Perception on Tourism Infrastructure available in Kanyam, Ilam Located in Eastern Nepal

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Abstract

Tourism infrastructure is the key to tourism development and one of the major factors for determining tourist satisfaction. Therefore, this paper examines the tourism infrastructure and tourist satisfaction in Kanyam of Ilam district in Nepal. Tourism infrastructure involves accommodation and other basic services like information, communication facilities. Kanyam is emerging as a popular tourist destination due to its felicitous tea garden and its prepossessing views. This study conducted the data through a survey with 70 articulated respondents comprising local people including intellectuals and elected representatives, tourism visitors, and tourists in the study area. The study result that more than 70 % of respondents think lack of infrastructure is a hindrance in tourism development. It can also be linked with the satisfaction among tourists underrated on accommodation services and sanitation services. This may be due to a lack of proper training for the tourism industry enterprisers. Further, the information service at the destination is not well established to inform at the destination. Despite this 80% of people involved in the tourism business were satisfied with the business as it is supporting the local economy and promotion of local products. Therefore, a master plan should be developed for infrastructure development for maintaining its image and bringing tourists back to the town.

Keywords: Tourism infrastructure, tourist satisfaction, Tea tourism, Kanyam, Nepal

Introduction

Tourism is the largest and fastest-growing industry globally that accounts for 10.4% of the world's GDP, making it one of the largest economic sectors worldwide (WTTC, 2020). Tourism has become a fundamental pillar for the economic growth of all countries both developed and developing countries. The infrastructure, one of the key factors is playing a key role in the tourism development of all countries. The infrastructure simply includes public safety, mail and freight services, medical systems, financial systems, education systems, national defense, and other services that support both resident and tourism demand, such as retail and shopping (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Among the four types of infrastructure, typically tourist infrastructure includes accommodation facilities, facilities for arrivals servicing, tourist information, and trails; para tourist infrastructure includes transportation facilities – roads and transport points; local facilities include communal and public transport, trade, and service

facilities and accompany facilities includes sport, leisure, entertainment (Hadush, 2018).

Besides, the factors such as physical, legal, environmental, and mental amenities can also contribute to making the tourism product enjoyable, reliable, and sustainable (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2014). That is why tourism infrastructure supports for the development of tourism areas even in remote destinations (Sakai, 2006)and also influence on the tourism industry, tourist satisfaction (Blazeska, Strezovski, & Klimoska, 2018) as well as the destination image (Hadush, 2018).

The term tourist destination refers to a place or area where a collection of tourism-related products and attractions are offered which deliver a tourism experience for individuals or groups travelling away from their home or place (Jalis, 2019). Attraction Infrastructure, Accommodation Infrastructure, Accessibility Infrastructure and Amenity Infrastructure are the key factors that determine the destination image, visitor's satisfaction and tourist's future intention (Hadush, 2018) and satisfaction is directly affected by attractiveness, accommodation service, cultural contact, and perceived risk revisit intention (Nguyen Viet, Dang, & Nguyen, 2020). Understanding both tourism infrastructure and satisfaction at a time is important for tourism planning and development as the revisit intention is directly affected by satisfaction, attractiveness, accommodation service, cultural contact, and perceived risk (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020).

In the case of Nepal, tourism becoming priority sector of national economy that has generated USD 833.8 Million, created 1034 thousand jobs (6.9% of total employment) and contributed 6.7 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product of the GDP of the country in 2020 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020). However, as the tourism industry is growing rapidly in Nepal studies have been carried out on the satisfaction of tourists in large cities like Pokhara (Bam & Kunwar, 2020) and around protected areas (Upadhyay, 2020) and at the national level (Poudel & Phuyal, 2016).

In this backdrop, this study selected Kanyam, Ilam as an ideal site for assessing research issues mentioned above. Nepal Ministry of Tourism 2012 campaign had considered Ilam district as being an anchor location for tea tourism.If so, infrastructure weaknesses like accommodation facilities must be overcome before the potential for tea tourism can be accomplished in Nepal (Lee, 2018).

Even though Nepal has placed tourism on high priority in and conducting different programs for the promotion of both international and domestic tourism for more than three decades.

There by, this paper examines the exiting the tourism infrastructure and tourist satisfaction in Kanyam a tea state in the Ilam District of Nepal.

Methods and Materials

With the objectives to assess tourism infrastructure available in Kanyam, Ilam, examine on satisfaction levels of tourism development stakeholders such as local people, intellectuals, elected representatives and the visiters in available tourism infrastructures and look at on satisfaction levels of international visitors' on locally available tourism infrastructures this study applied survey method and applied both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data include such satisfaction with services in Kanyam, enjoyment according to expenditure, perception about next visit, quality of local products etc. The quantitative data include such as population, some tourists, tourist stay in the hotel, means of transportation etc. that are collected from 70 respondents (30 local people, 20 tourism visiters who are associated with the tourism business directly with providing lodging and fooding with other facilities such as providing local guide, communication, horse riding etc. were interviewed to get the information

about the role of tourism in the study area and 20 are foreign visitors of Kanyam in 2018), More so, convenient and judgemental sampling method were employed to make the study more representative. . During the analysis, collected data are presented descriptively with 100-point summary percentage form.

The Findings:

Study Area

Kanyam, a tea garden situated in Ilam, hilly district in eastern Nepal. It lies in the Suryodaya Municipality, in province 1, Nepal and situated 35 kilometers approximately north of Charali and 50 kilometers from Chandragadi airport of Jhapa at an altitude of 700m-1840m above the sea-level. It lies at a latitude of 26 degrees 50-minute north to 26 degrees 53 minutes 48 second south and longitude of 88 degrees 02 minutes 47 second east to 88 degrees 07 minutes 42 second west. Around 240 hectares of land is used to cultivate tea ("Kanyam, Tea Garden of Ilam," 2021). The tea gardens of Kanyam are arranged so neatly that from a distance they resemble a green carpet. The Mechi highway also cuts through Kanyam, making it more accessible and it has beginning popular among international tourist too (Bhattari, 2019).
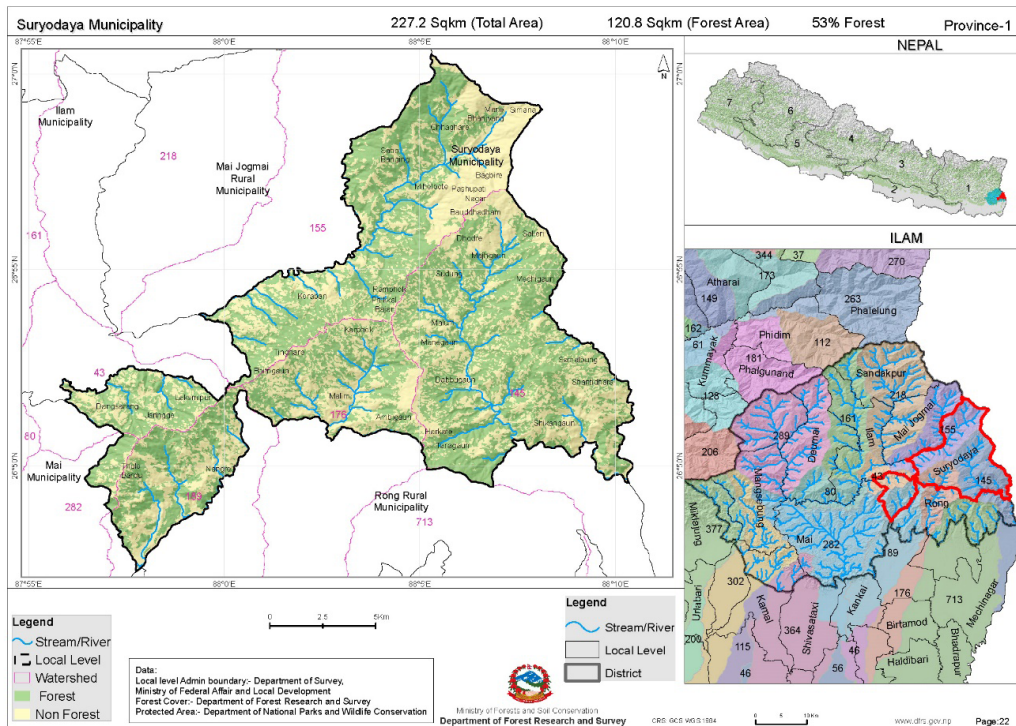

Figure Location Map of Suryodaya Municipality

Tourism Status of Kanyam

Characteristics of the Respondents

The distribution of respondents by caste is divided into five categories such as Brahmin, Chhetri, Janajati, Dalit and others. Most of the sample local respondents were Janajati 46.66%, Chhetri 20%, Brahmin and others are 13.33% and Dalits are 6.66%. On basis of age, respondents with the age group middle age (36-59) were the highest accounting for 43.33 percent and adult 15-35 holds 36.66 % and age above 60 were 20%. On basis of occupation, most of the respondents were engaged in the tourism sector in one way to another. It was found that 43.33% were involved in agriculture, 26.66% were involved in both agriculture and tourism, 23.33% were engaged in tourism and the remaining 6.66% were involved in another sector of the economy.

The second category of respondents were local business visiters, and it was reported 45% of visiters have established hotels in their own house and 55% of the hotels were on rent.

Another group of respondents were tourists, on basis of religion that 40% of the tourists were Hindu, 20% were Buddhist, 30% were Christian and 10% were Muslims. Most of the tourists were Indians, this may be due to the close border.

Tourism Infrastructure in Kanyam

Ilam is one of the emerging tourism hubs in eastern Nepal, where 134,077 tourists visited in the Fiscal Year 2018/19, which rose by more than 40% than the previous year (Chapagain, 2019). It is anticpated the number of tourist is more as there is no formal recording system for recording the number of tourist visiting in Kanyam. Recently, Muncipality is palnning for enhancing facilities inorder to attarct more tourist.

Components of Tourism in Kanyam Ilam

Components	Categories
Accessibilities	• Kathmandu to Bhadrapur (Jhapa) (40 minutes flight.) & Bhadrapur to Ilam (80 K. M.) • Pashupatinagar (India Nepal Border) to Kanyam 15 KM and Kakadvitta (Nepal India major entry border) to Kanyam (49 KM)
Accommodations	• Hotels and guest houses, mainly induvial houses • Delicious local organic vegetable and food items, milk products like Chhurpi and milk made *lolypop*, green leafy vegetables
Attractions	• breathtaking views of the tea plantations in about 240 hectares • Gateway to Sandakpur is the highest peak in the district of Ilam, Nepal and West Bengal, India; Antu Danda • Pathibhara temple referred as younger sister of Pathibhara Devi in Taplejung • Traditional weekly *Haat Bazzar*

Amenities	• Accessible as it lies in the major highway • Public toilet • Oldest tea processing Industry • Health post nearby • Availability of vehicles for hire • Access of communication service
Activities	• Horse riding • Photoshoot in traditional attire • Hiking around Kanyam tea garden

Source: Author compilation, 2018

Accommodation

Kanyam does not have any star classified accommodation nor have locally set standard hotels. Most of the hotels of Kanyam are budget hotels and providing multiple services. The various facilities such as lodging, food were available in the hotels of the Kanyam area. Out of 20 respondents, 45% of visitors had both lodging and food facilities in their hotels, 40% of visitors had only the facilities of food and 15% of visitors had lodging facilities available to the tourist.

Most of the tourist arrived in Kanyam area stayed for one day and few of them stayed for two or more than two days. Most of the respondents (75%) said that tourist stays in hotel by 1 day. 20% of respondents said tourists stay in the hotel for 2 days and 5% of the respondents said more than 2 days of tourist stay in a hotel.

Most of the tourists who arrived in Kanyam stayed in hotels while few of them stayed with relatives and friends. 70% of the tourists stayed in hotels, 20% stayed in relatives whereas only 10% of the tourists stayed in other places.

Means of Transportation

Tourist visits with different means of transportation. The means of transportation has been categorized into three parts such as office vehicles, private car, and public vehicle. Out of 10 tourists, 10% used office vehicle, 40% used private vehicle and 50% used public vehicle. The Mechi highway also cuts through Kanyam, making it more accessible, that supports for it popular among international tourist too (Bhattari, 2019).However, there is no proper transportation facility within the Muncipality from kanayam and nearby villages. Local representaitive stated, "we do not had proper transporation facility from Kanyam with nearby villages but with the new government we have been able to improve transportation service to major locations of Municipality."

Consumption of quality of Local Items/ Products

Local items/ products are considered as important thing that satisfy them and it allows tourists to interact with the host culture engage with them on-site, eating local food, or participating in local production allows provide real experiences (Kastenholz, Eusébio, & Carneiro, 2016).

The local products of the study area are vegetables, tea, fruits, dairy products, meat products and others. It was reported that the tourist prefers to consume local products. Most of the tourist consumed vegetables, meats and dairy products as well as seasonal fruits they are locally produced. Most of the visitors were found satisfied with the quality of local products whereas few visitors were not satisfied

with the local products.

Most of the visitors responded positively to the quality of local goods as 85% of the respondents have agreed on the quality goods. Only 15% of respondents said that the local goods were not of the required quality.

Training about Business

Training of tourism professional is important as it determines the quality of services that can be offers to tourists. Some of the tourism entrepreneurs have got training about business whereas some of them had not received training. Out of the 20 respondents, 35% of entrepreneurs had got training and 65% had not got training about hotel business in the study area. Most of the service providers were satisfied with the job whereas some of them were not satisfied with the job in which they are involved. Out of 20 respondents, 85% of service providers were satisfied with the job and the remaining 15% were not satisfied with the job.

Number of Tourist Receive Per Day in Average

The number of tourist arrival in Kanyam is different in various seasons. The tourist arrival is divided into three seasons such as high seasons (oct – dec), medium season (Jan – March) and low season (Jun.-Aug). Most of the tourist visited during the high season (66.66 per day) due to the tranquil weather which is prepossessing for sightseeing. In medium season the average tourist arrival was 22.22 per day and the fewer number of people visiting during the low season was 5.55 per day.

Purpose of Visit

The purpose of tourist visit in the study area is divided into three categories such as general visit, research study and sightseeing.

Table 1 Number of Tourist by Purpose of Visit

S.N.	Purpose of Visit	Per cent
1	General visit	30
2	Research study	10
3	Sightseeing	60
	Total	100

Source: - Field survey, 2018.

Most of the tourist visited the study area for sightseeing which is 60%. Similarly, 30% visited for general-purpose whereas 10% visited for a research study. The prepossessing views of tea garden and felicitous environment is the major attraction for the tourist in the study area.

Sources of Information about Kanyam

The tourists received information about the study area by various means of information such as travel agencies, friends, and relatives. It was reported that 30% of the tourist had got information from travel agencies and relatives and 40% had got information from friends. One of the tourists reported that, lack of informational board and details for visiting places make difficult to travel and know about the place.

Challenges of Tourism Promotion

Many factors affect the promotional activities of the tourism in the study area like infrastructure, planning, investment, and others. It was found that 43.33% of the respondents thought that the major

challenges for tourism promotion such as poor infrastructure, 30% thought lack of proper planning, 20% thought lack of investment and 6.66% thought other factors were obstructing the development of tourism in the region.

Visitors' satisfaction on available tourism infrastructure

Tourist Opinion of the Facilities
The opinion of tourists about the facilities available in the study area is divided into four categories such as lodging, food, recreation and sanitation.
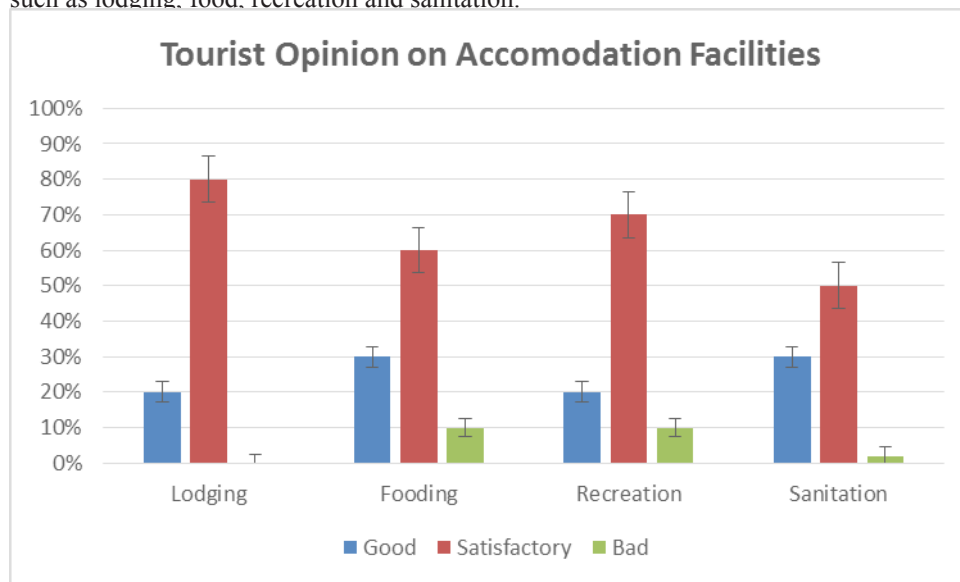
Figure 1 Satisfaction on Accommodation facility
Source: - Field survey, 2018.
All the tourists were satisfied by the lodging facilities provided by the hotels and but the satisfaction on sanitation facility was low. It also varied on the facilities being good and bad. Some of the tourists thought the facilities provided were good enough considering the remoteness of the area while some of them thought the facilities lacked the minimum criteria to be fulfilled. Few respondents stated that the accommodation of room was not quality as building were not made for hotels instead domestic homes converted into hotel building. In addition, it was also reported the most of tourist do not use accommodation facility as they were only there as a day visitor.

Opinion of Available Food in Kanyam
The opinion of tourists about the food available in the study area is divided into three categories such as expensive, moderate, and cheap. Out of 10 tourists, 10% said the available food in Kanyam is expensive, 30% said moderate whereas 60% said that the food in Kanyam was cheap.

Opinion of Tourists Satisfied with Available Service in Kanyam
Most of the tourist who arrived in the study area were satisfied with available services while few of them were not satisfied with the available services. Most of the tourist were satisfied with the service

available in Kanyam. Out of 10 tourists, 70% of the tourists were satisfied whereas 30% of the tourists were not satisfied with the service. Since Kanyam is an emerging touristic destination with high flow of domestic tourist, infrastructure is not well developed, space for parking for vehicles are one of the major lacking.

Satisfaction based on expenditure amount per day
During the survey, it was reported that out of total tourists, 40% of the tourists spent Rs.300-Rs.500, 10% spent more than Rs.1000 and 50% of the tourist spent Rs.500-Rs.1000. Most of the tourist spent between Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 which plays an important role in the economic development of the country as well as the tourist area. Most of the tourist who arrived in the study area enjoyed a lot according to the expenditure.
Out of 10 tourists, 90% enjoyed and 10% cannot enjoy according to the expenditure in Kanyam. Most of them thought it was a lifetime experience for them. The low expenditure of tourist can be linked with the inadequate infrastructure which has retained tourists only as day visitors as expenditure of tourist depend planning their trip, length of stay, type of accommodation(Kozak, Gokovali, & Bahar, 2008).

Tourist Impression towards Local People
The impression of tourist towards local people is divided into three categories such as very friendly, friendly, and not friendly. Out of total tourists, 70% thought that the local people were very much friendly and the remaining 30% thought that they were friendly. The tourist stated that, local people are friendly and cooperative and do not hesitate to support that you ask for them.

Tourist Perception about Next Visit
Most of the tourist preferred to come back to the study area and some of them love to come back but they did not know whether they have a chance to come back or not.
It was reported that 50% of the tourist said that they would come back again to Kanyam with their friends and families whereas the remaining 20% would not come back to Kanyam and 30% thought that they would love to come but they did not know whether they would have the chance to come back again. During this study it was reported that out of 10 tourists, 50% were in their first visit, 30% said that it was their second visit while the remaining 20% of the tourists were in more than two times visit.

Conclusion and Policy Implication
Kanyam in Ilam is a popular tourism destination for domestic and Indian tourist in Nepal and expanding rapidly in recent years. This paper examined the exiting tourism infrastructure and tourist satisfaction based on the survey of both local stakeholders and tourist visiting the location. The study revealed that, as Kanyam is emerging domestic tourism site but infrastructures are not well enough to support the international tourist. The basic facility like sanitation is not well developed enough for attracting tourist. The accommodation infrastructure and package for tourism is lacking. The proper information centers for tourist needs to be established along with good accommodation facility. Similarly, negligible percentage of local service providers have basic tourism skills for betterment and offering of services. As Kanyam provides its popular high quality local products to the tourists. Tourism promotional board and local agencies should integrate local farmers and others service providers for the quality of service in study area so that visitors would have positive impression. Some efforts have been initiated for

physical infrastructure development however no adequate attention has been paid for improving the services.

The issue of how to rise the stay of tourist is a major challenge. If proper tourism infrastructure development is possible, the chance of gaining popularity for hill stations is not far way (Shah & Trupp, 2020) and recent data on number of tourist inflow at Kanyam shows the similar pattern. The research finding suggest that the quality of infrastructure influences the number of tourist as well as that determines the number of days of stay that has positive correlation with expenditure amount. Therefore, Kanyam needs accommodation facilities most to support the flow of tourist. Integrated plan for the promotion of tourism activities in Kanyam is equally important. For the promotion and sustainable tourism development process in the study area, Local level government along with concerned organizations could play the crucial role.

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