to provide answers for the recovery of tourism in Nepal. the study has reviewed six prominent articles about peace tourism of Nepal. In conclusion there are many jargons about Buddhist tourism. Integration of Buddhists philosophy in peaceful tourism can be defined as Peace Tourism in Nepal of course it has to highlight the history of different wars and conflicts of Nepal and Lumbini. At this time Nepal government must be able to impose the peace philosophy of Buddha in tourism to attract global tourists with changing environment, mask and physical distance with complete assurance of security of tourists. In the name of Buddha Nepal can promote Yoga, Meditation, Religious, and Spiritual tourism in Lumbini as well as in Nepal.

Keywords: Buddhist Philosophy, Peace Tourism, Post Pandemic Era

Introduction

Tourism industry christened as a "fickle" industry, "seasonal" industry, "peace" industry, one of the "largest" industries, and so on (Ulak, 2020). Tourism has to play a significant role to uplift the living status of people in specific tourism areas worldwide. Tourism has potential for creating jobs and encourages income-generating activities and it also leads to infrastructure development if the stakeholders are responsible. In Nepal, tourism had uplifted the socio-economical condition of the locals and given them ample opportunity to better lives but the COVID has ruined the industry. It has created path towards the elimination of poverty and has significantly contributed to overall development of the country. It is also one of the major sources of foreign exchange earning of the country. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, tourism has suffered unprecedented setback, and its effect can be seen similar on global economy. It has rendered millions of people unemployed and huge investments have frozen and unable to generate business and move the economy. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had adversely affected different sectors, including, tourism in 2020. It had compelled tourism stakeholders to follow additional health, hygiene, and safety measures. But tourism is one of the crucial sectors to develop the least developed countries, like Nepal. It was prioritized by the government to generate money and enhance the local livelihood more sustainably (KC, 2021). The movement of persons can be further clarified by categorizing them into "excursionists" and "foreign tourists" (Bhola-Paul, 2015).

Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries. It acts as an engine for development through foreign exchange earnings and the creation of direct and indirect employment. Peace tourism plays a vital role to uplift the living status of people in specific areas worldwide. Tourism can improve government-to-government, government-to-private citizens and citizen-to-citizens' relationships. Peace tourism is defined as a phenomenon where every tourist's activity should be linked with peace as the aim for the visitors: locals, domestic or international visitors (Medhakar & Haq, 2018). The relationship between tourism and peace

has been endorsed by a number of institutions. Such initiatives highlight the co-relation and causal relationship between tourism and peace and support the theory that tourism can be helpful in mitigating conflict and accelerating peace. The relationship between tourism and peace has also been endorsed by a number of international initiations (e.g., The UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, International Bureau of Social Tourism in 1963, The Helsinki Accord in 1975, World Tourism Organization's Tourism Bill of Rights & Tourist Code in 1985, United Nations World Tourism Organization's Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty 2003, etc.) (Upadhayaya, 2011).

Peace is a vital and most cherished dream of humanity; it is a state that not only indicates the absence of direct violence but also sustains peaceful relationships among all levels and segments of society and between society and nature. 'Peace' the word itself have a great harmony, stress-free, security and calmness. In this sense if we develop tourism sectors in post covid era as a peace tourism which helps to heal the suffering parts of industry. Long-lasting peace and security are vital for a sustainable tourism sector. As tourism is a beneficiary of peace and peace brings hope for travel boom, tourism reciprocally has a key role in peace building by transforming itself in sustainable and participatory forms (Upreti & Upadhayaya, 2010).

Problem Statement

Global pandemic of COVID 19 has had a severe effect in various developing economies, including Nepal itself, as it has seriously engulfed the strongest economies of the world. The tourism industry globally has been paralyzed, and it will take long ahead to get the industry back on track. There are challenges to revive this industry and ensure its tremendous contribution to revitalizing the ailed tourism sector. To drive this situation more efficiently and tactfully, the need for good governance through its leading agencies seem to be much demanding and prevailing (Neupane, 2021). Governments are planning to provide the relief packages to the hardest-hit sectors but seem challenging as not a single sector remains untouched and bothered. The tourism sector being the highest contributor to almost all the economies, in one or another way or form, the relief and resilience packages are to be designed and offered by the governments.

Gautam Buddha who represents as the symbol of peace. Nepal is a beautiful country of having wide possibility in tourism, superior reason is the land of birth place of Buddha and country of Mountains. Tourism is a sensitive industry after cracking the industry due to COVID tourism can be developed as the based on the peace tourism applying Buddhist philosophy. Buddhism and its philosophy now have a global following. The Buddha seeks a middle way between the extremes of dogmatism and skepticism, emphasizing personal experience, a pragmatic attitude, and the use of critical thinking toward all types of knowledge, it explores the right and effective solutions. This study 8nalyses the challenges faced by tourism industry post COVID era in Nepal and try to provide answers for the recovery of tourism in Nepal (Shivakoti, 2021) post pandemic era of peace tourism. The study presents the stature of tourism sectors in Nepal and its contribution to National economy.

In Nepal, the travel and tourism sector contribute to 8 percent of GDP, 6.7 percent of total employment, and it generates 6 percent of the total foreign exchange earnings. Nepal Tourism Board estimates that loss of 85.2 billion USD monthly from tourism sector only and three in five employees lost their jobs due to COVID-19 in Nepal. The "Visit Nepal 2020" campaign had cancelled which aimed to attract 2 million tourists in the country this year. Tourism sector has already suffered a huge loss, and it is going to take quite to restore. The government should form special task force to create economic response package that will support Nepalese, their job, their businesses from the global impact of COVID-19, and to ready the economy to recover

(Panthhe, 2021). There are different sections, sets and subsets in Buddhism, entire all of them follow or pretend to follow the teaching of Gautam Buddha (Leve, 2015). There are also shifts in research priorities arising out of debates in tourism studies, and in surrounding areas of study and established disciplines (Meyer-Arendt, 2004). Tourism is rapidly growing in Nepal which can be largest economic industry for the intake of foreign currency of proper infrastructure development is maintained and security is generated (Karmacharya, 2013, p. 22). The fact is that it is necessary to find out the solutions to increase the tourists in Lumbini or in other Buddhists sites.

Objectives and Method

Every situation every moment and every activity have its own importance and possibilities. 'Everything teaches us something new' likewise from this epidemic, we got chance to learn what are the opportunities of peaceful sustainable tourism strategies? What can be done to overcome this pandemic and contribute to the sustainability of destinations? Why is a sustainable solution so hard to achieve in the tourism industry? What can be the role of circular economy post COVID due to tourism industry? are the specific objectives of the study. Methodologically it is the review of secondary sources to present the strategy and sustainability of Peace Tourism in Post Pandemic Era. The references are used as the list of data sources.

Results

The Nepalese tourism sector has problem on largely remains labour-intensive, political instability and many social issues and due to insufficient investment in quality infrastructure, technology as well as current types of pandemics and these kind of epidemic effects on tourism sectors. Even in this background, the tourism sector contributes a significant share of GDP and employment in Nepal. This paper assists to know what are the effective elasticities to various tourism indicators helps to understand sustainability in tourism in post covid era tourism sector and make sound policy inferences. The travel and tourism industry could not avoid the negative impacts and consequences of these events (Berki, 1986). Moreover, some of these events manifested the vulnerability of tourism both on global and regional levels. Therefore, this fact necessitates the research and study of the relationship between security issues and tourism, including the creation of a new, up to date definition of the notion "security and safety in tourism" (Kunwar & Ghimire, 2012) in this pandemic period.

Discussions

Concept of Peace Tourism

Peace tourism is directly related to dark or war tourism. The absence of war is peace. Buddhism is in present context is not the absence of war however Nepal has recently (2006) turned peaceful country from Maoist insurgency. It would be very useful if then governments were able to develop and promote the significance of people's war to the world. Luis D' Amore propounded the concept of peace tourism. Peace tourism is another phenomenon growing as unique genre of tourism. Definitions of peace tourism vary; however, the core aspect of peace tourism is to realize inner peace and work for world peace through visiting places. Thus, Buddhist tourism can be defined as a dimension of peace tourism. Medhakar & Haq (2019) say, "Peace tourism is defined as a phenomenon where every tourist's activity should be linked with peace as the aim for the visitors: locals, domestic or international visitors (Medhakar & Haq, 2018). Louis D'Amore chaired the First Global Conference: Tourism - A Vital Force for Peace in 1988, attracting more than 1,000 delegates to Canada to discuss the role of the tourism industry in promoting global understanding, trust, and world peace (Litvin, 1998), (D'Amore,

1988). A peace tourism can be an extraordinary example if India and Pakistan agree on Kashmir.

(Lollis, 2014; in Karki, 2018, p. 98) defines "peace tourism as travelling to experience places that authentically represent peace stories and peacemakers of the past and present. Peace activities require varying degrees of planning and preparation but peace places, primarily monuments and museums, are static and available to the tourist most of the time." The writer Lollis suggests peace as a destination because, according to him, historical or mythical places of peacemakers can be best choices for peace tourism. Exploring the connection between peace and tourism is going on in academia (Karki, 2018).

In a book "International Hand-Book on Tourism and Peace" Peter Van Den Dungen's paper entitled 'Peace tourism', mentions of cities which suffered greatly in war and subsequently resolved to dedicate themselves to its prevention, called 'peace city'. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Flemish city, German cities of Osnabrück and Münster, The Hague- 'international city of peace and justice, Geneva- Mecca for peace tourists, Oslo where every Nobel Peace Prize is awarded, New York have become important for peace tourism etc. Although there are undoubtedly points of convergence, at times war tourism and peace tourism may have little in common, and appeal to largely different publics.

Edwards W. Lollis's 'peace as a destination: peace tourism around the world' defines peace tourism as travelling to experience places that authentically represent peace stories and peacemakers of the past and present. Peace activities require varying degrees of planning and preparation but peace places, primarily monuments and museums, are static and available to the tourist most of the time. America and Canada contain one hundred peace monuments that 'authentically represents' ten different peace stories and at least 36 notable historic peacemakers. Many cities and corridors with concentrations of peace monuments are sufficient to sustain peace tourism (Karki, 2018). In that way Nepal can do but we need capable tourism planners.

Peace Tourism in Nepal

Peace is related with war or in other words, peace is absence of war. The absence of war means post-conflict tourism of the destination. Nepal was in long transitional period of 10 years of Maoists' people's war. 17000 people has to miss their life. Immediate after the peace agreements, if then governments were able to promote the significance of war through the global peace tourism it has missed the opportunity. Lord Buddha is an emblem of global peace. Nepal along with Lumbini is the land of Buddha, Yoga, Meditation, Religion and Spiritualism. It is the land of Buddha and peace. Meditation tourism may contribute to whole tourism industry in several ways. Meditation tourism may breed peaceful individuals who will inspire many people to visit places for meditation purpose. This can begin with meditation tourism to Lumbini. Therefore, this study suggests the stakeholders to build meditation centres where accommodation, teachers, facilities and required interpretations are available. This tourism helps to establish some ethical values such as non-violence. Buddha suggested non-violence as first precept but in Lumbini, there are many slaughterhouses. This is not ethical according to Buddhism. Meditation practitioners will avoid non-vegetarian food; killing animals in Lumbini will slowly come to end. As people find peace of mind during meditation, they will be ready to pay the meditation centres (Sharma N. P., 2020). Therefore, Peace tourism or Buddhist tourism can be used synonymously.

Peace Tourism in Lumbini

According to 2011 census conducted by Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Lumbini Sanskritik Municipality was inhabited by mostly the people of Muslim caste with total population of 23,568. Top five castes of people in Lumbini Sanskritik Municipality are Muslim (23,568), Yadav (9,816), Lodh (5,732), Chamar/Harijan/Ram (4,569) and Kahar (3,773) with total population of 47,458, which forms 65.46 percent out of total population of 72,497 in Lumbini Sanskritik Municipality. The land of Buddha is without local Buddhists. It means that entire Muslim, Buddhists, Vedic are living harmoniously. It is a symbol of peace tourism as well. Lumbini as a birthplace of Lord Buddha, a foundation of peace in the world and the heart of the Buddhist circuit has been severely impacted in the arrival of domestic and international tourists since the coronavirus outbreak. According to Lumbini Development Trust (LTD), about 13,107 international, 13,978 Indian and 67,942. Nepali tourists have visited Lumbini in January 2020, which was 48,060 less than in January 2019. The coronavirus had resulted in the closing-down of the tourism activities in Lumbini that has affected the livelihood of many people engaged in tour and travel agencies, hotels and restaurants, transportation companies, tourism institutions, and other businesses related to tourism in Lumbini and its premises (Kunwar B. B., 2021).

Future of Peace Tourism

In Nepal, the tourism sector is an important source of revenue and jobs. According to the Ministry of Tourism there are 129 Star Hotels and 1151 Non-Star Hotels which adds up to 43999 total beds. Similarly, there are 3508 Travel Agencies and 2649 Trekking Agencies. An average tourist spends 12.4 days in 2018 and 12.6 days in 2017 in Nepal the three-year development plan (2016-2018) of the government had aimed to increase the length of stay of foreigners to 14 days by 2018, which ranged from eight to 13.5 days in the past. In 2018, the sector employed 573,000 workers (8 per cent of total employment) and accounted for 26 per cent of total exports. Three-quarters of workers in the tourism sector are in informal jobs, leaving them with no protection and no income as the sector has come to a total stop (Shivakoti, 2021).

Over 4126 tour guides, over 16248 trekking guides, over two hundred river guides along with several hundred naturalists and workers in service industry lost their livelihood due to the pandemic. Similarly, there are over 65 Tourist Vehicle Service providers that employ over four thousand drivers and helpers who are also currently jobless. It is a clear understanding that even when the other sectors will start operating after the situation is under control, tourism along with all the service/hospitality industries will be the last to recover. This situation has rendered millions of people unemployed globally and thousands in Nepal. The government of Nepal or any other authority has not shown any interest whatsoever to compensate or to support these informal workers. In several developed countries like the USA, informal workers received benefit cheque from the government allowing them to maintain their lives. In other countries like Bhutan, they were given alternate jobs so that they can earn their livelihood. But so far in Nepal no concrete step has been taken to provide any form of relief to them. Some of the people involved in tourism have started alternative work, helped by family and friends but not all are lucky enough (Shivakoti, 2021). For the recovery of tourism industry, tourism sub-sectors' employees need extensive trainings and orientations to maintain highest standard of sanitation and hygiene. There should be strong monitoring mechanism for the actual implementation of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for sanitation and hygiene guided by the protocol in the field, if any breaches or gaps are identified then immediate corrective actions must be taken, it is very essential to keep the employees in discipline to mitigate and eliminate the chance of coronavirus transmission. Hence, this practice will boost up the

confidence level of flaccid travellers and motivates them to travel once again. Th ere will be a behavioural change of both the hosts and the guests as the footprint of the pandemic which will be experienced in tourism sectors in post COVID. Avoiding contact and social distancing; wearing mask and PPEs will decrease the charm of hospitality. Scholars are advocating tourism will revive through the domestic tourist movement and gradually international tourist mobility will help provide oxygen and spectrum to the tourism industry which has gone to coma being a patient of COVID-19 (Ulak, 2020).

The COVID-19

Covid-19 appeared in Wuhan, a city in China, in December 2019. Although health officials are still tracing the exact source of this new coronavirus, early hypotheses thought it may be linked to a seafood market in Wuhan, China. Some people who visited the market developed viral pneumonia caused by the new coronavirus (Panthhe, 2021). The world is facing an unprecedented global health, social and economic emergency with the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel and tourism are among the most affected sectors with airplanes on the ground, hotels closed, and travel restrictions put in the place in virtually all countries around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic, the greatest global challenge faced since World War II, has spread across 213 economies, infecting over 36 million people with more than one million deaths.

On 31 December 2019, WHO was informed of cases pneumonia of unknown cause inn Wuhan city, China. A novel coronavirus was identified as the cause by Chinese authorities on 7 January 2020 and was temporarily named "2019-nCoV". Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Coronavirus is a type of virus. There are many different kinds, and some caused disease. Covid-19 was first identified as a severe disease-causing atypical pneumonia, accompanied by fever, cough and sometimes a range of other symptoms (Neupane, 2021). The name "coronavirus" was invented in 1968; appeared to be similar to a "corona"- like or crown-like structure when observed through the electron microscope. Thus, the COVID-19 crisis is not the first situation in the world as numerous coronaviruses were encountered in the past years causing serious effects in humans and animals. On January 12, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) initially named "coronavirus" as 2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and on February 11, 2020, officially titled the disease as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the 2019-nCoV outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern as well as a pandemic on January 30, 2020, and March 11, 2020, respectively (Kunwar B. B., 2021).

The COVID-19 has been proven fatal to the world's tourism sector, including Nepal. The tourist arrivals in Nepal fell by almost 73 percent in March 2020. Nepal Rastra Bank on year-on-year analysis has mentioned that tourist arrival in FY2019/20 is expected to fall by 31.6 percent. The tourism-based sectors such as hotels and restaurants and transportation are expected to hit hard by this pandemic. Similarly, the Central Bureau of Statistics projects a contraction in gross value addition of hotel and restaurant sector and transportation sector by 16.30 percent by 2.45 percent respectively. In 2020, the visit Nepal campaign was aimed at bringing 2 million tourists in the country by the end of the year. But the campaign was called off at the end of March due to the massive outbreak of the corona virus. The tourism sector is likely to lose 85 thousand direct jobs and 36 thousand indirect jobs amounting to a total job loss of 121 thousand (Shivakoti, 2021).

Economic Sustainability through Peace Tourism

Peace tourism expresses the importance of having "positive peace. To tone down the pandemic effects and promote tourism as a sustainable industry, there are three main sectors that should be functioning and coordinated together. Tourism provides the opportunity for communities to generate income even if they are "poor economically, but rich in culture". It has the potential to provide direct and indirect employment for a large assortment of people in various social strata including part time and seasonal job opportunities for many people. Tourism can also provide supplemental income generation to people who already have other jobs. Taken as a whole, this large web of employment opportunities could generate income for multiple layers in society. Income generation leads to the increase of per capita income and it is one of the preventive factors that mitigate the civil conflict escalation. tourist projects will become beneficial not only for tourists but also for the local people. Another major objective of peace tourism is to cross ethnic, race and regional boundaries. This actually relates with the positive peace theory's suggestion about global civilization which aimed at improving global partnerships. Peace tourism is not just an income-generating industry, but also a great platform for enhancing positiveness (Herath, 2010). When the storm passes and the dust settles, whether the new world will emerge stronger in the post COVID era.

"Crisis carries risks; it also creates opportunities". Sustainable effective ability will hinge on our efficiency mitigate the risks while harnessing the opportunities that these social-psychological effects may present the long-term implications of the pandemic are reaching from the economy to governance and from healthcare to education (Chan Ghee Koh, 2020). Using emphasizing personal experience, a pragmatic attitude, and the use of critical thinking towards all types of situations we can get a great solution for sustainability of tourism industry through peace tourism in post covid era.

The COVID-19 outbreak has been considered as the most challenging tragedy that occurred in the world after the 2nd world war. The World Health Organization (WHO) had listed Nepal also as a country with a high-risk zone of COVID-19. The travel restriction and nationwide lock-down implemented by many countries including Nepal have resulted in a stranded traveller's movement. As the consequences ticket reservation, flight services, transportation, hotel, and restaurants were closed, and several job losses were registered in the tourism sector. The negative effects like fear, threat, frustration, and losing the confidence of tourism entrepreneurs appeared (Badal, 2018). This has brought changes in the tourists' behaviour and their motivation to travel for the next few years. In Lumbini businesses like lodges, hotels, restaurants, and travel offices were also severely affected by the pandemic. Thus, the tourism sector has been facing serious threats due to the prolonged lockdown and closing of tourism activities than the terror of COVID-19 itself (Kunwar B. B., 2021).

The prominent factors for building resilience in the tourism industry: government response, technology innovation, local belongingness, and consumer and employee confidence. They argue that using such inclusive resilience; the tourism industry may transform into a new global economic order characterized by sustainable tourism, society's well-being, climate action, and the involvement of local communities (Sharma, Thomas, & Paul, 2021). All stakeholders should be prepared to provide quality services including clean healthy environment and advertise tourism with focus on health & hygiene as a given priority to promote domestic tourism and proper management must be done in the tourism sector. They must learn to live with nature as well as develop food banks and wages for the unemployed should be provided (Rana, 2021).

Conclusion

Tourism after the global pandemic is almost in a coma. Tourism entrepreneurs are shifting their business and labourers are working in another field to survive. After the pandemic the tourism will grow slowly. Health issues, economic crisis, Sadness of losing people, depression, uncertainty about the future, instability situation and many other main issues are enduring people due to COVID- 19. The current situation and its expected changes take a social-psychological perspective as well as the potential risks and opportunities arising from three pandemic-attributed effects: depression and mental health issues, domestic violence and nationalism. At this time Nepal government must be able to impose the peace philosophy of Buddha in tourism to attract global tourists with changing environment, mask and physical distance with complete assurance of security of tourists. In the name of Buddha Nepal can promote Yoga, Meditation, Religious, and Spiritual tourism in Lumbini as well as in Nepal. Tourism is not just an income-generating industry but also a great platform for enhancing positive peace.

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