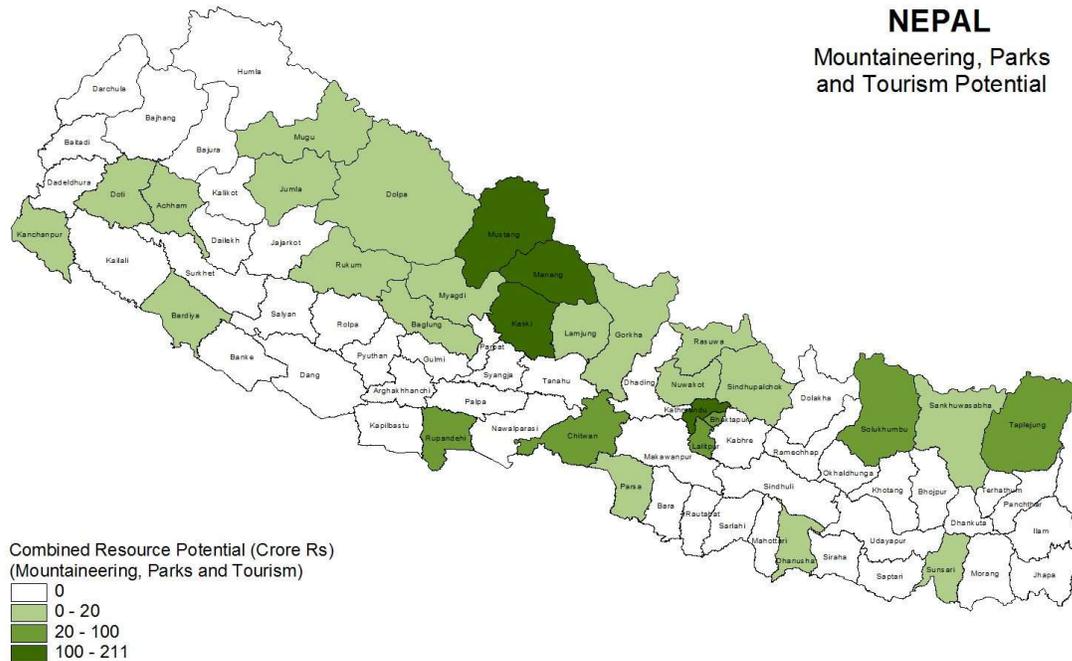


Tourism: Which district is rich?

Pokhara (Kaski District) is the most popular place for tourist after Kathmandu valley. Kaski district (NRs. 2030 Millions) is the second highest income generator after Kathmandu (NRs. 2640 Million) in terms of earnings from tourists.



The development and expansion of the tourism industry in past years have already been proved that Nepal's natural, cultural and social heritages are favorable. Development of a suitable

environment and necessary capital investment in the tourism sector in the country can huge take economic benefit from tourism more than now and there is no doubt in that.

Analyzing details of 15 years of tourists flow in Nepal, the purpose of tourists' visit in Nepal are mainly: (A) Mountain climbing, hiking, and viewing (B) Work and trade promotion (C) Pilgrims as religious purpose (D) Study and visit of bio-diversity and national park (E) Normal visit and sightseeing. Some tourists come by not disclosing the objectives of their visit as well.

Analyzing the trend of the tourists flow in the past 15 years in Nepal shows that:

- In the last 15 years, most of the tourists came in 2007. In that year, 526,705 tourists came to Nepal and this does not include Indian tourists/pilgrims that came through roadways.
- From the point of foreign earning also, 2007 remained an exciting year. The country earned \$260.60 million (Around NRs18 billion) in the same year.
- Staying period of some tourists is long while many of them spent 2-3 days in the country. Canadian tourists are interested in spending many days in Nepal while European and American tourists have also been staying a long period comparatively others. On an average tourist are staying 11.86 days.

In 2007, Indian tourists with 86,010 were among top countries visiting Nepal followed by Sri Lankan tourists 48,847 and Britain on third with 32,367 tourists. There were 28,786 from the US, 27,338, Japan 27,058, Bangladesh 24,012, Germany 21,323, and France 20,250 simultaneously.

Foreign Earning from tourists visiting National Park

There is no clear district wise data regarding the entry of all tourists. But details of tourists coming for mountain climbing, national park visit, and pilgrimages can be obtained district wise.

One-third of tourists go for national park visits as they were found visiting all 17 national parks. They are visiting for bird watching, butterflies, herbs and rear wild animals to observe or for study purpose.

Calculating the district wise income generated from the tourists earned through national parks in the last 15 years, a base data is taken national park. Similarly, the feasibility study done at different time periods also shows analysis that a tourist spending in his/her stay at Nepal can make the livelihood of a family of 4.5 members (In an average). A calculation, shown in Table 1, has been made by equally distributing the income of a national park that has been spread to more than one district.

The Table 1: Income distribution from National Parks in those connected districts.

Table 2: Income distribution from mountaineering in those connected districts.

Table 3: Income distribution from religious tourists in those districts

Income from Mountain Climbing

Thousands of foreign tourists arrive in Nepal for trekking at Himalayas and mountain climbing. In 2007, 162 groups have asked permission to climb the different mountain of which 86 groups stepped in. The number of tourists arriving for mountain climb was 1,128. These mountain climbers provided employment opportunity for 4,826 people directly. The country also earned the highest royalty of Rs. 240 million the same year. Besides royalty, the amount spent by tourists can make a livelihood of a family for a year which was calculated as economic benefit done from mountain climbing. The income in each district from the mountain climbing is shown in Table 2.

Income made from tourists coming for visits, pilgrimages and trekking

Pokhara is the most visited place by tourist after Kathmandu valley. In 2007, a total of 123,844 non-Indian visited Pokhara. Among them, 60 thousand tourist's priority was trekking and observing the mountain. Similarly, among pilgrimages, Pashupatinath, Lumbini and Janakpur are mostly crowded with tourists. Baraha Cheetra, Manakamana, Muktinath, etc. are popular religious places visited by many tourists however in the lack of keeping record tourists flow in those places have not been included. The income in each district from this category is shown in Table 3.

In 2007, the tourists who came to Nepal exchanged foreign currency of amount equal to NRs.18 billion. Among the amount, NRs. 11 billion has been spent in a different district, the details that could found. The details of remaining NRs. 7 billion which was also spent in various places have not been available and therefore, it could not be analyzed.

(Civil Engineer Pokhrel has done detail research on “Natural Resources and Conflict in Nepal.” He received research scholarships from Harvard University and Brandeis University USA for this research.)