THE CASE STUDY ON THE EXPLORATION OF COVID-19 IMPACTS AND THE RECOVERY MEASURES BY HOTELS IN ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT TREK

AUTHOR: AARATI K.C, SIDDHANT DAHAL & PAWAN SHARMA

SUPERVISOR: MARTIN TRANDBERG JENSEN

MASTER'S THESIS 10TH SEMESTER

AALBORG UNIVERSITY

SUBMITTED ON 31ST MAY 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ABSTRACT

This thesis is aimed to study the impact of covid 19 in Annapurna Circuit Trek (ACT) which is one of the popular trekking routes in Nepal. Our curiosity in the tourism in Nepal and their crisis response led us agree the group members work on it. Furthermore, the hotels in mountainous region have their own unique pattern, challenges and touristic products and services. However, tourism is seasonal business in the area due to geographical difficulty and seasonal challenge. Hence, the hotel industry in the area faces much more difficulties during crisis.

The research includes the study on different aspects of hotel industry in ACT and Covid 19 including the challenges of hotels, impacts of covid 19 on hotel industry in the region, strategies adopted by hoteliers and lesson learnt by hoteliers as future implication.

As we have used interview method for our study, some of the major theories and interviews have been base for conclusion. We had interview with hoteliers of ACT and hence taken their quotes as data for our research. The findings came up with the conclusion that the hotel industries in ACT are badly affected by Covid 19 and hence they have been going through hardship. However, they have been trying to mitigate the impact of covid 19 by improving their business products and services.

Table of Contents

List of Figures:

List of Pictures:

List of Tables:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Covid 19 caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV-2), was first found to be transmitted from animals to humans in seafood market in Wuhan, China in January 2020, later spread all around the world on the spur of moment. It has affected many countries in various sectors of economy as well as lives of many people. Nepal got hit by covid 19, starting from March 2020 that followed the suspension of domestic as well as international flights. It resulted to face a number of cancellations of tourists booking which ultimately resulted loss of income, employment and affected the livelihood of working-class people (Sah, et al., 2020). Covid 19 has affected tourism industry so bad that there was the lowest number of the tourists or no tourists at a point of time during the crisis in 2020 due to travel restriction, all kind of tourism industries got affected from big travel agencies to the small tea houses and homestays, which ultimately affect the economy of the country. Hence, its affects are very much in every side of tourism industry, that has on the one hand, made tourism stakeholders to act immediately and on another hand, warned them get prepared themselves from unprecedented crisis.

Hotels are an important part of tourism industry where guests get to stay overnight and shelter themselves during their travel period. In other words, it can be taken as one of the necessities of tourists hence, touristic areas include few or a greater number of hotels according to the demand. It has been certain that none of the industry was well prepared for Covid -19 like crisis in the beginning, hence hotel industry had also obligation that they adopt their own safety measures and act instantly for the situation. It brought with a lot of uncertainties in hotel industries as the main source of income was the tourists. In the situation while there were no flights and no tourists arrival in the country, the industry fell dramatically. There was overall 1313 hotels including both star and tourist hotels in Nepal in 2020 (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2020).

There had been new entry protocol in Nepal for mountaineering expeditions and trekking as presented by Nepal Tourism Board (2020) p.1. that referred, "After entry to Nepal, tourists shall stay in hotel quarantine for a minimum of 7 days. Tourists shall be required to take PCR test on the fifth day of hotel quarantine at their own expenses and shall be allowed to proceed for

expeditions or trekking on obtaining RT PCR Negative test report". The conditions of compulsory quarantine were clear the reasons behind the less or no tourists during that time in addition, it was also the matter of self-secure and self-assurance for travel. Hence, it resulted the cancellations of existing hotel booking and increased further uncertainties on the future guests. The crisis in tourism industry has left a huge effect in hotel industry in Annapurna Circuit Trek, which has directly or indirectly impacted several local stakeholders connected to tourism like porters, tea houses and guides. Hence it has played negative role in local economy as most of the locals are dependent on tourism.

When we think about the recovery of hotel industry in the normal business pattern, the prediction goes beyond some years that means it takes longer time for hotel industry to get in their position that they had prior Covid 19 (Lai & Wong, 2020). With the view to crisis like Covid 19 , Jiang and Wen (2020)suggest the hotel industries to transform the challenging situation to opportunity for positive outcome as there have been major focus on different strategies and efforts from hoteliers to overcome the economic impact of Covid 19.Therefore, it has lead the hoteliers become more innovative in their business. Covid 19 has also led the market segment change a bit with travel restriction abroad, hence considering this fact (Le & Phi, 2021) highlight the dominance of domestic travelers when the travel restriction gets loosened. Such shift in market segment requires bit flexibility and modification in their products in hotel.

As an immediate response to economic crisis in the industry, the study by Yacoub and ElHajjar(2020) figured out that hoteliers in Lebanese adapted the approach of cost-cutting, terminating employees' contracts, changing the operational patterns, investing in aspects such as food and beverages, according to the demand, reducing variable costs as part of their cost-reduction approaches. In regard to recover hotel industries post covid, another scholar, Ulak(2020) suggests with approach of rethink and restructure their lifestyle and industry according to the need of the situation. Furthermore, Traskevich and Fontanarib(2021) refer to proactive and steady preparedness for facing upcoming unprecedented crisis in future to deal with crisis like covid 19.

 Our study will also be intended to study the immediate action and future strategy that hoteliers have been working on to recover their financial stability in Annapurna Circuit Trek(ACT)in Nepal.   This paper will be focused on studying the impact of Covid 19 in hoteliers as a key tourism stakeholder in ACT and the way they have been dealing with crisis brought by it.

We have major to focus on financial crisis and their strategic plans they have adopted or are willing to adopt in future for economic recovery. There has not been made much research being specific regarding the impact of Covid 19 in hotel industry in Annapurna circuit trek. Therefore, this study can be useful for study of hotel industry in ACT during crisis and their pattern of crisis management. Furthermore, the study also brings out the challenging part brought by covid 19 because there was need for immediate response.

There might be several areas of financial outflow like salary, rent, maintenance, loan and interest which could be very difficult for hoteliers to cover. Hence, existing without income and need for covering several expenses could be impossible to manage for some hoteliers. It is certain that many entrepreneurs learn from their own experience and many others learn from seeing the strategies and the way they tackle problem with. So, it is necessary to study on the management skills and knowledge the hoteliers are using to overcome the economic crisis brought by Covid 19 in hotel industry in ACT, as suggested by Yacoub and ElHajjar(2020) to validate the research on hoteliers across the globe to address current measures focused to recover economic affect by covid 19.

This study aims to fulfill the following, research objectives:

- **To analyze the impact of the Covid-19 at the Hotel industry in ACT.**
- **To explore the recovery measures and futuristic strategies adapted by hoteliers in response to covid crisis.**

1.1 Background of hotels in Annapurna Circuit trek (ACT)

Mt. Annapurna carries the essence of history that has contributed to tourism and trekking industry in Nepal with the successful ascend Maurice Herzog, a French national on 3 June 1950, on the other hand the collaborative initiation of Thomas Cook and Jimmy Robert from the United Kingdom contributed on commercialization of tour package system in tourism industry in Nepal (Upreti & Upadhayaya, 2013). The Annapurna Circuit Trek, which is also known as the Round

Annapurna Trek, is one of the most popular treks which covers the distance of 250 km. The Annapurna Circuit stands for the most of thrilling experience during period of trek. Trekkers can encounter spectacular mountain views, glacier viewpoints and Buddhist pilgrimage sites (Mayhew, Brown, & Butler, 2016). ACT also provides with the pilgrimage to popular Hindu temple like Mukti Nath, view of calm lakes and majestic rivers and witness distinct Himalayan culture and tradition during the trek at Annapurna Circuit. Majority of locals in Annapurna Circuit Trek(ACT) are dependent on tourism (Skach, 2016). It has not been long that the local people, especially wealthy families in ACT started with hotels (Nyaupanea, Moraisb, & Dowler, 2006) in different villages of the area especially Manang had been the major center having highest number of hotels along the route of ACT in 2012 (Chapagain, 2016).

While looking back to the history of crisis, trekking in Annapurna along with the tourism in Nepal has been affected badly because of the natural disasters which has ultimately affected the economy and livelihood of people engaged in tourism industry. The earthquake in 2015 can be taken as an example of crisis in history that caused the tourism downfall by 39% specifically in Annapurna Conservation Area(ACA) (Raya, 2020)and when pointing out the recent crisis, covid 19 pandemic is well known disaster that has affected not only Nepal and Annapurna region but also the whole world.

As tourism is the lucrative sector which, Genç(2021) affirm to be supporting local economy and having possibility to promote and develop with low investment, local people in Annapurna region are being highly dedicated in tourism industry which ultimately has made them dependent in tourism (Sharma, 2013). The locals in the area have been developing their lifestyle and economy with support of trekking in the area, the study by Holden (2010) has found the development in lifestyle of people with rise in tourism business in Ghorepani and Tatopani.
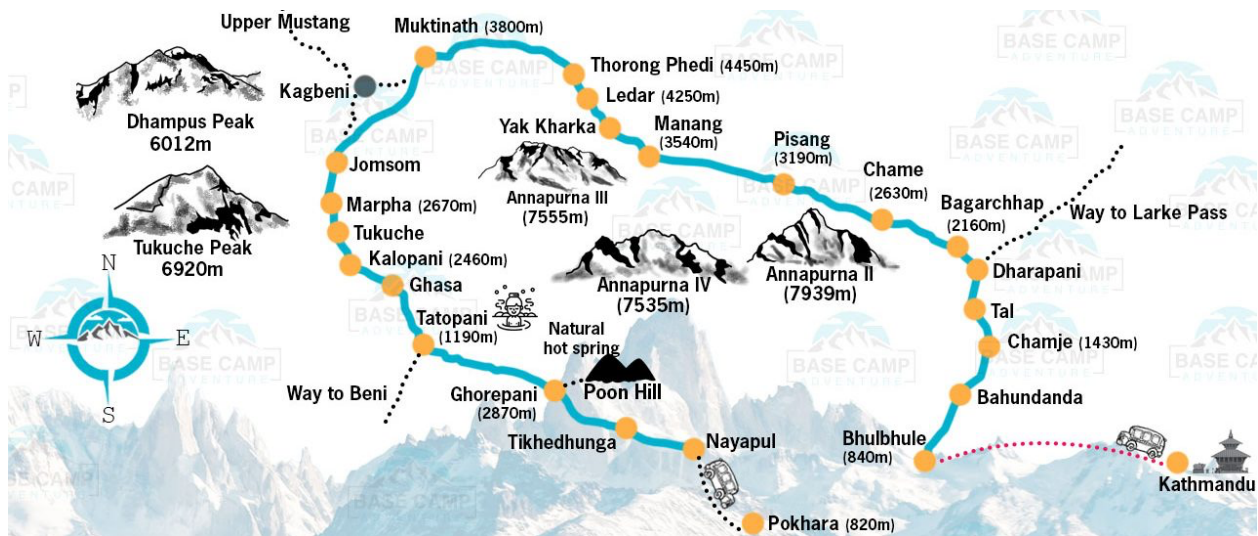
Picture 1: The Map of Annapurna Circuit Trek(Basecamp Adventure, 2019)

The small tea houses in ACT turned into hotels with increasing attraction towards trekking(DUNCANSON, 2002). Just as the hotels in Langtang are more a family identity as the house is used for the hotel purposes (Lim, 2007), hotels in ACT are also more a family owned and family identity. (ÇİNİ, GÜLEŞ, & ARICIOĞLU, 2018, p. 1492)define family-owned business as, "businesses in which, a huge part of ownership and management positions belong to family members, aiming the economic sustenance of family of business for generations, a subsystem in system (stakeholder group) being more primary and effective compared to subsystems." It represents the economic pattern to be passed over generations in family-owned business-like hotel.

Moreover they are found to have strict criteria to start business when we look over to area in Manang that is the people starting business must be the locals, hence it has motivated the locals towards entrepreneurship as outsiders are not allowed to start business there (Aase, Chaudhary, & Vetaas, 2009, s. 236). It has given the ownership of their place to locals and prioritized their right to land. Hence, tourism has been enriching and much advantageous sector of economy in ACT which has downturned occupation like agriculture, animal husbandry like traditional occupation with increasing attraction of locals. Hotels at the region can also be said to be great means that structures the socio economic pattern of the locals (Lim, 2007).With increasing tourism market in mountain region, there has been increase in hotels and jobs and opportunity in hotel industry, which according to (Gurung, 2014) the number has reached 1200 hotels and lodges with

1500 jobs in mountain region including ACT. Although tourism is major source of income in the region, hoteliers have been claiming that imported goods are demanded more than the local products like chocolate and coffee from neighboring cities like Pokhara, Besisahar and Kathmandu (Morimoto & Chapagain, 2014).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Stakeholders in tourism destination:

According to Freeman et. al, (2010), stakeholders are the individual or a group of people without which the organization would not exists. The major stakeholders recognized are as the communities, suppliers, employer, employees, and customers (Adu, 2017). In other words, Freeman (2010) elaborates that the concept of stakeholder is a broad and can also be determined as the individual or a group who are involved directly or indirectly to an organization to achieve a same goal and have same objective towards the organization.

In general, the stakeholders in tourism are denoted as the government, locals, communities, business operators, tour management organizations and tourists (Aref, 2011). Among the stakeholders, making a successful destination it is essential to distinguish the role between stakeholders and identify the players as planners holding power to change for a long-term progress and development (Freeman, 2019). Locals, communities, and businesses are regarded as a powerful participant seeking to build the destination (Aref, 2011). Locals' involvement is the most essential being a part of the stakeholder to have a sustainable tourism and development (Duarte and Nyanjom, 2017).

According to Nagarjun (2015), Locals and communities are illustrated as moral stakeholder playing an important role in tourism development. Hotels are considered as the businesses to

involve local and communities which can improve plans and service delivery, as locals' involvement enhances trust and confidence of the locals towards the tourism industry (Ertuna and Kirbas, 2012).

According to WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), hospitality industry are the players in value creation to the destination. Hotel industry are the source for revenue generation for overall stakeholders of the destination (Sheehan (2006). Stakeholders' theory in tourism provides the insights into the inter-relationship between different individuals/organizations who are directly or indirectly connected to the tourism destination (Philips and freeman, 2010). According to Sautter (1999), the stakeholder theory can be used as a normative tool for tourism planning which helps promoting collaboration between the key players in planning process. He further elaborates as the planning must include the interested stakeholders who seeks and could drive tourism by sharing the opinions and help planners to implement the strategic alliances such as (partnerships).

In context of Nepal, most of the hotels are operated by locals providing tourists a better service (Nepal Tourism Board, 2021). Similarly, homestay is getting popular as a new concept of accommodation service implemented by communities in rural areas (Schoppman et. al, N.D.).

2.2 Stakeholders' collaboration and participation:

Firstly, collaboration is defined as the working with different partners to share the available resources to create a strategic benefit (Hardy et. al, 2003 in Saito and Ruhanen, 2017). To bring up tourism succeed, stakeholders are the essential part as they are involved with the same objective and can affect the destination positively or negatively (Freeman et, al, 2010). Diversity between stakeholders is key to have a successful tourism because of joint decision making for the future development as well as to tackle any difficulties and problems appearing on its way (Bramwell and lane, 2000).

Stakeholders' collaboration helps to plan and develop the place with the responsibilities in hand. Stakeholders' participation involves the process of management, planning, decision making and implementation (Bramwell and lane, 2000). The partnership between locals and the community is essential for the destination to have a beginning of the collaboration (Adu, 2017).

The tourism industry all around the world is considered as fragmented in nature so the planning and implementation process should include coordination and collaboration as a primary focus towards the stakeholders (Adu, 2017). Tourism having a multiple number of stakeholders, collaboration can bring up a new opportunity as well as helps to tackle the poor situation facing the destination (Bramwell and lane, 2000). Collaboration is helpful for the destination as it brings up a collective benefit to the participants through which participants can learn from the process, helps to formulate policies, and respond quick to the changing environment affecting the destination (Jamal and Getz, 1995).

On the other hand, tourism destination serves several challenges in the implementation of stakeholder's collaboration as the distribution of power is not equal among stakeholders, which could bring a conflict (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Stakeholders with strong power of controlling the destination are in hand into the destination management and planning are only involved into collaboration by which low powered stakeholders could get excluded from the destination planning and management (Bramwell and lane, 2000).

Roberts and Simpson (1999) found that collaboration in terms of power distribution has higher chance to fail the destination. Influential power from stakeholder can control the decisions of policies making and implementation depending on the type of stakeholders which can generate positive as well as negative results (Brouwer, 2013). The collaboration of the internal and external stakeholders balances the stakeholder's ecosystem to produce the benefits to the tourism destination entity rather than individual efforts (Serravalle et. al, 2019).

According to Lin et.al., (2017) the power among the stakeholders in the destination is distributed in-terms of different aspects where government and local authorities in tourism holds a power in policy making, development and promotion mostly affecting the overall economy whereas, local businesses and local people hold a power in-terms of cultural and authenticity illustrating the social aspect of the destination.

However, Gossling et. al (2018) shows the unequal distribution of power in tourism will result in a negative impact on management and development of the tourism destination. The study of Gossling et. al, (2018) reflects upon the environmental effect of tourism in Coastal and marine environment which was the result of the poor management and governance with lacking the political efforts and exempted power to the local stakeholders from government regarding the sustainable management.

Although sharing with all the stakeholders is a self-challenging task but the stakeholders involved into the destination without a level of collaboration with others might fall into difficulties in dealing with problems that arises into the tourism destination (Roberts and Simpson, 1999).

2.3 Locals' and communities' participation and collaboration as stakeholder:

Local and the community participation into the destination is considered as an essential in tourism planning and development projects but might have level of inclusion varying destination with power and interest (Shani & Pizam, 2012). Locals' participation is simply creating opportunities to locals and stakeholders to help in development of the destination and to be involved into tourism for economic as well as social well-being (Duarte and Nyanjom, 2017). Locals in-terms of Community, participation is considered as the group of locals shares opportunities aiming a shift in power and empowerment differently than in the past (Shani & Pizam, 2012).

Gunawijaya and Pratiwi (2018), state stakeholder is generally divided into two categories, one is stakeholders who affect decision and other who is affected by decision. Locals are the one affected by the decision and the development of the destination requires locals to be involved in planning and implementation of decisions (Gunawijaya and Pratiwi 2018). Locals are found to be enthusiastic for development showing an interest to participate into the planning and implementation process (Adu, 2017). Along with it, study by Jamal, and Getz (1995) show that locals are also more concern with the degradation that can come apart with tourism to get influence on their natural habitat including culture, heritage and social life and the environment.

Community participation is also a key for upholding the local food, culture, and tradition (Nagarjun, 2015). Active locals' participation helps in preservation of culture and tradition as well

as conservation of the environment and natural resources (Aref, 2011). Ertuna and Kirbas (2012), shows locals participation can help to achieve a desired goals of sustainability and improve the welfare of local community. They further state that better leadership, support, the active participation of locals and their coordination with other stakeholders is a must for a successful tourism management and sustainable development (Nagarjun, 2015). The improper collaboration and unmanaged passive locals' participation can destroy the tourism industry potentiality (Adu, 2017).

2.4 Hotel's collaboration and participation as stakeholder:

In the study of Nguyen et. al (2017), in a popular coastal destination in Tohoku Region, found that the stakeholders collaboration provides an opportunity to manage any possible risk towards the destination where hotels can play a role in managing the destination. Similarly, Tang et. al, (2014), illustrates that the hotels participation and collaboration with the destinations stakeholders could bring positive development and management by overcoming the environmental issues. The study done in Taiwan shows that the stakeholders support and collaboration bring up collaborative knowledge and shared ideas which is necessary to implement any projects successfully into the destination (Leung, 2019).

The study of Hoang et. al (2021), shows the cooperation between two major stakeholders hotels and local authority in Danang depending on the hotel's reputation and revenue generation. However, this shows a level of collaboration exists only depending on the hotels category which is hard for a smaller hotel compared to large scale hotels (Hoang et. al, 2021).

2.5 Crisis management within Tourism

The greatest approach to deal with a crisis is to avoid it, and the best way to avoid a crisis is to foresee it. (Mikusov and Horvathova, 2019 as cited on Miguel et. al,2022).

Crisis management is the process by which an organization mitigates the real damage caused by a crisis that threatens to affect the company, its stakeholders, or the public (Coombs, 2014; Bundy et al., 2017). As discovered and explained by Pearson and Clair (1998), organizational responses can be planned or dependent on ad hoc reactions. According to Coombs (2014), the crisis management process consists of four steps: (1) prevention (steps taken to avoid crises); (2) preparation (includes the creation of a crisis management plan); (3) response (application of the preparation components to the crisis); and (4) revision (evaluation of the organization's response to both potential and real crises). In the tourism industry, certain models have been established to cope with successful crisis management tactics. Evans and Elphnick (2005) propose four steps for effective tourist crisis management: (1) integrating crisis management into a strategic planning process; (2) developing contingency plans; (3) identifying duties; and (4) maintaining some flexibility

The lack of knowledge and competence to deal with tourism crises is consistent with previous findings in the literature (Lettieri et al., 2009), which highlight how learning components are not well covered. Lettieri et al. (2009) investigated the crisis management process in the UK tour operator industry, recommending extensive contingency plans and flexibility to respond quickly and decisively at operational levels during a crisis.

More recently, Lai and Wong's (2020) study on hotel sector crisis responses at the start and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic emphasizes the necessity of contingency planning to adopt prioritized solutions while utilizing the most appropriate resources during pandemics. During the pandemic, some hospitality companies developed targeted practical solutions and specific cleaning protocols, as well as stressed the need for more safety-conscious operations across hotel departments and incentivised customers by ensuring flexibility in terms of bookings and cancellations (Bagnera et al., 2020).

If crises are not handled properly, managers, leaders, and policymakers' reputations may suffer (Pfarrer et al., 2008). Ansell et al. (2010) show that in global crises, transboundary crisis management necessitates extraordinary flexibility and substantial collaboration among various authorities, organizations, and jurisdictions, increasing interdependence among many players.

During times of crisis, destination government and travel industry policies, as well as public awareness and marketing initiatives, play a critical impact in the speed with which tourist sectors recover (Xin et al., 2019). For example, the SARS outbreak in Canada in 2003 was effectively combated by government-led programs targeted at increasing domestic tourism and a campaign engaging local communities and industry stakeholders (Jayawardena et al., 2008).

The hotel business in Hong Kong, on the other hand, was severely impacted by SARS since the negative impact was not counterbalanced by hoteliers who were unable to manage with or avert such an unprecedented disaster (Chien and Law, 2003, as cited on Miguel et. al,2022). As a result, the extent of disease-related harm to the tourist sector throughout the world is determined by government response tactics and stakeholder responsive actions. Hao, Xiao, and Chon(2020) have highlighted reducing non-essential costs, developing the capability and increase ability to act promptly in the situation like covid 19 as effective and proactive ways to overcome the economic crisis.

2.6 Crisis Management and the stakeholder's theory

The need of considering the many perspectives of industry stakeholders has been emphasized in the literature on crisis management (Carlsen and Liburd, 2008). Successful firms, according to the stakeholder theory, should look beyond their shareholders and recognise a variety of stakeholders who influence a company's performance and image (Seeger et al., 2001; Freeman, 2010). The literature identifies two basic kinds of stakeholders. Individuals or groups who are directly affected by the organization's success or failure are considered primary stakeholder, (Miguel et. al,2022). Shareholders, workers, customers, and suppliers are the most important stakeholders.

Secondary stakeholders, such as the community or rivals, are impacted indirectly by an organization. "The linkages among crisis concerns, stakeholders, and the organization are definitely multi-layered and flexible," Diers-Lawson (2021, p. 165) observed. As a result, it's critical to map and comprehend "the nature of the voices and viewpoints that stakeholders might

represent" inside a stakeholder framework (Diers-Lawson, 2021, p. 166 as cited on Miguel et. Al,2022).

However, various stakeholders' relationships and levels of power within an organization vary, resulting in diverse management styles. The stakeholder salience model (Mitchell et al., 1997; Freeman, 2010; Wood et al., 2018; Raha et al., 2021) was created to describe how businesses could engage with and manage various stakeholders. Furthermore, the stakeholder salience model's conceptualization overcomes the old-fashioned perspective of business "as a distinct entity" (Wood et al., 2018, p. 2), rather than as something that "exists in society."

Stakeholder identification and the salience model, according to Wood et al. (2018), provide a challenge to competing methods such as neoclassical ecological theory: Profit and debt are only considered as one of a company manager's responsibilities, which include managing a broader and more complicated set of factors, such as the whole network of stakeholder interactions (Wood et al., 2018).

2.7 The Hotel industry's Tourism Crisis Management

In the tourism and hospitality industries, crisis management is a major topic.The importance of the relationship between crises and tourism has been highlighted in several prior studies.De Sausmarez (2007), for example, suggested that crisis damage endangers not just the national economy but also the lives of numerous tourist sites.As a result, it's important to keep an eye on crisis management tactics in order to minimize the bad consequences.Some crisis, such as the economic cris-is and terrorism, are caused by humans.
Economic crisis discourage travel due to the high unpredictability of the economic environment (U and So, 2020), resulting in a drop in tourist demand and the loss of competent personnel (Okumus et al., 2005).

As a result, travel demand in low-income nations was greatly lowered, but not so much in high-income ones (Buigut et al., 2017). Natural catastrophes, such as epidemics, are examples of crisis. Epidemic outbreaks might limit visitor arrivals because travelers prioritize safety while

planning their travels (U and So, 2020). Hotel room prices and occupancy percentages decline when demand for hotel rooms decreases (Song et al., 2011). (Kim et al., 2005). Because normal travel patterns may take over a year to re-establish (Pine and McKercher, 2004), an epidemic crisis may have a significant effect on the tourist business (Tsao and Ni, 2016). Apart from the effects of the crisis themselves, the reactions to the crises may have an influence on a destination's image and reputation of attractiveness, and hence on its survival and profitability (Santana, 2004).

Researchers have looked at how to construct an effective crisis management model in recent studies of crisis management in the hotel business. For example, in the Russian hotel business, Kovaltchuk et al. (2016) investigated these principles and sought to construct a crisis management model. Barbe and Pennington-Gray (2018) gave insight into how hotels might use social media to communicate during a crisis. Abo-Murad and Abdullah (2019) conducted interviews to learn more about the influence of turnover culture on crisis management in Malaysian hotels. Mikulic et al. (2018) used integrated risk management concepts to conduct an exploratory evaluation of key hazards in the Croatian tourist business. Although these studies are useful for the hotel sector in disaster planning, they looked at crisis management in a broad sense. As a result, when a specific sort of crisis, such as an epidemic, occurs, there are few comprehensive crisis management methods to turn to.

Previous studies on epidemic crisis management have highlighted the significant influence on the tourist sector and urged that further study is needed to fully comprehend the many facets of an epidemic crisis. Zeng et al. (2005) assessed SARS as a short-term pandemic and investigated the potential for new ideas when tourism recovered. According to McKercher and Chon (2004), the government should be concerned about overreaction and lack of coordination, both of which have an impact on long-term tourist growth.

Shi and Li (2017) studied the effect of the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) epidemic on tourist arrivals from China to South Korea and found that the MERS outbreak had a substantial influence on overall arrivals but was minor for business travel. Although epidemic crises are a critical problem for the hotel sector, most of the research were undertaken after, rather than during, an epidemic crisis (Lee, 2009; Wan, 2013).

Even though several studies have been undertaken to investigate the effects of COVID-19 (Baum and Hai, 2020; Baum et al., 2020), there is still a paucity of research analyzing appropriate crisis management strategies in the hotel business during an epidemic crisis, this could be due to the very contextual nature of the case in which the crisis takes place. Given the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, a timely study of how hotels perceive and respond to this crisis might give insight for future epidemic emergencies.

2.8 Practices in Crisis Management

In the framework of crisis management practices, Israeli and Reichel (2003) were the first to investigate the relationship between crisis management methods' use and significance in the Israeli hotel business. They interviewed 13 managers and developed four kinds of practices based on their findings and a review of the literature. They drew on Mansfeld's (1999) work to create the "marketing" category. They split cost-cutting into two categories: "human resources" and "maintenance," with "government help" serving as external support.

There are 21 items in their framework. The paradigm was expanded with minor adjustments to the restaurant industry (Israeli, 2007), Indian luxury hotels (Israeli et al., 2011), and travel agency sectors by Israeli and his co-authors (Perl and Israeli, 2011).According to their findings, crisis management methods, stakeholders were reactive, and managers leaned heavily on government assistance. However, despite several crisis, we still don't know if stakeholders would be able to learn from them and adjust their choices.

To better comprehend crisis management strategies, we must first recognize that a crisis has many phases, including pre-, during-, and post-crisis (Ritchie, 2004). The pre-disaster stage occurs before a triggering event, and research in this stage focuses on developing a state of preparedness (Carmeli and Schaubroeck, 2008). The goal of research in the post-disaster phase is to critically assess the lessons gained and make future occurrences easier to handle; meanwhile, the goal of research in the during-crisis stage is to create emergency management and contingency management (Sawalha et al., 2013).

2.9 Tourism resilience and sustainable development

The main ideas behind the resilience concept are that systems don't change in a straight line, but rather in a loop; that the phases of the loop roughly repeat, but that the characteristics of each stage at different iterations aren't always the same; that the system's adaptive capacity determines how and how quickly it recovers from a destabilizing event, (Cochrane,2010). Resilience believes that human and ecological processes are complex, dynamic systems that can adapt within specific limitations.

If a stress event occurs, the components will reorganize into a new state of equilibrium, (Cochrane,2010), Using a resilience framework allows deeper penetration of systems by suggesting identification of the elements crucial to a desired state and allowing a management focus on reinforcing them so that, if a stress event occurs, they may form the foundations of a rebuilt, renovated system. Resilience thinking drives crisis management, but also guarantees that the underlying structures behind these aspects are in place, (Cochrane,2010).
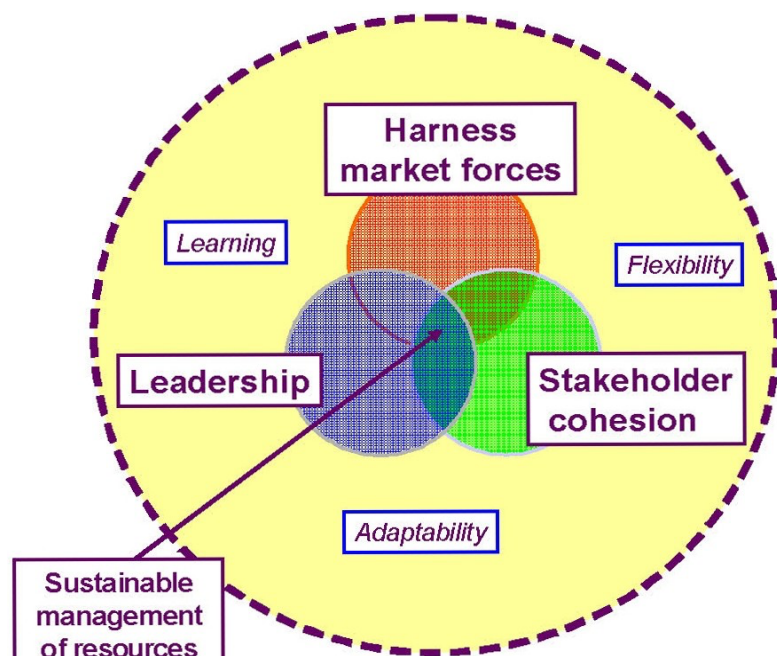
Figure 1: Sphere of tourism resilience; source: (Cochrane, 2010).

The model shows what the main parts of a strong tourism system are and how they work together. It's important to understand market forces and know how to use them, since any system that doesn't work well with the market is doomed to fail, (Cochrane,2010). This is an important part of the "triple bottom line" discourse of sustainability, which is based on the three dimensions of environmental, social, and economic success. (This framework is overused in the business world and is sometimes used to hide real progress, but it is still a useful "shorthand" for addressing issues of environmental and social justice as well as profit margins.)

A second important part is stakeholder cohesion and collaborative working. The private, public, and third sectors all have different roles and strengths that can only be used to their full potential if they are used together. The third major component is strong and consistent leadership, which is shown through a clear vision and good management. This can come from individuals or institutions, and it is needed to set up structures to resolve conflicts over resource use, move change forward, and get stakeholders to work together and engage with the market, (Cochrane,2010). There are also important parts of the system that have to do with its larger context. Flexibility is important to avoid being too rigid, which can make it hard to deal with stress.

For the Social Ecological System (SES) to be flexible and adaptable, institutions and regulations must consider components of other systems that affect it, such as changes in macroeconomic policy, technological advances, market trends, or supply chain links. To make sure people understand this, they need to learn (formally or informally) about the relevant systems through careful planning and evaluation, (Cochrane,2010).

Over the past 30 years, the word "sustainability" has made its way into the public consciousness and become part of the policy and practice of governments, businesses, and other

civil society partners, (Cochrane,2010). However, many people still don't understand how it is possible for growing populations to improve their standard of living while keeping a stable supply of natural resources.

But, as Holling (2001) explains, the resilience cycle clarifies what "sustainable development" means by showing that "sustainability" is the ability of a system to create, test, and keep adaptive capability, and "development" is the ability of a system to create, test, and keep opportunities. So, the goal of "sustainable development" is to build people's ability to adapt while also creating new opportunities. Therefore "sustainable development" is not an oxymoron, but rather a term that describes a logical partnership (Holling ,2001). Folke et al. (2002) say that it also helps to know how social and ecological systems can be governed so that the goals of sustainable development can be reached.

2.10 Tourism experiences

Tourism experiences are defined as "memorable events and impressions that happen because of emotionally and personally engaging interactions with an experience provider, which affect future purchase decisions and are shared with others" (Jonas, 2018). Positive tourism experiences are good for both tourists and businesses in many ways. Consumers, for example, benefit from better health, family relationships, and personal growth (Chen & Petrick, 2013). (Tsvetkov 2018).

Businesses benefit from repeat sales, customer loyalty, and a better ability to compete (Yu, Chang & Ramanpong 2019). Because of the benefits that can be gained from tourism experiences, the demand for them has grown (Tsvetkov 2018). This, in turn, has led to a lot of research on the idea, with many people looking at the different aspects of experiences in different tourism settings. Kastenholz et al. (2017), for example, investigated the different parts of rural tourism experiences. In a different study, Thahn and Kirova (2018) looked at the different parts of wine tourism. Ghosh and Mandal (2019) looked at the different parts of a medical tourism experience in a later study.

Elsayeh (2020) did a study to find out how COVID-19 changed the way Egyptians traveled and how the tourism industry changed after the pandemic. The results show that safety and cleanliness were the most important things about travel after COVID-19.

Madani, Boutebal, Benhamida, and Bryant (2020) did a study to find out what the Algerian people thought about tourism and taking vacations during a pandemic and how they felt about it. A second goal of the study was to find out what tourists would want after travel restrictions were put in place. The study found that Algerian consumers have a lot of different needs. Some of these needs were safety, the implementation of social-distance measures, and clean tourist sites, (Jonas,2022).

There are numerous doubts about the future of tourism as governments throughout the globe open their borders to tourists from other countries. Recovery methods are essential to overcome the pandemic's effects on tourism, Although the situation has improved, it does not mean that life will revert to the way it was before the COVID-19 epidemic. So, in order to go back to normal, businesses need to start from scratch since their consumers have changed and their demands have evolved since COVID-19, (Jonas,2022).

2.11 Tourism Recovery in Hotel industry after disaster

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a series of incidents has emphasized the susceptibility of travel and tourism to diseases, natural disasters, and local events with global consequences. SARS outbreaks in 2002 and 2009, the swine flu pandemic in 2009, the tsunami in Japan in 2004, the earthquake that wrecked Nepal's economy in 2015, and terror attacks in 2001 and 2008 all had an influence on the sector. This was on top of the sectors' susceptibility to business cycle swings.

The Covid-19 epidemic, on the other hand, has outstripped all other outbreaks in living memory, both in terms of scope and destruction (Zenker and Kock, 2020). Based on a survey of respondents from eight countries, Alanso et al. (2020) concluded that hotel owners' top worry was the financial effect of the pandemic, which was exacerbated by uncertainty, the unknown length of the crisis, and the loss of customers, employment, and lives.

China, being the pandemic's initial epicenter, was the first country to be hit by the virus.As a result of the subsequent lockdown and a series of containment efforts, the hotel business was the first to be affected by the outbreak's severity.

Zhang et al. (2020) reported early obstacles of falling hotel revenues and offered short-term self-rescue actions as well as long-term strategy optimization strategies that might secure the sector's survival and development in the post-Covid era. Operational modifications, cost control, and maximizing human resource involvement, as well as seeking active government help, were all part of the short-term rescue plan. The report recommended a change in marketing and pricing strategy, as well as the utilization of technology and product improvement, human resource reorganization, and increased financial reserves in the long run. Product or service improvement is very efficient way of attracting more tourists or guests. In regard to product/service development and and improvement John and Thakur inspired by Olson et al., (1995) identify different types of product development and improvement in business stating,"New-to-the-world products/services represent the products/ services that are new both to the firm and the marketplace. Line extensions represent products/ services that are new to the marketplace but not entirely new to the firm. Me-too products/services represent products/services that are new to the company, but not to the marketplace such as the replication of a competitor's products. Product/service modifications are existing products or services that have been simply modified, i.e., they are neither new to the company nor to the marketplace." Hotel industries thriving to cover the economic impact of covid 19 in their business can very much take advantage of this concept of different types of service or product improvement. It is possible with the use of primary tourism products in destination that stands as the major attraction to travel the place hence hotel industries have possibility of developing such primary products (Benur and Bramwell,2015). For example, there are different exhibitions and expos being organized like by hotels that becomes the travel decision of the people to destination where the hotel is located. Hence, the product development and improvement in the hotels have correlation to more tourists in destination.

Lai and Wong (2020) looked at industry behavior in two periods, the initial phase, and the pandemic phase, using a sample of Macau enterprises. The research examined the significance, use, and performance of six types of practices: pricing, marketing, maintenance, human resources, government, and epidemic prevention in two stages. The study's results indicated that in the early

stages, epidemic prevention, pricing, and maintenance, as well as governmental backing and human resource policies, were given top priority.

In the European context, the active cooperation of the European Commission as well as the state in the form of fiscal incentives was a consistent feature witnessed across nations throughout the epidemic. Rodrguez-Anton and AlonsoAlmeida (2020), Valle (2020), and Pavlatos et al., 2020, all report on this in some depth. Firms used alternate self-save tactics to deal with the crisis on an individual level. Marketing efforts were redirected, operational expenditures (including human resource costs) were reduced, discretionary spending were postponed, and physical infrastructure was offered for medical reasons or as quarantine centers. During the epidemic, however, the Commission's and the State's assistance was so enormous that all other self-save efforts by individual institutions paled in comparison.

Looking forward, to these studies provide a broad variety of recommendations. Valle (2020) proposed increased state fiscal support, a reoriented (online) marketing strategy aimed at domestic tourists, a communication strategy assuring tourists of hygiene and safety, increased use of technology that reduces human contact, the formation of crisis management teams, pay rationalization for high-paying jobs in the sector and pay freezes for employees, and investment in new technology. The major focus for the future, according to Rodrguez-Anton and Alonso-Almeida (2020), is to enhance tourist trust.

In sum, our analysis of literature reveals that hotels followed the following strategies for short- and long-term survival and growth: Saving methods, cost-cutting initiatives, income augmentation via service transformation and epidemic prevention, and revenue diversification are all short-term solutions while long-term goals include investing in new technologies, reorganizing human resources, and reorganizing assets. How did the hotel business In ACT do throughout the crisis, what recovery initiatives were taken, and what does the future hold? The goal of this research is to investigate and react to this topic.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains why certain research approaches were chosen, how empirical data was collected, and how it was analyzed. There is also a reflection and limits of this study. The chapter also covers semi-structured in-depth interviews, a qualitative research technique. According to Kallet (2004), the methodology section of a thesis should serve as the foundation for data gathering and analysis.

3.1 Qualitative Research

The qualitative research approach is frequently used in several academic disciplines and market research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explain, "Qualitative research is a form of inquiry used in several academic fields, mostly the social sciences, but also market research and other settings." The objective of qualitative research is to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of human behavior and the causes that lead to such conduct.

In other words, qualitative research examines and provides answers to issues such as how, where, what, when, and why a person might behave in a certain manner toward a particular issue. Smith (1987) characterizes qualitative research as empirical, stating, "The researcher gathers sense data regarding the phenomena under investigation, organizes them, and compares them to theories, hypotheses, and category definitions in order to test them." Due to the specificity of this approach, a limited number of participants is valid as a source of information.

When doing Qualitative research, there are several methods involved, but the most significant are the data collection and data analysis processes. Using the continual comparison approach and conceptual formulations that arise, the researcher continues to sample conceptually to completely develop and enrich the categories, (Schreiber and MacDonald,1997) depict the timing of these processes as occurring concurrently.

This research will collect qualitative data using a single strategy. The method used is the most suited since the data collected through interviews will be in descriptive language that can be coded and analyzed for patterns or meaning. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), coding qualitative data will enable the researcher to find themes that match to the research questions and analyze the collected data. Our research tends to use qualitative method as the qualitative approach

offers the researchers to make follow up on respondents' answer creating the value to the data. We could grab the opportunity to discover a different visional perspective towards the problem in the research and dive deeper into it to find new ideas and thoughts. Further, it benefits researchers to save money, deeper insights to collect data and collaborative experience towards researchers and interviewees.

Qualitative research seeks to uncover the innermost thoughts and feelings of those being studied. People, according to the constructivist view of knowledge, build their own realities via the use of flexible mental models that are supported by social interactions, (Riese,2019). Knowledge is a product of its time and place. As a result, they are unable to get clear insight into how others form their ideas and beliefs and their own mental processes. Communication is still unable to reach the mental processes (for example Maturana, 1999; Luhmann, 1995, as cited on Riese,2019). Researchers may, however, extract other people's descriptions of their world via contact. Researchers might utilize the discrepancies between their own story and the narratives of individuals they researched as material for thought and insight to further develop their own mental construction of what other people's reality is (Czarniawska, 1998, as cited on Riese,2019). Through the conversations we engage with participants in our research of Hoteliers in the ACT area, we can learn more about what is occurring in their environment and how it may be interpreted and seen.

The following figure is a visual representation of the many phases of qualitative research.
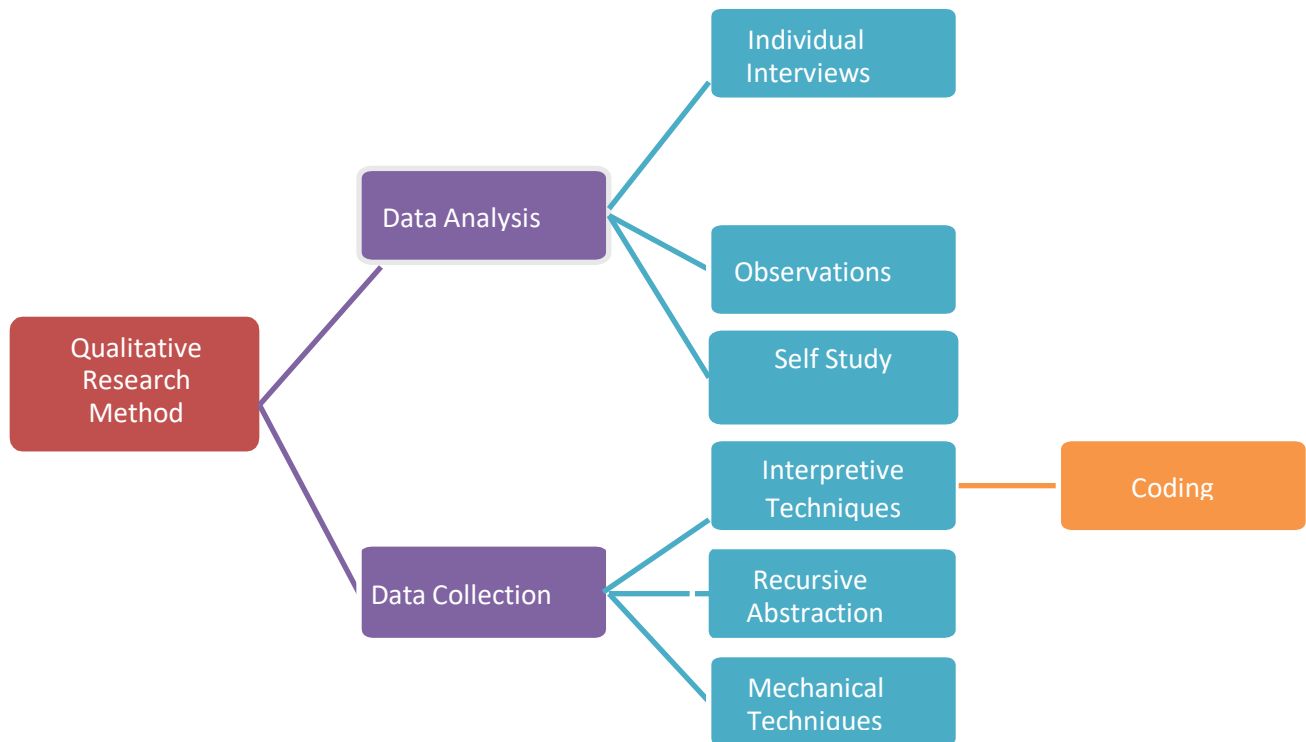
Figure 2: Research Method/qualitative; Source: Oun & Bach (2014)

3.2 Research Approach- Inductive

The inductive approach is a method for examining qualitative data that is led by specified evaluation objectives.

Inductive analysis refers to methodologies that mainly employ comprehensive readings of raw data to generate ideas, themes, or a model via interpretations made by an evaluator or researcher from the raw data. "The researcher starts with an area of study and lets the theory to emerge from the evidence," according to Strauss and Corbin (1998). The inductive approach's main goal is to enable research findings to arise from raw data's frequent, dominating, or noteworthy themes without the constraints imposed by established approaches.

Inductive approaches begin with the formation of a notion and try to test or build it via research (Saunders et al.2007). An inductive approach is best applicable for this research to acquire information from ACT hoteliers and construct theories. According to interpretivist phenomenology, comprehending social reality must be based on people's experiences with it. (Gray,2021).

Therefore, the researcher must set aside any prior knowledge of events and reexamine the immediate experience of them for new meanings to develop, leading to new, richer, or renewed meaning (Gray 2021). The new meaning will be derived from hoteliers operating around the Annapurna Circuit Trek and how they have been influenced by COVID-19, also what recovery measures they are taking for the survival from the pandemic.

3.3 Type of research- A case study

When an in-depth understanding of a topic, event, or phenomena of interest in its natural real-life setting is required, the case study approach is particularly effective. Complex topics may be examined from many angles using the case study approach in their actual-world situation, (Sarah et. al,2011). Case studies, according to Yin (2003), may be used to explain, describe, or investigate occurrences or phenomena in their natural settings.

These may be used to investigate and explain causal relationships and pathways that arise because of a new policy initiative or service development, for example. The case study method is particularly suited to gathering data on more explanatory 'how, what, and why' questions, such as 'how is the intervention being implemented and received on the ground?' The case study method might reveal more about what gaps exist in its delivery or why one implementation option was selected over another.

This, in turn, may aid in the development or refinement of theory, (Sarah et. al,2011). Case studies can be approached in a variety of ways depending on the researcher's epistemological perspective, such as critical (questioning one's own and others' assumptions), interpretivist (trying to understand individual and shared social meanings), or positivist (focusing on natural science

criteria such as generalizability considerations). While such a schema may be theoretically useful, in each case study, it may be beneficial to use more than one strategy, (Sarah et. al,2011).

With little control over social and behavioral events, case studies are undertaken to acquire answers to "how" and "why" questions, with the focus on current time and conditions (Yin, 2003). In social sciences, this technique of study is often employed to conduct in-depth analyses or investigations of certain demographics, locations, or groups, (Saunders,2012). In the instance of our case, hotels in the ACT and how the pandemic has impacted them, as well as what recovery measures are being conducted in the area to overcome the pandemic.

The case study method allows us to examine the pandemic in a daily environment and discover how the area has been impacted and how it is recovering. This method assists us in answering the question "how?" help discover answers to our research questions. Therefore, this approach becomes very important to our study. Hotel proprietors along the ACT route have been interviewed as part of a demography and qualitative data collection technique has been applied for the study.

3.4 Data collection

It can be taken as very important and critical part of the project that helps on shaping the paper. It includes detailed information on how the research is done and a complete information data collection method.

3.4.1 Sampling (non-probability)

The population segment has been confined with in the hotel industries along Annapurna Circuit Trek(ACT).According to (Sharma, 2017, p. 749), "Sampling is a technique (procedure or device) employed by a researcher to systematically select a relatively smaller number of representative items or individuals (a subset) from a pre-defined population to serve as subjects (data source) for observation or experimentation as per objectives of his or her study." As there

has been several hotels in the region and we were looking for the respondents remotely, it was quite difficult for us to get in contact with the ones who could agree for the interview. We searched the name of hotels in ACT by their name and searched in trip advisor and in Facebook. We enlisted about 40 hotels and contacted them via WhatsApp, Facebook or Viber. However, some of the contacts were not active in any means, some were not willing to talk for interview and finally we could get four hoteliers ready for interview. Hence, we took non-probability convenience sampling due to internet accessibility as well as their availability.

We had taken an interview with one of the hoteliers in Mustang, however, we had to stop interview in between due to internet problem. As we had only collected few information regarding hotel background and some parts of impact of covid 19, the information is not worth including in the study hence we just stored it and hence this way we went through the process of secondary selection of sample (Morse, 1991).

3.4.2 Interview

As our paper is focused on studying the economic effects of covid 19 in hotel industry ACT and their plans for overcoming economic challenges, we have various parts within the study that helps to obtain the objective of our research for example, we must study the normal characteristics of hotels, the effects of covid 19 and the ways they have been dealing with and further details. The data can be best collected from the ones who has been representing the hotel or who owns the hotel, hence we found it influential to get firsthand data from the hoteliers with the means of phone interview. Hence, the method would be primary data collection that relies completely on the interview, or the words and claims made by the hoteliers.

As referred by Mwandoba(2005) there are different ground of bringing up the rooted issues and contextualize the information from the qualitative methods, and further he also prioritizes the interview method as the method that benefits researchers for collecting raw data from participants needed for study. Therefore, with the view to collect detailed data on the effects of covid 19 in hotel industry in ACT, we chose to conduct the interview with hoteliers of the area.

There are different contexts through interviews, and we could expect different feedback from each respondent, hence developing follow up questions could add the new form of data to our research, hence we agreed to conduct semi structure interview with outline of possible subject

criteria. Semi structured interview has more detailed and clear answers and furthermore, it also helps on gaining more new area of discussion that is not even pointed out by the researchers (Sankar & Jones, 2008). Therefore, we prepared an outline of the possible topics for discussion, possible questionnaire and notes that might support interview to get more detailed and to possibly get new information for our study. Finally, we prepared interview guide with different parts specified, the first part of interview is specified as background that includes short introduction on background of hotel, second part would be about the impacts of covid 19 in their hotel and the third part about post pandemic recovery plans for accelerating their business. This guide includes the possible interview questions and notes on possible follow up questions.

As previously mentioned in sampling part, we tried to contact much more hoteliers but due to internet problem and access problem we could manage to convince four of the hoteliers from ACT. Prior to conducting interview, we firstly had our introduction and made them aware about our thesis purpose. Then after, we asked them on their availability and agreed on time to participate in interview. questions and notes on possible follow up questions.

As previously mentioned in sampling part, we tried to contact much more hoteliers but due to internet and access problem, we could manage to convince four of the hoteliers from ACT. Prior to conducting interview, we firstly had our introduction and made them aware about our thesis purpose. Then after, we asked them on their availability and agreed on time to participate in interview.

Respondents	Names	Position	Age	Hotel	Date of interview and time
1	Karna Chirring Gurung	Owner	26 Yrs.	Hotel Yak Kharka (Yak Kharka)	**19 April**
2	Mahendra Subedi	Co-Owner	43 Yrs.	Hotel Annapurna Inn (Muktinath)	**20 April**
3	Bikash Gurung	Owner	25 Yrs.	Hotel superview (Panche, Ghandruk)	**25 April**
4	Karma Wangdel Gurung	Owner	34 Yrs	Hotel Thorang peak (Yak kharkha)	**20 April**

Table 1: *Representation of Respondents based on their Names, age, and location.*

As per planned, we conducted interview with four of the hoteliers of ACT in dates as per their availability. Moreover, it was a phone interview through either WhatsApp or Viber call. We firstly informed them in detail regarding our thesis project, ourselves and informed them that the interview is going to be recorded for the purpose of data collection and analysis. Afterwards, we started the interview with predetermined interview guide and continued with follow up questions. All four interviews were conducted in Nepali language as we thought it would give them more confidence and they feel comfortable to share what comes in their mind and heart.

After completing interview, our quick part was taking the recording part and transcribe so that we have the data transcribed in English. It helps on making the data ready for findings and analysis. We ourselves got engaged in transcribing data as we all three are from Nepal and are well known to the language. Then we moved to next stage of our paper that is data analysis which will be briefly described in the section below:

3.5 Data Analysis

This is one of the important parts of the research that brings out the most important and relevant parts out of our raw data into the paper. Data analysis is a systematic process of getting use of firsthand data that we have collected, which we need to filter and manage accordingly. Primarily, it has four major stages immersion in the data, coding, creating categories, and the identification of themes (Green, et al., 2007, p. 546). We after having all four transcribed interviews, highlighted the major quotes in the interview that might have possibility of including in our analysis part, we highlighted them and then based on our different purposive quotes, we created categories for each quote and classified them.

We found the concept of global theme, organizing theme and basic theme as the tools for conducting analysis which is forwarded by (Stirling, 2001). It refers global theme to be a central part of the analysis that represents overall analysis which can only be fulfilled by several organizing themes that makes up the analysis of different connecting aspects (Akinyode & Khan, 2018, s. 167).

We found these tools to be very systematic and useful to analysis that has helped us go through analysis. Moreover, it has helped us on categorizing our data and manage them accordingly in topics and subtopics. Moreover, it is very important in thematic analysis to address the research issue and furthermore interpret data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3353).We have applied it to our research along with bringing with the theories and literatures that connects to our data. For connecting theories into context, we have used the chapter of literature review to some extent.

3.6 Reliability and validity:

The design of the qualitative research study should include the two major factors i.e., validity and reliability which shows a consideration of quality and accuracy of the data (Agunloye, 2019). Reliability and validity illustrate the meaning of the study using the valid and reliable academic sources that the data were collected from to conclude the accurate research findings

(Saunders et. al, 2012). "Trustworthiness of a report construct the issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability" (Saunders et. al, 2009).

Trustworthiness is an important factor in assessing the quality of the research which could bring the knowledge that can contribute to social changes (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, Bryman (2012) states building up the credibility of the study involves the study's standard exercising the norms and presentation of outcomes to the research participants to clarify the findings presented by the author.

Two different term reliability and validity explores different aspect of the study. Where "Reliability" is a concept that looks after the collection techniques and analytical procedure which eventually produces a consistency in findings if the study were to be repeated on the other occasion (Saunders et. al, 2012). The quality of research cannot be identified based on only reliability but also along with validity (Saunders et. al, 2012).

Whereas validity is a form of parameter that helps to measure a variable in the research to measure the intentional overall concept that is included into the research (Bryman, 2012). Validity comes along with two sub-parameters i.e., internal, and external which drives differently focusing on various measures and helps to make the analysis contexts like: appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the conducted research project. In General, Validity tries to elaborate the relationship between the variables in any research focus with a justification of the reliable outcomes of the research.

3.7 Ethical consideration:

Agunloye (2019) explains that the researchers need to understand the research ethics to maintain the standards of conduction for both parties i.e., researchers and interviewees. The protection of the rights and welfare of the interviewees included in the research is important to make the research transparent and valuable (Saunders et. al, 2015). Ethical consideration is an essential factor that needs to be considered to maintain the confidential personal respondent's

information and knowledge included in the study (Bryman, 2012). Without the research ethics, it can cause researcher to prove the research´s reliability and validity (Saunders et. al, 2015).

Informed consent holds an advantage of having consent form of ethics for the authors in which, if any concerns raised after the research by participants or researchers, the researchers could refer to a signed record of consent (Bryman, 2012). So, the informed consent of ethics has been followed as a form to keep research transparent by awaring them of the pros and cons of the research participations and letting the respondent to have a free choice of acceptance and rejection within their hand. The consent was designed according to the terms and condition of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Furthermore, we had informed the interviewees that the interview would be recorded for the purpose of data study and analysis.

No participants were forced or hurt during the research to present their views and opinions which is beyond the research ethics. Research was conducted in a fair and within the ethical boundaries. Moreover, the research has been conducted with no bias and plagiarism as the supportive elements like, literatures, articles, journals and referenced materials taken from all the sources has been properly referenced and credited to the real authors.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

4.1 Findings and Analysis

This chapter elaborates on the findings from the interviews taken with the hoteliers in different point of Annapurna circuit trek. The findings are brought out after the process of going throughout the transcripts and highlight the important parts and categorizing them into the specific part. As described in the chapter on methodology under data analysis we have used thematic analysis and got inspired by the paper of (Akinyode & Khan, 2018, s. 167) in analysis, where we

have used the idea of the global theme, organizing theme and basic theme as tool to categories our data systematically. Hence, the whole analysis part is based on study of the affects, challenges and response to covid 19 in hotel industry in ACT.
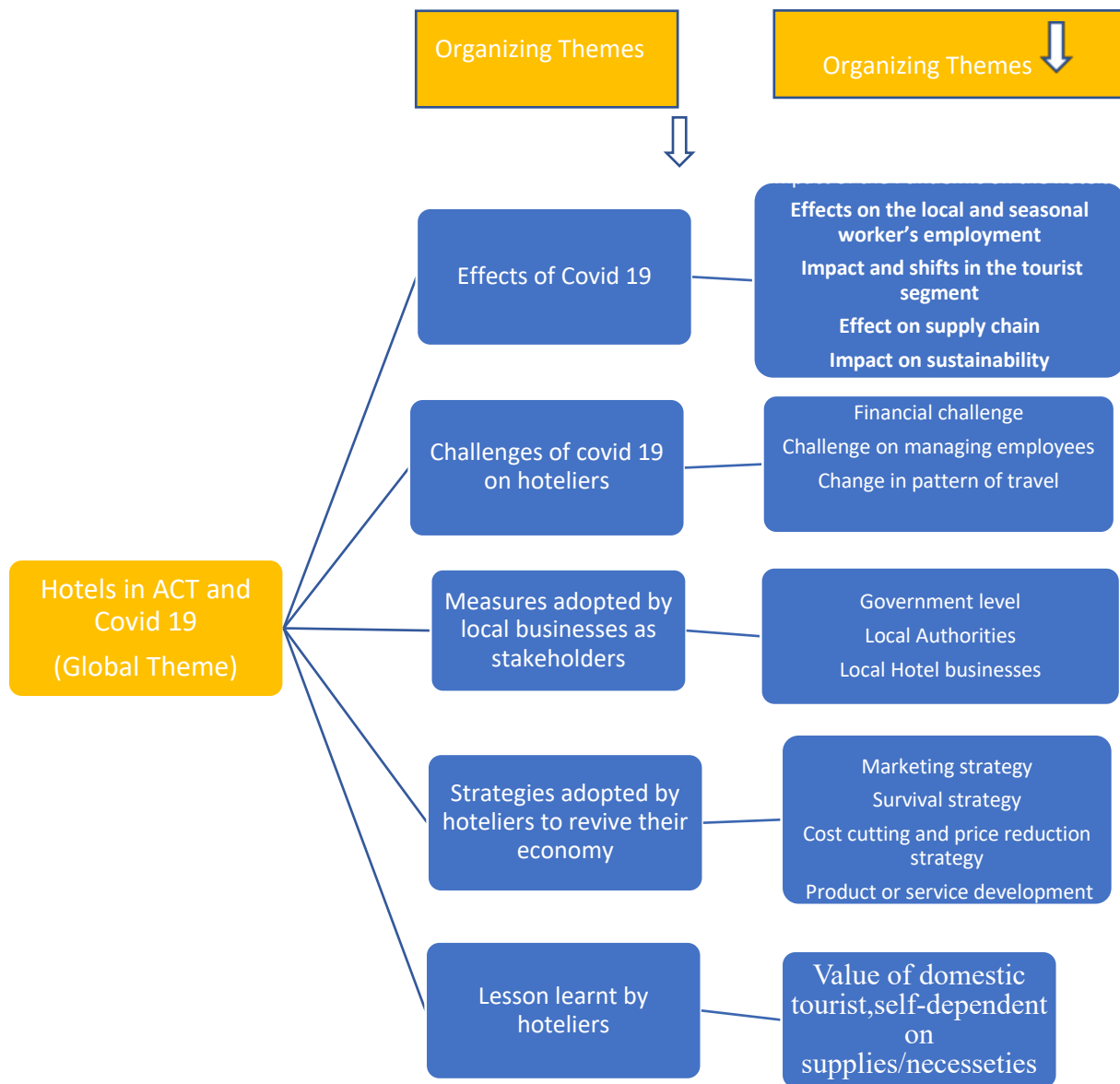
Figure 3: Coding our data into different categories or themes as the classification used by of (Akinyode & Khan, 2018, s. 167).

Here we have the hotels in ACT and covid 19 as the global theme as a central area of study, and in order to systematize our findings we classified the major theme to five organizing themes effects of covid 19, challenges of covid 19 on hoteliers, measures adopted by local businesses as stakeholders, strategies adopted by hoteliers to revive their economy and lesson learnt by hoteliers *(Akinyode & Khan, 2018, s. 167).* And these topics are also followed by the examples and specific datas that are sorted under these categories.

4.2 Uncertainty of the pandemic and the dilemma around it

The pandemic was discussed with all participants, as well as how it impacted their hotel business. We discovered that there was a great deal of uncertainty about the future and what it would mean for local businesses. Some respondents believed it would persist indefinitely and impact their business for longer than expected, and that the region would never return to the amount of tourism it formerly had. The hotel owners said that there were hardly any tourists at their hotel and that they were always seeking for different methods to generate cash to survive and continue in business. As Nepal is a developing country, interviewees said that they had received no support from the government. Our literature review, study of (Xin et. al,2019), suggested speedy recovery of a tourism destination and the sectors revival while there was a helping hand from the government, the government's aid and policies quickly helped to recovered the SARS ,2003 pandemic in Canadian hotel industry, but on the other hand the same study showed , the impact on Hong Kong hotels was severe because the government did not intervene and helped much to recover the SARS's impact on the hotel industry. Our primary data through the interview indicates the similar nature of lack of help from the government in the time of crisis. Hotel operators in the ACT felt entirely alone, with no help from the government. As a result of the government's lack of interest in supporting local hotels in the area, hotel owners were forced to come up with novel ways to stay in business.

Bikash Gurung, Hotel owner (Hotel Superview, Ghandruk), said "*The corona pandemic was underestimated and poorly managed by political leaders, as you know our government always has this sluggish attitude to deal with a problem. They were never serious about the pandemic in the first place, the government even compared the Covid-19 to flue and did not act properly and failed to create awareness among the public. This trend led to the higher uncertainty of the pandemic and the loss of the pandemic was felt much longer compared to other developed nation such as in China, Japan, and countries in Europe*".

The above quotes suggest and indicate the lack of knowledge and competence to deal with tourism crisis in par with the previous findings in literature (Lettieri et al, 2009). The government of Nepal failed to imply sudden measures in place to address the ongoing uncertainty of the corona crisis within the hotels industry. The government was a bit slow on addressing the pandemic and providing the essential guidelines to the hotel owner on how to act during the time of the crisis.

Another respondent,Karma Wangdel Gurung, (Hotel owner,Hotel Thorang Peak,Yak Kharka), mentioned slightly different view on the government's support and went on saying,

"*We did not get any compensation or any help from government towards our business, but government provided opportunities for unemployment to work for governmental projects as a labor to locals who were badly affected by covid and living in worst situation*".

As a result of this, underprivileged residents who depend on tourism jobs were able to earn some money to live, even if government help to hotels was not provided by the government.

Karma Chirring Gurung, Hotel owner (Hotel Thorang La pass), emphasizes because of the pandemic, local hotels and lodges strongly doubt that the revenue from tourists will be enough to fulfill their daily requirements, he underlines the various means of income seekers in his community.

"*Speaking for myself, I earn most of my income from tourism activities, but I notice that others in my community are beginning to look for alternative sources of income as tourism income declines. While tourism is decreasing, individuals are beginning to get more active in agriculture*".

Furthermore, Karma Chhiring Gurung, mentioned that, even during the pandemic, not all communities were affected equally. Due to the impact of social media, certain communities got

many domestic tourists, while others received none. So, the impact was on a different level based on where the hotel Is located on the trail, as a result the effect was different, so we acted differently.

"First, we didn't work at all; we had some savings from previous years, so we utilized them to get by. It wasn't a major problem for the first year, but the second year was much harder; there wasn't a single visitor, and tourists were our primary source of revenue".

The above quotation illustrates the stage of the epidemic, from the middle of the pandemic, during which the hotel owners experienced a variety of affects. The literature review in our study suggested, to have a better understanding of how to handle crises, we first need to acknowledge that a crisis consists of multiple stages, including pre-, during-, and post-crisis phases (Ritchie, 2004).

Our research demonstrated spontaneous reactions (ad hoc responses), to the crisis, but it did not include any of the many tactics that had been developed especially for the various phases of the epidemic. According to Pearson and Claire (1998), organizational responses can be planned or dependent on ad hoc reactions. The hoteliers we interviewed in ACT heavily relied on ad hoc reactions to the crisis and acted upon accordingly.

Karma Chhring Gurung, further adds,

In general, we can rely on agriculture in our area (Manang). We have our own land that we can use to cultivate crops, therefore it is not difficult to survive. It was not difficult to live and eat, but the daily costs were very difficult to fulfill due to the lack of tourist revenue.

The alternatives of engaging in tourist activities are discussed in this quotation. Despite the absence of tourists, the locations maintained their livelihoods via a variety of different activities such as agricultural.

He further ads,

> *"Because our hotel is located on the trail to Thorang La Pass, domestic tourists tend to be small, and we depend heavily on foreign visitors. Most domestic visitors traveled to the Tilicho Lake (considered the world's highest lake) area, and we did not get any*

tourists, therefore our revenue was significantly limited. Our side of the area had practically no visitors, but our neighboring villages, such as khangshar, received some even during the difficult times, so they performed better, but we were severely impacted".

The internal flow of tourists was heading mostly to Tilicho lake and the tourist's recovery was felt much faster in those villages as khanshar, but the Yak kharka village was severely impacted because it relied heavily on foreign tourists.

Karma Chhring Gurung, Hotel owner, Yak kharkha, indicates the new trend of tourism flow as,

"Khangshar is situated on the way to Tilicho lake, therefore the domestic tourists were increasing in that region. (There were domestic tourists boom in khangshar suddenly)".

This remark illustrates the many effects of the same epidemic. Even during the epidemic, one village loses hope while another experiences a domestic tourist boom. This depicts the pandemic's positive as well as negative aspects. Domestic tourism has reached unprecedented heights, whereas foreign tourism has almost disappeared. Within this scenario, the pandemics' multifaceted effects are examined. There were two villages that witnessed an increase in internal tourism because of social media's effect on the marketing of tourism destinations, whereas another village suffered a decrease in foreign tourism because of lockdowns and international flight bans.

4.3 Effects of Covid-19

Various subcategories and themes were developed to illustrate the impacts of COVID-19 on the hotel industry in ACT region, impact on the hotel business, impact on hotel operations, effects on employees, new ways of working, changes in tourist segment, impact on supply chain, and effect on sustainability. There are several subthemes within the main themes of effects, challenges, measures and learning from the covid. These sub-themes weave a web around this part, allowing us to better see, comprehend, and evaluate our data.

4.3.1 Impact of the Pandemic on the hotels

Before covid-19, hotels set tourist records, only to have their operations completely shut down in March 2020, the lockdown continued almost a year, (Karma wangdel Gurung, Hotel Thorang La peak interview,2022). As a result, some hotels saw a 100% drop in occupancy and income, apart from those that were located on the favorable spot where domestic tourists still come and stay for short trips.

One of the participants (Bikash Gurung, Hotel owner, super view hotel, Ghandruk), said that prior to covid, foreign tourist arrivals were constantly increasing in the region, and they saw a massive crowd of trekkers on the route, every year the numbers kept growing. Suddenly, COVID-19 exposed the sector to a level of vulnerability that had never been seen previously in this level. The respondent also noted that if scenarios like COVID-19 occurred more often, it may become catastrophic, and they would probably have to move to agriculture and farming for longer to survive. Due to the pandemic, all participants echoed how they have changed their way of life and earning; some had to focus more on agriculture and the production and stockpiling of foods and dry vegetables for the winter, knowing that there would be few or low tourists, making their hotel businesses economically unviable.

Another respondent (Mahendra Subedi, co-owner at Annapurna inn, Muktinath) spoke of the issues such as depression of hotel owners, who were so depressed because of the epidemic and with no aid from the government, they even thought to commit suicide, believing they would never be able to recover and live regular lives again.

"Covid 19 has appeared as the epidemic that has been affecting the whole world. It has for sure devastated the hoteliers, not only this it has also brought several problems like unemployment and downturn of different businesses. There have been many businesses that will take longer period to recover economic impact, and I have heard many painful stories from the business owners that they at some point reach to the thought of attempting suicide".

This quotation illustrates the general condition of the region's hotels. The effect on hotels was so severe that several individuals considered terminating their lives so they wouldn't have to

cope with it and watch their livelihood deteriorate daily. Here, at this specific case of Annapurna Inn, Muktinath, the owner mentioned that there was a lack of knowledge on how to cope and overcome the situation, as some businesses were new, and they never knew how to handle such a crisis just after they started their business. The owner also emphasized the danger of a new company going out of business and resulting in the loss of all assets.

However, even though they had some quick response measures in place, such as laying off employees and implementing cost-cutting measures, they were ill-prepared for the long term. As a result, they decided to leave their businesses in the middle of a financial crisis so that they could focus on farming and avoid the despair and dread of debts. Rather of focusing on the epidemic, they were more concerned about resuming their work once it was over. The study *of (Dayour et. al,2020)* analyzed the post pandemic recovery strategies within the tourism businesses of Ghana, and they found out that some businesses had immediate plans in place to get back on their feet, such as hiring new workers, cleaning the rooms, reminding old customers that they were still in business, advertising and promoting heavily to bring in new customers, asking the government and banks for small loans, and selling door-to-door. Such immediate coping mechanism lacks in context of tourism businesses, in Muktinath (one specific village within ACT), however our study shows also some positive initiatives started by hoteliers in other villages of ACT.

Yet, the effect was also different, according to the respondent (Bikash Gurung, Hotel Owner, Ghandruk), based upon the size and scale of the hotel in his village Ghandruk. Some hotels that had been around for a long time might live on their savings for a longer period, while recently constructed hotels were practically without hope.

"Many of the hoteliers here finished their saving and they had to take loans to adjust situation during Covid 19. Some of the hotels that had been doing great for a long time have good savings and hence could manage themselves with not huge problem. So, it has been the main problem for new hotel entrepreneurs, they had already loans and on the top covid 19 brought more crisis in their personal lives".

According to the preceding remark, the effect on the firm was tolerable depending on its size, and duration of operation. Hotels that had been around for some time had enough money saved up to keep open until the epidemic was finished, while newer establishments couldn't afford to stay open for long.

4.3.2 Effects on the local and seasonal worker's employment

COVID-19 has an influence on employees in both rural and urban hotels, according to our participants. Most, remote, seasonal hotels have different employment contracts than year-round operating hotels. Because the hotels do not have the official contracts with the workers, hotel owners did not need to cancel any contracts or utilize temporary labor during this period. Many personnel were on short-term and seasonal work schedules, or the employment was placed on hold until they were required again during peak season, or when operations were feasible. Some hotel owners we interviewed were family run business, therefore they could run their hotel with the help of their family members. The seasonal workers who travel to the villages of ACT region from neighboring districts (such as Dhading & Gorkha) were suffered due to the loss of seasonal work and income that comes from working in those hotels.

Because tourism has been scarce in recent months, a rural hotel respondent claimed that this has had an impact on the seasonal workers they usually employ during seasons. Due to the loss of employment and money from tourism and hotel labor, the employees were compelled to pursue alternative short-term contract jobs in the village or whatever work became available in the surrounding.

4.3.4 Impact and shifts in the tourist segment

The remote hotel owners were surprised to witness the enormous influx of local tourists in the area, given the halt in foreign tourists entering in the country. Domestic tourism has never seen such a surge. People must have become weary of the limitations and lockdowns in place around the nation, as seen by the surge in interest in the hiking trail. Internal visitors in Nepal sought to experience the area in the same way that international tourists did, and the new trend of trekking grew during the covid. Therefore, several settlements around Tilicho Lake did not suffer a significant drop in tourists.

One of the respondents thought that domestic tourism was undervalued in the past, but that during the epidemic, domestic visitors helped him keep his business afloat. As a result, he believes that more domestic tourism is needed in the area to counter future pandemics.

Bikash Gurung, Hotel Owner, hinted the worth of Nepalese tourists was heightened during the pandemic, as well as how they could prepare for the future by attracting more Nepalese tourists.

"We have realized that we can have more Nepalese tourists as well and they are more valuable during such a time of global crisis. Normally other hotels don't value Nepalese guests when they have Gora(white tourists) telling that Nepalese guests do not behave as good as foreign tourist in their hotels, Some of them also drink a lot and create problems. Hence Covid 19 has taught us the lesson that we need to value the Nepalese tourists as well".

Another responder (Karma Chirring Gurung, Hotel Owner) mentioned the new tourist trend in the area because of the pandemic. Internal tourists were not just interested in hiking, but also in a variety of other activities, so hotel owners and the community had time during the pandemic to expand these activities and draw more tourists to the region.

"As you know, our region is extremely cold, so new forms of activities such as ice climbing and skiing have gradually emerged. It's been 1-2 years since we've seen many Nepalese cyclists here as well; they used to come (few) before Covid, but now we see a large number after Covid, implying that there was a surge of such tourists arriving in the region during the interval".

According to the above quotations, there has been an increase in domestic visitors' interest in new types of tourism activities. As a result of these events, the village of Manang has also become popular among domestic tourists as a winter sports destination. A new trend of activities that serves to attract domestic visitors has also emerged as a direct result of the epidemic and has been brought about by it.

4.3.5 Effect on supply chain

Most responders said that their daily supplies and necessities had been halted. The hotel used to buy vegetables from a nearby city, and the suppliers would transport the goods to the hotel

using various methods (motors if available, porters, mules, etc.). However, due to the tourism crisis and loss of income, they were forced to look for alternatives, such as growing vegetables for their own consumption. As a result, overall supply chain was impacted due to the pandemic. Hotel owners lost their tourism income to buy essentials and had to grow their own crops to sustain the impact.

"People who own hotels run their hotels, and those who do not own hotels engage in other activities that generate some income, such as providing horseback riding to visitors, carrying, and transporting goods and luggage of trekkers (as porter)", (Karma Chhring Gurung, Hotel Owner).

Due to the low number of international tourists' porters and guides were also severely impacted, these porters and guides play very important roles in transporting and supply chain of this region (high altitude).

Another respondent adds,

"Because of the loss of business, we really struggled to buy daily food. It was difficult to purchase things from outside our area, and it was especially difficult to purchase items that could not be produced locally due to a lack of funds. For example, we could not afford to purchase rice or order other essentials from Kathmandu due to a lack of funds," (Karma Wangdel Gurung, hotel owner).

In addition to fewer visitors, the pandemic has caused several additional problems for the village, as stated in the above quotation. The lack of tourist revenue has left the town with a smaller supply of goods and services. The community was confronted with a difficult dilemma. The local population is once again at risk of poverty. Additionally, this quote demonstrates the wicked problem in the studied community that is difficult to address until the tourist industry recovers.

4.3.6 Impact on sustainability

The awareness of incorporating sustainable practices has also increased during COVID-19, according to rural hotels we interviewed. The theme of regionality and environmental difficulties was discussed by hoteliers, who said that awareness must be integrated much more into a hotel. During the discussion, the hoteliers also indicated that

they were more focused on building gardens surrounding their hotels, improving routes and trails for hikers, and improving their hotel's appearance, but preserving it in more natural ways to keep the village's theme. The hotel owner also discussed innovative ways of dealing with the issues posed by the pandemic, including raising awareness and improving cleaning standards among his employees to meet the demands of the new sort of safety practices imposed by the Covid-19 health emergency.

"we attempted to provide training on how to clean our hotel and advertise it as a covid-free hotel via a variety of hygienic procedures, to foster more guest confidence in the future. We needed to establish ourselves as a destination that looks after its tourists and makes them feel comfortable while staying at our hotel. So, we did all we could to make our hotel a free and safe place for travelers to come", (Karma Chirring Gurung, Hotel Owner).

He further adds,

> *"We realized that tourism would take much longer to recover, so we began to prepare. We began planting trees around the hotel and brainstorming ideas for how we could improve our hotel in a natural way, we painted the doors and made them look interesting, we created our garden, and we completed numerous DIY projects".*

The above quotations demonstrate how the epidemic has affected the hotel industry's outlook. As a result of the covid crisis, tourists' preferences have shifted, and new tourism experiences have emerged, the study of (Jonas,2022) suggested, The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked on the tourist sector, and recovery plans are vital to overcoming the pandemic's effects on the economy, post-crisis is the time for a fresh start rather than a return to pre-COVID-19 normal.

Since firms are now providing clients with different behaviors and new demands to meet the new needs and preferences of the tourists after the pandemic. This specific Hotel owner (Karma Chhiring Gurung), know what they need to do when tourists return to their area. To create a new kind of tourist experience in the wake of the pandemic, they understand the need of innovativeness.

4.4 Challenges for hotels in ACT post covid

There hotels of ACT are found to be small scaled and mostly family owned. As the outsiders are not allowed to start hotel business in the area (Nyaupanea, Moraisb, & Dowler, 2006) , there is dominance of local hoteliers. There are various challenges for hoteliers in the area and covid 19 has added further challenges for smooth operation of the hotels in ACT. We took some time in interview to discuss on their difficulties and situation of hardship during and post covid 19, which uncovered the different challenges faced by hoteliers from their own experience. The major challenges for hotels in the area that we found are presented in the figure below which will be followed by further detailed section.

Financial Challenge

Challenge on managing Employees

Change in pattern of travel

Challenge in managing food supply

Figure 4: The challenges for hoteliers in ACT due to covid 19 in Annapurna circuit trek

4.4.1. Financial Challenge

All four interviewees share their financial challenges faced due to covid 19 crisis in their hotel business. According to Bikash Gurung, the owner of Hotel Superview,"*Many of the hoteliers here finished their saving and they had to take loans to adjust situation during Covid 19. Some of the hotels that had been doing great for a long time have good savings and hence could manage themselves with not huge problem. So it has been the main problem for new hotel entrepreneurs, they had already loans and on the top covid 19 brought more crisis in their economy.*"

Here he highlights hardship of entrepreneurs, where they have loans and regular expenses but no source of income. He has represented the voice of many hoteliers that for the hotels that been running since long time have enough savings that has possibility to cover the expenses however, the newly established hotels with large amount of loan might get it more difficult to overcome this challenge. When we bring into the point of one of our interviewees, Mahendra Subedi, the co-owner of Hotel Annapurna Inn regarding the financial hardship, he exhibits unbearable anxiety of the new hotel entrepreneurs.

He states, "*I have heard many painful stories from the business owners that they at some point reach to the thought of attempting suicide. As we had some local contacts, we were still receiving some of the visitors and hence we managed to cope the situation* ".

Furthermore, another interviewee Karna Chirring Gurung, the owner of Hotel Thorang

Pass highlighted the financial struggle as he has taken loan for renovation that was completed right before covid started. As there is gradual increase in number of tourists in the region, they have been recovering their financial loss however, it seems to be slow recovery process as they have to reduce the price to some extent.

4.2.2 Challenge on Managing Employees

In the situation of no tourists or minimal number of tourists in the hotel, it is certain that the hoteliers go through financial hardship which needs to be maintained in their convenience. Hence, all four hoteliers are found to have expelled the staffs or sent them to unpaid holiday. One of our interviewees, Bikash Gurung representing Hotel Superview at Ghandruk states "We were obliged to fare goodbye to our staff as there were no more tourists and few of the staff were given unpaid holiday. So instead, we worked in a hotel".

Yacoub and ElHajjar(2020) refer employees reduction as one of the approach towards the reducing the economic impact of covid 19 in Lebanese hotel industry and it seems to be same apoproach. This was the major step towards cutting expenses by working themselves in family-owned hotel. While it was no issue regarding extra expenses on paying wages and managing their staff, for hotelier like Karna Chhring Gurung, who runs hotel with back support of his family

members only. He says," We would have a lot of trouble paying wages if we had external employees, but since we were all family members working here, we didn't have to worry about that."

But the challenging part is found more in private hotels in partnership, where chef was the only employee working full time the whole year. Hence, they were obliged to pay him during pandemic for they could neither give him job nor expel as stated by Mahindra Subedi, the co-owner of Hotel Annapurna Inn.

4.2.3. Change in pattern of travel

It is found that there has been change in pattern of travel during and post covid 19 spread. As the rise in covid cases resulted travel restriction, there was no flow of international tourists which used to be a lot higher in the region. However, as predicted by Lee and Phi(2021) after the travel restrictions get loosened, there would be more domestic travelers as major force in recovery of hotel industry. It had been found the same in the hotel industry in ACT that there was increase in domestic travelers.

It resulted the growth in internal tourism. However, the tourism pattern did not necessarily follow the trekking route to ACT, rather most of the domestic tourists started to visit the popular going Tilicho late situated near Khangshar. According to Karma Chhiring Gurung, the owner of Hotel Yak Kharka,"Most domestic visitors traveled to the Tilicho Lake (the lake situated at the highest altitude), and we did not get any tourists, therefore our revenue was significantly limited. " Hence this way it has increased the hotel business in that area rather than the trekking route. Karna Chirring Gurung further adds, "Our side of the area had practically no visitors, but our neighboring villages, such as khangshar, received some even during the difficult times, so they performed better, but we were severely impacted." Such change in travelers' preference or behavior also affects the hotel business in ACT.

Moreover, the road construction in the area through the trekking route has been one of challenging factors for hoteliers in the area that are located prior to Ghandruk in typical word they

say "Tallo gaun" that means village located in lower area. Bikash Gurung, the owner of Hotel Superview shows his concern for the hotels in that area as they are highly affected due to direct road access which reduces their possibility of having guests. However, his hotel being located at the center of Ghandruk, is safe from this threat as he gets the guests who directly step to Ghandruk from buses or any means of transport.

He further elaborates on the previous pattern of travel when the travelers took 14 days trekking now due to road or transport development many hotels in between do not get enough guests, visitors pass by those villages without stopping. This way the new travel pattern has been found due to covid 19 and normal travel patterns may take over a year to re-establish (Pine and McKercher, 2004). Hence, it has shortened the stay of tourists in ACT hence affects the hotel business in the area.

4.2.4 Challenge in managing food supply

Annapurna Circuit Trek is in Himalayan region where it is almost impossible to grow the agricultural products like rice and other grains and vegetables. Karma Wangdel Gurung, the owner of Hotel Thorang Peak acknowledged us on that it is unfeasible to carry agricultural activities, hence they depend upon the villages down in Manang. However, hotels in Ghandruk are found to be dependent upon importing the goods from another city like Kathmandu. Karma Chhiring Gurung, the owner of Hotel Thorang Pass states, "It was difficult to purchase things from outside our area, and it was especially difficult to purchase items that could not be produced locally due to a lack of funds." He connects the financial challenge with the challenge of managing food supplies.

As the hoteliers heavily depend on the supplies, they get from the neighboring cities like Pokhara, Besisahar and Kathmandu including the most demanded food supplies like coffee and chocolate (Morimoto & Chapagain, 2014). Hence, managing food supplies had been difficult for hoteliers in ACT. Bikash Gurung, the owner of Hotel Superview also shared his pattern of running business explaining about stock behavior. He stated that they used to stock mostly used food stocks like sugar, other important things like gas for about next two months and he noted the food and gas shortage in the area. Hence, they faced problem with these shortages.

These are the major challenges figured out from the interviews and while unfolding their experiences we also found out that they have been taking these challenges as opportunities. For instance, karma Chhiring, the owner of Hotel Thorang Pass, says," *We began to cultivate our own in our garden. We began producing vegetables and performed more agricultural labor over the summer to increase our food store for the winter. We sought to manufacture more and more dry food for the winter since we anticipated that purchasing food from outside our village would be prohibitively expensive.*"

This exhibits that they have been seeking possibilities after getting challenges, which might in future also help them for reducing on importing food costs from outside area, and the food stocks they start to have for future will help reduce the effects of uncertain crisis in the future. However, as per the suggestion made presented by Ulak(2020) rethinking and restructuring their normal lifestyle and industry according to the need of the situation helps overcoming challenge. It shows that the hoteliers have seen possibilities over challenges and are able to get prepared regarding food stock in the region.

4.3 Measures adapted by local businesses as stakeholder of ACT

This part of the paper focuses on the measures that has been adapted by different involved major stakeholders i.e., government, hotel businesses and local authorities which has been analyzed based on the hotel entrepreneur's voice.

According to Aref (2011) and Freeman et. al (2010), the major stakeholders are the major players to change and manage the destination where government, locals, businesses, tour operators tend to collaborate with each other to form a successful destination with same objective in hand. Bramwell and lane (2000) states tackling difficult situation will be easy when joint decision are made with the active involvement of one or more stakeholders. Covid-19 is one of the difficult situations for hotel businesses and collaboration was the must for them from different authorities(stakeholders) to ease the situation.

4.3.1 Government level:

Nguyen et. al (2017) illustrated that the government has an important role in management and providing support to hotels in rural areas to overcome the hard situations. The government has power to resilient in futuristic tourism which needs to zoom into different tourism practices in terms of geography and its operation preparing for the future of tourism (Benjamin et. al, 2020).

With the interviews with four of our respondents in ACT, during the pandemic government did not support directly to businesses through the compensation schemes or any trainings to be utilized during the period. But indirectly to support the locals of the ACT region towards their survival, government have implemented some rural developmental projects like, construction of roads, drinking water and electricity lines which was common with all our respondents.

Karma Chirring Gurung,

"*The government had set aside some funds for our village's development, so we worked on those projects and were paid, but we did not get any government assistance to help us run our company. While there was no cash from visitors, the projects and effort allowed the villagers to survive in certain ways*".

He was involved into the projects provided by government for survival as he did not have any choice at that time. Similarly, Mahendra Subedi claimed that government has provided some assistance regarding development projects around the trekking routes and villages passing by but himself was not involved in the project as the place he does business and live in has access to many infrastructures compared to others.

Bikash Gurung said he was not involved in the projects from government as it was hard for him to do a complete labor work such as digging for pipelines, carrying heavy wires, stones etc. and he claims he had enough saved to get survived at that moment.

Karma Wangdel Gurung said,

"*There are many internal tourists visiting this area. As people get holiday or weekend, then they quickly plan with friends or their partners and come Ghandruk, which is accessible and a nice destination in bike or other means of transport*"

He did not find any development works from government but said that he was still having guests as his hotel is at the starting point of the trek and is the center of tourist attraction according to the distance from Pokhara city. So, local tourist flow could be seen even during pandemic.

Impact of covid enforced government to bring an actionable focus on equity in terms of tourism. Equalization needs to be in front and focused as the rise of tourism transformation (Benjamin et. al, 2020). The study of Adams et. al (2021), focusing on the tourism resiliency unsuccess because of the political economic and cultural shifts that has been gone underway for longer period. The policies and directions from government for tourism in post pandemic situation is required and to be focused on the resilience of the tourism industry.

4.3.2 Local authorities:

Locals, communities, authorities and businesses are regarded as a powerful participant seeking to build and support the destination (Aref, 2011). Local authorities were present in all four of the places of business as per the hotel owners, having a similar goal and to manage the destination. Local authorities were found to be must to have in the destinations for better management and solve the issues regarding the businesses and the destination.

Karma Chirring Gurung said,

"*We have a hotel association committee that assists us in producing YouTube videos and promoting the Manang village such as Winter in Manang*".

It seems that the local committee was active to promote and market the destination to attract more tourists which was helpful for them, and he further said,

"*We have been getting more tourists through the help of the videos and pictures they see and share after they visited the place in social media*".

Alternatively, Mahendra Subedi illustrated that they were not involved with local authorities as they were new hotel business started just a year ago. But they said local authorities might not help them during covid, but they do create and manage to have an attractive environment around the destination. For example, good roads, facilities of water, electricity, maintaining clean environment, and helping businesses to have an improved services to guests, in terms of quality.

According to Bikash Gurung, he determined that he got help from them to create their food menu according to foreigners' preferences. Further, he did not have any idea of the local authorities work accurately as he was busy in his busines. But he said he knows that they mainly work with foreign tourists in maintaining norms and regulations and he also says he must pay a small fee time and again, to local committee for the improvements of the destination. Due to the good location and infrastructure, his business was still on operation on local domestic tourists during the Covid pandemic period.

He said,

"*There is a committee known as Senchuri Tourism Entrepreneur committee which assists international tourists as well as maintains norm and regulations for foreign visitors and also, help us to create a foreigners' friendly menus in Nepalese style*".

Furthermore, Karma Wangdel Gurung reflected that local committee is actively involved in making tourism into the destination smooth. He determined that the local committee collect fees from oncoming tourists and save them for future use to manage destination. He gave an example of the managerial work from local committee like, clearing the roads during winter as it will fully covered with snow, and they trek route will be closed.

He said, "*Not the government but the local organization helped the locals of Manang by distributing daily use products like, rice, lentils, vegetable, dry foods, noodles etc. for survival*".

Unlike others, in his village he got a different kind of help from committee who were providing them with the daily products to survive the situation of covid.

All in all, local authorities were present especially for the development of the destination rather to focus on individual businesses. they create rule and regulations to be followed by locals

and tourists to protect the destination. According to Sanetra (2019), the local authorities were influencing tourism with implementation of various plans and policies for the purpose of a good management. Reviewing the interviews of our study, the local authorities were collecting funds from hotels and tourists to maintain the infrastructure of the trekking routes. It is different on operation activity done by local authorities differing to the places. A well-managed fully functioning tourism policy system could play as the responsive role for small districts and regions in promoting, attracting, and developing the tourism destination (Sanetra, 2019).

4.3.3 Local hotel businesses:

Ertuna and Kirbas (2012) consider hotels as the businesses to involve local and communities which can improve plans and service delivery, as locals' involvement enhances trust and confidence of the locals towards the tourism industry.

Firstly, all four of our respondents did not have any business during covid lockdown but some of them did comeback after the end of lockdown but still the covid period. some of the owners survived from their saving whereas some found alternatives for that period as well as some are still using the alternatives as a secondary source.

Karma Chirring Gurung,

"For the first year, we assumed that tourism would revive, so we didn't do anything and waited about waiting for it to. But, by the second year, we realized that tourism would take much longer to recover, so we began to prepare. We began planting trees around the hotel and brainstorming ideas for how we could improve our hotel in a natural way, we painted the doors and made them look interesting, we created our garden, and we completed numerous DIY projects".

For Karma Chirring Gurung, it was the opportunity to utilize his spare time to create something new and attractive for future. He was involved in various DIY projects which he was inspired by and tried to create something new. He was the source of inspiration to others in his village. People started to follow him and do DIY projects in their hotels. Beside that he renovated the hotel using locally available products to make it authentic. Along with they managed to build

a good infrastructure assisting the governmental projects during pandemic. As he says, he continues to have DIY projects until now in his free time to make it look more attractive to tourists.

Mahendra Subedi reflected that he was still new to the business when covid-19 hit the world. He was worried about the rent and other expenses as he had invested a lot to build up the hotel which was still not enough paid off the debts. Even though, he and his business partner moved out of the place and went back to their own village shutting down the hotel and started farming and agriculture to pay off his rent and debt at that moment.

He said, "*At the same time we went back to village we still think about the hotel and what could we improve after opening up to attract more tourists and were thinking to have social media marketing and having the best service to get good reviews and feedback from guests*"

He wanted to have marketing of his hotel as well as he was expecting the "word of mouth" strategy to have marketing in future which is a very strong tool for trust in marketing.

According to Bikash Gurung, he did not have any option in the period of lockdown and just waited to reopen the restrictions. His business was not much affected by covid as the country reopened with some restriction with safety measures, they started to have guests and might not be the same as before but during the time he did not have to think about the measures or alternatives.

He said "*We had good contact with many of the regular customers, we were getting fine number of guests as domestic tourists even though there was an impact of covid 19. But international tourists were completely to zero number at some point in time*".

According to Bikash Gurung, all the Annapurna circuit trek was famous for the international tourists, but due to the restrictions domestic tourists were seen quite increased during the covid period. it is also easy for him to get guests as domestic tourists could visit his place which has good infrastructure and not far based on the distance from the Pokhara city known as the "city for tourists". This was the time for Bikash Gurung and his neighboring hotels and destination to understand the importance of domestic tourists.

Karma Wangdel Gurung was living in above 4000m and only were survived from tourism. He could not see any alternatives to have during covid. He has saved up for having a new business, but he had to use the money for survival. He said "*it's just about the time and if we live normal life cutting off the extra expenses. The daily expenses comparatively are less than when we run a business*".

Despite, during the covid situation he along with his family and neighbors were thinking of having a greenhouse as the alternative for future in the case of closing the business. At that time, it would cost him money and he didn't know how long it will be so, he just could not succeed. But after covid his planned greenhouse will come to operation soon as that could save him and his family from starving.

According to our interviews with hotel entrepreneurs taken from different parts of Annapurna circuit treks. All the entrepreneurs have their own way to adaptational measures during covid. Some of them did a complete shutdown whereas some started to find out the alternative measures for survival as well as future use. Our respondents have different location which also determines what measures and alternatives they could choose differently. As in the height above 4000meter, we could not expect farming and agriculture as the nature of soil. Whereas people living in nearby city with a good infrastructure could do something different during the pandemic.

The analysis of Akama (2002) in Kenya presented in-terms of the involvement of government in the development and management of tourism with diversification of the socio-economic situation is essential as it brings an establishment to the coordination between the different interested groups involved into tourism development. The proper coordination and assistance could bring the development of the tourism industry.

4.4 Strategies for recovery

This part of the analysis exhibits the response of hoteliers in ACT to the affects of covid 19 they have been facing and their plans and procedures they are about to follow in order to recover their business. The hotels in ACT are found to have huge economic impact and have been looking

forward for a greater number of tourists in the area as the many tourists there will increase the possibility of more guests in their hotel.

However, the hotels are found to be quite slow regarding plan and make strategies to accelerate the business performance. As co-owner of Hotel Annapurana Inn, Mahendra Subedi, made his claim that he was not able to make further plan for business as their huge investment went down and, but expenses remain constant due to covid 19. It represents financial affect as the major worry of the hoteliers due to covid 19 and unknown length of crisis as highlighted by Alanso et al. (2020). Below we have the major strategies that our interviewees are found to have implemented or are about to implement to increase the financial

Strategies of hotels / Name of hotels	Marketing/Promotional tools	Cost management and pricing	New product/service development or product/service improvement	Survival strategy
Hotel Superview	• Word of Mouth (WOM)	• Lay off staff • Discount pricing (for groups) • Pricing strategy i	• Introduce Buffet system • Service or management for Barbeque and campfire • Do It Yourself(DIY) like gardening and painting	• DOMESTIC TOURISM
Hotel Yak Kharka	• Social medias • Influencers • Popular bloggers	• Low or no cost lodging	• Cleanliness and following hygiene protocol • Horese riding competition • Celebration of different traditional festivals,	• Apple farming

			• music festivals, expos, and exhibition • Do It Yourself(DIY) like gardening and painting	
Hotel Thorang Peak	• Social media	• Lay off staff	• Green house vegetable	• Green house vegetables
Hotel Annapurna Inn	• Social media • Word of mouth (WOM)	• Lay off staff	• Cleanliness and following hygiene protocol	• Agriculture

Table 2: *Different types of strategies adopted by hoteliers in ACT to tackle the covid 19 crisis impact*

4.4.1 Cost management and pricing strategy

The period of crisis in business is tough situation where they lack general revenue and on the another hand they have the usual expenses on their head. Hence, we found that some of the hoteliers in ACT are about to use or have been using the cost management and pricing strategies to balance their previous loss and also to attract more guests at their hotel.

One of the interviewees Bikash Gurung, the owner of Hotel Superview elaborates on their post covid strategy, "*In terms of hotel prices, we have become a little more flexible. For the guest, the*

standard price was reduced. We used to provide a package for 1500 per person if they were in a group, which included lodging three meals per day (breakfast, lunch, and supper), but the price has now been lowered to Rs. 1250 per day."

He also claims that they have become bit flexible for the groups considering the bargaining behavior of domestic tourists. Such flexibility in pricing attracts the cost sensitive guests and hence helps in increasing revenue. In addition to the pricing strategy in hotel industry, the Study by Zhang et al.(2020) identifies pricing strategy as one of the strategies for short term self-rescue actions in order to survive and perform better. The same way, the study by (Majumdar, 2021) also exhibits the findings that hotel operators in India have been adopting price reduction strategies to increase cash inflow by announcing special discount pricing with the aim to increase the cash flows.

Due to financial disaster in hospitality sector many companies including hotel industry have only two alternatives either bankruptcy or cut off cost policy (Khan, Nasir, & Saleem, 2021). Mahendra Subedi, the co-owner of Hotel Annapurna Inn reveals similar thought and experience," We have not made plan or strategy as such, but we need to either lower the service by cutting costs/expenses or quit the business." As his hotel is not well established for having started just 3 years ago, he has found the cost reduction as the only alternative to continue his business as he states he has witnessed the most difficult situation of other hoteliers going bankrupt which leads them to have thought of suicide.

It is not bankruptcy the hoteliers or any other business operator look for. hence cost cutting seems to be very helpful method as uplifting strategy during crisis. Alanso et al. (2020) concluded that hotel owners' top worry was the financial effect of the pandemic, due to the loss of customers, employment, and lives. Therefore, in order to maintain financial loss of the hotel, majority of hotel owners are found to have cut costs as emergency and surviving strategy (Le & Phi, 2021) . It has been the same situation in regard to condition of Hotel Annapurna Inn that he shared his obligation to choose in between stopping the hotel or cost cutting.

We found one of the hotels in ACT adopting cost cutting strategy as survival strategy. During interview, Bikash Gurung from Ghandruk, the owner of Hotel Superview states," *We were obliged to fare goodbye to our staff as there were no more tourists and few of the staff were given unpaid holiday. So instead, we worked in a hotel. It was a much more difficult time for us."* Similarly, Hotel Thorang Peak is also found to have adopted the same strategy to cut expenses.

From the hoteliers' point of view, it is adopted as cost management technique during crisis so that they do not have more expenses. In addition, Mahendra Subedi, owner of Hotel Annapurna Inn shares his plan to cut costs in staffing by reducing their salary. However, (Davidson & Wang, 2011, p. 249) refer such strategies and management of employees as per their situational need as an unsustainable labor practice. Such strategies lead hotels towards unsustainable work ethics on job security and safe work condition which is regarded as important aspects UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Decent work for all has been one of the topics under Goal 8 which promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (United Nations, 2022). Hence, the employees lay off during covid 19 by Hotel Superview, Hotel Thorang Peak and Hotel Annapurna Inn is taken as unsustainable practice according to decent work ethics. In contrast to permanent dismissal of employees, Spanish tourism industries are found to have resorted less to layoffs and more to regulated planned temporary dismissal proceedings with the intention to get back the employees again when the tourism starts normally (Perles-Ribes, Ramón-Rodríguez, Jesús-SuchDevesa, & Aranda-Cuéllar, 2021).

Karma Chirring Gurung, Owner of Hotel Yak kharka in Manang made a statement regarding their immediate strategy to attract the domestic customers soon after travel restriction got loosened. He says, "We worked with the travel agency to provide low-cost or no-cost lodging and charge a decent amount for meals and drinks, but we still didn't attract many guests/travelers." Their view in this situation went for something is better than nothing, hence worked on price reduction strategy as survival strategy to cover some expenses.

4.4.2 Service strategy/ New product development or service improvement

Covid 19 has come up with many challenges and difficulties in hotel industries, however, we found that there has been change in pattern of service in hotels in ACT in different ways with view of getting more tourists in the region which ultimately increases chance of getting more guests at their hotels.

One of our interviewees, Karma Chirring Gurung, the Owner of Hotel Yak Kharka states, *"We attempted to provide training on how to clean our hotel and advertise it as a covid-free hotel via a variety of hygienic procedures, to foster more guest confidence in the future. We needed to establish ourselves as a destination that looks after its tourists and makes them feel comfortable while staying at our hotel. So, we did all we could to make our hotel a free and safe place for travelers to come. We also performed some advertising, but when visitors stopped arriving, we stopped doing so since it was pointless to do so when we didn't have any."* During the pandemic, it had been first and foremost priority of the tourists regarding hygiene and safety, hence some hospitality companies intensified the practical solutions and specific cleaning protocols (Bagnera et al., 2020).

As the cleaning is very general thing for the business-like hotels, cleaning according to hygienic protocol makes their service better. Hence, one can identify it as service modification (John & Thakur, 2020) (Olson et al.,1995) for it is neither new to company nor to market but it is simply modified a bit on pattern. It had primary motive to be safe and make customers safe but also to advertise their hotel as safe place to stay at during their travel through advertisement.

Such strategy of marketing the place or hotels with hygiene and safety have been found to be proposed by Valle (2020). Similarly, Mahendra Subedi, Co-owner of Hotel Annapurna Inn also makes sure that their primary focus had been on training good hospitality to the staffs so that they assure guests with best experience on hospitality under hygienic and safe environment. As he has also somehow made his claim regarding safety measures as that to assure the guests as his hotel is safe, he is also intended to market his place to potential customers.

The study by Park and Lehto (2021) has also concluded that the customers' choice on hotel is highly influenced by safety practices and protocols than by other factors during crisis, hence safety and hygiene protocols adopted by hotels are used as marketing stimulus (Park & Lehto, 2021). Our findings hence relate their strategy of marketing their business with better and secure hygiene and safety manner as hotels work on adopting new normal for safety of the guests and also for adding force to marketing.

It was domestic tourists that bloomed soon after the travel restriction got loosened and hence the domestic tourists were of major importance post covid for the revival of tourism industry (Le & Phi, 2021). After realizing that domestic tourists started blooming soon after covid 19 restriction got loosened, Karma Chirring Gurung, Owner of Hotel Yak kharka shares his strategy to attract the domestic tourists stating," *We also planned to create tour packages for local tourists and hold a horse-riding competition near the Thorang La pass, which would be aimed towards domestic visitors. We planned it for approximately a year and will most likely begin and conduct these activities the next year. We also want to host a variety of festivals that we have not tried earlier. For example, traditional festivals, music festivals, exhibitions, and expos."* This type of new service aimed to attract the new customer segment can be taken as me too product/service which is new to the hotelier but not to the customers (John & Thakur, 2020).

However, in some cases it might be completely new to the customers as well hence John and Thakur (2020) the same product/ service as New-to-the-world products/services for the service might is new both to the firm and the marketplace. These type celebration and events carry the community vibes and traditional lifestyle of the locals. Different events and celebrations engage and empower the local community as well and therefore help on progressive community with active participation tourism and exhibit their culture and tradition (Shani & Pizam, 2012).

Therefore, such events help on developing the destination and when it comes to destination development the locals get attached interested and work with it (Gunawijaya and Pratiwi 2018) (Adu, 2017). This strategy is not just applicable for the hoteliers who initiate or organize it rather it promotes and attracts more tourists there which is the ultimate reason behind the strategy.

Bikash, the owner of Hotel Superview at Ghandruk, "We've even begun to provide a buffet system for the food we serve, something we've never done before. We're beginning to pay more attention to our clients and adapting to their demands. The buffet is an example of a guest request that we have met and that has allowed us to be more flexible for our visitors." They have been serving food to guests however, they used to serve food themselves but now they have modified a bit in their system as per the demand of customers. Hence it is bit of change in existing system or service hence, being neither new to company on food service nor new to customers, it can be classified as service modification (John & Thakur ,2020).

Furthermore, considering the popularity and growing demand of Barbeque and campfire in the country, Hotel Superview is found to have added the amenities needed for camping and barbeque to their guests. These types of strategies are designed according to the demand of customers hence, they have higher chance of getting more customers.

Karma Wangdel Gurung, the owner of Hotel Thorang peak states," Green house has also been discussed to bring into practice to feed the tourists with basic daily vegetables and fresh products rather than importing from Manang village. " There has been the growing need for sustainable environment and healthy livelihood, hence the study by (Joshi & Kunwar, 2018) shows the increase in the interest of producing greenhouse vegetable by hotels and guesthouses in one of the popular tourist destinations, Nagarkot in Nepal. The service of hotel is not new to the market but new to the hotel hence it can be categorized as me-too products/services that stands for products/services that are new to the company, but not to the guests (John and Thakur,2020).

We got to find from Karma Chirring Gurung, Owner of Hotel Yak kharka that they worked on modifying the ambiance of the hotel by painting the doors, making garden, and numerous Do It Yourself(DIY)projects. Similarly, from another interview with Bikash Gurung from Hotel Superview we got to find that they have changed the paint of the rooms and improved the garden for giving the future guests have a great experience as decoration is heart of that place. Covid 19 scenario gave time to brainstorm the hoteliers to improve their business and make it better place to stay for guests that might increase their possibility of getting more customers. According to (Adebisi, Oduneye, & O.J, 2017) the interior decoration and appearance has great impact on customer's preference. Hence, it might be helpful for increasing the revenue for the hoteliers with customers acquisition or retention.

The hoteliers are found using their own strategic plans to uplift their business. The new products or service of their hotel can play vital role on attracting the tourists to their place which Benur and Bramwell(2015) identify as primary tourism products. All in all, we found that the hotels have been integrating crisis management into strategic planning and maintaining some flexibility and identifying their duties as for crisis management that have been highlighted in the study by Evans and Elphnick (2005) as essential aspect of hotels.

4.4.3 Marketing strategy:

Marketing strategy is a conceptual field of strategic marketing which focuses on the daily practice of marketing (Morgan et. al, 2019). Covid 19 brought a chaos to the tourism industry all around the world. Before and after covid there were many changes came over time. The marketing pattern was also changed due to the situation. Development of technological development in tourism industry in globalization era is the factor opening the opportunities to grow into the market for small and medium businesses. marketing and management could easily be adapted by small businesses as the needs of customers segments (Peter and Buhalis, 2004).

Karna Chirring Gurung, a respondent from Thorang La pass – Manang, said that during the final stage of covid they were trying to advertise ACT region as a corona free and people could travel with following the restriction and safety measures. He said,

"We first felt bad since there were no tourists, so we attempted to provide training on how to clean our hotel and advertise it as a covid-free hotel via a variety of hygienic procedures, to foster more guest confidence in the future. We needed to establish ourselves as a destination that looks after its tourists and makes them feel comfortable while staying at our hotel".

They together with the community and local authorities tried to market the destination to bring back the tourists as before. The modern form of businesses operation must seek the improvement of result focusing on the market needs an internal and external marketing investigating the consumer needs and trends constantly and follow continuously gives an improvement in the business into the market (Cespedes and Piercy, 1996).

Karma chirring Gurung further states,

" We have a hotel association that assists us in producing YouTube films and promoting Manang in new ways, such as winter in Manang, 8th wonder videos, and winter in Manang videos, to attract more people to the area. We pay a fee to the hotel association, and they assist us in producing movies promoting our hotel and location, as well as activities that can be enjoyed even during the winter (off-season), to attract more guests. Through this hotel relationship, we also

fund a blogger and a video producer to come to Manang and create unique films about Manang as a marketing. The Nishyang Hotel Association does not have a page on Facebook".

The statement of Chirring showed the collaboration on marketing the ACT region through social medias influencers and popular bloggers to promote the destination. Furthermore, Karma Wangdel Gurung, from Hotel Thorang peak also illustrates about the off seasonal tourism in Manang. He represents,

"The purpose for the blog was to market the winter season in Manang by showing winter is also as fun and mesmerized as other season to attract more tourists. As winter has not been a famous season for tourists. This is also to say visitors that winter is also a best time to visit Manang".

Businesses should have a focus on the future market and anticipate events and opportunities to benefit and protect business from everything preventing the business to achieve success (Cespedes and Piercy, 1996)

As the ACT is widen in huge area, the primary focus is seen towards the attraction on off seasonal tourism through marketing efforts in internet. It seems that the collaboration between local stakeholders in holding the market towards the destination is quite strong in terms of tourism as they have a same goal to reach. Moreover, Karna chirring Gurung shows an overview of the future marketing plans on providing different activities such as horse-riding competition, traditional festivals of locals etc. so that tourists in Manang could enjoy all year round to have a circular flow of income all year long.

Likewise, Mahendra Subedi, from Hotel Annapurna Inn – Muktinath has his own target segment of customers even though it lies in ACT region. His major income is from tourism but mainly focusing on religious pilgrimages. He states,

"Our major target customers are Indians from Madras, Gujrat and also the Nepalese. But we mainly prioritize the religious tourists they come to visit Muktinath temple for pilgrimage. We try to maintain good connection and communication with them, so that we have the guests from that link. Our main goal is to feed and provide lodge to the pilgrims, we mainly focus on them".

Mahendra receives mostly the religious tourists so the major marketing tool for him is the social media marketing and WOM (word-of-mouth) from the pilgrimage staying over in his hotel. He

believes in WOM as he has been trying his best to have a service mentality and provide as good hospitality for his guests as he can.

Whereas Bikash Gurung, from Hotel Superview – Ghandruk has an also same scenario. His tool of Marketing is also WOM, and he believes that his old customers are the source of his new customers. Bikash demonstrates as,

"We mainly rely on the connections and networks of individuals we know; they usually refer us to their friends and networks as a place to come and stay when visiting Ghandruk".

He lives in one of the popular destinations where word of mouth and social media marketing is a key for his hotel's popularity. He says,

"*People come by recommends us to other and posts pictures and videos of our place which led us to grow more customers".*

Marketing strategy is not only for survival in the market but to achieve the goals and objectives to maintain the competitive advantage (Morgan et. al, 2019). Karma Wangdel Gurung, from Hotel Thorang peak – Manang (Yak Kharkha) illustrates,

" In comparison, after covid we are also receiving more domestic tourists than before. Social media has become the major influencer for the growth of domestic tourists".

According to Karma Wangdel Gurung, the social media played as a marketing tool to lift up the domestic tourism slowly despite the fact of expectation on international tourists. In his case, marketing was effective to attract more domestic tourists than international. According to the study of Bhrammanachote & Sawangdee (2021), the understanding of the severe situation of covid 19 followed by market could adapt the marketing strategy differently because of changes in segment of tourists from international to domestic not only for survival but for future implications.

The territorial marketing is one of the important tools for local authorities in influencing tourism within the small territory under the governmental assistance (sanetra, 2019). Local authorities are ones who are responsible for obtaining funds, expansion of rural infrastructures and creating new and innovative tourism products such as, smart tourism, sustainable tourism etc. and the promotion of the tourism destination (Sanetra, 2019). Overall, all our respondents have their own strategy and

tool for marketing. Some of them are seen working collaborative whereas, some have similar techniques as they are a part of ACT region. Some have different market depending on segment of customers they hold.

4.4.4 Survival strategy

Survival strategy are the modes that can lead the businesses to survive in certain unexpected downfall of the businesses (Brüderl et. al, 1992). The modes are linked to the ways of management of the business throughout the uncertain pandemics (Bhrammanachote & Sawangdee, 2021). Basic of survival strategy is, cutting off the expenses and finding the alternatives (Brüderl et. al, 1992).

Throughout the pandemic all the respondents had a worst time but according to the geography of Nepal and being known for a fertile land, people are mostly involved in farming, agriculture, and horticulture. Tourism is a part of attraction of the available natural resources. Our respondents have managed to survive, some got a help from organization whereas some tried hard and stayed strong and adapted some alternatives to live as a tool for survival strategies throughout the pandemic.

Karma Chirring Gurung, from Thorang La pass – Manang demonstrated that even during covid it was not hard for him to get food and shelter, but it was just hard for him to live a life beyond having food and shelter. He stated his daily costs was high, so it was difficult for him to manage. Daily costs for him were besides food and shelter i.e., healthcare, clothing, transportation etc. Besides, he had to fire his employees that were working for him to cut down the daily cost.

Sooner, he started to engage into agriculture as he was living in a very high altitude, and nobody was involved in agricultural works which made them to bring foods and vegetable from the nearby village which was way hours far from his hotel. As a result, he and his neighbors started to get involved in agriculture so that they did not have to walk for hours to bring daily agricultural products.

He further adds as an example,

"When there was no business, we gathered more dried greens and meats for the winter so we may have more in the future. We undertook a lot of food stockpiling as a long-term survival strategy. We considered a longer time frame than usual since we had to combat the pandemic with practically little revenue from visitors".

He has used food stock as a survival technique that could bring them food on off season. Even though, the winter in Manang is cold so they have less agricultural works and food stock was a smart choice to survive in off season. He also demonstrated that apple farming was another source of invome for the locals as it could be grown in winter and has a high demand in the market.

"In Manang, there is now a trend of apple growing; I envision a surge in such activities, and this may be an option for us. Because fruits are constantly in demand, whether there is a pandemic or not, we may generate another source of revenue in addition to the one from the hotel". Karma Chirring Gurung from Thorang La pass – Manang

Mahendra Subedi, from Hotel Annapurna Inn – Muktinath was not the origin of Muktinath locally, but he lived there for business purpose. During covid, he had to leave the hotel and go back to his village and get engage into agriculture so that he could pay out the debt and rent of the place that he had rented out for hotel.

He further adds,

"In my village, people are engaged in agriculture they produce tomatoes, and cabbage, and sell them, some people rear donkeys, and some people are engaged in poultry and animal husbandry".

Bikash Gurung, from Hotel Superview – Ghandruk was only the respondent who was not hardly affected by covid as he says,

"We are at the main area known as Ghandruk, hence we normally get a higher number of tourists. They had no guests at all

when we were having a few guests. So, we were for sure affected but the hotels in the downward village were more affected".

As per Bikash, people were more affected on the villages nearby his hotel but his hotel lies in the heart of the city so there is easy access for people to spend a day or two without going long way up to the mountain. He illustrated that most of the people in his area are also living life form agriculture and horticulture, so it was not hard to survive during pandemic. He was only respondent in our research that has recovered quicker after the pandemic due to the location. After covid he could see domestic tourism rising specially among youngsters. He represents,

" During Covid pandemic, many were engaged in agriculture and horticulture which has been there as a secondary source of income for some people where some fully depend on it"

Karma Wangdel Gurung, from Hotel Thorang peak – Manang (Yak Kharkha) was living up to the base height at 4100m, so agriculture and other stuff was not possible, but he suggested and working on the green house project to fightback such pandemics and source out the daily livings. He had survived with his savings whereas he and the villagers also received basic needs such as daily use products as a compensational help from local organization. He elaborates as,

" Here at 4000m height, greenhouse to grow vegetables is also a possible agricultural method which could be used as a survival to tackle such situation in near future. The local organization helped the locals of Manang by distributing daily use products like, rice, lentils, vegetable, dry foods, noodles etc. for survival".

He further explains his plans for future as,

" Green house has also been discussed to bring into practice to feed the tourists with basic daily vegetables and fresh products rather than importing from Manang village".

Collaboration is a form of support to the local and businesses on survival depending on the situation that could benefit the destination for a smooth operation in any uncertainty (Bhrammanachote & Sawangdee, 2021). After covid, Karma Wangdel Gurung took the green house project seriously so that it can only not provide food and vegetables to locals but also for tourists. Tourists would also get an inspiration from the locals on how they live.

The survival strategy for hotel businesses in Chiang Mai was based on the understanding and commitment between the local and the businesses along with local stakeholders to the covid situation and take right action on time (Bhrammanachote & Sawangdee, 2021). Similarly, the survival strategy for hotel businesses in ACT is based upon their location, and geography. Finding out the alternatives would only possible when there is an actual rising problem.

Audretsch (1991) states that the environment is a key to long term sustainability of the business survival and every short-term survival of businesses forming up a series would be the reason for the long-term stability of the businesses.

All the respondents were ended up finding out their alternatives, some of them were short term whereas some hotel owners found a solution for long term survival as well as an interesting project to make destination more attractive.

4.5 Learning from the Pandemic/Resolution

In this phase, companies examine the origins and impacts of the crisis to gain insight (Faulkner, 2001). Very few companies, particularly those in the hospitality and food and beverage industries, were considering taking stock or analyzing what had occurred (properly or improperly) to help in the formulation of new strategic orientations, if required. Most operators were unconcerned by the resolution (and would take no action), claiming that it is the government's responsibility to analyze the crisis's harm.

Tourist SME reliance on government assistance validates the conclusion that governments, disaster and tourism organizations are responsible for crisis preparation, response, and management (Ritchie, 2004). Our research revealed somewhat varied viewpoints, the respondents in our research said that they would never anticipate government assistance since it would be unwise to do so. The reason for this is because the government has neglected to address and assist hotels in the area in the past. According to one of the respondents in our research, the following quotations illustrate the government's position.

> *"We, the people of this region don't hope for any support from the government in any crisis. But yes, they have helped us with the development*

of roads, and they worked on road construction in this area at that time, which somehow helped us".

Bikash Gurung,Superview Hotel,Ghandruk

The hotel owners said that it would be much more prudent to develop and adapt various tactics to better handle the crisis via their local hotel association committee for the recovery to have a swifter impact and be more relevant to their community. The local hotel associations committee's ideas were far more successful and trusted by everyone. The group engaged in several measures to retain visitors in the area.

"We have a hotel association that assists us in producing YouTube films and promoting Manang in new ways, such as winter in Manang, 8th wonder videos, and winter in Manang videos, to attract more people to the area".

Karma Chhring Gurung, Hotel Yak Kharka,Manang

The above quotations illustrate the responsibilities of local stakeholders in times of crisis and their attempts to address the decline in tourism while the government makes minimal efforts. To create a successful destination, stakeholders must recognize their respective roles and recognize those with the ability to affect change in the interest of long-term growth and development (Freeman, 2019). Communities and businesses are seen as a major force in the development of a tourist destination (Aref, 2011).

Additionally, our research backs up these assertions and underlines the need of cooperation among local hoteliers(stakeholders) to devise better ways for overcoming the situation(pandemic) and to move forward to create a favorable destination for all seasons. As proposed by Nagarjun (2015), the moral stakeholders of tourism development are the locals and communities. It's widely accepted that hotels are ideal businesses to get locals and communities involved in the planning and execution of their services, since it increases trust and confidence in the tourism industry (Ertuna and Kirbas, 2012).

A significant lesson from the pandemic is that a strong cooperation among local stakeholders may assist overcome crises like covid-19, and our research shows how this collaboration can aid in the future and take less time to recover for the hotel businesses in ACT.

The potential of domestic tourism was another important lesson gained by the hotel owners in the ACT. In the past, they relied largely on overseas visitors for their income, and they didn't care much about the domestic tourists. It was at this period that several hotels in the area got some domestic guests and realized that domestic tourism may be a valuable source of revenue in a time of crisis and if managed equally it could be the potential alternatives.

The hotel owners in the region learned about the new discoveries of alternate options because of the pandemic. Resumption of agricultural operations, including the construction of a green house in the altitudes, apple-farming, new DIY projects, and the production of own vegetables and greens to become self-sufficient and cease purchasing vegetables from the surrounding city. Because of this, if another pandemic were to occur, the crisis effect would still be manageable provided these tasks were undertaken and prepared for the future.

"While tourism was at a low point, we also sought for other sources of revenue. We did a little bit of farming as well, and we did a little bit of everything for survival. We also worked on local initiatives like constructing minor roads and enhancing the environment", (Karma Chhring Gurung, Hotel Yak Kharka,Manang)

The above statements demonstrate how some hotel owners were willing to adjust to new techniques and changes in their daily lives. Instead of waiting to see what would happen next, the owners were fast to consider alternatives and put them into action. The hotel's planning included community improvement activities as well as regional welfare.

Karma Chhiring Gurung, further elaborates,

> *"We also engaged in some agriculture; since it was difficult to get food and vegetables, we began to cultivate our own in our garden. We began producing vegetables and performed more agricultural labor over the summer to increase our food store for the winter. We sought to manufacture more and more dry food for the winter since we*

anticipated that purchasing food from outside our village would be prohibitively expensive. As a result, we became increasingly reliant on growing our own vegetables, greens".

The habit of food stockpiling is addressed as a new coping mechanism as well to become less reliant on necessities that come from outside their village, indicating a shift away from everyday necessities and supplies.

"We undertook a lot of food stockpiling as a long-term survival strategy. We considered a longer time frame than usual since we had to combat the pandemic with practically little revenue from visitors". Karma Chhring Gurung, Hotel Yak Kharka, Manang

Our study revealed some tactics used by hotel operators to survive and put their business on hold until the tourism comes back to normality.

Another hotel owners also emphasized that the epidemic has taught him to stick to specific tourist segment. As his hotel is positioned close to the Muktinath Temple, he would be able to respond to the demands of pilgrims when tourism returns to its former shape.

Our major target customers are Indians from Madras, Gujrat and the Nepalese. But we mainly prioritize the religious tourists they come to visit Muktinath temple for pilgrimage. We try to maintain good connection and communication with them, so that we have the guests from that link. Our main goal is to feed and provide lodge to the pilgrims, we mainly focus on them.

Mahendra Subedi, Annapurna Inn, Muktinath

5. Discussion:

With the assistance of analysis, findings, and a review of the relevant literature, this chapter contains a discussion on the purpose of the study. The primary goal is broken up into two sub-goals.

-To analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the hotel industry in the ACT.
-To explore the recovery measures and futuristic strategies adopted by hoteliers in response to the COVID crisis.

Initially, a variety of literature and researchers reviewed and observed in the preceding chapter demonstrate that the effect of covid-19 was severe across all businesses and that it halted tourism in many destinations. It is clear from studies and literature that the effect of the pandemic on rural hotels in developing countries is longer and more unpredictable than those in developed regions, where the government lends a helping hand to uplift and restore economic losses from the epidemic.

According to the findings of our study of hotel owners in rural tourist destination, ACT in Nepal, those businesses seemed to have been affected by the pandemics in several ways .The analysis also identifies that COVID-19 has have impact on a variety of different subcategories, including the impact on hotel business and operations, effects on workers, new methods of working, changes in the tourism segment, impact on supply chain and sustainability.

As the study by Alanso et al. (2020) has highlighted the biggest worry of hotel authority towards the financial effect of the pandemic. The hotels in ACT are also found as financially motivated and intended the most towards economic recovery, hence, they have been found to have adopted several cost cutting methods like employees lay off, control on unnecessary expenses and pricing strategies. And interestingly, all three hotels Hotel Superview, Hotel Thorang Peak and Annapurna Hotel and Inn were found to have used the employees lay off as the major cost cutting strategy to tackle the financial impact or challenges of covid 19. However, when they come up with the decision of employees lay off and salary reduction, it refers to an unsustainable economic

pattern. Unsustainable pattern of economy with a sense that it does not replicate the decent work due to insecure job situation.

Our findings exhibit that there have been various types of product development or service improvement in the hotel industry post covid that helped them overcome the economic impact. The challenges were on the one side, but the same challenge has given them an opportunity to rethink about their business and bring some changes. Which we found among different types of service products or service development as categorized by John and Thakur (2020). Similarly, the strategy of creating tour package for the local tourists with horse riding competition and hosting different local festivals and expos shared by Karna Chhrring Gurung, the owner of Hotel Yak Kharka, is the one of the strategies that is very much helpful in destination development and marketing. It can be taken as primary tourism product (Benur and Bramwell,2015) that becomes the major attraction that attracts the tourists towards the place.

Furthermore, this strategy also helps on improving the local economy by employing locals in the festivals and expos. Hence, the strategies taken by hotels can be useful for the destination marketing and development In context of Tohoku region, the study by Nguyen et. al (2017) found that hotel played vital role in managing the destination by collaborating with other stakeholders and reducing the risks of destination.

The study by Lai and Wong (2020) came up with government support to be one of the top priority in Macau enterprises during covid crisis. Government holds a major role as being a stakeholder of ACT within various contexts such as, planning, policy making, promotion and development (Brokaj, 2014). Adding up, the role of government is seen as passive regarding the recovery of ACT as well as the planning during the pandemic. However, Local authorities were actively involved in the ACT region to support and assist the local businesses for the recovery, development, and promotion of the destination.

Locals were involved in brainstorming and finding ways of survival for the long term because of the pandemic. Alternatives were formed by locals depending on the geographics of the

place Infact, they have been found willing to challenge the geographics of the place. For example, Karma Wangdel Gurung, the owner of Hotel Thorang Peak showed his interest and plan for having green house and serve guests with locally grown vegetables and other fresh products. This would help locals get engaged in economic activities which in a turn reduce the time and money to go to neighboring cities for food supplies (Morimoto & Chapagain, 2014). It helps on creating circular economy in the region which has possibility of developing the place.

Moreover, all the Local businesses survived with alternatives for a short period of time whereas some of them found alternatives that could be validated soon for a longer period. Meanwhile, the development of innovative services and new products were lifted. Hoteliers focused on service development and new practices towards the marketing pattern. WOM, being one of the popular forms of advertisement which gather the trust among people and is old-fashioned but is still a tool for mass market which helps to drive consumer decision making (Keller and Fay, 2009). Most hotels were using the WOM (word of mouth) as their marketing tool for promotion. Social media marketing was also the key for some hotels for their popularity.

6. Conclusion

Aims of the study included a review of relevant literature on crisis management and an investigation on current pandemic trends in the region of ACT of Nepal. The assessment of the literature examined the various crisis management approaches used throughout the globe, as well as the ways in which the pandemic was dealt with to boost the afflicted community's tourism resilience. To construct our own study, we looked at instances of other nations' methods and examples. When it comes to dealing with the issue and battling the epidemic, Nepal's Nature Based Tourism Such as ACT and its tourism activities at local level lacks the adequate support of the government in times of crisis, also there seems to be a larger gap between the central government and local stakeholders.

As demonstrated by our primary data sources, most enterprises in the ACT areas were founded on the premise of community-oriented tourism and were established as family-owned and inherited businesses, developed, and maintained by ideals of community-based tourism. The

pandemic was first regarded with a great deal of uncertainty, and the impacts remained in place for an extended length of time owing to the absence of recovery measures. The government had implemented a severe lockdown of the nation but was unable to trigger the recovery mechanism sooner to establish the tourism resilience of the ACT region. The communities of the ACT were left to recover tourism and establish other alternatives to Tourism activities in hope that the pandemic would end, and tourism would revive in the region. The hoteliers were left to fend for themselves and survive the epidemic. Moreover, hoteliers were in search of every possible alternative of survival as well as learned ways to manage their daily life. Hoteliers have also experienced the pandemic as a time to grasp the new ways to form ideas and get always ready to tackle such uncertainty smoothly.

7. Limitation of study

There were several issues and limitations we faced during the period of study, in absence of which our study could be better. Firstly, we decided to study on the hotel industry in Annapurna Circuit Trek (ACT) in Nepal but none of us (group members) could go there for observation or ethnographic study of the place which could enrich our study with more firsthand data. Hence, remote study on the topic partly affected our study.

Secondly, yearly the statistics on hotel industry in ACT were not available on the official sites of tourism authorities which could be additional resource to our study, however, we tried to reach the authorities to get the official statistics of hotels in ACT like Nepal Tourism Board(NTB), Hotel Association Nepal(HAN) Pokhara, Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) and Annapurna Conservation Area Project(ACAP) but none of the employees or contact person helped us with the statistics of hotel in the region. Hence, unavailability of factual statistics has been another limitation to our study.

Furthermore, we tried to go through other interviews as well, but some of the potential interviewees agreed on time but did not show up on agreed time, while some of the hoteliers were in contact and were ready for interview but the interview was obliged to stop in between due to internet disruption. Hence, the problem connecting with interviewees had been another problem while collecting data. This type of issues during data collection led on postponing, further parts of

our thesis. And we had time constraint till 31 May, hence we had to proceed with the data we had in our hand, that is four interviews. If we could have interviewed few more hoteliers in the region, we might have more data for analysis and discussion, which could better validate our study.

Similarly, we had also used the non-random sampling method for our study because we choose the sample on the basis of communication access to them and their acceptance on taking part in interview. Hence, the hoteliers with internet access who were ready for interview were taken as samples and it was on our convenience regarding time and saving money of going there and taking face to face interview. There might be more useful data if we could use probability sampling which is considered as valued sampling method because the results can be generalized (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013).

However, we have tried our best to bring into more data in our research by semi structured interview and we have three samples from different locations but two of the interviewees were coincidently taken from the same area, they are Karna Chhiring Sherpa, the owner of Hotel Yak Kharka and Karma Wangdel Gurung, the owner of Hotel Thorang Peak , both of them represent the hotels of Thorang La Pass route. However, we found their data are similar to some extent but not completely, hence each of our sample has its own significance. There could be more interesting and different result if the sample size was random from different points of ACT, like different points of ACT which we tried to reach by calling, mail or text message but we finally used the sample that we were able to get connected and ready for interview.

8. Recommendation from the study:

The study reflects the situation of the hotels in Annapurna circuit as a case. Through the research, it has been found that the hoteliers were trying hard for their daily survival and seeking assistance not only from local authorities but also from the government being a powerful stakeholder of the Annapurna Circuit trek. Looking into the findings, location played a centre of attraction for domestic tourists during the pandemic as well as the geographical state was also a

reason for the opportunity of alternatives. So, the assistance could be widened for hotels and businesses located in rural areas.

Possible alternative measures could be taught to the locals as a part of training by experienced supporting teams/organizations to help them tackle issues regarding such pandemic. This study illustrates the viewpoint of the only hotels where hotel owners were only the participants, which could further extend to the locals, tourists, as well as government officials to get a broad idea of actual situational analysis from each perspective.

As ACT is one of the famous trekking destination or travel destination, there are not many studies related to hotels in ACT and the impact of Covid 19 in ACT. Hence, the research gaps can be filled by studying on specified tourism industry in the Area. However, we found the study on Effects of Covid 19 crisis on small and medium-sized hotel operators by Basnyat and Sharma (2021) and COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Tourism Industry in Nepal *by Ulak (2020)* very much contextual to our study. So that we could use the knowledge from their paper to produce the new one. Therefore, more research in recent crisis come up with the new findings that help the new research emerge.

The use of empirical method in research is highly recommended, as observation, field notes can be of great importance in any research.

9. References:

- Aase, T. H., Chaudhary, R. P., & Vetaas, O. R. (2009). Farming flexibility and food security under climatic uncertainty: Manang, Nepal Himalaya. *Journal compilation*, 236.

- Abo-Murad, M. and Abdullah, A.L.K. (2019), "Turnover culture and crisis management: insights from Malaysian hotel industry", Academy of Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 1-14

- Acharya, A. S., Prakash, A., Saxena, P., & Nigam, A. (2013). Sampling: Why and How of it? *INDIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SPECIALITIES*.

- Adams, K. M., Choe, J., Mostafanezhad, M., & Phi, G. T. (2021). (Post-) pandemic tourism resiliency: Southeast Asian lives and livelihoods in limbo. *Tourism Geographies*, *23*(4), 915-936.

- Adebisi, T., Oduneye, F., & O.J, A. (2017). The Effect of Socio-Economic Characteristicson Hotel Customers' Preference of Interior Decoration Materials in Nigeria. *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality*.

- Adu-Ampong, E. A. (2017). Divided we stand: institutional collaboration in tourism planning and development in the Central Region of Ghana. Current Issues in Tourism, 20(3), 295-314. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2014.915795

- Agunloye, O.O., 2019. Ethics in academic research and scholarship: An elucidation of the principles and applications. Journal of Global Education and Research, 3(2), pp.168-180.

- Akama, J. S. (2002). The role of government in the development of tourism in Kenya. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *4*(1), 1-14.

- Akinyode, B. F., & Khan, T. H. (2018). Step by step approach for qualitative data analysis. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY*, 167.

- Ansell, C., Boin, A., Keller, A., 2010. Managing transboundary crises: identifying the building blocks of an effective response system. J. Continge. Crisis Manag. 18 (4), 195–207.

- Aref,F. (2011). Sense of Community and participation for tourism development. Life Science Journal, 8(1).

- Audretsch, D. B. (1991). New-firm survival and the technological regime. The review of Economics and Statistics, 441-450.

- Bagnera, S.M., Stewart, E., & Edition, S.2020. Navigating hotel operations in times of COVID-19. Boston Hospitality Review. 〈https://www.iacconline.org/docs/Navigatin g-Hotel-Operations-Corona.pdf〉, Accessed 21 November 2020

- Barbe, D. and Pennington-Gray, L. (2018), "Using situational crisis communication theory to understand Orlando hotels' twitter response to three crises in the summer of 2016", Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 258-275.

- Basecamp Adventure. (2019). *Annapurna Circuit Trek Map*. Retrieved from Basecamp Adventure: https://basecampadventure.com/annapurna-circuit-trek-map/

- Basnyat, S., & Sharma, S. (2021). Effects of Covid 19 crisis on small and medium-sized hotel operators: insights from Nepal. *Taylor & Francis Group*.

- Baum, T. and Hai, N.T.T. (2020), "Hospitality, tourism, human rights and the impact of COVID-19", International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 32 No. 7, pp. 2397-2407

- Benjamin, S., Dillette, A., & Alderman, D. H. (2020). "We can't return to normal": committing to tourism equity in the post-pandemic age. *Tourism Geographies*, *22*(3), 476-483.

- Benur, A. M., & Bramwell, B. (2015). Tourism product development and product diversification in destinations. *Tourism Management*.

- Bhrammanachote, W., & Sawangdee, Y. (2021). Sustaining or surviving? An exploratory case study on COVID-19's impact towards hotel businesses. Tourism and hospitality management, 27(2), 273-292.

- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2000). Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability (Vol. 2): Channel View Publications

- Brokaj, R. (2014). Local Governments role in the sustainable tourism development of a destination. *scientific journal*, *10*(31).

- Brouwer, H., Hiemstra, W., van Vugt, S., & Walters, H. (2013). Analysing stakeholder power dynamics in multi-stakeholder processes: insights of practice from Africa and Asia. *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, *9*(3), 11-31.

- Brüderl, J., Preisendörfer, P., & Ziegler, R. (1992). Survival chances of newly founded business organizations. American sociological review, 227-242.

- Bryman, A. (2012). Social research methods (4th ed). Oxford University Press.

- Buigut, S., Braendle, U. and Sajeewani, D. (2017), "Terrorism and travel advisory effects on international tourism", Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. 22 No. 10, pp. 991-1004.

- Bundy, J., Pfarrer, M.D., Short, C.E., Coombs, W.T., 2017. Crises and crisis management: Integration, interpretation, and research development. J. Manag. 43 (6), 1661–1692.

- Carlsen, J. C., & Liburd, J. J. (2008). Developing a research agenda for tourism crisis management, market recovery and communications. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *23*(2-4), 265-276.

- Carmeli, A. and Schaubroeck, J. (2008), "Organisational crisis-preparedness: the importance of learning from failures", Long Range Planning, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 177-196

- Cespedes, F. V., & Piercy, N. F. (1996). Implementing marketing strategy. Journal of Marketing Management, 12(1-3), 135-160.

- Chapagain, P. S. (2016). Land and Livelihood changes in Upper Manang Valley of Nepal Himalayas. *Researchgate*, 11.

- Chien, G.C., Law, R., 2003. The impact of the severe acute respiratory syndrome on hotels: a case study of Hong Kong. Int. J. Hosp. Manag. 22 (3), 327–332.

- ÇİNİ, M. A., GÜLEŞ, H. K., & ARICIOĞLU, M. A. (2018). Effect of the Stakeholder Salience Theory on Family Businesses Performance. *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences*, 1492.

- Cochrane, J. (2010). The sphere of tourism resilience. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *35*(2), 173-185.

- Cochrane, J. (2010). The sphere of tourism resilience. Tourism Recreation Research, 35(2), 173-185.

- Cochrane, J. (2015). The Sphere of Tourism Resilience. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 182.

- Coombs, W.T., 2014. Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding. Sage Publications, London.

- Davidson, M. C., & Wang, Y. (2011). Sustainable Labor Practices? Hotel Human Resource Managers Views on Turnover and Skill Shortages. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 249.

- De Sausmarez, N. (2007), "Crisis management, tourism and sustainability: the role of indicators", Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Vol. 15 No. 6, pp. 700-714.

- Diers-Lawson, A., 2021. Norsk tipping's loneliest stakeholder: crisis, issues, and the stakeholder voice. Whistleblowing, Communication and Consequences. Routledge, pp. 164–182.

- Duarte Alonso, A., & Nyanjom, J. (2017). Local stakeholders, role and tourism development. Current Issues in Tourism, 20(5), 480-496.

- DUNCANSON, W. (2002). Transformation in the Traditional Himalayan Landscape: The Rise of the Trekking Hotel. *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* .

- Ertuna , B., & Kirbas, G. (2012). Local community involvement in rural tourism development: The case of Kastamonu, Turkey. PASOS. Revista de TurismoyPatrimonio Cultural ,10(2), 17-24.

- Evans, N., Elphnick, S., 2005. Models of crisis management: an evaluation of their value for strategic planning in the international travel industry. Int. J. Tour. Res. 7, 135–150.

- Folke, C., Carpenter, S., Elmqvist, T., Gunderson, L., Holling, C. S., & Walker, B. (2002). Resilience and sustainable development: building adaptive capacity in a world of transformations. *AMBIO: A journal of the human environment*, *31*(5), 437-440.

- Freeman, R. E., Parmar, B. L., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Colle, S. d., & Purnell, L. (2010, June). Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Freeman, R.E., 2010. Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach. Cambridge University Press.

- Genç, R. (2021). Adventure Tourism in Nepal Himalayas: Environmental Effects. *Journal of Tourism & Adventure (2021) , 4*(1), 48.

- Gössling, S., Hall, C. M., & Scott, D. (2018). Coastal and ocean tourism. In *Handbook on marine environment protection* (pp. 773-790). Springer, Cham.

- Gray, D. E. (2021). *Doing research in the real world*. sage.

- Green, J., Willis, K., Hughes, E., Small, R., Welch, N., Gibbs, L., & Daly, J. (2007). Generating best evidence from qualitative research: the role of data analysis. *AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH*, 546.

- Gunawijaya, J., & Pratiwi, A. (2018). How Local Community Could Contribute to the Tourism Development in Rural Area?. KnE Social Sciences, 826-834.

- Gurung, H. (2014). Community-based Ecotourism for Sustainable Livelihoods: A Case Study from the Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal. *Research Gate*, 2.

- Hao, F., Xiao, Q., & Chon, K. (2020). COVID-19 and China's Hotel Industry: Impacts, a Disaster Management Framework, and Post-Pandemic Agenda. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 8.

- Hoàng, L. P., Tran, T. H., & Tra, L. D. (2021). Factors Affecting Hotels' Cooperation with Local Tourism Authorities: Empirical Evidence from Danang. VNU Journal of Science: Economics and Business, 37(4).

- HOLDEN, A. (2010). Exploring Stakeholders' Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Annapurna Conservation Area:Issues and Challenge. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 343.

- Holling, C. S. (2001). Understanding the complexity of economic, ecological, and social systems. *Ecosystems*, *4*(5), 390-405.

- Israeli, A.A. (2007), "Crisis-management practices in the restaurant industry", International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 807-823.

- Israeli, A.A. and Reichel, A. (2003), "Hospitality crisis management practices: the Israeli case", International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 353-372.

- Israeli, A.A., Mohsin, A. and Kumar, B. (2011), "Hospitality crisis management practices: the case of Indian luxury hotels", International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 367-374.

- Jamal, T., & Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration theory and community tourism planning. Annals of Tourism Research, 22(1), 186-204. doi: 10.1016/0160-7383(94)00067-3

- Jayawardena, C., Tew, P.J., Lu, Z., Tolomiczenko, G., Gellatly, J., 2008. SARS: lessons in strategic planning for hoteliers and destination marketers. Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag. 20 (3), 332–346.

- Jiang, Y., & Wen, J. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on hotel marketing and management: a perspective article. *Emerald Insight*, 2569.

- John, J., & Thakur, R. (2020). Long term effects of service adaptations made under pandemic conditions: the new "post COVID-19" normal. *European Journal of Marketing*.

- Joshi, B. P., & Kunwar, R. R. (2018). SUSTAINABILITY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY A STUDY OF NAGARKOT, NEPAL. *JOURNAL ON TOURISM & SUSTAINABILITY* .

- Kallet, R. H. (2004). How to write the methods section of a research paper. *Respiratory care*, *49*(10), 1229-1232.

- Karki, S. (2011). Tourism Development in Upper Manang Valley of Annapurna Region. *Nepal Tourism & Development Review, 1*(1), 57-58.

- Keller, E., & Fay, B. (2009). The role of advertising in word of mouth. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *49*(2), 154-158.

- Khan, K. I., Nasir, A., & Saleem, S. (2021). Bibliometric Analysis of Post Covid-19 Management Strategies and Policies in Hospitality and Tourism. *Frontiers in psychology*.

- Kim, S.S., Chun, H. and Lee, H. (2005), "The effects of SARS on the Korean hotel industry and measures to overcome the crisis: a case study of six Korean five-star hotels", Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 369-377

- Kovaltchuk, A.P., Dedusenko, E.A., Blinova, E.A. and Miloradov, K.A. (2016), "Concept and procedures of crisis management in Russian hotel enterprises", Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 473-480.

- Lai, I. K., & Wong, J. W. (2020). Comparing crisis management practices in the hotel industry between initial and pandemic stages of COVID-19. *Emrald Insight*, 3136.

- Lai, I.K. W. & Wong, J.W. C. 2020. Comparing crisis management practices in the hotel industry between initial and pandemic stages of COVID-19. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.

- Le, D., & Phi, G. (2021). Strategic responses of the hotel sector to COVID-19: Toward a refined . *International Journal of Hospitality Management pandemic crisis management framework*.

- Lee, K. (2009), "How the Hong Kong Government lost the public trust in SARS: insights for government communication in a health crisis", Public Relations Review, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 74-76.

- Lettieri, E., Masella, C., Radaelli, G., 2009. Disaster management: findings from a systematic review. Disaster Prev. Manag. 18 (2), 117–136.

- Leung, R. (2019). Smart hospitality: Taiwan hotel stakeholder perspectives. Tourism Review.

- Lim, F. K. (2007). Hotels as sites of power: tourism, status, and politics in Nepal Himalaya. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*.

- Lin, X., Ho, C. M., & Shen, G. Q. (2017). Who should take the responsibility? Stakeholders' power over social responsibility issues in construction projects. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *154*, 318-329.

- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars. *Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars.*, 8*(3), 3353.

- Majumdar, R. (2021). Surviving and growing in the post-Covid world: the case of Indian hotels. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*.

- Mansfeld, Y. (1999), "Cycles of war, terror and peace: determinants and management of crisis and recovery of the Israeli tourism industry", Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 30-36.

- Mayhew, B., Brown, L., & Butler, S. (2016). *Lonely Planet Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya.* Lonely Planet.

- McKercher, B. and Chon, K. (2004), "The over-reaction to SARS and the collapse of Asian tourism", Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 716-719.

- Meyer, D., & Meyer, N. (2015). The role and impact of tourism on local economic development: A comparative study. African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance, 197-214.

- Miguel, C., Pechurina, A., Kirkulak-Uludag, B., Drotarova, M. H., Dumančić, K., Braje, I. N., & Giglio, C. (2022). Short-term rental market crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic: stakeholders' perspectives. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 103147.

- Mikuˇsovˊa, M., Horvˊathovˊa, P., 2019. Prepared for a crisis? Basic elements of crisis management in an organisation. Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraˇzivanja 32 (1), 1844–1868. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2019.1640625.

- Mikulic, J., Sprcic, D.M., Holicek, H. and Prebežac, D. (2018), "Strategic crisis management in tourism: an application of integrated risk management principles to the Croatian tourism industry", Journal of Destination Marketing and Management, Vol. 7, pp. 36-38.93

- Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation . (2020). *Nepal Tourism Statistics 2020.* Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.

- Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. (2020). *Nepal Tourism Statistics 2020.* Kathmandu: Nepal Tourism Board.

- Mitchell, R., Agle, B., Wood, D., 1997. Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: defining the principle of who and what really counts. Acad. Manag. Rev. 22 (4), 853–886.

- Morgan, N. A., Whitler, K. A., Feng, H., & Chari, S. (2019). Research in marketing strategy. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 47(1), 4-29.

- Morimoto, I., & Chapagain, P. S. (2014). Entrepreneurship in the Peripheral Regions: A Case of Tourism in the Himalayan Village Manang, Nepal. *International & Regional Studies*, 11.

- Morse, J. M. (1991). *Strategies for Sampling.* Sage Research Methods.

- Mu, Y., & Nepal, S. (2016). High Mountain Adventure Tourism: Trekkers' Perceptions of Risk and Death in Mt. Everest Region, Nepal. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 502.

- Mwandoba, H. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 142.

- Nagarjuna, G. (2015). Local community involvement in tourism: A content analysis of websites of wildlife resorts. Atna Journal of Tourism Studies, 10(1), 13-21.

- Nepal Tourism Board. (2020). *Entry Protocol for Mountaineering Expeditions and Trekking in Nepal.* Kathmandu: Nepal Tourism Board. Retrieved from https://trade.welcomenepal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Entry-Protocol-for-Mountaineering-Expeditions-Trekking-in-Nepal-25-Sep-2020.pdf

- Nguyen, D. N., Imamura, F., & Iuchi, K. (2017). Public-private collaboration for disaster risk management: A case study of hotels in Matsushima, Japan. Tourism Management, 61, 129-140.

- Nyaupane, G. P., Lew, A. A., & Tatsugawa, K. (2014). Perceptions of trekking tourism and social and environmental change in Nepal's Himalayas. *An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 425.

- Nyaupanea, G. P., Moraisb, D. B., & Dowler, L. (2006). The role of community involvement and number/type of visitors on tourism impacts: A controlled comparison of Annapurna, Nepal and Northwest Yunnan, China. *Tourism Management*, 1381.

- Okumus, F., Altinay, M. and Arasli, H. (2005), "The impact of turkey's economic crisis of February 2001 on the tourism industry in Northern Cyprus", Tourism Management, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 95-10

- Olson, E., Walker, O.C. and Ruekert, R.W. (1995), "Organizing for effective olso product development: the moderating role of product innovativeness", Journal of Marketing, Vol. 59 No. 1, pp. 48-62.

- Oun, M. A., & Bach, C. (2014). Qualitative research method summary. *Qualitative Research*, *1*(5), 252-258.

- Park, S., & Lehto, X. (2021). Understanding the opaque priority of safety measures and hotel customer. *JOURNAL OF TRAVEL & TOURISM MARKETING, 38*(7).

- Pearson, C.M., Clair, J., 1998. Reframing crisis management. Acad. Manag. Rev. 23 (1), 59–76.

- Perl, Y. and Israeli, A.A. (2011), "Crisis management in the travel agency sector: a case study", Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 115-125.

- Perles-Ribes, J. F., Ramón-Rodríguez, A. B., Jesús-SuchDevesa, M., & Aranda-Cuéllar, P. (2021). The Immediate Impact of Covid19 on Tourism Employment in Spain: Debunking the Myth of Job Precariousness? *Tourism Planning & Development*.

- Peters, M., & Buhalis, D. (2004). Family hotel businesses: strategic planning and the need for education and training. Education+ Training.

- Pfarrer, M., Decelles, K.A., Smith, K.G., Taylor, S.M., 2008. After the fall: Reintegrating the corrupt organization. Acad. Manag. Rev. 33 (3), 730–748.

- Phillips, R. A., & Freeman, R. E. (2010). *[Introduction to] Stakeholders*. Edward Elgar Publishing

- Pine, R. and McKercher, B. (2004), "The impact of SARS on Hong Kong's tourism industry", International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 139-143.

- Quinn, E. A., & Childs, G. (2019). Trekking and toddlers: Towards a biocultural analysis of growth among infants and young children in a rural region of the Himalayas. *American Journal of Human Biology*, 4.

- Radwan, H. R. (2017). Managing Hotels during Economic Challenges: A Case Study on Hotels in Sharm . *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 97.

- Raya, B. (2020). DISASTER CHALLENGES IN TOURISM INDUSTRY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE ANNAPURNA CONSERVATION AREA. *Tribhuvan University Journal, 35*, 20.

- Reed, M. G. (2000). 13. Collaborative Tourism Planning as Adaptive Experiments in Emergent Tourism Settings. Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability, 2, 247. Research, 23(3), 723- 724.

- Riese, J. (2019). What is 'access' in the context of qualitative research?. *Qualitative Research*, *19*(6), 669-684.

- Ritchie, B.W. (2004), "Chaos, crises and disasters: a strategic approach to crisis management in the tourism industry", Tourism Management, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 669-683.

- Roberts, L., & F. Simpson (1999). Developing Partnership Approaches to Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 7, 314–330

- Sah, R., Sigdel, S., Ozaki, A., Kotera, Y., Bhandari, D., Regmi, P., . . . Dhakal, R. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on tourism in Nepal. *Journal of Travel Medicine*.

- Saito, H., & Ruhanen, L. (2017). Power in tourism stakeholder collaborations: Power types and power holders. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 31, 189-196

- Sanetra, B., & Sanetra-Półgrabi, S. (2019). Local authorities and tourism: the role of regional tourist products in Poland. *Tourism and Travelling*, *2*(1), 16-23.

- Sankar, P., & Jones, N. L. (2008). SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS IN BIOETHICS RESEARCH. *Advances in Bioethics*, 118.

- Santana, G. (2004), "Crisis management and tourism", Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 299-321.

- Sarah, C., Kathrin, C., Ann, R., Guro, H., Anthony, A., & Aziz, S. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Research Medical Methodology*, *11*, 100.

- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research methods for business students*. Pearson education.

- Saunders, M.,Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009).Research methods for business students. 5th ed. England: Pearson Education Limited.

- Saunders, M.,Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012).Research methods for business students. 5th ed. England: Pearson Education Limited.

- Saunders, M.,Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2015).Research methods for business students. England: Pearson Education Limited.

- Sautter, E. T., & Leisen, B. (1999). Managing stakeholders, a tourism planning model. *Annals of tourism research*, *26*(2), 312-328.

- Sawalha, I.H.S., Jraisat, L.E. and Al-Qudah, K.A.M. (2013), "Crisis and disaster management in Jordanian hotels: practices and cultural considerations", Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 210-228

- Schoppman, M., Andisiwe, A., Qi, C. J., Balint, D. C., Ndahimana, G., Balint, J. A., ... & Adhikari, S. HOMESTAY ON ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT.

- Seeger, M.W., Sellnow, T.L., Ulmer, R.R., 2001. Public relations and crisis communication: organizing and chaos. In: Heath, R.L. (Ed.), Handbook of Public Relations. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 155–165.

- Serravalle, F., Ferraris, A., Vrontis, D., Thrassou, A., & Christofi, M. (2019). Augmented reality in the tourism industry: A multi-stakeholder analysis of museums. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *32*, 100549.

- Shani, A., & Pizam, A. (2012). Community Participation in Tourism Planning and Development. In M. Uysal, R. R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy, Handbook of Tourism and Quality-of-life research (pp. 547-564). Springer.

- Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 749.

- Sharma, R. (2013). Socio-cultural impact of tourism in Pokhara. In B. R. Upreti, P. K. Upadhayaya, & T. Sapkota, *Tourism in Pokhara Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity* (p. 144). Pokhara: Pokhara Tourism Council.

- Sheehan, L. R. (2006). Destination management organizations: A stakeholder perspective (Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary, Haskayne School of Business).

- Shi, W. and Li, K.X. (2017), "Impact of unexpected events on inbound tourism demand modeling: evidence of middle east respiratory syndrome outbreak in South Korea", Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 344-356.

- Skach, B. (2016). The Annapurna Road: Development and Tourism on the Annapurna Circuit.

- Song, H., Lin, S., Witt, S.F. and Zhang, X. (2011), "Impact of financial/economic crisis on demand for hotel rooms in Hong Kong", Tourism Management, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 172-186.

- Stirling, J. A. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 388.

- Tang, Y. H., Amran, A., & Goh, Y. N. (2014). Environmental management practices of hotels in Malaysia: Stakeholder perspective. International Journal of Tourism Research, 16(6), 586-595.

- Traskevich, A., & Fontanarib, M. (2021). Tourism Potentials in Post-COVID19: The Concept of Destination Resilience for Advanced Sustainable Management in Tourism. *TOURISM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT*, 5.

- Tsao, C.Y. and Ni, C.C. (2016), "Vulnerability, resilience, and the adaptive cycle in a crisis-prone tourism community", Tourism Geographies, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 80-105.

- U, S.C. and So, Y.C. (2020), "The impacts of financial and non-financial crises on tourism: evidence from Macao and Hong Kong", Tourism Management Perspectives, Vol. 33, p. 100628.

- Ulak, N. (2020). COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Tourism Industry in Nepal. *Journal of Tourism & Adventure, 3*(1), 59.

- United Nations. (2022). *Department of Economic and social affairs , Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from Uited Nations: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8

- Upadhayaya, P. K. (2018). Sustainable Management of Trekking Trails for the Adventure Tourism in Mountains: A Study of Nepal's Great Himalaya Trails. *Journal of Tourism and Adventure*, 18.

- Upreti, B. R., & Upadhayaya, P. K. (2013). Tourism in Pokhara: Nepal's pride and means for peace and prosperity. In B. R. Upreti, P. K. Upadhayaya, & T. Sapkota, *Tourism in*

Pokhara Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity (p. 4). Pokhara: Pokhara Tourism Counci.

- Upreti, B. R., & Upadhayaya, P. K. (2013). Tourism in Pokhara: Nepal's pride and means for peace and prosperity. In B. R. Upreti, P. K. Upadhayaya, & T. Sapkota, *Tourism in Pokhara Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity* (p. 4). Pokhara: Pokhara Tourism Counci.

- Wan, Y.K.P. (2013), "A comparison of the governance of tourism planning in the two special administrative regions (SARs) of China–Hong Kong and Macao", Tourism Management, Vol. 36, pp. 164-177.

- Wood, D.J., Mitchell, R.K., Agle, B.R., Bryan, L.M., 2018. Stakeholder identification and salience after 20 years: progress, problems, and prospects. Bus. Soc. 60 (1), 196–245.

- Xin, (C.) J., Mingya, Q., Bao, J., 2019. Impact of crisis events on Chinese outbound tourist flow: a framework for post-events growth. Tour. Manag. 74, 334–344.

- Yacoub, L., & ElHajjar, S. (2020). How do hotels in developing countries manage the impact of COVID-19? The case of Lebanese hotels. *Emerald Insight*, 930.

- Yacoub, L., & ElHajjar, S. (2020). How do hotels in developing countries manage the impact of COVID-19? The case of Lebanese hotels. *Emerald Insight*, 941.

- Yin, R. K. (2003). Case Study Research Design and Methods Third Edition. Sage Publication.

- Zeng, B., Carter, R.W. and De Lacy, T. (2005), "Short-term perturbations and tourism effects: the case of SARS in China", Current Issues in Tourism, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 306-322.

- Zurick, D. N. (1992). Adventure Travel and Sustainable Tourism in the Peripheral Economy of Nepal. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 82*(4), 618.

APPENDIX 1:

For the analysis of the study, interviews from four different hotel owners were taken. The study was constructed based on semi-structured questionnaires for four participants which were Karma Chirring Gurung from Hotel Thorang La Pass, Mahendra Subedi from hotel Annapurna Inn, Bikash Gurung from Hotel Superview and Karma Wangdel Gurung from Hotel Thorang Peak which are listed below:

Questionnaires:
1st Part of the Questionnaires
Hotel's Background
1. How long have you been in the business?
2. How is your hotel categorized, (a star hotel, or lodge)?
3. Is the hotel your primary source of income or an alternative? / What is the source of income other than hotels?
4. How many rooms are there in your hotel and what is the maximum capacity of your hotel?
5. How many hotels are situated in your village area?

What is the major occupation in your locality?

2nd Part of the Questionnaires
Impacts of Covid-19 on the industry,
1) How has/had covid-19 impacted your business? (in general)
2) Have you had any pre-bookings prior to COVID-19? If you answered yes, what did you do with the reservations you already had or had paid for? How did you manage those bookings? (policy, free cancellation, rescheduling, refund) .
3) Did you feel the loss of revenues due to covid 19? Was it severe? (Covid effect finance)
4) Did the financial loss or decrease in revenue affect your, family members, or employees' well-being and mental health?
5) If possible, could you mention your highest monthly income before Covid 19 or the average monthly tourist season? And how much of a difference did Covid -19 make? (Changes in revenue)

6) As there was very much impact on financial part, how did you manage with covering the regular costs or expenditure? (Survival)

7) What were the difficulties you faced because of the pandemic? Or do you see it as a chance to learn something new? (Challenges)

8) Has domestic tourism also been affected as international because of the crisis? If no, how has it helped?

9) Is there any other kind of tourism that has developed because of the international flight restriction (domestic tourism)? (Alternatives for impact).

10) Is there any other alternative for tourism, (agriculture, migration, supplementary source of income), that has risen as a result of the pandemic? (Alternatives for impact)

3rd Part of the Questionnaires
Post pandemic Recovery

1. What contingency measures (crisis measures) did you put in place to deal with the situation? How did you react right away? Did you have to make any personnel or compensation cuts?

2. Did you have any special deals or low-cost lodging choices to entice more local and domestic visitors?

3. What was your primary focus to overcome the pandemic? Was it effective, and might it be replicated in the future for similar situations?

4. Has your company embraced new business practices (for example, new product development or service improvement)?

5. Has your company intensified its marketing efforts? Has it been useful to you if you answered, yes? how?

6. Did you have any affiliation /collaboration with other stakeholders, such as hotel associations for financial or supplement relief?

7. Was there any aid from the government and the local stakeholders for your survival throughout the pandemic?

8. What is your opinion that would have done to mitigate the effects of COVID-19?

9. Have you tried lobbying the local authorities or the leading organizations to make financial assistance from the government?

10. Have you developed any strategic measures to accelerate recovery from financial losses during the pandemic, when the pandemic became a part of daily life and it took a long time to resume tourism? Marketing, cost-cutting, special offers, and CSR efforts, for example? Please elaborate on the most effective approach that helped you.

11. Give you thought or reflection. If in future the crisis like covid 19 is repeated that there would be no international flight or travel ban. How do you plan for such a situation?

12. Everyone has learned a lot more in their industry; what have you learned from the pandemic, specifically in the hotel industry? What advice would you provide to a new hotel entrepreneur?

APPENDIX 2:

Several pictures were collected during the interview session to reflect the hotels in Annapurna Circuit trek. Below are some of them attached.

Picture 1: Hotel Annapurna Inn, Source: Mahendra Subedi

Picture 2: Hotel Super View - Ghandruk, Source: Bikash Gurung

Picture 3: Hotel Thorang La Pass, Source: Karma Chrring Gurung

Picture 4: Hotel Thorang Peak, Source: Karma Wangdel Gurung