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A Study of Dark (Disaster) Tourism in Reconstructed Barpak, Nepal

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"The strangest thing in the strange land is a stranger, who visits it"

- Dennis O'Rourke, 1988; in Kunwar, 2017, p.90

Abstract

Barpak is one of the largest and self-reliant villages of Nepal, situated at an altitude of 1900m of Gorkha district the village is popularly known for home-stay based tourism destination in the mountainous region of Nepal. At present, Barpak has been garnering attention as epicenter of Earthquake 2015. The earthquake transformed the former traditional homogeneous architectural attraction into seeming architectural repulsion. There is a confusion among the locals about their identity that was predominantly related with their homogeneity. There is an upsurge of cognitive dissonance and locals see the present context as tourism impossibility and are quite hopeless about post-disaster tourism development. This article adapts synchronic approach to highlight the tourism dynamics of Barpak in the aftermath by contemplating on the fact that disaster-led repulsion could be turned into attraction via an alternative paradigm. Developing both dark and non-dark (leisure) attractions that includes sociology of death, beliefs of death and disaster, commoditization of death, mortality mediation, memorials on one side and the landscapes, place, identity, socio-cultural diversity, instant culture in the

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aftermath, reconstruction narratives from the locals, on the other side, respectively. A leap from leisure tourism destination to niche tourism destination and continuation of both by complimenting each other. This unique mixture of dark and non-dark products at one place could be a prototype for post-disaster tourist destinations.

Introduction

Tourism used to be a relatively well-defined activity carried out in specific types of places at certain times. A standard definition of tourism that is often used today is that of the United Nations World Tourism Organization: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year of leisure, business and other purposes" (UNWTO, 1995,P.10; Fuchs et al., 2015,p.68). Tourism has been significantly repositioned from an activity undertaken by 'tourists' in specific 'tourist spaces' at specific times. It is now a mobilized, de-differentiated process of meaning construction engaged in by almost everybody in the developed world (either in terms of consumption or production). One result of this has been the emergence and analysis of 'new localities' in tourism, or places which are not traditional tourism places, but which have been created and shaped by more recent tourism trends. These include the Airbnb apartment, the 'poshtel', the albergo difusso, the dark tourism attraction, etc. (Richards, 2016/2017, p.9).

The academic study of dark tourism gathered momentum in the early twenty-first century, and is reflecting the growing interest of the citizens of postmodern societies with the sites of death and disasters- an interest that needs deeper research to be understood fully (Powell & Kennell, 2015, p.303).Dark tourism was first coined by Foley and Lennon (1996a, 1996b) in a special issue of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, their analysis relates primarily to 'the presentation and consumption of real and commodified death and disaster sites which has been expanded and exemplified in book form in Lennon and Foley (2000; in Ashworth & Isaac, 2015, p. 1). The initial focus was upon the identification of a new type of tourism destination and tourism product that was quite different from the assumed pleasure or enrichment conveyed by traditional tourism consumption. They were the first ones to bring the concept of dark tourism in the academia. However, the work was not the first to draw attention to the phenomenon of 'darkness' in tourism. If we go back to its background, it is MacCannell (1976; in Chang, 2017,p.1) who proposed similar concept of negative sightseeing that describes visitation to sites with negative past. In 1988 Dennis O'Rourke (1988; in Counterspace, 2014) made a film on cannibal tours which highlighted on the aspect of dark travel. In 1989, Uzzell (1989) discussed hot interpretation of war and conflict sites Rojek (1993,1997) discussed the emergence of 'black spots' which "refer to the commercial developments of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large number of people have met with

sudden and violent death". It is Seaton (1996) who coined the term thanatology and thanatopsis referring to the death. By the same year, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) also propounded the notion of dissonant heritage. Blom (2000; in Chang, 2017, p.1) mentioned the term "morbid tourism" referring to tourism activity prompt by an abnormal and unhealthy interest to visit place with disturbing and unpleasant theme, especially death and disease. Black tourism and grief tourism were also used to describe similar touristic phenomenon (Chang, 2017, p.1).Thanatology (dark) tourism defined by Seaton (1996), Foley & Lennon (1996) and Stone (2006) gives three different perspectives: a demand-led approach by Seaton (1996, 2009; in Light, 2017b), a supply led perspective by Foley and Lennon (1996; in Light, 2017b) and sites associated with death, suffering and macabre by Stone (2006; in Light, 2017b). The concept of thanatourism was defined as 'travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death' (Seaton, 1996). Foley and Lennon (1996) defined dark tourism as "the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites". Stone's (2006) definition states that dark tourism is 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre' (Stone, 2006, p.146).

Dark tourism is more than a simple fascination with death, it is also a powerful lens that allows contemporary life and death to be witnessed and relationships with broader societies and culture recognized (Stone, 2013; Allman,2017).The common feature throughout is the presentation and consumption of suffering, which is often related to death (although "death" is not an essential requirement of dark tourism), presented on the actual sites where the incident occurred (or in some cases, such as slum tourism, is currently taking place) or off-site memorials that have been developed to commemorate past events and atrocities (Speakman, 2019,p.153).

Disaster tourism

Disaster tourism as a subcategory of dark tourism, has only recently attracted the interest of academics and researchers. Dann and Seaton (2001; in Chang, 2017,p.1) offered a broader definition of dark tourism to include visits to destinations associated with catastrophe, violence, tragedy, and punishment. Tourist scholars increasingly have theorized tourists' relationships with national crises (Neumann, 1999; Edensor, 2002; Franklin, 2003; Pretes, 2003; Clark, 2004; in Pezzullo,2010, p.27). The meaning of disaster, as captured by UNISDR (2008) is 'A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources'. A disaster is commonly perceived within the social context or in terms of its social consequences; as Fritz (1961; 655; in Sharpley & Wright, 2018,p.338) famously puts it, a disaster is 'an event… in which

a society… undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented'. This definition includes situations in which a warning is issued and people alter their behavior to respond to that warning; for example, by evacuating. Based on the above-mentioned definitions, disaster tourism is defined here to be travelled predominantly recreational or leisure purposes to see areas affected by a disaster as defined by UNISDR (2008; in Kelman & Dodds, 2009, p.273; Tikoudi, 2016, p.78). Disaster tourism refers to post-disaster activities in response and recovery including memorialization (Kelman & Dodds, 2009, p.273).The prefix 'post'- is to indicate that a change has taken place, a process where the new has taken over from old (Giddens, 1993; in Blom, 2000,p.32). Fonseca, Seabra, and Silva (2015, p.2) describe disaster tourism as the practice of travelling to areas that have recently experienced natural or man-made disasters.

Of the various types of natural dangers, earthquakes are one of the most serious and unpreventable (Vare-Jones, 1995; in Tsai & Chen, 2010, p.470; in Kunwar, 2016, p.13) catastrophe. Catastrophes imply a cultural rupture, produced by human intervention in nature or by nature itself, in which humans either adapt or perish (Korstanje, 2017, p.46). An earthquake is a sudden and unpredictable movement of the Earth's crust caused by the release of strain that has accumulated over a long time. An earthquake belongs to the most devastating natural disasters. Earthquakes may cause many deaths, injuries and extensive property damage. Earthquakes often trigger avalanches, rock falls and tsunamis (Park & Reisinger, 2010, p.6; in Kunwar, 2016, p.13). The point vertically above the focus on the surface is known as the epicenter. Damage is caused by ground shaking and surface rupture, with indirect effects including landslides, lateral spread and liquefaction (Orchiston, 2012,p.64). Nepal earthquake was triggered on 25th April 2015 at 11:56 am local time with the magnitude of 7.8 Richter Scale. Following the classification of the size of the earthquake by Nepal's Department of Mining and Geology, the Gorkha earthquake is a one of the deadly disasters in Nepal. The epicenter was in Barpak. The quake lasted approximately 50 seconds affecting 32 districts out of which 14 districts being heavily affected. All across Nepal 9200 people died (Hutt & Shreesh, 2019), among the dead were 89 foreign nationals visiting from 17 countries (Wearing, Beirman & Grabowski, 2020). Around 773,093 private houses were completed damaged and 298,998 houses were partially damaged (Subedi, 2018).

Rationale of the study

The objective of the study is to analyze the disaster induced dark tourism in Barpak; to explore perspectives of death and mortality within Barpak community; to identify tourism opportunities in the disaster aftermath and to understand residents' perceptions on disaster-led tourism transformation in Barpak.

Barpak as the epicenter could be promoted as a prospective disaster tourism destination or dark tourism destination widely. There is a huge demand of dark tourism consumption in Barpak, but efforts have not been made to fully endure it purposefully and commercially. The tourism value generated by the hook word of epicenter has been consumed without any endorsement. There is an indecision about demand and supply of dark tourism in Barpak. The dilemma and the seeming repulsion brought up by disaster could be turned into attraction via an alternative paradigm through an amalgamation of dark and adventure tourism which has been labeled as 'darventure'(the combination of dark and adventure) tourism (Kunwar,2019), that occurs when features of both thanatology (Dark) and frontier thrills characterized by risk taking activities (Adventure) can be experienced and offered at the same place. The attraction of thanatology tourism in Barpak is the authenticity of the place as an epicenter. The core product is the spot of epicenter that triggered landslide in the adjacent hill of Barpak that could be viewed from Kot dada of the village. The attraction of frontier risk and thrills are the components of adventure tourism in Barpak is the peak experience in the Manaslu region. The other attribute of darkness and thrill entitled to Barpak is the mode of commute, the scary bus ride (Hepburn, 2012, 2017) in the tough and rough roads of the mountain landscapes for reaching the destination. This study shows the dynamics of Barpak as a destination with so many tourism opportunities. A leap from leisure tourism destination to niche tourism destination, and continuation of both by complimenting each other. This unique mixture of dark and non-dark products at one place could be a prototype in disaster affected tourist destinations.

Barpak

Barpak is one of the largest villages of Gorkha district situated at an altitude of 1900 m above the sea level that spreads out in a shape of a palm like structure from an aerial view. The distance from Kathmandu to Barpak is 177 km to the west followed by motorable road, Barpak can be accessed via Prithivi Highway that joins Kathmandu and Pokhara. From Abukhaireni (adjoining to Prithivi Highway), the road leads to Barah Kilo (a place which is 12 km far from Abukhaireni), a gravel road which leads to Baluwa from where it takes 4 hours of bus ride to reach Barpak. One can also enjoy approximately five hours of trek via Mandre to Barpak. The graveled road from Abu Khaireney running on the bank of Daraudi River to Barpak is extended to Laprak and Gumda. The headquarter Gorkha is 52 km far from Barpak.

There are altogether 1447 households with the population of 15000 inhabited by Ghales, Gurungs and Dalits. The Dalits comprise 56 households with 350 populations. The people of Barpak introduce themselves as *Barpak-mi* as autonym and outsiders call them as *Barpaki* as exonym. The nomenclature of Barpak is based on a historical incident of arresting 12 tigers (*bagh*) and tying them in a huge stone (the locals say

that the stone still exists in the spot) by the then Ghale rulers believing that tigers were responsible for the disappearances of villagers who pass by the jungle in the northern uphill area of Barpak. However, disappearances still continued. Hence, that part of the village is still considered ethereal by the locals. No houses are built on that side of the village. The village cemetery is located on that spot, which is now called *choyena danda*. Locals are fearful to travel to that place apart from the visitation to the graveyards of their relative and burial ceremonies.

Located in Sulikot rural municipality, Barpak is divided into two wards which are further divided into two different settlements locally known as *sworda (thulo gaun)* inhabited by the Ghales and *khyombo (saano gaun)* inhabited by the Gurungs, *Ghales* (a Tibeto-Burman speaking people of western Nepal) (Messerschmidt,1996,p.197) and others *(Sunwars, Pariyars, Kamis, Damais and Sunars).* Overall these two wards include 13 different toles starting from southwest namely, *kot, gantangta, thalibar, langribang, munigang, tatlinan, demeta, hongta, liwache, sankarr, sorda, khorga and khyombota.* The street network starts from the Kot, which is at the edge spreads out to other areas with rows of houses on each side of street. Among these toles, important toles are *kot, taklenan, sankar, and hong-ta. Kot* is important for religious aspect which lies in the south west edge of the village. It consists of a temple for *saat kanya devi or akala devi*, and a sacrificial open space used during festivals like Dashain (one of the biggest festivals of Hindus). *Taklenan chautara* (ground) and *kot* are located at a height along the ridge of the hill that would give a bird's eye view to the entire village and the epicenter. *Sankar* is a new emerging marketplace with hotels, shops around the bus park. *Hong-ta* or *honggen* is an old tole where people visit to fetch water, it is famous as *tindhara* (three water spouts). Barpak village is surrounded by other larger and smaller village clusters locally known as *nagpujache, kinangche, sikli, chingra, torontta, syamer, tumsika, thiligang, algang, foshyangta, lyame, mandre, isnaan, jhalywong, whoize, rangrung, balfya, suti, pukhri, tasara, siprang, punje, sindra.*

So far as the social-structure of the Ghales and Gurungs is concerned, the Ghales are divided into four lineage(clans) sub-groups locally known as Lila/Aathachyon they are: Samri with 114 household, Geldang with 150 household, Daanke with 250 household and Rildhi with 50 households. The larger lineages Geldang and Daanke are further subdivided into small segments. The Ghales have approximately 600-700 households.The Gurungs of Barpak are divided into fourteen lineage sub-groups (clans). They are: Kromje with 24 household, Ghotane, Kepchen, Guthi, Khempo Lama with 131 households, Lamchhane, Paicho Lama, Dingi Lama, Biki Lama, Khortang Lama, Kol Lama, Rakshya Lama, Tar Lama and Taisa. The Larger lineage groups like Khempo Lama are subdivided into small segments called *fang* or *toli.* The role of each lineage is to provide cooperation within the sphere of social, ceremonial, religious, economic functions during festivities. The village comprises every aspect

essential for the livelihood of the people, from religious sanctuaries to educational institutions, from health care centers to historical museums, from transport facilities to connectivity through alleys, from provisional shops to recreational hubs, Barpak is self-reliant and showcases rural modernity.

Review of literature

Dark tourism serves to transform the site into a mediating institution by allowing visitors the opportunity to be involved with at least four of the critical functions of the death system that may be seen to be in action, namely, the site as a place of disposal for the dead (actual or symbolic), a place for facilitating social consolidation, a source of narrative that makes sense of the death/death event (Dermody, 2017). The disposal of the physical remains of the dead is a task that every society must perform (Doka, 2003; in Dermody, 2017). To this end, many dark tourism sites feature memorialization of the dead by way of providing for a place of the actual or symbolic disposition of the dead. People have to adjust and consolidate after a death (Kastenbaum, 2001; Doka, 2003; in Dermody, 2017). In many societies, funeral rituals, memorialization (spontaneous and planned), public or private mourning and grief support are ways through which society adjusts. Contributing to this are rituals that draw people together to offer support to each other even as they mourn the loss, celebrate the life that has now ended, and memorialize the person who died. Unexpected death might confuse our ideas about life (Dermody, 2017). Society must develop ways to explain, understand and make sense of death (Doka, 2010; in Dermody, 2017).

There are no literatures that apply death system framework to dark tourism. Nevertheless, the existing literature on the death system suggests a number of reasons that its use in the consideration and analysis of dark tourism site would be appropriate. It is important to underline that the death system may vary significantly from one society to another. However, the lens provided by the framework may be applied regardless of the society or the particular death related phenomenon. The literature linking the concept of dark tourism with the sociology of death was originally founded upon three recognized theoretical approaches - Kastenbaum's (2001; in Dermody, 2017) death system framework, Durkheim's (1912; in Dermody, 2017) interaction ritual framework and Barbalet's (2002; in Dermody,2017) definition of emotion. Kastenbaum's (2001; in Dermody, 2017) death system framework serves as a guide to identifying system components and functions, as well as the resulting mediation of death (or the death event) that may take place. The interaction ritual theories proposed by Durkheim (1995; in Dermody,2017) describes a particular class of rite known as piacular or mourning rites (Durkheim ,1995). Barbalet (2002; in Dermody, 2017) defines emotion as "an experience of involvement" is proposed to bring a better understanding of what motivates some visitors to some dark tourism

sites, the manner in which these visitors interpret the experience and the outcomes of their encounters with the death event. The feelings of these visitors are what might be described as a marker of the interaction in the situation (past, present and future) that "registers in the physical and dispositional" being of the visitor (Barbalet, 2011; 38; in Dermody, 2017).

To sum up, the death system in a society has five components and seven functions. The components are individuals, places, times, objects, and symbols/language – all of which have particular death related meanings. The death system serves a number of critical functions: warning of and predicting life threatening events or death; preventing death; caring for the dying; disposing of the dead; achieving social consolidation after death; making sense of death; and setting rules about killing (Kastenbaum, 2007; in Dermody, 2017).Even a casual observation of the presentation of death at any given dark tourism site may reveal the following death system functions at play for purposes of the visitor experience at the site and an inquiry into that experience, namely, (a) a place for actual or symbolic disposal of the dead; (b) a place at which social consolidation occurs; (c) a place at which visitors are able to make sense of death in so far as the site or narrative provided there allows visitors to engage in meaning making to mediate or filter or legitimate death, their fear of death or the death event represented by the site and; (d) a place to seek or receive guidance or support for moral or social action in the face of the death event (Kastenbaum (2001; in Dermody, 2017) uses the term "killing rules" rather than moral or social guidance)

The commodification of death for popular touristic consumption- whether in the guise of certain memorials and museums, particular attractions, special events and exhibition, specific tours-has become a focus for the modern tourism economy (Stone,2016, p.223) through dark tourism nomenclature. In the year 2017, Light (2017) and Wendy (2017) reviewed and categorized the literatures of dark tourism in two different methodological approaches. Light (2017) compiled altogether 15 definitions defined by different scholars who studied in between 1996 to 2017, where he analyzed more than 171 literatures which throw light on the significance of dark tourism including its concept, model, approaches, theories and other aspects. Overall, Light (2017) categorized the whole 15 definitions into five different categories: definitions based on practices (the act of visiting particular types of place), tourism at particular types of place, motivations, form of experience and heritage. The bibliographic study conducted by Wendy in 2017 reflects eleven thematic sections with 433 different literatures to show the trends and clusters of 'dark tourism' studies. In addition to an initial overview of more general and foundational material, these eleven sections are: Genocide, massacre and atrocity memorials, museums and tourism; Slavery commemoration, tourism and memory; Penal heritage and crime tourism; Battlefield

and conflict tourism; Poverty and slum tourism; Dark tourism and travel writing; Disaster tourism; Pilgrimage as dark tourism: mass murder and celebrity death; Dark tourism, public memory and museology; Ruins, decay and dark tourist sites; Dark tourism and development of the heritage sector (Wendy, 2017).

So far as dark tourism studies in the context of Nepal is concerned, the area remained untouched for so long despite of the immense possibility. The discourse of dark tourism only started after 2015 earthquake. Back in 2012, Hepburn (2012) published an article on darkness in Nepal. The paper entitled "Shades of darkness: Silence, risks, and fear among tourists and Nepalese during Nepal's civil war" published in Writing the Dark Side of Travel edited by J. Skinner. The work of Hepburn's chapter published in Hooper and Lennon's edited book entitled *Dark Tourism: Practice and Interpretation* (2017). Her chapter, "Everyday darkness and catastrophic events: Riding Nepal's buses through peace, war, and an earthquake" highlights the concept of "everyday darkness in Nepal" and mentions that "although there are better and worse deaths, everyone dies and we all experience different kinds and degrees of suffering, no one dies without their share of it. This is everyday darkness." The very idea of dark tourism is premised on selective attention to instances of events that are ubiquitous. Nepal remains a unique dark tourism's potential supplier, as the tourists travelling to Nepal are not only the dark tourists but also, they are adventurers who enjoy harsh realities i.e. infrastructural challenges. Nepal is that destination where the tourists will get extraordinary experiences.

In course of reviewing the literatures related to dark tourism, the reviewers came across the study carried out by Robb (2009), in which she has discussed on "favela tourism" citing Scheper-Hughes's "everyday violence" (1992:ch.6), although this concept doesn't fully support the concept of "everyday darkness in Nepal" highlighted in the study of Hepburn (2017) it surely helped the reviewers to gain perspectives on dark tourism in a better way. At a cursory reading of this chapter, the bibliophiles might confuse this reading as a discouragement to those who are interested in travelling to Nepal, but if someone goes into the literal theme of this chapter, the realistic scenario of Nepal can be understood and a new horizon to the prospect of dark tourism in Nepal is identified. Although the text seems descriptive, it is a great source of theoretical knowledge for academics and practical implications for visitors.

There are few scholars who carried out their research on post-disaster social context of Nepal earthquake 2015. It is Kunwar (2015, 2016) who published two articles on disaster related tourism in the post-earthquake context of Nepal where he proposed to develop dark tourism as an alternative product in Langtang of Nepal, through his article entitled "tourism and earthquake: a case study of Nepal and Turkey" (Kunwar & Limbu, 2015) and "tourism and natural disaster: a study

of Nepal's earthquake-2015" (2016). It is Kužnik (2015) who proposed Nepal as a disaster tourism destination along with other different dark tourism destinations in his article "typology of dark tourism heritage with its implications on Slovenian future dark tourism products".

In the late 2015, Lord and Murton (2017) worked together with the people of Langtang locally known as Langtangpas and foreign volunteers on a collaborative effort called the Langtang Memory Project in the post-disaster phase. The project aimed to create a 'living archive' of Langtangpa culture and heritage and supported Langtangpas to tell their tales before and aft er the avalanche. The projects as part of a larger commitment to polyvocality in the wake of disaster—providing space for at-risk communities to describe their own conditions of vulnerability and narrate their own process of recovery (Schuller 2014;Liboiron 2015; Gergan 2016; in Lord & Murton, 2017,p.96). Although the paper does not specify dark tourism, it discusses several components of anthropology of disaster that coincides with dark tourism.

Soden and Lord (2018) presented the gaps in post-disaster scenario as silences created by misalignments between the narrative of loss produced by the technology supporting the government damage assessment and the lived experience and expressed ideas of the Langtang community. Building on Harley's concept of 'cartographic silencing' (Harley & Laxton,2002; in Soden & Lord, 2018,p.161) they highlighted the silences related to 1) ongoing landslide danger; 2) every day and collective practices of repair; 3) trauma suffered by the earthquake survivors, and; 4) the rapidly changing vision of 'the good life' underway in the Valley (Soden & Lord, 2018, p.161). This paper helped the researchers to get an overview of post-disaster seismic sites and several situations that arise in the post-disaster context including the questions on disaster preparedness, resilience of community, acts of memory and post-disaster tourism which has become important source of interpreting the prospects of dark tourism in the seismic sites.

They are Wearing, Beirman and Grabowski (2020) who confined their studies on volunteer tourism in post-disaster recovery context of Nepal, where they followed constructivist lens that helped to understand people, places and events along with the disaster dynamics. Likewise, Beirman, Upadhayaya, Pradhananga and Darcy (2018) studied on repercussions, recovery and rise of new tourism sectors in aftermath of Nepal earthquake 2015.The application of Nepal's recovery strategy has been examined through volunteer tourism, which played a central role in Nepal's tourism recovery and introducing accessible tourism as an innovative approach for new market sector in Nepal.

It is Ketter (2016), who studied on Nepal's Gorkha earthquake where the author highlighted on aspects of tourism crisis communication and destination image

restoration through social networking (facebook). The author followed the image repair theory which refers to the destination image as a critical factor that should be cultivated and protected from crisis.

Frontier experiences are often linked with winning over death. Hence, mountaineering, expeditions and all the adventure narratives in the adventure destination like Nepal should be analyzed through the lens of dark tourism i.e. death seeking behavior, tourism and tragedies, reliving death before actually dying, myths and legends of death, history and heritage, memory, remembrance, mediating between life and death, authenticity, emotion and experience. Frontier travel experiences are described by exponents as 'quests' in almost Arthurian language, or as odysseys, evoking the heroic journey and a desire for transformation through trials, in places'outside one's own common realm of experience' (Zurick, 1995, p. 137; in Laing & Crouch, 2009, p. 133), also it is often linked with mythical constructs. Butler (1996, p. 216; in Laing & Crouch, 2009, p. 133), for example, notes that the 'myth of the frontier has been a powerful one', and argues that it may therefore 'be an important part of its appeal as a potential tourist destination'. The highest peak of the world has chilling landmarks on the myth and morbid history that highlights the components of niche or special interest tourism called dark tourism.

They are Kunwar and Karki (2019) who thoroughly reviewed the dark tourism literatures for understanding its concepts, values and implication in the case of Nepal. In the same year, Kunwar, Aryal and Karki (2019) who conducted their study in two adventure tourism destinations which was severely impacted by Nepal earthquake 2015.The study highlights that post-disaster destinations reflect a new product of tourism called dark tourism. The tourists visiting both sites would get multiple benefits with features of darkness and adventure respectively. This could be called as "darventure" which denotes amalgamation of darker side of travel (death attractions, catastrophe, memorialization, education, entertainment and risk recreation) and peak experiences.

Barpak has been studied by many different scholars of many disciplines in different areas. Basically, studies were carried out before the earthquake 2015 and post-earthquake. They are Acharya and Halpenny (2013) who studied on home-stay tourism in Barpak that highlights the importance of how home-stay tourism as an alternative form of sustainable tourism development is important in rural Nepal. After the earthquake 2015, Barpak drew global attention in academia. As a result of this, many technical experts and mass media portrayed about the impact of the disaster and the reconstruction of the disaster sites including epicenter Barpak. All those portrayals were based on the repercussions of the disaster in the tourism industry. None of those studies have touched in the area of disaster pronged tourism opportunities. The contribution of this work to the literature is its highlighting of the

flexibility of the tourism industry after a catastrophe and noting that post-disaster scenario is the 'opportunity', 'signs of hope' and ' rebirth'(Miller, 2007,p.15), rather than an incident of declination.

Research gap

There has been a significant number of recent studies proposing models for analyzing and developing disaster tourism management strategies (Faulkner, 2001; Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001; Gothan, 2007; Gould & Lewis, 2007; Miller, 2008; Hystad & Keller, 2005, 2008; Lee & Hyun, 2016; Ryan & Kohli, 2006). However, the studies mainly focus on planning issues and suggest strategies that would potentially reduce the impacts of crisis and disasters on businesses and society. What has not been considered by the literature so far is the impact of disaster tourism practices on local society and economy (Wright & Sharpley, 2016).So far, limited attention has been given to the notion of residents' place image, especially in relation to its effect on residents' perception of tourism impacts and support for its development (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011; Schroeder, 1996; in Stylidis, et al., 2014). Hence, understanding the residents' perspective is important in identifying development trajectories that could bridge conflicting demands and images of the different stakeholders (Bandyopadyay & Morrais, 2005; Dredge, 2010 in Stylidis, et al., 2014). This study makes an attempt to fulfill the gap by focusing on understanding residents' perceptions on problems and prospects of tourism development in Barpak in the aftermath. This study tries to understand the least explored sociology of death (see in detail Brymer, E. & Schweiter,2017, pp.74-89) in the eastern societies and links it as an attraction of dark tourism. Berger (1969, p.52; in Walter,2008,p.318) assumed that 'every human society is, in the last resort, men banded together in the face of death'; we create social order in order to stave off the chaos and anomie brought by death. As a subdiscipline of sociology, the sociology of death and dying orients itself on the relationship between death and society (see in detail Walter,2008,2017; Fulton,1977; Faunce & Fulton,1958; Kearl,1989; McManus, 2017, p.255). Hence, despite its immense possibilities, dark tourism studies which concentrates on death are limited in specific geographical areas. While reviewing the literatures, the researchers did not find any sources of dark tourism studies conducted in the adventure tourism destinations impacted by dark incidents. Hence, this study is unique in terms of the geographical site.

Research methodology

This study incorporates scoping review, with the exploratory nature in order to provide an overview of a broad topic like this, map the existing literature and identify key concepts, theories and sources of evidence to explain the complex and unexplored research propositions. Scoping involves 'a synthesis and analysis of a wide range of both research and non-research generated material to provide greater

conceptual clarity about a specific topic or field of evidence' (Davis, Drey, & Gould, 2009, p.1386; Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, pp.21-22; Welling, Arnason, & Ólafsdottir, 2015; Hall & Ram, 2019,pp.1-11). Besides following scoping review, the researchers have followed qualitative approach. Qualitative studies are effective, in understanding the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of participants (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). It would seem that all qualitative methods have to go through a minimum of five basic steps: (1) collection of verbal data, (2) reading of the data, (3) breaking of the data into some kind of parts, (4) organization and expression of the data from a disciplinary perspective, and (5) synthesis or summary of the data for purposes of communication to the scholarly community. A way of interpreting each of these steps to make them consistent with the phenomenological approach (Giorgy, 1997, p. 245). More particularly, in-depth semi-structured interviews are especially useful to gather first-hand information, methodologically called synchronic approach, while researching relatively new and unexplored topic (Mack, et al., 2005). Semi-structured and unstructured long interviews of two to three hours were undertaken to collect the research data. The method was chosen because it is "data revealing" (McCracken, 1988; Riley, 1993; in Xie,2001, p.154) and is considered a powerful tool gaining insights into the socially constructed realities of individuals (Kvale, 1996; in Xie,2001, p.154). This helped the readers to develop an understanding on post-disaster sociological, cultural, environmental and economic scenario specifically in relation to tourism sector. Fieldwork was conducted in the month of May 2019. The information was collected by the group of 10 individuals led by the first author. The interviewers were divided into three sub-groups to collect the information on reconstruction, tourism and dark tourism. A total of 55 respondents were interviewed, an equal number of men and women were interviewed, varying in age from 19 to 84 but relatively age group of 30-50 years representing the local voices. A variety of occupations, such as teachers, students, social workers, photo-journalists, hoteliers, engineers and tourism/hospitality professionals were interviewed. The colloquial language has been used in this study.

Findings and discussions

Residents' perception on reconstruction and development in the aftermath

Disaster reconstruction is fraught with ambivalence (Oliver-Smith, 1996, p.313). Normally reconstruction of a damaged place would refer to the process of building again something that has been destroyed or lost, as could happen in a natural disaster, such as an earthquake. In such cases, rebuilding would not necessarily mean recreating something exactly as it was before often, it would result in a new building in the style relevant to the period even though adjusting to the inherited context. Reconstruction will also refer to re-establishing or regenerating socioeconomic condition or a place after a period of abandonment. This will include the mental

process of recalling something in one's mind and/or- re-establishing an identity. It is indeed a key question when reconstructing something that has been recognized as heritage (Jokilehto, 2013, p.1).Therefore, the researchers initiated their study by inquiring the locals about their understanding of the epicenter, catastrophe, death, injuries, resilience, physical destruction, landscape transformation, state of confusion, reconstruction, modern dwellings, recollection of the past, attraction and aversion, social change, new livelihood, homestay, hotel, food, tariff, museum, park, memorials, sociality, festivals, ceremonies, neighboring villages, adventure opportunities, 'the romantic gaze' (Urry, 2002).

Barpak's legacy as culturally rich village has been diminished by the reconstruction model. The traditional houses in Barpak were made up of locally available resources. The traditional designs of the houses, which is known as vernacular architecture had one or two storied with either two-way slope roof. The researchers visited few undamaged traditional houses to observe the traditional architectural designs and based on that observation, the researchers noticed the traditional structural patterns of the houses. The house has one main entrance at the center of the secondary entrance at the side which helps to connect them easily with the cattle and field outside the house. A raised porch (*pidi*) outside the house highlights the entry area where most of the time of the day is spent performing different activities such as sun bathing, drying grains, gathering with neighbors. The ground floor (*chey*) comprises of kitchen, living room and dining space. The living lobby is locally called *kimnang*, has a fireplace known as *kosh* where family members gather and dine. Just above fireplace there is upright hanging flat structure known as *pu* where they keep meat, bamboo basket and some tools. Similarly, the house has a second fireplace at the kitchen known as *pranga*, which is connected by the wood store known as *mang*. Master bedroom locally known as *neena nemnay* lies in the ground floor. Rest room and alcohol making room called as *chi- chornay* are located outside the house. The cattle shed is also the part of Ghale house that is located in the ground floor. The upper floor (*talyo)* consists of bedrooms and storage where they store grains, fodder and forages.

The reconstruction in Barpak is based on owner driven approach. The houses were reconstructed or repaired according to the vulnerability assessment and the individual dwellings were designed on their own needs and desires and design catalogue Vol. I & II (Tako, Basnet, Shrestha, & Pradhananga, 2019). Mostly the new houses have one or two storied with two or four rooms. The materials like stone, slate, wood, brick, mud, CGI sheets, reinforced bar, concrete etc. are used for construction. The reconstruction was done by imported materials by applying earthquake resistant techniques which brought rapidity in the construction but turn out to be quite costly. People with sound economic condition have built their residence using RCC framed

structure with dressed stone as the partition. Similarly, most of the people used brick and stone for reconstruction, the one-story house with two rooms on ground floor and attic floor with less height is generally insufficient for the large family members. Stone masonry with mud mortar and slate roofing has been replaced by reinforced concrete structure, which is good as this technology has good strength and can be made earthquake resistance. Using CGI sheet in roof rather than stone slates has created the problem less insulation of sound during rainfall and high heat during summer (Gurung, Sonam, Shilpakar, & Shrestha,2019). Similarly, wooden post beams are used inside the house, which carry upper floor loads easily to the ground. Wooden rafter and purlin carry the roof load of slate stone to the wall, which is eventually carried to the foundation. There is the mixed combination of wood and stone in most of the condition. The wall thickness is less, which also creates the problem for heat insulation at room. The private housing reconstruction has increased the number of houses but not addressed to livelihood. It could be a great opportunity to develop an earthquake resilient society addressing the vernacular architecture. Similarly, sustainability of those houses is another issue, as people are not getting sufficient space to live. Their daily activity very much less supported by new houses. This could bring a problem of adding extra floor which could be vulnerable, and constructing some more house (Tako et al.,2019).

Various government and non-government organizations intervened in the reconstruction process of Barpak in different ways. Few prominent organizations as mentioned by local respondents are NRA which identified the earthquake victims, provided financial aid of three hundred thousand rupees to each devastated family and technical support for reconstruction and retrofit, 26 houses owned by British Army welfare pensioners have been rebuilt with funds provided by the Gurkha Welfare Trust (Hutt & Shreesh, 2019), JICA Nepal helped in training and mobilization of skilled man powers for reconstruction process, CARE Nepal provided aid to few economically vulnerable families, agencies like CMC and Kopila Nepal provided psychosocial first aid for the earthquake survivors. The stipulated completion of reconstruction process is within 5 years. Earthquake resilient houses fulfilling the minimum building codes were constructed in order to receive the relief grant from NRA. However, many reconstructed houses are still not in compliance with the standard guidelines, hence faced grant disapproval from the deployed engineer. Although, the NRA claims that 85 percent of the reconstruction work has been completed, many households including 25 Dalit families living still live under the tents (Upreti, 23 April, 2019).

Residents' perception is very important in building or continuing disaster hit areas as a tourism destination. As Tikoudi, Dimou and Kourgiantakis (2016/2017) mention, "practices that ignore such locals' feelings, especially in the relief and

recovery stage of the disaster area, may cause negative locals' attitude toward further development of disaster tourism practices" (Tikoudi et al., 2016/2017, p.91). Tikoudi et al., (2016/2017) further mentions that, "overall impacts of disaster tourism could not be easily perceived by the locals, unless there is significant economic impact on the majority population. To this direction, "a well-organized plan and a strong will towards facilitating and implementing investments should accompany the efforts of the tourism related public and private sectors" (Tikoudi et al., 2016/2017, p.91). In this context, the role of place attachment (see Cui & Ryan, 2011; Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar- Laplacea, & Hess, 2007; Lewicka, 2011) in shaping residents' perception of impacts and their support for development (e.g., Choi & Murray, 2010; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Lee, 2013) is very significant.

While conferring on Barpaki's attachment to their place, the locals described Barpak's homogeneous settlement prior the earthquake as *tyaprakim* which means identical houses with similar designs called vernacular architecture. The unique stone dominant houses with black slate roofs, stone engrained courtyards and walls reflected a sense of equality through architecture in the community irrespective of the economic status of the people. Be it rich or poor everyone's house looked similar. In the aftermath the architectural outlook is explained by the locals with the statements like "neither a village; nor a city" locally explained as *na gaun; na sahar* respectively. The rich ones have sophisticated modern designs as duplex and the poor ones are not being able to stand off from the rubble. The stone dominant old structures are perceived perilous by the locals as it could not withstand the earthquake. The local understanding of concrete houses not collapsing during earthquake motivated everyone to build concrete houses. Now that the reconstruction has been completed, the locals have realized that their identity of biggest Gurung and Ghale village with unique cultural and architectural attributes has been lost and so is the authenticity. They are not able to decide whether the outlook is good or bad in tourism perspective. Locals narrate the present outlook as *suso: suso/ chaja:chaja* that is a local way of showing confusion. Various locals including 15 out of 21 hoteliers, 11 out of 24 homestay owners claimed it as an architectural pollution. Not only are they dissatisfied with the exterior outlook, but also, they are unhappy with the interior designs with the equipment that are used. The construction materials are not compatible with the topography of Barpak. The slate roofs are replaced with multi-colored zinc roofs, which do not provide thermal and sound insulation. Barpak's topography demands household that resists harsh weather such as heat, cold, snow and rainfall.

Local narratives on the reconstruction show the upsurge of cognitive dissonance quite evidently. The theory of cognitive dissonance holds that inconsistency among beliefs or behaviors will cause an uncomfortable psychological tension (Falk, 2009, p.120). Locals realized that Barpak village, once known for its homogeneity

in structure has turned into heterogeneous rural city. One of the locals said, "We rebuilt our structures all by ourselves…no engineers were consulted…good or worst we are responsible". A senior citizen when asked about the old and new houses in Barpak lamented by saying,"…back then houses were warm in the winter and cool for the summers…now it's extremely hot during summers and extremely cold during winters…and when it rains the zinc roofs will create so much noise that we can't hear what a person sitting beside us is telling…".The present Barpak resembles very little to what it was before the disaster, existing settlements portray minimal cultural designs. Barpaki take this situation as a cultural catastrophe and are facing an identity crisis. Hence, it is important to introduce context specific development plans. The issues of sustainable development vary from one place to the other, the need for place specific policies, which recognize the particular context of the destination (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Teye, S€onmez, & Sirakaya, 2002) needs to be implemented.

Tourism in Barpak

The earthquake and its aftermath had a significant and negative impact on tourism arrivals to Nepal in 2015 (Wearing et al., 2020). The exact statistics of tourists in Barpak is not available due to the absence of tourism information center. Barpak is the secondary route for the Manaslu trekking which falls under Manaslu Conservation Area Project (MCAP) hence the researchers have borrowed the data from MCAP in order to analyze the flow of visitors in the area. The data shows that the tourists flow has been drastically decreased in the aftermath of the earthquake. Yet, the local respondents expressed the increasing number of internal visitors in the aftermath. The increment can be justified by the mushrooming of tourism accommodations. Henceforth, if the disaster tourism prototype is promoted in Barpak it will definitely open up multiple avenues in tourism development of Barpak.

No. of tourists visited in MCAP area

Fiscal Year	2069/70	2070/71	2071/72	2072/73	2073/74	2074/75	2075/76
No. of Tourists	4286	5331	5658	2288	5745	7203	5138
Percentage	37.68	24.38	6.13	-59.56	151.09	25.38	-28.67

Source: MCAP, Gorkha (2019; in Kunwar, Aryal, Karki, 2019).

Barpak's history, culture, diversity, societal context, disaster experiences, adventure opportunity makes it tourable for many motives. Homogenous Barpak in the aftermath of the disaster is commended for its speedy reconstruction work that resulted to architectural heterogeneity. The culturally rich place inhabited by the Ghale and Gurung communities famous for the home-stay tourism destination in tourism game has been garnering its attention as Nepal earthquake 2015's epicenter than ever before. This phenomenon calls for introducing an alternative form of

tourism based upon the context and demand. Barpak as a tourism site has underwent drastic change after earthquake. The destination image has entirely changed by one incident. The change itself creates demand for the visitors to flock in. Jointly dark and non-dark forms of tourism attractions can be channeled together to uplift the tourism value of Barpak globally. However, there are very limited stakeholders to advocate for the promotion of Barpak as a strategic site with immense opportunities. The absence of the specialized tourism authorities and experts further worsens the scope of commoditizing authentic tourism in Barpak. Barpak broadly falls under Dharke-Manaslu Tourism Committee which limits Barpak under a small tourism cluster. There is a gap that needs to be identified. This study follows Mind-the-Gap model by Grinten (2010; in Duia & Werdler,2016/2017, p.52) and Weijnand-Schut (2017; in de Jong & Grit,2019,p.136) which suggests stakeholders to analyze between their desired identity, actual identity, physical identity and image. In order to find the discrepancy between the tourism dilemma in the aftermath of disaster in Barpak, the researchers identify that the desired identity of the stakeholders is to boost the tourism image of Barpak, actual identity is the tourism dilemma and the physical identity and image is the architectural heterogeneity.

Accommodation

Barpak prior earthquake fitted 'community based rural homestay' definition according to Nepal's *Homestay Operations Procedures 2010* (Acharya & Halpenny, 2017, p.2.). However, the post-earthquake continuity to home-stay tourism in the tents immediate aftermath and in the concrete buildings at present will fit the definition of 'privately owned rural or urban homestays' (Acharya & Halpenny, 2017, p.2).According to Lynch (2005b; McIntosh, Lynch, Sweeney,2010, p.3; in Kunwar & Pandey, 2014, p.23), homestay is defined as commercial home. Dernoi (1981) as cited by Weaver (2006; in Kunwar & Pandey,2014) defined it as a form of tourism in which visitors are accommodated in the houses of local residents. This mode of alternative tourism commonly referred to as homestay tourism was well-articulated by the late 1970's with formal programmes in Denmark ('Meet the Denes'), Jamaica ('Meet-the-People') and the US state of Connecticut ('Friendship Force'), among other destinations (Kunwar & Pandey, 2014). Barpak has been providing authentic homestay facilities since 2010 A.D. the initiative was led by a local women's group named Seven Sister and an organization named Gramin Adventures. According to the local tradition guests are welcomed as a family member where they get to share the living style, enjoy the local delicacies and acculturate in the local customs. Prior to earthquake 2015 there were altogether 22 homestays 17 of which were destroyed during earthquake. Despite that Barpak homestay Committee only halted their services for a week and continued hosting guests even on tarpaulins for a time being.

At the present moment there are 24 homestays in Barpak. One home-stay can

equip a total number of five individuals. The carrying capacity of the homestays are 120 individuals per day. Prospective visitors confirm their booking through different websites or through personal contact with the committee members. Committee receives the visitors in the community hall where they are felicitated by offering *tika* and garlands. Then the visitors are handed over to the homestay owners according to their rotation. The services are provided at the cost of Rs. 700 for internal visitors and at the cost of Rs. 1000 for foreigners. The cost includes accommodation charge, welcome program and breakfast. Breakfast includes millet bread, egg and tea. To be registered as homestay there are several criteria that requires rooms with twin beds in each room, toilet/bathroom facilities, drinking water facilities and the house owner must be the trained one for homestay. Based upon the demand of the guests, there is a provision of showcasing cultural performances such as *rodhi, ghatu, maruni, chudka and jhyali* in the evening. Homestays do not receive any form of financial assistance from the external agencies. The homestay owner pays certain accreditation cost to the committee as an outcome. Barpak Homestay Management Committee conducts frequent tourism and hospitality-based training programs in partnership NTO's like NATHM and TAAN to upgrade the homestay services in Barpak.

There were only two hotels with accommodation facility prior to the earthquake. In the present context the number of hotels with accommodation has grown to 21. There are 107 rooms in 21 hotels where each room comprises two beds for two persons. In that sense hotels in Barpak can accommodate minimum 214 to 250 guests in a day. The Tariffs of the hotel services are almost similar. The cost of vegetarian food ranges in between Rs.150-180 and the cost of non-vegetarian food ranges between Rs. 250-300.The room charge per day is around Rs 300-500.

Dark tourism attractions

Disasters can also make us better informed about the heritage we have lost, or are losing, leading to attempts to better preserve what remains by creating new mechanisms to recognize and protect natural and cultural heritage resources (Covenry, Corsane, & David, 2014,p.2; in Krostanje & George, 2017,p.211).Dark tourism as a "displaced heritage", which means that while heritage still is at risk in post-disaster contexts no less true is that memorizing trauma is a valid source to produce a new(displaced)heritage (Erikson, Covenry, Corsane & David, 2014; in Krostanje & George, 2017,p.211).Disaster restructures the relational position of many places in commercial and social networks (Gibson, 2008; in Martini & Buda, 2018,p.7), whereby the dark tourism phenomenon often produces new economic ventures and opportunities to rebrand places following events of from great loss and turmoil (Amujo & Otubanjo, 2012; Medway & Warnaby, 2008; in Martini & Buda, 2018,p.7).

Dark tourism attractions range with factors that influence the "darkness" of the site. The darkest sites tend to be sites of death and suffering and demonstrate the following characteristics: high political influence and ideology, education oriented, history centric, authenticity in terms of product and location, a shorter time scale from the event, a non-purposeful supply and a lower tourism infrastructure. Those that are situated on the lightest scale of the spectrum are associated with death and suffering and tend to have less political influence and ideology, are oriented to entertain, are heritage centric, are inauthentic in terms of product and location, have a longer time scale from the event, show a purposeful supply and display a higher tourism infrastructure. Dark tourism sites thus range on a scale from "darkest-darker-dark-light-lighter- lightest" (Speakman, 2019, p.157).

Death: rituals, memorialization and proceedings in Barpak

Barpaki's understanding of death, death rituals, memorialization of death, mortality-mediation proceedings can be characterized under dark tourism attractions as dark tourism largely explores death related mechanisms within its paradigm. "Human life is a once-only event; Death is an inevitable terminal point of individual life, the point of the ontological cessation of individual existence; There is no afterlife, either as eternal life or as rebirth; Hence, death is meaningless; there is no hope"(Stone's paradigmatic approach; in Cohen,2018,p.158). Stone (2009) further emphasizes on *memento mori-* "Remember that you must die" (p.23). In Asian traditions, memorialization of dead has been highlighted as ancestor worship. Cohen (2018) distinguishes two different long-established religious traditions particularly ancestor worship. All major Asian religions believe in the survival of the soul/spirit after death but differ in their soteriological teachings. The tension between the aesthetically oriented soteriology of liberation and that of the ritualistic tradition that aims at heaven is at the core of Hindu practices relevant to the ultimate end of the religious life (Sayers, 2013,p.1;in Cohen, 2018,p.160) where the ritualists (Brahmins) advocate renunciation of rituals and worldly life for the attainment of salvation and endorse ritual activity as the way to the ultimate goal, and eternal stay in heaven which has created " long tradition of ancestor worship"(Sayers, 2013,p.1;in Cohen, 2018,p.160). Buddhism condones ancestor worship in which there is mentioned the Buddhist doctrine of conditioned origination "describes a world in which nothing is permanent including the self" as Buddha's ultimate goal is nirvana, the extinction of the self. However, there are ancestral and divine rites performed by the householder even in the Buddhist community (Sayers, 2013, pp.10-11; in Cohen, 2018,p.160).

Hindus have always equated life with death like two sides of a coin that are inseparable. Life is completed only after attainment of death. The thought of one without the other is unfair and impossible for Hindus (Ghimire & Ghimire, 1998, p.18). While discussing about the etymology of death in Sanskrit, there are two most

common words which signify the balanced view of life and death. They are *kāla* and *mrtyu*. *Kāla* which means death, also signifies time and darkness. *Mrtyu* in Sanskrit means mortification and is derived from the root *Mar* means "to kill" or "to destroy" (Ghimire & Ghimire, 1998, pp.22-23).

Malinowski's study as quoted by Nagendra (1971) highlights the mortuary rites which function as sacralizers of tradition. Death to the native means the disturbance of the existing social equilibrium; for him horror and fear are its universal psychological concomitants (Nagendra, 1971; Pandey, 1976). Death rites serve "to counteract the centrifugal forces of fear, dismay and demoralization, and provide the most powerful means of reintegration of the group's shaken solidarity and of the re-establishment of its morale." These rites reinforce the faith in spirit, immortality of the soul and in the duties of ceremonial sacrifices. The acts of mourning and memetic wailing provide ready channels for the flow of the thwarted energy. They unite together the survivors and help them regain their lost morale (Nagendra, 1971).

Death is portrayed differently across the culture. Death is called *shiwa* and dying is called *shiye* among the Ghales and Gurungs of Barpak. No social or ritual occasion or rite of passage is more significant to the Gurungs than funerals and post-funerary celebrations. Funeral ceremonies are lengthy and elaborate affairs involving all categories of kinsmen. Not only are they important as rites separating the living from the dead, but as rites of reaffirmation and reconfiguration of statuses and roles among living individuals and of bonds between corporate groups (Messerschmidt,1976, p.84). People distinguish two types of death-the mortality and fatality locally called *si/shiwa* and *bikalnei* respectively. Locals believe that the mortality leads to paradise while fatality does not. The intensity of pain is different in the case of natural and unnatural death so is the death rites. According to their tradition, they bury the dead body in the case of mortality while they cremate in the case of fatality. But this rule will not be applicable to the *jhakri* and *jaishi* who are shamans and astrologers/priest respectively as they are generally cremated no matter the cause of death. The term shaman, in the literature, is generally applied to an individual who resembles the priest who achieves his status primarily through 'possession', 'ecstacy' or the trance (Jones,1996, p.4) to which Eliade (1964; in Jones,1996) called 'soul journey' or 'magical flight'. So far as astrology is concerned, Astrology is the study of the influence that distant cosmic objects, usually stars and planets, have on human lives. The position of the sun, stars, moon and planets at the time of people's birth (not their conception) is said to shape their personality, affect their romantic relationships and predict their economic fortunes, among other divinations (Burk, 2001).

Act of mourning the dead is called kriya *tong* and *tong chowk* is referred to the place where the mourners gather. Gurung funerals are observed in two parts, an initial mortuary rite and disposal of the body (*mhi sibari*) and concluding memorial

ceremony (*pai/arghun).*The commemorative rites is conceived to be an occasion of great gift giving, generally from the survivors to their deceased kinsmen, augmented on the final day by respectfully honoring those affinal kin (relation established through marriage) who are in an alliance relationship with the family and lineage of the deceased. (Messerschmidt,1976, p.85). The death rites in Barpak are conducted at least for seven days in the beginning and can exceed for 13 days, 45 days, six month and one year accordingly. During the transition period, the mourners are characterized as "carrying sorrow" (*mri nob)* (Messerschmidt,1976, p.85). The Lama follows different processes to release the spirit of dead. The son wears white cloth while performing the rites. One is not allowed to eat meat during the rite if the father dies, in the case of the mother-one is not allowed to consume milk during the following year. They bury their dead in Choyena hill which lies above the village. The cemetery for the Bonpos lies 25m above the Christian cemetery and the cemetery for Dalit community lies above Taklenan in a place called Chorko and in Kulung Pakha. The cemeteries are locally known as *dhursa.* At the time of earthquake 2015, 72 Barpakis died but they could not follow their traditional funeral rites where fatal deaths had to be cremated which they could not manage in time of urgency. The survivors buried the corpses of the deceased members and shortened the three days funeral ceremony to one day.

Memorialization of dead

Memories are often thought of in terms of scale: from the individual or private which may involve personal experiences such as loss or suffering (Burk, 2003, p.317; in McDowell, 2008,p.40); the local or communal which draws on key events or experiences that have occurred within close-knit groups; to societal memory which describes the narrative of the past that are sympathetic to a broader, loosely interconnected population. Also, on that same scale is public and national memory. Bodnar (1992, p.13; in McDowell, 2008, p.40) argues that 'public memory emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions', while Shackel (2003, p.11; McDowell, 2008,p.40) believes that it is a reflection of present political and social relationships. Sturken (2007: 10) articulates as a typical tourist subjectivity by inviting guests to remain 'distant to the sites they visit, where they are often defined as innocent outsiders, mere observers whose actions are believed to have no effect on what they see',…(Sturken, 2007,p. 10; in Pezzullo, 2010). In this regard, Rigney (2008: 93; in Pezzullo, 2010) observes: 'collective memory is not a matter of collecting, but of continuously performing'. Tours provide a forum for performing memories again and again for those who have survived and for those who are visiting.

In Barpak, the earthquake memorialization is observed every year on 12th Baisakh (25th April). On that day the lamps are lit to commemorate the death Barpakis who lost their lives in earthquakes. The colloquial statement of this act of memory is *thamaije minane sok mande che lagi batti nen* which means showing collective

grief by lightening the lamps. The local authorities further plan to extend the act of memorialization through the construction of earthquake memorial park where all the deceased of earthquake 2015 will be commemorated and memorialized (Kunwar, Aryal, Karki,2019), work has begun on the creation of a national earthquake memorial on 217 *ropanis* (110,374.88 sq.m) of land above the village. Built to a circular design, this structure will have a large clock whose hands have stopped at 11:56 am, fourteen pillars to represent the fourteen districts that were most seriously affected by the earthquake, and the inscribed names of the 9200 people who died all across Nepal (Hutt & Shreesh, 2019).

Mediation between the living and the dead

Mortality mediation 'model proposed by Stone & Sharpley (Stone, 2009a; Stone & Sharpley, 2008, 2014; Walter, 2009; in Light, 2017, p. 288) which draws upon notions of thanatopsis and the sociology of death to understand visits to places associated with death and suffering. The mortality mediation thesis argues that death has been sequestrated (removed from the public sphere) in contemporary societies, leaving individuals isolated from the realities of death because individuals may feel a sense of anxiety and vulnerability about death in ways that can challenge senses if self. At the same time there has been marked increase in the representation and recreation of death within popular culture so that absent death has become present in new ways i.e., religion, body world museums. Visiting places associated with death through dark tourism prospect enables individuals to encounter and negotiate death in situations that do not involve terror or dread. It presents setting for individuals to satisfy their curiosity and fascination about death and to confront the inevitability of their own death through gazing upon the death of significant others (Stone,2009a; in Kunwar & Karki, 2019, p.53).

In Barpak, along with the separation between the living and the dead, there is a cultural practice of mediating between the living and the dead once in every year. The name of this ritual is called *tyangra frika* which is observed by the Gurungs and Ghales on the occasion of *chandi purnima (Hindu full moon night)* or *Buddha purnima (Buddhist full moon night)* in the month of B*aisakh* (April-May). The ritual is also called "*bailangh wa*" which means calling the spirits in colloquial term. The Gurungs observe it one day before *chandi purnima* or *Buddha purnima and the Ghales* observe it next day after *chandi purnima* or *Buddha purnima*. In this regard, in order to get detailed information, the researchers followed participant observation in one of the *thhen* (lineage groups) of Gurung community of the village. Where the mediation between the living and the dead are conducted by the *pushare/dyangree(*shaman) of each lineage group. The shamanistic knowledge will be transmitted to anyone of male members within the lineage group after the demise of the shaman. The rites performed by the pushare or *dyangree mi* (person who will be on trance) of Kromje lineage group with

24 households of Gurung community of Barpak. The mediation process is conducted to fulfil the wishes and to solve the grievances of the deceased relatives in the presence of their family and clan members. The ritual will be organized in a room called *kosha (where kitchen, altar and dining are located)* for approximately three hours. The process starts with decorating the altar with ritual items, ingredients and *fui* (things that are loved by the dead spirit mainly rice, alcohol, cloth, cigarette etc.) offerings to the deceased ancestors. Fire is lit in the oven placed below the altar followed by rooster sacrifice. The oven will be surrounded family kin on one side, shaman and his helpers on the other. The way shaman starts body-shaking which symbolizes that he is inviting the dead spirits. Accordingly, the shaman will possess the spirit and starts murmuring which will be translated into the reaction, comments and demands of the dead which are fulfilled by living family members. In course of murmuring the shaman will also trance on the fire of oven. People believe that the shaman who possesses the spirit will not be affected by the fire and any pain during the ritual.

As it was observed that the Kromje clan was able to invite the spirit of the 89 deceased person from their clan out of which there were 40 female members called as *mumm* and 49 male members called as *fami*. The very next day every lineage group would organize a feast in the name of the deceased persons. Foods will be served to all the spirits that were mediated the day before. Female spirits will be sacrificed with female creature (hen or she-goat) and served food on black cloth whereas male spirits will be sacrificed with male creatures (rooster or he-goat and offered food on white cloth. There were 89 different offerings provided by the shaman to the spirits of the dead ancestors. This ritual is called *"fui thara"*. Messerschmidt (1976, p.79) cited this process as *bayu thhe*, 'spirit worship'. In the anniversary rite, almost all the members of the lineage groups are expected to gather in the village. The migrated members, married sisters and daughters are considered to be the guests in the function, guests are locally called *ngiwa dombo*. This is a major social gathering devoted towards the ancestral spirits of each lineage groups. It signifies the identity, integrity and solidarity of the sub-group within the community. In this gathering they not only focus on the ritual but also, they concentrate on managing sponsorship for providing food and drinks to the invitees. They also indulge themselves in merrymaking through various delicacies, folk music, song and dance. The females are well dressed up with traditional ornaments complemented with *darangko paccheuri* (shawl). The children seem to be on festive mood. People seem to be amicable, sober, and hospitable even to the strangers to whom they call *fi mi* for outsiders and *chindangg mi* for person from other territory. According to the respondents, this is one of the most expensive rituals in which they spend from four hundred thousand to six hundred thousand Nepalese rupees. When the ritual is over the guests including sibling will go back to their respective places and village will be less crowded.

Dark incidents and belief

Belief, as a word means something believed, an opinion or conviction, a religious tenet or tenets, confidence, faith, trust in something or somebody (Akdag, Yagci, & Aydin, 2014). The belief systems of people experiencing or expecting calamity are rife with symbols dealing with their situation, and their cosmologies are vibrant with metaphor. Hoffman (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002, p.19) jots the nonmaterial level through the examination of disaster symbolism by emphasizing on belief system filled with symbolic expressions in people experiencing or expecting calamity and dealing with disastrous situation.

While talking about the earthquake, local people explained their own beliefs regarding earthquake. Earthquake is locally known as *sungu*. People believe that earthquakes are the results of increasing unethical activities of the people to which they say *asath badi vayo*. There is another idea of *tolong-molang,* meaning upward direction and downward direction of the earthquake respectively, which is understood as the process of balancing the earth's surface that lasts briefly. This understanding confused them whether to escape or not during the shaking, as they supposed that small jolts goes up and down and one should not have to be worried. People of Barpak worship the Sun as god, the act of worshipping the Sun is locally called *miya lum che*. *Jijyu* (priest) performs the ritual to appease the god for preventing the negative events like disaster in their territory. Several anecdotes about earthquake exists in Barpak that depicts the confusion about earthquake in the local's mindset. One of the anecdotes stated by village astrologer is:

> "…kolle bhancha kya ho kya ho
>
> … kolle bhancha gola …
>
> …kolle bhanchan vhumi goptaune po hola…
>
> 33 koti deuta jageta vayo…
>
> manishharu sabai behosh vayo…"

The aforementioned statement literal translation is, "…What is it? Where is it coming from?... some say it's a powerful bomb……some say it will turn the earth upside down… 33 crore gods and goddesses are awakened … every human has become senseless.

Religion is another belief of human beings which is a part of culture. The religion in Barpak is combination of five traditions: indigenous shamanism, Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism, Christianity and Taoism. There is found syncretism within Hinduism, Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. There are altogether four types of religious experts in Barpak each specialized with their own areas, they are Tibetan Buddhist Lama, *jijyu* (priest), *jaishi* (astrologer) and *jhakri* ('traditional healer') (Miller,1997).

The role of *jaishi is* to determine auspicious dates and times for a wide range of daily, seasonal and life events (Masserschmidt,1976,p.80) such as looking fate of the new born child, to remove bad planet, *jokhana* ('divination') (Miller,1997,p.268) , to decide the date of *arghun,* choosing the date of marriage, *"Kosha lung Chang"*(to install the oven), to determine the dates to locate and translocate the cattle shed at the pasture. "On occasion he is also called upon to interpret and cure illness, based on his knowledge of the horoscope. He is skilled in the use of the Gurung-Tibetan twelve-year astrologic cycle *(barga or barkha)"* (Masserschmidt,1976, p.80). The *jhankri* are the shamans who do not possess books. "They pass their role of esoterica, myth, and ritual down by oral tradition" (Masserschmidt, 1976, p.80). The role of jhankri includes diagnosis of the disease, *jharfuk, kulpooja* (family, clan, tribe deity worship) (Miller,1997, p.268). According to the local respondents, a full fledge *jhankri* is he who is able to climb over roof through trance and enters into the jungle in search of *"dhyangro"* ('a large double-headed drum') (Miller,1997, p.268) used in the healing process. The new *jhankri* are often controlled and guide by the senior one. Beliefs and personal perceptions influence people's way of lives as well as their social lives.

Edutainment and dartainment

Sociologists describe, interpret, explain, critique and evaluate the social. When focusing on death, 'we must pay attention to ongoing interplay between societal formations (system of organization), social change (history), social institutions (infrastructure), and social identities (selfhood) to make sense of death- related human activity. As death is present in all of these social domains and its presence varies in form and purpose, it becomes possible to understand the myriad and complex ways that death is socially mediated' (McManus, 2017, p.255).

The interpretation on the sociology of death in Barpak including rituals, memorialization and proceedings provide an opportunity to gain the knowledge of death. To which Stone (2011b, 2012b; in Kunwar & Karki, 2019) calls 'death capital' which presents a setting for individuals to satisfy their curiosity and fascination about death and to confront the inevitability of their own death through gazing upon the death of significant other and Walter (2009, p.48) calls it as '*memento mori'* which involves reminding people of their mortality. One can be benefited with the component of education and entertainment called as 'edutainment' (Urry,2002, p.136) as well as 'dartainment' (Roberts, 2018; Dale & Robinson, 2011, p.213) describing dark attractions that attempt to entertain. Furthermore, to justify the context of visitors' experience in regards to dark sites, Turner & Turner (1978; in Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010, p.194) and Graburn (1989; in Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010, p.194) call attention to the formal similarity between tours and ritual. Imagining tours as a 'liminoid' (Turner,1982) ritual performance enables to explore how people subject themselves to a process of destructuration as they separate themselves from the routines and habits of daily life

and enter a liminal- like state where their identities become temporarily unfixed and where the rules of living change. In this space, tourists can try on other positionalities and practices, and then return home changed in some way- restructuration with a difference. Ritual is performative and transformative it is also restorative in the sense that it recalls, retrieves, and re-enacts living behaviour before it. It is, in Schechner's (1993,p.1; in Bowan & Pezzullo,2010,p.194) terms, 'restored behaviour' or 'twice-behaved behaviour'. In this sense it might be worthwhile to imagine tourist sites that induce memories of death as rehearsals, spaces where we can try on reactions and imagine the subjunctive 'what if?'. This possibility of transformation seems pivotal to the ritual of touring places that evoke memories of death.

Non-dark tourism attractions

In this study the non-dark tourism attractions refer to the elements of landscapes, people, place, space and sense of belonging that is pleasant and tourable. It includes attractions that are not dark in nature (Hohenhaus,2019). As Mousavi, Doratli, Mousavi and Moradiahari (2016) highlight that cultural tourism is not just about consuming cultural products of the past: it also deals with contemporary way of life and culture of people (p.74).In addition to the natural and cultural motivation of visiting Barpak, the disaster aftermath has led to a new circumstance of instant transformation in the livelihood. The instant culture itself could be a tourism attraction and product. Hoffman (2002, p.133) pins it by saying "nature destroys culture, but simultaneously begins culture again".

As far as landscape is concerned, the European Landscape Convention defined landscape as a resource having market value, that can be used for major economic activities such as tourism (Adebayo,2016/2017, p.48). Landscape is a central and powerful experience-scape in tourism. According the 1st Article of the European Landscape Convention, landscape is "an area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of natural/or human factors" (Ce,2000; in Carneiro, Lima, & Silva, 2018, p.87). Indeed, it is common that the visitors refer to the "beauty" and or the "quality of the landscape", as reasons for visiting some places (Marujo & Santos, 2012; in Carneiro et al., 2018). Thus, the diversity of the landscape (a set of natural, human, natural, aesthetic values and its abilities to generate emotions, transform landscape into privileged resource able to differentiate and promote regions and their products (Lavrador Silva, 2011; in Carneiro et al., 2018, p.87). Landscapes are valued environments where people live every day, a heritage, scenery with aesthetic and recreational qualities, and often important have biodiversity features (Plieninger, et al., 2014; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48). Landforms in cultural landscape created by nature and human culture both exist because of each other (Buckley, Ollenburg & Zhong, 2008; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48). Cultural landscape is a combination of both nature and culture as its elements, and the relationship between human and

their natural environment is a significant factor. As Fatimah (2015; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48) highlights, human and its natural environment are a unity, having inseparable connection. Cultural landscapes are integrally dynamic, with changing conditions, as a result of its cultural and natural forces and therefore necessitate adaptive management (Beagan and Dolan, 2015; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48). Cultural landscapes are at the interface between nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity. They represent a closely woven net of relationships, the essence of culture and people's identity" (Rössler 2006:334; in Adebayo,2016/2017, p.48). Cultural landscape has remained a vital resource for rural tourism as they comprise of various elements such as religious edifices, monuments, traditions and crafts which represents a focal point of tourist activity (Otilia-Elena Vicol, 2013; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48). Stoffelen and Vanneste (2015; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48) emphasized that cultural landscapes have a key position in most rural tourism destinations in the form of tourism assets and boundaries for tourism development. They indirectly provide the framework in which tourism is often envisaged as a regional development tool (Stoffelen and Vanneste, 2015; in Adebayo, 2016/2017, p.48). The Himalayas, steep mountains, hillocks, green forests, pastures, gentle sloping land including terraces and semi terraces, rivers, rivulets, pastures, rurality, sacred shrines have formed both natural and cultural landscapes of Barpak. Barpak has enchanting landscapes, panoramic view of Buddha Himal (6692m), Mt. Manaslu (8,163 m), and Mt. Ganesh (7,422m), Mt. Shringi (7187m) and Mt. Himchuli (6,441 m), Dharche (3220m) and deep gorge of the tropical jungle by Daraudi River. People of Barpak are planning to cash the adventure gateway of the Manaslu trekking route by adding Barpak as a stopover in the tourist itinerary. According to their plan, the Rupina La Pass (4,720 m) and Tsum valley camping trek begins from Barpak through Gai Kharka to Rubina la Phedi and passing the Rubina la Pass. Gargantuan peaks will be seen while descending from the pass. One can then cross the Budi Gandaki River and reach Tsum Valley (3700m) in 22 days.

Place is an essential marker of human existence and people make sense of their existence through their emotive or affective relationships with place. Similarly, in the specific context of tourism, the tourist's relationship to place is fundamental to the tourist experience. That is the destination may be the objective of the tourist, but place is the subjective reason for the journey. Thus, tourism cannot be understood only in terms of the geographic loci (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974, 1977; in Jepson & Sharpley, 2018, p.27; Silva, Karstenholz, & Abrantes,2013,p.18) it is also necessary to understand the social, cultural and psychological interactions that visitors have with the place (Morgan, 2009 ; in Jepson & Sharpley, 2018, 27). To describe the emotive relationships between people and place, including place bonding, place identity and place attachment, although sense of place is widely accepted as a legitimate umbrella

term (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Kyle & Chick, 2007; in Jepson & Sharpley, 2018, 27). Irrespective of the terminology, however fundamental to the place discourse is the distinction between space and place; what distinguishes space from place is meaningless to the meaningful or "the particularity of place to the homogeneity of space" (Bremer, 2006, p.26; in Jepson & Sharpley, 2018, 27). According to Gieryn (2000), the meanings that people or groups ascribe to particular places may be rooted in "shared cultural understandings of the terrain" (Gieryn, 2000, p.473; in Jepson & Sharpley, 2018, 27). Similarly, Greider & Garkovich, (1994) address that "a particular physical place or landscape may embody multiple landscapes, each of which is grounded in the cultural definitions of those who encounter that place" (Greider & Garkovich, 1994,p.2; in Jepson & Sharpley, 2018, 27). As an indigenous community, people of Barpak showed their close association with their place and space while they were in disaster trauma which is evident through their actions in the post-disaster reconstruction. The village has always been self-reliant through internal coordination, cooperation, reciprocity, mutuality and egalitarian approaches. The local respondents expressed how they participated very actively from their individual level during the reconstruction and instantly rejected the concept of integrated settlement put forward by various donors, believing that it would ruin their integrity. They also denied the translocation offers made by the government, Barpakis showed inquisitiveness in reconstructing the place where their identity belonged. However, the rapidity in reconstruction process made them to adopt heterogeneous (concrete building) structures which they could not identify with after the completion of reconstruction.

The seasonal attractions such as fairs and festivals, religious rituals, agro-pastoralism, ceremonies in Barpak can be commoditized. The socio-cultural facets of local communities and their culture including religion highlights syncretism, the combination of shamanism, Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism are yet another asset of tourism promotion in Barpak. Every festival is extravagantly celebrated in Barpak, it might be another form of tourism attraction for the visitors. Barpaki celebrate Dashain, Tihar, Buddha Jayanti, Maghe Sankranti, Chaitra Dashain, along with their own new year Lhosar. Ghale Lhosar is celebrated on 1st Magh and Gurung Lhosar is celebrated on 15th Poush. During Lhosar the Ghale and Gurung community of Barpak will welcome new Lho- the new animal year out of 12 Lho. They take blessings from seniors, eat their special cuisines like *sel roti* (crispy rice flour doughnut), fruits, yam and enjoy their new year with family.

Barpak village is branded as the land of world famous "Gurkha soldiers" with a homeland of Victoria Cross honored to late Captain Gaje Ghale. The military legacy of the village is very widespread. A remarkable proportion of the total population is employed outside the farm/home, mostly in public services and the army (namely the

British, Indian and Nepalese regiments). Remittances sent by these servicemen help significantly in the local economy of Barpak. Despite being rurally located, Barpak is considered to be one of the most affluent communities of Nepal. The village is self-contained, self-sufficient and progressive in many aspects. The beauty of Barpak is the mixture of rurality and modernity (rural modernization) that makes it touristic and attractive. The village has all the necessary infrastructures and implements such as agricultural products, traditional handicrafts, communication and transportation facilities, local enterprises, artisans and expertise. There are many locally operated businesses such as provision shops, pharmacies, lodges, cafes and taverns. Barpak amalgamates rurality and modernity which has been coined as rural modernization. This composition is viewed by Wójcik (2014, p.50) as the internal potential of rural areas by stressing upon the autonomous character of the rural environment (both natural and socio-economic), its uniqueness, and its own path of development. Rural modernization can also be considered as one of the non-dark touristic attributes of Barpak. The concept of a village mainly emphasizes the homogeneity of the socio-territorial system (local community), while the "rural area" is distinguished according to a certain set of characteristics. Barpak village's transformation is evident through an 'increase in the heterogeneity of the social and economic environment and the declining role of primary economic functions (agriculture)' (Wójcik,2014, p.50) after earthquake.

Visitor experience

Dewey (1938; in Ponder & Holladay, 2013, p.102) saw experience as a process based on interactions of an individual with the environment, learning from experiences was the process whereby development occurred. Tourism experiences have been described in four categories- feel, learn, do and be (Skynnis, 2003; in Ponder & Holladay, 2013, p.102). Tourism experiences may have transformative potential for those visiting destination (Cohen, 1979; In Ponder et al., 2013) by affecting the traveller in an unconscious way resulting in an accumulation of knowledge that creates new and expanded life experience (Gelter, 2006; in Ponder & Holladay, 2013).

Visitor's experience in Barpak as reported by the locals goes with the motivation to understand the military legacy of the village. But the visitors' perspective on motivation is chiefly the home-stay based tourism in largest Gurung and Ghale settlement where the visitors were lured by the authentic local culture in a close host-guest interaction. The interactive experience offered by Barpak is key to its tourism recognition. Another motivation is chiefly the everyday life of the local people. De Certeau (1984, p.xi;in Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010,p.197) articulates 'everyday life' as a critical term to signal our "ways of operating or doing things". In the disaster aftermath, the visitors' motivation has been changing. Barpak is now known as 2015 earthquake's epicenter. The locals report that there was a decrement

of the visitors due to destination image entitled to risk of disaster in the immediate year after earthquake. Slowly, the visitors have been increasing and motivations has become diverse since the disaster. There are visitors who like the Ghale and Gurung culture and still choose for homestay accommodation, there are visitors who are taking Barpak as a basecamp for the adventure tourism activities that are pursued in Manaslu range, there are visitors who use Barpak as an educational site of disaster, culture, geography related studies. In these days, a new kind of visitors are visiting Barpak which surpasses the seasonal lists. These days Barpak has been day-tripper's terminus (station). Now, that there are accessible motorable road, people from nearby districts are making Barpak as an *eat al fresco*(picnic) spot, where they travel, roam around, carry every consumable item with them, eat and enjoy and return home the same day. However, there is no local mechanism to collect the revenue from these activities. The day-trippers induced pollution is making waste management a new challenge in Barpak.

The locals barely get to interact with the visitors these days. There is very less means to create host-guest interactions. The researchers in seeking the answer to the interaction-based experience in touristic place have identified the interactive experience model by Falk and Dierking (1992) which later on re-casted as the Contextual Model of Learning (2000) which helps to comprehend visitor's experience in Barpak in both the pre-disaster scenario and the aftermath where the visitor's experience can be viewed (Falk & Dierking,1992) through personal context, social context and physical context. This gives a perspective that visitor experience can be continued through a different approach in both pre-disaster and post-disaster scenario. It could be derived from observations of real people in real settings. The real socio-cultural settings of Barpak, the epicenter, the cemeteries, the survivor stories, the memorial sites, disaster archives can be portrayed via interactive experience model and through the use of real time local guides, video-audio guides, walk around the disaster site, observing the local lifestyle, understanding the local perceptions is a part of contextual learning. Barpak as a site with diversity and complexity surrounding learning, Barpak can be used as a living laboratory for education through the interactive or contextual model. Every visitor in Barpak will be reminded of the magnitude of the biggest tragedy resulted by 2015 earthquake which killed 72 people and injured 450 people. Despite Barpak being popularized as epicenter, there's no access of roads to travel to the exact spot of the epicenter and it will at least take three hours walk from the motorable road to reach the spot. The access to the epicenter can invite a lot of researchers, academics and visitors to the site where one can learn about the ways of disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation. Wright and Sharpley (2016, p.14), suggest "visitor management is not only imperative but is key to highlighting a potential benefit of such tourism…".

Conclusion

Dark tourism is concerned with sightseer encounters of spaces of death or calamities that have perturbed the public consciousness, whereby actual and recreated places of the deceased, horror, atrocity, or depravity are consumed through experiences. Yet, the production of this "deathscapes" in tourism and, consequently, the consumption of recent or distant trauma within a safe and socially sanctioned environment raise fundamental questions concerning the interrelationships among morality, mortality and contemporary approaches to death, dying, and representation of the dead (Stone, 2016).In general, disasters like Nepal Earthquake 2015 are impossible to be forgotten and are traumatic in many shades. Furthermore, the lack of disaster preparedness and post-disaster incursion of diverse visitors derails the relief, recovery and rebuilding process. The authorities are not aware about the prospects of post-disaster tourism development, irrespective of the multiple scopes like dark tourism. Although, the theoretical foundations of dark tourism raise complex questions between "dark heritage" and both its representation and consumption by provoking debate over the relationships between "heritage that hurts" and how contemporary society deals with its significant Other dead (Stone, 2016).

In this study the researchers have portrayed Barpak as a heritage that endured massive catastrophe in 2015 that changed the place entirely and transformed its tourism values. There is an increment of the visitors who want to see the epicenter, invisibly this pattern coincides with dark tourists seeking for authenticity in dark sites. Hence, Barpak is an unclaimed dark tourist destination of Nepal Himalayan region which could be the potential dark tourism supplier with organized dark tourism products along with non-dark tourism possibilities.

At present, there is a huge dilemma about tourism development in the aftermath. The locals are not happy with the architectural outlook of the village in the post-disaster context. They are confused on the products to offer to the visitors. There are several questions on whether visitors will like the present outlook or not. The aesthetic settlement has turned into architectural repulsion. There is confusion among the locals about their identity that was predominantly related to their former stone-dominant architectures. There is an upsurge of cognitive dissonance in relation to the urban designs as shown by *Barpak mi*. Locals have seen the present context as tourism impossibility and are quite hopeless about the tourism boom in the aftermath. However, this repulsion can be turned into attraction via an alternative paradigm. The socio-cultural diversity of Barpak and the instant culture in the aftermath itself is a tourism attraction and a product. The dark tourism and non-dark tourism attributes can be a new tourism avenue for Barpak. This study tries to understand the least explored sociology of death (see in detail Brymer, E. & Schweiter,2017, pp.74-89) in the eastern societies and links it as an attraction of dark tourism. As a subdiscipline of

sociology, the sociology of death and dying orients itself on the relationship between death and society (McManus, 2017, p.255).

The study applies the lesson learnings from the disaster literatures that brings the concept of 'disaster fatigue' (Pezzullo,2010) which makes memory a prominent issue to be concerned in the context of disaster education, rebuilding and sustainability. Even though, museums, media, and commemorative sites strive to capture these embodied connections, corporeal memories are shaped by the sensuousness and specificity of environments. Hence, it is quintessential to visit and study about the disaster sites for authenticating the magnitude of event that occurred. To sum up, 'more' research is necessary to further explore dark tourism's supply and consumption in those geographical areas in which opinions of death, dying and mortality differ from those held in western societies (Speakman, 2019).

Acknowledgement

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