

PILGRIMAGE TOURISM: A STUDY OF GOSHAIKUNDA LAKE OF NEPAL

Asmit Kuikel

Scholar

Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies

akuikel70@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage is spiritual tourism to receive heavenly blessings. The study focuses on pilgrimage tourism and its importance. The study highlights adventure tourism and pilgrimage tourism in the context of Nepal. The focus of the article is on the pilgrimage industry in Nepal's Goshaikunda Lake, one of the most revered bodies of water that Lord Mahadev is said to have created to get rid of the effect of poison named Kalkut. The importance of the festival and Goshaikunda in both the Hindu and non-Hindu communities is highlighted in the paper. The principal two ways to Goshaikunda Lake are through Dhunche and Sundarikal, both of which have similar importance and adventure, as well as geographical and natural beauty. The ideal trekking path from Langtang to Helambu has also been created around Goshaikunda Lake. They are also included in the Ramsar wetland list, along with all the lakes associated with it. The paper is qualitative, more descriptive, explanatory, and entirely based on the researchers' personal experience of visiting Goshaikunda Lake as a primary source of data and literature as a secondary source, both of which are collected and analyzed qualitatively.

Keywords: pilgrimage, tourism, Goshaikunda, trekking, janaipurnima

Introduction

Morinis (1982) defines the term "pilgrimage" as the structural institution full of all relevant features that constitute the socio-cultural ecology and individual pilgrimage behaviors. Pilgrimage is recognized as a religious and cultural phenomenon of humanity and an important feature of the world's major religions. According to Kunwar (2017), pilgrimage today is defined by two approaches: a traditional religious journey and a modern scholarly journey. The term "pilgrimage" is used to label the journey of an individual who undertakes a sacred place with the idea that he is a pilgrim (Kunwar, 2017).

Kunwar (2017), defines Hindu pilgrimage as the institutional complex of the journey to a sacred place as practiced and conceived by cultural or religious groups in his book *Tourist and Tourism*. In the Hindu tradition, pilgrimage is regarded as Tirtha and the pilgrim as Yatri, and the term pilgrim is considered as a tourist with a religious motive. Morinis (1984), states that a person is considered as if they are on pilgrimage when they consciously see themselves as such and adopt the pilgrim role, with whatever dress, behavior, attitudes, etc. Pilgrimage is believed to be the beginning of tourism in every part of the country (Bhatia, 1994).

Pilgrimage tourism is defined as a significant type of tourism for places such as the Vatican, Rome, and Mecca-Medina in Saudi Arabia; Pashupatinath, Muktinath, and Janakpur in Nepal (Kunwar, 2017). Padin et al. (2015) divide pilgrimage tourism into three broad categories. Pre-process includes the actions undertaken in an initial sequence of pilgrimage tourism preparation, i.e., the point of the initiation; main-process is during the actual pilgrimage tourism; and post-process is the actions which are undertaken in an ultimate sequence after finalizing the pilgrimage tourism, i.e. while returning home from the destination. Nepal is one of the important destinations for pilgrims because of its prominent, scary, historical, and splendid cities. Nepal is considered the center for Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims as the country is regarded as the dwelling of Lord Shiva as well as the birthplace of Gautam Buddha and Goddess Sita (Ulak, 2022).

In Nepal, pilgrimage tourism has existed for a very long time. People once went on pilgrimages to atone for the faults they committed both deliberately and unknowingly. People used to go to places like Pashupatinath in Kathmandu, Muktinath in the Mustang, Janaki Temple in Janakpur, Changuaryan in Bhaktapur, Barahachetra in Sunsari, Lumbini in Kapilvastu, Swargadwari in Pyuthan, Gosaikunda in Rasuwa, etc., most often in the context of Nepal. In his book, Kuwar notes that tourists in Nepal are drawn not just by natural resources such as mountains, lakes, gorges, glaciers, forests, and animals, but also by distinct ethnic groups, culture, customs, and pilgrimage sites such as Pashupatinath, Gosaikunda, Lumbini, and Muktinath. There are various natural resources, as well as inherited traditions and customs, that have drawn people from all over the world to Nepal (Kuwar, 2017).

Muller & Cleaver, (2000) explain adventure tourism as a journey that includes physical exertion, interaction with the natural environment, and a culturally immersive encounter with local communities. This will present physical obstacles to tourists as well as high levels of sensory stimulation. Climbing,

trekking, abseiling, sea kayaking and whitewater kayaking, skiing and snowboarding, caving, ballooning, skydiving and parapenting, mountain biking, diving and snorkeling, surfing and sailboarding, snowmobiling and off-road driving, heliskiing, safaris, rafting, and others <https://www.nepalglaciertreks.com/Goshaikunda-lake-trekking.html> adventure travel activities are widely regarded as adventure tourism (Buckley, 2006).

Kunwar (2017) describes adventure tourism as a component of sports tourism. Kunwar writes about the origins of adventure tourism, citing the arrival of two Englishmen, Windham, and Pococke, to Chamonix, France, as the origin of adventure tourism. Trekking is a recreational walking activity that allows you to discover the village, villages, valleys, mountains, and spectacular landscapes while receiving maximum enjoyment with the least degree of discomfort (Ghimire, 2004 as cited by Rai, 2016). Trekking is a modern form of adventure tourism that may be classified into several types, including classical trekking, desert trekking, tropical trekking, glacial trekking, polar trekking, river trekking, swamp trekking, and volcano trekking. In addition, the author referred to trekking as a phenomenon of the turn of the twenty-first century (Diana, 2014).

The paper attempts to study pilgrimage tourism with the case study of pilgrimage-based tourism in Goshaikunda Lake, which is regarded as one of the most important pilgrimage sites of Nepal, and a sacred lake that has relevance in various aspects. Some of the specific research questions of the paper are:

- a) What are the religious and cultural importance of Goshaikunda Lake?
- b) How can people reach to lake and status hospitality in Goshaikunda Lake?

The research may not exactly reflect the experiences of all travelers mainly because it is based on personal experience and a literature review. The report's geographic description is based on a particular period of time and may not cover different seasons or times, and it lacks precise information on hiking routes and transit. The report is impacted by the researchers' assumptions regarding Goshaikunda and the area and may reflect different religious and cultural perspectives, which further highlights the study's limitations.

Geography of Goshaikunda lake. Goshaikunda lake is located at an altitude of 4380 meters above sea level in the Langtang national park in Rasuwa District, Goshaikunda rural municipality, it is an alpine holy lake and is also regarded as a freshwater lake. It covers 600 meters in length and a 370-meter width. The lake is a rich, vivid blue that sits calmly in its basin of grey rocks. Despite the strong gusts, there are no waves, only a few little curls on the coasts. The sky is lighter

in color than the lake, but it is just as clear, with no clouds in sight. The distance between Kathmandu City and Goshaikunda Lake is about 43 KM. There are several other lakes near Goshaikunda Lake. It is believed that there are approximately 108 lakes near Goshaikunda. Bhairabkunda, NaagKunda, Saraswotikunda, and Ganeshkunda are very close to them (Ghimire, 2019). This is also known as the sacred lake due to its religious and historical beliefs regarding its connection with the lord Shiva.

Ramsar is the earliest of the contemporary worldwide intergovernmental treaties on the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, although its provisions are very easy and general in comparison to more recent ones. The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental convention signed on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the Caspian Sea's southern shore. On April 17, 1988, Nepal ratified the Convention on Wetlands. Nepal now has 9 wetlands of international importance with a total surface area of 34,455 hectares. From the Ramsar Site information service, we can find that it is listed on the Ramsar Site with Site number 1693. The overall area of Goshaikunda, including all of its related lakes, is 1,030 hectares. Ramsar's status for the location was granted on September 29, 2007. An international agreement for the conservation and wise use of wetlands is known as the Ramsar site. Goshaikunda Lake freezes for six months from October to June, throughout the winter, before melting and flowing into the Trishuli River. The Goshaikunda wetland is the source of the Trishuli River, which stretches between Betrawati Village and Trishuli Town in Nuwakot District. The river has its holistic importance as well as a source of 20MW of electricity through a "Trishuli-Devighat hydroelectricity project" (Ramsar Site Information Service, 2007).

Table 1: Lakes around Goshaikunda lake

Name	Area (Ha.)	Altitude	Latitude	Longitude	Location
BhairabKunda	16.75	4261	28°4'51"	85°24'36"	Rasuwa
Goshaikunda	13.80	4381	28°5'00"	85°24'57"	Rasuwa
AmaKunda	5.22	4560	28°4'02"	85°25'22"	Rasuwa
SuryaKunda	4.54	4609	28°4'15"	85°25'51"	Rasuwa
SaraswotiKunda	3.80	4054	28°4'49"	85°24'8"	Rasuwa
RagatKunda	2.67	4520	28°4'6"	85°25'18"	Rasuwa
ChandraKunda	2.59	4545	28°4'9"	85°25'27"	Rasuwa
KyumuehhoKunda	2.34	4329	28°4'15"	85°24'15"	Rasuwa
DudhKunda	1.80	4420	28°4'35"	85°25'10"	Rasuwa
GaneshKunda	1.41	4620	28°4'29"	85°25'22"	Rasuwa
BatasKunda	1.02	4500	28°4'51"	85°24'46"	Rasuwa

Religious and cultural aspects of Gosaikunda lake. The religion of Gosaikunda Lake is based on Lord Shiva. At the time of the churning of the ocean, the *Kalkut* poison was released from the ocean (*Samundra manthan*) and that poison was subdued by Lord Shiva. When he consumed that poison, his throat became blue and its effect made him look for the water, so he moved towards the northern part with his weapon called *Trisula*. The water comes from its three holes, which were made through the three sharp peaks of the *trisula*, and the lake was formed in which Lord Shiva slept and found relief from the effect of the poison (mentioned in the *Mahabharat* and a detailed story is found in the *Himawat Khanda* of the *Skandha Puran*)(Ramsar Site Information Service, 2007). Aside from its religious significance, the Gosaikunda region is also historically significant. Amar Singh Thapa, the Nepali commander of the western front during the Anglo-Nepal war (1814–1816), traveled to Gosaikunda and died there (Ghimire, 2019). The two sacred lakes, Bhairavkunda and Gosaikunda, are known as the Black and White Lakes in Tamang. The *janaipurnima* celebration in Gosaikunda is regarded as the white lake's offering (Tautscher, 2007). On *Janaipurnima*, Pashupatinath Temple will be closed since it is believed that Lord Shiva would visit Gosaikunda on this auspicious day. So, a day before *janaipurnima* the sacred thread of lord shiva of Pashupatinath will be changed. (Anderson, 2005).

Trekking trail to Gosaikunda. Due to its fast expansion, the world's trail networks play an important role in adventure tourism (Upadhyaya, 2018). The Gosaikunda trek provides an insight into the unique terrain, culture, and wildlife of Nepal, as well as a panoramic view of the Langtang Himalayan Range. There are different hiking routes to Gosaikunda. Different tour agencies now provide a 3–7-day Gosaikunda trek package. Even now, they will provide a heli tour to Gosaikunda.

One of the most prominent tourist attractions in Langtang National Park is the Gosaikunda Langtang Trek. It is situated in northeastern central Nepal, near Kathmandu. The trekking agencies will offer different sets of packages for trekking on different routes on Gosaikunda. Langtang Helambu trek starts from either point and is a well-established trekking route for both pilgrimages as well as adventure tourism in Nepal. This trek is well-known for its Buddhist culture, natural beauty, and breathtaking scenery with a pleasant environment.

The Langtang-Gosaikunda-Helambu hiking route, located in the Kathmandu Valley's northern belt, is growing increasingly popular. On the first day, the trip will formally begin from Kathmandu to Syabrubesi, where we will enjoy

wonderful views of the Himalayas range, including Annapurna, Manaslu, and Ganesh Himal. On the second day, we'll go to Langtang village, which was devastated by an earthquake and landslide in 2015 but is now being rebuilt. After that, on the other day, we will go to Kyangjin Village, which can be visited on a day before departing for Lama Hotel, from where we will depart on the other day for Thulo Syabru, where we will stay in the Sherpa and Tamang villages, where we can get cultural and traditional hospitality, which is defined by Kunwar (2017) as a human phenomenon or a social phenomenon, deals with and is primarily concerned with the interaction between host and guest.

On the seventh day, we will proceed to Song Gumpa in the region around the Tamang Heritage Trail, where you will encounter members of this ethnic group with Tibetan origins and pass through the village of Thuman and the high landscape of Nagthali. Tamang heritage trail has emerged as a notable attraction in the Rasuwa district, where Tamang culture has been identified as a key tourism product supported by both natural and historical attractions (Kunwar & Pandey, 2016) On the other hand, we will go to Gosaikunda through the Lauribina Pass and enjoy the sacred lake. On the ninth day, we will travel from Gosaikunda to Ghopte, where we will enter the Helambu area. On the other hand, we'll go to Melamchi Gaon, a Sherpa settlement with a monastery and a shrine claimed to have been erected by an 8th-century Buddhist master. On the eleventh day, we will cross the border into Tarkegyang, crossing the Melamchi River.

On the twelfth day, we will go from Tarkegyang through the forest on a dirt road to the village of Sermathang. The path ascends steadily through the trees until you reach another dirt road. We may see a few monasteries as well as spectacular views of the Dorje Lhakpa summit and the Panch Pokhari lakes once we arrive. We will leave all-natural and cultural attractions and journey to Melamchi to end our tour on the 13th-15th day (Lantang, Gosaikunda & Helambu trek, 2019).

Literature Review

A journey undertaken on a pilgrimage is done to advance one's spiritual aspirations. The pilgrimage will strengthen one's inner or mental calm and assist in understanding the pilgrims or the religious and cultural sites, which is also seen as an integral ingredient of internal tourism and aids in the promotion of local culture and customs (Vijaya, 2012). Turner (1974) defines pilgrimage as a liminal social experience 'between and within the categories of ordinary social

life. Ordinary life is viewed as being structured and constrained by one's social standing and personal qualities. In everyday life, people think about and carry out their obligations and responsibilities, but during a pilgrimage, everyone is completely focused on the Gods, and they chant mantras, sing Bhajans, and forget about their daily lives until they return from their pilgrimage.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization estimates that around 300 million people visit the pilgrimage site every year, generating 18 billion dollars annually (Shaw & Thomson, 2013). The term "pilgrimage" can be commonly explained as a religious journey, which has attracted the attention of people from different fields like academia, planners, filmmakers, marketing personnel, organizational consultants, etc. (Choe & O'Regan, 2015). Padin et al. (2015) defined pilgrimage tourism as a process that is composed of three sub-processes over time and across various contexts, which are: the pre-process, which is referred to as an initial point where people will be ready at home; the main process, which is an actual pilgrimage; and the post-process, which is performed at the destination to return home.

Jha (1985) explains pilgrimage as a *tirtha-yatra* that is aimed at securing coordination between pious life and the highest *gyanam*. The basic pilgrimage rules are fasting, sexual abstinence, rejection of soft beds, walking with bare feet, etc. People essentially take holy baths, vow and pray to God and goddesses, give charity, *pinda-dana* (offer rice balls to deceased ancestors), and offer water to deceased ancestors (Kuwar, 2017). Also, Kuwar (2017), in his book *Tourist and Tourism*, claims that *tirtha* is the place where Vedic Rishis perform *Tapasya and mantras*. According to Moore (1985), today's pilgrimages are combined with recreational tours. Pilgrims are likely to travel in groups led by an experienced group elder or a tour leader.

Pilgrimage tourism is an important and consistent component of the tourist sector. Not only has pilgrimage tourism had a spiritual purpose, but it has also played an important role in protecting holy places, fostering cultural understanding, and providing excellent revenue-generating possibilities. (Daily Day, 2020).

Pilgrimage is related to Moksha (liberation), one of the four Purusharthas (virtues) for Hindus, along with Artha (material value), Dharma (righteousness), and Kama (pleasure) (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021). In the article *Hindu Pilgrimage in the Nepal Himalayas*, Messerschmidt & Sharma (1981) concentrate on Muktinath Temple, one of the most significant and widely known pilgrimages in

Nepal. It is situated in northern Nepal at an elevation of 3800 meters, which is about 500 meters lower than Gosaikunda Lake. They visited the Muktinath temple, which they made during the Janai Purnima festival, which served as the basis for the piece. The yearly ceremonial of the holy thread (Janai) on the occasion of the full moon known as Purnima is called Janai Purnima. Both pilgrims are home to Mongoloid people who speak Tibeto-Burmese. Hindus believe that Muktinath is most frequently linked with Vishnu, the lord of salvation (Mukti), and thus they think that going on the pilgrimage and taking a holy bath will bring them salvation. As a result, Muktichhetra is yet another name for the location.

In his study of Christian pilgrimage, Turner (1978) draws several generalizations regarding the significance of hallowed sites. Turner defined Muktinath Temple based on the following characteristics: a) devotion to one or more universal and supernatural concepts; b) connection to or association with nature; c) historical traditions; d) staged or steeped traditions; e) structured approach; f) physically climbing; g) uniqueness; h) peripheral location, and i) secular association

In Nepal, Janai Purnima, which is often celebrated on the full moon day of Shrawan, is regarded as the beginning of the festival season. On the occasion of Janaipurnima, upper-caste Hindu males used to change their sacred thread. The thread is conferred upon males as part of the most significant religious rites in which those males are officially initiated into Hinduism and must be worn for the entirety of their lives (Anderson, 2005). Taghadhari, a person who wears a sacred thread and goes by the name Janai, bathes in a river or pond and changes their sacred thread. Additionally, they fasten a holy thread known as a Rakshyabandan on their wrist, which is said to protect them from evil and purify their soul. People throng several holy locations during this festival, including Gosaikunda, Panchpokhari, Kaligandaki, Manichur, etc. Furthermore, a special type of nine-bean soup known as Kwati is made, which will give farmers who have spent their monsoon season on water and fields warmth and strength (The Kathmandu Post, 2022 July).

Aside from Janaipurnima, there is a large gathering in Gosaikunda, during Ganga Dussehra. The Ganga Dussehra, observed every year on Dashmi (the tenth day) of the Shukla Paksha of the Hindu calendar's Jeshtha (high summer) month, commemorates the Goddess' landing on Earth from Heaven. All along the Ganga, celebrations take place at ghats in villages and cities. Dasha means ten in Sanskrit, and hara means to destroy, hence swimming in the river over these 10 days is said to cleanse the individual of ten sins or, alternately, ten lives of

misdeeds (Agnihotri, 2016). The Gosaikunda Lake has a historical document dating back to 1447, citing the pilgrimage of King Jaya Jaksha Malla Deva of Bhaktapur. He walked for nine days to travel 80 kilometers to the sacred lake, where he stayed for three days and worship with the offerings (Tautscher, 2007).

Adventure travel and ecotourism (also known as soft adventure travel) are progressively combined as adventure tourism goods to become more socially and environmentally responsible (Lew,1995). With its unique natural features and cultural heritage, Nepal is regarded as an ideal destination for adventure tourism (Genç, 2021). Trekking and mountaineering are particularly popular in Nepal's northern region. The majority of the treks are scheduled at altitudes ranging from 1000 to 4000 meters, with several popular treks exceeding 5000 meters (Rai, 2016). Kunwar & Pandey (2016), define Tamang Heritage Trail and Langtang-Goshaikunda-Helambu trek as adventurous tourism.

Methodology

This is a qualitatively designed paper based on field research in which data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The researcher traveled to Goshaikunda, four years ago, before the COVID epidemic struck the world, during Janaipurnima, on a seven-day journey from Sundarikal to Goshaikunda. Unstructured interviews are an important source of primary data in which interviews were taken with devotees who traveled to Goshaikunda, to know and understand the lake's religious and cultural significance. To trace the status of hospitality an unstructured interview is taken with small entrepreneurs like local people who run hotels, lodges, seasonal hotels (known as Chapro in the local language), small shops, and seasonal priests who come by walking to give religious services, and people working for management or management committee (mela). Questions were raised about the religious and cultural aspects of the lake and celebration, the involvement of indigenous people during the festival, and the economic component of the event in Goshaikunda.

This article primarily focuses on the historical context of the Goshaikunda, as well as on its significance to religions as well as from a cultural perspective. Secondary data was gathered from various published and unpublished documents, including books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and previous research papers. Also, different tourism-related web pages and sites were surfed. In this paper's analytical approach, data gathered from the field through the researcher's observation and interaction is compared and contrasted with other literature relevant to pilgrimage tourism and Goshaikunda Lake. Because the

article is qualitative in nature, data is evaluated by compiling and transcribing information gathered from various sources. Data are interpreted logically in this work, arguments are supported by literature, and the majority of data is interpreted descriptively.

Findings and Discussions

On the way to Goshaikunda, alienated individuals were encountered, and it will be from them that fresh information about Goshaikunda will be learned. By using his trishula sword, Lord Shiva formed the Goshaikunda Lake. Additionally, in the lake's northern region, three holes are producing water, and near Trishul Dhara, it is even worshipped by locals. The majority of people will first worship Trishuldharma before taking a lake bath. People worship the trishuldharma in the belief that doing so will provide them with the authority from Lord Mahadev to take a bath in Goshaikunda Lake. Individuals also believe that Goshaikunda Lake will abduct them when they are taking a bath, hence they think that a single son cannot visit there.

A communal association guthi is founded to manage the Janaipurnima celebration on behalf of the four rural communities Syabru, Dhunche, Barkhu, and Yarsa. Tamang Bompos will lead the way, and other pilgrims will follow them for three days until they reach the lake (Tautscher, 2007). They will dance brilliantly and display their ethnic characteristics on the trip and return. The *Janaipurnima* event is very significant to the local populace. People from the Tamang community as well as more recent residents of Rasuwa and Nuwakot used to celebrate *Janaipurnima*. They will also travel to Goshaikunda following customs and culture. Various ethnic dances and rituals will be performed both en route and in Goshaikunda. They will amuse visitors with their traditional dances, known as *Jhaki* or *Jhakri* in their tongue. They will wear traditional *Jhakri* attire and play the *damfu*, a local musical instrument. They will carry out these activities every year. Rasuwa District Tamangs will perform the deed frequently. Also, Kirati people from the eastern part of Nepal will travel to Goshaikunda with their cultural values. And brahmin and Chhetri from different parts of the country will visit the lake during the *Janaipurnima* festival.

There are numerous religious beliefs associated with Goshaikunda Lake. According to older generations, after taking a holy bath in Goshaikunda, one should take holy water (Jal) from the lake and pour it on two holy sites: Pasupathinath and Kageshwori-Mahadev of Kathmandu, where people used to worship a statue of the Crow, and Kageshwori Mahadev, which is located in the

eastern part of the Kathmandu Valley and Pasupathinath then only the pilgrim will endeavor.

There are two primary approaches to Goshaikunda Lake. Trekking or walking via various routes is the most popular and adventurous, although helicopter travel is becoming increasingly popular in the winter season. The Goshaikunda trip is a short and spectacular hike in Nepal's Langtang area, north of Kathmandu. The trip is divided into two portions: Dhunche to Goshaikunda and Sundarijal to Goshaikunda. By the evening of the first day, one may easily reach Chandanbari or Lauribina. The road is abundant in flora and animals, and it continually provides breathtaking vistas of the snow-capped Alps. Ghattekhola, Deurali, Dimsa, Chandanbari, Cholangpati, Lauribina, Buddhadanda, and Ganesh Gauda are wonderful vantage locations along the way to see the undulating hills and high peaks like Mt. Langtang and Mt. Ganesh. On the third day of the journey, one arrives in Goshaikunda (Ghimire, 2019).

The walking path from Dhunche to Goshaikunda has just 14 hotels, and accommodation availability is limited throughout the trekking season, so be prepared to pitch a tent and camp. If you visit during the Hindu holidays of Janaipurnima and Gangadasahara, you won't have to worry about finding a place to stay. There will be temporary huts erected for pilgrims, and you will be able to live as part of the community while there (Ghimire, 2019). There is also a fantastic experience of researchers living in temporary huts and a wonderful chat with the owner. They claim to have made more than three lakhs during the janaipurnima season, which lasts about 10-12 days. They will arrive and cause pain, staying with their family and even animals.

The other path to Goshaikunda is through Sundarijal, which takes 3-4 days to reach. The path is far more adventurous than the one via Dhunche. On the fourth day of the walk, the researchers arrived and stayed in three magnificent locations: Thankune, Kutumsang, and ghopte. The walking experience was quite awful, and I learned that going to Goshaikunda is a difficult and adventurous journey. On the way to Goshaikunda, visitors may view locals grazing their animals, such as sheep and yak, in the greenery known as a *lek*. During our visit, we had a local meal in one of Kutumsang's traditional villages and went to Goshaikunda in the middle of the fourth day to take a holy bath. If we took the Sundarijal route, we would view Suryakund first at a height of 4600 meters. Locals indicate that there would be excessive solar light radiation in the lake, thus we would not be able to see the lake. It is said that when returning from

Goshaikunda via Dhunche, we should not glance back to Bhairabkunda, which is located directly after Goshaikunda Lake.

Climbing Lauribina uphill is the most challenging portion of the trek. People typically use sticks to climb the hill of Lauribina, which they leave at the little shrine at the peak. We can see many sticks in that temple, and people who used to walk downstairs will put some money and take a stick, where there is a little shrine known as the Temple of Lauribina. Lauribina temple can be seen on both routes. People who have to climb a great height may suffer from low oxygen pressure, which is known as *leklagne* in Nepali. Locals believe that various flowers will disseminate their smell during the rainy season, lowering the oxygen pressure for individuals trekking uphill. To solve this problem, people would eat garlic and even see people selling herbal beans that claim to enhance the oxygen in the body and make it easier for people to climb heights. Individuals can rent horses in Chandanbari while passing through Dhunche, and they can even observe people carrying visitors to Goshaikunda and Dhunche from Goshaikunda.

People after reaching will take a holy bath in the lake, which is considered a holy lake with holy water. During the *Janaipurnima* festival, thousands of pilgrims from India, Nepal, and other countries will visit the lake to change their sacred thread, known as "janai." People will visit the Mahadev temple near the Goshaikunda Lake after taking a holy bath in Goshaikunda and change their sacred thread from the priest who will be there to offer a religious ceremony, bringing sacred thread and holy thread to put on their wrist. Also, the *bompo* enters the little Shiva temple by beating his drum, and his assistant places the gifts, while other pilgrims begin chanting and dancing outside the temple (Tautscher, 2007). After taking a sacred bath in Goshaikunda, it is said that individuals would attain *moksha*. During *Janaipurnima*, residents of the researcher village on Kathmandu's eastern outskirts visit the holy lake to take a holy bath. People who had traveled to Goshaikunda Lake decades before told an exciting tale of their journey there, where they had to bring all they needed for food and shelter. Since there were no hotels or temporary lodging options back then, individuals had to bring their supplies of food like rice maize, flour, potatoes, oil, and even a stove because *Janaipurnima* used to fall during the rainy season, making it difficult to manage the firewood.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that Goshaikunda Lake, which is one of the most important and adventurous pilgrimages and trekking sites in Nepal, has tremendous religious and cultural significance. The natural beauty or scenery of Goshaikunda would fascinate tourists, relieving their discomfort and exhaustion from trekking. The cool water from the river and rivulets offer extra strength to those visiting for spiritual as well as ecological reasons. Not only the Goshaikunda Lake, but also the lakes around it, particularly Bhairabkunda, Suryakunda, Ganeshkunda, and Nagkunda, have some interesting facts. During the Janaipurnima festival, many people come not just as pilgrims, but also for cultural and economic motives.

Tourism has an important role in creating employment opportunities and generating foreign currency (Bhattarai et al., 2021). As a result, the Janaipurnima festival may provide an economic opportunity for native people. For this, locals will travel to Goshaikunda and its surroundings, where they will construct a temporary shelter and give logistical and feeding services to tourists. Also, the local priest will come to provide religious and cultural services, and they will bring sacred threads and holy threads with them, which people will most likely have after having a holy bath at Goshaikunda. Local business owners will also offer local items such as cheese, churpi, cultural garlands, and so on. even witnessing tourists enjoying their purchases. As a result, the lake and festival are also economically significant. During the pilgrimage, we will forget about our tasks and responsibilities and instead focus on the god and goddess or spiritual force. Not only will we do so, but everyone will, which will act as a medication to relieve our stress and strain from societal and personal duties. As a result, pilgrimage tourism paired with natural essentials will benefit us. People are now enjoying off-season trips not only during festivals and religious bounds but also because infrastructure development on the route can give service to those tourists. Still, there is a high potential for tourism development in the area where local or even other authorities should focus on developing a walking path that will be slippery during the rainy season, developing hotels and lodges, marketing the site, and providing x to tourists can increase the flow of tourists not only for pilgrims but also for natural energy and trekking. Nature, culture, and tradition may be experienced on the popular trekking route Langtang-Goshaikunda-Helambu.

The manuscript can be further examined after being scanned. As a result, I'd prefer that others write on a few issues that my paper doesn't cover. Additionally, opinions on how the locals view the Goshaikunda Lake's religious and cultural value are welcomed, and hiking tourism on Goshaikunda will be encouraged.

References

- Agnihotri, S. (14 June 2016). "All you need to know about Ganga Dussehra". *India Today*.
- Anderson, M. M. (2005). *The Festivals of Nepal*. New Delhi: Rupa Publication.
- Bhatia, A.K. (1994). *International Tourism*. New Delhi: Sterling Publication.
- Bhattarai, K., Upadhyaya, G., & Bohara, S. K. (2021). Tourism, Employment Generation and Foreign Exchange Earnings in Nepal. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Education*, 11, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jthe.v11i0.38232>
- Buckley, R. (2006). *Adventure Tourism*. Wallingford: CABI Publishing.
- Daily Day (2020). Pilgrimage tourism harmonizes religious and economic development. Retrieved from: http://outbox-consulting.com/pilgrimage-tourism-to-harmonize-religious-and-economic-development.html?fbclid=IwAR3gcYUwYSqYMg-2mljmn0Th_Os4Hrd5hzdoWzrf6Q0M2_qifcz-B7p9R5A. Accessed on August 1, 2022
- Diana, D. (2014). Trekking is a phenomenon of tourism in the modern world. *Research Gate*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/DianaDryglas/publication/301565755_Trekking_as_a_phenomenon_of_tourism_in_the_modern_world/links/571a558c08ae7f552a472f6c/Trekking-as-a-phenomenon-of-tourism-in-the-modern-world.pdf. Accessed on August 3, 2022
- Genç, R. (2021). Adventure tourism in Nepal Himalayas: Environmental effects. *Journal of Tourism & Adventure*, 4(1), 47–57. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jota.v4i1.40638>
- Ghimire, B. (2019, September 19). Goshaikunda: A fair mix of adventure and spiritualism. *The Kathmandu Post*.
- Kunwar, R. R. (2017). *Tourists & Tourism*. Kathmandu: Gangasen Kunwar.
- Kunwar, R. R. (2017). What is Hospitality? *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 8, 55–115. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gaze.v8i0.17832>

- Kunwar, R. R. (2013). Sport Tourism: Understanding the Concept, Recognizing the Value. *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 5, 13–42. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gaze.v5i0.15109>
- Kunwar, R. R., & Pandey, C. (2016). Tamang Heritage Trail: A Study of Gatlang Village in Rasuwa District of Nepal. *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 6, 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gaze.v6i0.15113>
- Kunwar, R. R., & Thapaliya, N. (2021). A Preliminary Study of Pilgrimage Tourism in Barahachhetra, Nepal. *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 12(1), 126–170. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gaze.v12i1.35681>
- Langtang, Gosaikunda & Helambu trek. (2019, January 12 12). Retrieved from: <https://www.kimkim.com/c/langtang-Gosaikunda-helambu-trek-17-days> Accessed on August 2, 2022
- Lew, A. A. (1995) Adventure tourism: Megatrend or niche, *Tourism Recreation Research*, 20:1, 57-58, DOI: 10.1080/02508281.1995.11014736
- Messerschmidt, D. A., & Sharma, J. (1981). Hindu Pilgrimage in the Nepal Himalayas. *Current Anthropology*, 22(5), 571–572. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2742289>. Accessed on July 17, 2022
- Messerschmidt, D. A. (1989). The Hindu Pilgrimage to Muktinath Nepal Part 1, National and Supranational Attributes to the Sacred Field. *Mountain Research and Development*, 9(2), 89-104
- Moore, A (1985). Rosanzerusu is Los Angles an Anthropological Inquiry of Japanese Tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12; 619-643
- Morinis, E. A. (1984). *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: A case study of West Bengal*, Bombay: Oxford University Press
- Muller, T. E., & Cleaver, M. (2000). Targeting the canzus baby boomer explorer and adventurer segments. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 6(2), 154–169.
- Nepal Glacier Treks & Expedition Pvt. Ltd. Gosaikunda Lake. *Tours, trekking, and more adventure in Nepal with Nepal Glacier Treks*. Retrieved from <https://www.nepalglaciertreks.com/blog/Gosaikunda-lake.htmlx>. Accessed on July 18, 2022
- Rai, R. (2016). Trekking Tourism in Mountain Region, Nepal. *Research Gate Net*. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319256189>. Accessed on August 1, 2022.

- Ramsar Site Information Service. (2007). Gosaikunda and associated lakes. Retrieved from: <https://rsis Ramsar.org/ris/1693>. Accessed on July 23, 2022.
- Shaw, D. and Thomson, J. (2013), "Consuming spirituality: the pleasure of uncertainty", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol.47 No.3/4, pp.557-573. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561311297454>
- Tautscher, G. (2007). *Himalayan Mountain Cults*, Kathmandu: Vajra Publications & Ev-K2-CNR Publications.
- The Kathmandu Post. (2022, July 23). Here's how Nepalis are celebrating Janai Purnima. *The Kathmandu Post*.
- Turner, V. (1974). *Dramas, fields & Metaphors*. Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V & Turner, E (1978). *Image & Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Upadhyaya, P. K. (2018). Sustainable Management of Trekking Trails for the Adventure Tourism in Mountains: A Study of Nepal's Great Himalaya Trails. *Journal of Tourism & Adventure*, 1(1), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jota.v1i1.22748>
- Vijaya, G. et. al (2012). Development Dimension and Pilgrimage Tourism. *SAJTH*, 5(2).