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Abstract

“Cultural Tourism: A review of Karnali” is the collection of facts of interesting cultural tourism attractions of Karnali province of Nepal. If there is heaven, it exists in Karnali. Its natural and cultural attractions accommodate a wonderland to visit. The paper is focused on the cultural attractions of Karnali Province. To generalize the facts of culture of Karnali from tourism perspective the study has been conducted. It is the scientific but descriptive literature review of available sources. The paper will be a perfect guideline for field researchers of cultural tourism in Karnali. In conclusion, Nepal is one of the pristine center of natural and cultural tourism attraction. Nepal’s most beautiful natural and cultural attraction is Karnali. There are around 30% of Khasaryan population in Nepal, literally originated from Khasasn kingdom. Karnali stakeholders must analyze the sentiment of Khasaryan of their ancestral kingdom with different programs and invitations. Karnali tourism is a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of the society. It encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, literature, music, and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions of Karnali. Specifically culture of Khasaryan, Mashto worship, Deuda, Himalayan Buddhism, Rara and pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar are the prominent cultural attractions of Karnali.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Karnali, Khash, Sinja, Mashta, Dewal, Kailash-Mansharovar,

Introduction

Tourism is itself a culture. For MacCannell (1993) all tourism is a cultural experience. Thus tourism is itself a cultural experience. Similarly, Urry (1990) believes that “tourism is culture”, it is a culture of guests, mediators, and hosts. Cultural attractions of Karnali province are innumerable. Each and every corner of any community it has diverse range of cultural identities. Travelling to Karnali is adventures and researching the facts of the land is further interesting. Culture and tourism

have always been inextricably linked with its inseparable elements. Cultural sights, attractions and events provide an important motivation for travel, and travel in itself generates culture, is like most in Karnali tourism. But it is only in recent decades that the link between culture and tourism has been more explicitly identified as a specific form of consumption: cultural tourism (Richards, 2018). However, cultural tourism in Nepal goes back to 3000 BC. as pilgrimage visit- *Tirthayatra*. The *Tirthayatra* is a prototype for the modern Hindu pilgrimage, recognizing its modern iconic status, it may be argued that a historian might explore the Mahabharata's *Tirthayatraparva* in terms of its historical accuracy and social context, often through a political lens (Haigh & Darpan, 2011) The importance of with the example of Krishna's Brother Balaram and his pilgrims in Saraswati River(The Mahabharata, *Shalyaparva*, *Tirthayatraparva*, 9.54). Krishna has visited Nepal, let out the water of Kathmandu lake and made settlement. So tourism or cultural tourism in Nepal was established around 5000 years ago.

The tourism components access, accommodation, attractions, and amenities are considered the most important factors for tourism development (Camilleri, 2018). From tourism perspective, it is denoted that access and amenities are 'sense-making' and attractions and activities are having exploratory attributes. If these sense making and exploratory factors are adequately developed tourists perceive the wellbeing and engage through positive word of mouth about the destination which tourism planners and destination developers must consider (Reitsamer & Sperdin, 2017). Thus the components of Karnali tourism of course in its virgin status of attractions.

Nepal, specially the Kathmandu valley was a lake. The lake was opened by lord Krishna and made a livable settlement. The settlement was ruled by his herdsmen Goppals had capital in Matatirtha village of Kathmandu. Geographically, Nepal, a small, peaceful and beautiful country with different geographic characteristics, is the blessing of the nature and the heaven of the earth if its resources can be utilized properly. The term 'Nepal' is very old and has been used even in the *Atharvaved* -supposed to be written nearly 5000 years ago. Nepal, with nearly 125 ethnic groups, 123 linguistic communities and ten religious groups, is an interesting place of academic research for the sociologists, anthropologists and linguists of the world who are conducting hundreds and thousands of research on these things (Dahal R. K., 2018).

The recorded history reveals that king Ashok of India in 300 BC and Gautam Buddha of Nepal in 600 BC had visited Kathmandu valley during the Kirati period (Dahal R. K., 2018). These visits were guided by *Tirthayatra*- a sort of Cultural Tourism in Nepal. The emergence of cultural tourism as a social phenomenon and as an object of academic study can be traced back to the surge in post-World War 2 leisure travel in Europe (Richards, 2018). Cultural tourism became a well-established phenomenon in many tourism destinations, and was increasingly the target of academic research. Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. Therefore, Karnali province of Nepal is a virgin land for the study of cultural tourism.

For Karnali tourism development, the relationship of various components e.g., tourism infrastructure, travelling resources -accessibility, preparedness of tourism -attraction, internal and external factors- accommodation and amenity, which are important to be considered at planning period. In tourism development and available tourism potentials at destination (Karim, Latip, Marzuki, Shah,

& Muhammad, 2021) the local governments must take initiations. The provincial government has the slogan of tourism promotion. It is “Nepal-the World’s Tourist Destination, Karnali- Nepal’s Tourist Destination”. Whoever travels in Nepal must visit Karnali. However, the study is focused on cultural attraction attributes of tourism development of Karnali.

Karnali region covers the upper watershed of the Karnali river, namely, Humla Karnali, Mugu Karnali and Sinja Karnali that drainage the area of Sinja and Tila rivers. During the Gorkha conquest in the 1790s, Jumla, which was the largest among the 22 principalities in the west, covered much of the Karnali watershed. This became the administrative district of Jumla after unification and remained so throughout the subsequent periods. The reorganization of districts in 1962 placed the four districts of Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Tibrikot under the Karnali zone. In 1972, Dolpa district to the east was included under the Karnali Zone in 1975, Tibrikot was renamed Kalikot with some boundary readjustments (Bhattarai & Katwal, 2020). Under the federal dispensation Karnali is now a province encompassing large areas of the middle hills, *Siwalik* range and the traditional upper watersheds of the Karnali river. Thus it is necessary to figure out the product of cultural tourism in Karnali the study has been conducted.

Objectives and Methods

Karnali is one of the pristine land scape and it has original *Khas* cultural tradition. To generalize the facts of culture of Karnali from tourism perspective the study has been conducted. It is the scientific but descriptive literature review of available sources. The paper will be a perfect guideline for field researchers of cultural tourism in Karnali. These attractions/products of Karnali tourism relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions (Richards, 2018). Karnali is highly potential cultural tourism zone of Nepal yet to be explored in many ways.

Discussion and Analysis

Culture is the identity of the people. Cultural tourism has long had an important economic dimension of rural development, particularly because the income derived from tourism is argued to help support the preservation of cultural heritage of the specified locality. Karnali culture is the identity of the people of Karnali. It is a home to diverse range of ethnic and non-ethnic groups like *Brahaman, Kshetri, Tharu, Gurung, Magar, Raji, Majhi, Raute* (seasonally), *Newar, Tamang*, etc. Among various spoken languages, Nepali(*Khas*) language is spoken by 95% population. Sinja Valley, the place of origin of Nepali Language lies in Jumla district of the Province. Other major language spoken in the Province are Magar 2.46%, Tharu 0.44%, Bhote/Lama 0.75%, Kham 0.34%, Gurung 0.28%, Sherpa 0.19% and others 0.65%. The largest ethnic group in the Province is Chhetri (41.9%) (Bhattarai & Katwal, 2020) Similarly, there are 15.8% Kami, 10.9% Magar, 10.3% Thakuri, Brahmin (8.4%), Damai (4%), Sarki 2.6%), Sanyasi (1.7%) and others 1.6%. Majority of population are Hindu (95.14%) in the Province predominantly followed by Buddhist (3.19%), Christian (1.36%), Muslim (0.18%) and others (0.1%). Out of the total population of the province (1570418) 49.31% of the population are residing in the urban area (NOKP, 2021). Thus Karnali is the mix of every culture of Nepal with the dominance of *Khas-Mashto* – unique culture of Caspian European colt in Nepal, in historical kingdom of Khangsar of King Nagaraj.

Khasa and Mashto Culture:

The word *Khas* has been derived from Caucasus. The European Caucasus people migrated in ice age toward Caspian Sea, Iran, Afghanistan to Kasmir to the east. Kasmir was *Kasyapnagar* at the beginning of the valley settlement; was established by sage Kasyap. Kasyapnagar became Kashmir when Mughals own the land (Badal, 2017). The Kasyapas- people of Kasyap sage migrated toward east into Karnali. *Khas-Aryan* community in Nepal, were migrated by the force of Mughals in India in around 12th centuries. In general, people of Karnali can be grouped into *Khas* and Mongoloids. The northern part mostly is inhabited by Mongoloids, while the southern belt by *Khas/ Aryans*. *Khas* are regarded to be the pre-Vedic Aryans who are believed to have crossed the Caucasus Mountains and continued further east to the mountains while their larger groups remained in the Ganga plains and developed Hindu culture of Ganga and Indus civilization (KPTMP, 2020).

The *Khasa* culture and tradition cannot be solely seen as a product of Hindu culture. It is not even a product of Indian and the Tibetan Buddhists. *Khas/Masto* is actually a mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism, Bon, and Tibetan traditions. People had the choice to adopt Hindu traditions by wearing the sacred thread (*Janai*) or to remain in (*Jad*) by maintaining Tibetan Himalayan Buddhism and culture. There was a clear tendency of cross-cultural practices in society. Consequently, in some instances, it would be very difficult even to know whether a particular family was a *Jad* of Tibetan origin or a so-called Hindu Thakuri or Khasa. Interracial matrimonial relationship was a cause for the genetic mixture of the people of *Khasa* origin (Dhungel, 2010). Actually the culture and both the Aryan and Mongols are mixed somehow in Karnali and had developed the unique Mashto culture. One of a few cultural factors which clearly distinguish the people of *Khasa* origin from the people of Hindu/Buddhist origin is the *Khasa's* religious and cultural practice of Mashto tradition. It is interesting to note that most of *Chhetris* and *Bahuns* of *Khasa* origin of Nepal are the followers of the *Mashto* tradition (Dhungel, 2010). They are distinctively known as the followers of various kinds of *Mashto* even if they live far away from the original home of the *Mashto* culture of the Kamali region. It is a fact that the *Mashto* tradition is by no means a culture related to Vedic Sanatana Hindu religious line but seriously interlinked with Tantric Hinduism. It is closer to the pre-Buddhist Shamanistic Bon practice of Tibet as well.

Some of the *Mashto* deities of *Bahuns* and *Chhetris* of *Khasa* origin are known as *bange-masta*, *bahiramasta*, *thado-masta*, *bahra-masta*, *athahra-masta*, and *Kalki-mashta* etc. It is an absolute mix of different groups of original Karnali people. From such historical reality, it is not so easy to prove that a particular family or community is of the pure Hindu or pure *Thakuri*. *Brahmin* or *Chhetri* of Hindu or even Tibetan origin (Dhungel, 2010). Thus, despite being Hindus several clans of *Brahman*, and *Chettri* still have retained their faith in their traditions shamanistic and animistic practices and worship *Mashto* God. This practice of ancestral worship is known as *Dewali* which is a sacred ancient tradition passed through generations.

Dewali- Ancestral Worship – Kulpuja:

These rituals of *Dewali* vary amongst the clans of *Chettri/Bahuns* in terms of their practices and process although the predominate belief system remains same. The practice of ancestral worship of *Kuldevta* is known as *Mashto Puja* or *Dewali* in Nepal. *Kuladevi*, is an ancestral tutelary deity in Hinduism. This ritual of *Dewali* is also known as *Mashto puja* which is also locally pronounced as *Mashta*, here *Mashto* refer to “*kul*”; “the household deity”. The term *Mashto* signifies *hawa*

“wind”. It is like *hawa* / wind, cannot be seen *hawa*, don’t know from which direction it comes and goes but it poses a strong power. Likewise, *mashta* (*kul*) has no structure, no one has seen it, no one knows where it came from but it is very power full, powerful enough to execute human according to their *karma* (Bista, 2019). Thus *Dewali* is the ritual worship of *mashto*. *Mashta* is known by different name in different clan such as: *Adhimashta*, *Rumalmashta*, *Darhemashta*, *Khapparmashta*, *Thedhimashta*, *Mandalimashta*, *Dhudhemashta*, *Ladhemashta*, *Munddamashta*, *Rudramashta*, *Kailemashta*, *Kalkimashta* and *Kalamashta*. As there is no specific idol of these *Mashta*, *Diya* is considered as its symbol and representative. For *Bahun/Chettri* community *Mashto* God is considered as their soul protector. There is a strong belief among the people, if they please or worship *Mashto* god, they would recover from all kind of pain, suffering, illness, loss in business or agriculture, obstacle, misfortune, frustration, regret, or any kind of discomfort. This belief made them worship *Mashto* God as a family deity (Bista, 2019). One can’t get spiritual power and became *Dhami* on their own choice. The *Dhami* are crucial part of ancestor worship of *Mashto Puja*. In lower Humla and Jumla, the *Khas* people recognize a unique family of a family of incarnating gods, referred to as *Mashta* - twelve brothers/sisters and their kin who are imbued with non-dharmic values and who speak through the medium of oracles or shamans known as *Dhami* (NRCT, 2019). Worshipping *Mashto* is a unique feature of this region must be directed toward the cultural tourism.

There is no such specific idol of *Mashto* god, the *Dhami* calls *Masto* spirit within their body and acts as a mediator to communicate. In this process they use *Syauli* (machilus plant) and start shaking his body to call the deity and when *Mashto* god enters into the body, the *Dhami* develops a divine power and can perform various miracles like for example plunging hands into boiling oil, walking barefoot on burning coal, drinking flaming mustard oil, revealing past activities and uttering future etc. (Bista, 2019). During the sacrifice *Dhami* carries *Chamar* in right hand and *Ghanta* in left hand. Which act as an instrument to successfully complete the ritual of sacrifice (Bista, 2019). Cultural study has just begun to uncover the hidden facts of Karnali. One of the most significant cultural attraction is *Mashto*- there are other Hindu castes such as Brahmins and Dalits, who together make up less than a third of the Karnali population; practice of Hindu traditions are well ingrained or deep rooted in every aspect of life of the people of the Karnali region (Bhattarai & Katwal, 2020). It is perfectly mixed. Some people believe that *Kalkimashta* is the mix of *Kalki*- Lord Vishnu and *Mashta*- semi man *Ardhanareshwar* lord Mahadev. *Mashta* is tantric rituals so it cannot be found in Vedic literature. Therefore, *Kulpuja* is the mix of three universal truths, creation, operation, and destruction. It is Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva in Hinduism.

The Karnali provides an ancient trade route, bringing salt, wool and meat from Tibet to trade for rice from India. The trail is witness to many varied and rich cultures. It is the land of *Khasha* and there is a long history of *Khasa* in this region. Specially, *Thakuri*, *Magars* and other ethnic groups are there in this region. In medieval period *Khasha* culture was developed. Nepali language was originated in this region. Both Hinduism and Buddhism were developed in this region. In the same way *Badimalika*, *Tripura Sundari*, *Khaptad* and other centers of gods and goddesses are famous in this region. *Deuda* is a popular folk song and dance of this region. This region is the primary place of different groups of people in Nepal (Dahal K. , 2021).

The *Khas* civilization - the source of Nepal’s national language, the *Raute* - the last nomadic people of Nepal, *Chettri*, *Magar*, and *Sonaha* ethnic groups are also found along the Karnali river corridor. The unique cultures of each of these ethnic groups is vibrant today and witnessed by their lifestyles,

architecture, farming and fishing practices, religious beliefs, and cultural celebrations (NRCT, 2019). *Himali Bhotia* community, *Khasha* and *Byasi* Community, *Thakuri Chhetri*, *Brahmin*, and *Dalit* Community are the significant community of the Karnali.

The *Magar* speaking (10.9%) people are the original indigenous ethnic group of the province. Culture of *Magar* people is different from other places. Religion, custom, tradition, folk-lore, language, fair and festivals, living style of people, housing pattern, art, and craft are unique features of culture of these indigenous groups. The indigenous groups and their culture are the main heritages of cultural tourism. The *Magar* cultural heritage is a major matter of attraction. The Heritage of *Magar* culture is observable. In this context the following factors are taken as a part for the tourist's attraction *Magar's* religion and spiritual beliefs, marriage ceremony, rituals, custom and traditions, folk-lore, music (*Sorathi*, *Maruni*, *Jhapre*), music instruments, dances (*Madal*, *Dholak*, *Tyamko* etc.), fair and festivals, food and drinks, art and crafts, house building pattern and architecture, dress and ornaments, are the main attraction for the tourists (Dhakal, 2019). It is the cultural identity of *Magars*. Archeological monuments are also equally important as cultural products in the study area. Temples, Monasteries, *Chaytas*, *Devalayas*, etc. are major monuments in Karnali. Dorbahadur Bista says, Khas were migrated in around 3rd millennium in Nepal through Sutlaj River.

Origin of Khasaryan people of Nepal

District	Place	Caste	District	Place	Caste
Dailekh	Dullu	Dulal	Kalikot	Khitkisain	Khirsine
	Badalamji	Badal		Bhutau	Bhurtel
	Nepa	Nepal		Ranchu	Ruchal
	Paudi	Paudel		Gela	Gelal
	Lamachaanni	Lamichhane		Baanjhkot	Baanjhkota
	Baanskot	Banskota	Mugu	Khanaya	Khanal
	Banstoli	Bastola		Kalaigaun	Kalyan
	Satala	Satyal		Khatyad	Khatiwada
	Luyati	Luintel	Rukum	Sarpukot	Sapkota
	Chapagaun	Chapagain	Jumla	Dhita	Dhital
	Riju	Rijal		Pandusera	Pande
	Pokhar	Pokharel		Pyakuri	pyakurel
	Daha	Dahal		Simkhada	Shimkhada
	Parajul	Parajuli			
	Koirali	Koirala			
	Dawada	Dawadi			
	Kattil	Kattel			
	Bhushakot	Bhusal			

(Raila, 2020)

Adhikari, Karki, Khadka, Basnet, Lekhak, Mahat, Bhatta, Rokaya, Budha, Bhandari, Amatya, Dixit, Lama, Acharya, Bharati, Nepali, Giri etc. were the posts to serve the administration of King Nagraj of Karnali (Raila, 2020). These people (*Kharsharyan* of Nepal) are highly eager to visit the Karnali whose ancestral maternal relation is deep rooted with Karnali. All these people worship Mashto in different name. Karnali government must be able to analyze the sentiment of these people and cultural tourism.

Religions

Nepal is the center of three prominent world civilization. 1. Kasharyan: originated in European, Caucasus zone around Caspian lake migrated toward east in Ice age, developed in Indus river civilization, *Khas Mashto Pujak*, spread from Karnali zone, 2. Mongol: developed in Wahngho and Yangzi civilization entered in Nepal from Tibet. 3. Dravids' Civilization after the invasion of Aryans; they migrated specially from south India to North India. Northern part of the Ganga river was Nepal.

Throughout the Karnali region, people practice a variety of distinct religions, guided by unique combinations of Hindu, Buddhist, shamanic and animist beliefs for purification. This diversity of religious thought reflects a complex history of religious intermixture, coexistence, syncretism, as well as a variety of ongoing religious practices that enliven the heavenly landscape. In the upper Karnali, most of the Buddhist Monasteries are affiliated with the *Nyingmapa* sect, though the 13th century. Tumkot monastery is *Sakyapa*, and 11th century Halji monastery in the Limi Valley follows the *Kagyū* sect of Buddhism. The Yalbang monastery, led by the Rinpoche Perna Rigsal, is a growing religious center, with almost two hundred monks and a complementary monastery of Buddhist nuns or anis. Tibetan Buddhists live along the river corridor in Kailash region and in river valleys of upper Humla in Nepal. After many years of relative neglect, the monastery at Tumkot is now being restored and renovated to accommodate more residents (NRCT, 2019). Thus, Karnali can be the central hub of Tibetan Himalayan Buddhism and Hinduism, Bonism, and Animism of Nepal. In the middle and lower Karnali watershed, the vast majority of people are Hindus who practice a diverse range of Hindu (*Khas*) traditions. There are also a handful of temples and shrines along the river dedicated to Hindu deities, such as the temples at Tallo DUNGESHWOR and Karpunath are popular. A variety of different forms of Shamanist and Animist practices persist reflecting earlier indigenous religious practices that existed prior to the arrival of Buddhism and Hinduism in these areas. Each village has at least one or two shrines for Shamanic gods, that honors a mixture of land and indigenous gods, and also that some shamanistic practices are also practiced in Buddhist communities further upstream Shamanism. Both Buddhists and Hindus recognize a variety of territorial deities and demigods throughout the region - in short, the entire landscape throughout this region is animated by the presence of gods and other sacred beings.

Kailash Mansarovar:

The Karnali river flows from the sacred region of Mount Kailash in the Tibetan autonomous region of China. The River begins as the *Mapcha Khabab* in a glaciated valley to the West of Lake Mansarovar and Rakshashtal, near the area referred to as the Garuda Valley in the ancient kingdom of *Zhangzhung*. Streams running from the glaciers of the sacred mountain of Mount Gurlamandata

are another source of the Karnali. The sacred Mt. Kailash and the holly Lake Manasarovar are the most attractive spots for pilgrims of Tibetan Buddhism, Hinduism, Bon and Jainism. There is an old legend that pilgrimage around the Kailash Mountain, standing for purification and beneficence, can relieve the crime committed. So pilgrimage surrounding Kailash is the main activities of various religions. The route of pilgrimage surrounding the sacred Kailash covers 32 kilometers starting from Tarchen. The pilgrimage is most popular in Tibetan horse year.

Mount Kailash, also known as *Kang Rinpoche* in Tibet, is known to be the center of the cosmos and the abode of the gods within the Buddhist, Hindu, Bon and Jain faiths, as well as in a variety of different Shamanic religions. In a variety of faiths, this holy mountain represents the highest form of spiritual evolution, the center of a sacred mandala, and the point where the realms of heaven, earth, and the hell meet. In Hindu philosophy, Kailash is said to have emerged from the mixing or churning of the cosmic ocean. It is the site where the fourteen principal gems (Mixture of 14 Bhuwan) at the center of the cosmic system were deposited. Pilgrims of many faiths visit Kailash each year to do *kora* or circumambulation of the mountain, and to visit the various *Gompas* and shrines that surround this holy mountain.

The sacred landscape that surrounds Kailash is thought to be a relic of the original Cosmic Ocean and the life-giving center from which four great rivers flow. The four rivers flow from the mouth of a different creature - the Indus river from a Lion's mouth (*Singchen Khabab*) in the North, - the Karnali River from a Peacock's Mouth (Mapcha Khabab) in the South- the Brahmaputra or (Yarlung Tsangpo) river from a Horse's mouth (Tamchhog Khabab) in the East, and - the Sutlej river from an Elephant's mouth (*Langchen Khabab*) in the West.

Lake Manasarovar, which sits at the foot of Mt. Kailash at an elevation of 4590m, is a relic of the "Sea of Tethys" that once covered the Tibetan Plateau and is considered to be a holy "Lake of Wisdom" in many religious traditions. Tibetan Buddhists call this lake as *Mapham Yumtso*, which means "Unconquerable Turquoise Lake", and they believe that the queen of the *Naga* (the ancient serpent gods) resides here, sending forth life-giving waters to the world. Kailas has never been summited because to do so would commit grave offence: to the Hindu, the peak is the home of Siva, who sits in eternal meditation with his wife Kali; the mountain forms. It is the centre of Buddhist cosmology, but is also the site of a great contest of the mythical Milarepa with the Bon priest Naro Bonchung. To the ancient Tibetan Bon religion, it is the Axis Mundi and to the Jain it is the place that Rishabhana, equivalent to Shakyamuni, achieved Moksha or enlightenment (Piasecki, 2019).

The mountain(Kailash) has four sides, a rare symmetry that is certainly a source of its sacred status: it sits on the earth mandala, below which, in the Buddhist cosmology, are three other mandala hell realms, relating to water, fire and air. Above are the celestial realms. When pilgrims walk the route, they are absolutely between heaven and hell. The south face of Kailas bears the naturally formed patterns of a swastika, a symbol that endured for thousands of years through multiple systems (again Mesopotamian, Chinese and Vedic) as a positive emanation of the auspicious (Piasecki, 2019).

For Hindu and shamanic *Dhami* pilgrims drinking its water or bathing in the lake is thought to wash away pollution carried from the womb and help bring pilgrims wisdom and understanding. For Hindus, Lake Manasarovar is also considered to be the soul of Brahma; for Shamans, bathing in the lake renews their ability to interpret divine knowledge. Each year, thousands of pilgrims from

multiple faiths visit this sacred lake to bathe in its waters and circumambulate its periphery - they come on individual pilgrimages or as part of major collective journey. As the body of water at the center of the Cosmic Heaven, Lake Mansarovar is thought to nourish the world. Himalayan Pass is also considered one of the shortest and most feasible trade routes between India and China via Nepal (Bhattarai G. , 2021). This route has been used for centuries by Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims and tourists to Kailash Mansarovar yatra (Khanal, 2021).

Rakshastal, one name for the saline lake immediately to the west of Mansarovar lake, is considered to be “the Lake of Power and the residence of wrathful or violent gods and goddesses with devilish natures”. It is important to note that this lake also has many names, which reflect different spiritual orientations and meanings. *Rakshastal*, or “Demon Lake” is merely the Sanskrit name given to the lake by pilgrims of the Hindu faith, but the local Tibetan name for the lake is Langak Sertso (gold lake) (Chapagain, Dhaubanjari, & Bharati, 2021). Practitioners of the ancient Tibetan religion of Bon refer to the lake as Muley Tsho (silver lake) and believe that the *Dulla Gyalmo* - a manifestation of the Bon Queen of the Universe and consort to the great tutelary deity *Walchen Gekho*, who reside in Mount Kailash - lives in the waters depths. The Karnali river, central attraction, main river of the province, emerges from the Mount Kailash region. It is a holy region that is sacred to Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain and Bon religions and a sacred pilgrimage site for hundreds of thousands of tourists. The Kailash region is the source of four life-giving rivers supporting billions of people. The flow of the Karnali River does not come from *Rakshastal* but instead the headwaters of the Karnali River comes from the meltwater of glaciers on the north side of the Himalaya in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. The *Machakabab*- Mouth of Peacock, Spring, sacred to Tibetans, contributes to the flow of the Karnali along the way (NRCT, 2019).

The lake is important to Bonpo, shamans, and tantric practitioners, most lay people regard the lake with caution - in large part perhaps because its water is brackish and cannot be safely consumed. The stream that flows between Mansarovar Tal and Rakshas Tal is referred to as Ganga Chhu, and the direction of its flow is interpreted as a symbolic manifestation of the triumph of wisdom over power. Mount Gurla Mandata, the companion peak to Mt. Kailash and the abode of the Bon goddess *Kangkar Lamo* overlooks the shores of the lake, and so it too is an important part of the mandala of the Kailash Sacred Landscape. The upper regions of the Karnali watershed in Nepal have long been culturally and economically linked to the Kailash-Mansarovar region of Ngari prefecture of Tibet. In the past, while establishing ritual friendships and fictive kin relations traders from Nepal and Tibet used to make vows to Kailash and Mansarovar to bind them in perpetuity - a practice which highlights the connectivity between the landscapes of the Karnali region and the sacred landscapes of Kailash-Mansarovar. In the contemporary, the upper Karnali is also an important route of pilgrimage for visitors traveling to *Kailash and Mansarovar* - the number of pilgrims and tourists traveling through Humla has increased substantially in recent years (NRCT, 2019). North south Karnali corridor is indispensable. Federal, provincial, and local entire mechanism must work day and night to attract the people who want to visit Kailash Mansarovar by developing a smart Karnali highway.

Temples and Monasteries:

Tripurasundari, Chandannath, Chhayanath, Kharpunath, Belashpur, Shivalaya, Deuti Bajai, Khairabang, Digre Shai Kumari Bhagwati Temple are the famous temples of the province. Goddess

Deuti Bajai resides in a holy temple of purity, it is believed that she is a desire fulfilling Goddess. According to local belief, the innermost desire of a person is fulfilled by the Goddess. People from different part of the country, especially from eastern Terai and hills come to visit the Goddess Deuti Bajai (Dhakal, 2019). It is the most significance site of Hindu worship sites throughout the Karnali province of Nepal. Since this important pilgrimage destination combines outstanding natural resources. It will become a prime area for tourism development of the district and the province.

Chhayanath is a sacred pilgrim place for Buddhists as well as the *Khas/Hindus* located in Mugu district of Nepal. Local people from the nearby village of Dolpa come up here to harvest Yarsagumba and also graze their cattle in the summer. Yarchagumba has been used by Amchi's (traditional Himalayan healers) for centuries; In recent years it fetches high cash for its aphrodisiac properties (Bhattarai & Katwal, 2020). Chandannath, Chhayanath, Kharpunath, Khorjernath are the important temples of Karnali. The influence of Kashmiri art on Chandannath temple, the master was from Kharpunath who went to Kashmir for education and then established Chandannath temple. On the other hand, Halzi, Raling, Shey Gomba, Ribo Bhumpa Gomba, Saldang Gomba, Pugmo Bon Gomba, Rigmo Bon Gomba are other famous tourist attraction of Karnali. The Karnali tourism administration must link all the temples and monasteries with linking package tour of Hindu and Buddhists circuit of Karnali.

Bhurti Temple Complex of Dailekh:

In the tentative list of UNESCO, the temple complex of Bhurti in Dailekh District of Karnali province of Nepal, consists of an ensemble of 22 monuments. It is also known and *Bhurtika Bais Devals* in Khas Nepali tone. Exactly when and by whom this temple complex was established and constructed is not known. Mythological, the temple complex was built Pandavas when they were in exile of 13 years. The five temples (Devals) resemble five Pandavas of Mahabharat. The temples are constructed in the typical style of Western Malla Architecture- the only architecture found in Karnali Nepal.

The website also claims that the monuments are constructed in dry stone masonry in *Panchadeval* style - a variant widespread in the entire *Khasa* Kingdom. It assembles the *Khash* and *Mashto* tradition of Karnali province. The style, form and craftsmanship of the temples are unique to the region. These historical archeological sites are the major tourism attractions of the province. Currently there are is no worship practices taking place at these temples. The temples are in their original state and are at some distance from the nearby township. The temple complex is found to be in good condition. Pandavas were great devotee of Lord Krishna so the small temple in the middle of other five Deval represents Krishna. Thus local people can practice worship to lord Krishna in different festivals and preserve it for future references. Furthermore, Kankrebihara, Kot Gadhi, Bhurtika 22 Devals, Kirtisthamba, Paduka, Sinja Birat Palace, Jaktipur Palace, Jajarkot Palace, Salyan Khalanga are other major tourist attractions of Karnali.

Kankre Bihara:

Kankre Bihar was built during the regime of King Ashok Challa of Sinja Kingdom (now Jumla) approximately in 1268 AD, who has ruled between 1255 to 1278 AD, he was the son of Kra challa whose son king Jitari challa adopted the "Malla" since then the "challa" Dynasty was known as Malla in the history of Nepal. King Ashok was the follower of the Mahayana Buddhism and the

Kankrebihar is symbol of devotion to lord Buddha. His kingdom Extended up to Trisuli River in the East, Sutlej River-Garwal-Laddhakh in the West, Khari region of Tibet in the North and the Ganga river (Tarai) in the South (Dhakal, 2019).

It is possibly the oldest and largest *Shikhara* Style Stone carved Vihara/Temple of Nepal revered both by Buddhist & Hindu civilizations. It is the home to the Bon religion (Dolpo), Kankre Bihar temple is a religious site of Karnali, which is situated in the middle part of the Surkhet Valley. According to local people and archeological study this temple was build 12th -13th century. This area is also very important for the Hindu and Buddhist devotees. It is archeological and historical important. Near about one thousands of visitor visit Kankre Bihar per day, school and campus students and teachers from different parts of the country come to visit. It is also the famous for the picnic spot. Shiva Mandir at Latikoili, near by the Kankre Bihar is a famous Shivalaya made up of stone. People belief that Kankre Bihar temple and the *Shivalaya* were built in the same time.

On the occasion of Mahashivaratri, thousands of visitors visit temple and worship the greatest god of Hindu. Hundreds of shops are selling the hisses mix foods as the *Parsad* of God Shiva. There is not any administrative restriction to use hisses (Marijuana) on Mahashivaratri. Religious temple or Devalayas, Monuments and religiously important places are all over the study area. Worshipping the God and Goddess for the protection the climates, seeking progress and prosperity, live from diseases, growth grain, protection of animals and human being etc. are common things of local people. They worship caves, bottom of the tree, hills, stone, Deuarali etc. so religiously many people visit to see or to participate in this types of activities of the local people (Dhakal, 2019). It is an ancient historical temple which, was made in 12th century. Now this temple is under reconstruction. According to local people the worshipping was disturbed because of the damage of this temple. It is not possible to find out the construction organization or the person till now but it has a great attraction power to the tourists.

Sinja and Dullu:

Sinja is the origin of *Khasha* Civilization and Language. It is the winter and summer capital of *Khasha* Kingdom. Karnali is one of the old civilizations of Nepal and is connected with ancient *Khasha* (Malla) kingdom. Also known as Naga descendants (from Western Tibet), the *Khasha* people are said to have migrated into this region possibly from *Khasgar* region of Western Tibet or Kashmir region of Pakistan. The archaeological remains and inscriptions found in Surkhet, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Jumla (Sinja) reveal that Karnali Province was the heart of the *Khasha* Kingdom. Dullu and Sija were being the summer and winter palacial sites respectively. Till 14th century AD, *Khasha* Kings were ruling the greater *Khasha* territory extending Garhwal in the west, Mansarowar and Guge regions of Tibet in the north, Gorkha-Nuwakot regions in the east and up to Ganga river in the South (Aryal, Niroula, & Ghimire, 2019). Sinja Valley, which is considered to be the place of origin of Nepali language and different temples and shrines within the parks and the buffer zone are other factors for engaging the visitors.

Sinja Valley contains the archaeological evidence of the capital city of the well organized and influential Western Malla or Khasa Kingdom of the 12th and 14th Century. After the 14th Century the Khasa Kingdom split into the Baise or Twenty-Two Kingdoms which existed until the unification of Nepal in the late 18th Century. Excavations have revealed the remains of old palaces, temples (Kanak Sundari, Tripura Sundari) and the old settlement. A remarkable ring of huge monolithic

stone columns was found surrounding the ruins of the ancient settlement with a Malla gateway and steps. Earthen pipes were excavated testifying to an elaborate water supply system.

Across from the Hima River there are caves with ancient votive ritual Buddhist chaityas and cliff inscriptions. Even today the ancient rites of the Mashto (Shamans) are practiced in many of the stone Dewals or temples. The Sinja Valley was where the Nepali language originates from and the earliest examples of the Devanagari script from the 13th Century were found on the cliffs and in nearby Dullu (UNESCO, 2021). Sinja valley, which is considered once the ancient kingdom of Nepal, is located in Jumla district. It is the place where Nepali as a language originated. Sinja Valley was the ancient capital city and powerful town of the Khasa Kingdom.

Dullu Durbar has a 1,038-year-old Saupal Adhai Shakya-built first inscription, a historic Kotgadhi, an unbroken flame and archeological stone fountains. The municipality has started developing it as a tourist area by constructing a museum as it is getting run-down due to lack of protection. Mayor Ghanshyam Bhandari said that a plan has been made to protect Dullu's heritage. Dullu has the first inscription in Nepali language, the work column of the *Nagavanshi* and *Pal* dynasty kings of the Sinja Empire (UNESCO, 2021). Similarly, Baleshwor, the tomb of Jang Bahadur Rana's father Bal Narasimha Kanwar, Pauwa, Dullu Durbar, Dharmagadhi, Panch Deval and other properties built by Kazi Jaspau Thapa are among the properties. Various monasteries, parties and pavilions have also shown religious significance. Dullu area is also considered important for folk culture like Deuda, Dhamari, Rattewali, Neule Vaka, Karkae and Ashika.

Dailekh is named by "Deo Lok" means the settlement of Gods. Deo means God and Goddess. later it is said Dadhichi Lok, where seer Dadhichi lived, later people said Dahi (yogurd) lekh because near the headquarter of Dailekh, there is cold climate and people in agriculture era used to tamed cattle and used to make delicious yogurt therefore people said it Dahilekh. Especially in the period of Mahabharata, the teacher of Kaurav and Pandav seer Dornacharaya used to live in Dullu. Dullu municipality was named by the name of seer Dornacharaya. Siddhasthali is a bit height from Dullu center. There is the Jungle near Siddhasthali. We can see the dilapidated footprints of temple where the Dornacharaya used to live. Later Dornacharaya settled their brothers in Badalamji, where the family of Dornacharaya or Acharaya village says Bhakta Sahi. The Panchkoshi pilgrimage site, Shristhan, Nivisthan, Paduka and Dharaleshwar are being renovated. Dullu region is considered as the birthplace of Karnali Khas civilization (UNESCO, 2021).

Dullu was made the winter capital during the Sinja Empire. The oldest inscription written in Nepali language is Shake 903, i.e. 1038 BS, which is said to be the linguistic inscription of the period of Damupal, the successor of Nagraj of Karnali province at that time (Badal, 2019). Although the origin of Nepali language is believed to be from Sinja of Jumla, the recorded history is believed to be connected with Dailekh. According to linguist Prof. Dr. Madhusudan Giri, there have been various debates about the origin of Nepali language which started from the stone pillar written by Sahupal Adai in 1038 BS. Along with the linguistics in Dullu, there is also the 'Kriti Khamb' of Shake 1279, in 1414 BS It is the origin of 32 Thar that 32 surname of Khas people originated from 32 places of Dailekh district of Karnali Province. Badal from Badalamji, Acharya from Acharyagaun, Rijal from Rijju, Dahal from Daha, Lamsal from Lamsu, Nepal from Nepal, Kattel from Katti, Bastakoti from Bastekot, Khanal from Khan, Dullu Durbar from Dullu, Bhurtel from Bhurti and many others are mentioned in various genealogies, say experts. The statue of Jain Tirthankar Mahavira of Shake

1136 in the Paduka temple has a special significance (UNESCO, 2021).

Area-wise, Karnali is the biggest river basin in Nepal, yet it is the least developed and most food-insecure region in the country. This region has the highest poverty rate in Nepal, with every second person in Karnali being multidimensionally poor. The highlands in Karnali are considered to be relatively water-poor regions in Nepal. The indigenous communities rely on natural springs as their primary source of water for drinking and irrigation and are highly vulnerable to changes in precipitation. The southern lowlands are prone to disasters, such as floods and droughts, and the northern highlands experience landslides and flash floods (Chapagain, Dhaubanjari, & Bharati, 2021).

Cultural Attractions of Karnali

SN	Districts	Details
1	Surkhet	Deuti Bajai Jalesoredham Uttarganga Malika temple, Sidhapaila mandir, Lati koili shivalaya, Kankre Vihar, Baikandagadhi, Bheri babai Diversion, multi-purpose, Sidhapaila mela
2	Dailekh	Panchakoshi (Sirsthan, Navisthan, Padukasthan, Dhulesore, Kotila), Tallo Dungsore Belaspur temple, Narayan temple, Panchadeval (Bhurtika) For World Heritage Site, Kotgadhi, Kazi Jaspau Pauwa, Sat khamba, Pather Nauli, Dharmagadhi, Kirtistambha
3	Kalikot	Panchadeval, Chautho deval, Gunamandu, Chulimai temple (need access), Pugmai temple, Shilling temple at Mahabu height Basudhara also known as Tribeni, Kotdarbar, Kalika (historical stone carving)
4	Salyan	Khairabang Bhagwati temple, Chayachhetra Satidevi temple, Laxmipur Shaktipith Devsthal Krishna temple, Kalimati ki Bajyu (Devi Gangamala), Endangered ethnic community of Raute, Unique folklore of Bangard area, Tappa and Maruni dances, Falawang Darbar
5	R u k u m West	Saikumari Digre Bhagwati, Kalika temple, Barah temple, Shivaji temple, Laxmi Narayan temple, Devisthan temple, Mastathan, Rajkot and Miteri Cultural Museum, East Magar folklores, Botam- chhatri patan trail
6	Jumla	Chandannath temple, Bhairavnath temple, Darbar temple, Kanaksundari, Chimara Malika, Tharpa Mastasthan, Bhandar ban, Panchadeval Dudul Chaitya, Sinja civilization, Mani Gumba, Chotra Gumba, Dilli kot, Gaijatra, Ropain jatra, Ghoda khela nach
7	Humla	Kharpunath, Mahadeval, Lawasur madu, Bhagwati madu, Raling Gomba, Rijhiling Gomba, Yalbang Gomba, Deuda folk dance, Limi Valley, Lungdup machaling monastery, Tumkot monastery, Til monastery, Yangshi, Laitongka, Langdu, Khasarpani monasteries, Sarkiko sthan
8	Dolpa	Balatripurasundari, Chalmasta Bhawani, Manma Deuta mandir, Kalika mandir, Dho Valley, Dhama Jhankri (traditional witch craft), Banu Bajasthan, Gumbatara monasteries, Sahartara monasteries, Tuppatara monasteries, Chyujungpal monasteries, Bikramshahi maharajko harikirtanstan, Chyujungpal gate

9	Mugu	Chhayanath temple, Kalika and Malika mandir, Bachanbolne monastery, Mahakal monastery, Chittai, Dolfu, Maha, Shero, Kirmi, Daura monasteries
10	Jajarkot	Malika mandir, Masto mandir, Shivalaya, Khalanga Durbar area / Jajarkot Durbar, Paink masto mela

(KPPC, 2020)

Thus Karnali government must make linking points or pilgrimage route of all these cultural monuments.

Prioritized 100 destinations of Tourism Development Program of Nepal

SN	Districts	Developing Destinations
1	Surkhet	Kankrebihar, Deuti Bajyai, Madan Ashrit Park, Jajura Daha, Gidde Hill Tourist Spot
2	Dailekh	Pancha Koshi Religious Area Kot Gadhi-Pancha Deval- Belaspur-Mahabu Area
3	Kalikot	Pachal Waterfalls
4	Salyan	Kuvinde daha
5	Rukum W	Botamkot Chitri Patan
6	Jumla	Sinja Civilization Dudul Stupa
7	Humla	Limi valley
8	Dolpa	Phoksundo National Park Tripurasundari Religious Spot
9	Mugu	Rara Lake Rara to Phoksundo (Lake to Lake) Trekking
10	Jajarkot	Khalanga Durbar Area

(Study, 2020)

The only one source of revolutionary transformation of Karnali is its tremendous natural and cultural attractions. The only solution of poverty alleviation is tourism must be analyzed and implemented by the policymakers.

Conclusion

Nepal is one of the pristine center of natural and cultural tourism attraction. Nepal's most beautiful natural and cultural attraction is Karnali. There are around 30% of Khasaryan population in Nepal, literally originated from *Khasasn* kingdom. Karnali stakeholders must analyze the sentiment of *Khasaryan* of their ancestral kingdom with different programs and invitations. Karnali tourism is a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of the society. It encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, literature, music, and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions of Karnali. Specifically culture of *Khasaryan*, *Mashto* worship, Deuda, Himalayan Buddhism, Rara and pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar are the prominent cultural attractions of Karnali.

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