

Tourism Development in Lumbini Region: A Perspective of Domestic Tourists

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jsdpj.v2i2.69572>

Abstract

Globally, domestic tourism has been emerging as an alternative to international tourism both in the normal and the hard times. This also has momentum in Nepal, where the Lumbini region is considered one of the ever-visited destinations among Nepali tourists. The paper is a typical case study of Lumbini Sanskritik Municipality, the birthplace of God Buddha. This paper assesses how domestic tourists perceive tourism development in Lumbini, why they visit the site, what potentials and challenges they feel, and from which region of Nepal they belong and why. Following a quantitative dominant mixed method approach, the researcher has employed a structured questionnaire survey tool among 174 domestic tourists. Besides, semi-structured interviews among the five key informants were also taken. The paper argues that the travel and tourism of visitors from different regions of Nepal increased in recent years despite the fact that the region is known as a worldwide hub of international tourism. Domestic tourists are also attracted to Lumbini for various reasons, but the religious attachment is the fundamental one where respect for Buddha and Buddhism as a national pride is manifested. Despite having different opportunities and explorations the study also reveals some hurdles and challenges in terms of policy intervention and infrastructure development for the proportion of domestic tourism in Lumbini.

Keywords: Tourism, pilgrimage, domestic tourism, Buddhism, Lumbini

Introduction

It is difficult to define tourism, and its conceptualization often contests its scope as a service or an industry. While tourism includes a multidimensional service sector, it equally incorporates many industries, including accommodation, transport, travel companies, and recreation

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facilities. In its broadest sense, tourism is defined as a process of traveling and staying of people in places outside of their usual environment for different purposes including recreation, pilgrimage, business, health, or education, and sports. Indeed, global tourism is perhaps the largest movement of goods, services, and people in history. Consequently, it is a significant catalyst for economic development and sociopolitical change (Lyon, & Wells, 2012). Tourism study also engages with different types and modes, including domestic and international. The first belongs to the traveling of tourists to places within their own country or near the place of origin whereas international tourism indicates both incoming and outgoing tourists in different countries. While many of the studies in tourism are inclined toward international tourism, this study advances domestic tourism as a conceptual construct.

Domestic tourism has less theorized connotation in tourism studies. It is much addressed in various empirical studies of different countries as reflected by different researchers (Massidda, & Etzo, 2012; Nurov, et al., 2021; Styliadis, et al. 2017; Suhartanto, 2018). Much discussed issues in domestic tourism include travel motivations, existing potentials, local narratives, drive of cultural bonding, nationalism, ethnic identity, impacts and determinants, religious holiness, short-term recreation, and small-scale economy. Moreover, recent concerns have been paid to the studies on the nexus of domestic tourism with internal political conflict, civil war, terrorism, pandemics, natural hazards and disasters (Arbulú, et al., 2021; Moya Calderón et al., 2022; Nunkoo et al., 2022; Fountain, & Cradock-Henry, 2020; Cui, et al., 2016; Bultjens, et al., 2016).

Methods and Materials

The study has followed a mixed method approach whereby the quantitative method is dominant and the qualitative is complementary. Whereas both primary and secondary data have been used, the study is methodologically based on the Lumbini region taking a case study of Lumbini Sanskritik municipality (hereby LSM). A structured questionnaire survey was employed among 174 domestic tourists who visited the study site on the occasion of the English New Year (First January) of 2023. The survey was

carried out in the nearby and entrance of the core area of the Lumbini (i.e. Ward 3 of LSM) which followed an accidental sampling design. Two kinds of purposive criteria of sampling, i.e. respondent's identity as Nepali nationals and the age range above 15 years were predetermined. Moreover, five key informant interviews (KIIs) have been conducted to triangulate the quantitative data along with an exploration of local issues, policy contexts and changing dynamics of domestic tourism in Lumbini. The respondents for KII include three official executives of the LSM (the Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, and chairperson of Ward 3) and one from local stakeholders (including the president of the hotel association and secretary of e-rickshaw union).

LSM lies in the southern part of Rupandehi district Lumbini Province of Nepal. The core area of the Buddhist pilgrimage site where Buddha was born lies in this municipality. The LSM was first formed in 2014 and then further restructured in 2017 along with 13 small administrative units (i.e. wards). The municipality has a total population of 87,383 as per the national census 2021 (CBS, 2023). This LSM in particular ward 3 bestows popular tourist destinations in the Lumbini region which include *Mayadevi Mandir* (the main temple listed in a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is considered as the birthplace of Gautama Buddha along with *janma smarak shila*), sacred pool and garden (famous as 'puskarini' and 'uddhan') and the Ashok pillar (known as *ashoka stambha* which was built in third century BCE and now considered as the evident claim of Buddha's birth at Lumbini).

Scholarly Review

Indeed, tourism is a traveling activity along with different purposes, goods, services, motivations and products. However, it has been defined broadly and different approaches have been proposed in terms of duration, locality, and purpose. Largely, it is now agreed that tourism is not only a holiday affair, it includes more than this, including different economic, political, sociocultural, psychological and environmental dimensions. The definition of World Tourism Organization (WTO) is considered as the most cited definition of tourism which is described as "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive

year for leisure and not less than 24 hours, business and other purposes” (UNWTO, 1995, p. 10). However, limiting to this time and purpose is also criticized as a narrower perspective of tourism which therefore calls for a broader perspective in the changing political context including globalization and the emergence of new socio-economic structures.

The history of travel and tourism dates back to the rise of different civilizations in the world. It became a more phenomenal affair 1990s when the world witnessed the end of the Cold War though it slowed down at the beginning of the 2020s due to the rise of the pandemic of COVID-19. Over 900 million tourists travelled internationally in 2022, which is almost double of 2021 though still 37 percent fewer than the tourists who visited in 2019. It has been expected to have a further recovery of tourism statistics in 2023 (UNWTO, 2023). While talking about Nepal, a total of 614,148 foreign tourists visited Nepal in 2022, indicating a strong recovery in the country's tourism sector as compared to 230,085 tourists who visited the country in 2020 and 150,962 in 2021. However, the arrivals are yet to recover to the pre-pandemic level, when around 1.2 million (i.e. 11,97,191) tourists visited Nepal in 2019, the most populous visit to Nepal in the recorded history of travel and tourism (NTB, 2023). Yet, the tragedy is that this data does not represent the number of domestic tourists which has become increasingly popular in recent years. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MCTCA) has already prepared the strategic framework for the Nepal Tourism Decade 2023-2032 while the Nepal Tourism Board has said it is targeting 1 million foreign visitors for 2023.

The different studies reveal that Pokhara (including model villages of nearby districts) and Chitwan (Sauraha in particular) are the most popular destinations for domestic tourists. They are the epicenter of ecotourism while other religious destinations are also popular and historically rooted in the Nepali culture as internal tourism (Silwal, & Gonzales Garcia, 2022; Gawlik et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there are less proportional activities for the exploration of potential sites that could be more beneficial and appropriate for domestic tourists. Social media has given domestic tourism a huge boost to promote and expose such destinations and their quality features. The popular Destinations of

religious importance and getting an increasing number of domestic tourists include Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan), Halesi Mahadev (Khotang), Muklinaath (Mustang), Swargadwari (Pyuthan), Pashupatinath (Kathmandu), Pathivara (Taplejung), Chatara Dhaam and Barahachetra (Sunsari), Janakpurdham (Dhanusha district), Lumbini (Rupandehi and Kapilvastu), Chaandannath (Jumla), Badimalika (Dadeldhura), and Namu Buddha (Kavre). Among them, Pashupatinath, Muktinath, Swargadwari, Chatara Dhaam, and Lumbini are the most popular ones. The tradition of going abroad particularly to India by Nepali people for pilgrimage (*Tirthatan*) was also popular in history and has continued in recent years too. The most visited pilgrimage destinations include Chaar Dham (Puri, Badrinath, Kedarnath and Rameswaram), Pataliputra, Gaya, and Kashi.

The study of Lumbini as a tourist destination has been widely done by various scholars after 2000 and particularly in the 2010s (Nyaupane, 2009; Rai, 2020; Sharma, 2020; Subedi, 2017; Pathak, & Paudel, 2019). While the national-level data source for visiting Lumbini is largely regulated by the Nepal Tourism Board, the data of domestic tourists who visit Lumbini is out of the database system. Though not in the scientific system, small records are being kept by the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT). According to the Trust, 270,422 Nepali tourists visited Lumbini even during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. It is also recorded that around 5,00,000 domestic tourists have visited Lumbini in 2022.

Apart from that, the number of people visiting Lumbini from various schools and colleges and having not entered with registration could have been missed in the data system. On the other hand, only a few (i.e. 23992) international tourists from different 96 countries (excluding India) visited Lumbini in 2022. From India, 230431 tourists alone visited Lumbini who need not follow any visa process due to the open border and close bilateral relations between Nepal and India.

Result and Findings

Age-sex Determinants of Domestic Tourists

Literature often reveals that age and sex are some of the prominent determinant factors affecting tourism both in domestic and international typologies (Alén, et al., 2016; Leonidou, et al. 2015). Indeed, age and sex are biological factors and are associated with socio-psychological construction. On the other hand, gender is itself a social institution that is deeply rooted in patriarchal society and could affect travel decisions too. Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the age-sex structure of the sample respondents who visited Lumbini.

Table 1: Age-sex structure of the tourists in Lumbini

Age group	Sex		Total	
	Male	Female	N	%
15-24	19	18	37	21.26
25-34	15	20	35	20.11
35-44	26	28	54	31.03
45-54	18	22	40	22.98
55 and above	5	3	8	4.59
Total	83	91	174	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Out of the total 174 respondents, 83 were male and 91 were female which indicates an almost equal proportion of the participants though women were slightly high as compared to the males. It indicates that there was no such gender discrimination in accessing travel opportunities. While analyzing the age factor, the age group 35-44 is dominant (31.03%) where there were 26 males and 28 females, letting the proportion of 31.32 percent and 30.76 percent respectively in their respective domains. Then a nearly equal proportion of people visited the site who belonged to the different age groups (45-54, 15-24 and 25-35). However, only 4.59 percent of people aged of 55 years and above used to visit Lumbini from 55 and above. This data also reveals that the travel culture is largely influenced by age factors where the youth and early adulthood are more inclined to visit new places and get recreational entertainment. Nepal is largely dominated

by the followers of the Hindu religion. The youth-educated generation seems to be more inclined to Buddhist teachings, meditation, and global exposure of Nepal in the name of Buddha and his name as a national pride.

Status of Caste/ Ethnicity and Literacy

Caste/ ethnicity is an unavoidable social characteristic of Nepali society which could affect different types of tourism activities (Chitrakar et al., 2020). This study has followed this kind of two-folded general categorization because it is not a sociological study. Hill-origin people include hill Brahmin, Chettries, Khas, Dhasnaami, Hill Janajatis and Hill Dalits. While Tarai origin caste/ ethnic groups include Madhesi (Brahmin and middle castes), Tarai Dalits, Janajatis (including Tharu) and Muslims. In contemporary society, the literacy status and educational attainments of tourists are equally important in making travel decisions, including the mode, frequency and purpose of the visit (Sharpley, 2018). While accessing the data on literacy the study followed a scientific approach of census criteria, i.e. people having basic skills of reading, writing and performing simple household-level arithmetic. The other categories include ‘only literate’ (who can read and write) but never attended school and ‘literate having attended’ any school or college in their life. Table 2 portrays the status of caste/ ethnicity and literature of the respondents who visited Lumbini.

Table 2: Literacy status and caste/ ethnicity of tourists in Lumbini

	Hill origin	Tarai origin	Total	
			N	%
Illiterate (could not read & write at all)	6	8	14	8.04
Only literate (can read and write) but never attended school	16	15	31	17.81
Literate and have attended any of school or college in their life	69	60	129	74.13
Total	91	83	174	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As the results reveal, out of the total 174 respondents, 94 were of hill origin and 80 belonged to Tarai origin people, which is about 52.29 percent and 47.7 percent respectively. It indicates that slightly a bigger number of

domestic tourists from hill origin caste/ ethnic groups as compared to the visit of Tarai origin caste/ ethnic groups.

Regarding the literary status, most of the people (74.13%) were literate and have also attended any school or college in their lives. This resembles the national average literacy rate in Nepal. The proportion of this kind of literacy and school attainment is comparatively found more in Hill-origin people rather than the people of Tarai origin. Similarly, 17.81 percent of total respondents were literate only who could read and write but never attended school in their life. This proportion is also found higher in hill-origin people and less in the Tarai-origin caste/ ethnic groups. However, the study confirms that 8.05 percent were totally illiterate and were neither used to reading and writing nor having the basic arithmetic tasks for household affairs. Though not in a significant way, the Tarai-originated people were found more illiterate as compared to the people of hill origin. At large, the study supports the hypothesis that more literate in particularly people having higher educational attainment are more likely to visit different places for different purposes.

Frequency of the Visit

A comparative study method has been largely followed regarding the frequency of visits and experience of the tourists (Lim et al., 2016). The higher number of visits by the same tourists is an indication of more popularity of the destination site. This truly implies different kinds of domestic tourism. In the case of a pilgrimage site like Lumbini, the frequency of visits is also important where religious tolerance and mutual harmony of Nepali society, scenic beauty of different infrastructures established by different countries in Lumbini and respect for Buddha in the heart of tourists could have worked as a function of motivation. Therefore, most of the visitors (around 65%) found that they had visited Lumbini more than one time. Table 3 presents the frequency of visits by tourists in Lumbini.

Table 3: Frequency of visits by domestic tourists in Lumbini

	N	%
First time	61	35.05
Second time	38	21.83
Third	24	13.79
Fourth	29	16.69
More than four	22	12.64
Total	174	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result shows that 35.05 percent of the respondents visited Lumbini the first time followed by the respondents who visited the region for the second time (21.83%). It is also observed that 16.66 percent of respondents visited Lumbini the fourth time while less proportion of people visited for the third time and more than the fourth time. However, respect to the pilgrims like Lumbini as a destination site is fundamental rather than the other attraction or fascination. Reflecting on the situation of local tourists in the study site, the Chairperson of Ward 3, LSM has focused on the mobilization of local people and promotion of awareness. He continues:

“The importance of tourism development in this region cannot be explained in a few words. For example, the World Heritage site; the birthplace of Lord Buddha; a hub of world peace; and spiritual respect. However, I feel that there is a low level of domestic tourism as we could do. It might be due to fewer benefits and facilities that have been created for them. So, I often emphasize that local people and domestic tourists should be mirrored in a proper tourism development plan. I feel there is a gap between the local people (their productions and culture) and the visitors/ tourists”. (Based on the personal conversation, 3 January, 2023).

Mode of the Visit

Domestic tourism is largely affected by social networks as well as personal choices. Contacts, emotional attachments and social distance could also affect the decision about the visit of the tourists either in a single/ individual way or in a group (Joo et al., 2018). The study employs an analytical question about the mode of the visit to explore whether the visitors came single or in a group (including their family, friends or relatives). As presented in Table 4, it is found that most of the visitors (i.e. 71.26%) were in group visits whereas fewer people visited alone (28.73%).

Table 4: Mode of the visit by the domestic tourists

	N	%
With family/ group	124	71.26
With single	50	28.74

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Therefore, the hypothesis that domestic tourists are more likely to visit in a group (either with their family or friends) than the single/ individual level was tested and the result is shown in Table 5. The finding shows that the calculated value of z is 2.131 which is more than the one-tailed tabulated value of 1.645. It concludes that more people who visited Lumbini are in favor of group visits as the place is religious in nature. Group visits are significant characteristics of domestic tourism as well which was further explored after the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

Table 5: Z-test value of mode of visit

Test	Calculated value	Tabulated value (5% level of significant)	Result
Z	2.131	1.645	Significance difference

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Major Attractions of Tourism

Tourism has been described as the 3As, which include Attraction, Access, and Amenities. The attractions may have two broader dimensions, i.e. natural and human-made. Attractions also matter in cultural and heritage tourism, and they are multidimensional in nature (Ngwira, & Kankhuni, 2018). The question of what are the major attractions of the tourism development in Lumbini was asked to the respondents. Many respondents think there is more than one factor that attracts tourists to visit Lumbini. Theoretically, the major attraction of the Lumbini region is cultural and religious which was supported by this study's findings as well. Table 6 shows the summary of respondent's perceptions about the tourist attractions in Lumbini.

Table 6: Major attractions of tourism in Lumbini

Attractions	N	%
Birthplace of Buddha/ Buddhist culture	128	73.56
Archeology and research	54	31.03
Ecology and Biodiversity	21	12.06
Hospitality	10	5.74
Religious tolerance	27	15.51
Other	5	2.87

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As the Table indicates, 245 responses were revealed by 174 respondents in the multiple choices. Most of the local people (87.65%) respondents thought that the major attraction of tourism in Lumbini is the Lumbini region itself which is known worldwide as the birthplace of the God Buddha. This finding is supported by many studies too because Lumbini has been described as a holy place where the god Buddha was born. In the international community, it is further treated as the symbol of peace, harmony, and love which can have a better future potentiality too. Yet, 31.03 percent of local people reflected that tourists often visited Lumbini due to archeological and research perspectives while only a few

(i.e. 12.06%) used to visit for ecology and biodiversity. Hospitality is another important factor of attraction in many destinations, despite the fact that it is not very evident in the case of Lumbini. As the stakeholder consultation during the interviews reveals, hospitality is a trained service that is mostly targeted by international tourists rather than local and domestic visitors. The services including tourist exploration visits, guides and exhibitions including paid meditations are largely offered by expensive hotels which are less affordable for local visitors.

Place of Origin of the Domestic Tourists

Physical proximity, ease of access, and mode of transportation are some of the critical elements that affect the visitor's choice of travel in domestic tourism. The study therefore employs an analysis of how far from the tourism tend to visit Lumbini as their destination. The district, province and outside the province are specified types of three localities/ distances considered for this assessment. As reflected in Table 7, the findings show that nearby distance and close distance are the primary concerns for visitors for domestic tourism.

Table 7: Places of origin of the visitors in Lumbini

	N	%
Outside Rupandehi (within Lumbini)	56	32.18
Rupandehi district	77	44.25
Outside Lumbini	41	23.56
Total	174	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The findings show that nearby distance and close proximity are the primary concerns for visitors to domestic tourism. Rupandehi district is the home of the core destination area of Lumbini and it offers a larger number of visitors (44.25%) followed by visitors from the districts of Lumbini Province excluding Rupandehi. The province includes 12 districts which include Arghakhanchi, Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Eastern Rukum, Gulmi, Kapilvastu, Parasi, Palpa, Pyuthan, Rolpa and Rupandehi. It is however seen that there is less visit of Lumbini by the people who belong to the

regions or districts of other provinces. However, this is also not significantly less number of visits. It indicates that Lumbini is becoming a popular destination among the domestic tourists. While assessing the ways of visiting people in Lumbini in different regions of Nepal through qualitative tools, the findings suggest that the culture of travel and tourism is not at as much as we often have the glorification of Lumbini as a popular destination of international tourism. Nevertheless, awareness and importance of tourism in the region has increased. As the chairperson of the Hotel Association of LSM reflects:

“We have some infrastructures that are built and targeted for high-paid tourists, particularly who come from abroad. Nepali and Indian tourists could not afford much, and they came frequently for a one-day visit. Being a center of the world pilgrimage site, this is the place where a family or group of relatives and friends can visit and enjoy the trip. We should encourage the group visit and long stay of the domestic tourists giving them an attractive package of tour and travel.” *(Based on the personal conversation, 4 January 2023).*

Satisfaction with Tourism Services

Satisfaction and motivation of tourism have been largely discussed in tourism studies by different scholars (Engeset, & Elvekrok, 2015). It is often argued that the higher satisfaction of tourists in the destination along with different goods and services could eventually lead to multiple benefits and a higher number of tourist flows. The statement of whether the satisfaction of tourists was at an optimum level was asked of the respondents in the Likert Scale (Table 8).

Table 8: Perception of tourists towards the quality services

Statement	N	%
Strongly disagree	22	12.64
Disagree	22	12.64
Neutral	33	18.96
Agree	59	33.90
Strongly agree	38	21.83

Total	174	100
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Source: Field Survey, 2021-2022

The result shows a dominant perception of satisfactory tourism services in the destination area. However, it is not encouraging enough. Nearly one-third (i.e. 33.90%) of the respondents agree with the statement followed by 21.83 percent of respondents who strongly agree despite the fact that 18.96 percent were found neutral. It shows that more than half (i.e. 55%) of the respondents reflected their satisfactory experience. It is further interesting to note that almost a similar proportion of respondents (i.e. 12.64%) agree and disagree giving a clear negative tone with around 25 percent. This finding reveals a bitter truth about service qualities. Largely, goods and services are not dysfunctional. Indeed, people’s satisfaction and aspirations should be represented in tourism services. A tourism master plan could work more scientifically rather than an integrated development plan; in a way, they should be prepared following all the scientific planning procedures. To reflect the vision of LSM as narrated by the Mayor of the Municipality:

“Quality of tourism services is required strictly. The existing infrastructure could not meet the needs of tourists, but their quality and number should be increased as the flow of tourists would increase. Supply of basic needs and affordable services are prerequisites to promote domestic tourism. In my view, the promulgation of integrated development planning is the major policy principle for LSM. We are working in this regard, but the federal government and provincial government should equally prioritize the tourism development in Lumbini”. (*Based on the personal conversation, 6 January, 2023*)

Need of Additional Facilities for Tourism Development

Tourism development and its sustainability can be best ensured along with the need for identification and management of additional facilities in the destination (Camilleri, & Camilleri, 2018). The respondents in the study site were very optimistic regarding the widening scope and attraction of tourism activities in the Lumbini region. Despite this, they critically expressed that the level and quality of basic services of tourism were very weak and discouraging too. In this context, the present study

employs a rank question about additional facilities or infrastructures they could need to explore tourism services and hospitality. The ranking priorities were given from one to six, and the responses have been summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Suggestions for the need for additional facilities for tourism

Suggestive measures	N	Ranks
Proper roads and transportation	70	I
Help desk and communication center	57	III
Emergency health and drinking water	39	IV
Affordable hotels and accommodation	63	II
Wastage management and toilet facilities	52	IV
Exploration of tourists places nearby Lumbini	39	V

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result reflects that the tourists of the study site are very aware of the different basic facilities they would need to promote tourism further in the days to come. The majority of the respondents prioritized proper roads and transportation as their first ranking, which then followed by the priorities of affordable hotels and accommodation as the second-ranking, held desk and communication center as the third and both as having emergency health and drinking water and wastage management and toilet facilities as the fourth-ranking. A few people further shared their fifth priority as a need to explore tourist destinations and sites nearby Lumbini including Kapilvastu (the home of Buddha’s father) and Devdaha (the home of Buddha’s mother, and wife)

The opportunities and challenges of tourism services are investigated thoroughly in different literature (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). They have been explored in various dimensions, including political, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. Indeed, there are more opportunities than challenges in Lumbini. The opportunities could lead this place as an international hub of tourism along with peace and humanity. Lumbini is a place of attraction which makes it a tourist destination;

Siddhartha lived here in his childhood and youth until he reached 29 years; so this is an important place. The social transformation is possible from Buddhist pilgrimage as we talk about *Chatur-bramha Bihar* (Maitri, Karuna, Mudita, and Upekxa) in the Buddhist practice. It is further taken as a place of must-visit four places of Buddhism, including Lumbini (birth place), Bodhgaya (place of *bodhi* or enlightenment), Sarnath (place of *gyan* distribution), and Kushinagar (place of *mahaparinirvan*, i.e. physical death).

Conclusion

This paper stresses the status and perception of domestic tourism in the Lumbini region of Nepal. This destination is one of the renowned pilgrim destinations of world tourism and it is getting attention from the domestic tourists of Nepal as well. But there is also a reverse side to this discussion. Is it sufficient for the sustainability of tourism in Lumbini? The finding concludes that this place is sanding in between the challenges as well as opportunities, though there is a positive trend of tourist flow each year. Indeed, Lumbini is less explored in terms of tourism among Nepali visitors. Indeed, we cannot ignore the fact of the overlapping nature of international tourism as well as domestic tourism, but it is equally important not to undermine each of them in preferring one to the other. Even the role of government institutions (local, provincial and federal) and other private sectors should be coordinated to foster the tourism sector in Lumbini.

The role of Lumbini Development Trust and Lumbini Buddhist University need to be explored much as they are doing today. In sum, the tourism of Lumbini should be viewed as an icon of sustainability, peace, and harmony. Research on the nature of domestic tourists, their interests and hobbies, purposes of visit, and their affordability to the available resources/recreations in Lumbini could bring new knowledge and contribute to the policy intervention.

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