

Dakshinkali: Emerging Rural Tourism Hub - Insights and Growth

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Abstracts

Dakshinkali, situated in the southern part of the Kathmandu Valley, has evolved into a prominent rural tourism destination centered around a Hindu temple dedicated to Goddess Kali. As an incarnation of Mother Parvati, the temple's significance surged during the reign of King Pratap Malla, fostering a rise in religious and rural tourism. The increased influx of visitors has stimulated local economic growth by selling their local products, resulting in heightened business activities, increased employment rates, and improved living standards. The growing popularity of Dakshinkali as a rural tourism destination motivates the community to preserve its culture, tradition, and indigenous knowledge. Tourist support motivates locals to safeguard their culture, contributing to the growth of tourism and income. Dakshinkali is popular because it is close to Kathmandu and has a peaceful rural atmosphere. It is considered a sought-after destination, following the global trend of rural tourism. This study explores Dakshinkali's role in rural tourism, using a qualitative research design and historical frameworks. The findings highlight Dakshinkali as the nearest and most significant rural tourism hub in the Kathmandu Valley, set for continued growth. Its increasing popularity, driven by a growing disinterest in modern city life, is evident in its rising appeal. With the world favoring rural destinations, Dakshinkali shows promise for the future of rural tourism in the region.

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Introduction

Rural tourism deals with the travelling of an individual or individuals in a rural setting. It also provides relaxation, rejuvenation, and exploration opportunities in tranquil and picturesque settings (Corina, 2018). Rural tourism, as defined by Šajn and Finer (2018), and Lane and Kastenholz (2018) offer visitors a unique and authentic experience, allowing them to connect with local customs, traditions, and natural surroundings. This form of tourism is characterized by its emphasis on sustainable growth, bolstering local economies, and conserving rural heritage. Furthermore, it can enhance the quality of life in rural communities and support local culture.

People began travelling for various reasons, including studying cultures, participating in sports, seeking medical treatment, making pilgrimages, and more (Bhatia, 1995). This is called rural tourism, encompassing the study, observation, and firsthand experience of rural cultures, traditions, rituals, festivals, and other aspects. Offering a tranquil reprieve from the bustling pace of urban life, rural tourism enables visitors to experience rejuvenation and happiness (Gautam, 2019). Gradually evolving and expanding across the globe, this form of tourism has undergone continuous growth and development over time. Nepal is mostly made up of rural areas, but with the ongoing growth and development of cities, more people are moving from rural to urban living. (Kunwar, 2006). The ongoing acceleration of the migration phenomenon from predominantly rural regions to burgeoning urban areas signifies a notable shift in demographic patterns. It underscores the increasing perceived opportunities associated with urban living (Dingle & Drake, 2007). As a result, people who have been residing in cities for an extended period are seeking out rural areas that are conveniently located near urban centers (Bhatia, 1996). Urban dwellers find joy and satisfaction in exploring rural areas and observing local traditions, festivals, customs, and the traditional farming system.

Nepal, located in South Asia, is known for its stunning natural beauty. The country has diverse landscapes, ranging from low-lying areas at just 59 meters above sea level to the towering heights of Mount Everest, which stands at 8848.6 meters. Nepal is a land of contrasts, showcasing the beauty of both lowlands and high mountain peaks. A nation with a mix of different ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures, Nepal features a varied landscape including mountains, hills, plains, ravines, valleys, and beautiful lakes (Do & Iyer, 2010). Since the beginning of human civilization, the country has been a center of rural life, providing a glimpse into traditional ways of living that persist to this day (Sharma, 1989). In this way, Nepal seems to be a country made up of villages in South Asia.

Throughout human civilization, Nepal has stood as a focal point of rural life, offering insight into enduring traditional lifestyles. As people moved and migrated over time, permanent settlements started to appear and thrive in different parts of the world (Prashrit, 2014). The development of human settlements occurred globally as people migrated and travelled in search of resources and opportunities. From their early beginnings as hunter-gatherers in the wilderness, civilizations emerged and allowed for new forms of mobility, such as trade, religious pilgrimages, exploration, etc. (Ritchey, 1976). These movements facilitated the growth and expansion of human settlements across the world (Pandey & Regmi 2005). As cities grew and prospered through industrialization, not only did the incomes of their inhabitants rise, but also their standards of living, allowing for a portion of their increased wealth to be directed towards leisure activities and entertainment (Lipton, 1980). Tourism has also become one of the areas to spend. The main objective of this study is to understand and explore the Dakshinkali region as an important rural tourism destination.

Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, is one of the most developed cities in the country. The rural life of the people living in the surrounding area of cities also attracts the people. The Dakshinkali region, one of such rural areas close to the Kathmandu Valley is 22 km south of the center (Basnet, 2009). This area has been called Dakshinkali since the ancient period as there is a famous temple of Kali goddess (Chand, 2019). The Dakshinkali temple, which is very close to the Kathmandu Valley, was rebuilt during the regime of the medieval king Jayaprakash Malla. It was built at first by King Haridatta Varma of the Lichhavi period. Four Narayan temples were built on all four sides of the Kathmandu valley during his regime (Kshetri & Rayamajhi, 1999). Because of this, the Dakshinkali region has been recognized as a

historical area with human settlements since ancient times. Even now, the Dakshinkali region remains an appealing destination for rural tourism near the Kathmandu Valley. The objective of this study is to explicitly outline and clarify the concept of rural tourism in the Dakshinkali area, the closest rural region to the capital city Kathmandu, Nepal.

Methodology and Data Analysis

A descriptive qualitative research design and historical framework have been adopted in the process of this study. This research work is based on collective information from two sources – primary and secondary. The preliminary data were obtained mostly from interviews with local knowledge and experts. The study area is a rural settlement in Dakshinkali and its surroundings in the southern part of Kathmandu Valley, the capital city of Nepal. The priest of Dakshinkali temple, a member of the Dakshinkali Area Development Committee and a representative of Dakshinkali Municipality were the key informants for the interview purposively. Similarly, the secondary data were gathered from the various library and personal collections. In this study, rural tourism of the Dakshinkali region is discussed as an important destination. The descriptive and analytical method was employed in the preparation of this research work.

Result and Discussion

Nestled near the bustling Kathmandu Valley, the Dakshinkali rural area unfolds as a captivating tapestry of history and natural beauty. With roots reaching back to ancient times, this region has been marked by human settlements, earning it a distinct place in the historical narrative of the area (KC., 2018). The Dakshinkali region not only echoes the whispers of time but also stands as a contemporary haven for those seeking an immersive rural experience. Its proximity to the Kathmandu Valley makes it an alluring destination for rural tourism, inviting visitors to explore the rich cultural heritage and picturesque landscapes that define this unique corner of Nepal. In this introduction, we embark on a journey to unravel the charm and significance of the Dakshinkali rural area, where tradition and modernity harmonize against the backdrop of Nepal's diverse and enchanting heritage.

Rural Tourism and Dakshinkali

As people in various parts of the world developed different cultures, those in one place became more interested in observing the cultural activities of people in other

places (Government of Nepal Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2006). Wanderers exploring rural areas contribute valuable human travel details, becoming a pivotal source for future tourism development (Weil, 1996). In an evolving civilization, some embrace modernity, while others maintain a nomadic lifestyle, prompting those in the former group to visit rural areas, seeking insights into the livelihoods, traditional practices, and culture of local ethnic groups (Kunwar, 2002). As societal shifts occurred, rural tourism gained popularity, with urbanized individuals expressing increasing interest in exploring and experiencing unique aspects of rural life, culture, and traditions.

Nepal has been a land occupied by a multitude of castes, languages, religions, and cultures since antiquity. Furthermore, the progression of Nepali society has predominantly unfolded within the rural milieu (Dahal, 2003). Even during ancient and medieval times, the residents in and around the Kathmandu Valley, the capital of Nepal, led their lives in a predominantly rural setting (Gurung, 2007). While the Kathmandu Valley has progressively urbanized in modern times, the lifestyle of its surrounding residents has steadfastly retained its rural character (Chand, 2000). One of the places around the valley gaining popularity among rural tourists is the southern part known for its stunning natural beauty.

Situated in the southern part of the Kathmandu Valley, the Dakshinkali region holds significant religious and rural tourism importance. If people are tired of the busy city life, they will quickly discover a rural and peaceful place. In a place with such a peaceful environment for people of religious faith, they become happy to visit any deity. Factors like convenient access to accommodation, transportation facilities, communication, and security play a crucial role in the development of tourism (Sharma, 2011). For individuals seeking natural beauty, the Dakshinkali region offers captivating landscapes. While the area is often visited by those with religious inclinations, it holds equal significance for rural tourists.

The Dakshinkali region is also good in terms of security. People can get there easily as there is a public bus from Ratnapark, the center of Kathmandu, to Dakshinkali (N. Aryal, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Affluent individuals may choose to use their private vehicles, and alternatively, they can opt to hire reserved taxis for transportation. As it can be reached after a short journey in a different environment with the convenience of transportation, it has become the destination of choice for many people for rural tourism.

Currently, the tourism significance of Dakshinkali continues to grow. The continuous expansion of human settlements in the Kathmandu Valley and its surroundings makes the environment distinct from urban areas and a focal point of attraction for people (Zeller, 2015). Tourists are increasingly drawn to the Dakshinkali area because it can provide such environment (D. Thakuri, personal communication, September 21, 2023). Religious tourists, after satisfying their spiritual quest by visiting the Dakshinkali Goddess, can also fulfil their interest in rural tourism by experiencing the local life and partaking in the consumption of locally produced goods. This adds a unique and distinct dimension to their overall experience.

Despite the Dakshinkali temple being significant for a long time, the local community didn't benefit until recently due to a lack of recognition and promotion of the area. As a result, the residents didn't give much consideration to the visitors coming to the temple and its vicinity. But nowadays, as the number of tourists is increasing, their local products are starting to find a market (Backman, 2005). They make *khuwa* from milk and sell it along with local vegetables and fruits. Some people have run hotels. Some earn income by selling flowers, garlands, incense, *aksheta*, *prasad*, etc. Some people also earn money by guiding tourists. Due to contact with tourists, politeness has developed in the speech of local people (S. Banjara, personal communication, September 22, 2023). They have honed diverse skills based on tourists' recommendations, transitioning from traditional farming to more business-oriented practices. Individuals interacting with tourists are also experiencing increased education. The transformation is evident in the significant changes witnessed in the local community's approach to rural tourism in the region.

Dakshinkali is situated approximately 22 kilometres from the capital city of Kathmandu. Despite its proximity, the region lags in access to modern technologies and facilities that are readily available to the residents of the capital. The only healthcare facility in the area is the Manmohan Memorial Hospital, and locals often need to travel to the capital to avail themselves of comprehensive health services (P. Baskota, personal communication, September 23, 2023). Likewise, individuals from the Dakshinkali area commute to the capital for higher education opportunities. The local populace in the region continues to rely predominantly on agriculture as their primary source of income (A. Pandey, personal communication, October 11, 2023). Despite being very near to the country's capital, Dakshinkali is an important rural tourist destination in Nepal.

Rural Lifestyle

The people of Dakshinkali adhere to traditional norms and beliefs, incorporating traditional tools and techniques into their daily lives. Some elderly individuals continue to communicate in their distinct language, not being fluent in the national language which is Nepali (P. Bhujel, personal communication, October 21, 2023). They lack literacy and awareness of the outside world. In their daily lives, they rely on traditional tools such as *gagri* and *karuwa* for fetching and consuming water. They use *janto* and *dhiki* to make flour. They consider guests as gods and never let them return without having some food (G. Basnet, personal communication, October 24, 2023). Some even welcome guests with meat, alcohol, cigarettes, *tamakhu*, etc. They use *gundri* (a traditional mat made up of straw) to sit.

People in rural communities regard their neighbours as brothers and sisters, gathering together during festivals and *jatras*. They place trust in astrologers, seeking auspicious moments for new beginnings. There's a tradition of sharing food items among neighbours, and some even stay overnight at each other's houses. The community collaborates to address shared challenges. However, rural life has its drawbacks; there's less emphasis on cleanliness and reliance on witch doctors is prevalent (C. B. Deula, personal communication, September 22, 2023). They believe in *Dhami*, *Jhankri*, *Lamas*, *Boksi* (witch) etc. They consider social evils as part of culture and tradition.

Agricultural System

The people in Dakshinkali primarily rely on agriculture, employing a substantial farming system. Key agricultural products include paddy, maize, black gram, legumes, millet, buckwheat, *silt*, *timur*, *dalle khursani* and organic vegetables. People work in groups without wages during the sowing and harvesting of crops. The group moves to the farm of another member after completing the agriculture work on the farm of one member (D. Thakuri, personal communication, September 26, 2023). Farm owners are not obligated to provide wages to the members, but they receive food as a meal from the owner. After finishing their assigned tasks, the owner is required to work on the farms of other members.

The residents cultivate various products primarily for self-consumption. In times of abundant yields, instead of selling them in the market, they share the surplus with neighbours who may have had lower yields that year. Additionally, they engage in animal husbandry, raising cows, goats, hens, sheep, etc. This contributes to the production of various dairy items such as yoghurt, curd, butter, ghee, etc. Dakshinkali is particularly renowned for *khuwa*, a milk-based product (S. Ullak, personal communication, September 23, 2023). They favour local seeds over hybrids and employ organic fertilizers derived from kitchen and animal waste.

Local Food Items

People's dietary preferences are contingent on crop availability and the area of production. The majority of food items are predominantly sourced from local products (R. Ranjitkar, personal communication, November 2, 2023). Likewise, the residents of Dakshinkali rely on staple crops like maize, wheat, and millet. Key food items include roti, curd, beaten rice, alcohol, ghee, legumes, radish, gram, beans, pumpkin, tomatoes, chilli, garlic, onions, potatoes, spinach, ginger, eggs, fish, yam, *khir-puri*, *sinkamari*, *jhilinga*, *aarsa*, *chaku*, *sel*, and various types of meat such as buffalo, chicken, duck, goat, etc. The Newari cuisine, in particular, is distinctive and boasts a variety of delicious dishes (M. Maharjan, personal communication, September 22, 2023). The local cuisine encompasses a variety of legumes, beaten rice, and meat dishes. Notably, Dakshinkali is renowned for *khuwa*, a sweet delicacy prepared by simmering milk and sugar over an extended period until it achieves a thick consistency and then allowing it to cool in a refrigerated environment (R. Gautam, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Travellers to Dakshinkali make sure not to miss the opportunity to savour *khuwa*.

Local Traditional Dress

Just like people in various regions of Nepal have their distinct cultural attire, those in Dakshinkali also have their traditional clothing (B. Deula, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Men in Dakshinkali wear *patuka*, *daura-surwal* and *Dhaka Topi* (Nepali cap) whereas female wear *gunyo-choli*, *patuka*, *fariya*, etc. Above the *hakku-patasi*, they wear *patuka*. People in rural areas make their clothes. They utilize locally available resources and tools for crafting their clothing, showcasing the essence of typical Nepali society and fostering a rural atmosphere. However, contemporary trends have led men to favour shirts, pants, coats, etc., while women opt for skirts, pants, t-shirts, *lehenga*, and other modern attire (M.

Karmacharya, personal communication, September 21, 2023). Generally, men adorn themselves with rings and watches, while women accessorize with items such as *Chura*, *Pote*, rings, etc.

Natural Beauty and Biodiversity

Situated away from the bustling crowd of the capital, Dakshinkali offers a serene and peaceful environment with fewer people, fewer vehicles, and abundant greenery. Individuals from the capital who appreciate tranquillity make weekly visits to this location. The scenic vistas of hills and the Himalayas from the hilltop serve as a major attraction for a considerable number of tourists. Moreover, the area is frequented by those seeking hiking opportunities (A. Maharjan, personal communication, October 3, 2023). The region is abundant in diverse flora and fauna, making it an ideal destination for researchers and enthusiasts of plants and animals. Such a rich environment is uniquely found in rural settings. Therefore, Dakshinkali stands as the nearest location to the capital where individuals can immerse themselves in a genuine rural experience.

Impact of Tourism on Local People

Dakshinkali is a significant pilgrimage site in Nepal, and the impact of tourism is evident in the region. This influence extends to the culture and traditions of the local people. Apart from the temple, visitors are drawn to the local festivals and fairs, adding to the overall appeal of Dakshinkali (M. Maharjan, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Dakshinkali attracts tourists from various parts of Nepal and even abroad. As visitors come and stay, locals interact with them, leading to the exchange of culture and ideas that influence the community. It is important to note that the impact of tourism can be both positive and negative.

Positive Impact

The positive impact of tourism in Dakshinkali can be discussed in the following.

Job-Opportunity

Tourism not only creates job opportunities but also facilitates market access for local products. Many visitors to the temple purchase *Khuwa*, and there is a substantial demand for agricultural products like cowpeas and broad beans due to the boost in tourism (K. Maharjan, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Thus, tourism has played a crucial role in sustaining agriculture in this region. It has

provided employment opportunities in hotels, restaurants, tea and coffee shops. Additionally, many individuals make a living by working as tourist guides (N. Maharjan, personal communication, October 3, 2023). Likewise, road development projects and parking management initiatives have generated employment opportunities for numerous locals. Industries such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and hospitality have flourished as a result of tourism. In this manner, tourism has had a direct or indirect impact on the livelihoods of the local population.

Business and Urbanization

Thanks to tourism, business has expanded in Dakshinkali, and local products have gained access to the market. Visitors purchasing items like flowers, Aksheta, Dhaja, coconut, etc., create income opportunities for the local population. This contributes to alleviating poverty to some extent. Additionally, new infrastructures are being developed in the potential market area, further promoting overall development (P. Giri, personal communication, September 2, 2023). Similarly, the ongoing construction projects around the Dakshinkali temple have brought about an urban atmosphere in the area. With urbanization, the facilities for transportation, drinking water, schools, colleges, hospitals, and communication methods are progressively improving in the Dakshinkali region.

Social Sector

The fluid exchange of information and ideas between tourists and locals has created a deep sense of brotherhood, marked by mutual respect and cultural understanding. This goes beyond communication, with locals eagerly learning different languages of tourists, strengthening connections and fostering a shared community spirit. This enriching exchange transcends linguistic barriers, transforming the tourist experience into a perfect blend of transformative cultural interaction (K. Maharjan, personal communication, September 22, 2023). An exchange of ideas and thoughts with local communities is fostering a heightened social consciousness. This dynamic process raises awareness about crucial aspects such as education and health. Individuals are enlightened about the adverse impacts of various human activities on the environment, leading to a conscientious approach towards cleanliness to create an inviting atmosphere for tourists. This transformative effect of tourism extends to altering perceptions of outsiders among locals. People are now more mindful and refined, forming diverse groups and organizations dedicated to waste management. They actively encourage tourists to minimise waste, reflecting a

collective commitment to responsible and sustainable practices (A. Maharjan, personal communication, October 23, 2023). Thus, tourism has contributed a lot to the development of the social sector of Dakshinkali.

Cultural Sector

As civilization evolves, people keep adding knowledge, behaviours, and skills, shaping and refining their experiences over time. This ongoing process is what we call culture (Honingmen, 1954). This dynamic entity is ever-evolving, undergoing shifts and transformations over time, demonstrating its adaptability and responsiveness to changing circumstances. As a living testament to human innovation and creativity, culture persists as a vibrant tapestry woven by successive generations, embodying the collective wisdom and evolution of society (Aapte, 1997). Culture is how people live and express their identity. It's not just about specific individuals or groups but also includes things like food, language, religion, and clothing. Culture is the result of thousands of years of experience and effort. Every social group, race, and civilization has its own special and unique culture (Baral, 1993). People in Dakshinkali have their own culture, which is their identity.

Culture can be tangible, like art and eating habits, or non-tangible, like ideas and traditions. Tangible things are visible, while non-tangible aspects are felt in thoughts and behaviours (Mekaivar & Page, 1950). Culture is passed down through generations in a group, guiding their daily activities. It varies based on factors like caste, race, and group. Because of these differences, something accepted in one culture may not be approved in another (Honingmen, 1954). Culture is like a set of rules created by people to make their lives easier. It has evolved from the Stone Age to the Modern Age with changes in technology being a significant factor (Prashrit, 2014). As civilization progressed, there were significant changes in agriculture, animal husbandry, daily tasks, and food practices due to advancements in technical knowledge, leading to a noticeable shift in culture. Culture is dynamic and spreads from one group to another. Over time, old customs are abandoned, and people adopt aspects of other cultures. Cultural diffusion occurs when in contact with different cultures, and eventually, the adopted elements become part of the main culture. It's important to prioritize making people aware of their cultural significance for its protection and promotion.

The people of Dakshinkali are largely influenced by Newari culture, typical of the Kathmandu valley and one of Nepal's oldest. Emphasizing prayers, dance, song,

and celebrations, Newari culture has unique characteristics. However, cultural practices have evolved, partly influenced by tourists visiting the area (N. Thapa, personal communication, November 2, 2023). Tourists visiting the site adopt local traits, leading to a cultural exchange. This cultural fusion benefits locals economically and serves as a powerful draw for tourists, motivating the community to preserve and promote their culture.

Religious Sector

Dakshinkali is a key pilgrimage spot, especially as global belief in God declines. In response, locals value religion and aim to preserve it through tourism. The Dakshinkali community prioritizes maintaining the temple and surrounding religious sites (P. Maharjan, personal communication, November 2, 2023). As the number of pilgrims rise, there is increased respect and care for the temple, maintaining cleanliness. Locals believe preserving religious sentiments is crucial for attracting more tourists. This commitment extends to preserving norms, values, and beliefs, fostering a society where religious importance is evident, and instances of social problems have decreased. Religion, for them, shapes the way of life and contributes to an ideal society.

Religious temples in the Kathmandu Valley significantly influence daily life. Pilgrimage tourists, including those of different religions, visit to study the local religious practices. Dakshinkali, being a vital pilgrimage site, is a must-visit for people exploring the Kathmandu Valley (S. Maharjan, personal communication, September 22, 2023). This phenomenon has contributed to the religious impact and the improvement of livelihoods for the people in Dakshinkali.

Negative Impact

Tourism does not always have positive impacts; sometimes, the effects can be negative. In Nepalese society, traditions and religious beliefs play a crucial role, in guiding socio-cultural activities through social norms and values. However, over time, tourism and various other factors have introduced new social problems and vices. Particularly, the influence of Western tourists has led to a rise in disobedience and carelessness among youths in the Dakshinkali area, evident in an increasing trend of smoking, drinking, and drug use (T. Maharjan, personal communication, October 20, 2023). Dakshinkali, being a rural site, experiences a rise in criminal activities, particularly drug abuse. Some tourists, especially from India and third-world

countries, introduce drugs like marijuana, lysergic acid, phencyclidine, cocaine, *chares*, heroin, etc. Local youths imitate these behaviours, leading to an increased drug abuse problem. Additionally, the influence of tourists is changing traditional Nepalese clothing as people are drawn towards Western outfits in the name of fashion and modernization.

Tourists visit Nepal for various reasons, many seeking entertainment and quality time in nature. However, some also come with the intent of spreading their religion. Agents of religious outreach often target economically disadvantaged and socially marginalised individuals, employing various means, including financial incentives, to encourage religious conversion (R. Rizal, personal communication, November 2, 2023). Such actions disrupt social stability and harmony, particularly affecting the Kathmandu Valley due to tourism. The allure of Western culture has led the valley residents to adopt Western lifestyle. Presently, English is often prioritized over Nepali, with ideas expressed in English gaining more respect than those in Nepali, negatively impacting local languages. This influence is noticeable even among the youth in Dakshinkali, where English songs are heard not only in public buses but also near temples, reflecting the pervasive impact of tourism on cultural dynamics.

Human nature tends to notice negatives more than positives. Drug addiction is fuelling crimes like theft, robbery, murder, and rape. Pick-pocketing is also on the rise. Tourists feel harassed by aggressive selling around the temple, with locals indifferent to the long-term consequences of overcharging tourists for goods (P. K. Pokhrel, personal communication, September 20, 2023). Tourists often feel uncomfortable with beggars around the temple. Additionally, some tourists engage in smuggling activities, including theft of items of social and cultural significance. Such incidents contribute to the loss of historical documents from Nepal regularly.

Certain tourists bring transmittable diseases with them, and during their stay and interactions with locals, these diseases can be transmitted, affecting both individuals and society. Communicable diseases such as AIDS, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, and Chancroid have a broader impact on Nepalese society. Additionally, the environmental repercussions of tourism are evident, with deforestation in the name of tourism leading to increased occurrences of natural disasters like floods and landslides (A. S. Basnet, personal communication, November 2, 2023). Dakshinkali, once enveloped in dense forests, now features roads, parking areas, and a market. The surge in visitors and vehicles has led to significant air and noise pollution, adversely

impacting the health of residents (M. Ranjitkar, personal communication, September 22, 2023). In summary, tourism has had adverse effects on the Dakshinkali area.

Conclusion

Dakshinkali has become a lively rural tourism hub near Kathmandu, attracting travelers with its serene rural atmosphere and rich cultural heritage. Besides its religious importance, the growing tourism options, along with its strategic location, diverse culinary choices, and warm hospitality, enhance its appeal. The combination of careful preservation efforts and collaborative initiatives is propelling Dakshinkali towards becoming a leading rural tourism destination. This transformation emphasizes the unique qualities that make it stand out, turning it into an exceptional and inviting spot for an increasing number of tourists. The tranquil rural setting and deep cultural roots of Dakshinkali contribute to its popularity among visitors. The region's growing array of tourism experiences, including its proximity to Kathmandu, various food options, and welcoming atmosphere, make it a favored destination. As Dakshinkali focuses on preserving its distinctive features, coupled with community collaboration, it is poised to emerge as a premier rural tourism hub. This evolution showcases the special characteristics that set Dakshinkali apart, making it an appealing and exceptional destination for a continually expanding influx of tourists.

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