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Eco-tourism and its Socio-cultural, Environmental and Economic Aspects

“A Case Study of Nagthali, Rasuwa, Nepal”

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a vital component of Nepal's economy, with a particular emphasis on eco-tourism. The diverse natural landscapes and rich biodiversity of Nepal, make it a popular destination for tourists seeking sustainable and nature-focused experiences. This thesis examines the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions of eco-tourism using a case study conducted in Nagthali, Rasuwa. Nagthali, a rural community in Nepal's Rasuwa district, has evolved as an emerging eco-tourism destination due to its unique natural and cultural heritage. The research investigates the effects of eco-tourism on the local community, economy, and environment, as well as the perspectives and experiences of the stakeholders involved.

Using qualitative research approaches such as semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the findings shed light on the prospects and challenges associated with eco-tourism development in Nagthali. The findings indicated that the implementation of ecotourism in the Nagthali area of the Rasuwa district had both favorable and unfavorable effects on various aspects such as local livelihoods, environmental conditions, economic factors, and socio-cultural elements. The findings also underline the importance of community involvement, cultural heritage preservation, advertising, and environmentally friendly tourism practices in the future development of Nagthali, Rasuwa as a prominent eco-tourism destination. This study contributes to the current body of knowledge on eco-tourism and makes practical recommendations for policymakers, local communities, researchers, and tourism professionals.

Keywords: eco-tourism, socio-cultural aspects, environmental aspects, economic aspects, responsible tourism practices, sustainable development, community involvement.

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List of Abbreviations

ACAP- Annapurna Conservation Area Project

CBET- Community Based Ecotourism

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

NTB- Nepal Tourism Board

TIES- The International Ecotourism Society

TRPAP- Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme

UNEP- United Nations Environment Programme

UNWTO- United Nations World Tourism Organization

WCED- World Commission on Environment and Development

WTTC- World Travel and Tourism Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

Tourism refers to different types of travel and exploration that people undertake for leisure, business, or other reasons (UNWTO, 2020). Sustainable and responsible tourism practices have gained increasing recognition in recent years. Due to this, eco-tourism has become more popular and is being given more attention, with a focus on minimizing negative environmental effects, assisting local communities, and promoting the preservation of natural and cultural resources (Cobinnah et al., 2017). Historically, the term 'eco-tourism' 'was embraced to outline 'the nature-tourism phenomenon' (Dahal, 2017). The International Eco-Tourism Society defines eco-tourism as 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education' (TIES, 2015). Further, it is considered an important part of sustainable tourism that focuses on 'biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, poverty alleviation, and economic development' (Duffy, 2008; K. C., 2016; K.C., Rijal & Sapkota, 2015).

Eco-tourism contributes positively to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is vital for developing countries like Nepal, 'rich both in culture and natural environment ' (Amati, 2013; UNEP, 2013). The tourism industry has recovered slowly with an increment of 68 percent in the arrivals of international tourists (Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2022). The concept of Eco-tourism in Nepal is relatively a new and growing concept. Therefore, it is very early to predict the impacts of ecotourism in Nepal. However, it is important to acknowledge that the implementation of eco-tourism has the potential to generate income for communities while also protecting the environment (Ojha, 2020). Moreover, tourism revenue can mitigate the adverse effects of mass tourism on the ecology and environment (ibid). About 4 percent of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is contributed through Eco-tourism. In addition, it is responsible for employing about 200,000 people (Shrestha, 2020). Further, Eco-tourism and homestays have been effective in upscaling local economies through the involvement of the local community. There is huge potential for Eco-tourism since mass tourism has had negative impacts in various areas of the tourism industry. However, the practices and their implementation have not been efficient (ibid).

Furthermore, Eco-tourism is a delicate section of the tourism industry, hence, requires awareness, education, and consciousness at all levels, such as among the tourists (both domestic and international), guides, tour operators, and the local community. Moreover, ecotourism incorporates the engagement of the local community and the local administrative body with nature and sense of social responsibility to the environment that we value (Shrestha, 2019).

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a region of mystical mountains and welcoming people from various ethnic groups spread across the country. It also serves as a destination for international visitors (Ojha, 2020). Furthermore, natural heritages, flora and wildlife have been an essential element of the Nepalese tourism industry. Scholars have performed numerous research on eco-tourism and its functions and advancements. However, few studies have looked at the effects of eco-tourism on social, economic, and environmental factors. This was my first motivation for conducting a study on eco-tourism and its effects on social, economic, and environmental factors. Furthermore, eco-tourism is still a developing and relatively new idea in Nepal, and extensive research is required to fully comprehend its significance and contribution to the Nepal Tourism Industry.

Travelers, hikers, and researchers from all over the world have long been drawn to Nepal, a small landlocked nation ensconced in the Himalayas. There are many options for eco-friendly travel experiences due to the country's diverse landscape, which ranges from the towering Himalayan peaks to the lush Terai plains (Shrestha, 2019). Due to its rich cultural history and expanding tourism opportunities, Nepal makes a great case study for examining the potential benefits and challenges of ecotourism (NTB, 2020).

1.1.1 Why Nepal as a Research Sample?

Several key factors influenced the choice of Nepal as the research sample. To begin with, the country's topographical diversity, which ranges from towering snow-capped peaks to the lush lowland Terai region, provides a diverse range of ecosystems, vegetation, and animals (Shrestha, 2019). This natural wealth creates an ideal environment for ecotourism activities, with plenty of options for nature lovers, bird watchers, and hikers alike. Second, Nepal's rich cultural legacy, which includes over 100 ethnic groups with their own rituals, traditions, and dialects, provides an enthralling backdrop for

researching the social components of ecotourism. Third, as a developing country, Nepal's economy is heavily reliant on tourism, which accounts for 7.9% of the country's GDP in 2019 (WTTC, 2021). Exploring the economic aspects of ecotourism would thus provide vital insights into the potential benefits and problems of this business for the growth of the nation.

Nepal's tourism sector needs to quickly update its strategies and operations, despite its many opportunities and importance. The government of Nepal acknowledges the potential of ecotourism to support sustainable development and has implemented measures to promote its development in the country (Dahal, 2017). Empirical research is necessary to evaluate the impact of ecotourism on the environment and local communities, and to determine sustainable ecotourism development strategies. Modernizing and digitalizing marketing and promotion methods is necessary, along with developing new business models and segmenting targets and mechanisms. Modern tourism's competitiveness depends heavily on innovation and technology, such as internet bookings and online payments. In addition, Nepal's modern tourism is hindered by inadequate transportation and communication equipment, security concerns, poor infrastructure, limited innovation channels, insufficient tourism marketing, and a focus on a specific demographic.

1.1.2 Why Nagthali as a Research Destination?

Although Nagthali in Rasuwa is a distinctive ecotourism destination, there has been limited research conducted on it. This contrasts with the numerous studies that have been conducted on ecotourism practices in Nepal, including case studies of popular destinations such as Pokhara, Ghandruk, and Bandipur. Nagthali, Rasuwa is a suitable case study for a thesis on ecotourism due to its unique characteristics and significant features related to social, environmental, and economic aspects. Nagthali is a remote village located in Langtang National Park. It serves as an excellent example of community-based ecotourism and showcases sustainable tourist development in its entirety. According to Aryal et. al. (2018), Nagthali is a successful case of community-based ecotourism that promotes local participation and distributes profits among community members.

An exceptional opportunity to look at the social, environmental, and economic facets of ecotourism at the local level is provided by the case study of Nagthali, a rural village in the Rasuwa province of Nepal. Nagthali is a popular ecotourism location because of its beautiful scenery, diverse wildlife,

and distinctive Tamang culture. This small but thriving village acts as a microcosm for comprehending how ecotourism programmes may support sustainable development, strengthen neighborhood communities, and aid in the preservation of natural and cultural resources (Bajracharya et al. 2007) The area has been identified as a viable ecotourism destination, with the potential to promote sustainable development and contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural resources (Nepal trek hub, 2023). However, the effects of ecotourism on the region's social, environmental, and economic aspects have not been thoroughly studied.

This thesis seeks to address this void by investigating the social, environmental, and economic implications of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, Nepal. The study will look at both people' and tourists' opinions and motives for ecotourism, as well as the social implications of ecotourism on the local community, such as changes in social structure, cultural values, and local livelihoods. Through a combination of field research, interviews with local stakeholders, and analysis of existing literature and data, this research will also examine the region's environmental implications of ecotourism, such as changes in biodiversity, ecosystem services, and natural resources. The study will also look into the economic impacts of ecotourism on the region, such as changes in income, employment, and economic development.

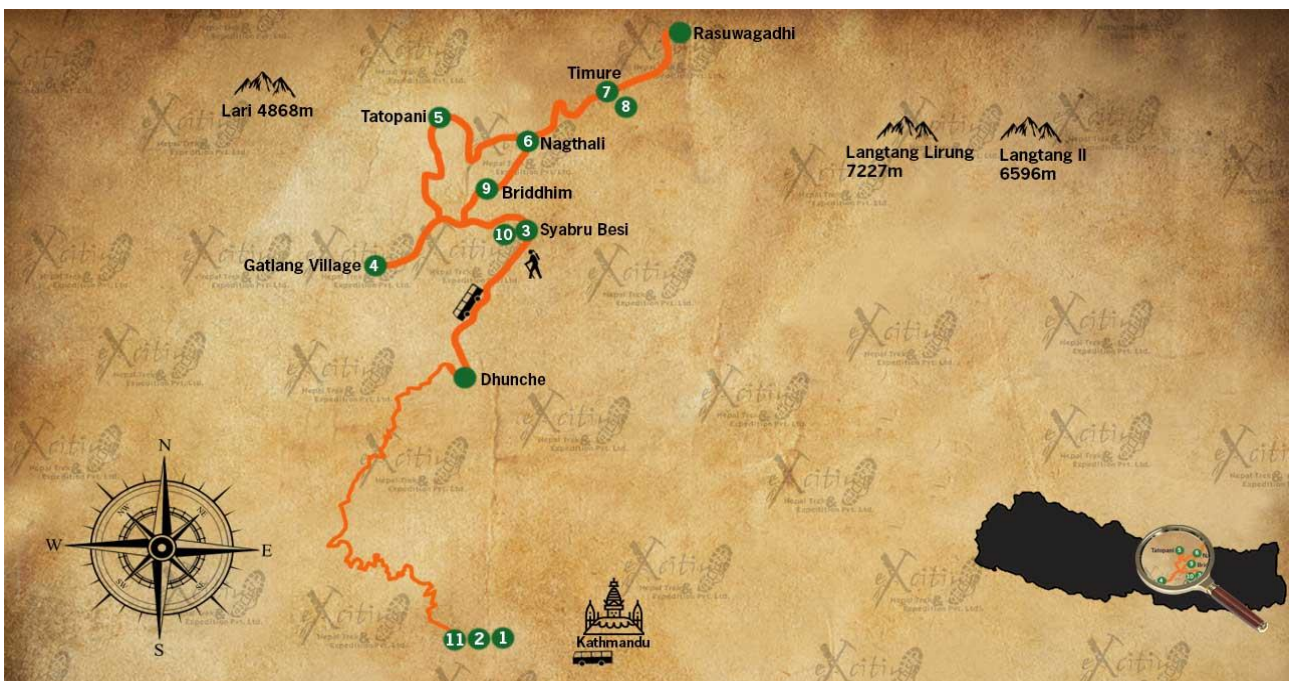


Fig 1: Trip map of Rasuwa district, Nepal
(Source: Exciting Nepal, 2023)

1.2 Motivation and Problem Formulation

The research is motivated by the issue of mass tourism, which can have a significant impact on the Nepalese tourism industry. Effective management of popular tourist destinations requires a focus on eco-tourism practices and their impact on social, economic, and environmental factors. This is particularly important given the growing number of international and domestic tourists visiting these areas. Tourism is a significant contributor to the Nepalese economy. Therefore, it is appropriate to conduct this research and discuss its potential.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the growth of eco-tourism in Nepal. However, there is limited exploration of eco-tourism practices in this area. In addition, ecotourism plays a crucial role in supporting local communities and preserving the ecosystem, which is essential for the growth of sustainable tourism. Conducting a study on the effects of eco-tourism on social, environmental, and economic aspects is crucial for gaining a better understanding of the relationship between eco-tourism and its impact. This is particularly important for the Nepalese tourism industry, especially in the case study destination.

Ecotourism is gaining popularity as a way to support sustainable development and preserve natural resources. Ecotourism has become a viable economic opportunity in Nagthali, Rasuwa, Nepal. It has the potential to provide financial support to the local community while preserving the natural environment and cultural heritage of the area. The impact of ecotourism in Nagthali on social, environmental, and economic aspects has not been thoroughly researched. This study aims to fill the knowledge gap by conducting a thorough examination of the impact of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, Nepal. Hence, the research aims to explore the following question:

What are the impacts of ecotourism on Socio-cultural, Environmental, and Economic aspects of Nagthali, Rasuwa?

In order to facilitate and operationalize the main problem formulation, three working questions are developed as follows:

Working question 1: What are the various practices of ecotourism of Nagthali?

Working question 2: What is the current state of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa and how has it developed over time?

Working question 3: What are the motivations and perceptions of tourists and local community and organizations regarding ecotourism in Nagthali?

1.3 Thesis Objectives and Structure

The study is focused on practices of ecotourism in Nagthali and their impact on the social, environmental, and economic aspects. Therefore, to explore the research topic, the following objectives have been outlined for the research:

- To identify and explore the various relevant practices of ecotourism in Nagthali.
- To explore the status of ecotourism in Nagthali.
- To investigate how ecotourism has impacted the social, environmental, and economic aspects of Nagthali.

The thesis comprises eight chapters, each with a specific purpose in examining the subject matter. The first chapter presents the reader with the subject's incentive and problem, as well as a quick introduction to this thesis, followed by a discussion of the problem formulation and its working questions. The second chapter of this thesis paper deals with the literature review, providing the key elements of the notion of ecotourism and sustainability, particularly in Nepal, and primarily with the theory of social, environmental, and economical approaches of ecotourism. Likewise, the third chapter of this thesis provides a brief overview of the ecotourism practices of Nepal along with the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects associated with Case destination. Similarly, the fourth chapter presents the methodology used in the research, including the philosophical basis of the study and the selected research methods. Additionally, it provides insights on data collection methods and considerations for research quality.

Furthermore, chapter five presents an analysis of the collected data, along with discussions and interpretations of the findings based on quality interviews conducted within the framework previously mentioned. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the conclusions regarding the topic. Chapter seven provides some key recommendations to enhance ecotourism practices and policies in Nagthali and

support its sustainable development. Finally, the last chapter of this thesis outlines the limitations of the research conducted.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

The focus of this study is Nagthali, Rauwa, an emerging tourist destination in Nepal. The conclusions drawn from this research are only suggestive rather than conclusive as this study is based on a case study. The conclusions could not be generalized on the whole although the inferences may be valid to some extent in destinations with similar geographic conditions. Similarly, the absence of a control group has made this study challenging to distinguish between how ecotourism affects Nagthali's social, environmental, and economic factors. Determining whether any reported changes are caused by ecotourism, or another factor has likewise been difficult.

Moreover, measuring the social, environmental, and economic impacts of ecotourism also has been quite complex throughout the study since different stakeholders experience different ideas on what counts as favorable or unfavorable consequences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The chapter on literature review presents an outline of ecotourism, delves into the conceptual framework of eco-tourism and sustainability, analyzes eco-tourism practices, and discusses the impacts linked with this type of tourism. The goal of this chapter is to provide a thorough understanding of ecotourism by combining current knowledge and research in the field. This chapter establishes the basis for analyzing the impacts of eco-tourism practices in the following sections by examining the key concepts, theoretical frameworks, and practical implications of eco-tourism.

2.1 Overview of Ecotourism and Practices

The ecotourism sector is experiencing significant growth within the tourism industry, with an annual expansion rate of 10-12%. This is three times faster than the overall tourism industry growth rate (Coria & Calfucura, 2012). Ecotourism is a type of travel that focuses on preserving natural areas, minimizing visitor impact, and involving local communities in a sustainable way (TIES, 2019). Ecotourism involves conservation, sustainable travel, and community development. Its goal is to protect the environment, support local communities, and offer educational opportunities (ibid.). Sustainable tourism and community-based ecotourism are commonly practiced in industry. Sustainable tourism prioritizes the preservation of local communities, cultural heritage, and the environment. Community-based ecotourism involves local participation and control in tourism development and management (KC, 2017). Ecotourism practices such as these can enhance community empowerment, encourage social unity, and support ecological sustainability (KC, 2017; Oliveira & Silva, 2010). However, there may be challenges when economic benefits become more important than social and cultural concerns, especially in developing countries (UNEP, 2013).

Ecotourism as one of the worldwide phenomena in the tourism industry has continued to gain popularity in biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation, environmental protection, and economic turnaround. Since its initial introduction in the 1980s, the idea of ecotourism has grown in acceptance on a global scale (Newsome & Dowling, 2010). Its growing stature shows no sign of slowing down in ecological integrity, community development, economic development, and potential socio-cultural benefits (Duffy, 2008; Gurung & Scholz, 2008). While some experts believe ecotourism integrates sustainable development and facilitates liberalization, empowerment, and public empowerment in the tourism practice domain. To accommodate the (Duffy, 2008) statement, it also supports ownership, partnerships, jobs, equitable sharing, and market standards. Besides, responsible travel in nature areas, improving well-being, minimizing impacts, creating awareness regarding local culture, and respecting cultural integrity is also the priority of ecotourism. Ever since the genesis of ecotourism back in the 1970s, the concept of conservation, natural, social, environmental, economic, and local communities have become a widespread interest among tourism planners and marketers.

In the same point, Weaver adds:

“The widespread interest in ecotourism among tourism planners and marketers is justified by several popular assumptions regarding the potential economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits of the sector.” (Weaver, 2008, p795). Nevertheless, experts and institutions claim that ecotourism practices have failed to generate intended benefits when poorly planned and implemented. As a result, environmental, social, and economic gains may turn into environmental and social disasters. This notion of accountability for a balanced and integrated approach on long-term proactive measures to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts examine strategic awareness of policymakers and think tanks (Honey, 2008).

Ecotourism aims to satisfy the needs of both tourists and host destinations while also preserving and improving opportunities for the future. The involvement of local government, communities, NGOs, and the private sector is crucial for sustainable ecotourism. This helps in conserving, developing, and maintaining healthy cooperation and coordination. (KC, 2017). To achieve sustainability in ecotourism, it is important to consider all aspects, including the environment, society, economy, local resources, traditions, and workforce. (KC, 2017) Ecotourism has been highlighted as a possible economic activity in Nepal that might support sustainable development, environmental preservation, and poverty alleviation (Dahal, 2017). The concept of ecotourism is therefore as complex as sustainable development since it is a holistic way of carefully managing all kinds of resources to meet the needs of environmental, social, economic and aesthetic imperatives, including various other life support system.

All the above definitions illustrate ecotourism as a type of tourism that emphasizes the preservation of nature and culture, while also providing benefits to local communities. Many countries' governments and local authorities endorse ecotourism as a way to safeguard the environment and conserve local cultures (Wood, 2002). Ecotourism may face challenges in some countries due to natural features, insufficient infrastructure, and political instability, which can impact its profitability (Coria & Calfucura, 2012). Ecotourism can enhance economic development and living standards, but it should be viewed as a component of a broader development approach that complements other initiatives (Coria & Calfucura, 2012). The international development community promotes ecotourism as a way for developing countries to improve the economic well-being of indigenous communities while preserving the connection between tourism, indigenous people, and natural areas (Coria & Calfucura, 2012). According to Diamantis (2004), if ecotourism attracts a large number of tourists and stakeholders, it may be considered a type of mass tourism. Efficient planning and

management of ecotourism are essential to attain a harmony between economic, social, and environmental goals (Wood, 2002; Diamantis, 2004).

2.2 Conceptual Framework of Eco-tourism and Sustainability

The foundation of ecotourism is sustainability, which means addressing present needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to address their own needs (WCED, 1987). Ecotourism is described by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education (TIES, 2015). The three fundamental tenets of ecotourism are learning opportunities, sustainable practices, and attractions centered in nature, according to Weaver (2008). Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of ecotourism and its potential to advance sustainability begins with these guiding concepts.

2.2.1 Eco-tourism as a form of Sustainable development

The creation of local jobs is often cited as the main contribution of ecotourism to sustainable development (Das & Chatterjee, 2015). Ecotourism has the most noticeable impact on industries that directly employ people, such as the tourism industry and eco-lodge workers. One could argue that this may not be true in underdeveloped nations like Nepal, where gender inequality is still a concern, despite the fact that women benefit more from employment development in the ecotourism industry than men do (ibid.). Ecotourism not only helps the economy by providing new jobs, but it also makes substantial contributions to the improvement of infrastructure. Das and Chatterjee (2015) argue that environmental degradation and the inability to reach sustainable goals may stem from a lack of well-developed infrastructure in ecotourism. They also claim that the increased demand for non-sustainable sources like firewood is caused by the lack of renewable energy options in host locations (ibid.).

Ecotourism empowers local communities by having a net positive impact on their social, economic, political, and psychological well-being. Sofield (2003) said that empowering locals was crucial to the development of ecotourism and its eventual success in achieving sustainability. Miller (2017) explains that this is because local communities and their citizens lacked the requisite skills and bargaining power, which led to low skills and poor salaries. Another major barrier to ecotourism, he

has warned, is an unequal distribution of benefits within a community (ibid.). Additionally, he mentioned that the term "ecotourism" is frequently used as a buzzword in marketing, "labeling a project as ecotourism without any real sustainability" (Miller, 2017).

According to data from Nepal's Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation in 2019, there has been a significant increase in the number of newly established tourism-related businesses compared to previous years. Recent statistics from the Nepalese government indicate a significant increase in employment opportunities in recent years (Shrestha, 2019). There are negative impacts of tourism in Nepal, but they have not been extensively researched. It is important to study how ecotourism impacts the social, economic, and ecological systems of the region. This study aims to analyze the impact of eco-tourism in the chosen destination to fill a gap in the existing literature.

2.2.2 Eco-tourism and the Triple Bottom Line

A well-known idea in sustainable development is the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) paradigm, which emphasizes the need for a balance between economic, social, and environmental considerations (Elkington, 1997). The TBL framework recognizes the interdependence and interconnectedness of economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental conservation. In ecotourism, economic benefits should be generated in a manner that respects and supports local communities, while preserving and protecting the natural environment (Elkington, 1997). By addressing these three factors in its strategy, ecotourism is in line with the TBL framework which is explained below as impacts of tourism concerning this thesis research paper.

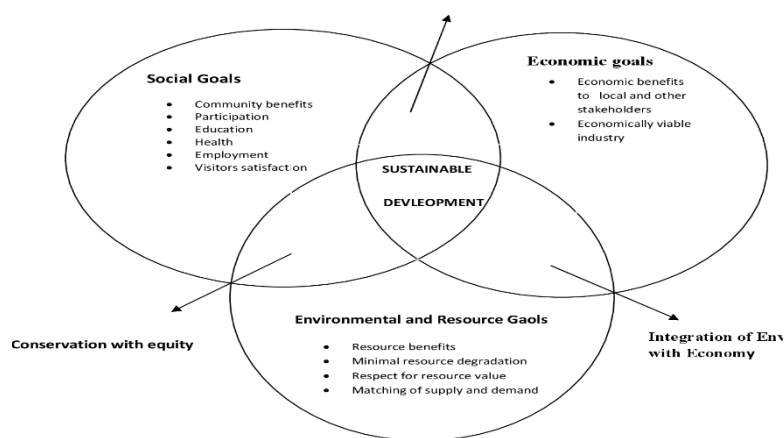


Fig 2: A Model of Sustainable Tourism Values and Principles (Source: Murphy and Price, 2005)

Murphy and Price (2005) propose a sustainable tourism model that can help us better comprehend the TBL framework's implications in ecotourism. This model emphasizes responsible resource management, community involvement and empowerment, cultural preservation, and visitor education. The TBL framework and sustainable tourism values and principles can help ecotourism achieve a balance between economic growth, social equity, and environmental conservation (Murphy and Price, 2005). Sustainable tourism should aim for lasting positive effects on local communities and the environment, rather than just economic benefits (ibid.).

2.3 Impacts of Eco-tourism

Research has shown that ecotourism can have both favorable and unfavorable impacts on the environment, economy, society, and culture. Its purpose is to enhance environmental consciousness, support sustainable communities, foster cultural experiences, and promote environmental preservation. It is important to have a clear understanding of the relationship between local communities and conservation, and how ecotourism can improve it. (Oliveira & Silva, 2010). Based on the stated literature, a few impacts will be presented in the subsequent sections.

2.3.1 Socio-cultural Impacts:

The socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism on local populations can be both beneficial and detrimental. On the plus side, ecotourism can help local residents find work, enhance their income, and improve their quality of life (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Ecotourism can also support the revival of traditional crafts and practices and the preservation of culture (Gurung, 2013). Moreover, ecotourism arranges cultural tours for various communities to showcase their rich culture and provide a positive experience for all involved stakeholders (Stem, et. al., 2003). Ecotourism is promoted through the establishment of local cultural lodges, also known as eco-lodges, in various destinations. Ecotourism offers opportunities to gain cultural knowledge through experiences such as staying at local lodges, trying traditional cuisine, learning about history, and participating in cultural activities. Communities can improve their well-being and educate many people about their genuine culture, traditions, and values. (Folk, 2019). Ecotourism promotes social stability and harmony, preserves traditional culture, and reduces political conflicts as well (Stem et. al., 2003).

Cultural commodification, changes in social institutions, and disputes between tourists and local residents are some of the negative social repercussions caused by poor management of ecotourism

(Hall & Lew, 1998). Due to its potential for influencing Western culture, ecotourism may present difficulties for the preservation of authentic cultures and values (Folk, 2019). The local culture and traditions of the host destination may be negatively impacted if the indigenous culture is modified to align with the culture of tourists. (Folk, 2019). Tourism may contribute to an increase in alcoholism, drug addiction, and prostitution (KC, 2017). KC further states that unhealthy competition among locals may also arise due to the attraction of tourist revenue (ibid). The level of community involvement and cultural awareness displayed by tourism operators determines the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism (Boo, 2013).

2.3.2 Environmental Impacts:

Ecotourism refers to traveling to natural areas that are relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated to study, admire, and enjoying the scenery, as well as the wild plants and animals. It also involves accepting the existing culture in those areas. (Dahal, 2017). Ecotourism is primarily centered on safeguarding resources, promoting biological diversity, and ensuring sustainability. Local individuals are motivated to conserve the environment, and this results in benefits for the community, as stated by Duffy in 2008. Diamantis (2004) stated that ecologically sustainable tourism in natural areas can enhance tourists' understanding of the local environment and culture, promote conservation, and contribute to the well-being of the local community (2004). According to Stem et al. (2003), ecotourism helps to discourage deforestation, reduce hunting rates, and decrease the conversion of forests into agricultural and business areas. It is suggested that sustainable management of natural resources can result in the expansion of forest areas, preservation of natural resources and biodiversity, and an increase in tourism resources during the development of tourism. Ecotourism aims to minimize harmful environmental impacts and promote the preservation of natural resources. (ibid.).

However, ecotourism activities can have unintended environmental consequences (Boo, 2013). Ecotourism, for example, can result in increased demand for natural resources, habitat degradation, and biodiversity loss (Lindberg et al., 1996). Furthermore, ecotourism can contribute to pollution and waste generation, especially in areas with insufficient waste management infrastructure (Mehmetoglu & Normann, 2013). Folk (2019) argues that the increase in ecotourism can lead to significant development pressure in destinations. As a result, destinations are currently undergoing the construction of additional accommodations, businesses, and recreational attractions related to the

tourism sector. The extensive construction activity harms habitats, the local environment, and native species. (Folk, 2019). Ghimire (2016) provides an example of the impact of building construction on Patan Durbar Square in Lalitpur, Nepal. This once-popular tourist destination has been significantly impacted by the construction of buildings. According to Nepal (2007), the primary objective of ecotourism is to safeguard and improve the environment and welfare of the local community and to emphasize more resource, efficient, supply and demand goals with a theme of biological protection, and natural resources. In addition, it is also a tool to integrate the ecosystem and produce financial advantages for the local community that inspires for conservation of biodiversity.

2.3.3 Economic Impacts:

Folk (2019) states that numerous tourists are exploring new destinations instead of opting for popular ones. This trend leads to increased job opportunities for locals and indigenous populations in various communities. Residents of tourist destinations often serve as guides, handicraft vendors, hotel proprietors, merchants, and hosts to visitors. Consequently, the residents are experiencing improved living conditions. She also mentioned that unhealthy competition among locals may arise in an attempt to generate more economic benefits than others (ibid).

Home-sharing sites like Airbnb are becoming increasingly popular in many host destinations, likewise homestays in rural destinations of developing countries (KC, 2017). However, such home-sharing can have negative impacts on the local economy. Ecotourism has several positive economic impacts such as increasing regional revenue and national income, improving infrastructure like transportation and accommodation, and reducing poverty (KC, 2017). A study conducted by Lindberg, Enriquez, and Sproule in 1996 revealed that more than 50% of residents directly benefited from local ecotourism, while 70% of non-tourism jobs were deemed reliant on tourism. The economic consequences of ecotourism are determined by the degree of local ownership and economic integration with the larger economy (Boo, 2013).

Chapter 3: Eco-tourism Practices and Impacts; Nagthali, Study Area

This chapter presents an overview of eco-tourism practices in Nepal, with a particular emphasis on the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions of Nagthali, Rasuwa, as a case study area. The chapter also discusses the challenges encountered by eco-tourism in Nagthali and identifies potential opportunities for its growth.

3.1 Eco-tourism Practices in Nepal

In recent years, there has been an increase in the amount of literature analyzing ecotourism practices in Nepal, covering a wide range of subjects like its social, environmental, and economic dimensions, as well as the difficulties and opportunities it brings. This section lists the key ecotourism strategies that are suitable in Nepal:

Community-based Eco-tourism (CBET): A developing trend in the tourism sector is community-based ecotourism (CBET), which encourages ethical and sustainable travel to natural regions while strengthening local communities (Gurung and Scholz, 2008). Nepal presents fantastic prospects for the development of CBET due to its rich biodiversity, culture, and tradition. This section of this study attempts to examine the idea of CBET, as well as its advantages and disadvantages, as well as its present status and potential in Nepal.

CBET is a form of tourism that is controlled and run by regional groups, frequently in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations (Basnet, 2018). By providing tourists with distinctive and genuine experiences that are different from conventional mass tourism, CBET initiatives want to generate cash, maintain local culture and legacy, and conserve natural resources. Homestays, guided tours, cultural outings, and outdoor pursuits like hiking and wildlife safaris are examples of CBET activities (Basnet, 2018). The empowerment of local communities, the promotion of sustainable tourism, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the conservation of natural resources are only a few advantages of CBET. CBET programs also provide locals with work opportunities and a means of income, which can assist in lessening poverty and raising living standards. By promoting

ethical and sustainable tourism practices, CBET can also lessen the harm that tourism causes to the environment and local communities (ibid).

CBET projects have proven effective in Nepal in promoting eco-friendly travel and empowering local communities. One of the most effective CBET initiatives in Nepal is the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) (NTB, 2020). ACAP was founded in 1986 as a collaboration between the Nepali government and neighborhood groups to preserve the region's natural and cultural history and foster environmentally friendly travel. The project has been effective in minimizing the detrimental effects of tourism on the environment and nearby communities while producing revenue for locals (Basnet, 2018).

The Community Homestay Network in Nepal is yet another CBET project that has been a success. To promote sustainable tourism and give local women more authority, the Nepal Tourism Board and local communities formed a partnership to launch this project in 2011 (NTB, 2020). The project gives visitors the chance to experience traditional homestays with local families while learning about the community's culture and heritage. The project has been successful in promoting sustainable tourism and providing locals with revenue (Community Homestay Network, n.d.). Despite CBET's advantages, there are several difficulties and detrimental effects. Initiatives including CBET demand the active support and engagement of local communities, which can be challenging in some circumstances. Additionally, traditional mass tourism, which can be more lucrative but also more harmful to the environment and local communities, may compete with CBET initiatives. To maximize benefits and reduce unfavorable effects, it is crucial to make sure that CBET projects are adequately planned and managed (Basnet, 2018).

In conclusion, CBET has enormous potential for Nepal's growth of sustainable tourism. CBET projects can strengthen local communities, encourage environmentally friendly travel, protect cultural heritage, and protect natural resources. The success of CBET programs in Nepal, such as the ACAP and Community Homestay Network, shows how CBET could support the growth of sustainable tourism in that country. To guarantee that benefits are maximized, and unfavorable effects are reduced, CBET programs need to be carefully planned and managed.

Wildlife Eco-tourism: In Nepal, ecotourism that places a strong emphasis on wildlife is growing in popularity. Numerous rare and endangered species, like tigers, rhinoceroses, and snow leopards, can be found throughout the nation. The purpose of this section is to investigate the idea of wildlife ecotourism in Nepal, including its advantages and disadvantages, current situation, and potential in the future.

Nepal's wildlife ecotourism gives visitors the chance to view and engage with the nation's abundant biodiversity. Jungle safaris, bird viewing, and animal trekking are among the wildlife tourist activities available in Nepal. The most well-known wildlife locations in Nepal are Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Bardia National Park, and Chitwan National Park. Numerous animals, including tigers, rhinos, elephants, and crocodiles, can be found in these parks (Ghimire, 2016).

Wildlife ecotourism in Nepal offers numerous advantages, including providing local communities with economic opportunities and employment (Ghimire, 2016). It also plays a vital role in promoting the preservation of animal habitats and natural resources while increasing awareness of environmental issues and the importance of conservation. Additionally, wildlife ecotourism fosters mutual understanding and cultural interaction among visitors and local communities (ibid.).

However, despite these benefits, wildlife ecotourism in Nepal also faces several challenges and can have detrimental effects. There is a potential for adverse environmental consequences, such as wildlife disturbance and habitat degradation (Nepal Tourism Board, 2020). Socially, there is a risk of local residents being displaced and the erosion of traditional values. Moreover, the excessive use of natural resources is another concern associated with wildlife ecotourism (ibid.).

For Nepal's tourism industry to grow sustainably, wildlife ecotourism holds enormous potential. Wildlife ecotourism provides local communities with cash and job possibilities, encourages the preservation of natural resources and wildlife habitats, and promotes environmental awareness. To guarantee that benefits are maximized, and adverse effects are reduced, thorough planning and management are necessary when developing wildlife ecotourism operations (Ghimire, 2016).

Trekking and mountaineering: Trekking and mountaineering are prominent ecotourism activities in Nepal. Mount Everest and other world-famous peaks can be found in the region. Trekking and

mountaineering are examples of ecotourism activities that allow visitors to see Nepal's diverse natural beauty and cultural history. Hiking and mountaineering are two outdoor recreational activities that provide significant cash for the country. They can, however, have negative environmental consequences, such as soil erosion and trash (Thapa, 2019). Nepal's most popular trekking destinations include the Everest Base Camp Trek, the Annapurna Circuit Trek, and the Langtang Valley Trek (Ghimire, 2016).

The growth of ecotourism through trekking and mountaineering in Nepal has enormous potential. Trekking and mountaineering ecotourism are advantageous because they help local people by providing cash and job possibilities, promoting the preservation of natural resources and wildlife habitats, and increasing public understanding of environmental issues (Thapa, 2019). To guarantee that advantages are maximized, and adverse effects are reduced, however, the growth of hiking and mountaineering ecotourism efforts requires careful planning and supervision (ibid).

3.2 Impacts of Eco-tourism in the Study Area

Studies have revealed that ecotourism has more beneficial impacts than its shortcomings on the environment, society, and economy. Based on the literature presented above, few impacts concerning the study area are presented here.

3.2.1 Socio-cultural Impacts:

In the case of Nepal, ecotourism has been enhancing the parameters of human rights, gender, justice, and democracy (Shrestha, 2019). As understood, tourism needs to be practiced by the general people of each community from historical, cultural, and religious perspectives. In hindside, it promotes Nepalese local cultures, ancient monuments, arts, and main attraction of touristic destinations. Likewise, capacity building and social empowerment of marginalized communities through social participation may also benefit Nepalese communities through cultural exchange and knowledge shared by the visitors and hosts (Minca and Linda, 2000, p. 124).

Examining the Favorable Socio-cultural Effects of Nagthali, Rasuwa: Ecotourism has provided several advantages to the community of Nagthali. It has increased local income and improved the standard of living by creating job opportunities (NTB, 2020). Eco-tourism has generated a market for

locally made products like handicrafts, food, and drinks (Makar, 2016). This has helped to preserve the local culture and customs by offering incentives for locals to maintain their traditional practices. The Tamang community has preserved their traditional way of life by promoting ecotourism. Visitors are educated about Tamang culture through homestays, cultural displays, and interactions with locals (Gurung and Dahal, 2017). This has enhanced the community's cultural identity and instilled a sense of pride. It is important to ensure equitable distribution of eco-tourism benefits and respect for the rights of local communities.

Examining the Unfavorable Socio-cultural Impacts; the case of Nagthali, Rasuwa: Ecotourism has also had a severe social influence on the Nagthali village. The surge of tourists has put a strain on the village's scarce resources, such as water and electricity (Sapkota, 2016). Locals have also expressed concern about cultural degradation caused by the influence of Western culture brought by tourists (Panthi & Dahal, 2019). Locals have been displaced from their land and homes as the village has become more commercialized (Makar, 2016).

Mitigation of negative impacts: Several steps have been implemented in Nagthali to alleviate the negative societal repercussions of ecotourism. To increase access to the village, the local government has invested in infrastructure development, such as the construction of roads and bridges (Makar, 2016). Locals have also formed cooperatives to administer and benefit from the village's eco-tourism activities (ibid.). These cooperatives have also contributed to the preservation of local culture and traditions.

3.2.2 Environmental Impacts:

Nepal, a country rich in natural resources, has the potential to commercially utilize its forest areas, flora, and fauna to showcase its offerings to tourists. This promotes community benefits and infrastructure development at the destination, while also supporting ecotourism in host communities. Additionally, it can serve as an alternative means for a nation's social, political, community, and grassroots development (K.C., et al., 2015).

Baral and Stern (2016) conducted a study which found that eco-tourism has helped to conserve the forests and wildlife in Nagthali. The village has established conservation projects that involve community members in monitoring and protecting the environment. According to Bhatta (2018),

ecotourism has had a significant environmental impact on Nagthali, specifically in the areas of waste management, deforestation, and soil erosion.

Waste management: Tourism produces significant waste, such as food waste, plastic, and other non-biodegradable materials, which require proper management. In Nagthali, waste management is a significant issue because of insufficient infrastructure and resources (Karki, 2019). Improper waste disposal can lead to littering, water pollution, and harm to wildlife habitats (ibid.). It is important to conduct tourism activities in an environmentally sustainable way.

Deforestation: If not managed effectively, ecotourism can potentially contribute to deforestation. The need for firewood and building materials in Nagthali has resulted in deforestation in some areas, particularly around tourist lodges (Bhatta, 2018). This can have a severe influence on the local ecology, including soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and habitat disruption.

Soil erosion: Because of the high altitude and steep slopes, soil erosion is a severe environmental hazard in Nagthali. Trekking and hiking, for example, might worsen soil erosion by establishing new pathways and disturbing vegetation (Karki, 2019). This has the potential to have long-term detrimental consequences for the local ecology and contribute to climate change.

To maintain the long-term viability of ecotourism in Nagthali, appropriate environmental management techniques must be developed and implemented. This involves encouraging waste reduction and recycling, developing sustainable land use techniques, and educating tourists on responsible tourism (Bhatta, 2018).

3.2.3 Economic Impacts:

In developing countries, income and employment have a direct and indirect impact on the nation's GDP and standard of living (Kruk and Banskota, 2007). In addition, there is an expectation to increase household contributions and generate more revenue. According to certain reports, Sherpas who serve as guides and porters for tourists in the mountains are financially stable (Ghimire, 2016). Due to the evolving tourist behavior, Nepal has enhanced its eco-tourism industry and community-based tourism marketing efforts. This has created better income opportunities for local businesses, industries, and

products. Ecotourism benefits residents and communities financially and by improving their knowledge, skills, and resource management. It ultimately supports the economic development of small tourism communities, such as Nepal. Tourism in Nepal, including mass tourism, hunting, and adventure tourism, has greatly contributed to the local economy and wealth generation (Lindsley, 2003) in today's globalized world.

According to Gurung and Dahal (2017), ecotourism can provide economic support to local communities, promote conservation of resources, and create income opportunities for rural areas. This is particularly significant for Nagthali as it is a rural locality that has traditionally depended on farming as a means of livelihood. Ecotourism provides significant economic benefits through job creation. Bhattarai (2017) suggests that ecotourism can create employment opportunities for residents in various sectors, including guiding, hospitality, and transportation. Nagthali has the potential to create employment opportunities in the travel, bird watching, and cultural tour sectors through ecotourism. Ecotourism can enhance local economies by creating both employment opportunities and revenue. In order to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism in Nepal, it is important to responsibly utilize and manage all available resources and policies in economic, environmental, and social aspects.

Nepal (2018) claims that ecotourism can bring in money for the local community through admission fees, lodging, and food services. This money could go toward community improvement initiatives and conservation activities in Nagthali. On the other hand, ecotourism may also have unfavorable effects. For instance, excessive tourism may cause the environment to deteriorate and local culture to disappear. According to Bista et al. (2019), ecotourism in Nepal has faced criticisms for having harmful effects on the environment and culture as well as for not completely involving local communities in decision-making. As a result, it's critical to make sure Nagthali's ecotourism industry develops in a sustainably and responsibly manner.

In conclusion, ecotourism can significantly increase the local residents' economic well-being in Nagthali while simultaneously fostering the preservation of the environment. To prevent having a detrimental effect on the environment and culture, it is crucial to make sure that ecotourism is grown in a sustainably and responsibly manner.

3.3 Challenges and Future Prospects of Eco-tourism in Nagthali:

Nagthali, in Nepal's Rasuwa district, is a location recognized for its natural beauty and rich biodiversity, making it a viable ecotourism destination. However, ecotourism development in Nagthali must be carefully managed to ensure social, environmental, and economic sustainability. This literature review investigates existing studies on the obstacles and future potentials of ecotourism in Nagthali, with a focus on the Nagthali, Rasuwa as a case study for this particular research.

Challenges:

For ecotourism to grow in Nagthali, various difficulties must be overcome. These include insufficient waste management, insufficient infrastructure, and trained labor scarcity. According to Bhattarai (2017), poor infrastructure, such as transportation and communication, may affect the growth of ecotourism in Nagthali. Improper waste management strategies, such as improper solid waste disposal, can harm the ecosystem and the health of local communities (Bista et al., 2019). Inadequate professional human resources, such as knowledgeable tour guides and hospitality personnel, can have a negative influence on the local economy and reduce the quality of the tourism experience (Gurung & Dahal, 2017).

As tourists desire to experience local customs and traditions, the development of ecotourism in Nagthali has resulted in the commodification of culture (Bhattarai, 2017). Incorrect handling of this issue may result in cultural exploitation and disputes between tourists and locals.

Future prospects:

Despite these difficulties, Nagthali's ecotourism has bright future prospects. Ecotourism has the ability to promote regional conservation efforts while providing money for local populations (Nepal, 2018). As travelers look for genuine and sustainable travel experiences, the growing interest in sustainable tourism practices has opened up opportunities for the development of ecotourism in Nagthali (Bista et al., 2019).

Additionally, the Nepali government has taken action to support the growth of ecotourism by acknowledging its significance and by offering financial and technical support for ecotourism projects (Gurung & Dahal, 2017). In addition to generating social and economic advantages for the

community, the introduction of community-based ecotourism initiatives has assisted in including local communities in the creation and management of ecotourism activities (Bhattarai, 2017).

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter illustrates the philosophical assumptions, design, and research methodology employed in this thesis. Various research approaches and methodologies have been utilized to analyze the data and assess the status of eco-tourism, as well as the social, environmental, and economic impacts it has on the chosen destination of Nagthali, Rasuwa, Nepal. The utilization of a case study methodology, a constructivist research paradigm, and a qualitative data collection approach have been justified. Moreover, it provides a detailed account of the data analysis methods and procedures employed, along with the methodology employed for data acquisition, which encompasses semi-structured interviews as well as participant observation. The chapter also includes a discussion of the ethical concerns that were raised and subsequently addressed. The final section of the chapter provides an overview of the limitations of the research.

4.1 Philosophy of Science

By choosing how problems are stated, empirical data, theory selection, and underlying structures, the philosophy of science, as an inherent component of social science theory, aids us in improving our research abilities and concepts (Crotty, 1998). Pedersen (2008) states that *“philosophy of science helps us to improve our role as researchers in relation to basic assumptions about the world, society, knowledge, individual, language and the relationship between theory and empirical data.”* (P. 137).

Given that this research is qualitative in nature, the constructivist paradigm will serve as its guiding principle. Knowledge about the social, environmental, and economic aspects of ecotourism in relation to the case destination of Nepal, Nagthali, has been gained through social interaction between me as a researcher and social actors such as local communities, tour guides, travel agencies, tourists, etc. The constructivist paradigm is most appropriate for this study since it uses semi-structured interviews,

participant observation, and case study to interpret various meanings through conversation and interaction. Additionally, the problem formulation and research approach of this study are compatible with the social constructivist philosophical perspective, which sees knowledge as a socially constructed reality. The ontological and epistemological issues in the context of this study are further covered in this section. This methodological chapter is offered to outline the researcher's philosophical perspective on research and help the reader understand how the researcher has approached the research process.

Ontology: Ontology, a philosophical discipline, investigates the nature of reality as well as the interaction between the researcher and the phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A subjectivist ontology is used in this thesis, which recognizes that stakeholders' subjective experiences and social circumstances determine the meanings and dimensions of ecotourism (Creswell, 2013). Multiple realities exist, according to the subjectivist viewpoint (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As a result, understanding the phenomenon of ecotourism requires the different perspectives of local inhabitants, tourists, hotel owners, homestay owners and other stakeholders.

This ontological approach emphasizes the interconnectedness and dynamic nature of Nagthali ecotourism's social, environmental, and economic components. The subjectivist paradigm enables an investigation of the complexity and nuances of ecotourism, exposing the variables that influence Nagthali's ecotourism development, both favorably and adversely. This ontological consideration has resulted in the use of a case study methodology, with qualitative data collection methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observations used to capture the varied variety of stakeholder experiences and perspectives (Yin, 2013). The thesis uses this approach to generate insights that can inform tourism policy and development while also providing a greater understanding of Nagthali's ecotourism.

Epistemology: A social constructivist paradigm is used as the epistemological viewpoint in this thesis report to provide a more analytical approach to the research. The constructivist viewpoint, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994), suggests that humans generate meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. This paradigm acknowledges that knowledge, as previously said, is subjective and impacted by the social and cultural context in which it is generated (Bryman, 2012).

Ecotourism has many potential social, environmental, and economic implications in Nagthali, but understanding them involves the perspectives and meanings of diverse stakeholders. This thesis research recognizes that the meanings of ecotourism in Nagthali are shaped by interactions and relationships between people and their environment by employing a constructivist method as its epistemology. Using this paradigm, the effects of ecotourism on Nagthali's society, nature, and economy can be studied in their whole and their right context. Choosing constructivism as the epistemological viewpoint is therefore more relevant and appropriate for my study since it allows me to evaluate the multiple interpretations offered by respondents and provide a concise analysis of the chosen topic.

Because this is a qualitative study, the positivist philosophical approach is avoided, and the constructivism philosophy is adopted to allow the researcher to integrate qualitative data and use the researcher's interpretation during analysis to produce a meaningful theme that can be linked to theories. Rather than statistical data, the study is being conducted to determine the situation of ecotourism from the standpoint of stakeholders. Because tourism is not only a complex phenomenon, but also distinct in terms of environment, cultural variations, social norms, and so on, the researcher uses subjective meanings and qualitative data to seek information and validate the choice of constructivism as the research philosophy. As a result, the researcher focuses on local stakeholders' narratives, stories, perceptions, and interpretations to acquire a better understanding of the condition of ecotourism and its social, environmental, and economic impacts, as well as the barriers in the chosen destination.

4.2 Case-study Research:

In order to gather comprehensive information on the events, experiences, and connections inside that context, case study research focuses on a particular occurrence (Denscombe, 2014). Case study research is a type of exploratory or descriptive research approach. Additionally, Yin (1984) cited in Eisenhardt (1989) , states that a case study can be carried out using a single or a large number of cases, as well as multiple levels of analysis. As it focuses solely on the topic of research, choosing one case over several allows for a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon (Denscombe, 2014).

An appropriate and effective method for exploring complex social issues, particularly in previously unknown areas, is the case study (Eisenhardt, 1989). Studies on ecotourism practices that employ a case study approach are extremely few in number, and studies that examine the broad social, economic, and environmental effects brought about by ecotourism industries are rarer still. Veal (2006) asserts that a case study is an effective tool for identifying a setting and establishing its relationship to a particular research objective. Likewise, I also believe that using a case study approach for this particular thesis research will also be beneficial for identifying a setting and verifying its relationship to a specified research objective. Case study methodology is the ideal approach to apply in order to acquire extensive information about the local communities, their ecotourism practices, and the impacts they create.

The topic of this study is relevantly new, and the problems it addresses are complex. The case chosen for this paper was more rational than random. The reasons for my case being rational are that Nagthali is an understudied location, and I may be able to fill a gap in the existing research, which is relatively limited on this destination. As a researcher, I may be able to offer new perspectives on the subject under consideration. Similarly, this location already has an existing eco-tourism project, identifying it as a viable location for future efforts. I was already interested in studying ecotourism and related areas of this field, which increased my drive and motivation to this research. Furthermore, I have a few known stakeholders with whom I have already discussed the area's ecotourism.

The qualitative research approach is used to gain a thorough understanding of the context and answer research questions. Qualitative research methods, including open-ended questionnaires, interviews, observations, and case studies, are utilized. Thematic analysis is a method used to analyze qualitative data and identify patterns and themes. This method allows for a thorough examination of eco-tourism in Nagthali, including its social, environmental, and economic effects, as well as the viewpoints and experiences of those involved. This thesis seeks to gain comprehensive insights into eco-tourism practices and impacts in Nagthali, Rasuwa by utilizing a combination of case-study research and qualitative research approach. The case study offers a detailed analysis of a specific situation, and qualitative methods enable a thorough investigation of the topic and the personal interpretations given by those involved.

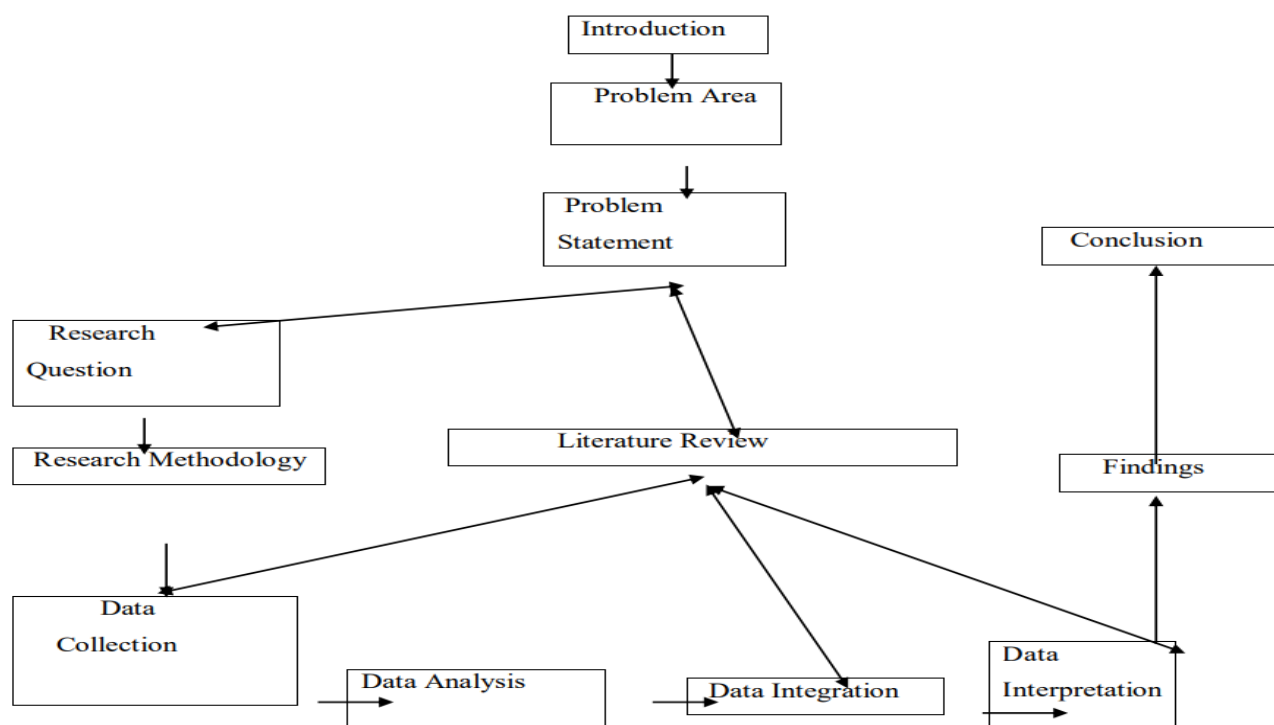


Fig 3: Research Design (Source: own elaboration)

4.3 Research Reasoning

The abductive approach as a method of research reasoning is found to be the most appropriate for the setting under study based on the subject of this thesis and the applied philosophy of science. Abductive reasoning enables a dynamic relationship to develop between the underlying theoretical understanding of a phenomenon and its implementation in practice (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). The abductive approach to research reasoning emphasizes empirical study while also allowing the researcher to gain some knowledge of the phenomenon studied and establish a theoretical framework at the outset (Kovács & Spens, 2005). This is in contrast to the deduction approach, which controls a hypothesis and a proposal based on existing theories, and the induction approach, which depends solely on pure empirical research and observations (ibid.).

Ecotourism is a topic with multiple dimensions and intricate interrelationships between social, environmental, and economic factors. Abductive research permits a flexible and iterative process that combines inductive and deductive reasoning to investigate these complexities, generate new insights,

and refine existing theories (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Abductive reasoning emphasizes the incorporation of empirical data into theoretical frameworks, which can then be used to support or modify existing ecotourism development theories. Similarly, the abductive research approach promotes the development of new insights and explanations by identifying patterns and relationships within the data. This is especially pertinent to this thesis project, as it focuses on an emerging ecotourism destination where established theories and models may not completely capture Nagthali, Rasuwa's unique characteristics. Abductive research employs an adaptable and iterative data collection and analysis procedure (Kovács & Spens, 2005). As a deeper comprehension of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa is gained, this adaptability enables us to continuously revise research questions, methods, and theoretical framework. This adaptability is particularly beneficial in the study of emerging and dynamic domains(ibid.), such as ecotourism.

4.4 Data Collection

The methods of data collection differ based on the research topic and field. The research paper has collected primary and secondary data in accordance with the stated problem formulation.

4.4.1 Primary data:

Participant observation has been conducted to gain a better understanding of ecotourism practices in the location being studied. Similarly, I as a researcher conducted in-depth interviews with eight stakeholders to gather information for analyzing the research issue. The interviews consisted of semi-structured questions. In my opinion, this will help me comprehend the study's context and ensure that the analysis is relevant and focused.

Tourism stakeholders, such as tourism organization members, hotel owners, tour operators, tour guides, and local residents, were interviewed. I conducted the interviews using semi-structured questionnaires to gather information about ecotourism practices in Nepal and their social, environmental, and economic impacts. The research has been limited to a specific region and time period in order to maintain data confidentiality.

4.4.1.1 In-depth Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth interviews are a type of qualitative data gathering that researchers use to learn more about the experiences, viewpoints, and opinions of its participants (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). In-depth interviews have been chosen above other qualitative research techniques because they enable me to get specific descriptions from participants, support open communication among participants, and stimulate in-depth discussion of the subject that guides me to better understand the social, environmental, and economic impacts of eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa. Individuals from the local community, tour guides, representatives from travel agencies, and member from tourism organization have been interviewed one-on-one in semi-structured interviews. All of these interviewees were chosen as research participants because, as stated by Bryant (2005), they play a crucial role in achieving the study's primary goals and objectives. These stakeholders are impacted by ecotourism and have an impact on its growth and evolution. This research has gathered qualitative data from these interviews, including general eco-tourism development, socio-economic and environmental factors, changes, and the current eco-tourism scenario in the study area.

This thesis utilized a semi-structured interview format because it allows the interviewer to probe deeper and ask follow-up questions based on what they learn from the participants' responses (Showkaat & Parveen, 2017). The interviewer's question-asking skills are also crucial throughout because they help the interviewee gain insight into the topic at hand and give voice to his thoughts and opinions (ibid.). In order to make things simple for the interviewee and the interviewer, I firstly prepared an interview guide, which I then reviewed with my supervisor, and then followed an interview guide for this theis report. An interview guide containing a list of questions and topics to address ensured that the questions were consistent, the discussion was led, and the broad areas of the research were covered (Bryman, 2012). I believe that the interview guide has been useful in keeping the questioning methodical while also allowing for follow-up questions based on stakeholders' responses by requesting that they further clarify on specific topics when appropriate. By using in-depth interviews as part of the research method, I believe that this thesis has been able to capture the many different aspects of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, and come up with useful information that can help shape sustainable tourism practices and policies in the area.

The following is an overview of my interviewees:

S.no.	Name of Interviewees	Type of Stakeholder
1.	Jhabaraj Neupane (Male, 54 yrs)	Tour Guide/ Local/Secondary Level Teacher
2.	Nishan Gajurel (Male, 37 yrs)	Secretary- Dhunche Tourism Management Committee
3.	Anonymous	Relation Officer- Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee
4.	Dawa Sangbo Tamang (Male, 56 yrs)	Local/ Hotel owner- Mountain View Hotel
5.	Thomas Einhsus (Male, 60 yrs, German)	Tourist
6.	Namgel Sherpa (Female, 41 yrs)	Executive Director-Namgel Travel and Tours /Tour Operator
7.	Chhiring Sangbo (Female, 34 yrs)	Homestay owner-Eco- Guest-house/Local
8.	Balkrishna K.c. (Male, 58 yrs)	Tour Guide

Table 1: Overview of interviewees

4.4.1.2 Participant Observation

To fully comprehend the socio-cultural dynamics in Nagthali, an ethnographic research method was used, specifically through participant observation. Participant observation is a qualitative data gathering technique that involves observing activities, actions, and interactions in a natural environment in a systematic and in-depth manner (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). This thesis on eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, uses participant observation to analyze the social, environmental, and economic impacts of the eco-tourism industry. As a researcher, I participated in eco-tourism activities and visited the case study destination to collect primary data.

As a participant, I gained a genuine and unbiased understanding of the researched phenomena. Participant observation is a data collection method that captures real-time information, including nuances, patterns, and dynamics that may not be revealed through other methods like interviews or surveys (Kawulich, 2005). Participant observation allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the research context by directly experiencing it, which helped me interpret the findings more accurately. It enhanced the comprehension of the indigenous culture, customs, principles, and convictions. During data collection, I followed established standards by taking thorough field notes, using audio or video recording equipment when necessary, and practicing reflexivity to maintain the reliability and validity of the participant observation data.

4.4.2 Secondary data:

Secondary data sources has employed in this study to supplement the literature review and provide evidence for the primary qualitative methods' data collection. In the context of my thesis, which aims to explore the social, environmental, and economical aspects of eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, it is crucial to acknowledge the limited availability of secondary data on this subject. As a relatively lesser-known eco-tourism destination in Nepal, Nagthali has not been widely covered in research studies, governmental reports, or other academic publications. A thorough review of the existing literature reveals only a handful of relevant sources that provide insight into the eco-tourism industry in Nagthali, Rasuwa, and its various implications. Most of the available secondary data focuses on eco-tourism in Nepal as a whole, or on more popular destinations like Pokhara, Chitwan National Park or Annapurna Conservation Area. Consequently, there is a significant gap in the understanding of eco-tourism's impact on Nagthali and its local community, environment, and economy.

As a researcher for this study, I have used official documents such as reports from the CIA and the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) to gather basic information on the eco-tourism perspectives of a selected local community in Nepal. In addition, secondary data from academic literature on eco-tourism, including its practices, sustainability and ecotourism framework, and the triple bottom line, has been utilized. In addition, I also utilized secondary data from official databases such as dissertations, articles, books, newspapers, research, and journals, for instance: by Bhatta (2018) and Karki (2019) about Nagthali, to investigate the case destination and other relevant topics.

4.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

As described by Braun and Clarke (2008), the main technique for qualitative analysis in this study was thematic analysis. Eight interviews in total, six of which were conducted in Nepali, were undertaken for this study. To aid in analysis, these interviews were subsequently translated and transcribed though it took a long time. Thematic analysis, a method for methodically uncovering, structuring, and offering insight into patterns of meaning throughout a dataset, was then performed on the transcribed data, allowing for a precise description, exploration, and management of the various aspects of the study topics (Braun & Clarke, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2008), six steps of theme analysis have supposedly been applied to the interview's findings: reading through the data, developing preliminary codes, looking for themes, analyzing themes, defining themes, and labeling themes are the tasks involved in producing a report (ibid.).

I started the process by carefully reviewing and getting familiar with the interview transcripts. To familiarize myself with the datasets, I listened to the audio recording at least once and read and reread the transcribed data numerous times. To identify significant data segments relating to the research objectives, initial codes were created. Themes encapsulating the current state, impacts, experiences, motivations and perceptions, plans and policies, challenges, and opportunities related to ecotourism in Nagthali started to emerge through a comprehensive analysis of these codes.

These themes were carefully examined, and their development strengthened their applicability and importance to the study. The final themes, which served as the foundation for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data, were identified and labeled (underlined). It is significant to highlight that the interview data could be thoroughly explored through theme analysis, which provided for a thorough knowledge of the social, environmental, and economic aspects of eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa.

4.6 Ethical Considerations:

When conducting qualitative research, ethics are essential because they ensure the safety and welfare of the participants/respondents. An effective interview procedure depends on getting informed consent and making participants feel comfortable (Saunders, 2012). I made sure that these ethical

issues were followed throughout my research. I got every stakeholder's permission before the interviews by outlining the study's objectives and methodology. To encourage honest and accurate communication, I also gave them the choice of selecting the language that they felt most at ease with. They were contacted by me via business emails, messenger calls, and texts, and the interviews were scheduled at their convenience.

I decided to conceal the participants' identities to ensure confidentiality. Each participant was given the option to leave the interview process at any moment and was advised in advance that they might refuse to answer any questions they felt were inappropriate. I also gave them my word that they may have a copy of the project's final version if they so desired. During the interviews, I asked the respondents for their consent to utilize an online platform and assured them that the data I collected would only be used for academic study. It's important to note that one of the participants requested anonymity. The necessary steps were made to respect his request and maintain the confidentiality of his identity. I believe that I was able to create a polite and welcoming environment for the participants by following these ethical rules, which eventually improved the credibility and validity of my study findings.

4.7 Trustworthiness of the Research

The reliability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study findings are all ensured by trustworthiness, which is a crucial component of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To maintain the validity and reliability of the obtained data and material for my thesis on eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, I used a triangulation approach. The triangulation approach refers to the act of comparing one's own experiences and opinions to those of others in order to provide accurate answers for a given construct (Shenton, 2004). Additionally, he described this method as a cross validation process (ibid.). Techniques, including in-depth interviews, field observation, and online research, have been used in the context of this study to compare and validate the information and data gathered.

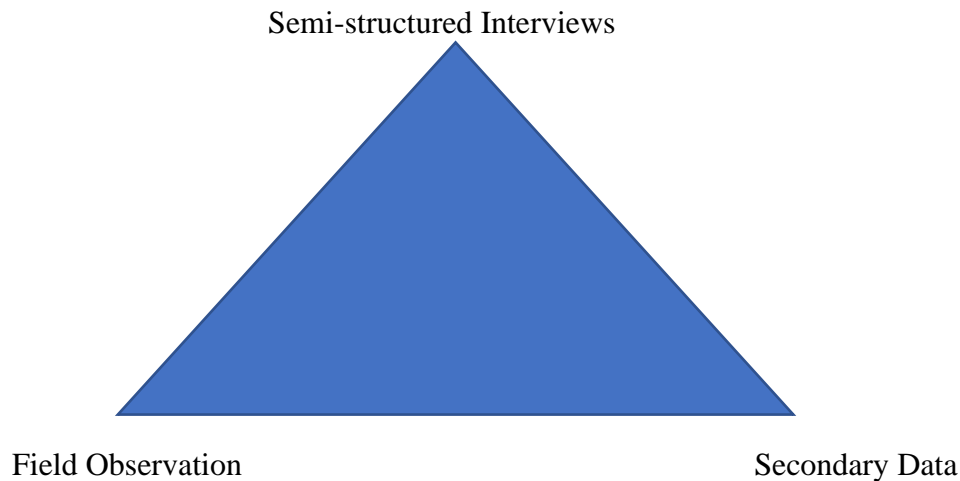


Fig 4: Triangulation for this thesis research (Source: own elaboration)

4.8 Methodological Limitations

This thesis on eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa has some methodological constraints that may affect the accuracy and generalizability of the research on eco-tourism in Nagthali. The study's sample size, especially for in-depth interviews, is limited. This may restrict the broader applicability of the findings. The main data comprises interviews conducted with eight participants, which could restrict the range of viewpoints. Considering the time limitations of the study, this sample size is appropriate.

Despite attempts to accommodate participants' language preferences, language barriers may still have been present. The quality and depth of the data collected during interviews and observations may have been affected by this. The researcher's perspective and potential bias may have impacted the analysis and interpretation of the data, as is common in qualitative studies. While maintaining reflexivity during the research process, personal biases and preconceived notions may have influenced the outcomes. Similarly, the results of the Nagthali, Rasuwa case study may not be relevant to other eco-tourism destinations that have different social, environmental, and economic conditions. The findings may have limited generalizability. Due to time limitations, it may not have been feasible to conduct a more comprehensive analysis or collect supplementary data to reinforce the findings.

Although there were limitations in the methodology, I made sure to conduct the research with thoroughness and honesty. The results offer useful information about eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the research findings in relation to the issues discussed in the introduction and literature review chapters. The goal of this analysis section is to provide comprehensive information on the interviews that were performed to contextualize the results and connect them to the problem formulation that was previously described. Using three distinct working questions, this chapter analyzes how eco-tourism has affected the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the case destination, Nagthali, Rasuwa, to address the chapter's aim, objectives, and research questions.

The first of the chapter's four sections discuss Nagthali's ecotourism initiatives and involvement with the local community. The second segment will highlight the current state of eco-tourism and its development, and the third section will look at the motivations and perspectives of tourists, locals, and organizations in Nagthali in relation to eco-tourism. The socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of ecotourism in Nagthali will be examined in the fourth portion of this report, along with some concluding remarks.

The stated literature review, which has as its core theories; ecotourism, sustainability, and the triple bottom line, will be used to investigate the stated key issues. This division into sections, in my opinion, will provide the reader with a better picture and enable me to delve deeper into the current research issue. This analysis also helps in deciding whether the research objectives of this thesis have been addressed and answered, which may therefore be summarized in the conclusion section. The analysis section will mostly examine and discuss the perspectives of the stakeholders who were interviewed, including tourism management organizations, locals, hotel owners, homestay owners, travel agencies, tour guides, and tourists.

5.1 Analysis on the Various Practices of Eco-tourism and Community Involvement in Nagthali

This section of the analysis highlights eco-tourism practices in Nagthali and community participation by presenting the results of data obtained from responses to eight semi-structured interviews. The incorporation of these diverse perspectives from relevant stakeholders will help to comprehensively

capture the social, environmental, and economic aspects of the mentioned eco-tourism activities which will then be presented in the final section of this chapter.

Eco-tourism activities and community participation:

Community based eco-tourism: The eco-tourism activities in Nagthali have been studied using the provided literature review and interviews. Community-based ecotourism entails the management and operation of tourism operations by local communities. While preserving regional culture and protecting natural resources, it seeks to provide tourists with distinctive and genuine experiences (Basnet, 2018). In response to this statement, one of the respondents, Nishan Gajurel, secretary of the Dhunche Tourism Management Committee, expressed his opinion as follows:

“...Ecotourism in Nagthali offers a wonderful opportunity to explore the area's rich cultural history and natural beauty while being mindful of the environment and preserving it for future generations.....” - Interviewee 2, Appendix B.

Similarly, the importance of engaging the local community in ecotourism activities was also highlighted by the anonymous respondent, the relation officer of Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee. He mentions that the Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee collaborates closely with the people of the community including marginalized people by employing them as guides and tourism operators. This engagement not only offers job prospects but also guarantees that the community actively participates in exhibiting their culture, traditions, and indigenous products to tourists (Interviewee 3). He stated his plan about the eco-tourism and community participation as,

“..._Being specific about Nagthali what I can say is in Nagthali, the plan is to work with the local people of the community to build tourism projects that show off the area's natural beauty while protecting the local customs and history....” - Interviewee 3, Appendix C.

Based on the statements made by Nishan Gajurel, an anonymous respondent, and the opinions expressed by other interviewees about Nagthali's eco-tourism, it can be concluded that Nagthali has also been discovered to embrace various community-based eco-tourism practices, in which members of the community actively participate in running tourism operations and are aware of the importance of preserving the natural environment as well as their cultures and traditions. Regarding community

involvement, Nishan Gajurel, secretary of the Dhunche Tourism Management Committee, stresses the need of developing gender equality and including marginalized groups in the case of eco-tourism operations carried out in Nagthali. He asserts that:

“..the ecotourism initiatives at Nagthali are motivated by a strong dedication to promoting gender equality and social justice. The objective of our organization is to enhance the agency of women's groups in the area by offering them chances to engage in tourism-related endeavors. The objective is to generate a beneficial influence on both the individuals and the society by taking such actions. The ecotourism initiatives prioritize the inclusion of marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities and differently-abled individuals..”- Interviewee 2, Appendix B.

Homestays, escorted tours, cultural excursions, and outdoor activities such as hiking and safaris are examples of community-based eco-tourism initiatives that empower local people to assume ownership and responsibility, resulting in long-term sustainable development (Honey, 2008). Among the activities mentioned are mountain tourism, trekking, hiking, homestay tourism, and cultural tourism.

“....it's, of course, an emerging eco-tourism hub most likely adapting the community-based practices since it has a lot of possibilities on mountain tourism, trekking and hiking, homestay tourism, culture tourism.....”- Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

According to Honey (2008), the participation of local communities in CBET ensures environmental safety and the preservation of local culture. In this context, Dawa Sangbo Tamang, a local hotel owner from Nagthali, underlines the necessity of local community participation to involve tourists in community-based eco-tourism activities. He claims:

“...The main activities for tourists here are sightseeing, cultural show, local foods, and forest visit where the people from the community play an important role in showing these activities to the tourists...”- Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

Wildlife eco-tourism: According to the interviews, wildlife eco-tourism has the potential to become a popular activity in the location due to its enormous biodiversity and natural beauty. According to

Ghimire (2016), wildlife enthusiasts go to Nepal's Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Bardia National Park, and Chitwan National Park. Similarly, Nagthali might be an excellent site for travellers interested in wildlife eco-tourism. Namgel Sherpa, executive director of Namgel Travels and Tours, suggests Nagthali as a potential place for wildlife eco-tourism activities, saying,

‘‘Nagthali offers various wildlife eco-tourism activities such as jungle safaris, bird watching, and animal trekking....’’ Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

Despite its wildlife eco-tourism potential, it has not been properly acknowledged and has not been a main emphasis of its eco-tourism characteristics. Wildlife ecotourism is hampered by a lack of infrastructure and facilities. To keep tourists safe and comfortable in wildlife-rich areas, appropriate accommodations, transportation, and guides are required. Without these comforts, tourists may shun wildlife activities (Newsome et al., 2002). In response to my inquiry on wildlife eco-tourism activities in Nagthali, Jhabaraj Neupane, the local tour guide suggests that a lack of infrastructure, limited resources, and restricted access may have hampered the growth of wildlife eco-tourism activities. He stated that;

‘‘...Lately, I came to know that last year, part of the nearby forest has been destructed in order to make a wider road for the tourist which is completely not good in my point of view since it may disrupt the authenticity of the place and also wildlife vegetation..’’ Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

According to the findings of the interviews, although Nagthali provides unique and real ecotourism experiences, wildlife-related activities have not been a key emphasis in the region despite their potential. Given the region's emphasis on cultural history, natural beauty, and authenticity, as well as a lack of infrastructure and resources for wildlife-related tourism, it appears likely that wildlife ecotourism has not been a common practice in Nagthali, as evidenced by the lack of mentions and conversations about it in interviews with various stakeholders.

Trekking and mountaineering: According to Ghimire (2016), trekking and mountaineering have become important aspects of eco-tourism, drawing in adventurers and nature lovers from various parts of the globe. Nagthali, the case destination, has been identified as a suitable location for tourists who enjoy mountaineering and trekking activities. According to Jhabaraj Neupane, a tour guide, the region provides stunning views of the Langtang Himalayas, which include well-known peaks like

Langtang Lirung, Ganesh Himal, and Jugal Himal. This makes it a favored spot for trekking and mountaineering, as he explained in an interview. He states:

“..From this area, you can see the Langtang Himalayas and peaks like Langtang Lirung, Ganesh Himal, and Jugal Himal. This makes it a popular place for trekking and mountaineering..”

Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

Jhabaraj Neupane went on to say that the opening of Nagthali to international trekkers in 1992, made possible by efforts such as the TRPAP project, was critical in the development of trekking and mountaineering in the area (Interviewee 1). Visitors' trekking and climbing experiences are enhanced by the provision of accommodations and other services (Ghimire, 2016). This comment was found to be compatible with the perspectives of one of the respondents, Namgel Sherpa, a tour operator, who indicated that the availability of accommodation has also benefited tourists who generally come for trekking and mountaineering activities in the neighboring Himalayas. He claims that:

“....You can see that this area now contains among 5 homestays and some hotels but if you go and observe the Langtang area, where tourists mostly come for trekking, hiking, and mountaineering activities, there has been a significant increase in the local businesses, providing a source of money to the local community and enhancing the trekking and hiking experience of the tourists as well....”

Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

The local community involvement in Nagthali has benefited from trekking and mountaineering activities. According to the interviews with tour guides, Jhabaraj Neupane and Balkrishna K.C., ecotourism pursuits like trekking and mountaineering have given locals job opportunities, particularly as guides, porters, and staff in tourism-related businesses (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 8). While mountaineering and trekking boost the local economy, they also present problems including trash management and soil erosion. For eco-tourism in hiking and climbing to be successful, careful planning and oversight are required (Thapa, 2019). Likewise, initiatives have been made to encourage ethical mountaineering and trekking in Nagthali to lessen the challenges posed by these types of eco-tourism activities. To protect the area's natural beauty, these measures include waste management programs and visitor management plans. Respondent Namgel Sherpa claims the following in relation to this:

“..we have tight rules for responsible tourism, such as how to deal with trash, save energy, and respect local traditions and customs. These rules are made in collaboration with the local community and authorities. We work with local communities and environmental groups to make sure that our work is sustainable and good for the environment..”- Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

Therefore, it could be analyzed that trekking and mountaineering have become popular forms of eco-tourism in Nagthali, providing visitors with breathtaking natural scenery and cultural immersion along the Tamang Heritage Trail. The expansion of these activities has brought about financial advantages for the nearby community, while also highlighting the significance of preserving the environment and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

Overall, Nagthali can be seen as an example of how community-based ecotourism projects can successfully promote sustainable development while also protecting a region's natural and cultural heritage. However, some of the interviewed respondents believe that a more balanced collaboration between the government, local authorities, and the people of the community is needed in the future to make Nagthali a better eco-tourism hub by implementing more community-based initiatives, plans, and policies. Here are some samples of interview responses in this regard:

“..however, I feel like concerned stakeholders are not working as needed to improve Nagthali as an emerging destination however there has been so much progress in terms of other nearby areas like Gatlang, Briddim, etc. So, I feel, better tourism plans and policies should be implemented in order to preserve the Nagthali area since it is really a nice destination and could be a great asset in terms of community-based eco-tourism.”- Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

“.....I believe that with good planning and investment, as well as the necessary amount of emphasis from the major players like government and local authorities and collaboration of those major stakeholders with the local community, Nagthali can become a top community-based ecotourism destination in the Rasuwa district and, in the meantime, in Nepal.”-Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

Therefore, the analysis of the interview responses and the interpretations have led to the conclusion that eco-tourism activities in Nagthali, Rasuwa are mainly centered around community-based efforts,

including homestays, cultural tours, and outdoor activities such as trekking and mountaineering. Engaging the local community in managing and operating tourism activities has been advantageous for both the community and the conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage. Enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, such as the government and local authorities, is necessary to advance Nagthali as a sustainable and prosperous eco-tourism spot.

5.2 Analysis on the Current State and the Development of Eco-tourism in Nagthali

Analysis of the current situation and growth of ecotourism in Nagthali are provided in this section. The development and difficulties of eco-tourism in Nagthali can be learned by looking at the context of the tourism industry, which includes its growth, significant stakeholders, and legal framework. The potential for sustainable development in Nagthali through eco-tourism initiatives is also highlighted by this analysis, as are the efforts undertaken by regional communities, governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to promote environmentally friendly and responsible tourism practices.

Development of eco-tourism in Nagthali

Eco-tourism dates back to the late twentieth century, when environmental conservation and sustainable development became more important (Fennell, 2008). As already discussed in the literature review chapter, ecotourism began as a reaction to the negative impacts of mass tourism on the environment and local populations. Its mission was to create a responsible alternative that promotes conservation, educates tourists, and helps local communities (Fennell, 2008). This statement by Fennell also gets consistent with one of my respondent's experiences. One of the respondents, Namgel Sherpa, the managing director of Namgel Travels and Tours, responded to my inquiry about the current state of ecotourism in Nagthali by stating that the industry is still in its infancy and has evolved with the goal of promoting the growth of the local population as well as the environment (Namgel Sherpa, Interviewee 6).

Because of its potential for sustainable development and natural resource conservation, eco-tourism has gained a lot of attention in recent years (Blangy, 2016). He further states that a notable trend in eco-tourism is the increased demand from tourists for unique and environmentally responsible travel experiences. Tourists are increasingly looking for destinations that offer one-of-a-kind encounters

with nature and local cultures while minimizing negative environmental impacts. This trend has resulted in the global expansion of eco-tourism projects, with destinations having their natural and cultural assets to attract visitors (ibid.).

Nagthali, in Nepal's Rasuwa district, is discovered to be a destination of a similar type that has seen great growth in eco-tourism during the last decade. However, an interview with Jhabaraj Neupane, a local tour guide, revealed that the history of tourism in Nagthali can be traced back to the early 1990s when the territory was opened to international trekkers as part of the TRPAP project (Interviewee 1). Nagthali had previously been a restricted location, accessible only with specific licenses (Interviewee 1). The region's opening, in partnership with the local government, Langtang National Park, and the Ministry of Tourism, created the groundwork for Nagthali's eco-tourism development (ibid.).

“..In 1992, there was a project called TRPAP in Rasuwa, and that project’s main aim was to raise the lifestyle of remote areas. From that period, with the close collaboration between the local government, Langtang national park, and the Ministry of Tourism the area was opened which is very famous these days as the Tamang heritage trail..”-Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

Regarding the current state of eco-tourism in Nagthali, the number of people interested in eco-tourism in Nagthali has increased dramatically, according to Namgel Sherpa, executive director of Namgel Travel & Tours. Tourists' raising awareness of the need for ethical and sustainable travel practices, as well as their desire for authentic cultural experiences, can be attributed to this expansion. He asserts that:

“I’ve noticed a substantial growth in the number of people interested in eco-tourism in Nagthali over the years. This is due, in part, to increased traveler awareness of the necessity of ethical and sustainable travel practices, as well as increased interest in authentic and immersive cultural experiences....”- Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

The ecotourism sector has, however, been severely damaged by the COVID-19 outbreak. International ecotourism operations have been interrupted as a result of travel restrictions, lockdowns, and health concerns (Gössling et al., 2012). Similarly, it could be analyzed through the interviews conducted that the COVID-19 epidemic has had a serious negative influence on this case destination,

Nagthali, and its eco-tourism activities as well. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic's negative consequences, Nagthali's ecotourism industry has proven resilient and has the potential for long-term growth.

“...However, the earthquake and COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact; tourists did not return for two years following the earthquake, but it has gradually increased since then. Again, there was a corona pandemic that had an impact, but the flow of tourists is gradually improving now....”

Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

“...more sustainable tourism initiatives that stress environmental and social sustainability have been developed. Though, we must admit that covid-19 pandemic has adverse effects here as well likewise the other destinations of the world...” Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

Hence, it could be analyzed that eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa has undergone substantial growth since it first opened to international trekkers in the 1990s. The industry has developed to support local growth and environmental preservation. Although the COVID-19 harmed the sector, the eco-tourism industry in Nagthali has shown resilience and potential for long-term growth. Efforts to promote sustainable and socially responsible tourism initiatives persist, despite external challenges.

Policy and regulatory framework

The policy and regulatory framework are integral in influencing the growth of eco-tourism in Nagthali. This concise analysis examines the current policies and regulations, as determined through a review of literature and interviews, and their effects on the eco-tourism sector in Nagthali. The policy and regulatory framework have been shaped by collaborative efforts between government agencies, local communities, and tourism stakeholders, as noted by Smith (2019). The literature review and interviews have shed light on the historical evolution and accessibility of Nagthali for tourism-related pursuits. It has been brought to attention that a special permit was mandatory before 1992, as stated by Interviewee 1. According to Interviewee 1, the TRPAP project in Rasuwa was instrumental in enabling access to the region for global trekkers and contributed significantly to the advancement of the Tamang Heritage Trail. These initiatives demonstrate collaboration among the local government, Langtang National Park, and Ministry of Tourism towards the advancement of tourism in Nagthali.

“..From that period, with the close collaboration between the local government, Langtang national park and Ministry of Tourism the area was opened which is very famous these days as Tamang heritage trail..”- Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

Additionally, the interviews provided insight into the development of eco-tourism in Nagthali and the subsequent creation of hotels, guesthouses, and homestays (as stated by Interviewee 4 and Interviewee 7). The aforementioned statement implies that the policies and regulations have effectively supported the development of tourism infrastructure to accommodate the rising influx of tourists. This aligns with the perspective of tourism practitioner Smith, who asserts that various policies and regulations have been put in place to facilitate the growth of tourism infrastructure, in response to the increasing number of tourists. As per Smith (2019), regulations may necessitate the utilization of renewable energy sources, waste management systems, and sustainable construction practices in eco-tourism projects.

The policies and regulations that empower local communities foster a sense of ownership and encourage their active participation in the tourism industry (Smith, 2019). Although there was no explicit mention of eco-tourism policies and regulations in Nagthali during the interviews, we can infer the impact of government initiatives and regulatory frameworks on the tourism industry as a whole. Chhiring Sangbo, a local homestay owner has provided the following statement:

“..our local community has benefited much from ecotourism. It has strengthened our economy, encouraged small businesses locally like mine, and produced job possibilities..”- Interviewee 7, Appendix G.

Through this statement, it could be analyzed that the presence of homestays and community-based practices suggests that local communities are involved somehow and supported by policies that encourage their participation and benefit them.

Moreover, responsible tourism practices help sustain eco-tourism destinations in the long run and reduce any harmful effects on the environment and society (UNWTO, 2020). The interviews have also emphasized the significance of sustainable practices and environmental conservation in Nagthali.

Although there was no discussion on particular regulations, the focus on responsible tourism practices indicates an understanding of the importance of safeguarding the environment.

Overall, the presented analysis suggests that the eco-tourism policy and regulatory framework in Nagthali have effectively enabled the area's opening, the development of tourism infrastructure, and the engagement of local communities. It is realized that further investigation is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the specific policies and regulations governing eco-tourism in Nagthali.

5.3 Analysis on the Motivations and Perceptions of Tourists, Locals and Organizations regarding Eco-tourism in Nagthali

The motivations and perspectives of tourists, locals, and organizations are important factors that influence the dynamics and outcomes of eco-tourism in Nagthali. This analysis aims to provide insights into stakeholders' motivations, perceptions, and expectations regarding eco-tourism in the area by examining the interviews as well as the literature review.

Tourists who visit Nagthali are mainly interested in experiencing unique cultures, witnessing natural beauty, and seeking adventure. Jhabaraj Neupane during the interview emphasizes the cultural aspect, stating, *"Nagthali has a lot of possibilities for cultural tourism, and the local people play an important role in showcasing cultural shows and local food to tourists"* -Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

This showed that tourists are drawn to Nagthali due to its cultural heritage and opportunities to interact with the local community. Similarly, Dawa Sangbo Tamang, a local hotel owner emphasizes the appeal of the location, stating, *"We can introduce people from all around the world to our culture and way of life because of eco-tourism"* – Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

This suggests that tourists are seeking genuine cultural experiences and a deeper understanding of the local customs and lifestyle. The local community in Nagthali expresses pride in their cultural traditions and acknowledges the economic advantages of eco-tourism. Chhiring Sangbo, a homestay owner, recognizes the beneficial effects of eco-tourism on the local economy and states; *"Eco-tourism has provided me with an opportunity to acquaint people from various parts of the globe with our customs and lifestyle"* - Interviewee 7, Appendix G.

Through this statement, it could be analyzed that local residents view eco-tourism as a way to increase their income and enhance their quality of life. Furthermore, the local community expresses a wish to conserve their cultural heritage. Chhiring Sangbo further expresses concern regarding the potential disinterest of the younger generation in upholding cultural traditions by stating, *"younger generations may be drawn to more lucrative opportunities in the service sector, leading to a decline in the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices"*- Interviewee 7, Appendix G. This emphasizes the significance of eco-tourism in conserving and advancing cultural customs for upcoming generations.

The organizations participating in eco-tourism in Nagthali are driven by the objective of achieving sustainable development and preserving natural and cultural resources. The executive director of Namgel Travels and Tours, Namgel Sherpa, emphasizes the necessity of making sure that the neighborhood benefits from tourism, saying; *"still there are a lot of locals in the community who need to be benefited with the tourism aspects of Nagthali"* – Interviewee 6, Appendix F. This showcases the organization's commitment to equitable distribution of benefits and the importance of community engagement in the development of the tourism sector. Furthermore, there are successful CBET programs in Nepal such as the Community Homestay Network and the Annapurna Conservation Area Project. These programs demonstrate the dedication of groups towards promoting sustainable tourism practices and conserving local culture (Basnet, 2018; Community Homestay Network, n.d.).

Hence, the above analysis leads to discuss that tourists, locals, and organizations in Nagthali share a common interest in cultural preservation, economic development, and sustainable practices. Tourists desire genuine cultural experiences and natural beauty, while locals acknowledge the economic advantages of eco-tourism and the importance of conserving their cultural heritage. Organizations give priority to sustainable development and fair distribution of benefits. The motivations and perspectives serve as a basis for working together and adopting practices that conserve natural and cultural resources, while also promoting the local community's well-being.

5.4 Analysis of the Impacts of Eco-tourism in Nagthali

This section presents a concise analysis of Nagthali's eco-tourism effects. This study investigates the consequences of eco-tourism in Nagthali from the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic

viewpoints, highlighting the favorable and unfavorable implications of each aspect as well as the contradictions. By analyzing relevant literature and insights gathered from interviews with locals, tour guides, tourism management committees, tourists, hotel owners, and homestay owners, this study seeks to gain a thorough understanding of the impact of eco-tourism on the community, culture, and environment of Nagthali. The section is structured into three segments to offer the reader a better understanding of the case destination's eco-tourism effects on socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects.

5.4.1 Impacts on Socio-cultural Aspects

Nagthali's ecotourism has had a variety of socio-cultural effects on the people of the local community and their way of living. This examination looks at both the pros and cons of these impacts as well as the conflicts that result from interactions between tourists and locals. Results from a review of the literature and interviews with Nagthali stakeholders served as the foundation for this analysis.

Culture Preservation and Community Development Enhancement: Preserving and promoting local culture and traditions have been discovered to be one of the beneficial socio-cultural effects of ecotourism in Nagthali, as mentioned by almost every respondent. Stem, et al. (2003) claim that a variety of cultural excursions and activities are offered as part of ecotourism to showcase the vibrant local cultures. In a similar vein, ecotourism can support the revival of traditional arts and crafts as well as cultural preservation (Gurung, 2013). The results of the interviews are also consistent with Stem et al.'s (2003) and Gurung's (2013) statements. As stated by Jhabaraj Neupane, a tour guide and local,

"Nagthali has a lot of possibilities for cultural tourism, and the local people play an important role in showcasing cultural shows and local food to tourists."-Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

This demonstrates the usefulness of ecotourism in safeguarding and enhancing the local culture and traditions. Similarly, the increase in tourism has led to a desire for genuine cultural encounters, motivating local communities to exhibit their distinct customs, such as the Tamang culture, rituals, and arts. As per the statement of Interviewee 7, Chhiring Sangbo, who is a local homestay owner, eco-tourism has provided him with an opportunity to acquaint people from various parts of the globe

with their customs and lifestyle. The process of enhancing the abilities and social status of disadvantaged groups by involving them in social activities can have positive effects on Nepalese communities. This can facilitate the exchange of cultural knowledge between visitors and hosts, as suggested by Minca and Linda (2000, p. 124). The Nagthali case also reveals that the interaction between tourists and locals has resulted in cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Dawa Sangbo Tamang, a local hotel owner during the interview mentioned that:

"It's been amazing to witness the increased participation of the local community in catering to the needs and desires of tourists. We can introduce people from all around the world to our culture and way of life because of eco-tourism."- Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

The aforementioned claim made by Dawa Sangbo is consistent with the claim made by Folk (2019), who shows how eco-tourism has facilitated opportunities for cultural appreciation and exchange while fostering a sense of pride and the preservation of indigenous customs. In the same vein, Dawa Sangbo's observation demonstrates how Nagthali's communities have enhanced their way of life while simultaneously imparting to the following generation their unique culture, traditions, and values. To preserve their cultural and traditional practices, the locals were urged to maintain them.

In addition to this, it has been shown that, despite the lack of significant infrastructure development in Nagthali, infrastructure development has in some way contributed to the good sociocultural features of ecotourism. For instance, the TRPAP project in the Rasuwa district opened the route to the Nagthali area. Similarly, Gumba, which is regarded as an old historical landmark and can be a tourist draw, has been built. The interview also reveals that eco-tourism in Nagthali has helped to tackle the area's water shortage issue by building water pipelines, which was previously thought to be a severe issue. This is stated by Dawa Sangbo Tamang, a local hotel owner:

"At that time, there was an organization called TRPAP, which opened this route. Before that, it's such a remote area, even there was so much of scarcity of water, water pipelines have been constructed now."- Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

A market for locally produced commodities including handicrafts, foods, and vegetables has also been formed in Nagthali as a result of ecotourism, raising local income and raising residents' standards

of living by opening up work opportunities. Tamanag's statements contradict those of Coria and Calfucura (2012), who stated that ecotourism should not be the sole source of community development and should be supplemented with other actions. The infrastructural development of Nagthali's ecotourism has resulted in the establishment of road networks, water pipelines, monuments, hotels, and homestays. These developments were implemented to promote ecotourism in the area. The construction of community facilities has increased social well-being among the locals, who are pleased and proud of these enhancements. Ecotourism, hence, can be considered a means for socio-cultural development.

Socio-cultural Disruptions and Contradictions: The practice of ecotourism in Nagthali has resulted in adverse socio-cultural effects on the local community's culture, traditional practices, and social dynamics. The findings from the literature review and interviews reveal that the growth of ecotourism in Nagthali has led to various socio-cultural disruptions and contradictions.

One of the main concerns expressed in the interviews is the possible loss of cultural authenticity and traditional practices. As per Jhabaraj Neupane, a tour guide and teacher from the area, Nagthali is a developing eco-tourism destination. However, there is a need for collaborative efforts to conserve the region and its distinct cultural heritage. (Interviewee 1). The influx of tourists and their influence on the local culture can disrupt the traditional way of life and dilute the authenticity of cultural practices. He stated, *"There is a lack of concerted efforts to preserve the area and its unique cultural heritage"* - Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

Dawa Sangbo Tamang, a local hotel owner, echoes this sentiment, noting, *"The main activities for tourists here are sightseeing, cultural shows, and local foods"*-Interviewee 4, Appendix D. Although these activities can generate income for the community, they may also result in the commercialization and commodification of cultural practices. The commercialization of cultural practices may lead to staged performances that offer a superficial experience for tourists and a disconnection from authentic traditions.

Similarly, a local homestay owner, Chhiring Sangbo, expressed concern about how ecotourism may affect the neighborhood, particularly in light of the younger generation's lack of interest in upholding cultural traditions, stating, *"younger generations may be drawn to more lucrative opportunities in the*

service sector, leading to a decline in the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices"-
Interviewee 7, Appendix G.

The interview responses are consistent with the literature review, which identifies the potential dangers of cultural commodification, loss of cultural identity, and disruption of traditional social structures (Honey, 2008; Gössling et al., 2012). The commodification of cultural practices and conversion of traditions into tourist destinations may lead to a decline in genuine cultural identity and pride within the indigenous population.

To summarize, this analysis of the literature review and interview responses highlights the adverse socio-cultural effects of ecotourism in Nagthali. The impacts consist of the possible loss of cultural authenticity, decline of traditional practices, and disruptions of social structures. It could be analyzed that it is important to adopt sustainable management practices that conserve cultural heritage and promote the welfare of the local community amidst the increasing ecotourism in Nagthali.

To discuss further, the study of ecotourism's effects on socio-cultural aspects in Nagthali indicates both favorable and unfavorable outcomes. Some benefits of tourism are the conservation and advancement of local culture and customs, cultural interaction and mutual comprehension between visitors and residents, and the improvement of infrastructure that enhances the community's quality of life. These results are consistent with the literature review and interviews, highlighting the importance of ecotourism in protecting cultural heritage and promoting socio-cultural growth.

However, the analysis also identifies negative aspects and inconsistencies. Preserving cultural identity is a concern due to potential loss of authenticity, commodification of cultural practices, and decline in traditional knowledge transmission. The findings from the literature review and interviews analyze that there is a need for collaborative actions to address the adverse effects of ecotourism in Nagthali and ensure its sustainable management.

The overall analysis finds out that it is important to maintain a balance between the economic advantages of ecotourism and the conservation of cultural heritage. To reduce negative socio-cultural impacts, it is beneficial to implement strategies that involve local communities in decision-making

processes, promote sustainable cultural practices, and empower them. By doing so, Nagthali can sustain its ecotourism benefits while conserving its distinct cultural identity and traditions.

5.4.2 Impacts on Environmental Aspects

This section analyzes the effects of ecotourism in Nagthali on the environmental aspects of the area. The analysis examines the impact of ecotourism on the natural environment, taking into account both favorable and unfavorable outcomes as well as the contradictions of the impacts. This is based on a review of existing literature and interviews conducted. The results reveal the environmental advantages and obstacles linked to the expansion of ecotourism in Nagthali. By comprehending these effects, it is feasible to recognize approaches for maintaining the environment sustainably and conserving it in the situation of ecotourism growth.

Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Practices: Ecotourism in Nagthali has a considerable positive impact on natural resource protection. According to Gurung (2013), a survey of the literature shows that eco-tourism techniques promote sustainable resource management and emphasize the importance of conserving the area's unspoiled natural environment. Eco-tourism, according to Interviewee 1, Jhabaraj Neupane, a tour guide, and local citizen, has played an important role in raising awareness about the significance of maintaining our natural resources. There is currently a greater emphasis on sustainable practices, such as waste management and biodiversity preservation. He backs up this claim by saying:

‘‘In Nagthali, ecotourism has raised awareness about the importance of preserving all these sorts of natural environments and their authenticity. The local community has become more conscious of sustainable practices, such as waste management and conservation efforts.’’ Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

With this regard, another respondent, Namgel Sherpa, the executive director of Namgel Travels and Tours, also highlight the favorable outcome of ecotourism on biodiversity conservation in Nagthali. In the question regarding the impacts of eco-tourism upon the environmental aspects of eco-tourism in Nagthali, he responded by saying,

‘‘We work with local communities and environmental groups to make sure that our work is sustainable and good for the environment..... Our travel business promotes ethical tourism in

several ways. First, we teach our staff and clients about ethical tourist behaviors including recycling, saving energy, and respecting local cultures and traditions and environment as mentioned earlier. Second, we create ecotourism tours. Finally, we collaborate with tourist partners to create and utilize responsible tourism standards to ensure our operations are sustainable and good for local communities and habitats..''-Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

Through this statement, it can be demonstrated that Eco-tourism has aided in conserving biodiversity by encouraging responsible tourism and increasing awareness about preserving the area's distinct environmental aspects. The literature review confirms that eco-tourism efforts in Nagthali have resulted in the creation of protected areas and the execution of conservation programs (Maharjan, 2019). The above statements made by the interviewees also continue to be consistent with Coria & Calfucura (2012), who stated that environmental preservation is the most crucial environmental aspect of ecotourism.

Similarly, environmental education and awareness turn out to be other important favorable aspects that the eco-tourism in Nagthali has provided. For instance; in relation to the query about the operation of the homestay, the local homestay owner, Chhiring Sangbo, answered:

''I keep my homestay eco-friendly by employing numerous sustainable measures such as solar energy, water conservation, recycling and composting waste, and procuring food locally. In addition, I teach my visitors about responsible behavior and our attempts to protect the environment and local culture''- Interviewee 7, Appendix G.

Similarly, with this regard, the anonymous respondent, the relation officer of the Nagthali eco-tourism committee also put his perspective as; *'''....For example, we educate our customers about proper waste disposal and encourage them to use refillable water bottles. In addition, we work closely with the community to develop eco-friendly tourism activities and create awareness on environmental preservation....*''- Interviewee 3, Appendix C.

Through these statements by the respondents, it could be analyzed that Eco-tourism has raised awareness of the need for environmental conservation among local residents and other key stakeholders, enabling them to inform tourists about the value of environmental protection and the

sustainable practices used in the destination, such as organic farming and responsible waste management. This is consistent with the findings from the literature study, which show how eco-tourism activities give tourists a place to learn about the local environment, biodiversity, and the value of conservation (Shrestha et al., 2020).

Furthermore, as other key good elements of eco-tourism, the significance of eco-tourism in alleviating environmental degradation cannot be overlooked. In the context of Nagthali, several eco-tourism efforts have been implemented in order to reduce deforestation, soil erosion, and other forms of environmental degradation, however many conservation measures remain to be implemented in the destination. Here are a few samples of interview responses in this regard:

“We promote responsible tourism practices such as waste management, water conservation, and the use of eco-friendly transportation. We work with the local community to positively impact the environment through activities like reforestation and wildlife conservation”-Nishan Gajurel, Interviewee 2, Appendix B.

- “...People who are getting better in terms of their economy now start to use biogas instead of firewood, which has stopped people from cutting down trees but it’s not a case for all local people..”*
- Namgel Sherpa, Interviewee 7, Appendix G.

Bin et. al. (2013) suggest that sustainable use of natural resources can lead to an increase in forest areas, biodiversity, and tourism resources during tourism development. Based on the statements presented above by the interviewees, it can be inferred that the natural resources and biodiversity of Nagthali are increasing. These statements align with Stem et al's (2003) view that ecotourism discourages deforestation, reduces hunting, and promotes biodiversity.

Environmental Challenges and Contradictions: Although eco-tourism in Nagthali has good intentions and efforts, there are challenges in the environment that contradict its purpose. The study of the literature review and interviews has identified issues and difficulties that must be resolved to promote sustainable environmental practices in Nagthali.

One major downside is the added pressure on natural resources. Interviewee 1, Jhabaraj Neupane, reported that there has been a notable increase in tourism in the area, resulting in higher demand for food, water, and lodging. It can be illustrated that the growing demand is straining the local ecosystem and its ability to support it. As mentioned by Interviewee 4, Dawa Sangbo Tamang, before the earthquake, a single hotel was receiving 15-20 guests per day, which shows a significant increase in tourism. He responded as follows:

“..Now it has changed and let’s say we earn roughly around 8-9 lakhs Nepali rupees during one season. Prior to the earthquake, we had 15-20 guests each day in my hotel alone, with additional tourists visiting nearby hotels. So, the trend of tourists flow in this area has gradually increased..”- Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

From this statement, the analysis could be presented as, if tourism grows too quickly and isn't managed well, it can lead to resources depletion and environmental degradation. Likewise, building roads has improved access and increased tourism, but it has also caused environmental problems. Interviewee 6, Namgel Sherpa, states that the building of roads has had a big effect on the job of tour guides and the tourism industry in the Rasuwa district. However, it can also cause problems like breaking up habitats, soil erosion, and disrupting wildlife. These statements align with Folk’s (2019) assertion that the local community and environment may not receive benefits from ecotourism if profit is the primary motivation behind it. It is important to manage the environmental consequences in Nagthali to minimize their negative impact on the delicate ecosystems.

There is a contradiction between the objectives of eco-tourism and the actions taken in reality. Eco-tourism endeavors to support the preservation of the environment. However, Interviewee 7, Chhiring Sangbo, a local homestay owner, expresses apprehensions regarding the management of waste in the region. As per the statement of Interviewee 7, the rise in the tourist population has led to issues of littering and insufficient waste management infrastructure. The presence of this inconsistency emphasizes the necessity for improved waste management methods and increased consciousness among both visitors and inhabitants about their obligation to safeguard the natural surroundings.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the environmental effects of eco-tourism in Nagthali. According to Interviewee 6, Namgel Sherpa;

“.. the pandemic has had an impact on the tourism industry, which in turn has affected the sustainability of eco-tourism practices...” - Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

It could be analyzed that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a reduction in the number of visitors to various destinations, which has had both favorable and unfavorable ecological consequences. Reduced human presence facilitated the recovery and regeneration of natural habitats. However, the pandemic-induced economic recession has increased the burden on the local community, which may result in the depletion of resources for short-term economic gains.

To sum up, the analysis of the effects of eco-tourism on environmental aspects in Nagthali demonstrates favorable elements as well as inconsistencies. The benefits of this approach involve encouraging sustainable management of resources, conserving biodiversity, and promoting environmental education and awareness. The endeavors to manage waste, restore forests, and conserve wildlife are commendable accomplishments in the preservation of the natural environment. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the adverse effects and inconsistencies that come with tourism expansion, including heightened pressure on natural resources, environmental issues linked to road building, and insufficient waste disposal methods. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the susceptibility of eco-tourism and its ecological effects. Achieving a balance between tourism development and environmental conservation is essential. This can be done by using efficient resource management techniques, encouraging responsible tourism behavior, and increasing environmental awareness among both tourists and locals (Folk, 2019).

5.4.3 Impacts on Economical Aspects

The practice of ecotourism in Nagthali has the potential to conserve the natural surroundings and enhance the economic growth and social welfare of the local community. Nishan Gajurel from the Dhunche Tourism Management Committee and an anonymous respondent from the Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee emphasize the significance of community participation and fair allocation of benefits among all local community members by stating,

“We actively encourage local communities to take part in tourism-related activities, and we strongly encourage the growth of local businesses to make sure that locals make a lot of money from tourism while also preserving the natural environment.”

- Nishan Gajurel, Dhunche Tourism Management Committee

“We want to make sure that everyone in the local community benefits from ecotourism, especially those who may have been marginalized in the past. So, we basically team up with local community groups and organizations to find ways to boost the economy and make sure everyone in the community can benefit from these opportunities.”

- Anonymous, Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee

The remarks made by Gajurel and the anonymous respondent can be analyzed in relation to the ecotourism principles established by the International Ecotourism Society in 2015. Nagthali has been promoting ecotourism to enhance the economic well-being of the locals. The above statements also align with Coria and Calfucra (2012) which suggest that it is important to maintain a positive relationship between tourism, communities, and natural areas. They note that developing countries are often encouraged by the international development community to adopt ecotourism practices, which can improve the economic well-being of communities and promote environmental conservation during tourism activities.

Economic Prosperity and Local Empowerment: The economic benefits of ecotourism in Nagthali have been acknowledged through different means, including literature and interviews. Most interviewees tend to focus on discussing the favorable economic consequences of ecotourism. The results of the interviews suggest that the economic status of most of the local community has improved considerably, and there has also been a rise in employment opportunities. Examples:

"Local people are getting an opportunity to improve their economic status."- Jhabaraj Neupane, Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

The construction of hotels, guesthouses, and homestays has produced job opportunities, allowing residents to supplement their income through tourism-related activities. Another respondent, Dawa Sangbo Tamang, notified the positive economic impacts brought by eco-tourism of Nagthali;

"Before that, it was such a remote area, even there was so much of scarcity of water. After the TRPAP project, when it opened the route, I thought that if I start running a hotel, I will have the job opportunity, and it will be a service for the guests as well." - Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

Moreover, he has added; *"..At that time, I remember earning just 10 thousand Nepali rupees during one season. Now it has changed and let's say we earn roughly around 8-9 lakhs Nepali rupees during one season."* - Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

An executive director of a tour company, Namgel Sherpa, also underlined the economic benefits of eco-tourism, saying;

"Ecotourism in Nagthali has provided an excellent chance for our travel agency to promote sustainable tourism practices while also supporting the local population." – Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

The local homestay owners have experienced an increase in income, which reflects the positive economic impacts. Chhiring Sangbo, a local homestay owner, has observed this trend.

"It has strengthened our economy, encouraged small businesses locally like mine, and produced job possibilities." - Interviewee 7, Appendix G.

On the basis of the viewpoints expressed by the interviewees, it can be inferred that the growth in Nagthali's tourist numbers has led to a rise in income, contributing to the region's economic progress. The increase in tourism has led to a higher demand for local goods and services, benefiting small businesses and the local economy. These statements are consistent with Shrestha's (2019) perspective, which suggests that the growth of tourism has led to the development of small businesses, providing opportunities for local entrepreneurship.

Based on Folk's (2019) idea that tourism can improve the quality of life for local people, we can examine the responses provided by participants in this study. Based on the statement provided, it can be inferred that employment opportunities have been created and local individuals are enhancing their skills and abilities. The rise in demand for local products, organic food, and locally sourced food in Nagthali as well as encouraging the sale of handcrafted items and traditional goods demonstrates the economic advantages for other locals who are not directly involved in tourism. The favorable factors

have a positive impact on the economic prosperity of the locality, thereby improving the overall standard of living in Nagthali.

Economic Disparities and Contradictions: Some participants, however, emphasized the unfavorable economic outcomes of ecotourism. The interviews revealed that tourism in Nagthali is seasonal, which is an unfavorable aspect. Chhiring Sangbo, a homestay owner, shared that the number of tourists visiting is not consistent throughout the year, which causes their income to vary. He mentioned that;

"We earn roughly around 8-9 lakhs Nepali rupees during one season." - Interviewee 4, Appendix D.

This phrase implies that reliance on seasonal tourism can cause economic instability for local businesses, making it difficult to maintain livelihoods year-round.

Furthermore, the local community in Nagthali does not benefit equitably from the economic consequences of eco-tourism. Jhabaraj Neupane, a tour guide, and local citizen is concerned about Nagthali's slow development in comparison to nearby areas like Gatlang, Briddim, etc. He notified that;

"I feel like concerned stakeholders are not working as needed to improve Nagthali as an emerging destination." - Interviewee 1, Appendix A.

Similarly, Namgel Sherpa, executive director of Namgel Travels and Tours noted;

''...This presents a range of possibilities for local guides, tourism operators, and other service providers. However, as I talked in the previous question, still there are a lot of locals in the community who needs to be benefitted from the tourism aspects of Nagthali, rather, we hope it will happen soon and we can see every local being facilitated through the tourism of the area.'' - Interviewee 6, Appendix F.

This means that some stakeholders may gain more from eco-tourism development than others, while others, particularly local people may not see as much economic growth and opportunity.

There can be conflicts when considering the economic benefits for local communities versus the possible negative impact on traditional ways of making a living. According to Interviewee 7, Chhiring

Sangbo, eco-tourism has stimulated the local economy and opened up job prospects. It can be inferred that because of the overdependence of local people on tourism for the economy, traditional practices like farming and animal husbandry may conflict with the growing needs of tourism. This could result in a change from traditional ways of making a living, which may lead to a loss of cultural identity and social disruption in the community.

As has been demonstrated, the economic benefits of eco-tourism in Nagthali can be altered by external influences. The COVID-19 epidemic has had a huge impact on the tourism industry. The aforementioned circumstance has hampered travel and resulted in a drop in the number of people who visit. A tour operator interviewed, Namgel Sherpa, acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic harmed the overall tourism industry including Nagthali. Nonetheless, he claimed that the number of tourists has gradually increased. As a result, it can be concluded that Nagthali ecotourism is vulnerable to fragility as a result of external forces outside the control of local stakeholders.

Finally, the research on the economic implications of ecotourism in Nagthali reveals both favorable and unfavorable consequences. Favorable implications include enhanced local economic status, employment generation, and greater demand for local goods and services. These elements contribute to Nagthali's economic development and overall standard of living. However, there are several drawbacks and conflicts to consider. Tourism's seasonal nature causes income variations and economic instability for local businesses. Furthermore, the distribution of economic advantages among community members may not be equitable, and there is a potential clash between tourism development and traditional livelihoods. External challenges, like the COVID-19 epidemic, illustrate Nagthali's ecotourism's vulnerability to global conditions. To address these problems, initiatives that encourage year-round tourism, assure equitable distribution of benefits, and balance tourism development with the preservation of traditional traditions must be developed in the destination.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In conclusion, by highlighting the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of the destination's eco-tourism, the study intended to analyze the role of eco-tourism in the sustainable development of the local community of Nagthali, Rasuwa. The purpose of this thesis research project

was to evaluate the ecotourism sectors in Nepal, with a focus on the Nagthali community in the Rasuwa district, where ecotourism has been practiced but has not received the proper recognition. Based on the methodology and literature review outlined above, the study attempted to address the stated research objectives. The following conclusions were made throughout the study after a thorough analysis and discussion of the stated research topic and working questions.

The research commenced by exploring the eco-tourism practices in Nagthali and identified the prevalence of community-based tourism initiatives. These initiatives have played a significant role in promoting sustainable practices and involving locals in eco-tourism activities (Duffy, 2008). Likewise, the research also indicated that Nagthali, Rasuwa, has adopted community-based eco-tourism practices. This involves the active involvement of local communities in tourism operations while maintaining their natural environment, culture, and traditions. Engaging the local community in eco-tourism activities, such as community-based homestays, cultural excursions, and outdoor activities, has been found to create employment opportunities, empowered marginalized groups, and promoted sustainable development in the region. Furthermore, a study of the historical development of Nagthali revealed the growth of eco-tourism over the years, emphasizing important events and milestones that influenced its progress. The growth of eco-tourism in Nagthali is observed as the result of cooperation between government agencies, local communities, and tourism stakeholders. It has also been found out that tourism infrastructure has grown, and sustainable practices have been encouraged due to policies and regulations. However, it has been realized that there is a need for further collaboration and policy implementation to fully realize Nagthali's potential as a top community-based eco-tourism destination in Nepal. The motivations and perceptions of tourists, as well as local residents and organizations, were also explored. It was found that tourists are attracted to Nagthali for its unique cultural experiences, nature-based activities, and the opportunity to engage in ethical and sustainable travel. The local community and organizations view eco-tourism as a means to boost the local economy, protect the environment, and promote social inclusion.

Analyzing the impact of ecotourism in Nagthali led to both favorable and unfavorable consequences in terms of socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects. The preservation and development of local cultures and traditions, as well as the promotion of cultural exchange and mutual understanding between tourists and locals, have all benefited significantly from ecotourism. However, issues with cultural commodification, a loss of cultural authenticity, and a deterioration in

the transfer of traditional knowledge were found. Concerning the environmental aspects, ecotourism has helped to protect natural resources, conserve biodiversity, and raise public awareness of environmental issues. However, concerns about the rising demand for natural resources, environmental issues related to infrastructure development, and the requirement for better waste management practices were noted. Ecotourism has also benefited the local economy by creating jobs, raising incomes, and fostering the expansion of small companies. But it was recognized that there were problems with seasonal variations of tourism, unequal economic distribution, conflicts with traditional livelihoods, and vulnerability to external forces like the COVID-19 epidemic.

Hence, the case study of Nagthali, Rasuwa shows the viability of eco-tourism as a strategy for sustainable development that can have favorable impacts on socio-cultural, environmental, and economic variables. By involving the community, protecting the environment, and engaging in ethical business practices, eco-tourism can encourage a harmonious relationship between nature, culture, and economic growth. However, it is essential for destination managers and stakeholders to continuously monitor and adapt strategies to maintain this delicate balance. To address issues like waste management, and preserving the authenticity of the local culture, careful planning, regulation, and stakeholder collaboration are required.

The results of this study offer important insights for other developing destinations seeking to utilize eco-tourism as a means of achieving sustainable development. These destinations may establish efficient rules, encourage community involvement, and ensure the preservation of local culture and the environment by learning from Nagthali's experience. Overall, this thesis advances knowledge of the effects of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, and highlights the significance of sustainable practices for the long-term success of ecotourism destinations.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

Several recommendations can be made based on the findings and conclusions of this thesis to improve the long-term growth of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, and other similar destinations. These recommendations are targeted at addressing the highlighted issues and optimizing the positive impacts of eco-tourism on the community's socio-cultural, economic, and environmental aspects.

7.1 Recommendations for the Local Government and Other Relevant Authorities

The promotion and encouragement of local community participation in eco-tourism activities should be a priority for the local government and authorities, including the Nagthali Ecotourism Committee. Community members can participate and benefit from ecotourism development by receiving training, workshops, and capacity-building initiatives. One participant reported that the number of tourists visiting Nagthali, a rural village, has been steadily increasing each year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. A substantial rise in tourism could lead to environmental resource depletion and displacement of wildlife due to increased human activity, making it unsustainable. Ecotourism can have adverse effects on the environment, economy, and socio-cultural factors of host destinations. Insufficient management, planning, and community involvement can significantly impact the situation. The notion is reinforced by Wood (2002) who stresses the importance of managing and planning ecotourism effectively to uphold equilibrium across the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of communities. To ensure sustainability, policies, and institutions must incorporate the perspectives of community members from the outset. The involvement of the community in all stages of ecotourism planning and execution is essential to mitigate the adverse effects on the local community and promote favorable cultural and environmental outcomes. Therefore, it is important to consider planning and effective management with the proper participation of the local community for the daily influx of tourists in Nagthali, Rasuwa.

The research indicates that insufficient collaboration and policy implementation are the primary reasons why Nagthali, a promising ecotourism destination, has not been adequately acknowledged. It is recommended that the local government and other authorities encourage collaboration between government entities, local communities, tourism stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations to develop a consistent approach to eco-tourism. Regular communication, information sharing, and coordinated efforts can lead to more efficient laws, rules, and sustainable practices that may benefit the community in Nagthali. Another option to address the specific needs and challenges of eco-tourism in Nagthali is to review and enhance existing policies and regulations. The rules and regulations could prioritize sustainable practices, environmental protection, cultural preservation, and equitable distribution of economic benefits. Regular monitoring and assessment of policy implementation is necessary. Improving the destination's infrastructure and services for tourism,

including lodging, transportation, waste disposal facilities, and visitor amenities, could be a viable solution to address eco-tourism concerns. It is important to consider sustainable and environmentally responsible infrastructure development to minimize negative impacts on the environment. It is recommended to conduct educational programs and awareness campaigns for visitors, locals, and tourism operators to promote responsible tourism practices in the region. The programs should promote eco-friendly tourism, cultural awareness, and environmental conservation, as recommended by UNEP in 2013.

Additionally, it may be also important for the local government and other authorities to set up a thorough monitoring and evaluation system to determine the effects of ecotourism in Nagthali. The socio-cultural, economic, and environmental indicators might be measured often to spot new problems, track development, and assist in decision-making. The results may then be applied to modify plans of action and enhance the sustainability of ecotourism operations. Moreover, the findings of this thesis research would also recommend the creation of emergency plans and strategies to deal with crises and unforeseen events, including natural disasters or disease outbreaks. It contributes to the resilience of ecotourism activities and improves the capacity for adaptation to changing conditions while reducing adverse effects on the community and the environment.

7.2 Recommendations for Future Research

This research can serve as a guide for future studies on this topic in other destinations. This study's results could benefit development planners, decision-makers, local community organizations, researchers, and students. This study is limited to contextualizing the findings on how ecotourism affects Nagthali, Rasuwa in terms of social, environmental, and economic factors. Other researchers may want to explore different areas in more detail. To ensure the long-term sustainability of eco-tourism initiatives in Nagthali, it would be helpful to conduct long-term studies that assess the ongoing impacts on the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the area. Tracking changes over time and using that information to inform adaptive management strategies would be helpful.

Additionally, more research can be done to examine how cultural preservation measures and strategies can help reduce the adverse effects of tourism on the local culture. Finding new ways to preserve traditional knowledge and practices can help to keep local culture alive and sustainable. Community empowerment research in eco-tourism initiatives would also be a valuable source of

information for increasing local participation and ownership. Investigating measures for equitable sharing of economic benefits, community-led decision-making procedures, and empowerment of vulnerable groups would also be an important topic to research to improve the socio-economic development and inclusiveness of ecotourism in Nagthali.

Furthermore, studying sustainable resource management practices used by eco-tourism locations is critical for addressing environmental challenges. Researching waste management, renewable energy sources and biodiversity preservation would contribute to the formulation of practical plans for the sustainable management of Nagthali's resources. In general, future research should focus on information exchange and collaboration among academia, government agencies, and local communities. As a result, sharing ideas, best practices, and lessons learned will be easier, promoting the growth and sustainability of ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa.

Chapter 8: Limitations

The thesis has limitations that should be taken into account. This study focuses solely on eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, and cannot be generalized to other eco-tourism destinations. The findings and deductions are context-specific and may not be directly applicable to other cultural settings or geographic regions. Another important limitation of this study is the sample size. As a researcher, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with a limited sample size of eight individuals due to time constraints. A larger sample size may have produced different results or improved the research findings. Due to time constraints and limited attention to detail, some aspects related to the topic may not have been thoroughly explored.

Additionally, the study is based on information obtained from interviews and secondary sources. Data accuracy and reliability may be limited by factors such as response bias, recall bias, or data availability. Furthermore, the study predominantly utilizes qualitative research methods, which offer comprehensive insights and thorough comprehension of the topic at hand. However, quantitative data has been restricted, and statistical analyses have not been thoroughly performed. The findings may not be applicable to a broader context and may lack statistical strength.

Furthermore, the research is carried out within a designated time frame and may not encompass enduring modifications or developing dynamics in eco-tourism. Additional research may be necessary to evaluate the long-term sustainability of eco-tourism in Nagthali, as the impacts and outcomes of this industry may change over time. The study mainly concentrates on the perspectives of tourists, local hotel owners and homestay owners, and representatives from eco-tourism organizations. Additional insights and perspectives from stakeholders such as government agencies or environmental conservation organizations were not extensively explored in this thesis, which would have provided more valuable insights and perspectives in relation to this thesis research. Further research may be necessary to fully comprehend the complexities and dynamics of eco-tourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Interviewee 1

Interview Transcription: Interview with Jhabaraj Neupane, Tour Guide/Local/Secondary Level Teacher

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your experience as a tour guide in the Nagthali, Rasuwa area?

- I am Jhabaraj Neupane, 55 years old from Rasuwa district, working as a secondary level teacher and also working in tourism sector since 1987. I have been working as a trekking and tour guide all over Nepal, mostly to different areas of Rasuwa district like Gatlang, Nagthali, Langtang Himalaya area since I am the local here and I can say that I have got ample knowledge in this sector.

2. What are your thoughts on the ecotourism in Nagthali?

- Well, what I observe and experience about Nagthali is it's of course an emerging eco-tourism hub most likely adapting community based practices since it has a lot of possibilities on mountain tourism, trekking and hiking, homestay tourism, culture tourism however, I feel like concerned stakeholders are not working as needed to improve Nagthali as an emerging destination however there has been so much progress in terms of other nearby areas like Gatlang, Briddim, etc. From this area, you can see the Langtang Himalayas and peaks like Langtang Lirung, Ganesh Himal, and Jugal Himal. This makes it a popular place for trekking and mountaineering. So, I feel, better tourism plans and policies should be implemented in order to preserve the Nagthali area since it is really a nice destination and could be a great asset in terms of community based eco-tourism.

3. How has it evolved over the years?

- It has a long history. Before 1992, Nagthali was a restricted area, and no all tourist could visit there because through Nagthali there is a path to go to Tibetan village. Very limited tourist could visit there only with a special permit from tourism board and tourist had to hire the special officer from Ministry of Tourism which was also so expensive. In 1992, there was a project called TRPAP in Rasuwa, and

that projects main aim was to raise the lifestyle of remote area. From that period, with the close collaboration between the local government, Langtang national park, and the Ministry of Tourism the area was opened which is very famous these days as the Tamang heritage trail. When Nagthali was opened for the international trekkers, at that time there was not any hotels and even tea shop in the area. People had to carry food and tents with organizing groups to stay in there. Now, it contains five or six hotels and trekkers are getting food and accommodation. Local people are getting opportunity to improve their economic status. In many ways, Nagthali is a dream destination, travel can be as cheap as you want.

4. How has it influenced your role as a tour guide and the overall tourism industry in the region?

- Oh, absolutely! In fact, there has been a notable impact on both the accessibility of the area and my understanding of tourism and its related components. The construction of roads has significantly impacted the role of tour guides and the tourism industry in the Rasuwa district. In the absence of roads, reaching remote areas and tourist destinations posed a significant challenge. In many cases, transportation options may be limited to walking for extended periods or utilizing jeeps or motorcycles. The area had a limited capacity for tourist visitation, which resulted in restrictions on the types of tours and activities that could be provided. The construction of roads has significantly enhanced accessibility. Improved accessibility has facilitated tourist access to several areas of the Rasuwa district, such as the Langtang National Park, Gosaikunda Lake, and the Tamang Heritage Trail.

5. From your perspective, what are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

- Before entering directly into the question, let me give you a bit of background. As I already talked about this TRPAP project which started in whole Rasuwa district, this project has been a real blessing in relation to tourism of Rasuwa. TRPAP gave training in many different areas, such as basic hospitality and English language, small hotel and lodge management, food and beverage services, cooking and baking, eco-tourism, local tour guide, basic English language, home-stay management, professional hiking guide, etc. in different areas of Rasuwa including Nagthali. TRPAP did a good job of promoting local culture. It has helped bring back the culture of the area, which was about to extinct. Local groups, where mostly are women, have been able to turn their culture programs into money-making ventures by putting on shows for tourists at reasonable prices. The Community Lodge

and Cultural Center was built with the help of the locals so that they can do business for instance such as homestays, handicrafts, and traditional cultural performances. The Tamangs of Nagthali, likewise Gatlang, now know that tourism is good for them. I believe, this way, eco-tourism has brought several social-cultural impacts to this host community.

6. Do you think it has influenced local traditions or beliefs in any way?

- Yes, ecotourism has changed some of the local customs and beliefs. Tourists' exposure to different ways of life and points of view has led to a certain amount of cultural exchange. Locals try to keep their traditions alive, but they are also more open to new ideas and ways of doing things. This makes for a lively mix of traditional and modern influences which I believe is good in some ways.

7. Has it changed how tourists interact with the local community?

- Ecotourism has developed a stronger bond between tourists and the local community and has grown in popularity in recent years. Tourists can participate in community activities such as farming, cooking, and cultural rituals. In Nagthali, for example, tourists can enjoy a fusion of Tamang and Tibetan culture, craftsmanship, gombas, and so on, which promotes mutual understanding and respect.

8. Have you observed any opportunities for cultural exchange arising from ecotourism?

- -Yes, ecotourism has opened up many doors for cultural exchange. Tourists come from a variety of cultures and bring their own traditions and customs to share with the locals. Similarly, the local people share their culture and customs with tourists who stay in their homestays or eat in their hotels, via the exchange of cultural knowledge and experiences, both tourists and locals benefit. These opportunities for cultural exchange benefit me and other tour guides, and it is one of the benefits of working in this industry.

9. What do you think are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

- Ecotourism has provided considerable economic benefits to Nagthali and other Rasuwa communities such as Thuman, Chilime, and Goljung. It has created jobs and other sources of income like homestays, shops, hotels etc. for the community people as talked earlier. Furthermore, ecotourism has increased demand for local products and services, helping to the expansion of the

local economy. Well, this is something I was thinking to talk about, along with good economic impacts, the contradiction however is people are getting more dependent on tourism and somehow stopped to do agriculture and animal husbandry which could be not good for all of the locals out there since tourism is very seasonal here in Nagthali.

10. Has it generated jobs and opportunities for locals, including tour guides like yourself?

- Yes, ecotourism has certainly generated employment opportunities for locals, including individuals working as tour guides, like myself as I said before.

11. How has ecotourism impacted the environment in Nagthali? Have you observed any changes in the ecosystem or wildlife as a result of ecotourism?

- Well, to give you some context, the architects, gumbas, surrounding mountains and landscapes, nearby spots for instance: Taruche and forest are the major attractions of Nagthali area. In Nagthali, ecotourism has raised awareness about the importance of preserving all these sorts of natural environments and their authenticity. The local community has become more conscious of sustainable practices, such as waste management and conservation efforts. However, an increase in tourist activities specially in the summer season can put pressure on the ecosystem and wildlife. Lately I came to know that last year, part of the nearby forest has been destructed in order to make a wider road for the tourist which is completely not good in my point of view since it may disrupt authenticity of the place and also wildlife vegetation. It is crucial to maintain a balance and implement measures to minimize negative impacts through proper regulations and education.

12. What efforts are being made to minimize the negative environmental impacts of ecotourism in your role as a tour guide?

- As a tour guide, one of my primary tasks is to teach tourists how to minimize their environmental impact. I recommend that people follow Leave No Trace rules, such as using appropriate trash cans and promote ethical wildlife viewing activities. For example, I usually keep some separate rubbish bags on hand in case tourists require them. I encourage tourists to walk and hike as much as they can, and I advocate for eco-friendly lodging and forms of transportation. I also encourage them to participate in conservation efforts if they are taking place at the time. This issue reminds me of an incident that occurred in Pokhara two years ago, when a group of 13 tourists participated in community-based environmental projects and also gathered and donated monies among themselves.

I believe every tour guides and every visitor should have this sense of responsibility regarding the environment.

13. As a tour guide, how do you ensure that you promote responsible tourism practices?

- I've always been interested in this subject. So, to encourage responsible tourism, I talk a lot about how important it is to respect local cultures and customs. Let's use Nagthali as an example, since it was the main topic of this talk. When I go there with a group of tourists, I tell them and encourage them to talk to local people, see and try on Tamang dress, stay in their homestays, and eat local food like Marsi rice, potatoes, barley, etc. I take them to gumbas and tell them the story of how they got there. In the same way, I encourage local people to show tourists their traditional dances and songs, and to tell tourists about their religions and local festivals. When I go to Nagthali, I see that visitors find it interesting to see all of this. In addition to this example, everywhere I go, I encourage tourists to take part in community-based activities that help the local economy, like buying items made in the area or taking part in cultural exchange programs.

14. Are there any rules or regulations in place to protect the environment and the local community that you adhere to?

- Yes, sure, rules and regulations are in place to protect the environment and the local community. As a tour guide, I follow these regulations and ensure that my guests do as well. For example, we follow certain codes of conduct that promote environmental sustainability and community well-being, respect restricted areas, get necessary permits for certain activities, and adhere to specific codes of conduct that promote environmental sustainability and community well-being.

15. How do you collaborate with local NGOs, travel agencies, tour operators, and tourism management offices to ensure responsible tourism practices?

- Yes, I used to collaborate with so many other travel agencies from Kathmandu and Rasuwa district and also with some other tourism related NGO's before when I used to work as a full-time tour guide. Since, I am working as a seasonal tour guide these days, I collaborate with quite few, for example; Rasuwa travels, Mountain view hotel and some homestays. by sharing resources and information, we hope to have as few bad effects on the environment as possible and as many positive effects as possible on the local community.

16. What do you think is the future of ecotourism in Nagthali?

- You know, I've been thinking a lot about this. I mean I am not sure about this. I spoke about Nagthali based on my understanding and guide experience. The place, though small, is authentic, and worth visiting in order to get a good sight and cultural experiences, I would say somehow unique. But being a remote rural location, enough of things must be done, so, if the problems are addressed through concerned stakeholders and the development takes place, the future appears hopeful and could be a better example of eco-tourism destination, especially with the community-based initiatives, else, it's not the case.

17. How can ecotourism be improved to benefit the local community, environment, and tourism industry?

- If you talk about my point of view on this, the best way to improve Nagthali's ecotourism is to build stronger partnerships between the local community, people who work in the tourism business, and government organizations. This can be done by putting in place community-based tourism projects that help the people make money and put conservation of the environment first. For example, building training programs for local guides, supporting the development of sustainable infrastructure, and involving the community in decision-making can be very helpful for everyone involved.

18. Is there anything else you'd like to add about ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, from your perspective as a tour guide?

- As a tour guide, I think that ecotourism in Nagthali has a potential to support more local people, protect the environment, and make long-term tourism growth possible. As we've already talked about, it's important to find a balance between building up tourism and keeping the place's unique character. I hope that Nagthali will get better as a place for ecotourism in the future, and I really wish that more research to be done on this subject.

Appendix B:

Interviewee 2

Interview Transcription: Interview with Nishan Gajurel, Secretary of Dhunche Tourism Management Committee

1. Can you please shortly introduce yourself and your organization?

- My name is Nishan Gajurel, and I am in charge of managing the growth of ecotourism of the areas like Dhunche, Syafrubesi and Nagthali as the Secretary of the Dhunche Tourism Management Committee. Dhunche Tourism Management Committee was formed in 2014 with co-operation with the local community.

2. Can you define what ecotourism means to your organization, and how it relates to Nagthali?

-At the Dhunche Tourism Management Committee, we believe that ecotourism is a positive way to travel responsibly, preserving natural resources and cultural heritage, while also benefiting the local community. Ecotourism in Nagthali offers a wonderful opportunity to explore the area's rich cultural history and natural beauty while being mindful of the environment and preserving it for future generations.

3. What are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali, and how does it impact the local community's traditions and cultural heritage?

-The local community in Nagthali has benefited from ecotourism, which has a good socio-cultural influence on the community as a whole by helping to preserve its cultural history and traditions. It has also helped the community by providing economic opportunities, which has contributed to the reduction of poverty and an improvement in their level of living.

4. How do you address issues of gender equality and social justice in ecotourism in Nagthali?

-That's a good question. Ok, the ecotourism initiatives at Nagthali are motivated by a strong dedication to promoting gender equality and social justice. The objective of our organization is to enhance the agency of women's groups in the area by offering them chances to engage in tourism-related endeavors. The objective is to generate a beneficial influence on both the individuals and the society by taking such actions. The ecotourism initiatives prioritize the inclusion of marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities and differently-abled individuals..

5. What efforts have you made to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali is environmentally sustainable? What efforts have you done to reduce any negative environmental impacts?

-I am proud to say that ecotourism in Nagthali is environmentally sustainable, thanks to the measures we have taken. We promote responsible tourism practices such as waste management, water conservation, and the use of eco-friendly transportation. We work with the local community to positively impact the environment through activities like reforestation and wildlife conservation.

6. What are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali, and how does it contribute to the local economy?

-Ecotourism in Nagthali has had a big good effect on the local economy by creating jobs and bringing in money for local businesses like homestays, restaurants, and souvenir shops. It has also helped to make the local economy less dependent on farmland by making it more diverse. If you had talked with some locals or hotel owners out there, may be you already came to know about it a bit on how the eco-tourism has impacted on their economic side.

7. How do you ensure that the economic benefits of ecotourism are distributed equitably among the local community, including marginalized groups?

-Our organizational group makes it a priority to include underrepresented people in our ecotourism programs. We also work to make sure that economic benefits are shared equally. We actively encourage local communities to take part in tourism-related activities, and we strongly encourage the

growth of local businesses to make sure that locals make a lot of money from tourism while also preserving the natural environment.

8. How does your organization address issues of social justice and climate justice in ecotourism in Nagthali? What steps have you taken to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali is accessible to all visitors, regardless of their socioeconomic status or backgrounds?

-So, basically, we try to make sure that people travel in a way that doesn't hurt the places they visit. In this way, we can work for climate and social justice. Our goal is to make sure that everyone, no matter where they come from or how much money they have, can enjoy nature and other eco-tourism forms in Nagthali. So, our goal is to make sure that ecotourism is fun for everyone. We do this by supporting tourism practices that are open to everyone. I know that it's important to make sure that everyone has a chance to try ecotourism and gain from practices that make tourism more sustainable.

9. What are the challenges you face in promoting sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali, and how do you address these challenges?

-One of the most difficult issues we encounter in fostering sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali is boosting tourist understanding of the need of responsible tourism practices. To address this issue, we organize community education programs and collaborate with local partners to promote sustainable tourist practices. Another obstacle to fostering sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali is balancing tourism needs with the preservation of natural and cultural resources. To address this, we collaborate closely with local communities to develop guidelines for responsible tourist practices that prioritize environmental and cultural heritage protection. Furthermore, in isolated regions like Nagthali, access to resources like as water, energy, and waste management facilities can be restricted, providing additional difficulty for sustainable tourism. We address this issue by employing environmentally friendly techniques and collaborating with local communities to establish long-term infrastructural solutions. Lets see how long way we can go with these initiatives to promote sustainable eco-tourism of Nagthali.

10. How does your organization involve the local community in ecotourism activities, and what steps do you take to ensure that the community benefits from ecotourism in Nagthali?

-Our group is sure that community participation is important in all parts of ecotourism. From the beginning steps of planning to the end of any projects that we implement for tourism of Nagthali and other areas of Rasuwa district for instance; Dhunche area, we make sure that the local community is involved in every step. We have a strong belief in giving back to the community and helping projects that use ecotourism to promote sustainable development.

11. How does your organization work with local authorities and government agencies to promote and regulate sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali?

-In order to promote and manage ecotourism that is both environmentally responsible and sustainable in Nagthali, we collaborate closely with the local authorities and government agencies. We engage with other groups to promote environmentally responsible tourism practices and to build ecotourism regulations, and we also offer technical assistance to local partners in this endeavor. We are actively looking for partnerships with other groups and stakeholders who share our vision and commitment to promoting environmentally responsible and sustainable tourism in the region.

12. How do you educate visitors about the importance of sustainable ecotourism practices in Nagthali, and are there any specific initiatives or programs in place for this purpose?

-To teach people about how important it is to practice ecotourism in a way that is good for the environment, we hold community education events and post information on our website and other ways of getting the word out about how to be a good tourist. For instance: we organized clean-up campaign recently along with the collaboration of local communities and eco-tourism workshop held for 3 days back in 2019. We also offer guided walks and training programs that teach people how to travel in a way that is good for the environment.

13. Lastly, what steps are you taking to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali is inclusive and accessible to all visitors, regardless of their backgrounds or identities, while also promoting gender equality, social justice, and climate justice?

-We support gender equality, social justice, and climate justice in all aspects of our work to make sure that ecotourism in Nagthali is open to all visitors and accessible to everyone. As I said earlier, we work closely with the local communities to make sure that all visitors, no matter where they come

from or who they are, feel welcome and valued. We also back projects that help everyone have equal access to tourism possibilities.

Appendix C:

Interviewee 3

Interview Transcription: Interview Anonymous, Relation Officer- Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee

Interviewer: Good evening, sir. So, can we get started if you are ready?

Interviewee: Good evening. Yes, Sure, I'd be happy to answer your questions. Before I start, I'd like to let you know that I'd rather be anonymous in this interview, if that's okay with you.

Interviewer: That's perfectly fine with me. Since we discussed it previously in our informal discussion, that is entirely your choice, so no problems there.

1. Can you please shortly introduce yourself; I mean your role and your organization?

- Yes, I work for an ecotourism company in Nagthali, Nepal, which is a village in the Himalayas. Our organization is called the Nagthali Eco-tourism Committee. It was founded in 2021, after the pandemic, even though I thought it could have been started earlier. Its goal is to promote tourist practices that are good for the environment and for people. I mostly work to build connections with visitors, stakeholders, and people in the community to encourage responsible travel and make sure that everyone's voice is heard in the process of developing tourism in this area.

2. Can you define what ecotourism means to your organization, and how it relates to Nagthali?

- Our organizations says that ecotourism means encouraging travelers to act in ways that are good for the environment and the communities around them. It also hopes to help the local economy. Being specific about Nagthali what I can say is in Nagthali, the plan is to work with the local people of the community to build tourism projects that show off the area's natural beauty while protecting the local

customs and history. That's how it is relevant to Nagthali and we are striving to work out best to promote the tourism industry here though there are so many obstacles to work with, for instance lack of infrastructure and amenities being a remote area, lack of promotional campaigns and advertisements, also people are less aware about responsible tourism practices, however, I can say its getting a little improved now. So, yes, still there is still a lot to work on promoting eco-tourism of Nagthali.

3. What are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali, and how does it impact the local community's traditions and cultural heritage?

- That's really interesting! It seems like ecotourism in Nagthali has a positive impact on the local culture and traditions. What I observed during these years of my experience is, Ecotourism has a big effect on the local community because it brings people from different cultures together and helps them understand each other. People from the area can teach tourists about their habits and way of life, and tourists can learn from the locals' information and experiences. This can help break down barriers between cultures and make people more aware and respectful of each other. We also sometimes look at what tourists and local people have to say about this. Ecotourism can also help to keep traditional arts and crafts alive, and I think it has helped in some ways in Nagthali as well. Visitors can find out about the background and importance of different crafts, and locals can show off their skills. This helps keep these ethnic traditions alive, which can be a source of pride for the local community.

Yeah, we know that tourists can sometimes hurt local communities, especially when it comes to equal rights for men and women and social justice. For example, if tourists don't follow local customs and practices, it can lead to a loss of cultural identity and a drop in cultural heritage. This is why it's important to support tourism that is responsible and sustainable and respects the culture and traditions of the area. I, along with the rest of the Nagthali eco-tourism committee and other stakeholder organizations, make sure that our programs are open to and accepting of people of all backgrounds and genders. We want everyone to feel like they belong and have a good time.

4. How do you address issues of gender equality and social justice in ecotourism in Nagthali?

- Great question! Nagthali Ecotourism Committee prioritizes gender equality and social justice. Ecotourism should be available to all, regardless of gender or background. We as an organization,

empower local women to promote gender equality. We train and hire tourism women and encourage their decision-making. We educate visitors and residents about gender equality. However, the participation still seems to be low, but we are working on it. Similarly, we engage with local community organizations to identify and remove program impediments for social justice. We work to guarantee that ecotourism serves all community members and does not worsen social inequality. We also support local culture and customs, which can give the community pride and identity. In every aspect of our work, I am aware that sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali requires gender equality and social justice. I will continue to promote socially and environmentally responsible ecotourism.

5. What efforts have you made to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali is environmentally sustainable? What efforts have you done to reduce any negative environmental impacts?

- Several precautions are taken to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali does not have a harmful influence on the local ecosystem. For example, we educate our customers about proper waste disposal and encourage them to use refillable water bottles. In addition, we work closely with the community to develop eco-friendly tourism activities and create awareness on environmental preservation.

We advise guests to use energy-efficient appliances and equipment and to turn off lights and electronics. What I also want you to know is that we are constantly looking for ways to make our programs more environmentally friendly. We're looking into solar and hydro power to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. To limit plastic waste, we also promote biodegradable items and urge people to bring reusable bags and containers. Despite our efforts, Nagthali ecotourism confronts environmental challenges. Because of the village's isolation and lack of infrastructure, garbage disposal and energy management are difficult. Implementing sustainable approaches is difficult due to a lack of funds and resources.

6. What are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali, and how does it contribute to the local economy?

- Oh well! Ecotourism in Nagthali contributes in some ways to the local economy, but there are still steps we can take to improve its economic impact. For instance, we are attempting to ensure that the economic benefits of ecotourism are distributed more equitably throughout the local community, including excluded groups. We also encourage people to purchase and utilize local goods and services, which can help the local economy expand and create more employment. We are also aware

that ecotourism can have unintended negative effects on the economy, such as making locals overly dependent on tourism and driving up prices of local products. To remedy this, our organization is working to ensure that the expansion of tourism does not negatively impact other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture and small businesses. This can help make the economy more diverse and prevent negative events from occurring.

7. How do you ensure that the economic benefits of ecotourism are distributed equitably among the local community, including marginalized groups?

- We want to make sure that everyone in the local community benefits from ecotourism, especially those who may have been marginalized in the past. So, we basically team up with local community groups and organizations to find ways to boost the economy and make sure everyone in the community can benefit from these opportunities.

8. How does your organization address issues of social justice and climate justice in ecotourism in Nagthali? What steps have you taken to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali is accessible to all visitors, regardless of their socioeconomic status or backgrounds?

- Sorry, can you please repeat the question again?..... oh got it! I guess that's a very important question.

Absolutely! Promoting social and climate justice is crucial in ecotourism, but it may also be a difficult and demanding task. We know that local governments, government departments, and other stakeholders must collaborate to make tourism practices more sustainable and these issues more important. As a result, we collaborate closely with these partners to develop and promote policies and practices in Nagthali's tourism industry that prioritize social and environmental sustainability. However, some significant parties, such as the local government, are not putting enough emphasis on this issue.

Furthermore, we believe that education and training are critical in encouraging people to travel in a responsible and environmentally friendly manner. We want to spread the word about how crucial it is for ecotourism to be fair to people and the environment, and we want to encourage people to make responsible travel decisions. This involves supporting environmentally efficient modes of transportation, reducing trash, and respecting local cultures and habits.

However, it might be difficult to ensure that our programs are available to all guests, regardless of their financial situation or where they come from. We all know that ecotourism can be expensive and caters to a specific sort of tourist. We are constantly exploring for methods to make ecotourism in Nagthali more affordable and accessible to a wider range of individuals. This includes providing discounts to local residents and promoting community-based tourism programs that benefit the entire area.

9. What are the challenges you face in promoting sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali, and how do you address these challenges?

-Ok, to be honest, as the Nagthali Eco-Tourism Committee, we have a lot of problems when we try to make ecotourism in Nagthali more sustainable. One of the hardest things to do is to find the right mix of economic, social, and environmental issues. It can be hard to make tourism projects that are good for people and the world and also make money. The place also doesn't have enough infrastructure and tools, which is a problem. Nagthali is in the middle of nowhere, so it's not easy to get clean water, toilets, or medical care there. This can make it hard to give tourists the services and amenities they need while also keeping the earth and society healthy.

To solve these problems, we work closely with the local community, government agencies, and other interested parties to build and run ecotourism programs that are good for the environment, people, and the economy. We also encourage people to buy and use local goods and services, and we make it a top goal to include underrepresented groups in the growth of tourism. We also try to teach tourists and locals about the importance of environmental practices that are good for the environment, such as putting trash in the right place, saving energy, and honoring local traditions and customs.

Overall, promoting ecotourism in Nagthali that is good for the environment and the people who live there is not easy, but we are still committed to working toward tourism growth that is good for both the environment and the people who live there.

10. How does your organization involve the local community in ecotourism activities, and what steps do you take to ensure that the community benefits from ecotourism in Nagthali?

- Ok, I guess I have already answered this question to some extent. We engage the local community in ecotourism activities in various ways. We train and hire local residents by working with local guides and tourism operators. We help local community projects that promote economic development. We engage the local community in ecotourism activities in various ways. We train and employ local residents by working with local guides and tourism operators. We help local community projects that promote economic development and sustainability.

11. How does your organization work with local authorities and government agencies to promote and regulate sustainable ecotourism in Nagthali?

- In order to promote and manage ecotourism that is both environmentally responsible and sustainable in Nagthali, we collaborate closely with the local authorities and government agencies. This includes working to educate policymakers and other stakeholders on the benefits of sustainable tourism practices, as well as creating partnerships with local government agencies to facilitate tourism that is less harmful to the environment.

12. How do you educate visitors about the importance of sustainable ecotourism practices in Nagthali, and are there any specific initiatives or programs in place for this purpose?

- Well! We organized different activities and events to teach people about how to do ecotourism sustainably in Nagthali. Some examples of sustainable practices that can be taught to visitors, I believe, are reducing waste and conserving energy. This can be done through educational materials and training programs. We plan events like cleaning up the neighborhood and celebrating local traditions to encourage responsible travel. These programs aim to teach visitors about sustainable ecotourism and encourage them to engage with the local community. For example, visitors may learn about ways to reduce their impact on the environment while traveling and participate in activities that support the local economy. However, I along with my organization must accept that the initiatives and programmes to encourage sustainable ecotourism practices in Nagthali area are not taking place that frequently as it should. I am now planning to inform and aware all stakeholders and organize the workshops in the sooner future.

13. Lastly, what steps are you taking to ensure that ecotourism in Nagthali is inclusive and accessible to all visitors, regardless of their backgrounds or identities, while also promoting gender equality, social justice, and climate justice?

- As the Nagthali Eco-Tourism Committee, we want to make sure that ecotourism in Nagthali is open to everyone. To do this, we take a number of steps that give equal importance to social justice, climate justice, and equality between men and women. As mentioned earlier in previous questions, these steps include working closely with the local community to create sustainable tourism programs that benefit everyone in the community, encouraging the use of local goods and services, and making sure that tourism development is balanced with other economic sectors like agriculture and small-scale industries.

We also try to make people aware of how important it is to travel in a responsible and sustainable way. We promote gender equality and social justice by making sure that our programs are open to all visitors, no matter who they are or where they come from. We also work closely with government agencies and other stakeholders to make sure that Nagthali's tourism business has policies and practices that put social and environmental sustainability first. Overall, we want to build a tourism industry that helps both the local community and the environment, while also promoting social justice and climate justice, by putting sustainability and inclusivity at the top of our list.

Interviewer: That's so great to know. Thank you for your time and information.

Interviewee: Thank you too for letting me put some insights into this topic.

Appendix D:

Interviewee 4

Interview Transcription: Interview with Dawa Sangbo Tamang, Local and Hotel Owner of Himalayan View Hotel

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your background in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- My name is Dawa Sangbo Tamang and I am 56 years old. I have been running the hotel named as Mountain View Hotel since 2063 B.S. (2006 A.D.). At that time, there was an organization called TRPAP, which opened this route. Before that, it's such a remote area, even there was so much of

scarcity of water, water pipelines have been constructed now. After TRPAP project, when it opened the route, I thought that if I start running a hotel, I will have the job opportunity and it will be a service for the guests as well. So, with this thought, I started the hotel with 4 rooms and a small temporary kitchen.

2. How long have you lived here? / How long have you been operating your hotel in the area?

- I used to live here since 2004. As said, I have been running my hotel since 2006, means, 17 years now.

3. What do you think of the ecotourism in Nagthali?

- I don't exactly know what the name of this kind of tourism is here in Nagthali. The main activities for tourists here are sightseeing, trekking and mountaineering, cultural show, local foods and forest visit where people from the community play an important role in showing these activities to the tourists. The natural things which were here are still the same, what we have made new is this gumba. According to Tibetan language, its called jhewa panten. Atisewa panten, the mark of lama pancha. If you see the upper side, the gumba covered by stones, you can see a big stone where om is written by the finger of him.

4. How has it changed over the years? What is your experience?

- At the time when I started hotel here, there was no tourists coming to this area. At that time, I remember earning just 10 thousand Nepali rupees during one season. Now it has changed and let's say we earn roughly around 8-9 lakhs Nepali rupees during one season. Prior to the earthquake, we had 15-20 guests each day in my hotel alone, with additional tourists visiting nearby hotels. So, the trend of tourists flow in this area has gradually increased. However, the earthquake and COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact; tourists did not return for two years following the earthquake, but it has gradually increased since then. Again, there was a corona pandemic that had an impact, but the flow of tourists is gradually improving now. To add, this area also doesn't have that much literate people, so I think this is also the reason that tourists flow is less here compared to other areas.

5. What do you think are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

- I did not feel that much of the impacts until now.
(But then interviewer explained; what socio-cultural impacts mean, what could be the examples of positive and negative socio-cultural impacts)

- Oh, okay! In a season, when tourists arrival gets more, a cultural show is performed because of which the new generation, our kids get to learn about our culture, I mean Tamang culture. Similarly, it has also been beneficial in encouraging the people to utilize local products. Not many, but very few are also working as a tour guide because of tourism. Also, the water pipelines get improved far better than the past days.

6. Have you also experienced negative impacts?

- If we talk about the negative sides, then, for me its like our Tamang culture gets commoditized, for example, people, especially, the new generation somehow used to adopt other forms of dresses rather than our traditional Tamang dress. Also, Lama people are found to be less in monasteries. Regarding the foods, some hotels are adopting the modified menu rather than the local food, they are selling other kinds of foods like chowmeins, dumplings, pizza, burgers etc., which I think is not good in terms of saving our culture. The biggest problem I see is overdependence on tourism, people neglect to do agricultural activities.

With this talk, I remember one incidence which I want to share with you, the are some tourists who don't take tour guide with them sometimes. Two years back, 2 tourists disappeared since they did not take guide with them. Then, we all started to search for them, but then, after some days they are found to be in Tribhuvan, boarder of Tibet. I mean its always better to have a tour guide with them for the tourists.

7. Has it affected local traditions or beliefs in any way?

- Not really, until now. Some tourists who follow the Christian religion occasionally urge us to accept the Christian religion by giving us the benefits, but that is not an issue; they can talk about it, but it is our choice which religion to follow.

8. Has it changed the way locals interact with tourists?

- Ok, may be a little in terms of language. I don't know if its relevant to talk about this here, tourists also teach us to learn about the cooking methods. When I first came here and started my hotel, honestly, I did not know what black tea was and what milk tea was, since I never learned English. I got to know about it from the tourists. This is just a simple example, there are so many names of food and the way to cook those, I learnt it from the tourists. I want to say, this also has been a process of

interaction for me. Maybe I don't remember right now, but there have had many advantages to me and other locals through interacting with tourists.

9. What do you think are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

- We obviously gain economic benefits from ecotourism here. If more tourists come, our business will grow; otherwise, we will lose money. There are seven properties nearby, including mine, and we are all fully reliant on tourism for a living. People avoid agricultural occupations since the farming land is far away. As a result, people begin to manage hotels and homestays and become reliant on them. That indicates that ecotourism has had a significant economic impact on people like us.

10. Has it created jobs and opportunities for locals? How has it affected local businesses and the economy?

- Um, job opportunities, sure, if a large group of tourists comes here, we hire locals as cooks, which is good for hotel owners like us and also good for other unemployed people. It creates job opportunities for people, not only here, but in other villages and nearby communities who sell cabbages, people who run poultry farms, people who keep goats and sheep for a living, and people who grow barleys, because we need to buy cabbages and other vegetables, chicken and goat and sheep meat, barleys, and so on from them in order to serve tourists in our kitchen.

11. How has ecotourism affected the environment in Nagthali?

- I think, there are not any effects until now.

12. How do you think ecotourism in Nagthali could be better managed?

- OK, for me, I guess there needs to be more advertisement of this place because from this place there are not many people who works as a guide and who works in trekking agency. Making brochures and making it reach to Tourism Board, Ministry of Tourism and trekking agencies will help for the promotion of this place in my opinion. But people talk about other infrastructure like better road but what I see from the tourists is they don't want a good and wider road and a good means of transportation to come here, they prefer walking or hiking. So, for me, road is not a problem, there should be more advertisements.

13. Are there any rules or regulations in place to protect the environment and the local community?

- Yes, we do that. We formed a main committee from Gatlang to Bridim, and another one from Thuman to Nagthali. However, these committees we formed have now been discovered to be non-functional. However, we are in the process of reforming those committees, making them useful, and revising the rules, regulations, and policies for tourism, both local and international, the environment, and the local community.

14. Do you think locals have a say in how ecotourism is managed?

- Yes, they also think the same as mine on how eco-tourism could be managed here. They also talk that committees need to be reformed and make it work actively.

15. Is there anything else you'd like to add about ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- As we talked earlier, I again want to say that advertisement is the most needed thing for this place as of now so that more tourists get to know more about this place and make it beneficial to create the job opportunities for the local people and support us financially. Besides that, I also want to say it would be better if the concerned stakeholders emphasize also on making one educational institution here since the kids still have to go a little far away for their education. Opening health care centre and recreational activities centre are also the needed thing for this place. Lastly, through this interview I want to request to the concerned authorities to hire local people in order to support them in the tourism projects organized here.

Appendix E:

Interviewee 5

Interview Transcription: Interview with Thomas Einhsus, Tourist from Germany

Interviewer: The purpose of this interview is to gain your perceptions and experience towards the ecotourism, here at Nagthali, Rasuwa. Is that fine with you that I am going to take a short interview with you with this purpose?

Interviewee: Yes, it's all fine.

Interviewer: Thank you.

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your trip to Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- My name is Thomas and family name is Einhsus. I am 60 years. I am from Germany, but I live and work in Switzerland. I am very happy to be on holiday into this amazing place. I like Nagthali very much because first off all, it's no road going up here, so it's no cars, it's no traffic and for me it's a very very authentic place.

2. Why did you choose to visit Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- Because as I said, this place is very authentic and it's not so many tourists coming here. This is what I am looking for and I believe, also many people who come to Nepal are looking for this kind of place. I love the authenticity and also the nature because many viewpoints here may be one of most beautiful viewpoints.

3. How much are you familiar with the concept of eco-tourism?

- I like ecotourism very much. I like the foods which grow in here. Especially, the people who comes from the West, they appreciate the authentic people here and then also the food which is very appealing.

4. How has it affected your experience in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- The experience is getting interaction with local people. In the evening, when you sit with local people together, you see how they prepare the food, its amazing and also I like the feedback which you get from the people.

5. What do you think are the socio-cultural impacts of eco-tourism in Nagthali?

- First off all, different people are coming to different places. There are some people who like beach and some people who like big cities. Then, there are some people who like may be nature like mountains, fresh air and also like to see some stars in the sky in the night, and for all those, this place is amazing.

6. Have you noticed any changes in the local traditions or beliefs?

- Ok, this is like everywhere. It's like, we all do have cell phones and for sure it's changing the social life of the people, it's one time in a negative sense and one time in a positive sense.

7. How have you interacted with the local community?

- I find my interaction very nice because I have a lot of interest in foreign cultures and travelling. I am very very happy, especially, here to be a part of their life.

8. Have you had any opportunities for cultural exchange?

- Well, how I describe this, it's always the cultural exchange. Ok, the people speak a little bit english but I don't speak really nepali but people understand also hindi, so, sure we can exchange a lot of sense. I have a lot of questions about this area. For me, that looks like Buddha statue, but people give me knowledge that its gumba. For me, its very beautiful to learn, people share their tradition and like to give also when we are open. It's always of the person, if he is open, he can gain a lot from the local people. There are also many people who speak very good English, so, cultural exchange is not a problem.

9. What do you think are the environmental impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali and what have you noticed?

- I wish for Nagthali that more people come but then in every place, it becomes a little bit problem, all the local people have to deal with plastics and metals from the beverages people drink. This could be a problem, maybe, someone should find a good solution. I find this not to the local people; it may be on us foreign people. We carry the things from down which we have consumed here like the bottles and plastic things. The rubbish should be managed properly. This should be taken as awareness. I think in the future, this is a beautiful place and people who have been here will speak to some other friends, may be with people who don't have come to Nepal and send a lot of photos from here. For instance, I hope, in future, some of my friends will come to witness this place and to get the amazing experience. Then, it could be important to keep the environment clean. As more people come, the environment will suffer more.

10. What do you think can be done to minimize the negative environmental impacts of Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- I think they are doing very very well already for the moment but when the tourists are increasing, like I said, may be the balance between the hotel owners and the foreigners is important to care for the environment. It's not too much people coming now, but the place will be imbalanced when more people come.

11. How do you think tourism could be more managed in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- This is always how much advertisement you make of the place. Then, it's a question how many people you want also. For example, you said that you live in Copenhagen, Denmark, if you know, in Copenhagen, people like tourists coming but when its too many tourists, they say that its becoming more imbalanced.

12. What do you think about the future of eco-tourism in Nagthali?

- I think this destination still have huge potentials because the nature here is so beautiful and I hope that local authorities, hotel owners and higher authorities around need to understand how beautiful and precious this place is. For me, it's a pro.

13. Would you recommend Nagthali as an ecotourism destination to others?

- Absolutely.
I would be better quiet so that no more people come here. No, I am joking.

14. Is there anything else you'd like to add about ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- I think, I like it and I met also some American people, Canadian people and people from other countries. They were all amazed and very happy to witness this place. I can advise everyone who come here, people who come from Thuman and people who come from Thatuthangi, to stay at least one night here in this place to not to miss out the beauty of this place since they reach here in the middle of the day.

Appendix F:

Interviewee 6

Interview Transcription: Interview with Namgel Sherpa, Tour operator, Executive Director of Namgel Travel and Tours

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your travel agency or tour operator and your experience in the tourism industry in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

- My name is Namgel Sherpa, and I run Namgel Travel and Tours as the executive director. I've worked in the tourist business in Nagthali, Rasuwa, for more than ten years, so I've seen how it has grown and changed.

2. What do you think of the ecotourism in Nagthali?

-Oh, Nagthali ecotourism is fantastic! The natural beauty of the place is breathtaking, and the local culture is rich and distinct. The eco-tourism sector in Nagthali is still in its early stages, but it has enormous potential for long-term development that helps both the local people and the environment.

3. How has it changed over the years?

-I've noticed a substantial growth in the number of people interested in eco-tourism in Nagthali over the years. This is due, in part, to increased traveler awareness of the necessity of ethical and sustainable travel practices, as well as increased interest in authentic and immersive cultural experiences. As a result, more sustainable tourism initiatives that stress environmental and social sustainability have been developed. Though, we must admit that covid-19 pandemic has adverse effect here as well likewise the other destinations of the world.

4. How has it affected your travel agency and the tourism industry in the area?

- Ecotourism in Nagthali has provided an excellent chance for our travel agency to promote sustainable tourism practices while also supporting the local population. We collaborate closely with the local community to establish ecologically friendly and socially responsible tourism activities that also provide economic advantages to the town. This has assisted us in attracting more people who are interested in environmentally conscious travel and cultural activities. I am working on to find more

good ways to promote Nagthali as an emerging eco-tourism hub, once, it will be explored more, it will be good for the tourism in this region, meanwhile, also for my business.

5. What do you think are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-From what I've seen, ecotourism has helped keep Nagthali's culture and traditions alive. For example, tourists are urged to take part in cultural events like traditional dances and music shows. This practice helps keep local customs alive and gives money to the community. Tourists can learn about local customs and gain a better understanding of and respect for the people who live there. People can, for example, learn about the history of the area by going to cultural events or museums. Ecotourism has helped the people who live there by giving them jobs and money. Because of this, their customs and culture have also been kept and spread.

6. Has it affected local traditions or beliefs in any way?

-Okay, that's a tricky one! It appears that the impact of ecotourism on local traditions and beliefs in Nagthali has been limited. It can be said that the initiatives undertaken has contributed positively to the promotion and preservation of local traditions. It has also provided economic benefits to the community and raised awareness among visitors about the significance of cultural heritage.

7. Has it changed the way tourists interact with the local community?

-Yes, it appears that ecotourism has had an impact on the way tourists engage with the local community in Nagthali. We kindly encourage visitors to engage in responsible and respectful tourism practices, such as taking the time to learn about local culture and traditions, and supporting the local economy by purchasing locally made goods. This is beneficial in promoting cultural exchange and fostering community engagement.

8. Has it created any opportunities for cultural exchange?

-Nagthali has seen many opportunities for cultural exchange due to ecotourism. Activities such as home-stays, cultural festivals, and guided tours allow visitors to learn about the local culture and traditions. In my opinion, promoting cross-cultural understanding and preserving local cultural heritage are facilitated by this.

9. What do you think are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-Ok, I guess, the development of ecotourism in Nagthali has brought about positive economic changes by creating a valuable source of income for numerous members of the local community. As you can see the progression of people doing hotel business and homestay business, tour guides, though there are still some who have to be dependent on the traditional industry like agriculture due to the lack of sources. Tourism has the potential to boost the local economy by generating demand for local goods and services, while also creating employment opportunities. This is a great way to contribute to the growth and stability of the local economy in the long run.

10. Has it created jobs and opportunities for locals?

-Certainly! The development of ecotourism in Nagthali has provided significant employment and economic benefits for the local community. This presents a range of possibilities for local guides, tourism operators, and other service providers. However, as I talked in the previous question, still there are a lot of locals in the community who needs to be benefitted with the tourism aspects of Nagthali, rather, we hope it will happen soon and we can see every local being facilitated through the tourism of the area. For that, there needs to be a very good emphasis upon the eco-tourism of Nagthali by all stakeholders including government with close collaboration with the community.

11. How has it affected local businesses and the economy?

-Yes, I mean! Ecotourism has been good for local companies and the economy in Nagthali, but there are still some things that need to be fixed to keep the industry going. For example, more could be done to make sure that economic gains are shared fairly in the local community, especially among groups that have been left out. Also, there needs to be more support for sustainable tourism methods and less damage to the environment. Even with these problems, the growth of ecotourism in Nagthali offers travelers a unique and real experience that could help the area's long-term economic and social growth.

12. How has ecotourism affected the environment in Nagthali?

-Since I started working in this area through my travel business, I can say that there are more pros than cons to ecotourism. The environment is cleaner now than it was in the past. Before clean

campaigns, people used to throw their trash in a nearby river and on a road corner. Now that they are more aware, they have set up some trash cans. I've also noticed that locals are now aware of how to turn food waste into soil at home. This is one way that waste management is going on here.

Bird watching and jungle safaris are now popular things to do in Nagthali. This makes us a little scared, because if the number of tourists who come to watch birds and go on jungle safaris keeps going up, it could hurt the plants and animals. So, we're still doing study on it so that we can avoid problems and run our business in the right way.

13. Have you noticed any changes in the ecosystem or wildlife?

- Nagthali offers various wildlife eco-tourism activities such as jungle safaris, bird watching, and animal trekking. Due to its low visitor numbers and seasonal tourism, Nagthali's ecology and animals have changed. During peak season, certain animals become more acclimated to humans and may approach tourists more often. Human traffic also affect vegetation during the peak season. We engage with local communities and conservation organizations to ensure sustainable tourism. We prioritize responsible tourism to conserve the local habitat and wildlife despite low visitor numbers.

14. Are there any environmental concerns or issues you have noticed because of ecotourism?

-What I experience about this is ecotourism has been observed to have some environmental concerns to a certain degree. The potential effects of human activity on the surrounding ecosystems and wildlife are a significant area of concern. The consequences of this can include degradation of habitats, disruption of breeding and feeding behaviors, and heightened pollution levels. But again, I am saying this usually happens in the peak season, let's say around mid-year. The potential impact of ecotourism on climate change is a concern, particularly with regards to the increased transportation and energy usage that may result.

15. What are the efforts being made to minimize the negative environmental impacts of ecotourism?

-Yes, certainly, along with running my travel business, my travel company and my team are also trying to lessen the effects of ecotourism on Nagthali. First, we have tight rules for responsible tourism, such as how to deal with trash, save energy, and respect local traditions and customs. These rules are made in collaboration with the local community and authorities. We work with local communities and environmental groups to make sure that our work is sustainable and good for the

environment. I've noticed that there isn't enough funds for eco-friendly technologies and practices like solar energy and sustainable transportation. I also heard from the Dhunche Tourism Committee that the government and local partners are having serious talks about funds.

16. What can you do to make sure that your travel agent or tour operator encourages responsible tourism?

-Good question. Our travel business promotes ethical tourism in several ways. First, we teach our staff and clients about ethical tourist behaviors including recycling, saving energy, and respecting local cultures and traditions and environment as mentioned earlier. Second, we create ecotourism tours. Finally, we collaborate with tourist partners to create and utilize responsible tourism standards to ensure our operations are sustainable and good for local communities and habitats, which has been doing well. If you talk only about Nagthali-based ecotourism, it has a long way to go.

17. How do you work with local non-governmental organizations and tourism control offices to make sure tourism is done in a responsible way?

-We work with non-governmental organizations and tourism control offices in the area to make sure that tourism is done in a responsible way. These groups help us come up with rules for responsible tourism. We also help with local environmental and community projects and talk to people there to make sure what we do is good for the area and will last. We take part in industry-wide projects and workshops that work to make tourism more environmentally friendly. Working with these groups makes sure that our business methods meet world standards for responsible tourism and helps the tourism industry grow in a way that is good for the environment.

18. What do you think is the future of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-Ok. What I see is that the future of ecotourism in Nagthali looks promising. The region provides a one-of-a-kind blend of natural beauty, cultural legacy, and adventure options, attracting an increasing number of responsible visitors interested in sustainable tourism. I believe that with good planning and investment, as well as the necessary amount of emphasis from the major players like government and local authorities and collaboration of those major stakeholders with the local community, Nagthali can become a top community-based ecotourism destination in the Rasuwa district and, in the meantime, in Nepal.

19. How can it be improved to benefit the local community, environment, and tourism industry?

-To preserve Nagthali ecotourism, we need a more comprehensive and imaginative approach. This includes working with community organizations and government agencies to create and execute responsible tourism rules that stress environmental conservation, community development, and cultural preservation.

Tourism infrastructure construction can also prioritize local materials and labor, which helps local companies and protects the destination's culture and history. Instead of only focusing on the number of visitors, we all should carry an interest to promote Nagthali as a unique and authentic tourism destination with immersive cultural experiences and natural features.

20. Is there anything else you'd like to add about ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

-Not much, really, since I already told you what I knew and had done about the place as the director of a travel agency in answer to your other questions. I just want to stress how important responsible tourism is in Nagthali and how stakeholders need to work together to make sure that tourism is good for the community, the environment, and the tourism business. Lastly, I want to encourage responsible travelers to go to Nagthali and enjoy the unique beauty and culture of this wonderful place while helping local communities and conservation efforts.

Appendix G:

Interviewee 7

Interview Transcription: Interview with Chhiring Sangbo, local and Homestay owner

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your background in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

-My name is Chhiring Sangbo, and I was born and raised here in Nagthali. My family has lived in this beautiful and serene hilltop village for generations. My parents were farmers, and as a child, I learned to love and respect the land. For around 5 years of my life, I also used to run a hotel in Kathmandu but over time, I became increasingly aware of the potential of our village to attract tourists seeking a peaceful and authentic experience, which led me to establish my eco guest house.

2. How long have you lived here? / How long have you been operating your homestay in the area?

-I have always lived in Nagthali, which is almost 34 years now except the years I ran a hotel in Swayambhu, Kathmandu. I've been running my homestay for about 7 years. I realized that many travelers were looking for a place where they could connect with nature and learn about the local culture, so I chose to turn my home into an eco-guest house. It's been fun to meet people from all over the world and show them the beauty of our village and the area around it like tatopani, syafrubesi, gatlang etc.

3. What do you think of the current state of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-The trend of ecotourism in Nagthali is showing a consistent increase. The number of visitors to our location is increasing due to the appeal of our eco-friendly way of life and the chance to encounter our distinct culture and natural surroundings. The statement emphasizes the importance of managing growth in a sustainable manner to ensure the preservation of the environment and lifestyle.

4. How has it changed over the years?

-In the past decade, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of visitors seeking an eco-friendly and culturally immersive experience. I remember when I was a kid, its just like very few tourists coming to the area. It's been amazing to witness the increased participation of the local community in catering to the needs and desires of tourists, and that's way we experience a larger number of tourists these days but its seasonal unfortunately.

5. What has been your personal experience with ecotourism in Nagthali?

-My own experience has been good with ecotourism. I've been able to introduce people from all around the world to our culture and way of life because of it.

6. Do you think it has been beneficial for the local community?

-Absolutely, our local community has benefited much from ecotourism. It has strengthened our economy, encouraged small businesses locally like mine, and produced job possibilities. You can see that this area now contains among 5 homestays and some hotels but if you go and observe the Langtang area, where tourists mostly come for trekking, hiking and mountaineering activities, there has been significant increase in the local businesses, providing a source of money to the local community and enhancing the trekking and hiking experience of the tourists as well.

7. What do you think are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-Ok, if you talk with local authorities, you may get better insight, but what I know is Ecotourism has changed Nagthali's culture and civilization. It has brought us together as we welcome travelers and increase their experience. Sharing our traditions with guests helps maintain and promote our culture. However, I feel that younger generations may be drawn to more lucrative opportunities in the service sector, leading to a decline in the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices.

8. Has it affected local traditions or beliefs in any way?

-I think, yes. Ecotourism has made us appreciate our traditions and beliefs. It's inspired us to share our traditions with others. Personally, I am so happy to see that tourists coming here enjoy so much our local traditions. We are aware to protect our traditions against commercialization and exploitation, however, as the local at the area, I experience some of the teenagers' locals try to adapt western culture which may affect our local traditions and beliefs.

9. Has it changed the way locals interact with tourists?

-Definitely. As ecotourism has grown, native people have become more involved in tourist activities. Now, they feel more at ease talking to tourists, telling them stories, and teaching them about our culture and surroundings.

10. What do you think are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-Our local economy has been significantly bolstered by ecotourism. It has generated a constant stream of income, which has raised the living standards of many in our village. It has also encouraged the preservation of our natural resources.

11. Has it created jobs and opportunities for locals?

-People in the area are getting jobs. If we look at my situation, one day the municipality announced that training for homestays was starting, and now I'm the owner of my own homestay. Some people in the area have opened their own hotels and homestays. But there are still some businesses related to outsiders where they hire people instead of locals because they have more knowledge and experience.

12. How has ecotourism affected the environment in Nagthali? Have you noticed any changes in the ecosystem or wildlife?

-Ecotourism has shown us how important it is to protect our surroundings. More work has been done to protect our environment and wildlife, and these efforts have mostly been successful. We've seen some good signs of change, like the return of some bird species and less damage on our hills. People who are getting better in terms of their economy now starts to use biogas instead of firewood, which has stopped people from cutting down trees but its not a case of all local people.

13. Are there any environmental concerns or issues you have noticed because of ecotourism?

-Yes, I guess, there are some like waste management and excessive use of resource and yes, also pollution in the tourist's season.

14. How do you think ecotourism in Nagthali could be better managed?

-Since, I'm not that knowledgeable on this topic, I don't have much to say but as a local and homestay owner, I think the local community, government, and tourist stakeholders should work together to improve Nagthali's ecotourism. Creating a sustainable tourist plan, adopting waste management systems, and regulating tourism expansion could be some examples if I am right.

15. Are there any rules or regulations in place to protect the environment and the local community?

-Yes, there are some rules in place, such as limits on building and rules for getting rid of trash. But there is always room for change in how these rules are enforced and how tourists and locals learn about how important they are.

16. Do you think locals have a say in how ecotourism is managed?

-Locals do have some say in how ecotourism is managed, but there is still room for more involvement. Community meetings and consultations could assist in ensuring that residents' voices are heard and their problems are addressed.

17. How do you ensure that your homestay operates in an eco-friendly manner?

-Well, that's a good question. I keep my homestay eco-friendly by employing numerous sustainable measures such as solar energy, water conservation, recycling and composting waste, and procuring

food locally. In addition, I teach my visitors about responsible behavior and our attempts to protect the environment and local culture. One more thing I did is I purchased products from local artisans to decorate all of my rooms in my homestay.

18. Is there anything else you'd like to add about ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa?

-Oh yes, and I should also say that ecotourism in Nagthali is about more than just enjoying the natural beauty of our village and the nearby areas. It is very important to show respect for our history, environment, and way of life. We hope that more tourists will come here, leave with memories, and feel like they have to protect it. I would like to say thank you to everyone who is working hard to make Nagthali a good place for ecotourism and who is also helping us in some way.

Appendix H:

Interviewee 8

Interview Transcription: Interview with Balkrishna K.C., Tour guide, Kathmandu

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your experience as a tour guide in the Nagthali, Rasuwa area?

-I'm Balkrishna K.C., a tour guide from Kathmandu. I've guided many tours in Nagthali, a beautiful part of Rasuwa.

2. What are your thoughts on the ecotourism in Nagthali?

-I think it's a great way to show visitors the beauty of Nagthali while protecting the environment.

3. How has it evolved over the years?

-It's grown a lot. More tourists are interested in eco-friendly trips now.

4. How has it influenced your role as a tour guide and the overall tourism industry in the region?

-It's made me more mindful of the environment when I guide tours. It's also brought more business to the area.

5. From your perspective, what are the socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in

Nagthali?

-I could have known a lot if I am the local from Nagthali, Rasuwa or if I guide the tours more frequently, its just seasonal for me. On the basis of my knowledge, ecotourism has been essential in maintaining the local culture and bringing residents closer together. Additionally, travellers are encouraged to educate themselves about the local culture.

6. Do you think it has influenced local traditions or beliefs in any way?

-I think yes. The eco-tourism in Nagthali area and elsewhere in other areas has encouraged locals to keep their traditions alive.

7. Has it changed how tourists interact with the local community?

-As per my experience, there has been a recent shift in the focus of tourism toward cultural exploration and engagement with the community at large.

8. Have you observed any opportunities for cultural exchange arising from ecotourism?

-Yes, it is common for tourists and residents to discuss their respective cultures with one another, which opens the door to new opportunities for cultural exchange.

9. What do you think are the economic impacts of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-The practice of ecotourism has resulted in the creation of employment and prospects for individuals residing in the area, thereby contributing to the growth of the economy.

10. Has it generated jobs and opportunities for locals, including tour guides like yourself?

-I must say 'yes' in this case. Ecotourism hub like Nagthali has resulted in an increased demand for tour guides like me and also other services, which has opened the door for people to obtain employment. Being specific about Nagthali, seasonally, around July to October, I guide tours around 2-3 times a year, some year being a little more means it has created job for me as well.

11. How has it affected local businesses and the economy in the area?

-The growth in tourists has benefited local businesses. Being straightforward, more tourists imply more chances for local companies to sell their goods and services. This question make me realize to

talk to the people in relation to local business and impacts to them from eco-tourism, I will do that in my next tour guide and gain a little wider perspective on to what extent, it affects.

12. How has ecotourism impacted the environment in Nagthali? Have you observed any changes in the ecosystem or wildlife as a result of ecotourism?

-Auh, let me think. I mean yes, ecotourism has increased environmental awareness in Nagthali. As I heard through local authorities there when I went for the last tour as a guide for a group of tourists from Australia, conservation initiatives have been implemented to protect wildlife and natural habitats.

13. Are there any environmental concerns or issues you have noticed stemming from ecotourism?

-The management of garbage left behind by tourists can be difficult, and there is a pressing need to guarantee that rising tourism does not have a detrimental effect on the natural environment. That's a common issue in all emerging tourism hubs, other than that, I was not that familiar with other environmental issues in Nagthali, but they may be.

14. What efforts are being made to minimize the negative environmental impacts of ecotourism in your role as a tour guide?

-Ok, during these years of my experience as a tour guide and as a responsible citizen, I teach tourists how to act in a responsible way and how to have less of an effect on the environment, before guiding them to the destination, though they are already aware in most cases. It's not only I teach them, rather there are a lot of things that I get to learn through the tourists in relation to minimize the negative environmental impacts especially when going to any destination as a tour guide. I also consult with local non-governmental organizations and tourist management offices to encourage responsible tourism.

15. As a tour guide, how do you ensure that you promote responsible tourism practices?

-Ok. As I already mentioned in the previous question that I teach tourists how to respect local customs and have the least amount of effect on the environment. I also tell them to help businesses and communities in their area by using the local people's homestay, eating in local hotels and buying the souvenir and crafts from local shop and so on.

16. Are there any rules or regulations in place to protect the environment and the local community that you adhere to?

-That's so obvious. Yes, all destinations do have their favourable rules and regulations, so do the Nagthali have as well and I am very much happy to follow the guidelines as a tour guide.

17. How do you collaborate with local NGOs, travel agencies, tour operators, and tourism management offices to ensure responsible tourism practices?

-Yes, I work closely with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tourism management offices to spread the idea of responsible travel as I said it before. To list out, its Kankali Tourism management committee, RTEES Nepal, Hotel association of Nepal (HAN) and some travel agencies in Kathmandu. I have been a part of them in some of the projects for instance; Bagmati cleaning campaign, tourism literacy campaign etc. to protect the environment and help the people around us.

18. What do you think is the future of ecotourism in Nagthali?

-In my opinion, ecotourism will only continue to expand in Nagthali as time goes on. Ecotourism is going to become more and more well-known as people become more conscious of the significance of protecting the environment and practicing sustainable practices, that's what I can say now. I really wish to see the bright future of Nagthali in the upcoming years.

19. How can ecotourism be improved to benefit the local community, environment, and tourism industry?

-Yes, in this regard, we as tourism stakeholders need to make certain that the money generated from tourism is being put back into the community so that we can provide benefits to the local people. In order to preserve the natural world, we must lessen the destructive effects of tourism as much as possible. And if we want the tourism business to benefit from what we do, we need to continue to deliver experiences that are authentic and genuine.

20. Is there anything else you'd like to add about ecotourism in Nagthali, Rasuwa, from your perspective as a tour guide?

-During my tour there along with the tourists, I felt like its such an authentic place and its so rare since most of the destination have already started to be modified and getting a sense of artificiality. Ecotourism could be a good thing for Nagthali, but it needs to be handled in a responsible way. As a

tour guide, I am committed to promoting responsible tourism and making sure that tourism is good for both the environment and the local community.

Appendix I:

Photographs taken during field visit of case destination, i.e. Nagthali, Rasuwa District, Nepal





