

## **Acknowledgments**

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Thesis - Master's in Tourism Studies  
Stakeholders' perspective on rural community-based tourism development and  
poverty alleviation

**Executive Summary:**

Community-based tourism development is regarded a tool for development, especially in developing countries because of its potential to reduce poverty. However there is doubt whether or not tourism can be a tool to reduce poverty as poverty is a complex phenomenon which is rather difficult to measure / evaluate.

In this context, this study examines the stakeholders' point of view on tourism's impact on poverty reduction and their involvement and role in a case study of a rural community in Nepal, a village named Kharikhola. 20 qualitative interviews were collected during the research period, with an attempt to establish the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation and their own role in tourism development.

From the literature review, the theories so far discussed within CBT development with regard poverty alleviation were presented, where it was found that various researchers consider tourism to be the vehicle for development to reduce poverty, however there has not been adequate research in this subject area. The conceptual framework proposed by Zhao & Ritchie (2007) is applied as the basis for identifying the roles of stakeholders in Kharikhola.

The study indicates that the CBT does have a significant role in community development however CBT development alone cannot reduce poverty at the speed it has been expected. However, by involving all different stakeholders with a better coordination and partnerships, it might be able to give a better outcome.

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**List of abbreviation:**

APT	Anti-poverty Tourism
CBT	Community-based Tourism
DDC	District Development Committee
LEDC	Less economically developed countries
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTB	Nepal Tourism Board
RDC	Regional Development Committee
UN	United Nation
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
VDC	Village Development Committee

## **1. Background:**

Rural tourism is perceived as a tool for promoting local jobs and raising the level of economic welfare in peripheral and rural areas (Eadington & Smith; Echter; and Fleischer as cited in Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000, p. 1007) and governments, development agencies and non-governmental organizations have increasingly sought to invest in initiatives that aim to reduce poverty through tourism development mainly in less economically developed countries (LEDC) (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 297); after all tourism is a highly significant foreign exchange earner for many of the poorest countries as it is currently estimated that approximately 40% of all international tourist arrivals accrue to LEDCs (Scheyvens as cited in Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 299). This can however also be a result of the lack of any viable alternatives or the self-fulfillment of political rhetoric (Baum & Moore; Oppermann as cited in Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000 p. 1007).

In the context of Nepal, the total contribution of tourism to the economy is estimated to have been NRs. 147.2bn (US\$1.69 billion) in 2012, around 9.4% of gross domestic product (GDP) (WTTC, 2013 as cited in Jones, 2013, p. 4). This contribution is expected to grow by 7.2% in 2013, and 4.5% per year for the next 10 years with approximately 553,500 jobs, which are directly tourism related (WTTC 2013 as cited in Jones, 2013, p. 4-5). In fact tourism provides a steady and comparatively good income for a large number of Nepalese, as Jones (2013) indicates an estimation of average earnings per capita in the service sector between 1990 to 2009 were US\$1,107 compared to US\$319 in agriculture and US\$353 in manufacturing (Jones, 2013, p. 5).

Despite this bright picture, Nepal remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Over 30% of Nepalese live under the poverty index with less than US\$14 per person per month and about 80 per cent of Nepal's people live in rural areas and depend on subsistence farming for their livelihoods (Rural Poverty Portal, 2013). Although Jones (2013) reports that the tourism benefit have spread to people in rural areas as a result of high labour mobility, the majority of tourist flows are concentrated in 'a tourism triangle' between the Annapurna region, Sagarmatha (Everest) and Chitwan National Park (e.g. 95% of all trekkers are within this region) (Jones 2013, p. 6). Thus, development and more importantly, the benefits of tourism have more or less bypassed the rural areas outside this triangle.

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At the same time, development in rural areas is halted by decade long conflict and political stagnation have drained the higher educated youth away from the villages to urban cities in Nepal and abroad (Gartuala, 2009, p. 39), as most rural people perceive rural-urban migration as a plan of action against poverty (Snel & Staring as cited in Mthembu, 2012, p. 71). This has left the women, elderly and children to take care of the household and creating a vacuum in the development of the communities.

A recently released data from Nepalese Department of Foreign Employment stated that almost half a million Nepalese left Nepal for foreign employment in 2013 (Nepalnews, 2014). In fact, Kinsley (cited in Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004, p. 72) suggests that in rural communities people are so desperate that they will accept any proposal, which portends to offer economic growth, with little or no consideration of future detrimental impacts, thus tourism frequently remains the preferred development option.

When it comes to tourism's potential on overall development, the Nepalese government does perceive as one of the tools and the Tourism Act 1978 has set out standards and procedure for tourism business in the country (MTCA as cited in MacLellan, Dieke & Thapa, 2000, p. 174 & Jones, 2013, p. 13). However MacLellan et al (2000) and Jones (2013) have identified several weakness of Nepalese tourism policy in terms of implementation and effective management (MacLellan et al 2000, p. 188 & Jones, 2013, p. 13). Within mountain tourism for instance, there are inadequate and inappropriate policies, which leads to conflict between tourism and conservation of the protected areas. Similarly, there is a lack of cohesive policy joining tourism development and environment protection and also lack of communication between government and the private sector in tourism (MacLellan et al 2000, p. 188 & Jones, 2013, p. 13). These reasons among others have led to demand-led growth with crisis management at pressure points and ad hoc implementation of policies (MacLellan et al, 2000, p. 188). Similarly Jones (2013) points out that the Nepalese government has set broad goal for the development of tourism, with occasional specific targets, but without strong focus or prioritization (Jones, 2013, p. 13).

One more reason for this inefficiency is the lack of local government. Despite of the fact that there exists several levels of Nepalese government, such as local level VDC (village development committee), DDC (district development committee) and RDC (regional

development committee) and community development is included in every level of policy, there is no clear distinction or tasks division within each level, as there has not been any local level election since 1997, according to president of Media Initiative of Right, Equity and Social Transformation – Nepal, Subash Acharya (New Spotlight, 2013). As a consequence, citizen participation is very low in processes of planning and good governance.

Similarly the national tourism organization, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) is seen as one of the most corrupt government organization and is accused of being designed to serve the vested interests of a handful, powerful people (Kathmandu Post, 2013). Tourism development work has come into total halt with recent protests campaigns by tourism entrepreneurs and businesses as well as voluntary tourism associations (Nepalnews, 2014 & People's Review, 2014). Thus interested individuals or organizations (both private sector and non-profit) who desire to work for promoting tourism in rural area and develop the community often experience obstacles and require a lot of resources in getting permission to implement any programs as they cannot get procedures approved locally. But such organizations and individuals still keep trying to work with the support of local communities helping the community to develop and impact the local society eventually.

### ***1.1 The case of Kharikhola village:***

One of such communities where individual interest and small scale programs funded by earlier tourists (in the form of non-profit organizations) who have built up their relationships with the community as tourists, have been the main source of development is Kharikhola village and its surroundings. This village is situated in Solukhumbhu district in Nepal, where the popular trekking route Everest Region is also located. But the village lies to the south of Lukla (main airport and trekking point to Everest route) but away from the main trekking route (outside “the tourism-triangle” as per Jones 2013, p. 6). This means, the development induced by tourism (mass/trekking and mountaineering) has not reached the area and can easily be assumed that it is not as developed as other villages which lie on the way to Everest Base camp. Kharikhola is thus an interesting case to study tourism's impact on rural lives, mainly on poverty in the area where the level of tourism relatively low but growing and people are still dependent on traditional (farming and trading) way of living.

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Map of Nepal and Kharikhola (Source: Google Maps)

Said that, tourism is making differences in the lives of local people of Kharikhola. Especially after resolving the decade long civil war in Nepal, since 2006, the village and surrounding areas have started to taste the fruit of community-based tourism (CBT) development. Primarily initiated by former village residents with help from tourists and visitors from other countries, some small non-profit organizations work in the community development through local involvement. Various programs such as volunteer tourism, charity work, a local health post, drinking water project, skill development programs, child education and teacher's training to name a few are conducted. Though the village is inaccessible by road, there is a Monastery, a few primary schools and shops and guest houses and even a green house and nursery are operating and tourists who want to do community work and experience rural Nepal away from well-established routes have made Kharikhola their new tourism destination.

This way, the (tourism) development is triggered by a few individuals and organizations and not by the government both local and national level, through their development plan, even though the general perception of development and its facilitation is the duty of government. There might of course be some legitimate reasons behind the lack of commitment from government's side such as lack of resources and budget deficiencies, but local people can not and do not wait for their turn to come in the unknown future.



In this context, a few questions arise that form the basis for this research study. First of all, when the government body is absent to facilitate the stakeholders to work together, how can the various stakeholders in the community mobilize tourism as tool to work, collaborate and network with each other and create any kind of partnership? Secondly, how do both locals and other organization/individuals perceive such development? Do they think tourism actually helps to improve the rural lives if not alleviate poverty? Thirdly, what kind of challenges do the various organizations/social enterprises as well as the local community face while involving in such work? And finally, is there any link between the challenges they face and their own perception on CBT development?

While the core of this research is tourism and its role in poverty alleviation, the above mentioned questions inspire me to examine in depth how the stakeholders of Kharikhola village perceive tourism and their own role in it.

### ***1.2 Theoretical perspective:***

Involvement and partnership with stakeholders is considered a must from a destination management perspective. To emphasize the role of stakeholders, Hall (2008) says that one of the key tasks for any tourism planner is seeking the involvement and collaboration of the various stakeholders in the tourism planning process from outside of the organizational context within which they work (Hall, 2008, p. 118). Similarly, Jamal and Getz (1995) also consider that partnership between the various stakeholders within any community development is considered critical due to their interdependencies among multiple stakeholders in a community tourism destination (Jamal & Getz, 1995). Although stakeholder perspectives are widely studied either in the developed countries or areas where tourism is highly developed, it can be argued that getting the various stakeholders' perspectives also from tourism areas yet to be developed is very crucial to gaining the stakeholders' support if any development work is to succeed.

Similarly understanding the challenges faced by these stakeholders including the local people and understanding their perception of the partnership and involvement can contribute in tourism planning immensely as Hall (2008) argues that recognising the opinions, perspectives and recommendations of external stakeholders are just as legitimate as those of the planner, emphasizing the need to plan *with* rather than *for* stakeholders (Hall,

2008, p. 119).

Moreover, getting the local peoples' perspectives, whose lives are directly effected by tourism will assist the academic society to understand partly the impact of tourism in those areas and partly understand the characteristics of tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation and regional development, as researchers like Zhao & Ritchie (2007), Johnson (2010) and Spenceley & Meyer (2012) point out that there have been inadequate research about the impact of tourism with regards to poverty alleviation.

Likewise, the organizations involved in Kharikhola village and similar other CBT development can benefit from this study as it will help them to learn and understand the local peoples perspective. At the same time, it can also help to learn how the challenges faced are solved so that they can carry out their work more effectively and be strategically prepared for the challenges in future. Therefore the practical application of tourism research on poverty reduction is perhaps the most important aspect of this research (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 311).

### **1.3 Problem Statement:**

This research study aims to explore in-depth the perspective of various stakeholders involved in CBT development where the main focus areas are the challenges faced by the stakeholders and their own perception of their involvement and partnership. This leads to the problem statement as follows:

***How do the various stakeholders of Kharikhola view community-based tourism development in Kharikhola? And how do they perceive their own role in such development?***

The main objectives of this thesis research are as follows:

- a) To understand the significance of various stakeholders' roles in CBT and tourism planning and to investigate the possible link between tourism and poverty alleviation via CBT through the literature.
- b) To investigate the stakeholders' perceptions of CBT development in Kharikhola's tourism development.
- c) To examine the stakeholders' involvement and their role in Kharikhola's tourism development.

#### **1.4 Research structure:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the stakeholders' point view on tourism development with regards to poverty alleviation and their own involvement and role in it. The research report is structured as follows:

- Chapter two presents the literature review of prior studies that support the construct of this research. The relationship between tourism development and poverty alleviation is discussed together with the roles of stakeholders in CBT development in order to highlight the relevance of the research subject.
- The third chapter presents the methodological approach of the research. The research approach, data collection and data analysis process are presented, followed by discussion on trustworthiness of the data collected. It concludes with criticism and limitations of the research methods applied.
- A brief description of Kharikhola as the case study is present in the chapter four
- In the chapter five, the data collected during the research study is presented.
- The data presented are discussed in relation to the objectives of the research study in the chapter six.
- Chapter seven presents the conclusion from the research and moves on to further scope of research for future implication.

The next chapter present the literature review.

## **2. Literature review:**

In this chapter the research subject area will be examined on the basis of the available literature in order to gain a broader understanding of the subject matter, which facilitates theory development and closes areas where a plethora of research exists and uncovers areas where research is needed (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xiii). This research study intends to examine the perspectives of stakeholders on community-based tourism development with regards to poverty alleviation. Hence, in this research there are three major components tourism development, poverty alleviation and stakeholder perspective, that need closer examination, which will further lead to the research framework to be applied for data analysis and discussion in chapter 6.

The chapter is divided into five major parts; in the first part I will examine the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation in the global context. In the second part, the role of tourism is examined with regards to community development, identifying the main characteristics of such development and the criticism it has received from both researchers and tourism practitioners. The third part will highlight the stakeholder (collaboration and partnership) perspective in connection with tourism development and poverty alleviation.

The fourth part will proceed with a closer examination of literature and theory regarding the research components in the Nepalese context. The fifth and the last part will present the research framework.

### ***2.1 Tourism and Poverty Alleviation in global context:***

It is evident from the huge database of literature available on the Internet and scientific research magazines, that the topics of tourism and poverty alleviation although being broad and complicated, have been studied mostly as case studies as well as comparative studies between two or more destination or countries in several contexts, such as destination management (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007), socio-economic impact (Mbaiwa 2005; Mthembu, 2012), tourism policy and planning, Pro-Poor Tourism benefits (Chok, Macbeth and Warren, 2008), Social entrepreneurship and social-economy (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000; Johnson, 2010). Various approaches have been applied to study and evaluate/measure the impact of tourism on poverty issue as a part of wider part of anthropological tourism

studies, sustainable tourism development, tourism's linkages to agriculture sector (Harrison & Schipani, 2007, p. 195).

Among this literature, only a few perspectives are deemed relevant and will be elaborated through out the literature review with the aim to achieve broader understanding of the subject matter. But first of all, I would like to discuss tourism in the context of poverty alleviation.

### **2.1.1 Tourism's main contribution towards poverty alleviation:**

Tourism constitutes the largest source of foreign exchange revenues making it the major service sector where developing countries are able maintain trade surplus and positive balance of payment (Mbaiwa, 2005, p. 157; Neto as cited in Koenig, 2010, p. 4; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 299). Moreover, governments, development agencies, non-governmental organizations and private sector not only consider tourism as a development vehicle, they also assume that tourism can reduce poverty and improve livelihood, mainly of the rural areas or the developing countries (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p 120; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 297; Erskine & Meyer 2012, p. 341 and Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000, p. 1007). As tourists travel to impoverished regions of the world for a variety of reasons, they spend money on travel, accommodation, excursions, food, drinks and shopping providing the poor the opportunity to capture some of this spending through employment and, probably most importantly, through providing products and/or services that the tourism sector and tourists need (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 299).

Mitchell & Ashley (2010) also demonstrate that international tourists are significantly better than developing agencies at spending money in poor countries, by giving an example that in 2007, tourists spent US\$ 295 billions in developing countries, almost three times the level of official development assistance (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010, p. 1). This makes tourism, the world's largest voluntary transfer of resources from rich people to poor people. Hence, the common idea is that once the area/region gets wealthier, there will be some kind of spin-off effect that eventually benefit the poor (Zeng et al as cited in Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 120; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, 298). But it is difficult to demonstrate with concrete evidence that the poor have gained from tourism, thus there is some kind of skepticism whether or not it actually has any impact.

The potential of tourism has resulted in tourism-based poverty alleviation initiatives due to the positive attitude, but according to Zhao & Ritchie (2007) the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation largely has remained terra incognita among tourism academics (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 120). Similarly, tourism as tool for economic development in developing countries have been a focus of research in tourism studies since 1970s (Hall, 2007, p. 2), but only a few researchers have focused on the areas of poverty alleviation within tourism and that is basically case study driven and oriented to practical aspects (Zhao & Ritchi, 2007, p. 120). This could be due to the multidimensional nature (economic, socio-political and culture) complex nature of poverty, as it not only means inadequate income and human development, but also embraces vulnerability and a lack of voice, power and representation, it is always a big challenge to cover the wide range of poverty related issues (World Bank, 1990, 2000 as cited in Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 121).

#### **2.1.2 Critical viewpoints on tourism's contribution toward poverty alleviation:**

Not everyone however is positive about tourism's contribution towards poverty alleviation. Hall (2007) in his editorial for book about Pro-poor tourism also expresses his critical point of view with regards to the benefits of tourism to the poor debating the tourism agenda put forward by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - *"Tourism exchanges benefit primarily the countries of South"* while still agreeing the importance of tourism in poverty reduction (Hall, 2007, p. 1 & 6).

Moreover, Erskine & Meyer (2012) point out that the academic community seems to have maintained a rather pessimistic view regarding tourism's value as a tool for poverty reduction and adopted a position which claims that major structural reforms are necessary to allow the tourism industry to aid poverty reduction and reduce inequality (Briton, 1982; Scheyvens, 2007; Schilcher, 2007 as cited in Erskine & Meyer, 2012 p. 341). One of the concern about tourism is dependency, as tourism's economic benefits are often overstated and that destinations are frequently dependent on northern transnational corporations, which control much of the transport, accommodation, and packaged tourism products (Briton cited in Erskine & Meyer, 2012, p. 340) .

The above claim is asserted by Mbaiwa's research work on enclave tourism and its socio-economic impacts on the Okavango Delta, Botswana. According to Mbiawa

(2005), tourism revenue seeks its way out even before it actually is transferred to Botswana because it is highly dependent of international tourists and also foreign investors, hence very little is retained in the country (Mbaiwa, 2005, p. 163-164) the benefit to locals become very little.

A similar pessimistic view have been confirmed by Tumusiime and Vedeld (2012) as they evaluate the tourism revenue sharing scheme in Uganda at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park among it's various stakeholders. They question whether the idea of economic benefit from tourism development is only illusion (Tumusiime & Vedald, 2012, p. 15) as they observe that despite of the fact that over 80% of the revenue was spent on community level projects (Tumusiime & Vedald, 2012, p. 19), there was general dissatisfaction among the local people about the direct economic benefit but also institutional interplay such as lack of access to information, lack of local involvement and influence, lack of facilitation, monitoring and evaluation, among others (Tumusiime & Vedald, 2012, p. 20-25).

Other researchers like Opperman and Chon (as cited in Mbaiwa, 2005) argue that tourism in fact reinstate socio-economic disparity in developing countries instead of reducing as tourism in developing countries depend upon demand processes in the developed countries (Mbaiwa, 2005, p. 160). And even though income level increases, and thereby improved lifestyle as in the case of Costa Rica, over time this effect will diminish due to other factors which are not always considered while studying the impact of tourism (Croes, 2012, p. 551).

Whether or not researchers agree with the level of impact of tourism towards poverty alleviation, tourism plays a significant role in community development, especially in rural areas. The next chapter demonstrates why researchers and practitioners give tourism this emphasis in rural community development.

## ***2.2 Role of tourism in rural community:***

Whether tourism researchers and practitioners agree or disagree about the level of socio-economic benefits of tourism in developing countries, they undeniably agree that tourism surely has a significant role in community development; mainly because community participation is often regarded as one of the most essential tools, if tourism is to

make a substantial contribution to the national development of a country (Lea as cited in Sebelé, 2010 p.136). Among these various researchers, Sue Beeton (2006) has discussed tourism in the context of CBT development with an emphasis on strategic planning, the host-guest relationship and community and individual empowerment (Beeton, 2006). The premise for CBT is according to Beeton (2006) the relationship between tourism and community (Beeton, 2006, p. 16), i.e. tourism and community must be seen simultaneously as tourism relies on visiting places and people, which cannot exist outside community.

According to Beeton (2006), rural tourism is a multi-faceted activity that can include nature-based recreational activities and community attraction as well as farm related tourism (Beeton, 2006, p. 142). Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism (Aref & Gill, 2009, p. 68). Similarly, tourism that has focus on rural community areas development have got many names, Community-based tourism (CBT), Pro Poor tourism, Anti-poverty Tourism (APT), eco-tourism (including nature, biodiversity, environment, heritage), adventure tourism and even volunteer tourism (Beeton as cited in Aref & Gill, 2009, p. 68).

Unlike conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is an experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in the natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions (Aref & Gill, 2009, p. 68-69).

With an ever increasing emphasis in community involvement, CBT have gained popularity in the past three decades (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009, p. 9) with the defining characteristic of bottom-up community engagement to develop tourism products and services or to craft and implement a tourism strategy (Hall, 2000; Murphy, 1985 as cited in Johnson 2010, p. 151). It is also perceived as one of the most essential tools if tourism is to make a substantial contribution to the national development of a country (Lea 1988 as cited in Sebele, 2010, p. 136) because it includes the empowerment and involvement of communities in decision-making, implementation and identifying local problems as well as introducing something that is adapted to local needs (Lea 1988 as cited in Sebele 2010, p.



137; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009, p. 10).

Thus it is assumed that tourism activities when the community itself is involved, will have a greater effect in the general lives of the community and that eventually will be beneficial for the poor (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005, p. 1057) and that CBT provides a mechanism for an equitable flow of benefits to all tourism stakeholders, through a system of local development control and consensus-based decision making (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 298).

Emphasising the appeal of CBT as an alternative to mainstream tourism, World Wildlife Fund (cited in Goodwin & Santilli, 2009) defines it as a form of tourism "where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009, p. 11)." At the same time, the concept of CBT is also very flexible as it involves any kind of activity as long as it supports the objective of economic and social development of the communities (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009, p. 11).

But what exactly is "community?" According to Beeton (2006), the term "Community" is rarely defined but is used by politicians, social commentators, religious leaders, academics and media reporters, assuming that everyone know what the term means (Beeton, 2006, p. 4). The most common uses of the term in today's culture tend to see communities defined geographically as in a valley, mountain range or water catchment, or politically as in towns, cities and countries (Beeton, 2006, p. 5). Similarly there is a vast difference between urban and rural communities, not just geographically or politically but also because of the access to services, education and the natural environment, as well as differing social issues, level of homogenization and personal preferences (Beeton, 2006, p. 5). She further adds that the four essential elements of community as; a) empowerment, b) the existence of mutual interdependence among members, c) having a sense of belonging/ownership, connectedness, spirit, faith and trust; and d) possessing common expectations, shared values and goals (Beeton, 2006, p. 10).

Besides Beeton, CBT has received growing interest from various researchers and practitioners. Isaac & Conrad (2012) have investigated the livelihood enhancement opportunities due to the eco-tourism development in Sirigu, Ghana. Similarly the model on

CBT based on the theories of community participation, power redistribution, collaboration process and social capital creation, was applied by Okazaki (2008) in a case study of CBT project initiated by indigenous community in Palawan, the Philippines. Zapata, Hall, Lindo & Vanderschaeghe (2011) have critically examined the characteristics of CBT to explore the viability of the CBT model to support socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in a Nicaraguan case study.

Any discussion regarding CBT would be incomplete, if its characteristics are not discussed because CBT's popularity and strength are based on the perceived effect of these characteristics in any community/society, which is measured beyond economic benefits. The next sub-chapter discusses about these characteristic of CBT.

### **2.2.1 Characteristics of CBT:**

Common to most of the studies on CBT, is the discussion about social impact, as tourism not only changes the physical landscape of a destination but also results in changes to the social life of the community (Kang et al as cited in Hwang, Steward & Ko, 2012, p. 328); and when tourism development intensifies beyond a community's capacity, the social life of a community undergoes tremendous change and upheaval (Perdue, Long, and Kang as cited in Hwang et al, 2012, p. 328).

In addition, community participation/ involvement is a much preached topic in CBT. As emphasized by Beeton (2006) earlier, any tourism cannot exist outside community, the cooperation of local community is essential to access and develop the assets of the local community which are the base for any tourism image (Murphy as cited in Oakazaki, 2008, p. 512). The word participation implies how and to what extent people are able to share their views, take part in an activity, project, program, decision-making, profit sharing and other issues related to the tourism development process (Isaac & Conrad, 2012, p. 98). Similarly, equity is one of the most important reasons for the inclusion of local inhabitants in tourism (Lindberg as cited in Isaac & Conrad, 2012, p. 98).

Furthermore, community participation refers to action in which individuals confront opportunities, which include joining in the process of self-governance, responding to authoritative decisions that impact on one's life, and working co-operatively with others on issues of mutual concern as well as the responsibilities of citizenship (Til as cited in Tosun,

2000, p. 615). Therefore, it is an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs and increasingly assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control and assess the collective actions that are proved necessary (Askew as cited in Tosun, p. 615). Tosun (2000) also views community participation a tool to re-adjust the balance of power and reassert local community views against those of the developers or the local authority, or to redefine professionalism, which may determine the conditions of successful participation and prevent manipulation of a community in the participation process (Tosun, 2000 p. 615).

That's said, however the same issue of community involvement is highly and negatively debated in academic world as demonstrated by some researchers.

### **2.2.2 Criticism of CBT:**

During her research on CBT in case of Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust, Central District, Botswana, Sebele (2010) found that the communities were involved/consulted only in the initial stage of the project but they are not involved in running the project (Sebele, 2010, p. 142) and there were several challenges, such as lack of community involvement, imbalance in board representation and dependency on donors, lack of communication (Sebele, 2010, p. 141-142).

Similar cases were also seen in case of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Ghana, as Ahebwa, Van der Duim and Sandbrook (2012) and Tumusiime and Vedald (2012) studied the Tourism Benefit Sharing scheme. The intention of this scheme is to uplift the marginalised group of Ghana by sharing the revenue with the local people but this share is quite minimal that it creates dissatisfaction among the locals and the local communities do not feel they are compensated adequately for the conservation costs as the distribution is uneven (Ahebwa et al, 2012, p. 287 & Tumusiime & Vedald, 2012, p. 20 & 21), while the major part of revenue leaks to the way back to private/ international enterprises and operators who run tourism activities and local elites (Sandbrook as cited in Tumusiime & Vedald, 2012, p. 381). Similar tendency was also noted by Akama & Kieti (2007) in case of Kenya, where the leakages of tourism receipts to overseas companies operating inclusive tour packages may range from 40% to 70% (Bennett *et al.* & Sinclair as cited in Akama & Kieti, 2007, p. 744).

When viewed critically, CBT thus does not seem to achieve the intended result in terms of community enhancement, let alone poverty alleviation. Moreover, CBT is often stimulated and supported by donor agencies and government and not necessarily community (Sebele, 2010, p. 138; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, 298) so survival of CBT is highly dependent upon factors other than the community. Thus it is obvious that researcher criticize CBT to a degree, that Salazar (as cited in Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 298) for instance suggested that CBT actually should be named "Community-centered tourism" instead. In addition, communities do not have sufficient understanding of how the tourism industry functions, or how to attract tourists and manage them, then they are unlikely to benefit (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 298).

Despite these above mentioned criticisms, there is a lot of focus on community involvement in CBT development. In order to achieve better outcome that helps poverty alleviation, tourism practitioners and researches argue that such development require collaborative approach within and among these various stakeholders, as no one organization [individual] does, or can deliver tourism development (Graci, 2012, p. 27). The next section examines collaboration theory and its application in tourism development.

### **2.3 Collaboration theory:**

Although the theory of collaboration has been widely applied and studied in the context of tourism destination management, community tourism planning and public governance in developed countries/western world, its application in developing world is evolving as new forms of collaboration arise to manage growing concerns over climate change, biodiversity loss, resource depletion and impacts of globalization on indigenous and local inhabitants (Jamal & Stronza, 2008, p. 169). Jamal & Getz (1995) have proposed that *"collaboration for community-based tourism planning is a process of joint decision-making among autonomous key stakeholders of an inter-organizational, community tourism domain to resolve planning problems of the domain and/or to manage issue related to planning and development of the domain"* (Jamal & Getz, 1995, p. 188). Thus, collaboration offers a dynamic and flexible process for incorporating the often diverse view of multiple and interdependent stakeholders, such that changes can be made to the planning as situations evolve (Jamal & Getz, 1995 p. 1995).

Similarly Bramwell and Lane (2000) identify 'that there is a great potential for collaboration and partnerships to promote tourism development that is more sustainable . . . that partnership arrangements could be much more widespread' (cited in Plummer, Kulczycki & Stacey, 2008) and that partnerships between protected-area management agencies and the commercial tourism operators are often seen as the only way in which tourist dollars can be raised for the use of the protected-area management agencies (Buckley as cited in Plummer et al, 2008, p. 502).

Although these definitions focus mostly on tourism planning and sustainability, the concepts of collaboration and partnership are also recommended because of the complexity of tourism system (Jamal & Stronza, 2008, p. 170). In this regard, Farrell and Twining-Ward (cited in Jamal & Stronza, 2008) argue that the tourism system operates within a nested set of systems and a sustainability focus entails viewing them as complex adaptive systems whose management requires consideration of spatial and temporal factors, as well as of the decision-making dynamics. Systemic interactions between tourism and other sectors increase the scope and scale of impacts, adding further to domain complexity (Jamal & Stronza, 2008, p. 170).

Furthermore tourism development may be the working agenda but organisations work differently in a given destination, creating a gap in information flow with resulting difficulties, conflict, challenges and barriers (Jamal & Stronza, 2008, p. 171). As Jamal & Stronza examine the tourism practice in Bolivia, they point out that not every member of the community gets involved thus it requires dedicated leadership if any collaboration to work (Jamal & Stronza, 2008, p. 183), and as collaboration is a long term process, there are many pitfalls as well as benefits (Jamal & Stronza, 2008, p. 184).

However this process of collaboration is highly interdependent of stakeholders as it is these stakeholders who contribute knowledge, resources, varying perspectives on issues, and understanding to the planning and management processes (Plummer et al, 2008, p. 504). At the same time, stakeholder perspective is necessary to identify the causes of conflict and obstacles to co-ordination including differing perceptions of the impact of tourism among the key stakeholders in the domain (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Lovelock, 2010, p. 254)

Furthermore stakeholders perspective is essential as Tosun (2000) argues that the local community is more likely to know what will work and what will not in local conditions (as cited in Lima, Eusébio and Partidário, 2011, p. 46) and meaningful participation as well as collaboration cannot take place before a community understands what they are to make decisions about (Lima et al, 2011, p. 46). But said that some research studies have indicated that there is a strong lack of understanding and involvement of the stakeholders in tourism development, particularly the community (poor) and civil-society organizations.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that collaboration and partnerships in tourism development are considered an important step toward a meaningful CBT that eventually has a wider impact on the issue of poverty, their roles and perceptions on poverty alleviation and tourism development are still not very widely researched area. The next sub chapter presents the discussion on tourism development in the context of Nepal

#### ***2.4 Tourism development and poverty alleviation in case Nepal:***

Although tourism in Nepal has a long history, tourism is not a very researched subject area, much less tourism and poverty alleviation. Among the research literature available, I found that most of the works within tourism development and poverty alleviation are dominated by the works of various INGOs and NGOs such as the Overseas Development Institute, the World Bank, and the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development and only a handful independent researchers have studied tourism development in Nepal with regards to poverty alleviation and even less from a stakeholder management perspective.

Among them, Jones (2013) has examined the contribution of tourism in Nepal and the challenges it faces in tourism as well as its overall contribution to development in the country. From his findings, Jones (2013) points out that the country encounters several challenges, among others, the lack of key local level management, poor partnerships, social mobilisation gap and lack of technical knowledge and skills (Jones, 2013, p. 22, 23 & 24).

In an another attempt, a comparison study between Nepal (Annapurna region) and China (Northwest Yunnan) has been performed on the role of community

involvement in tourism with regards to economic growth by Nyaupane, Morais & Dowler (2006). They found that in Annapurna region, local tourism entrepreneurs maintained a significant degree of control and ownership in terms of local tourism sector however prosperity has also brought wider gap in both economic and social level (Nyaupane et al, 2006) giving more resources and control to already traditionally wealthy family while disadvantaged and low caste group received limited benefits from tourism. Despite of this, the researchers recommend tourism as a tool for developing communities like of Annapurna region.

While these researchers highlight the potentials of tourism development and it's contribution to poverty alleviation in Nepal and similar developing countries, they apply mostly Western theories which often are based on the success of Western destinations, on how development work in any particular area (Tuson, 2000, p. 618). However these studies have also provided evidence that every case study is different and the outcome of tourism development varies in each case. That said, these same western theories build the main foundation for development in developing countries as they are heavily supported by donor agencies and international society (Tosun, 2000, p. 631).

In the context of Nepal, however, development is discussed from a distinct theory that dominates along with other western theories such as tourism planning, community involvement and participation, collaboration theory and poverty alleviation, which explain the development paradox.

#### **2.4.1 Development and Fatalism in the context of Nepal:**

Renowned Nepalese anthropologist, Dor Bahardur Bista in 1990s put forward a very controversial theory about Nepalese society explaining the slow rate of development (contributed by foreign aid) in Nepal through his book "Fatalism and Development – Nepal's struggle for modernisation."

According to Bista (1991), the culture of fatalism devalues the concept of productivity in Nepal, although Nepalese have been known as effective merchants and craftsmen in the past, these characteristics are not shared by all Nepalis, nor are they equally distributed across the nation (Bista, 1991, p. 2). This culture of fatalism includes values and institution that are inherently in conflict with development.

He explains that the absolute belief in fatalism: *that one has no personal control over one's life circumstances, which are determined through a divine or powerful external agency*, has a devastating effect on the work ethic and achievement motivation, and through these in the Nepalis' response to development (Bista, 1991, p. 4). Thus fundamentalist Hindus who believe in the divine origin of things do not want foreign aid to interfere with what is determined for society, and although not directly, they tend to be very uncooperative towards foreign aid (Bista, 1991, p. 135). However, Bista claims, that because of the way Nepalese are brought up to show respect to others and not to express "no" to anything, they say "yes" to everything, even when they have absolutely no intention of fulfilling the commitment (Bista, 1991, p. 136).

The phenomena of fatalism is also strengthened by the way Nepalese society perceive education (Bista, 1991, p. 5). According to Bista (1991), education is not perceived as a means of acquiring skills that can be used productively to secure economic prosperity but is seen as an end itself which once achieved signifies higher status, and in association with which the privileges of status are expected automatically (Bista, 1991, p. 6). So to become educated is to be effectively removed from the workforce, in a way one can enjoy all the privileges without actually doing work.

Similarly, the concept of community in universal terms is not necessarily the same in Nepal, especially when the people's conception of society extends little beyond that of the village, notions of government, of the state, nation and public are often difficult to grasp (Bista, 1991, p. 143). A very localized concept of community is found which is mainly connected to the caste group of the village, the common grazing grounds and sometimes a special structure for holding community events and community responsibilities. The members of the community are directly identifiable and its construct is concretely grounded in perceptible social actors, making the public, the state, the nation all very abstract concepts (Bista, 1991, p. 144).

Although Bista's extreme point of view explains the slow development in Nepal, it cannot be said that is impossible to apply other relevant theories in Nepalese context. As Tosun (2000) suggests, there is no single blueprint and a set of fixed rules to operationalize any tourism development approach, but the limitations of the developing



countries that prevents them from achieving a higher development level should first of all be accepted and policies should be adapted to the environment in which it is to be implemented (Tosun, 2000, p. 626).

Drawing from the above literature review, it can be concluded that CBT development can be regarded as one of the tools in poverty alleviation which can be enhanced by collaboration with the stakeholders in any particular destination. However, not each and every theory can have similar impact on tourism development or poverty alleviation in different countries and thus can be seen with some skepticism.

While the literature reviewed above sheds light on the subject area and thereby addresses the first objective of this research study, the following sub-chapter presents the research framework that will be the basis for data analysis.

### ***2.5. The research framework:***

Zhao & Ritchie (2007) propose an integrated research framework on APT, with the purpose of synthesizing multiple perspectives and address the shortcomings of the research approach so far within tourism development and poverty alleviation via anti-poverty tourism. Although this research study has focused on CBT development and poverty alleviation, it can be assumed that the premises are similar to APT. Thus this framework is selected as the research framework.

The advantage of applying this framework, according to Zhao & Ritchie (2007) is that this approach can be used to test propositions put forward concerning the relation between the various dimensions such as poverty alleviation, stakeholders or examine the linkages among the components of the same dimension (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 134). As this research study examines stakeholders' perspectives with regards to tourism development and poverty alleviation, I find it appropriate to apply.

Six primary group of stakeholders are identified namely The Poor (local people/ community), Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, Aid Donors and tourist (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 122). The following table illustrate the main characteristics of these six stakeholders, according to Zhao & Ritchie (2007):

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Stakeholders	Main Characteristics
The community including the poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ the poor are the targeted beneficiary of APT</li> <li>□ although presented as a single stakeholder group in the framework, the poor are not necessarily homogeneous in terms of assets, skills, social networks, confidence, etc.</li> <li>□ the poorest of the poor as they are least capable of directly participating in tourism enterprises.</li> <li>□ They can participate by engaging in public councils and related decision making as community members,</li> <li>□ or pursue tourism-related economic activities as the input of local human resources, either wage/paid work or selfemployment.</li> </ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ plays the role of a policymaker, such as poverty alleviation</li> <li>□ leadership and appropriate intervention</li> <li>□ can play a strong role in terms of education, coordination, regulation and even implementation</li> </ul>
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ the fundamental power that energises the development of tourism and plays a wide range of essential roles such as investment, product development, marketing and operation</li> </ul>
Civil-society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Regarded as an effective tool to address the failure in the governance of the state and market.</li> <li>□ an important medium through which aid is channelled in that it has a common interest in development and is able to reach to the poorest of the poor</li> <li>□ society can play a positive role in a variety of ways, for example to seek development funds, campaign for business ethics, amplify the voice of the poor at the policy level, provide free training and guidance, support small/ micro business initiatives and promote a democratic participatory process</li> </ul>
Donor Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ provide loans, grants or other kind of assistance to support APT development projects.</li> <li>□ usually do not directly participate in development,</li> <li>□ but they have the legitimacy to ensure that the money or other resources they have donated are used for the purposes they desire</li> </ul>
Tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ the customers and money source of destinations</li> <li>□ can have a decisive impact on demand side of tourism, i.e. on the product design and market development of the destination</li> <li>□ can play a more active role in poverty alleviation by being pro-poor during their travels in impoverished host places, volunteering donations, cultural exchange and knowledge transfer</li> </ul>

Table No. 1: The role of stakeholders

Although Zhao & Ritchie's research framework, provides sufficient

understanding about these stakeholders, I would like to supplement the key points of the various stakeholders in the basis of the other available literature.

#### **2.5.1 Local community and the poor and marginalised:**

Among the various stakeholders, the role of community has been regarded most crucial in tourism development (Sebele, 2010, p. 136) because local residents are seen as the key resource in sustaining the product (Hardy et al as cited in Sebele, 2010, p. 136). Community as the host willingly or unwillingly provides the location for the tourism activity as it operates in their lands, and is based on their cultural and natural assets and attractions (Nelson as cited in Isaac & Conrad-J., 2012, p. 99). So in theory, the host community is supposed to be the owner as well as the beneficiary of any tourism related income as Murphy argues that tourism is a community product (Murphy as cited in Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier & Van Es, 2001, p. 133).

Although local employment opportunity is highly praised in such CBT development (Sebele, 2010, p. 140; Croes & Vanegas Sr, 2008, p. 96), in most of the case, the community remains merely the neighbors of any conservation area, national park or the tourist attraction and in some cases the community itself is a tourist attraction like in the case of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, while most of the job opportunities with higher level income goes to private business and international tour operators.

Furthermore, most of the members of community are often regarded as the poor, if not marginalized population and are assumed to be those who lack of education and resources in the context of developing countries and rural community as well pointed out by Zhao & Ritchie (2008) and they have a weak understanding about tourists as well as the way the tourism industry works (Ashley et al as cited in Lima et al, 2011, p. 46).

In the other hand, the poor are not necessarily homogeneous in terms of assets, skills, social networks, confidence, etc. (Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 130, local people themselves become resources in social mobilization when facilitated by other actors in tourism, among others government, civil societies and NGOs (donor agencies). This is evident in case of Sirigu, Ghana where some residents, mostly women are taking initiative using tourism development as a means to enhance their livelihood through income generation activities (Isaac & Conrad, 2012, p. 102-103). The local communities of Sirigu have not only

derived direct benefit of tourism development but have also been able to establish micro credit schemes from which they can obtain loans for local retail businesses (Isaac & Conrad-J, 2012, p. 104).

While the case of Sirigu seem promising, for projects like of Sirigu and many other similar projects in developing countries to succeed with the expected outcome, the respective government and their policy play a vital role in tourism development and poverty alleviation.

### **2.5.2 Government:**

According to Simpson (2008) the majority of government agencies around the world have taken a back seat in tourism development, seemingly happy to allow the private sector to drive forward the industry in their countries and regions, while being equally happy to collect taxes from successful operations, providing little or no assistance to struggling initiatives in the past (Simpson, 2008, p. 6). With the increasing awareness of the importance of tourism as a global, national and regional socio-economic engine; the potential for tourism to contribute to environmental management and enhancement; the profile of tourism as a tool for international development and regeneration; increased lobbying by industry, NGOs and tourism organizations, governments have taken a greater interest in tourism development (Simpson, 2008, p. 6).

At the same time, poverty alleviation has been among the top agenda items of most, if not all, governments in developing countries, especially after the declaration of Millennium Development Goals, which is the international frame to monitor the progress in development, since the year 2000 (Baltaretu, 2012, p. 167). So poverty alleviation is one of the main reasons for governments' involvement in tourism development because of tourism's perceived socio-economic impact.

Similarly, the government role is required to ensure that the tourism economy functions in a balanced manner without only the powerful and rich investors benefit the most but also is distributed to growth of a certain destination/country because of the fragmented nature of tourism and the escalating competition in the global tourism market (Jenkins & Henry as cited in Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 130). Consequently, lack of government invention would mean the poorest are bound to carry a heavier burden in terms of costs of

environmental degradation, cultural commodification and social displacement (Lima, Eusébio and Partidário, 2011, p. 47). Thus, the development of a robust tourism economy is nearly impossible in the absence of the leadership and appropriate intervention of the public sector.

In addition, if tourism development is to be achieved, the public sector will also need to play a strong role in terms of education, coordination, regulation and even implementation (Mowforth & Munt as cited in Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 130) by providing the necessary legislation (Scheyvens, 2007, p. 241, Lima et al, 2011, p. 47) and funds for tourism development (Wilson et al, 2001, p. 135). The local government can also act on behalf of developers through favorable zoning or building bylaws, or if necessary mustering its energy and skills to lobby senior governments (Reed, 1997, p. 571).

However, various research studies have also indicated governments' weaknesses and failure in delivering the necessary public service in the community which is further confirmed by local people and other stakeholders point of view on the role played by the government, as evident from the various research work by Okazaki (2008) and Graci (2013). Among the major weaknesses of governments, researchers have established corruption as one of the components leading to stakeholders frustration, as discussed by Graci (2013, p. 34-35) as she examined Selin & Chavez's tourism partnership model in tourism development in the island of Gili Trawangan, Indonesia. Similar weaknesses such as lack of understanding, lack of leadership and lack of capacity to implement were established in the context of tourism development in South Africa (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004 p. 75).

However, the biggest obstacle for tourism development is inadequate funding (Wilson et al, 2001, p. 135) and although the funding is considered to be government responsibility, governments specially in developing countries also often, if not regularly, suffer from funding constraints. In this scenario, the involvement of private sectors is very crucial.

### **2.5.3 Private Sector:**

International society have recognized the potential of the private sector in tourism development which can provide benefits to the community, as Simpson (2008) quotes Responsible Tourism's statement: *"We call upon tourism enterprises and trade associations in originating markets and in destinations to adopt a responsible approach, to*

*commit to specific responsible practices, and to report progress in a transparent and auditable way, and where appropriate to use this for market advantage. Corporate businesses can assist by providing markets, capacity building, mentoring and micro-financing support for small, medium and micro enterprises” (Simpson, 2008, p. 9).*

Although the private sector, such as tour operators are fast and dynamic at responding to market trends and the perceived opportunities as they are motivated to gain financial stability and make profit (Simpson, 2008, p. 9) and not to local social concern at a particular destination, trends have emerged where private sectors are taking more responsibilities and are seemed to recognize the issues of sustainability, and to recognize the importance of the community as a stakeholder in the paradigm of successful tourism, with the more aware operators and investors understanding something about the needs and requirements of the community (Scheyvens; Swarbrooke; UNWTO as cited in Simpson, 2008, p. 9).

However it must also be noted that large multi-national tour operators’ ability to deliver benefits to communities and their awareness of the impacts that tourism initiatives have at the local level is limited by their geographical location (decision makers located far from the tourism destination), their lack of time and lack of interest in local communities, and in the communities’ needs and requirements (Swarbrooke; Timothy as cited in Simpson, 2008, p. 9).

Instead, local business people whose fortunes are tied to growth and the vitality of the community are considered most active in community decision-making and policy formation (Reed, 1997, p. 571).

Although there are a lot of theories on how private sectors can influence tourism development and play efficient role in poverty alleviation, there are only a handful of research work are found in the same context. Among them, Erskine & Meyer (2012) made a comparative study among one tour operator in Ecuador along with the development organizations. Their findings demonstrate that private tour operator can succeed in delivering the community benefits compared to development organizations as are they are free from constraints prevalent in development organizations such as monitoring and reporting (Erskine & Meyer, 2012, p. 349).

However the same study also demonstrate that majority of local people still favor development assistance from development organisations rather than from the private sectors (Erskine & Meyer, 2012 p. 350). Similar opinions were expressed by Bolwell & Weinz (2008); tourism development that includes poverty reduction cannot be left to the private sector alone in many developing countries because of the lack of money and weak institutional capacity of the private sector in such destinations (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008, p. 14). In addition, Reed (1997) also warns that the lack of institutions supporting tourism may allow conventional power holders in the community to retain their influence in key decisions, particularly in emerging tourism settings (Reed, 1997, p. 569).

Due to the above mentioned weaknesses, the role civil society becomes crucial in CBT development in order to create the balance in the community.

#### **2.5.4 Civil Society:**

Civil society, as a collective concept, refers to a multi-level group of voluntary and non-profit organizations that, such as religious groups, unions and membership-based services (Johnson, 2010, p. 153), that are independent from the state, market and family spheres, and are dedicated to promoting the public good, especially for marginalized or disadvantaged social groups (Hadenius & Ugglä as cited in Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 131). These organizations operate by membership fees or donations to serve a more narrowly defined group or purpose (Johnson, 2010, p. 153). Due to civil-society's independence and distinct roles, it has been promoted as an effective mechanism to address the failure in the governance of the state and market. Civil society is also an important medium through which aid is channeled in that it has a common interest in development and is able to reach to the poorest of the poor (Edwards & Hulme as cited in Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, 131).

Although academics like Zhao & Ritchie (2008) recognise the role of civil-society in tourism development, study in detail about civil-society from tourism development perspective is rare. It could perhaps be because the concept of civil-society is often associated with governance and democracy, as Scholte (2004) explains that civil-society activities are considered as a way to obtain greater democratic accountability from United Nations (UN) agencies, multilateral financial institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and various private global regulatory arrangements with hope and expectations that

it could bring greater public control to global governance (Scholte, 2004, p. 212). This is mainly because civil society groups can bring citizens together non-coercively in deliberate attempts to mould the formal laws and informal norms that regulate social interaction (Scholte, 2004, p. 214).

On the other hand, both civil-society and local NGOs have overlapping characters in the way the organisations are run through membership-fee and donations and community involvement and development as the main agenda. Thus researchers like Mercer (2002) view NGOs as part of civil society, which also strengthens civil-society through their activities, which in turn supports the democratic process (Mercer, 2002, p. 7). The roles of NGOs, both local and international, are elaborated in the next section.

#### **2.5.5 NGO and Donor Agencies:**

Since the early 1970s more than a 100,000 NGOs have been founded in Asia, Africa and Latin America by people from all walks of life, from peasant women to professors, squatters, students, fisher folk and unemployed intellectuals (Fisher as cited in Kennedy & Dornan, 2009, p. 184). The contributions by NGOs are generally looked upon as an “alternative” source of development (Kennedy & Dornan, 2009, p. 184) as in most of the developing countries, the governments often seemed to be less capable of implementing development activities.

NGOs have a vital role to play in building civil accountability, consultancy, providing full-spectrum alliances (increasing networking, resource sharing and ‘deep engagement’) (Jepson cited in Simpson, 2008, p. 7) and act as facilitator to promote the building of respectful relationships by empowering the stakeholders (Okazaki, 2008, p 515). In addition they may take responsibility for conducting important research, providing funds for consultants, taking up equity, building capacity within the community and triggering skills transfer opportunities (Simpson, 2008, p. 7). Furthermore monitoring and reporting are integral part of such development work, thus they have the legitimacy to ensure that the money or other resources they have donated are used for the purposes they desire (Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 131).

Among the studies within NGOs role in tourism development, Kennedy & Dornan (2009) have grouped 12 major NGOs into three main categories; a) Education and



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Advocacy NGO, b) Voluntourism organizations; and c) Tour companies with foundation (Kennedy & Dornan, 2009 p. 193-196). Despite the fact that the three groups of NGOs vary in methods, operations and programs, Kennedy & Dornan (2009) conclude that their goals and missions have the common thread of pursuing socially and environmentally sustainable and responsible development, while their key concerns still remains the issue of dependence of the community (Kennedy & Dornan, 2009, p. 198). Since the NGOs focus on the long term goal of sustainability, they also point out that results are not seen immediately but tend to take a few years before the result is noticeable (Kennedy & Dronan, 2009, p. 198).

While all these five stakeholders are vital in tourism development because of their role and contribution potentials, tourists are main engine of the tourism vehicle as without them, there is no tourism.

#### **2.5.6 Tourists:**

Tourists are the major contributors (money sources) in tourism development (Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 130), spending substantial amount of their earnings on tourism activities as customers. Besides, their role is far from just being the customer, they can also use substantial amount of their time on volunteering in the host community. But they are seldom seen as significant stakeholders in tourism or given full consideration in the practical planning and development process (Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 130).

One of the reasons for lack of acknowledgment of the tourists' role as stakeholder lies in their diverse identity as tourism activities and tourists themselves are very fragmented, dynamic and diverse. It is thus a difficult task if all tourists are to be represented and involved in decision-making and policy development (Zhao & Ritchie, 2008, p. 130). Likewise, not many research works include tourists' opinion about the socio-economic aspect of tourism development, not to mention the poverty alleviation perspective, although the potential of these tourists contribution in the form of socio-economic benefits and social empowerment cannot be doubted.

Even so, tourists are the subject matter for studies mostly from culture exchange, marketing, product development and destination development perspectives. This was also evident in the research work by Amaka & Kieti (2007). Although they researched the role of tourism on socio-economic development with both locals as well as tourists as their

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primary data in a case study of Mombasa Resort in Kenya, the questions asked to tourists revolved around motivation for traveling to Kenya and specifically Mombasa and type of accommodation, mode of transport, kinds of tourism activities (package) and only question about poverty issue were problems confronting local residents with the obvious answers of poverty, unemployment and poor living conditions (Akama & Kieti, 2007, p. 739-740).

Each of these six groups of stakeholders have distinct role in tourism development and poverty alleviation from the one taking initiative, another providing support and building capacity, facilitating the development to creating a balance between the private sectors and public. Finding their point of view would facilitate the collaboration and partnership process with these stakeholders in order to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation.

The next chapter explains the research methodology applied to collect the required data and the approach to present and analyze the data collected.

### **3. Research Methodology:**

This chapter explains the choice of research approach and considerations on empirical data collection and analysis, together with the author's reflection and criticisms & limitations of the research.

#### ***3.1 Research approach:***

This research study intends to understand various stakeholders point view on CBT development with regards to poverty alleviation of one particular community, Kharikhola. Thus it has applied a case study approach.

A case study approach is defined as 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence' (Robson, 2002 as cited in Altinay and Paraskevas 2008, p. 77) The main features of a case study are exploring relationships between variables, ability to deal with complexity, making comparisons, ability to look at data at the individual level (McGivern 2006, p. 111).

Similarly this research is constructed with both deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive approach is applied during the planning of the research as it is essential to understand the issue of the research, to examine the theories that could be relevant and for collecting the data required for determining the research area. For the data analysis and discussion, inductive approach has been applied where the data were tested based in the theories discussed during literature review.

#### ***3.2 Methods of data collection:***

In order to investigate the stakeholders' point of view on CBT development and poverty alleviation, qualitative data collection method is assumed to be appropriate because a qualitative method is associated with the holistic –inductive paradigm that establishes the nature of truth by being grounded in the real world (Jennings, 2001, p. 125).

Although the research is mainly qualitative, quantitative data has also been used to a certain degree to form the background information required for the research study.

Similarly, the empirical data analysis is based on interviews as primary data sources, while the research background is based on secondary sources such as Internet.

### **3.2.1 Collecting data from Kharikhola:**

To collect the required primary data, I traveled to Kharikhola during April 2014, where I stayed for more than a week. Some of the interviewees lived closer to the main market (bazaar) area while most of them lived further up in the village, at a walking distance from half an hour to 2 hours. Among these local stakeholders, some of them can also be considered private sector stakeholders, as they also run local businesses and some of them as civil-society as they are engaged in community work and were committee members of various local groups. Some of the interviewees are both involved in civil-society and run local businesses.

Although every local people I talked to, expressed that they were not rich, I observed that there were significant differences between the well-off people and the poor ones. To make the conversation smooth, I asked for some basis data, such as age, number of children and sometimes also about their income.

### **3.2.2 Selection of the interviewees:**

With regards to the selection criteria among local interviewees, I had intended to get some information on the village population and caste distribution for the local VDC office, which turned out not possible because the office has been closed since a few years. As I inquired among the locals, I was informed that the majority of the locals population are Sherpa and Magars, while Dalit and Rais are the minority. Thus, I attempted to collect data from each caste living in the village. However, I actively sought to interview some of the Dalits, as they are considered the most disadvantaged group and the poorest of the poor in the village.

At the same time, I was with a group of seven volunteers from Australia and New Zealand for a week long health camp. Although I had lot of discussion with all seven voluntourists, I have only presented two interviewees in this research study.

As there is no formally functioning local government present in the village, I could not interview the local government employee. Similarly there were no local NGOs present.

Furthermore, the interviews lasted on an average about 1½ hours with semi-structured questions. As I visited the local people at their own place, not only I had the

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opportunity to interview them but I also had opportunity to see their lifestyle and have interaction with their family and neighbors as well.

Before I left for Kharikhola from Kathmandu, I had set up an interview appointment with Nepal Tourism Board and some of the tour operators for the last week I would be back in Kathmandu. But those appointment were canceled because of the Everest Mishap that happened on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and the chaos afterward. I talked with only one Travel agent, who operates trekking through the route. At the same time, he is also an active member of Kharikhola Trust, an NGO based in Kharikhola.

Besides the stakeholders I met and interviewed in Nepal, I also interviewed Serge Currat, who established an NGO Action Kharikhola in Switzerland for the benefit of Kharikhola via Skype.

The following table gives an overview of the interviewees and the type of stakeholders:

S. No.	Name of Interviewees	Type of stakeholders
1	Bhai Kaji Thapa Magar (M)	Local community, private sector
2	Nirmala Thapa Magar (F)	Local community, Civil-society, private sector
3	Indra Kumar Rana Magar (M)	Local community, Civil-society, private sector
4	Bhim Bahadur Rana Magar (M)	Local community
5	Padam Thapa Magar (M)	Local community, Civil-society, private sector
6	Kumari Sewa (F)	Local community, private sector
7	Jeevan Nepal (M)	Local community, private sector
8	Sushmita Rai (F)	Local community
9	Gayatri Rana Magar (F)	Local community
10	Harki Maya Magar (F)	Local community, private sector
11	Gore Magar (M)	Private sector/ non resident
12	Purnima Rai (F)	Local community
13	Motilal B.K. (M)	Local community
14	Sarkiman B.K. (M)	Local community

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15	Mingmar Galzen Sherpa (M)	Local community, private sector
16	Pemba Galzen Sherpa (M)	Local community
17	Ngima Dorjee Sherpa (M)	Private sector, NGO
18	Serge Currat (M)	NGO/Tourist
19	Helen Simpson (F)	Tourist
20	Margaret Topping (F)	Tourist

Table No. 2: List of the interviewees and the type of stakeholders

### 3.2.3 The Interview guideline:

A semi-structured interview was considered suitable as I intended to collect qualitative data. The interview guideline is referred to Appendix 1.

However the interviewees were not asked the same questions but varied according to their background. Sometimes I changed the questions to make it simpler for the interviewees. Instead of directly asking what they think about tourism development in Kharikhola for instance, I asked them how their life has changed since the civil war was over. Other times I simply started by asking for their life story in order to understand their idea of poverty, the changes they have experienced and whether they feel as poor as earlier.

Similarly I used the word 'change' more often than the word 'development' as the interviewees connected the word 'development' with national development but not local development. When asking about development, I also used a term 'village development' rather than 'community development' as the meaning of community can be understood both geographically as a village and as an ethnic group (caste). Since there are four main ethnic groups in Kharikhola, to avoid any misunderstanding I used the term 'village development' as my interest is to examine Kharikhola's development in relation to poverty alleviation and not of just one ethnic group.

Moreover, the interviews with local stakeholders and the Travel Agent were done in Nepali so I transcribed them in Nepali and later I translated them to English.

### 3.3 Data analysis method:

According to Bryman (2012) qualitative data approach allows the researcher

to emphasize the words rather than the quantification in the collection and analysis of data and it presents the opportunity to take an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2012, p. 380).

The research topic, poverty is often is measured in terms of per capita income, while other parameters such as education, accessibility, human rights and change in lifestyle, have been increasingly used now-a-days. Thus, to examine the stakeholders point of view, their reflection and story, the changes they have noticed themselves are present in the form of narration, coupling them with the theories discussed earlier in the literature review.

### ***3.4 Trustworthiness of the research:***

As this research is qualitative in nature, an alternative method to validity and reliability, known as trustworthiness is regarded to be more appropriate to evaluate the research which have similar components as validity and reliability (Bryman, 2012, p. 390).

**Credibility:** I visited the local interviewees at their own premise, where they were asked to express their own opinion often evaluating the changes they have experienced in their lives and and their own perception of poverty in their own life. Therefore their opinions expressed in this research can be assumed to be credible given that the similar situation applies. However, in the long term, their story might change as they experience changes in their lives.

**Transferability:** Even though the findings from this research can not be generalized, it can however be used to examine if similar pattern exists in similar case and or can be used in cross-sectional study of the same area with regard to impact on poverty alleviation.

**Dependability:** The interviewees are bound to be influenced by many factors daily and even my presence and my question about poverty might influence their point of view in the long term. However given the same circumstances and same environment, any replication could result with similar if not same result.

### ***3.5 Reflections from my field visit for data collection:***

Being a qualitative research study, I had not aimed to interview many people. However during my stay, I experienced certain minor obstacles. The younger generation, from student to youth less than 25 years e.g. were very reluctant to speak and were difficult to get permission for an interview. It was not because they lack the sense of cooperation as I

observed, but most of them answered that their opinion does not count because they are still young. Thus it required a good deal of persuasion and I succeeded with some.

Similarly, when I attempted to interview some of the women, most of them had the same feeling that their opinion does not matter. Among the few who agreed for the interview too, preferred their husband to speak for them instead, so I had to find chances where their husbands were not around. Only with the Chairman of Mothers Group did not hesitate for the interview.

Further more, some of the interviewees started their answers with 'I don't know' and I had to repeat or alter the questions with changing the meaning. This was not because they actually do not know what to say, but they hesitate to answer as they doubt whether their opinion is worth expressing. I explained each interviewee the reason for taking interviews and their opinion has a highly value for me and the research.

These observations do not illustrate any point regarding the research subject directly, but they do give an insight of the Nepalese society, which is still dominated by patriarchal values. This is again an important aspect of understanding the behavior and mentality of the stakeholders in Nepal.

Lastly this field visit was beneficial for me as a researcher as I could experience and notice the actual state of Kharikhola, currently operating projects and witness the conditions people live with. This allowed me to judge and compare myself the level of poverty among these interviewees based on their appearance and the condition of their house, facilities as well as neighborhood.

### ***3.6 Criticism and limitations:***

#### **3.6.1 The researcher's position:**

Researcher are often blamed to be biased (Beeton, 2005, p. 39) as the researchers while doing any research collect wide knowledge about the research subject and thereby form a certain opinion since the start. At this point, I consider as the author, it is important to state that I come from Nepal and have strong bond with my home country.

In addition, the primary data required for this research is being collected while volunteering together with a group of (local and foreigner) volunteers in Kharikhola during a



week long free health camp.

Futhermore I have previously trekked and lived in many rural areas in Nepal. Thus I assume that my understanding of poverty in rural is similar to the rural life of Kharikhola as I have lived their life to a certain degree. This can however have both positive and negative influence in the way I access the local interviewees in term of poverty.

### **3.6.2 Other practical issues:**

Among the various stakeholders identified by Zhao & Ritchie (2007), I was unable to interview both local level as well as national level government. Thus I did not get an opportunity to get clear picture of the Government's involvement in development of Kharikhola. Similarly, there were also lack of data with regards to the various development activities carried out in Kharikhola as the VDC office was not open. Lack of these data gives a very one sided picture of development, which is presented in the next chapter.

Similarly, the nature of the research being exploratory and qualitative, according to McGivern (2006), it may not deliver a definitive answer to the research problem (MCGivern, 2006, p. 88). As the terms such as point of view, perception and understanding are broad and can be described and interpreted in various ways, by the time the research concludes, it could risk not getting any specific answer.

The next chapter presents a brief description of Kharikhola and the CBT development.

#### 4. Study case – Kharikhola, a brief description:

According to Jones (2013), majority of tourist flow in Nepal is concentrated in a 'tourism triangle' between the Annapurna region, Sagarmatha (Everest) and Chitwan (Jones, 2013, p. 6). In that respect, Kharikhola village lies just outside this 'tourism triangle.' As I decided to study about tourism development and poverty alleviation in Nepal from stakeholder perspective, I wanted to examine a rural community area where tourism is not a primary means of livelihood and yet a considerable number of tourism activities are carried out to develop the village/community. Thus I selected Kharikhola to be the rural community to base my study on and collect data from.



Kharikhola from Kathmandu (Source: Google Maps)

Kharikhola is a small village that lies to the south of Lukla in Solukhumbu district. To reach the village, one can either drive by bus from Jiri or Salleri and then trek up North east for about 2 days. Alternatively, one can fly to Lukla from Kathmandu and then trek southwards for 2 or more days.

Although Lukla is a popular tourism destination located in Solukhumbu district and route towards Mt. Everest, Mt. Ama Dablam, Mt. Makalu and many other high mountains, its prosperity due to tourism has not been transferred to other closer area such as Kharikhola. If not Lukla receives a big flow of tourists with up to 50 flight arrivals/departures a day during season with maximum 18 passengers per flight (Bienvenu, 2013), very few tourists head south, passing by Kharikhola.

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The classic trekking route to Everest Base Camp

However, the tourists Kharikhola welcomes are the few trekkers, who prefer to trek all the way from Jiri/Salleri towards Everest Base Camp (EBC), Mera Peak and other trekking destination above Lukla, which also know as the classic trekking route to Everest Base Camp.



The main bazaar (market area) the trekking route follows through

This route passes through the center of Kharikhola, mostly know as the main bazaar (market) area which stretches about 400 meters. While the cluster of houses are seen

in the bazaar area, most of the people live further up, away from this trekking route. To reach some of the houses, it takes more than 2-3 hours of walk.

Kharikhola is one among 5 villages of Juving VDC. According to the population census of 2011, there are 736 households in Juving VDC with 1642 males and 1710 female residents (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011, p. 15). Exact figure of total residents living only in Kharikhola was not found as the official source, the VDC office has been closed for long time. However the headmaster of the Kharikhola High School, Padam Thapa informed that there are approximately 1100- 1200 people in Kharikhola.

The majority of them are Sherpas, Magars, Dalits (B.K.s) and Rais. Traditionally, Sherpas and Magars are ranked high caste in this area and Rais as middle while Dalits are the low caste, often also referred as the '*Untouchables*.' The main source of livelihood is agriculture, with tourism as supplementary source.

Among these castes, Dalits are considered the poorest of poor as they are traditionally allowed to work only as Blacksmiths, tailors or shoemakers or some very low level works like constructing a toilet, while all other professions with substantial income opportunities are taken by other castes. Similarly they are not allowed to sit with the high castes, touch them or their food and utensils or enter their houses so Dalits are the most suppressed caste/group of people in Nepal.

There are two schools in Kharikhola; Mera Primary School which is situated at a distance of 1½ hour walk from the bazaar and Kharikhola High School, which is situated at distance of ½ an hour walk from the bazaar. There is one health post in the village supported by Dhulikhel Hospital (Dhulikhel Hospital, 2014) and some NGOs, among others Action Kharikhola (Action Kharikhola, 2014). There is also a police check post and a community house, built by the Mothers group with financial support from some NGOs.

There are approximately 20 small hotels and lodges, all varying from 1-2 beds capacity to 9-10 rooms. At the main bazaar there are 7 shops selling everything from food to clothes, footwear and trekking gears and other smaller grocery shops and tea shops along the route. At the far end there is monastery, known as Pema Namding, with 7 students and some monks living.

Besides running hotels and shops, local people also work as guides and

porters, mostly Sherpas and Magars. Some of them have left the village and are settled down in Kathmandu and are running their own tourism related businesses. They often also become the guardians for the development activities supported by tourists and NGOs as they are often the first contact the tourists have had while visiting Kharikhola.

#### ***4.1 Involvement of tourists and NGOs in the development of Kharikhola:***

Kharikhola itself is not a tourism destination but only a route. Tourists do not normally come to Kharikhola as a final destination but mostly stop by for lunch or a good night rest on the way to their final destination. This has however not stopped the tourists from seeing the need for doing something for this village.

Among the first tourists who contributed in the development of Kharikhola as well as Solukhumbu district was Sir Edmund Hillary, who through Himalayan Trust built schools in Solukhumbu including Kharikhola Primary School in between 1967 to 1971 (Sherpa, 2003, p. 1). This school has now been upgraded to a high school with more than 700 students (Thapa, 2014, personal communication). Currently a Swiss NGO, Kharikhola School Project supports the school with funds (Kharikhola School Project, 2014).

Another swiss NGO, Action Kharikhola has been working for Kharikhola's development since 2001. With their support and subsidy from Nepalese Government, a small power house was established in 2007 (Action Kharikhola, 2014), which supplies hydro-electricity not only to Kharikhola but also nearby villages. Now every house has at least two bulbs and the service is very reliable with 24 hours supply. The same NGO also cooperates with Dhulikhel Hospital and supports the operations of the Kharikhola health post by funding the salary for the staff members as well as supplies necessary equipment (Action Kharikhola, 2014).

Meanwhile a New Zealand based organization, Band-aid Box organized free health camp at the Kharikhola health post since 2005 to 2012 almost every year for the benefit of people at Kharikhola and surrounding areas (Band-aid Box, 2012) and now this task has been taken by another NGO Haatmahaat (Haatmahaat, 2013).

Recently a group of volunteers (Stitches for britches) provided women and girls from a Mothers Group and Kharikhola High School a sewing training, with an aim to uplift women with practical skills which will give them independence and benefit the



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community in the long term (Humphreys, 2013). The list below provides a short overview of the support provided by such tourists initiated NGOs to avoid listing each one in detail:

S.No.	Activities/entities supported	Supporting Donor/NGOs
1	Kharikhola High School	Earlier supported by Himalayan Trust, currently by Kharikhola School Project and other individual donors
2	Kharikhola Hydro Power project	Action Kharikhola
3	Kharikhola health post	Action Kharikhola and Dhulikhel hospital, Kharikhola Trust
4	Kharikhola Health camp	Previously supported by Band-aid box, currently by Haatmahaat
5	Sewing training for mothers group (2014)	Stitches for Britches
6	Mera Primary School	Nepal Sunrise, Children of Solukhumbu Trust
7	Green House Project	Nepal Sunrise
8	Teachers Training and Education	Individual donor/volunteer Sarah Davey
9	Community House (Mothers Group)	Nicole Niquille Foundation – Switzerland
10	Pema Namding Monastery	Individual donors
11	Kharikhola Drinking Water Project	Lions Club of New Zealand

Table No. 3: List of projects supported by Tourists/NGOs

This list does not provide a complete picture of the development support, Kharikhola has received so far but only attempts to provide a general picture of the various activities and initiatives through tourism to help and uplift the lives of Kharikhola.

Although, it sounds as if all kinds of public service have actually been funded and facilitated by NGOs run by tourists for philanthropic reasons, the local people are equally engaged in the form of various local committees (civil-society) such as Mothers group, hospital committee and Kharikhola high school committee, Mera School Committee, Youth Clubs and through partnerships with these NGOs.

#### ***4.2 The current political situation and decision-making process in Kharikhola:***

As stated earlier in Chapter 1, Nepal has suffered severely from the civil war since 1994 that lasted more than a decade (New Spotlight, 2013). According to the school

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headmaster Padam Thapa, the VDC office, Kharikhola High School and the police post were destroyed during the conflict. The tourists were not harmed directly but were harassed by demanding extortion money from the rebellions side while there was no guarantee for their security. This deduced the number tourists trekking though the route drastically. So the condition of villages including Kharikhola deteriorated throughout the time. People (mostly men) who did not support the war left the village and the village more or less stood still with ever increasing gap between the rich and poor.

Many people of Kharikhola have moved to and settled down in Kathmandu and other areas such as Lukla to pursue their career, while their parents stay behind and look after their property and farming. Among those I interviewed, had most of the children living/studying in Kathmandu or abroad and admitted that they do not expect their children to come back to the village permanently.

Although the conflict was resolved in April 2006, Nepal has not yet been able to draft the Constitution Assembly resulting political deadlock and stagnation. Because of the political instability, there has not been local government election since 1997 (New Spotlight, 2013) and villages like Kharikhola have no locally elected representative to lead the village development in Nepal. People are deprived of the right to participate in the activities of local development (New Spotlight, 2013).

In this situation, the members of local political parties have played an important role in the development of Kharikhola. Although there is no locally elected and functional Chairman at present, the former Chairman, Prem Thapa together with the various representatives of political parties confer with each other on the distribution of yearly budget decisions on behalf of the village and their recommendations is forward to the DDC for further approval (Thapa, 2014, Personal Communication).

At the moment, construction of road to Kharikhola is their aim, according the locals. However, there are resistant from some locals as they are afraid of losing the tourism based income source as the tourists will stop trekking through the route because they will be able to reach Lukla without stopping at Kharikhola.

As I inquired among the locals about Governments support with public service, I was told by the headmaster that the school is provided salary for half of the

teachers working there. Besides school, the only visible public service is the presence of Nepalese Police. As I had to base my knowledge about Government's support on hear-say and not on solid information with proper statistics system, I cannot claim that these are the only truth, however with a long list of NGO and civil-society based activities, it is apparent that development of Kharikhola has a root in tourism.

Similarly, poverty alleviation is the core issue in this CBT development but just looking at the list of public service activities, mostly with the involvement of tourists and NGOs is not to understand the impact on poverty issue. The next chapter presents the data collected from the various stakeholders of Kharikhola.

## **5. Findings:**

This chapter presents the data collected from these interviewees, which is divided into two major parts. The first part presents stakeholders' perception of CBT development in Kharikhola and the second part present their point of view on the various stakeholders' role in Kharikhola's development.

20 individuals are interviewed for this research. Among them, 15 are local residents of Kharikhola, 1 temporary worker from a neighboring district, 3 tourists and 1 travel agency. It must be noted that most of these interviewees have dual role in the community. As presented in the Table 2, most of the local residents can be considered as the private sector as well as civil-society. Similarly, the private sector and tourists can also be a part of NGO. Although these roles were overlapped and recognizable, it is however difficult to separate their individual opinions from one type of stakeholder to another, especially with the local community.

### ***5.1 Stakeholders' perception of CBT development in Kharikhola's development:***

As discussed earlier in the literature review, tourism is considered not only the vehicle for development but also a tool to reduce poverty and improve livelihood (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p 120; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 297; Erskine & Meyer 2012, p. 341 and Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000, p. 1007). In order to examine whether the stakeholders perceive tourism as the vehicle or development and reduce poverty, it is necessary to explore how they view Kharikhola's development.



#### **5.1.1 Stakeholders' perception on Kharikhola's development:**

Among the local residents I interviewed, all generally agreed that there has been changes in Kharikhola especially after the end of civil war. However most of these stakeholders claimed that prior to the civil war, the village was more developed because the area/trekking route was busier and thereby there were many businesses and the villagers had witnessed prosperity.

*Before the Maoist insurgency, this village was a lot better than now. We already had electricity, the bazaar was bigger and busier. There were few primary schools but it became worse during the insurgency and we had to build the village again after 2006. It is gaining back but not as before the civil war. Tourists are again trekking this route instead of flying directly to Lukla but it will take time to reach at the same level as before.*

Indra Kumar Rana Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

However, others view it more positively pointing out the visible progresses in the village such as bridges toilets bringing changes in their lifestyle.

*It has developed a lot, not as before the insurgency, when Kharikhola was actually a big bazaar and there were many more people living and many tourists travelled through this route. But now also life has become easier. There is a bridge now, the trekking trail, toilets, community forest, tree plantation. Life is good here, you can buy many things just like in big cities.*

Bhim Bahadur Rana Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

Opposite to Indra and Bhim, some of them are not satisfied with the pace of development, although they agree that Kharikhola is developing.

*People are building new houses closer to the trekking route, that is why I have some work. But I think the community has not developed as it should be.*

Bhai Kaji Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

Furthermore, some even compare Kharikhola's development with developed villages and wish for more development.

*You see Namche, there the society has changed very much. Their lifestyle has changed so much that they don't allow us to stayover at their house anymore because we are*

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*not rich and clean enough. Tourism has changed that village and we want our village also to change.*

Nirmala Thapa Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

Meanwhile, local stakeholders who have moved to Kharikhola and settled down in the village view it differently.

*Compared to my old village, it is very developed. Many things are available here. In my village even if you have money you cannot get what you want. We do not have high schools or any health post near by. Here is opportunity to earn and also get what you want.*

Kumari Sewa, Kharikhola, April 2014

Although most of them agree that Kharikhola has developed, some claim that development is uneven.

*I see that there is progress around the bazaar, but then it is also only limited around the bazaar... if you go further up in the village, nothing has changed. They do not even have toilet and children are dirty and sick and they sleep in the same room together with the cattle.*

Gayatri Rana, Kharikhola, April 2014

Focus on physical infrastructure and public facility are the only development. A perspective to a better future (which is not physically visible) for the children if not for them at present is also seen as development.

*Our village has changed a lot and so has our lives too. I could not go to school but my children do. My sons have finished SLC and my daughter is still going to school. Earlier there was no place for Dalit to speak. Now we have a Dalit Committee where we can discuss our problems and needs. The committee then talks with other committees to solve our problem.*

Sarkiman B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

Although these locals accept that they will not experience much progress themselves in their daily life as they will still have struggle as hard as they have always been doing, the development no matter how slow, has shed a ray of hope for the future. Besides, the local residents, tourists who have visited Kharikhola also point out the positive

development of Kharikhola.

*The first time I was here for the health camp in 2008, I remember how we had to scrub every patient clean before we could even check their temperature. There were many many people sick and needed immediate help. The second time I was here, it had improved a bit and now I can see it has really improved a lot more in these years. Actually the health workers are well experienced now so I feel they can run the health camp without us foreign volunteers.*

□ Margaret Topping, Tourist, Kharikhola, April 2014

Similar changes were also noticed by Serge, as he expresses:

*I see really a big improvement also with the young generation. They are very active. When I was there last time, they are asking me to be members of young society and I went with them. I was saying to myself, wow it is great. They are just young people believe in themselves and want to have a good life. I meet a young guy going all the way from Kharikhola to Jiri carrying a basket and took the dirt to clean the way. The name was Keep Kharikhola clean. I never saw this before and thatswhy I think it is a big improvement with the new generation.*

Serge Currat, Switzerland, April 2014

The statements above indicates that every interviewee has different perception of development and they also evaluate the level of development on the basis of both physical evidences as well as the social changes they experience. For interviewees like Bhim Bahadur, the schools, community forest and bridge were the symbols of development, while for Sarkiman, accessibility to school education for his children was significant enough. Similarly tourists like Margaret and Serge who have visited Kharikhola several times can clearly see the positive changes, confirming the development of Kharikhola.

### **5.1.2 Perceived role of tourism:**

Andereck et al (2005) together with many other researches referred to in the literature review, assume that tourism activities when the community itself is involved, will have a greater effect in the general lives of the community and that eventually will be beneficial for the poor (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005, p. 1057). This section attempts to examine how the stakeholders' perceive these benefits.

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The main motivation for engaging in tourism related activities and businesses is the economic benefit, according to some of the local interviewees. Among them Bhai Kaji expresses:

*We have electricity in our village, hotels and shops and even toilet. But had it not been for tourism and because of tourists, there would not be any incentive for getting electricity in the village... If people had not seen it as important thing to have, if you want tourists to stay at the hotels and earn money, for local people it was not very important. We are used to living without much luxury.*

Bhai Kaji Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

This motivation is so strong that in some instance, it unites people to address their problems and take action jointly. Mingmar tells about one of these incidents:

*A few years ago, the Government planned an alternative trekking route to Namche from Salleri without passing through Lukla. We all went to District headquarter and striked for two weeks. One person from each household from this whole trekking route, Kharikhola, Bupsa, Puiyan, Khari, Nele, Nuntala, all the villages were there. And finally they [the Government] gave in. If they had opened that route, people here would not survive. We need tourists, we have invested so much to build hotels and if they don't come through this way, how will we survive?*

Mingmar Galzen Sherpa, Kharikhola, April 2014

The potential to earn has motivated the local people to start their businesses and as Mingmar reveals, people are also ready to fight for it. But is not only the economic benefit that counts. Other indirect benefits from tourism are also the reason for the local peoples' positive attitude towards tourism.

*It [tourism] is good for the development of Kharikhola. There are some direct benefits, like employment, businesses but there are also indirect ones. I have just received sewing training from a group of volunteers from New Zealand. Girls are now especially interested in sewing and it does not have to be Damai (Dalits) to be a tailor.*

Gayatri Rana, Kharikhola, April 2014

Girls like Gayatri have gained some skills that would last for their lifetime. For her the value of tourism lies far beyond the money she can earn. Nirmala Thapa shares

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similar observation;

*My husband used to run at local mill, down nearby the river and it was very hard, his back hurt. Now it has been 10 years, he does not work there and he feels better. Now we run the hotel and little bit of farming and we are still able to support our children in Kathmandu.*

Nirmala Thapa, Kharikhola, April 2014

Harsh lifestyle has its own price. As Nirmala's husband opt to tourism changing his job at the local mill, they have only earned money but also gained other benefit such as improved health and affordability for better education for their children.

Even Bhai Kaji, one of the local interviewees, who claims that his life does not depend upon tourism, admits that tourism plays some kind of role;

*People are building new hotels closer to the trekking route, that is why I have some work.*

Bhai Kaji, Kharikhola, April 2014

As an electrician, he does not work directly with the tourists and therefore he believes he can easily earn for himself without depending on tourism. However oddly the houses he works for, are highly dependent upon tourism and demand for his job in Kharikhola still indirectly depend upon tourism.

However, it is not only skill improvement or health and jobs that indirectly due to tourism, that makes tourism important vehicle of development . Opportunity to learn new things and to develop local infrastructure are also seen as the result of tourism in Kharikhola:

*Because of tourism, we get the opportunity to meet new people from all over the world. They have helped us build our schools, health post and water supply by providing funds. We local people have only provided labour.*

Indra Kumar Rana, Kharikhola, April 2014

*We have learnt a lot from others, especially from the tourists who come at health camps. They have taught us to keep ourselves clean so that we are healthier.*

Motilal B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

Similarly others than local interviewees also agree on the benefit of tourism. For instance Gore Magar, who was in Kharikhola for a temporary job a carpenter expresses;

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*I think, more tourism means more benefit for the local. We can sell our food and build hotels for tourists to stay. That is why there is electricity and running water here in Kharikhola. If we had the same at my village, I could work there and earn and still be with my family.*

Gore Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

Even though these stakeholders agree that tourism has both direct and indirect benefit and effects general lives of the community, there are however some of the local stakeholders, especially the Dalits, who do not feel they can see the direct benefit.

*There is no direct benefit from tourism for us Dalit. Even our daughters cannot work as dishwasher at the local hotels because we are untouchables.*

Motilal B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

*If you come from Rai, Magar or Sherpa community, then yes you can work as porters, guides and earn some money. But Dalits like us, they do not hire us.*

Jeevan Nepali, Kharikhola, April 2014

This barrier however is mainly created by the society that has deep roots in the caste system, where Dalits are considered inferior and weak. Others also point out some drawbacks of tourism such as the Dependency issue as they opine that tourists coming and helping the poor just make them more dependent:

*Just look at B.K.s, the dalits. It was bad before but now not many people discriminate them, and there is plenty of work in the village if they want. But they still wait for someone to fight for them, instead doing something themselves. It is most of their children who get sponsored by foreigners and the volunteers give them clothes and goods too, but the next year also it is them who spread their hands.*

Pempa Galzen Sherpa, Kharikhola, April 2014

Sushmita Rai also argues that tourism is not enough for developing Kharikhola as she thinks it makes the poor people more dependent on tourists:

*It is certainly not good that tourists have to sponsor some children to go school. I don't mean it for the children. But once the parents believe they can easily get help from tourists to send their children to school, they do not work harder themselves. This not good enough.*

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Sushmita Rai, Kharikhola, April 2014

Although tourists help the local people and sponsor children with good intention, youth like Pemba and Sushmita argue that people become less motivated to work harder for progress, when they know they can easily get support, so they would not take their own responsibility. On the other hand, tourists like Serge feel differently and believe that the villagers are getting more responsible;

*In the beginning I thought may be we may have to stay behind after we installed the generator. But I am positively surprised. Now they can manage themselves everything. They just got some training how to maintain the systems in good condition and as soon as they have problem with electricity they go and fix it within one hour. They took their responsibility on their own and they are not waiting for other to fix. I am surprised and happy about that.*

Serge Currat, Switzerland, April 2014

Another drawback of tourism is that people including younger generation perceive tourism as faster source of income;

*Young people prefer to work as porter during trekking season because they can earn immediately and they find it lucrative because then they can buy mobile phones and stylish dresses. Although we have strict rules in school about leaves and not attending school, some anyway work and eventually drop out when they cannot pass their curriculum. Because they see good money in such temporary work, they do not think the consequences of not having proper education later in life.*

Padam Thapa, Kharikhola, April 2014

The jobs generated due to tourism is mostly labour intensive and seasonal in Nepal (Jones, 2013). Students drop their school education to work without thinking about the consequences. They ignore the importance of being educated, which is often the pre-condition of getting good and well paid jobs. Thus Padam considers this a huge loss for the youth who drop school education.

Another negative consequence is migration as people seek for new opportunities when they become rich:

*You know many people from Kharikhola are very rich, but when they earned a lot and*

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*moved to abroad or Kathmandu. Tourism was the reason they earned but now they do not live in the village.*

Indra Kumar Rana, Kharikhola, April 2014

The migration trend is however both ways and people from other villages and areas are settling down in Kharikhola. Among the local interviewees, three of them had moved to Kharikhola in less than 5 years as they see opportunity for a better life at Kharikhola. For Kumari, who moved to Kharikhola about three years ago, the main reason is education but also because she has the opportunity to earn;

*My daughter studies here at Kharikhola High School and back in our village we do not have that opportunity. We cannot afford to send her to Kathmandu because we are not rich. But here I earn good from the shop and I can pay for our children's education.*

Kumari Sewa, Kharikhola, April 2014

In case of Purnima, who moved to Kharikhola five years ago and has built a her own house has the reason similar as Kumari's. However she is not entirely positive about the tourism.

*My neighbours are nice to me and it is a good place to live. There is a school, hospital and electricity. But we do not have toilets and television like others. And that donkey transportation is not that good either. Because donkeys are cheaper, poor people do not get job as porters... Although I know that things would even more expensive if porters have to carry all the load. And tourists are nice, they pay good, but if donkey takes your place then what can you do?*

Purnima Rai, Kharikhola, April 2014

Despite of her husband not getting tourism related jobs, she does see that tourism is beneficial in general. However having a tourism related job does not secure even distribution;

*Sometimes I think it is the travel agents who earn most and these porters, guides and kitchen boys earn very little compared to what we tourists pay to the travel agents.*

Helen Simpson, Kharikhola, April 2014

It is clear from these statements, that tourism is generally considered beneficial both directly



in terms of employment and business development as well as indirectly in terms of building infrastructure, improved health, education. However, the stakeholders doubt the equal distribution of the benefits, especially among the poor as expressed by Helen.

Similarly, the stakeholders are also concerned about the negative consequences. Some of them think that too much help from the tourists would make people more dependent and lose motivation to work harder themselves and take their responsibility. Others fear that the young generation might neglect their future, while they are chasing after faster source of income. Similarly some of the stakeholders are concerned that too many people are migrating away as they seek for better opportunities other place. But there seems to be a balance being created as people are moving to Kharikhola, not only away.

Although some of the stakeholders expressed that they do not get any direct benefit from tourism, it is the indirect benefits that has higher value. But are these indirect benefits from tourism enough to reduce the poverty? This will be answered next.

### **5.1.3 Contribution towards poverty reduction:**

Various researchers such as Zhao & Ritchie (2007); Spenceley & Meyer (2012) argue that tourism (CBT) has the potential to reduce poverty (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007, p. 120) Spenceley & Meyer, 2012, p. 297). However some researchers such as Hall (2007) are critical about tourism's role in poverty alleviation, as the benefit derived is overrated (Hall, 2007, p. 1 & 6) while others like Opperman and Chon (as cited in Mbaiwa, 2005) argue that tourism in fact reinstate socio-economic disparity in developing countries instead of reducing (Mbaiwa, 2005, p. 160)

Among the local interviewees, everyone perceived that they are poor, but when examined closely, I found that this expression of being poor is always comparative, which means they compare with the ones (neighbour, relatives, friends) who are seemed wealthier than themselves and consider that they are poorer than the others.

Similarly, there was no doubt among the interviewees that tourism development has some direct and indirect impact on poverty. When asked about the poverty situation of the village, most of them agreed that the poorest of the poor are still poor and were sceptic whether tourism really helps the most needy, but they agreed that their own

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life style has changed and improving.

*Tourism has reduced poverty a lot. It has become easier to get loan from banks if you want to start any business related to tourism because they know that one can earn from it and pay the loan back.*

Bhim Bahadur Rana Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

Based on his personal experience as his son could get the loan, Bhim agrees that people are encouraged to take tourism related business initiative and thus thinks that such opportunity is the way toward poverty alleviation. However there is also skepticism;

*It [tourism] is helping but it is only helping those who are clever and can run tourism related businesses. Those who are only farmers have difficulty surviving throughout the year, therefore they have to work as porters to survive.*

Indra Kumar Rana, Kharikhola, April 2014

While Bhim based his opinion on personal experience, Indra see poverty in general and states that those who are not involved directly in tourism business are still the poorest of the poor and suffering.

*Those who were rich, they are becoming richer but those who were poor, I cannot say they are getting richer but they are not as poor as they used to be. I can see that on the way they dress and those things they buy at my shop.*

Kumari Sewa, Kharikhola, April 2014

Similar opinion is shared by Kumari too, but with a hint of progre. Gayatri, on the other hand argues the poor people have simply no time and capacity for fighting poverty;

*You would think people will build toilets when those at bazaar have, because it is hygienic. But they are too busy surviving, I don't think they see it with same importance as you do. Tourist's donation has helped a lot in the village, mainly with health camp, education and electricity but only indirectly. I think they will remain poor.*

Gayatri Rai, Kharikhola, April 2014.

Among the Dalits, who are considered the poorest of the poor, there is optimism although they are realistic;

*It has reduced poverty to certain degree but I don't think poverty will be eradicated*

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*easily. Now our lifestyle has changed with time and we are not as poor as we used to be. But we will still remain poorer than other higher caste in the village.*

Motilal B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

This optimism is also because of the hope that in future their children will do better.

*Our children get benefit from tourism. They go to school and there is some fund/organisation that provide books. All these come from the tourists and donor agencies. In future it will be more I suppose, once the poor get more education and skills then they can do businesses.*

Jeevan Nepali, Kharikhola, April 2014

Poverty is difficult to define and measure, as discussed earlier in literature review. This is also evident from the way each interviewee evaluated the level of poverty in Kharikhola. Similar dilemma was also experienced by tourists interviewees;

*I cannot say if they are very poor. I can see parents buying that "Wai Wai" noodles and energy drinks for their children, it is not cheap so may be they are not very poor. But their children are wearing trousers with big holes. May be they just do not know how and what to prioritize better and use the money they have in a better way.*

Helen Simpson, Kharikhola, April 2014

The reason behind the Dalits lagging behind lies however in the social construct of Kharikhola. As Dalits are considered untouchables, there are not treated equally;

*Sherpas and Rais do not discriminate but Magars are worst. They do not want us to enter their houses and abused us, scold us for nothing. We can work all day in their field without getting a drop of water but they treat us like we are not human beings.*

Sarkiman B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

However, attitude toward them are changing slowly but not enough to provide them tourism related jobs;

*It is mostly older generation who are intolerant, the new generation does not care if we sit with them. But we cannot get jobs other than of carrying rocks or blacksmiths.*

Motilal B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

Evaluating poverty is not an easy task, especially if it is about your own life.

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The local interviewees although first expresses that they were poor, opened up and admitted that there has been some progress, they are not as poor as they have been. Having been at the place and understanding what the local interviewees meant, I can only say that it will take a few more generation for those people who live bit further away from the main market area, to come to the same level as those who are living in the town areas. The same level I mean here is the small facilities, such as toilet, proper drinking water, education and equal job opportunity.

**Sub-conclusion:**

Based on the changes they have experienced in Kharikhola, the stakeholders of Kharikhola have no doubt that CBT development can be a vehicle for overall development of a destination. In fact they all claim that had it not been for tourism, Kharikhola would have been nothing because they have seen neighbouring villages lagging far behind in terms of development.

But they also expect that the development could be better, as they compare other areas such as Khumbu valley where tourism has brought progress and prosperity and drastic changes. The tourists who have been engaged in its development are also optimist and agree with the positive changes they have noticed, that tourism plays a a vital role in Kharikhola's development.

On the other hand, there prevails also scepticism, as the people who get richer start to move away to pursue other opportunities while the poorest of the poor become more and more dependent on the help they get without putting effort to changes by themselves.

Similar skepticism are sensed when it comes to the role of tourism in terms of poverty alleviation. Everyone agrees that tourism has helped the poor but the poor (Dalits) do not see and expect much changes in their own life, they are though hopeful that it will be better for their children. Although there are signs that peoples attitude towards Dalits is changing, it would however take more effort from all for the Dalits to be able get equal job opportunity.

In this situation, the stakeholders' commitment is very important if tourism development is to succeed in helping poverty alleviation in Kharikhola. The next part

examines the stakeholders' involvement and their role in Kharikhola's development.

### **5.3 Stakeholders' involvement and role in Kharikhola's development:**

Stakeholders interviewed in this research study are multi-faceted and diverse and they are also interdependent, thus I found that their roles are often overlapped and not separable from one to another. To present the data, I have divided them into the local community as one group and Tourists and trekking agency as another group where their involvement and various overlapping roles is discussed.

#### **5.3.1 The local community:**

Among the various stakeholders, local residents are seen as the key resource in sustaining the product (Hardy et al as cited in Sebele, 2010, p. 136), as the host willingly or unwillingly provides the location for the tourism activity as it operates in their lands, and is based on their cultural and natural assets and attractions (Nelson as cited in Isaac & Conrad-J., 2012, p. 99). The role of the community is diverse in nature as some can be the poor, who are perceived to be less educated and helpless, while others play the role of the local private sector providing the hotels and service to the tourists, working as employee at tourism related jobs. At the same time they can play the role of the civil-society by forming committees to promote the community and even play the role of local government and some get involved in local NGO work. Thus the role of a community is changing and evolving with the time.

For some of the local interviewees, their entrepreneurship nature and commitment to the society have resulted in interaction and cooperation with tourists and NGOs:

*Sometimes I sell vegetables to hotels. But I also get help from some tourists. There was one named Andre, he was very impressed by the green house farming, it is not big but he helped with plants and taught me some technique. He came to volunteer at one primary, a two hour walk from here and he taught other farmers also about green house and plants.*

Harki Maya Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014

*We started our group by raising 20 NRS per month but it was too expensive for most*

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*of members and they are mostly poor women, so since last 4 years we raise 10 NRS per month. This fee is used for different activities in the village such as monthly meeting, cleaning activities, awareness program for building toilets, installing dustbin. Latest we have built a community kitchen with some assistance from Nicole Foundation. Similarly we built the Kharikhola trail with fund supported by the Government, and some INGOs. The school was destroyed during Maoist insurgency and the group helped to rebuild the school with 10,000 NRS.*

Nirmala Thapa, Kharikhola, April 2014

Although they lacked resources, their engagement has succeeded to encourage the tourists and NGOs to be involved in the community development, as their capacity increased they could even help in rebuilding the school that was destroyed during the civil war.

Even among the Dalits, they have started to get involved in community through Dalit Committee;

*Earlier there was no place for Dalit to speak. Now we have a Dalit Committee where we can discuss our problems and needs. The committee then talks with other committees to solve our problem.*

Sarkiman B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

However, there is uncertainty about Dalits' equal job opportunities in tourism and Dalits who have already realized this, are preparing themselves to learn other skills;

*Tourism is not for us. It is for Sherpas, Magars and Rais. They say we are too weak, so we cannot carry 50-60kg and walk all day. So there is nothing for us in tourism. Instead there are now some technical schools in Salleri and Khotang. One of my sons is there right now to learn about carpentry and masonry.*

Motilal B.K., Kharikhola, April 2014

However it is not only Dalits who do not find opportunities and do not get involvement even though they can see that they can benefit.

*I am not in that Mothers group... May be I should join. I know they get trainings and some money, but you have to pay membership fee too and I don't have that much money.*

Purnima Rai, Kharikhola, April 2014

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Although she knows, that being in Mothers group is beneficial for her, Purnima is hesitant, as she cannot afford the membership fee. Other interviewees also express similar opinion for the lack of engagement from the local people;

*We have our own lives to take care as we struggle everyday to feed ourselves and family, so we hardly have time to think about the community development. I think first of all, if we only we do not have to think about sustaining daily lives, we can start thinking about the problems our society is facing and ways to solve them.*

*Bhai Kaji Magar, Kharikhola, April 2014*

*The people here are poor so they have a lot to do. And we also use a lot of time for religious purpose. We lack education so we do not know how we need to work for the development of the village as a whole.*

*Pemba Galzen Sherpa, Kharikhola, April 2014*

It is not only about affordability, but also because people give higher priorities to religion, according to Pemba. On top of that when people lack education, they do not know where and how to start. Due to the lack of knowledge, the local interviewees also perceived that getting involved in civil-society and NGO work is also not for the poor;

*I do not have much information about them. NGOs are only for clever people. They bring the projects as per their interest and target people are also themselves. They normally do not ask people like us to join. Magars from bazaar have more chances but then they are also the ones with power.*

*Kumari Sewa, Kharikhola, April 2014*

But among those who feel that it is necessary to be involved in community development, they have many ideas too;

*I think we should not be so dependent on tourism only. The bazaar we have, should be developed in a way that we can sell our local products to each other and earn money. This will also make things cheaper. Right now we bring food (mainly fast food) and goods from Salleri so everything is expensive while we have food at our home which if we can sell and earn instead of making alcohol drinks and getting drunk.*

*Sushmita Rai, Kharikhola, April 2014*

Although she acknowledges tourism's role in Kharikhola's development,

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Sushmita emphasizes the role of the private sector as she think that they can provide better and cheaper service, while this will also help people to change their lifestyle. Once local people see that they can earn more my selling their crops instead of consuming themselves, they will be able to progress.

Meanwhile others also point out that this kind of development is too slow and less effective and there is need for the Government to take action;

*Although I say the development of this village is because of tourism, we cannot wait for 1-1 tourist to come and give us donation and help us. It is a very slow process. But if we had that government working properly instead of putting all the money into their pocket it would go faster.*

Mingmar Galzen Sherpa, Kharikhola, April 2014

But some actually do not expect much from the Government;

*With what we hear from our parents and neighbours, we cannot trust government, they do nothing anyway.*

Gayatri Rana, Kharikhola, April 2014

Although they do not trust the politicians, they still argue that development should be Government's agenda;

*We cannot trust our politicians, they only come to our villages during election time and then they are gone. But it is still their duty to bring programs that would help rural areas.*

Pemba Galzen Sherpa, Kharikhola, April 2014

When it comes to NGOs role, local people were generally satisfied;

*They are doing great job. We do not have local NGO here, but I think the tourists come with good programs and we learn a lot, our children go to school, so we are very grateful. We do not see any problem in this.*

Nirmala Thapa, Kharikhola, April 2014

But, the local interviewees express their doubt about the benefit in the community from NGOs;

*The local committee who receives the donation/funds are the same people who are powerful in the village. Although the fund comes to target the poorest, the local*



*committee decides to use the money the way they think they need or be useful for the village but mostly to them. Just look at water distribution, those who know how to do it, got water right at their doorstep with having to pay much but there are still many household up in the hills who have to share the taps. If they were in the committee they would also have tap for each house.*

Pemba Galzen Sherpa, Kharikhola, April 2014

Although they all agree the role of NGOs in Kharikhola's development, the interviewees do not sense fair distribution because they can see that the poor who are the target for such development assistance are still struggling with their daily lives. It is thus natural that they question about decision-making. However they also realize that in order to create the changes, there is even greater need for locals to be involved and even stronger if every stakeholder can work together.

*I think we need to have all these things together, I mean tourism, NGOs and also we local people need to work together. I don't trust government as such but tourists can teach us new and better ways of doing things but it is again upto us local people. Poor people should also be included.*

Sushmita Rai, Kharikhola, April 2014

From the above discussion, it is apparent that the role of local stakeholders is multiple in nature and often changing with the need they feel and the action they take. While they reflect upon their own role as the local community, they also see the importance of collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders such as the private sector, civil-society, NGOs and the Government.

Similarly these local stakeholders have their own barriers, such as time, interest, lack of education and knowledge and lack of opportunities to play an active role in Kharikhola's development.

### **5.3.2 The tourists and the travel agency:**

Patterns similar to the roles played by the community can be noted among the private sector and tourists. The trekking/travel agents based somewhere else can still be involved in the community development by being the connecting point for NGOs. While tourists first would start as an ordinary consumer, but after seeing the need for some action,

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would be involved in development work as volunteers or even as NGOs.

*In 1999 I was with some friends in Nepal for trekking. I did not imagine but I saw this village Kharikhola, I met Sher Bahadur the mountain guide and it started finally here with this hospital. When I saw the condition, I said ok now I have to do something.*

Serge Currat, Switzerland, April 2014

*I have visited Nepal since 1980s and I like to volunteer so I come to Nepal quite often. When I was here last year, I volunteered for the same health camp.*

Helen Simpson, Kharikhola, April 2014

*I like Nepal and like traveling a lot. I had volunteered here before so it is nice to be back again.*

Margaret Topping, Kharikhola, April 2014

Serge, Helen and Margaret, all three have visited Nepal several times but they are involved in Kharikhola's development differently. Serge after seeing the conditions of Kharikhola in 1999, started an NGO, Action Kharikhola to support Kharikhola by bringing projects and collecting fund. They support the health post and the hydro-power project.

Helen and Margaret on the other hand, have worked as volunteers at Kharikhola health camp providing their skills and knowledge for improving the health condition of the people of Kharikhola. Though they are involved differently, they have a common reason, to do something for the people of Kharikhola.

The private sector although not based locally however often have roots in the community, so they feel it is their duty to do something for the community they come from, such as involving in school projects;

*I left my home at 13 as porter and I walked even without any shoe. After some years, I had the opportunity to visit UK because some good tourists sponsored me. When I reach the airport, I could not find toilet myself because I could not read English. It took me more than two hours to find the way to my host who was waiting for me at the airport. There I realized the importance of education, especially language. If you are not educated, the life becomes very difficult. At that point I decided that I will build a school for my village one day and I started to learn English language myself.*

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Ngima Dorji Sherpa, Kathmandu, April 2014

Having struggled through the harsh life, Ngima feels that it is his duty to be involved in community work even though he does not live there anymore. Because of the nature of his business he is often in contact with tourists like Helen and Margaret who are willing to spend some of their time volunteering or tourists like Serge who can help fundraising for the various projects in Kharikhola. So it is natural for him to be the connection point for the tourists and NGO. However Ngima and all three tourists emphasize that their involvement is not enough to develop Kharikhola.

*There are only certain things you can do as a tourist, like fundraising and volunteering, but there is a limit, we don't live here. It is after all Kharikhola's people who have to develop their village.*

Helen Simpson, Kharikhola, April 2014

*The women's group who got training last week with the other group of volunteers certainly got new skills, so yes of course. But issues like community empowerment does not just come from tourists coming and helping them. It might but it will take many many years. There should be the government or some NGOs working progressively for that.*

Margaret Topping, Kharikhola, April 2014

While Helen and Margaret point out the need of locals, Government's and NGOs involvement, Serge looks for collaboration and partnerships but he expresses that it is one of the big challenges.

*Another thing is that not many organizations like to cooperate. I met a lady who runs hospital in Lukla, she said it is better to keep our projects separate. It sounds like we are competitors trying to provide one is better than the other instead of thinking that we can have bigger impact if we work together.*

Serge Currat, Switzerland, April 2014

They do however has a good understanding that development works take time but they are also concerned whether the development work will continue in their absence;

*Last year we had a big meeting here in Switzerland with our committee and we were thinking, do we have to leave this Kharikhola project to do another project in Nepal.*

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*May be in Kathmandu, Dolpa or somewhere else. Because, I know you know better than me that another area, they need more help. I always say no its better to keep some money to keep the project alive, if something happens we are always behind. It could be earthquake, it could be a war, I don't know. We never know what could happen in Nepal and after we decide to go ahead. Plus we do not know whether those work will continue if we pull out.*

Serge Currat, Switzerland, April 2014

The will to support Kharikhola is strong still among the tourists, however Margaret also argues that efforts from tourists and NGOs are not enough;

*I think for this place to be developed, it has to be more combined effort from every side and even from the poorest of the poor and the high caste people need to change their attitude toward the Dalits and the government has to play more active role as well as the local civil-society.*

Margaret Topping, Kharikhola, April 2014

Both tourists and the travel agency see it important to support in Kharikhola's development. They even choose various way to do so. Some of the tourists start NGOs and use their spare time to raise funds while others find more meaningful to volunteer. Either way they are determined. The private sector apart from providing employment, become the link between the communities and the tourists/NGOs and ensure the projects are implemented. However, they also see it as a partnership work for CBT to succeed.

**Sub-conclusion:**

Developing any community is not a single man's job and not certainly of the tourists only who out of kindness commit to do something for the community. Similarly the effort of those who already left their community is not enough although the community shows gratefulness.

The signs of positive changes are noticed by these tourists who have been coming back to Kharikhola with an intention to help the people. However they are also concerned that without joint effort from all different stakeholders, this development is very slow paced and while taking longer time for the most needy people to get the benefit.

Similar views are expressed by the community, even those who are

considerably poor. There are barriers on the way, but slowly they are taking steps toward working together as a community, but they also confirm that they still need guidance and resources from other stakeholders in order to reach the development goals.

## **6. Discussion:**

This research study started with the following three objectives:

- a) To understand the significance of various stakeholders' roles in CBT and tourism planning and to investigate the possible link between tourism and poverty alleviation via CBT through the literature.
- b) To investigate the stakeholders' perceptions of CBT development in Kharikhola's tourism development.
- c) To examine stakeholders' involvement and their role in Kharikhola's tourism development.

Within the literature, I found that many researchers and tourism practitioners consider CBT as a development vehicle in the developing countries, with a potential to reduce poverty and improve livelihood due to its economic value. However it is also highly debated whether it actually can help in poverty alleviation. Mainly because poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon, evaluating benefits in economic value is not enough but exactly because poverty is complex in nature, it is also difficult to demonstrate with concrete evidence that the poor have gained from CBT development.

On other hand, not all researchers agree with the view that CBT can impact positively in poverty alleviation as some studies have shown that tourism revenue leaks before it reaches to the poor creating even bigger gap between the rich and the poor.

CBT's role in community development is however not denied by these researchers, as there is an increasing emphasis on community involvement and participation in decision-making, implementation and identifying local problems as well as introducing something that is adapted to local needs.

Similarly there are many challenges if (CBT) is to succeed. The uneven distribution of the tourism revenue, the lack of coordination, community involvement and participation are some of them. To resolve such challenges, collaboration and partnerships with all various stakeholders are deemed necessary.

However this process of collaboration is highly interdependent of

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stakeholders, thus the stakeholder perspective is necessary to identify the causes of conflict and obstacles to co-ordination including differing perceptions of the impact of tourism among the key stakeholders in the domain.

Among these stakeholders, Zhao & Ritchie (2007) have identified six groups; the poor, the Government, the private sector, civil-society, NGOs/Donor agency and the tourists.

Although tourists are the main economic source in tourism, their value in CBT development is very underestimated mainly because of their diverse nature but also because they are seen only from marketing perspective.

Since the community makes its location available for the tourism activities, in principle the highest possible benefit should be provided to them but the benefit they get is so unevenly distributed that some researchers fear that CBT would create even wider gap between the rich and the poor. Thus a lot of focus is given to community involvement and participation for CBT to succeed.

While role of the community is emphasized by researchers, governments lack of involvement is criticized by many. Due to pressure from international society and donor agencies, however poverty alleviation has become governments' top agenda.

The private sector on the other hand have the potential of investment and create employment to the local community as well as can deliver the benefits to communities. However there is a lack of study on how the private sector can contribute towards poverty alleviation, although private sector is increasing involving in community development.

Likewise, the civil society has been promoted as an effective mechanism to address the failure in the governance of the state and market; and an important medium through which aid is channeled in that it has a common interest in development and is able to reach to the poorest of the poor. However their role similar to the private sector's are sparsely examined in the academic world.

Supplementing the civil-society, NGO are seen as the "alternative" source of development in most of the developing countries, as the governments often seemed to be less capable of implementing development activities. NGOs have a vital role to play in

building civil accountability, consultancy, providing full-spectrum alliances and act as facilitator to promote the building of respectful relationships by empowering the stakeholders.

Kharikhola as a case study in this research has attempted to establish some of the theories found in the literature review through the point of views of 20 different stakeholders.

### ***6.1 The relationship between CBT development and poverty alleviation:***

From the fourth chapter, one can see that most of the development work (public services such as schools, health posts or supply of electricity) are supported by NGOs run by tourists, pointing a big gap in the Government's initiative to develop the village. Whether or not this claim is 100% true, the absence of the local government gives an impression that all such work is initiated by tourist who feel pity for the people of Kharikhola.

While I interviewed 15 local resident and 1 temporary worker from Kharikhola, I found that most of them give credit to tourism for the development activities so far, mainly after the resolution of the civil war. The public services that have made their lives easier such as schools, health service, regular supply of electricity have been funded by the various NGOs and implemented by local committees, whereas the highly debated road, which is supposedly a Government project is taking longer time than the villagers can patiently wait. In such situation, where Government is failing to provide the necessary service, it is natural to view CBT development as the main driver of development.

However, the interviewees evaluated Kharikhola's development not as an independent value but they compared with both the villages which they perceived more prosperous and those village which were less prosperous. Similarly the changes in lifestyle, houses with or without toilet, drinking water, number of hotels and shops, villages with only primary school and villages with higher schools were the criteria for this comparison.

From my own observation, I found that houses closer to the main market area and the trekking route have both running water and toilet facilities, while further the houses are, lesser the facilities are. Especially, among Dalits who live 1-2 hours walk away from the market area, there is none.

As discussed earlier, poverty is multi-faceted, thus measuring the accumulated

wealth is not the only method to measure poverty. Opportunity for jobs, sanitation and hygiene conditions, healthcare opportunities, education, all count. When asked about the poverty situation in Kharikhola, everyone replied that they are less poorer than earlier, but that does not mean they are getting richer. Their idea of being less poorer is based on the changes they are experiencing. For instance, Motilal B.K., Sarkiman B.K., who are Dalits and were deprived of the rights to education because of the caste system in Nepal, now can send their children to school and just with this possibility they see themselves not as poor as in the past.

But are they as rich as other high caste people in Kharikhola? Do they have any possibility to be richer in the near future? The answer is no. The development triggered by tourism has reached Kharikhola, there is no doubt but it will still take some time for people like Motilal and Sarkiman to get other benefits than being able to send the children to a donor sponsored school.

Of course it is not tourism's fault. The reason lies behind the division/barrier created by Nepal's caste system. Although NGOs support projects targeted for less fortunate people, because of the caste barrier by the time it is Dalits' turn, the (benefit) pot is almost empty.

It is not to blame the high caste people of Kharikhola. Most of them I interviewed are also poor in their opinion. So when the opportunity is provided, the share is first divided among those who have the knowledge and power, as in the case of drinking water - The distribution pipeline was not provided to Dalits, whereas others (of higher caste) who are also living away from the main market were provided.

But not everyone agree that it is only because of the caste system that Dalits are neglected. According to Pemba Galzen Sherpa and Sushmita Rai, it is also because they are not proactive themselves, waiting for someone to come and help.

Although for many it seems just laziness and one could conclude that it is the drawback of tourism development, these Dalits are however cursed with fatalism. As discussed earlier in chapter, 2.4, people believe in fate, meaning anything that happens, happens because it is destiny. Thus Dalits though suppressed in the society, accept that it is their fate to be suppressed as untouchables. So most of the Dalits neither protest or try to



change their situation. If anyone from outside comes and makes changes in their lives, then it is also because it is the destiny and they accept the changes accordingly.

This is however changing slowly. Even Sarkiman admits that they have started to protest if they feel discriminated and the younger generation treat them with more respect than the elder generation. This could be because of education opportunities as well as the exposure they get from travelling and with tourists, so younger generation see it differently.

At least this is what I sensed while talking with younger interviewees like Pemba and Sushmita. As they themselves do not believe in fate any more, they also criticise the poor for not being active but just waiting for others to come and help them.

Similarly changing lifestyle and opportunities have also some influences in the community behaviour. As Mingmar Galzen Sherpa talks about the incident when the villagers protested against the Government, when they tried to open a different trekking route towards Namche Bazaar, because they risked losing their income sources.

On the other hand, the same incident is a proof of communities coming together when in need, to actively seek solutions for their common problem. Thus CBT development has succeeded to a certain degree in empowering the community.

Hence it can be concluded that CBT development can be a development vehicle that empowers the community through involvement and participation by providing the necessary structure and resources and improving livelihood in rural communities such as Kharikhola. However, it can also be concluded, that tourism development cannot alone reduce poverty, although it contributes by providing both direct benefits in the form of employment and indirect benefits such as community empowerment, opportunities for school education and healthcare. At the same time, it can also be said that tourism development does not have mechanism for even distribution of the benefits, and the need for the Government to act according to its role even more necessary to ensure that the poorest of the poor can benefit from tourism development.

## ***6.2 Stakeholders' involvement and their role in Kharikhola's development:***

Approximately 1200 residents live in Kharikhola out of which, 15 were interviewed. These 15 local residents' role in the community overlaps with each other and

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varies from being the helpless poor to strong committee Chairman of a Mother's group, from a hotel owner to guide or the Headmaster of a high school and so does their involvement in Kharikhola's tourism development.

However none of them will remain in their current role as these roles and responsibilities are evolving with the time. For instance, it can easily be anticipated in case of Motilal and Sarkiman, as now that they can speak in Dalit Committee and express their opinion instead of waiting for some tourists to pass by and help them with donation or sponsor their children.

It is also evident that it is easier for the people with entrepreneurship spirit to get direct benefits other than employment from the story of Harki Maya Magar, who because of her engagement with agriculture received help from tourists in green house farming. The Mothers group is another example. Without them taking the initiative, they would not have been able to make a special place in the community, at the same time they would not have had support for building the community house, if their engagement was not significant.

However, there are still barriers for people not to get involved in the community effort though they know that it can be beneficial personally. Sometimes because they are struggling every day to meet the ends, and sometimes because of lack education and knowledge, that they simply do not know how and where to start.

But again it is also the way society is built. Purnima Rai expressed that she would like to join the Mothers group, but besides the question of affordability with regards to membership fee, she also needed to ask her husband for permission. The male dominated society can sometimes bring hindrance to the initiative women want to take.

At the same, the poor people do not feel they have the right to get involved in civil-society or NGO works because of the caste system. Both Kumari Sewa and Jeevan Nepali have experienced reluctance and abuse from high caste, when they inquired about the funds meant of Dalits.

In contract to these challenges, the younger generation however is positive and visionary. For instance, Sushmita Rai does not want to wait for foreigners' help but thinks that the village should give more attention towards attracting private sectors, so that the

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farmers can benefit my selling their produce rather than depending upon tourism.

While the community is increasing positive about the concept of community involvement and participation, the tourists also see similar sign in Kharikhola. As they started their journey with Kharikhola with an intention to help the community, they are seeing evidences of changes as they can see that the local people have started to take responsibility and take initiatives.

Margaret expressed that she now can see that they do not need foreigners to come and volunteer for the health camp as the local health worker seem far more competent at present compared to what she had experienced in the past. Similarly, Serge's concern about whether the hydro-power project can run with them being standby has proved not necessary any more because he can see now that the locals are capable of running the project and providing good service to the community. However, Serge is also aware that, for a better result Kharikhola still need Action Kharikhola to support.

Having struggled through the harsh life, Ngima feels that it is his duty to be involved in community work even though he does not live there anymore. Because of the nature of his business he is often in contact with tourists like Helen and Margaret who are willing to spend some of their time volunteering or tourists like Serge who can help fundraising for the various projects in Kharikhola. So it is natural for him to be the connection point for the tourists and NGO. However Ngima and all three tourists emphasize that their involvement is not enough to develop Kharikhola.

Playing the role of a connection point between the locals and tourists, the private sectors such as travel agencies are vital for Kharikhola. While making a living out of tourism, Ngima is committed to provide his fellow villager the opportunity to educate, the opportunity he himself did not have when he was young. However the challenges lie in the coordination with the community and other similar stakeholders.

The tourists like Helen, Margaret and Serge are committed to support Kharikhola, with way and means they can, however they also emphasize that for such CBT development to succeed, it requires joint effort from all different stakeholders including the local community as well as Government.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the stakeholders are

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diverse, yet interdependent with each other and CBT development can bring these stakeholders together and empower the community in decision-making and acting together for a common goal. Meanwhile their roles overlap with each other and is evolving together with the changes in the community. Even among the poor, there are now opportunities to raise the voice and express their opinion, so new roles are being created in Kharikhola and the tourists and NGOs are optimistic as they see local people getting more skilled and responsible.

Thus it can be said that CBT has the potential to bring these stakeholders together and create collaborations and partnerships. However, this can only happen, when all different stakeholders play the roles they are required to.

The next chapter presents the final conclusion and future implication of the research study.

## **7. Conclusion and future implication:**

In this research study, I investigated the stakeholders' perspective in CBT development with regards to poverty alleviation and their own roles in it. The research contributes to the literature by approaching the question on tourism's role in poverty alleviation by taking a practical approach where poverty is not measured not on the basis of economic value but from the stakeholders' perception. Similarly, the collaboration and partnerships are considered the success factor if CBT development is to deliver its promises, thus their involvement and their role in CBT development is deemed necessary to explore.

The integrated research framework for research on tourism and poverty alleviation proposed by Zhao & Ritchie (2007) has been used as a guideline for the research data collection as well as analysis, while the research studies discussed in the literature reviews have been the basis for overall analysis of the research data. In addition, theory on fatalism's role in Nepalese development is discussed as it helped to understand certain behavior of the stakeholders.

Kharikhola, a village in rural Eastern Nepal, where tourism plays a vital role yet is not main occupation for the majority of the people living in the area, was selected as the case study. 15 local resident, 1 temporary worker, 1 travel agent and three tourists were interviewed, in order to get answer to the research question - *"How do the various stakeholders of Kharikhola view community-based tourism development in Kharikhola? And how do they perceive their own role in such development?"*

With approximately 1200 residents, Kharikhola welcomes around 15-30 tourists everyday, who stop by on the way to Lukla and continue further to several trekking destinations such as Everest Base Camp. Among them, some tourists find it necessary to do something for the village as they view the village not very developed with majority of people living in poor condition.

Most of the public services are provided by NGOs (run by tourists) through local committees which function as civil-society. The Nepalese Government meanwhile is still struggling to break through the deadlock since the civil war started in 1994, thus there is no local government present in Kharikhola. In other words, Kharikhola's tourism development is more or less in the hands of a few local level civil-society and NGOs.

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Thus it is natural for the local interviewees to have an understanding that any development that has happened in Kharikhola is because of tourism. However, the benefit from this CBT development has reached sparsely to the poorest of the poor, the Dalits. Although it is the social construct of the Nepalese society, that has roots in the Dalits' poverty situation, the only biggest difference, tourism has made in their lives are the opportunity for school education and accessibility to health service.

Similarly, the study revealed that for the local stakeholders development is a comparative factor, where the stakeholders compare the progress with villages, they perceive as more developed than their own village and villages they perceive less developed than their village. So, in some cases they found Kharikhola quite developed while in some other cases, they found it is not as developed as it is supposed to be.

Likewise, the tourists agree that they are seeing the changes in positive direction and not only because they have been able to help the village to build school or other services, but because they see that local people have started to take responsibilities and the capacity is building.

On the other hand, poverty though being a complex subject to measure, is evaluated on the basis of the stakeholder's possession compared to the neighbors and friends and relatives in Kharikhola. Thus, in the beginning the local stakeholders said that people at Kharikhola were poor regardless of the differences within themselves. However the major differences noticed during the field trip were remarkably simple facilities such as toilet and drinking water.

The Nepalese caste system and people's belief on fate were considered the main constraint behind this situation, as the Dalits' suppressed by higher caste people have no chance to change their lives, as there are many restrictions and prejudices that prevent Dalits from getting those type of jobs which pay better, while they do not try to fight against such suppression because they accept it as their destiny. However, young generation who are more skeptic towards fatalism, think that the poor are simply dependent upon the help they receive, so there is not much point in struggling harder to change their lives when others can fix it for them.

However the best solution for alleviating poverty was suggested to be a

collaborative effort from all types of stakeholders including a bigger role played by the Government. As the local stakeholders are aware of their role in community development and are either already involved or planning to be more active, there is however a clear lack of the leadership role that is supposed to be the role of the Government. CBT development can of course be the driver of community development as seen in case of Kharikhola. However its impact on poverty needs to be reconsidered, as the benefit to the poor from CBT is very little compared to other stakeholders among them in Kharikhola.

The chances are greater if CBT is even more visible part of the Government's development policy in local level and not just remain as a written policy. But at the moment, looking at Kharikhola's development progress, it does seem that the Nepalese Government has taken a back seat, letting the people, the private sector, civil-society and NGOs to do the heavy lifting while still enjoying the taxes and income from tourism activities.

### ***7.1 Future implication:***

Tourism development and it's role on poverty alleviation is a complex study. In one way, this research study found that the poorest of the poor are not getting even share of benefit while it still recommends that such development is still needed and is the driver for overall development. As this research has been carried in a very short period, and with a small number of stakeholders, it is certain that findings cannot be generalised or valid to similar other community's development situation.

However this study provides enough insights regarding the stakeholders' understanding on the topics such as development and poverty at the same time, it also shows that community are changing their roles in community development and are getting more and more engaged to be a part of development that alters their lives to a positive direction. A longitudinal and cross-section study is recommended in the future, as it will help examine and compare the development progress in Kharikhola in the future.

Similar case study would contribute the literature with better knowledge about the perception of stakeholders on tourism development and poverty alleviation, which can pave the way to better collaboration and partnerships that would result in achieving the goal of alleviating poverty through tourism development.

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## **Appendix 1 - Interview Guideline:**

Since the research purpose is to examine the stakeholder's point of view on tourism development and poverty alleviation, I decided to collect data by using a semi-structured and informal interviews.

I had prepared two sets of question; one for the local community and one for other stakeholders.

### **Questions for the local community:**

To start the conversation and to get familiar with the interviewees, I often asked about their background or their children and their occupation. I explained them about my research thesis and asked for the permission to use these interviews as data.

Besides the background information (name, age, number of children and income/profession) I had prepared a set of questions as follows:

- a. Do you see the community is developing? Why and how do you think it is developing?
- b. what are your opinions about tourism development?
- c. Has it changed your life/lifestyle? How?
- d. How do you see your role in community development? How do you get involved?
- e. How do you see the role of Government and other stakeholders?
- f. Is there any obstacle/challenge in community development? How do you as community solve them?

### **Questions for other stakeholders:**

- a. How often have you been to Kharikhola?
- a. Do you see the community is developing? Why and how do you think it is developing?
- b. what are your opinions about tourism development?
- d. How do you see your role in community development? How do you get involved?
- e. How do you see the role of Government and other stakeholders?
- f. What are the obstacles/challenges in community development?

The interviewees were not asked these questions in a sequence but i followed the conversation covering all these questions.

**Appendix No. 2, Interview data:**

**Interview with local people from Kharikhola village:**

**1. Bhai Kaji Magar, age 20:**

Background information: He is single but lives together with his mother, elder brother and his wife and his son. He works as electrician in the village. His monthly income is between 6000-9000 NRS. He gives his monthly earnings to his mother and saves some for his pocket money.

The interview:

Q. Do you see the community is developing? Why and how do you think it is developing?

Ans: It is too early for me to say it is developing but yes it is changing. We have higher school now so I did not have to leave my village for study. But I went to Salleri to get training as electrician. Earlier we had no choice. We could just stay here and do whatever we can or we could leave the village to get education or employment.

Q. Does this mean you have good chances for job here at present?

Ans: That I cannot say. If I had money then I would have gone for better education and possibly also abroad but I do not have. So I have to be satisfied with what I have. There are lot of ad hoc works in the village but then I do not have a proper regular income as an electrician. I repair wire, electricity and other electric appliances for local people, power house and also at hotels and lodges. I am often busy but I earn around 9000 NRS maximum.

Q. So you think you would be better off if you go abroad?

Ans: Yes I think so.

Q. You say there is a lot of ad hoc work here and now better education too. Do you then think the community is developing?

Ans: People are building new hotels closer to the trekking route, that is why I have some work. But I think the community has not developed as it should be. We have electricity in our village, hotels and shops and even toilet. But had it not been for tourism and because of

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tourists, there would not be any incentive for getting electricity in the village.

Q. What do you mean by if it has not been for tourism, there would not be any incentive for getting electricity? Can you explain?

Ans: I meant that if people had not seen it as important thing to have, if you want tourists to stay at the hotels and earn money, for local people it was not very important. We are used to living without much luxury. Plus it was tourists who taught us that we could earn more by getting electricity and make your life better. In fact it was because of some tourists who came with pipes and generators, built the power house, that we have electricity now.

Q. So you see the role of tourism to be important when it comes to Kharikhola's development? How has it affected you?

Ans: Directly it has nothing to do with me. My life does not depend upon tourism, but my brother works as a porter during tourist season.

Q. But you work at hotels and lodges. If they have no tourist staying, would you still get those ad hoc tasks?

Ans: May be not. But as an electrician, I can migrate to other villages where there is more work. I have better options that way.

Q. How do you see your role in community development? How do you get involved?

Ans: I am not involved in politics but I do help out as volunteer whenever there is something. I am still young and they do not listen to young people unless you are a politician.

Q. Is there any obstacle/challenges in community development? How do you as a community solve them?

Ans. We have our own lives to take care as we struggle everyday to feed ourselves and family, so we hardly have time to think about the community development. I think first of all, if we only we do not have to think about sustaining daily lives, we can start thinking about the problems our society is facing and ways to solve them. If not we will depend on others as we do now. We depend on tourists and NGOs to come and help us.

**2. Nirmala Thapa Magar, age 47:**

Background information: She is the Chairman of Women's group for the past 6 years. She lives with her husband and has three children. The eldest son works in Korea and her youngest son and daughter live in Kathmandu and are studying. The main occupation is agriculture, but she also runs a small lodge and a shop at Kharikhola bazaar.

The interview:

Q. Since you are the chairman of the women's group, can you please tell me what do you and the group do in the community?

Ans: We started our group by raising 20 NRS per month but it was too expensive for most of members and they are mostly poor women, so since last 4 years we raise 10 NRS per month. This fee is used for different activities in the village such as monthly meeting, cleaning activities, awareness program for building toilets, installing dustbin. Latest we have built a community kitchen with some assistance from Nicole Foundation. Similarly we built the Kharikhola trail with fund supported by the Government, and some INGOs. The school was destroyed during Maoist insurgency and the group helped to rebuild the school with 10,000 NRS.

Q. So you have done a lot of work to develop the community in these years. Why and how do you think it is developing?

Ans: You see Namche, there the society has changed very much. Their lifestyle has changed so much that they don't allow us to stay over at their house anymore because we are not rich and clean enough. Tourism has changed that village and we want our village also to change.

Q. You don't see this as bad thing, that people at Namche do not treat you good?

No no, of course we do not like being treated as inferior but what I mean is that they live a very prosperous life. We do not want to treat others the same way.



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Q. Does this mean you see tourism as something positive? Something that brings change?

Ans: Yes of course. Because we have tourists staying at our hotel, we have been able to build our house better, we are able to send money to our children to study in Kathmandu.

You go to a nearby village Baku, just 8 hours walk from here and you can see there is nothing. There is no place to sleep, you have to bring your own food, you cannot buy anything, no toilet, no running water, you need to go to the river to fetch water. Life is very difficult there and it is one of the nearby village. But tourists do not trek through that village so no change.

Q. What about your own life? Has it (tourism) changed your life/lifestyle? How?

Ans: My husband used to run at local mill, down nearby the river and it was very hard, his back hurt. Now it has been 10 years, he does not work there and he feels better. We run the hotel and little bit of farming and we are still able to support our children in Kathmandu.

Also collecting 10 NRS per month from Women's group is not a big amount, had it not been for the tourists who come here and run different training programs, health camps and sponsor school children, our village would not have been developed at all. We still need to work hard and there is a lot to do, but we cannot do it alone.

Q. How do you see your role in community development? How do you get involved?

Ans: I have been working as Chairman of Women's group for 6 years. I believe we women need to come forward. There are some nice tourists who come back with good training programs, we need to learn from them and use them in our lives. You can see that in Kharikhola we have installed Dustbin and we try to clean the village and make people use the dustbin. We have not have local election since many years but we do go and speak at the local authority.

Q. Is there any obstacle/challenges in community development? How do you as a community solve them?

Ans: There is not many problem here in community, we all want to develop the village but we lack education. Our priority therefore is education and then the health and transport. But because there is no local representative, it is very difficult to get what we want. We go to

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meetings and decide what our priorities are but it is a very time consuming process. If we had local representative, it would not take so much time.

Q. What about poverty? Has tourism or community development helped poor people?

Ans: There are many poor people here, but because they work as porter during season and can earn minimum 10,000 NRS a week even as a porter, they do not seem to be poor. They all have mobile phones in their hand and wear trendy clothes. But there are the low caste people (Bks) and it is different. They are still poor but they do least to change their lives. For instance, when tourists come here with some programs, even the health camp, you can see that they are poorly dressed and dirty and the tourists pity them and give them clothes, soaps etc., but every year it is the same story. We are also not rich as such but we do a lot to make our lives better, but for these poor people it will take longer time in my opinion.

Q. What about the local NGOs or organisations/business here? How do you view their roles?

Ans: They are doing great job. We do not have local NGO here, but I think the tourists come with good programs and we learn a lot, our children go to school, so we are very grateful. We do not see any problem in this.

**3. Indra Kumar Rana Magar, age 65:**

Background information: Runs a tea shop, since 15-16 years and is a farmer. Lives with his wife. Have 3 children, but only the youngest son lives with them. He was active member in health committee and Community forest user group, but now he is old and wants others to work so has stepped out.

The Interview:

Q. You have been active in the village, can you tell me what you think about community development?

Ans: Before the Maoist insurgency, this village was a lot better than now. We already had electricity, the bazaar was bigger and busier. There were few primary schools but it became worse during the insurgency and we had to build the village again after 2006. It is gaining back but not as before the civil war. Tourists are again trekking this route instead of flying directly to Lukla but it will take time to reach at the same level as before.

Q. So you do not see tourism helping the development in the village?

Ans: It is helping but it is only helping those who are clever and can run tourism related businesses. Those who are only farmers have difficulty surviving throughout the year, therefore they have to work as porters to survive.

Q. How do you mean by it is only helping clever people?

Ans: You know many people from Kharikhola are very rich, they earned a lot and moved to abroad or Kathmandu. Tourism was the reason they earned but now they do not live in the village. They come here may be once in 2-3 years. Most of the children go to school and at least 85% of those who finish school, study further. Young people flee to Kathmandu and only poor and old people live here. But I still think tourism has benefit only a limited number of people.

Q. I have been in the village for a week now and I can see many young people too. Do you not think they will stay here?

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Ans: Yes of course some of them will. They work as porter during season and they earn about 7000 NRS a week. That has helped a lot, they can afford new clothes and things. They have cash now and if someone is sick, they can afford taking him/her to Lukla or Kathmandu for treatment.

But not everyone gets the chance to work for tourists. Many carry firewood, stones and transport goods. They do not earn much.

Q. You said earlier that many people from Kharikhola have moved away. Is that a bad thing?

Ans: Because of tourism lifestyle has changed a bit. A porter can earn 5-6000 NRS a week and guides more. They have learnt from tourist to be clean and wash clothes more often. And when they learn they leave the village. They should be doing something for the development of the village but they do not. But I am not saying that it is bad only.

Q. Ok, then what are the good things?

Because of tourism, we get the opportunity to meet new people from all over the world. They have helped us build our schools, health post and water supply by providing funds. We local people have only provided labour.

Students from all over the area can come to study in Kharikhola, if not they have to go to Lukla or Salleri. Now we even have hostels so the students can rent room and save 4-5 hours walk to school everyday. The tourist have sponsored many children from poor family and they have clean drinking water in the school. We have electricity and there is no power cut like in Kathmandu.

Q. That sounds good. What do you think then the challenges/problems Kharikhola faces in the development work?

Ans: We have no problem as such. VDC and DDC has no budget for tourism. In fact budget is frozen there and since there is no representative and hence no authority, they do not release money for the necessary work in village development. Now we have been struggling to get a proper road and we do have budget for road construction and there is money for that but still its taking longer time. Government prioritises more on school and health service, but

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most of us want road connection.

So we are very dependent on tourism. In fact many people from Kharikhola do not want road to come. They think about themselves only. They say we have invested so much money on building a tourist lodge, if there comes road through Kharikhola, tourist will not stay overnight and they will lose money.

Q. What about the NGOs? I have heard that there are many NGOs working here.

Ans: We have a local NGO, that has helped us to bring equipment for the health post. There are also some NGO or tourist who come with many activities and we need more of them. But the big INGOs like CARE-Nepal see that we we have progressed a lot, we use toilet and have a good supply of water and their main focus is the same, so they go to other villages.

Q. What about your own role in the development?

I try to influence the VDC, like I together with many others are trying to get the road constructed soon even though there are people who clearly do not want it. But I do wish there are more people who would work for the village and not think only about themselves.

**4. Bhim Bahadur Rana Magar, age 74:**

Background information: He lives with his wife and youngest daughter. Has 3 sons and 4 daughters. He has been farmer all his life and has a buffalo now. Farming is sufficient for living. Some 20 years ago, he was chairman of local primary school.

The Interview:

Q. You have lived all your life here, please tell me what you think about the development of this village.

Ans: It has developed a lot, not as before the insurgency, when Kharikhola was actually a big bazaar and there were many more people living and many tourists travelled through this route. But now also life has become easier. There is a bridge now, the trekking trail, toilets, community forest, tree plantation. Life is good here, you can buy many things just like in big cities, but it is nice here, air is not polluted. But yes the donkey trails makes the village a bit dusty.

Q. You mentioned the trekking trail and the dust because of donkeys transporting goods. But what do you think about the overall tourism development?

Ans: It is very important. If it had not been for the tourism, we would not have developed that much. All the facilities we have now is because the village lies in the tourist route. The only thing is if we get sick and need operation, we have to go to Lukla or Kathmandu, if not one can easily live here.

Q. What about the poverty issue? Has tourism helped poor people around Kharikhola?

Ans: Yes, tourism has reduced poverty a lot. It has become easier to get loan from banks if you want to start any business related to tourism because they know that one can earn from it and pay the loan back. My son had taken loan to start his hotel and he has no problem paying the interest every year.

Similarly, we people have learnt a lot from tourism. We have now more knowledge and have become cleverer. There are more options now, one does not have to be a farmer for living.

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There are even more people for other villages and districts coming here for employment. Youth from here go out of district to Kathmandu and abroad and youth from other villages come here.

Q. What about the problems due to tourism? Are there any negative issues?

Ans: There is no problem as such but we need a road here. If the road comes through the village and we have a proper transport system, our lives would change. Everything grows here so we will be able to supply our products to other areas if we can transport them by vehicle and not by donkeys. It would also be cheaper.

Q. What about the NGOs working here? How do you see their roles in the community development?

Ans: There is no local NGO here. So NGOs working here are all those funded by tourists. Together with them, our sons and brothers have done a lot of work to develop our village. I am only grateful.

Q. How do you see your own role in the community development?

Ans: Now I am too old and it is others turn to take the responsibility. But I do encourage the young generation and give advices to them.

**5. Padam Thapa, age 56:**

Background information: He works as a school principal since 2007 at Kharikhola High School and has worked at the same school for more than 26 years. He lives with his wife and has 3 children but they do not live together. Besides he is also active member of Hospital Committee and hydropower committee. Earlier he lived at the village. He built his house closer to school and started a hotel about 20 years ago.

The Interview:

Q. Can you tell me about Kharikhola's development?

Ans: Kharikhola is developing. And all this development is because of local interest and initiative and private businesses. If not we have deadlock politically, there is no local representative because there has not been local election since 1997.

Q. So you mean the government has done nothing?

Ans: No, we do have yearly budget and decision is made by consulting with all parties representative, but we use unnecessary time in meeting and discussions.

Q. You said that development is mainly because of locals and private businesses. How have they contributed?

Ans: Business is source of income and there is good money in tourism businesses. But tourism in this area is not that big as I wish. Because there are many benefits. Many of our locals work as porter during season. We have built toilets and have got drinking water. Even though it was meant for earning money, we use these facilities ourselves too. Awareness has increased and people have learnt from others how toilet is necessary. We are getting less sick because of that.

Q. Where does tourism come in this context?

Ans: This village has developed because of tourism. If not there is nothing in this village. We cannot sell our crops to each other, we all grow the same. We would not be able to educate our children if Edmond Hillary had not helped to build the school. Some tourists sponsor



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poor children. But yes there are also problems because of this. There is increase in small crimes like stealing for instance, lot of small things disappear from the hotels and schools. Everything is expensive here, nothing is cheap compared to other villages where there is no trekking route. Too many people pass by so of course there will be problems.

Q. What about poverty reduction? Has tourism helped in poverty reduction?

Ans: Yes and No. Yes, because our lifestyle has changed. You can see for example toilets at most of the houses, so we are getting healthier. Almost all the children go to school, at least to the primary level. Dropout rates have decreased every year. They are aware that education is important. People are getting richer. You can see in the bazaar that some people have moved away and the houses are rented to people from other districts. These people see that there are better opportunities here.

In my own family, I have all my children educated and they are now out working and studying. They will not come back here and live with us.

Q. Then what do mean by no?

Ans: Like I said, people are moving away from the village. Young people prefer to work as porter during trekking season because they can earn immediately and they find it lucrative because then they can buy mobile phones and stylish dresses. Although we have strict rules in school about leaves and not attending school, some anyway work and eventually drop out when they cannot pass their curriculum. Because they see good money in such temporary work, they do not think the consequences of not having proper education later in life.

At the same time we are still dependent of others (tourists) donations. At our school only half of the teacher get salary from government. How can I say poverty is reduced when we cannot even pay our staff members without others help? But yes it is slowly helping.

Q. There are some NGOs working here. What do you think about them?

Ans: Yes we have a few NGOs, but they are all in Kathmandu or abroad. Kharikhola Trust, Action Kharikhola, Moving Mountain all contribute in the community. Hospital, monastery, schools are run because of them.

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Q. These NGO, how do they work? How do you see their roles?

Ans: I think it is necessary. Those tourists who want to help us, help us through them, but they also consult us what we need and what we think. Without them the help we get will be even less effective. For instance, I take care of some students and they live with us and they get support from these NGOs. I cannot otherwise raise so many students on my own.

We have formed some local committee to support the development work and I think NGOs are good at identifying our need and consulting us.

Q. How about your own role in the community development?

Ans: I think as a headmaster, I have a responsibility to fulfill. But I am also engaged in lots of activities such as hospital committee. Many students have sheltered in my house and I think my role in the community is obvious.

There are of course a lot to be done yet. We have a lot to change. For example, alcohol consumption, every house brews and it is easily available so we have people drunk from early morning. We need to change that. Perhaps when the road is constructed then it might change, because then you know you can sell your products to others than drinking yourself. But it will take time.

**6. Kumari Sewa, age 35:**

Background information: She comes originally from Okhaldhunga and is from Dalit (Low Caste) community. She has been living in Kharikhola since last 2-3 years and runs a shop at the bazaar. She is illiterate but has rented the house mainly for her daughter's education.

The interview:

Q. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Why are you living here instead of your own village?

Ans: I come from a Dalit community. I live here at Kharikhola with my daughter and a niece. My husband lives with our sons back in our village. He also runs a shop there and visits us once in a while. My daughter studies here at Kharikhola High School and back in our village we do not have that opportunity. We cannot afford to send her to Kathmandu because we are not rich. But here I earn good from the shop and I can pay for our children's education.

Q. Since you have been here for 2-3 years, what do you think about the development of this village?

Ans: Compared to my old village, it is very developed. Many things are available here. In my village even if you have money you cannot get what you want. We do not have high schools or any health post near by. Here is opportunity to earn and also get what you want.

Q. Being Dalit, what are the challenges for you to live here? Do you feel discrimination?

Ans: Of course, we are still discriminated. Sherpa's do not discriminate, it is alright to enter at Sherpa's lodges and houses but it is different at Magars. There are also more Magars in Kharikhola than Sherpas.

But it is not just about entering someone's house. We feel neglected. For instance, we know nothing about the funds that come from government. The only thing we know is it comes, but we have no idea for what, whom and why. If we ask the committee people, they scold us for being too concerned about money than about children and their future.

Q. But then how can you say it is better here?

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Ans: It is lot worse in other areas and the area we come from. Those who had to attend SLC (School leaving certificate exam) last year, could not get any room on rent in Khotang because they were Dalit. It is easier here in route, you can stay over at most of the hotels, except those of Magars. But even in this village, there are many houses where we are not allowed.

Q. You compare a lot about your own village and this village. What do you think about poverty and how has development helped Kharikhola?

Ans: We are still poor, but moving here, we can afford to send our children to school. It is still difficult to save more but we survive. Those villagers who have hotels in Kharikhola, they are rich. Some villagers are richer and do not live in Kharikhola anymore. Things are expensive here so for those who are poor, it is still hard. Some of them I know work as daily labour, carrying stones, cutting wood and collecting firewood, bamboos to make Doko. Their lives has not changed much.

Q. So you mean that there has not been much of poverty reduction in Kharikhola?

Ans: Those who were rich, they are becoming richer but those who were poor, I cannot say they are getting richer but they are not as poor as they used to be. I can see that on the way they dress and those things they buy at my shop. But perhaps it also has to do with tourism. Some tourists use this route for trekking and some stay here and do some work. Every house in the bazaar has clean toilet and drinking water and electricity. Up in the village they do not have toilet at every house.

Q. Now that you mention tourism, what are your opinions towards it? Has tourism any significance for you?

Ans: I think a lot change in this village has come because of tourists. They come and teach us many things and they actual work hard for us. Recently they had organised a sewing training for women, I could not go but I would have like to. Tourists do not discriminate. They do no say – you are Dalit so sit a little away from me.

The only bad thing is the donkey transport. Because of them, the trail is dusty and noisy. It

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takes longer time to walk because you have to stop and give side to the donkeys passing by. There is also increased chance that a tourist get injured because they get pushed by donkeys, you know the road is not big.

Q. How do you see government's role in all this?

Ans: I am not very interested and have less idea about what is happening in local government but I know that politicians come with promise but they never do a single work. So this village has developed mainly because of tourism. If tourists would not come this way, nothing would have happened.

Q. There are also NGOs working around the district and not only Kharikhola. What do you think of them?

Ans: I do not have much information about them. NGOs are only for clever people. They bring the projects as per their interest and target people are also themselves. They normally do not ask people like us to join. Magars from bazaar have more chances but then they are also the ones with power. Dalits have not much voices. I have some relatives among BK and there is one small Dalit Association, where they meet once in a while, but not much happens there, compared to other groups.

Q. Then what and how do you think you can do to improve your life and the community?

Ans: I am too busy with my shop and children, so I hardly have time to be in any group. Even if I try, who is going to listen to me? My focus is my children, if they do better than us, then our lives will change in some way. It has already changed.

**7. Jeevan Nepali, age 30:**

Background information: He works as a tailor in the village. He comes from Cheskam, about 3-4 days walk from Kharikhola but has lived most of his life in Lukla. He moved to Kharikhola about 1½ years ago with his family. His parents still live in Cheskam and being the eldest son, he still supports the parents financially.

The interview:

Q. You said you have lived in Lukla before, why would you move to less developed area than Lukla?

Ans: It is because of my daughter's health that I moved to Kharikhola. For some strange reason my daughter was always sick in Lukla, but when she would visit her relatives at Kharikhola, she would get better. Plus Kharikhola is lot better than my old village. There is nothing there, only my parents live there because they have always lived there but they have hard life back in the village. Here the school is closer, there is a health post, so we moved here.

Q. As a newcomer, how has it been in Kharikhola?

Ans: It has been difficult sometimes. Local people give you hard time, mainly when you are Dalit. They do not let you speak if you have some opinion about certain things. But otherwise it is a good place, better than my old village. I have made good friends and even though I live a bit away from bazaar, I have a good business because I am skilled. People come to me from far away villages, so I earn good. I earn bit less than in Lukla, but then I don't have to spend my money on my daughter's treatment so I have no complain about that.

It is also cheaper to send my children to school, as there are some funds for Dalits, I think given by some tourists and also something from government, so it is easy. We can live with discrimination. It has been like this, in fact worse before, so I am positive that at the certain time, my children will experience less discrimination.

Q. You said it is easier for you because you are skilled. How is it different for those who are unskilled?

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Ans: I make down jackets and sell them to guides and porters and other trekking staffs because I am skilled. They come searching for me because I have good reputation but some of my relatives who have always lived in this village are not skilled, they still work as day labour, not as guides or porters for tourists but they carry fuelwood and stone for less than 200 NRS per day. You can just imagine how hard it must be, when everything is so expensive here.

Q. You sell your products to guides and porters. How has tourism effected your life?

Ans: I have seen and heard lot of progress because of tourism, but I have not experienced myself any big change. I still need to settle here and find my place in the society. Local people, mainly Magars, do not like us, they do no speak to us in normal manner. But we have to make them understand that we Nepalis can live anywhere in Nepal.

Q. But do you think that tourism has provided any opportunity to the poor?

Ans: Yes and no. If you come from Rai, Magar or Sherpa community, then yes you can work as porters, guides and earn some money. But Dalits like us, they do not hire us.

Q. Why do they not hire Dalits? Is it again because of your caste?

Ans: I don't think tourists care about castes at all. But it is the trekking companies who prefer to hire their own people, their relatives whom they trust more than others.

Q. So back to tourism, is there any benefit to the poor?

Ans: Directly no, but our children get benefit because of tourism. They go to school and there is some fund/organisation that provide books. All these come from the tourists and donor agencies. In future it will be more I suppose, once the poor get more education and skills then they can do businesses, work with tourists.

Q. What about the local government and other organisation?

Ans: It is actually of no use for me, all powerful people control everything. I just want to live with what I have and continue my life.

Q. So you do not see your role in this society?

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Ans: I do not have big words. My duty is to take care of my children. They go to school and one day, I hope they have different life than mine. They might become something else than tailor. I do not want to waste my time and energy trying to speak for us Dalit, because that will only give problems. I want to live in peace.



**8. Sushmita Rai, age 17:**

Background information: She has just finished her SLC exam and is waiting for results. She worked as a volunteer during the health camp and lives with her mother and sister at bazaar.

The interview:

Q. Can you first tell me, why are you volunteering in the health camp?

Ans: I just finished my school and am waiting for the results. I like to contribute to the society that's why I am volunteering here and I meet new people, old friends and relatives who come to the camp. I want to study nursing when I get my result and this health camp inspires me.

Q. You talk about contributing to society. Why do you think it is needed?

Ans: You have seen during the health camp, many people are still very poor. They have to walk for days to come to this camp, because there is no easier means of transportation. So we need to work more and do something for the society.

Q. So what is your opinion regarding the development of Kharikhola?

Ans: It is developing but I think it is happening too slowly. You can see the difference already between the bazaar and rest of Kharikhola. We need people to educate more so that they build toilets and use water properly. We have fertile land but people still do not know how and what to grow to get the maximum benefit. It is not enough with some tourists using this route. It is certainly not good that tourists have to sponsor some children to go school. I don't mean it for the children. But once the parents believe they can easily get help from tourists to send their children to school, they do not work harder themselves. This not good enough.

Q. Why do you think tourism is not enough?

Ans: We do need more tourists and tourism need to be developed as well. But I think we should not be so dependent on tourism only. The bazaar we have, should be developed in a way that we can sell our local products to each other and earn money. This will also make things cheaper. Right now we bring food (mainly fast food) and goods from Salleri so

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everything is expensive while we have food at our home which if we can sell and earn instead of making alcohol drinks and getting drunk.

Q. So you are talking about social changes. How would these help in poverty issues?

Ans: I know change does not come easily. I think we need to have all these things together, I mean tourism, NGOs and also we local people need to work together. I don't trust government as such but tourists can teach us new and better ways of doing things but it is again upto us local people. Poor people should also be included.

Similarly NGOs and tourists help us with equipment, funds and training. People get sick a lot and also waste a lot of time and resources on alcohol. We need to teach them that it is not good for their health and they can use their crops in other ways than making alcohol. People also need to learn how to be clean and take care of hygiene.

Q. So as an individual you see that you can do a lot?

Ans: Yes, but it will take time. Community does not take young people seriously. I think we need a lot to do within agriculture and health. Also we need to identify ourselves what we need. It is of course good that tourists/NGOs come with programs for us, but we also need to speak up. I also think many young people plan to leave the village, but I do not want to.

Q. Why not? You can also earn more if you move to Kathmandu.

Ans: I know what I want to be in future. But I think it will be shame if we all young people move away.

**9. Gayatri Rana, age 14:**

Background information: She lives with her grandmother and a brother in the bazaar, while her parents live in Kathmandu. She is studying in 7<sup>th</sup> standard at Kharikhola High School.

The interview:

Q. How do you see Kharikhola's development?

Ans: I am too young to remember how it was before. But I see that there is progress around the bazaar, but then it is also only limited around the bazaar.

Q. What kind of progress and what do you mean only limited around bazaar?

Ans: Well around bazaar we have shops, hotels and even there a beauty parlour and computer training center now. But if you go further up in the village, nothing has changed. They do not even have toilet and children are dirty and sick and they sleep in the same room together with the cattle.

Q. What is the reason for this difference?

Ans: I think it is partly because of tourists. They need rest and different things so they buy from us and then we buy from others to sell the goods to tourists. But it is also because we are interested in making our lives better.

Q. So you mean those who do not live around bazaar are not interested in making their lives better?

Ans: No, I don't mean that. But you can see, there are toilets in every house in bazaar and running water 24 hours. But these are not just because we could sell to tourists, it is also because we want a better life.

Q. Then why do you think so?

Ans: I think it is due to lack of education and awareness. Even now there are some children who do not go to school. Some only study upto 5<sup>th</sup> standard and then they stop because they lose interest. Many villagers are illiterate, so they do not insist that their children continue at

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school. They do not know the importance basically.

Q. Then tell me what tourism has done in this village.

Ans: It is good for the development of Kharikhola. There are some direct benefits, like employment, businesses but there are also indirect ones. I have just received sewing training from a group of volunteers from New Zealand. Girls are now especially interested in sewing and it does not have to be Damai (Dalits) to be a tailor.

The health post is another example. I see foreigners working for us and it is inspiring for us young people to do something for our village when people from far away come and do something here. But beside tourism, communication has changed our lives too. Now most of us have mobile telephone so we can get help when we need. I can talk to my parents, before it was not easy.

Q. What about poor people? Is there any influence?

Ans: There are some examples where poor people move to Kathmandu or other areas because they can earn more. But in Kharikhola, I think it is slow. You would think people will build toilets when those at bazaar have, because it is hygienic. But they are too busy surviving, I don't think they see it with same importance as you do. Tourist's donation has helped a lot in the village, mainly with health camp, education and electricity but only indirectly. I think they will remain poor.

Q. How do you see government's role in village development?

Ans: I don't know. I am not interested in politics. Beside who will listen to us? They say we are too young. With what we hear from our parents and neighbours, we cannot trust government, they do nothing anyway.

Q. But then who would do? Or what can be done then?

Ans: It is upto us people, but as I said earlier, we do not have knowledge on how to do. We need to learn first, so it is good that tourists and NGOs come and teach us something.

Q. So you see the role of NGOs as social mobilizer or similar, who needs to motivate you?

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Ans: Yes, we definitely need help. Like with the sewing training, we need more program in other areas too. I want to be a nurse and contribute. But now I also have other interests like sewing and working with computers and hair dressing. I do not want to live all my life collecting grass and firewood.

**10. Harki Maya Magar, age 61:**

Background information: She was married to Magar family when she was 15 years old and after her marriage she has lived in Kharikhola all her life. She works as a farmer and is the first person in Kharikhola to produce green vegetable in a bigger scale and sell them as well as the first one who started green house farming. Although her house is at a distance from the bazaar, many villagers come to her to buy vegetables daily.

The interview:

Q. You have lived here for so long. Please tell me how the village has developed?

Ans: Before Lukla airport, this was the main trekking route towards Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest). Kharikhola was busy, there was life. There were many more people living in this village. We had good businesses, even though life was harsh. After Lukla airport opened the business went down, people started to fly directly to Lukla. It got worse after the Maoist conflict. Tourism almost stopped, so did people too. There were only a few tourists now and then, the Maoist made it difficult for those who wanted to trek. Many left the village because they did not want to be part of the conflict. Only poor and weak people lived here.

Q. How is the situation now? Has the prosperity of the past returned?

Ans: It has become better the last 7-8 years but it will take long time to bring back the good time of our past.

Q. How has your life changed during this time?

Ans: My life has not changed. I always had to work hard and I am still working hard. But yes because I worked hard, I managed to send all my children to school and now they live their own lives. All my three sons live close by and they also work. Now also I work hard so my children do not have to support me and my husband.

Q. That is good, How do you think the community has changed / developed?

Ans: It is changing of course, it has too. When I was a child, I was not allowed to go to school, now every child has the right to go to school. There are more people and also many people

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from other villages have moved here because it is better here.

Q. Why and how is it better?

Ans: You know there is this big school, not only for small children. And the tourists use the trekking route so people can do business with them, sell the goods and food.

Q. But I heard that there passes may be 20-30 tourists a day. How can it be better?

Ans: It can be better. But even if we get only 20 tourists a day, these 20 tourist stop my 4-5 hotels and eat lunch and some stay for the night. To feed them the hotel owner has to buy things for other shopkeepers. They can also sell doko to guides and kitchen boys.

Q. So it is compared to other villages it is better to live here?

Ans: Yes it is.

Q. You said that people do businesses with tourists directly or indirectly. Do you also sell your stuffs to hotels?

Ans: Sometimes I sell vegetables to hotels. But I also get help from some tourists. There was one named Andre, he was very impressed by the green house farming, it is not big but he helped with plants and taught me some technique. He came to volunteer at one primary, a two hour walk from here and he taught other farmers also about green house and plants. Now there is a nursery at the market which sells trees for planting in the forest.

Q. This green house project, did this guy come alone or was it some kind of project?

Ans: I think it was a project, but don't ask me about those big things, I have no knowledge.

Q. Why do you say you have no knowledge? You have worked so much and know a lot.

Ans: Project, politics, NGOs, I don't understand. I am busy with my life, no matter which project or government comes it doesn't change my fate so I don't have anything to talk.

Q. You sound a bit frustrated with them. Don't you think NGOs or government work for

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people?

Ans: No no, it is not like that. But I have no time to be interested in sitting and talking just for the sake of talking. I like to work and I like show that I can do things on my own. I still want to learn new things even though my eyes don't let me.

I have nothing to complain about NGOs or volunteers, they come from far far away to help us. I am only grateful. But Government, I cannot say it works. Ever since Maoist, I have not seen much from Government's side.

But they say there is a budget for road construction and I hope that they get it, but I doubt if it is happening so soon. If they say two years, then it will take another 5 years. I don't trust the Government.



**11. Gore Magar, age 48:**

Background information: He comes from Lodhing a village 2-3 days walk from Kharikhola. He works as carpenter for a hotel owner at Kharikhola and will be staying in Kharikhola until summer. He moves from village to villages seeking similar job with carpentry and masonry. He earns about 500 rupees per day and if the employers are nice, he gets food for free.

The interview:

Q. Why do you work as temporary worker and not a full time one?

Ans: I go where the work is. In village there are not many people who will buy furniture and I don't have capital to start my own shop. I have some pieces of land and I help my wife with farming when I am home.

Q. How do this village doing compared to your village?

Ans: Well this is a trekking route so many tourists are coming so they are building hotels and houses here so it is a richer village than mine. But I think there are equally poor people also living in this village.

Q. What could be the reason for them remaining poor?

Ans: We are born poor and although we have lands we do not grow enough. And we have many children so more mouth to feed. Then we do remain poor. Kharikhola is not very different from my village, only thing is no tourist trek through my village.

Q. So you think if there were a trekking route through your village, it would be better?

Ans: I think yes, more tourism means more benefit for the local. We can sell our food and build hotels for tourists to stay. That is why there is electricity and running water here in Kharikhola. If we had the same at my village, I could work there and earn and still be with my family.

Q. How about the Government or the NGOs? How do you see them?

Ans: We are too poor to decide how and what they should do and who is going to speak for

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us. But it is great that some tourists come and help poor people, they are lucky.

Q. Because you say you are poor, should you not ask the Government to help you?

Ans: I am illiterate and I don't know what to speak and what to think. If the village committees do not speak for us poor, we have not much to say. We carry on our lives as it is, that is better. I just hope my children would have an easier lives.

**12. Purnima Rai, age 31:**

Background information: She migrated to Kharikhola from Aishelikharka with her husband about five years ago. Now has built a small house close to the trekking route but earlier they used live in the bazaar. She has two small sons of age 2 and 5.

The Interview:

Q. Can you please tell me why moved to Kharikhola?

Ans: My husband had no job in our village, so I followed with him wherever he went. Now we have been living here and we have own house.

Q. so it was because of unemployment that you had to leave your village? How is it now, if I may ask?

Ans: We are doing good here. My husband works a day labourer, carries firewood and stones. Other times he weaves doko and similar items and sells them to villagers and travellers. I stay home and take care of children. So it is easy now. We have a good life.

Q. What you think about village development? How is it going?

Ans: I cannot say much, I have never been to school and I do not sit with thulo manche so I don't know what they say.

Q. I am not asking about them. You must be having some kind of opinion.

Ans: I think it is happening but only for those who can.

Q. What do you mean by those who can?

Ans: I mean those who have power and money. For poor people like us there is nothing. When there are some projects coming, we never know. So we do not get to participate. We only find out when it already is over.

Q. So you do not think that it has anything to do with your life? Do you not feel you belong here?

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Ans: No no, my neighbours are nice to me and it is a good place to live. There is a school, hospital and electricity. But we do not have toilets and television like others. And that donkey transportation is not that good either. Because donkeys are cheaper, poor people do not get job as porters.

Q. So people like your husband suffer because of donkey?

Ans: Yes, I think so. Although I know that things would even more expensive if porters have to carry all the load. And tourists are nice, they pay good, but if donkey takes your place then what can you do?

Q. Now that you mention tourists, what do you think about tourism?

Ans: It is good. We have beautiful mountains, it is good that people from other countries come to see them.

Q. Then what are the benefits of tourism?

Ans: It is the hotels and travel agents who get most benefit.

Q. Not local people?

Ans: Yes a little. We just have been to the health camp and there are foreigners taking our temperature. So yes there are some benefits. There was a training for women a while ago by some other tourists. I heard about it from some of friend at the bazaar that it was a good project. But I did not go there.

Q. Why not?

Ans: Because I am not in that Mother's group.

Q. Why are you not in the Mother's group then? You have two small sons, would it not be good for you?

Ans: I suppose so. May be I should join. I know they get trainings and some money, but you have to pay membership fee too and I don't have that much money.

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Q. What if I tell that it is only 10 rupees per month? Is it still a lot for you?

Ans: Only 10 rupees? Then may be not. I would like to open a shop one day, may be they can help me find out how. I don't have much money to start right now. But I first need to ask my husband.

Q. Ok, and what are your opinions about the Government and NGOs? How do you see their roles?

Ans: I have no interest in those things. My husband might know more. I only focus on my children and I really don't what is going on outside. But may I need to start now that you have told me a lot.

**13. Motilal B.K., age 56:**

Background information: He comes from Dalit caste and lives up in the village about 2 hours walk from the main bazaar. He has two sons and 2 daughters, all married. He lives with his wife, his two son and their wives and two grandsons. He is the blacksmith in the village and now that he is old he mostly stays home and repairs tools and knives. Earlier he used to walk around villages repairing knives and other tools.

Q. As a blacksmith, do you earn good now-a-days, I can see you have only a few things to repair today?

Ans: Sometimes I make 5-600 rupees and that is a good sum of money for an old person like me. We have a small piece of land and the crops we harvest last for 2-3 months. My sons work too as day labourer so it is not a problem.

Q. Why do your sons work as day labourers? Can they not get a good job?

Ans: No they did not complete school. And even if they did at that time who would give them good job. They are sons of Dalit.

Q. Is it different now being Dalit?

Ans: Yes, there has been a lot of changes. We have a small Dalit committee where we can express our worries and problems. There is a high school at Kharikhola. There are many more opportunities. When I was young, there was only one primary school at Pangnum, which took half a day to reach. We got married early, had many children. A big family meant we had many mouths to feed. But now it is different. My sons will most probably have 2-3 children each.

Our lifestyle has changed also, we used to eat potato and wheat porridge before and now we also eat rice. Children get other type of food also like "Wai wai" noodles, energy drinks.

Q. So the community has developed a lot. Do you think that it has also helped reduce poverty?

Ans: It has reduced poverty to certain degree but I don't think poverty will be eradicated

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easily. Now our lifestyle has changed with time and we are not as poor as we used to be. But we will still remain poorer than other higher caste in the village.

We build toilets for high castes but we ourselves do not have. When they brought the water pipeline they did not supplied to us, they said we need to invest just like others. So we still do not have running water at our house. We have electricity but we do not earn from it like hotels do.

But we have learnt a lot from others, especially from the tourists who come at health camps. They have taught us to keep ourselves clean so that we are healthier. But it is difficult because we do not have running water at our home 24 hours.

Our children go to school and some of them even get sponsored. That is very good because when they grow up, I hope they have a better future than just carrying rocks for others.

Q. Why do you think about carrying rocks, can they not be guide or do some kind of tourism related business? They say tourism is increasing.

Ans: Tourism is not for us. It is for Sherpas, Magars and Rais. They say we are too weak, so we cannot carry 50-60kg and walk all day. So there is nothing for us in tourism. Instead there are now some technical schools in Salleri and Khotang. One of my son is there right now to learn about carpentry and masonry.

Q. So tourism does not help you in any way?

Ans: No there is no direct benefit from tourism for us Dalit. Even our daughters cannot work as dishwasher at the local hotels because we are untouchables. But yes because of tourism they are building more houses so we do get job indirectly.

The tourists come and give us clothes and medicine, we are grateful for that.

Q. So caste discrimination is the main problem here. The Dalit committee you mentioned, what does it do about caste discrimination?

Ans: Yes and no. We have the Dalit committee and members are also very committed but it is difficult to reach the local government because there is no government. So decisions are made by the members of all political parties and if you are not powerful who will listen to

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you.

Things have become better, it is mostly older generation who are intolerant, the new generation does not care if we sit with them. But we cannot get jobs other than of carrying rocks or blacksmiths.

Q. So what would you do to fight against poverty?

Ans: We have lot of problems. We want to have our own cows and goats but because we have only a small piece of land, it is not enough for grazing. We are not allowed to take our cows at others field or forest. Only at the community forest we are allowed but it is far away. If not we could have our own milk and drink that and be healthy.

The changes/development that is happening is very slow although there are programs for poverty alleviation, it is difficult to see these programs being implemented. I don't think my life will see better days but I hope my children and my grandchildren will do.



**14. Sarkiman B.K., age 42:**

Background information: He comes from Dalit caste and lives up in the village about 2 hours walk from the main bazaar. He lives with his wife and his two sons and 1 daughter. He works as a daily labourer, carrying mostly rocks and firewood and sometime works for people building new houses. His income varies from 200- 500 rupees per day.

The interview:

Q. Do you see Kharikhola changing/developing? How?

Ans: Our village has changed a lot and so has our lives too. I could not go to school but my children do. My sons have finished SLC and my daughter is still going to school. Earlier there was no place for Dalit to speak. Now we have a Dalit Committee where we can discuss our problems and needs. The committee then talks with other committees to solve our problem.

Q. What kind of problem?

Ans: When we have problems and difficulties to send our children to the school because we do not have money, we put it forward at the committee and then the committee talks with the school and find ways to help us. We are also trying to save money to get the water pipeline to our place. We cannot afford it alone but if everyone helps, either by digging or by donating little bit of money we will be able to do that.

Also Government has some provision for Dalit's help, we discuss at the committee how to spend them.

We also discuss problems with the high castes. It has become easier with Sherpas and Rais, they do not discriminate but Magars are worst. They do not want us to enter their houses and abused us, scold us for nothing. We can work all day in their field without getting a drop of water but they treat us like we are not human beings.

We have started to protest also if we feel it is not fair. We would rather travel long distance to get work that work for people who discriminate us.

Q. That is great. How do they react when you say no?

Ans: They don't like but other people support us. Down at the bazaar Sherpas and Rais do

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not mind we stay at their place and they are very friendly to us. We also meet tourists there and some of them are curious about us, B.K., you know about why we are untouchables.

Q. Ok, one of the interviewee I talked with earlier told that no one hires a Dalit as porter for tourists. If you say Sherpas are friendly, why don't you work for them?

Ans: They are friendly to us but they say we are not as strong as Rais or Sherpa, so they prefer their own people.

Q. So as a Dalit you do not get any direct benefit from tourism?

Ans: No, there is nothing for us Dalits. We do not have money to build a hotel or shop. People don't hire us.

Q. What about the NGOs? Do you see any changes because of them?

Ans: Yes, they work for the village development. We have health post in the village, people come from other villages too and I know that some of the NGOs are helping with the health post, but I don't remember their names. Schools are supported by tourists, so that poor children, mainly orphans get help. Once my son was very sick and some tourists helped with his treatment.

Q. What would you do to fight against poverty?

Ans: I have actually started to plant trees on my field. It is a good investment for future. We don't produce much crop anyway. I go to committee meetings sometimes. They tell us new things and we can learn a lot from others and also tourists. I am planning to send my son to get good training so he will be skilled and can earn more. Then they will be able to look after us.

**15. Mingmar Galzen Sherpa, age 27:**

Background information: He runs a hotel in Kharikhola and occasionally as guide. He lives with his two sons and wife. His mother lives close by but as she is alone, she has enough so he does not have to provide for her.

The interview:

Q. How often do you work as a guide?

Ans: 4-5 months a year, but mostly this Salleri to Lukla route. My English is not good is I don't get to work that much and I have a hotel to run.

Q. Do you earn good from being guide and hotel?

Ans: Yes we earn good and but we still have fields, so we do not have to buy potatoes and other main food. In good times there are 5-7 guest staying here and sometimes only one and sometimes none. But we are paying our loan back slowly, so yes it is doing fine.

Q. What do you think about tourism in this area? Is it helping the development?

Ans: I think it is helping. We get guests at hotel and earn good, they send money to school and health post, so we can get those facilities, it is for us not for the tourists. The donkey trail makes too much noise and dust but if the road gets damaged it gets immediately repaired. If it had not been for tourism, people of this route and not only Kharikhola will either die poor or leave this area and move somewhere else.

Q. What do you mean by die? They still have their farms and cattle.

Ans: We need tourism to sustain our lives here. For example to build our hotel it costed a lot of money, if it was only for us, we would not build such a big house, a hut would be enough. Now if tourists don't come then we will be those village Baku and Kaku, there is nothing there.

Q. So tourism means a lot for this village.

Ans. Yes it does. A few years ago, the government planned an alternative trekking route to

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Namche from Salleri without passing through Lukla. We all went to District headquarter and striked for two weeks. One person from each household from this whole trekking route, Kharikhola, Bupsa, Puiyan, Khari, Nele, Nuntala, all the villages were there. And finally they gave in.

If they had opened that route, people here would not survive. We need tourists, we have invested so much to build hotels and if they don't come through this way, how will we survive?

Q. But did you not say there are around 5-7 guests in good time? What difference would it make?

Ans: Ever since Lukla airport opened, trekking towards Everest Base Camp has become shorter. Those tourists would not be using the alternative route anyway, so it will be those tourists who would pass by Kharikhola or stay over and even if it is only one tourist, we would benefit if he/she uses this route.

The government could use the money for us instead. They can use to construct the road here instead. On that alternative route, there is no settlement, they will have to start everything not just the trekking route.

Q. So you wish more government intervention but on your side?

Ans: Yes of course, although I say the development of this village is because of tourism, we cannot wait for 1-1 tourist to come and give us donation and help us. It is a very slow process. But if we had that government working properly instead of putting all the money into their pocket it would go faster.

I know many people are against the road construction but once the road comes this way, they will see that our village will be different. Right now we have a health post but if someone fractures his/her leg, we have to wait for the helicopter, that is if you have lot of money and good connection with the airline company. If there would be road, there would be new possibility.

Q. Did you not say earlier that you earn good right now, why do you need road then?

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Ans: It is good for me. But I want it to be better for future and for others. Some of my relatives live still up in the hills and they eat nothing but potatoes. My cousins and nephews go to school, but when they are finished with school what option they have? They will move away and we need to keep these people in the village, because we need them. If not old people will die alone because there is no one take of them and we would not even know when did they die. They would be rotting in their house and it might take us days before we find them dead.

Q. You are such a good thinker. Why do not you join some committee and work actively for these things?

Ans: Oh that is only for thulo manche. Those who are clever and know how to butter the foreigners take that post but they do not much. They just sit and talk but talk does not help. I remember last time when there was this team for drinking water project from New Zealand, all these foreigners and a few villagers were digging the drench for putting pipes and most of the villagers were like "Oh I have pain in my back." They have simply become lazy because they know that others will fix it.

Q. If these committees are not doing what they are supposed to, why are they still functioning?

Ans: Of course some of them are working. Like the Mothers group, they are active and they are getting benefits from these groups. These women are the one who go and demand that certain things are done, like cleaning of the village.

I think these small committees do help, because even if the members are lazy, they do make donors to help at least their circle. And that is still needed, it is not only Dalits who are poor, there are also many from other castes who are poor, just not as poor as Dalits.

Q. So you do see that tourism and those committees do help in poverty alleviation?

Ans: yes, tourism has helped lot of poor people, like by sponsoring their children to go to school and also by giving them jobs as porter or guides. But it is very slow and as you become guide or porter, people like to move other places where there are better

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opportunities.

That is why we need these committees. You know we do not have local government as such. If these committees work properly they can put more pressure on the government and government will at least release those budget. But they are busy fighting with each other. The forest user group and many others are not agreeing about the road for example.

Q. You need these committees to pressure on government, but what about NGOs?

Ans: We have no local NGO at least not a functional one. They come up with 1-2 projects and they are gone. Not that I am not grateful for them, but it is not long term and our committees are not capable enough to make it long term. The foreigners or NGOs when they come here, they are very excited to do some good work, but when they do not see commitments from local people, at the certain point they also lose motivation to do any thing and after 3-4 years some stop, some still support schools.

Q. Then what should be done for the NGOs to keep working?

Ans: I think we local people have to show that we also want to develop not just some tourists who come here and see us poor and then they think we need to develop. Community leader should think more about the community that there relatives and friends and then tell NGOs what most of the villagers need instead just telling the NGOs what they think they need.

**16. Pemba Galzen Sherpa, aged 23:**

Background information: He lives in Kharikhola but works as guide so he is often away from his village. As the eldest son, he has to provide for his mother and his disabled brother at home. His three sisters are all married and live in other villages.

The interview:

Q. How often do you work as a guide?

Ans: I am busy for 6-7 months. I work for different companies and travel all around Eastern Nepal and Tibet.

Q. Do you earn good?

Ans: They pay me from 500-600 rupees per day when I am walking with clients. It is actually better if you have a tented tour, then I save good but if it is tea house tour then that money is just sufficient to eat and sleep. It is normally the tips that help me to save something otherwise it is just enough to eat and survive.

Q. Why don't you work as something else then?

Ans: I don't know. May be because now it has become habit, I am used to it and I like travelling. I started working as guide since I was 17 and I haven't learnt anything else so I cannot just stop working as guide.

Q. Why not go home and help your mother with farming?

Ans: There is not enough work for me, my mother takes care of farming and my brother. If I work at least I save the food at home and I get some cash so it is fine but when I get married one day, then I have to start some business at Kharikhola, may be a tourist hotel and lodge.

Q. Then you think that business will help you raise your family?

Ans: Yes, if we can improve the tourism in this route, I think we can earn good and I can still work as guide time to time and my wife can look after the hotel.

Q. So you see tourism as something that will help you improve your life?

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Ans: Yes, if more tourists come, we will earn more and the village will be more developed.

Q. How would the village develop just because you earn better?

Ans: It will not only be me. If there are more tourists, there are more work for others too and if we have work here, people will not move to other places like Kathmandu or abroad.

Q. How about now? How do you think the village is developing?

Ans: Well it could do better, but I don't know.

Q. What do you mean by I don't know?

Ans. I mean, I did not finish my school and work as guide, I don't know what development means. If you are asking about poor people getting richer, then it is not happening, not very soon at least.

Q. I meant similar, if tourism as such has helped people to improve their lives?

Ans: Yes and no. Yes because we have some good tourists who not only go trekking but they are volunteering at health camp, some other training and water project for the school, so they help a lot and we have learnt a lot and benefited from those projects that are long lasting but most of the benefit goes to them who know these people and are powerful in the village.

Not every tourist is interested in such things you know, they like to hang out and have fun but that is it. But it is just like people at village. There are some who are very committed to women's group and cleaning of the market area and school committee but most of the village are not interested in those things. They are busy with their fields and cattle.

Q Why do you think most of the villagers are not interested? Should they not care about the village development?

Ans: The people here are poor so they have a lot to do. And we also use a lot of time for religious purpose. We lack education so we do not know how we need to work for the development of the village as a whole. We only think how we can get rich, at least richer



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than the neighbour. Also poor people wish that some one comes and help them, give education to their children, but they do not go themselves to the school and examine how they can send their children to the school themselves.

Just look at B.K.s, the dalits. It was bad before but now not many people discriminate them, and there is plenty of work in the village if they want. But they still wait for someone to fight for them, instead doing something themselves. It is most of their children who get sponsored by foreigners and the volunteers give them clothes and goods too, but the next year also it is them who spread their hands.

Q. So you are saying that being helped by others is not good either?

Ans: It is good for those children, now they can go to school. But I think tourists will get tired too if they see the same person every year that needs help.

Q. What should be done then, so that they have better life?

Ans: I think it will get better with time. The Dalit children are getting educated and they will get good jobs in future, then I think it will change. But it also government's job to support people to improve their lives.

Q. How should government support?

Ans: I don't know yet. We cannot trust our politicians, they only come to our villages during election time and then they are gone. But it is still their duty to bring programs that would help rural areas.

I know that the powerful people will again gain more but they do the same with NGOs too.

Q. What do you mean by that with NGOs? What should be their roles?

Ans: The local committee who receives the donation/funds are the same people who are powerful in the village. Although the fund comes to target the poorest, the local committee decides to use the money the way they think they need or be useful for the village but mostly to them. Just look at water distribution, those who know how to do it, got water right at their doorstep with having to pay much but there are still many household up in the hills

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who have to share the taps. If they were in the committee they would also have tap for each house.

Q. So you mean the fund gets misused?

Ans: Not exactly misused. Of course we all get benefit in some way but it could have gone directly to the needy one instead.

Q. So how should NGOs work to avoid this?

Ans: It will be alright, they just need come here and examine and talk with the poors. It is not enough just listening the village chairman or those who live around the trekking route. The really poor people don't live around the market.

Q. But did you not say before that most of the people are not interested in committee work?

Ans: It will take time, but they will learn.

**17. Ngima Dorji Sherpa, age 40:**

Background information: He comes from Kharikhola and at present he lives in Kathmandu and runs a travel agency 'Nepal Myths and Mountain Trails.' He is also an active member of Kharikhola Trust and helps with the free health camp every year, by finding donations and volunteers for the camp.

Q. How often do you visit Kharikhola?

Ans: It depends. Sometimes once in a month and sometimes it can go half a year. My mother and my youngest sister and her family still live in Kharikhola.

Q. What changes have you noticed since you first left your home?

Ans: I left my home for work when I was 13 years old as a porter. I did not go to school because there was no school. Now there has been a lot change. There are schools now, and there is progress in general health condition. There is electricity far better than that of Kathmandu. People are getting educated. People are doing business there now. The hotels are not very high standard as you have seen but it is far better and cleaner than before.

But it is not developed to the standard it could be. Just take an example of Khumbhu. Khumbhu valley was also very poor before 1953. It was after Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's ascent, it has developed a lot because of tourism. They built schools and hospitals, there are good business opportunities. So, if you look above Lukla, there lifestyle is 3-4 standard higher than of Kharikhola. You can still find people at Kharikhola living at zero level. I feel very pity for them.

It could have been different if not for the political problem in Nepal. Before the civil wars, almost 300 tourists used to trek through Kharikhola everyday. But Maoist started to collect entrance fee at each and every village and it became easier for them to fly to Lukla because they are many more flights than earlier.

It is picking up now slowly but now we need to find other ways to make it attractive because now those tourists who chose Lukla as starting point you cannot turn them back so we need to attract other tourists or businesses.

I think the road construction will help as it will provide opportunities for new business. We

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can may be sell the potatoes to Kathmandu and other places.

Q. How do you see your role in the development of Kharikhola?

Ans. Kharikhola need our help time to time. I do not believe that just giving money to people is enough for development. In my opinion, education is very important. Because if you are educated, you will always have option to do something in your life. But the current dilemma is that even education is not enough because those who study in villages cannot find job in Kathmandu. You know yourself there is a difference in the quality of education in villages and in Kathmandu. So the best job for those who comes Kharikhola is trekking business or if they get the chance, then go abroad for work.

So my main focus right now is quality education. I left my home at 13 as porter and I walked even without any shoe. After some years, I had the opportunity to visit UK because some good tourists sponsored me. When I reach the airport, I could not find toilet myself because I could not read English. It took me more than two hours to find the way to my host who was waiting for me at the airport. There I realised the importance of education, especially language. If you are not educated, the life becomes very difficult.

At that point I decided that I will build a school for my village one day and I started to learn English language myself.

Three years after I came back from UK, I with a few more former villagers collected funds from many of our clients and built a school in Pangnum village, which take about 3-4 hours reach from Kharikhola because it was my birthplace. After that many people came to me and requested to build schools. But I had to hide myself because how can I do that? I have got no money and people do not understand that it takes time to collect funds for such work.

After some years we started Mera Primary School. There are around 100 students now.

Because I myself did not get proper education, I learnt English while I was carrying heavy loads for tourists, I would like to make it easier for others to get proper education because it is very important.

After education I believe healthcare is very important for the villagers. That is why I support the health camp. It is difficult for those who live in Kathmandu to get treatment because it is so expensive. If you have to come from Kharikhola to Kathmandu, you might as well sell your

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property and leave the village. For B.K.s, as they are the poorest in that area, that is even not an option, they have more or less nothing. They cannot even send their children to school because they do not have money. Of course we help them by sponsoring and then they send the children to school.

Q. You are involved in these such work. What challenges do you face I such kind of social work?

Ans: there are lot of challenges. First of all, it is very difficult to raise fund. You need beg for 1-1 dollar for the clients and it demands a lot of work before people give you donation, you need build the trust, because their money is also hard earned money, it did not come for free. Secondly, it is challenging to make sure the money you raised is spend properly. If there are people who start use the fund raised from us for their own personal gain, it is not alright. It also requires someone you can trust in the village because sometimes they may not do the work as they were supposed to. Thirdly, local people think that money comes very easily from the tourists because they have plenty of money. So they do not think if certain problems can be solved by themselves. They wait for someone (tourists/foreigner) to send money to start anything.

Q. So you do not feel that the local people back you up?

Ans: It depends upon the situation. Earlier it was easy, local people would easily engage themselves but now-a-days everything is politicalised. The political parties have different agenda, so they are good at giving advices and suggestion but no one comes to work, when it is required. It would perhaps be easy once there is local election because then one person can take the decisions and mobilise the people.

Q. What is your opinion about tourism development when it comes to poverty alleviation?

Ans: I have heard that there are some INGO and Government project on poverty alleviation for areas around Solukhumbu. But I have only seen them coming and holding meeting but nothing else can be seen. In contrast to that I think there has been more development because of tourism.

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If the tourists had not supported, Kharikhola would be nothing. Everything is built and supported by foreigners. School, hospital, electricity, Monastery, you name it. You cannot see a single thing by the Government except paying salary for half of the school teachers.

Seeing the tourists working for us at Kharikhola some people are realizing that you need to work hard if you want to develop your place, although there are many more who just like sit and watch and enjoy the hard work of others.

**18. Serge Currat, age 42:**

Background information: He lives in Switzerland and has visited Kharikhola several times since 1999. Along with some friends, he started an NGO Action Kharikhola, which fundraises and supports Kharikhola Health post and Kharikhola High School at present. They had also helped Kharikhola Hydro-power project with generator and trained locals to maintain the power house.

The interview:

Q. Can you please tell me why and how you started working for Kharikhola?

Ans: When I was 25 years old, I went to work with the Red Cross and it was before the Yugoslavian war and they told me if I were interested in your work but there is no war so we do not need you. So I decided to do something myself. May be I travel a lot and be in Africa and I thought I am certainly going to do something in Africa. But in 1999 I was with some friends in Nepal for trekking. I did not imagine but I saw this village Kharikhola, I met Sher Bahadur the mountain guide and it started finally here with this hospital. When I saw the condition, I said ok now I have to do something. It also helped me a lot, to improve myself, to improve my ability to discuss, to manage some projects, I am very interested about Buddhism and Hinduism of course.

It is always a big challenge to find money but here in Switzerland, I am so surprised to see how the people are motivated to help us. As soon as a project is reliable, people believe and give support.

We were lucky to start with Pashmina. Today we sell singing bowl and typical jacket, winter jacket from Nepal in Christmas market and now we sell a lot and it is good money for the project.

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Now we have 600 members and they pay 30 euro every year and sometimes we get donations. We bought an x-ray machine that cost us 25,000 USD and one old lady sponsored us.

Q. For you personally, how do you see the progress? Are you satisfied?

Ans: Yes I am satisfied but in one way, you know, sometimes our committee we were a bit frustrated. You know because there is a nice monastery over there? They never get problem to get money to build the monastery, everyone gives money but for hospital no one gives money. Last year we had a big meeting here in Switzerland with our committee and we were thinking, do we have to leave this Kharikhola project to do another project in Nepal. May be in Kathmandu, Dolpa or somewhere else. Because, I know you know better than me that another area, they need more help. I always say no its better to keep some money to keep the project alive, if something happens we are always behind. It could be earthquake, it could be a war, I don't know. We never know what could happen in Nepal and after we decide to go ahead. Plus we do not know whether those work will continue if we pull out.

Q. So you have been in Nepal since 1999 and worked with Action Kharikhola since 2000. I would like to ask for your opinion. Since you were at Kharikhola the first time and today, can you see changes? Do you see any progress there?

Ans: Yes. I was there before when there was no electricity. It is a big improvement. Now with electricity, I can say that we avoid the ecological problems to the trees. Cause they need a lot of trees just to heat the house. And with light, children can read in the evening. Almost 400 houses have electricity with two bulbs inside. They cut fewer trees and avoid smoke in the kitchen and lung disease. I have seen less and less people with fire accidents in the health post in the past few years. I was surprised to see how many patients get burnt, I don't know how, may be alcoholic people fall down. I have seen children with burns, they sleep near the fire and they just turn on their side and they fall down in the fire. We have avoided this problem to a high degree so these are the benefits.

But now you can also see a lot of people buying television, it is a kind of luxury. One day we will have internet, but I don't if they know where is the limit children from using internet for

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some harmful things.

Q. How do you find local people responding with these developments that are happening because of the programs you and others have started?

Ans: In the beginning I thought may be we may have to stay behind after we installed the generator. But I am positively surprised. Now they can manage themselves everything. They just got some training how to maintain the systems in good condition and as soon as they have problem with electricity they go and fix it within one hour. They took their responsibility on their own and they are not waiting for other to fix. I am surprised and happy about that.

But the hospital, I think the people always asked for a doctor. Now since last year we have a doctor posted, but before the people did not come to the hospital, only during the camps because there was no doctor. Today I hear the latest news that since the doctor have been installed almost 40 patients everyday. It is a big amount. When I was there two years before, there was no doctor, it was only health assistant.

And I was surprised to see the health assistant and the nurse staying in the hospital for days waiting for some people and I thought there were too many people at the hospital doing nothing. But today with the doctor, I think it is a great improvement. The people may be still have fear to go to the hospital, something we have improved is the education and information flow.

And I see really a big improvement also with the young generation. They are very active. When I was there last time, they are asking me to be members of young society and I went with them. I was saying to myself, wow it is great. They are just young people believe in themselves and want to have a good life.

I meet a young guy going all the way from Kharikhola to Jiri carrying a basket and took the dirt to clean the way. The name was Keep Kharikhola clean. I never saw this before and thatswhy I think it is a big improvement with the new generation.

Something that I am a bit disappointed is the school. The quality of teaching is not satisfying. The teachers are not so high level, highly qualified or trained. The Headmaster of the school is a nice guy but sometimes I think he is lazy and he does not want to improve. He is waiting for help from someone.



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Q. What are the challenges you have faced when you are working for this NGO?

Ans: The big challenge is to start the first project the generator for the electricity and to bring the hospital in better condition. The big challenge is to bring a project which will last for long terms not short terms. Ok we help and but after they have to take their own responsibility and today we can see that it has succeeded with the electricity project. It is more than 13 years and it still works.

When you see the hospital, it was built by a French foundation but after 4 years nothing was in good condition. And this foundation is a very big foundation in France, but we called them many times for information but they never give information.

Similarly corruption is one thing you have to be careful about. Two years ago when we brought the x-ray and USG machine, at custom in Kathmandu, they asked me money and after a lot of hassle I paid 600 rupees for nothing just to get out of that place.

Another thing is that not many organisations like to cooperate. I met a lady who runs hospital in Lukla, she said it is better to keep our projects separate. It sounds like we are competitors trying to provide one is better than the other instead of thinking that we can have bigger impact if we work together.

**19. Helen Simpson, age 50:**

Background information: She comes from Australia and is a nurse. She was in Kharikhola for the second time. She first visited the place in 2013.

The interview:

Q. This is your second time, how do you feel about coming to Kharikhola?

Ans: I love Nepal, I have visited Nepal since 80s and I like to volunteer so I come to Nepal quite often. When I was here last year, I volunteered for the same health camp. I like coming here because people are very simple, friendly and generous. They are poor but they smile and seem happy.

Q. So your visit here is mainly altruistic?

Ans: Yes, I live myself in a community and I simply love the idea of giving back to the world. But this time it was also because Ngima asked for help. Last year, there were some friends who recommended me and then after I was here last year, I could see that people at Kharikhola need help. So when Ngima asked for help, I said yes.

Q. They say that tourism helps poor people. What do you think? Do you see any difference?

Ans: A lot have changed in Nepal since my first visit back in the 80s. But I cannot say much about Kharikhola, I was here only last year, and for me it seems the same at this time too. I do not know it is tourism, perhaps yes, because they can charge us more, for them it is 100 rupees while for us it only 1 dollar. So they get employed and earn.

But sometimes I think it is the travel agents who earn most and these porters, guides and kitchen boys earn very little compared to what we tourists pay to the travel agents.

Q. So compared to other places, how would you access this village in terms of development?

Ans: Well it is still like old times in some way and yet it is developed in the sense that there are more facilities, electricity, water, toilets, hotels and shops for us tourists as well as locals. But as I can see during the health camp, there are many many poor people. Their dresses are worn out and seem like they have never touched a soap in their lives. I think there are many

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poor family living in the village away from the village center.

It would be better if they had bigger road. But I cannot say if they are very poor. I can see parents buying that "Wai Wai" noodles and energy drinks for their children, it is not cheap so may be they are not very poor. But their children are wearing trousers with big holes. May be they just do not know how and what to prioritize better and use the money they have in a better way.

But then in the other hand, the porter who are carrying our baggage are very young and they are already working. They must be needy to work as a porter at that early age.

I also heard a few young boys speaking little bit of English, I think some of them are just shy so they do not speak English language. The school is good, I have heard so I think it will be more developed in a few years.

Q. In your opinion, what could be the reason for them being poor, except for the rough terrain and distance from Kathmandu?

Ans: I cannot say for sure. I think most of them are farmer here and actually have plenty to eat. If not how can they afford to brew alcohol at home? But I think farming is very hard for them, and they may not have cash in hand. But I can say they really lack education in hygiene and sanitation, after seeing them at the health camp.

There is no other option except farming here so I think they must be depending a lot on weather for a good harvest. Also they grow lot of potatoes and although potato is good for health, when there is no variation they do not get good nutrition.

But people seem happy, so may be it is not necessary to be rich. You know they have family and relatives around them and they know each other very well and they can get help from them, may be that is the reason for them being happy and content.

Q. Do you think tourists can play a role in community development more just by paying for the trekking?

Ans: I think yes, like I am volunteering here at the health camp. But it is also about personal interest. Some are happy just be trekking and others have to climb Mount Everest. Some do not like the idea of volunteering.

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I think we should also be demanding the travel agents we use that the porters or any other labour they are using, are not too young and are well paid.

Q. As a volunteer, you have worked for them here. Would you be interested if there are ways to put even more effort in Kharikhola's development?

Ans: Yes personally I would like to, but there are only certain things you can do as a tourist, like fundraising and volunteering, but there is a limit, we don't live here. It is after all Kharikhola's people who have to develop their village. But yes we can help them by giving training and opportunity to learn how to and what to do it.

**20. Margaret Topping, age 62:**

Background information: She comes from New Zealand and is a nurse. She was in Kharikhola for the third time. She first visited the place in 2008.

The interview:

Q. You have been twice earlier. What makes you come back for the third time?

Ans: I like Nepal and like traveling a lot. I had volunteered here before so it is nice to be back again.

Q. What changes have you noticed here?

Ans: The first time I was here for the health camp in 2008, I remember how we had to scrub every patient clean before we could even check their temperature. There were many many people sick and needed immediate help. The second time I was here, it had improved a bit and now I can see it has really improved a lot more in these years. Actually the health workers are well experienced now so I feel they can run the health camp without us foreign volunteers.

Some of the patients are still very dirty and but it is nothing compared to what we had seen in 2008. Also there are more houses, more shops and the school is big and there is electricity and water. The only thing we need is internet, then distance will not matter, I guess.

If the road is built I think it will change even more.

Q. Do you think that all/some of these changes have happened because of tourism?

Ans: I cannot say that, I cannot evaluate that as a tourist who comes here only once in a while. It is upto local people to give or not give credit to tourism.

Q. But they say that tourism helps poor people. Do you agree?

Ans: In some way yes, they get employment, and run hotels so a way to earn a bit cash to supplement the agriculture. And I think that tourists are good at helping poor people. I mean that is why we are here, to provide some kind of facility to them. But I do not know how good we as tourists help. I recognise some of the faces and those who were poor the first

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time I was here, they are cleaner but they still have the same difficulties. Specially the Dalits, I still remember one particular incident, when these five dalit women were waiting for their turn at the health camp, they had to keep waiting because the high class got their rights first and they would not even protest. I thought that was strange. Now I have not seen that this time, but just because I did not see that does not mean it does not happen.

I wished I would just interfere and say that these five women were at the health camp before others, so they have the first right to get treatment, I don't know what the consequences will be later behind us. Will they be scolded or treated badly because we tourists treated them first? I don't know.

Q. Does this mean you doubt that they can get other benefit than economic?

Ans: It is tricky to say yes or no. The women's group who got training last week with the other group of volunteers certainly got new skills, so yes of course. But issues like community empowerment does not just come from tourists coming and helping them. It might but it will take many many years. There should be the government or some NGOs working progressively for that.

Tourists can of course give them exposure to a different world. They can be some kind of messenger or trainer but if the poor people want to have an improved lifestyle, then it should be government and local society to lift them up.

But then I have also heard stories where tourists/foreigners helped this Dalit man to get water to his village and everyone now puts pressure on him to beg for more donations from foreigners but because he is Dalit, he has to wait for his turn to get water and let other get theirs first. So the poor people hardly get any chance.

Q. So the tradition and the caste systems are the main reason for these people to remain poor?

Ans: I think mainly yes. The life here is easy going, no hurry and time sit still but for those who are poor, I have seen they have been working at the potato field all day long and I am sure they do that more or less almost everyday. But I think they rely too much on agriculture and tourism. Men are all out and women are working all day and night and even children are

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working. It is a tough life and when you have so many restriction because of caste system, you do not dare to anything new or different because you are not allowed.

They seem content too and they have their family and relatives around when they live close each other. I think that is why they are happy even though they are not rich and they feel safe so they do not seek new opportunities because that would mean they will have to get out and do things alone. And if they are happy, may be they do not need changes as we think they need.

Q. Well ok let's say that they do not want/need changes. But the world is changing. What do you think they can do so that they do not remain backwards?

Ans: I think they need to get more education and get prepared. One of the things I noticed here is children eat a lot of junk food. I have not see any case of malnutrition but if it continues, there might be. They need learn how the traditional food is better but also watch their own food habit too. They drink too much salt tea and alcohol and eat hot foods.

Q. You worked as volunteer but if you are presented with other ways to put more effort to develop this place will you be interested in?

Ans: You mean by donation and so on? Or doing something else actively? I think we do a lot already. We tell our friends and families about Kharikhola and there are many small NGOs in New Zealand who work actively for Kharikhola and other places in Nepal and we support them back home. But I think for this place to be developed, it has to be more combined effort from every side and even from the poorest of the poor and the high caste people need to change their attitude toward the Dalits and the government has to play more active role as well as the local civil-society. If not we can keep on sending donation and volunteering but how long can we do that?