The Impact of Tourism Development on the Reduction of Multidimensional Poverty in Nepal

We want to dedicate this dissertation to our beloved family, friends, and relatives for their unwavering support and encouragement. We also want to thank Aalborg University and the entire management team for providing an inspirational academic environment and our supervisor, Martin Trandberg Jensen", whose supervision and insight were invaluable throughout this dissertation journey.

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Abstract

Research purpose: This dissertation paper aims to shed light on a potential solution tourism development can contribute to the reduction of multifaceted poverty cases in Nepal. The paper is focused on understanding the positive impact of tourism-related initiatives on several dimensions of poverty, including economic, educational, socio-cultural, income generation, women empowerment, and oppression awareness.

Adopted method/theory: This dissertation was grounded on three theories: Amartya Sens' Capability approach, social exchange theory, and human capital theory. Six hypotheses were postulated from these three theories. Its testing tilted this dissertation toward a Positivist, deductive, and quantitative mode of research. A total of 392 responses were gathered from Nepalese citizens who are currently residing in Nepal.

Findings: This dissertation's findings indicate that tourism development holds a complex relationship with multifaceted poverty reduction. Meanwhile, oppression awareness (B 0.47, P = 0.00), socio-cultural settings (B 0.32, P = 0.00), income equality (B 0.135, P = 0.00), and economic aspect (B= 0.132, P = 0.00) were found positive and significant impact on reducing multidimensional poverty cases. A one-unit increase in tourism-related initiatives on these aspects will bring a multiplier effect of 0.47, 0.32, 0.135, and 0.132, respectively. Similarly, oppression awareness was found to be the strongest and positively correlated to women's empowerment (0.842), suggesting that tourism activities that focus on lowering oppression boost women's empowerment in Nepal.

Limitations: It is predicted that there is a high chance that participants might have ticked socially desirable options rather than their actual experiences related to tourism institutes, poverty cases, and different socio-cultural and economic circumstances. This may have affected the overall credibility of the findings.

Keywords: Tourism initiatives, multidimensional poverty reduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter briefly introduces tourism and the multidimensional poverty situation in Nepal. It also explains the significance of the study and ends with research questions and objectives. In this section, the justification for researching this topic will be provided. Before, the analysis of the Nepalese scenario towards multidimensional poverty and the role of tourism will be discussed. After that, the research problem will be formulated. Lastly, this chapter will provide the significance of this study.

For decades, tourism has been viewed as a vehicle, especially for poverty reduction; however, to date, most of the research has focused on eradicating poverty via income only, lagging behind in considering multifaceted phenomena of poverty or impoverished peoples' perspectives (Winter & Kim, 2021). Tourism development was seen as a prominent strategy from the 1960s due to its potential to accumulate foreign currency and boost the economy (Winter & Kim, 2021). Tourism from a poverty eradication perspective is emphasized due to its labour-intensive, minimal hurdle to enter, and reliance on low-level employees (Sun et al., 2022; Winter & Kim, 2021). Such perks of tourism development have been magnified for decades, and several institutions, including local governments and international agencies, have started tourism to promote the economy (Winter & Kim, 2021). Many critics, such as (Desbiolles, 2022; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021), contend that tourism needs to be taken with cautiousness due to its structural discrepancies between the global south and north in a globalized capitalist economy, and the positive influence of this endeavor is often viewed way lesser than anticipation.

Several attempts have been made throughout the course of time to prevent such discrepancies from being addressed (Winter & Kim, 2021). Through the introduction of Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, several international development agencies have prioritized pro-poor tourism (PPT) initiatives, aiming to merge the poor in global capitalist markets by boosting job opportunities and entrepreneurial activities and other perks offered to

them (Winter & Kim, 2021). However, pro-poor tourism often neglects the broader socio-political, ecological, and cultural aspects of tourism growth in favor of scrutinizing the "micro-level" economic impacts (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012). Thus, instead of quantifying tourism's economic perks and flaws, a more comprehensive strategy is needed to gauge how tourism aids in poverty reduction (Winter & Kim, 2021). To better comprehend the bondage between tourism and poverty reduction, it is essential to articulate a theoretical framework that fits the reduction of multidimensional poverty (Winter & Kim, 2021).

Nevertheless, conventional forms of tourism often fail to fully grasp this potential in Nepal, as individuals experiencing poverty often face a lack of access to the tourism sector (Dooley, 2018). Instead of effectively supporting around 15% of the Nepalese population living below absolute poverty, i.e., below $1.9 per day, the bulk of tourist money is frequently affluent to well-to-do companies and financiers (Dooley, 2018). To make the situation even worse, the increased influx of individuals might exacerbate the unnecessary pressure on resources (Dooley, 2018), especially in rural regions of Nepal where multidimensional poverty cases are higher and scarce resources such as food and water are slowly getting redirected further from such impoverished communities to lucrative tourist destinations (Dooley, 2018). Even with these remarks, tourism is considered a potential vehicle to significantly reduce poverty cases in Nepal (Dooley, 2018; Yergeau, 2020). Tourism dares to bring out essential economic perks to Indigenous communities of Nepal as niche tourism, such as rural and pro-poor tourism, is slowly getting positive recognition (Bennike & Nielsen, 2023; D. Chaudhary, 2023).

Effective management of tourism in Nepal is believed to offer a market where people can sustain themselves via entrepreneurial activity, and it can bring more revenue collection, enabling communities to circulate such money in local community development (Dooley, 2018). Tourism is considered a powerful sector with abundant opportunities for diversifying the local economy. It can be operated in rural and marginal regions where other diversification and export options are least available. Though developing nations face low entry barriers, especially while promoting their tourism products but, they suffer from leakages and fluctuations in demand. As UNWTO (2024) found, tourism is a strong alternative for boosting the economy of developing and least-developed countries. However, it is only possible when

such countries prioritize minimizing leakages and capitalize on linkages to the regional economy. Contrary to this, Bhattarai and Karmacharya (2021) found that tourism in Nepal does not have a substantial impact on Nepalese economic development both in the long term and in the short term. It alludes to skepticism on whether the Nepalese economy via tourism output is eclipsed more by leakages than linkages, which potentially underpins multidimensional poverty despite having ample potential for tourism.

Nepal is experiencing a shortfall in international trade as imports dominate significantly. The reason for such a lack of competitiveness is Nepalese products and services in domestic and global markets (K. Bhattarai & Karmacharya, 2021). While Nepal is significantly struggling with exports, tourism is viewed as a means to lower that trade deficit (K. Bhattarai & Karmacharya, 2021). According to Bhattarai and Karmacharya (2021), there has been extensive research on the relationship between tourism, economic development, and poverty alleviation in many nations; however, from Nepal's perspective, there is a paucity of research on this topic. More importantly, the empirical exploration of tourism's potential to minimize multidimensional poverty in Nepal remains significantly lacking. While Nepal has recognized tourism as a vehicle for economic growth and fixing trade imbalances; however, its in-depth studies on its ability to combat multilayered poverty are significantly missing (Bennike & Nielsen, 2023; K. Bhattarai & Karmacharya, 2021). Due to this, a sense of urgency is needed for robust empirical research to determine the true impact of tourism on reducing multidimensional poverty alleviation.

1.2 Research problem

Despite Nepal being considered with a hefty potential for tourism development, the growth as compared to its potential is still below par. Several scholars, such as (Nielsen, 2023; and Dhungel, 2015), have made significant contributions by linking tourism development to economic development; however, their efforts seem inadequately addressed as despite Nepal battling with multidimensional poverty, studies linked with tourism and poverty alleviation are still understudied. Additionally, comprehending the magnitude of the relationship between

tourism and poverty is critical. Oviedo-García et al. (2019) assert that more robust empirical research with econometric modeling is required to understand the magnitude and impact.

The Nepalese living standards survey by the Nepal Statistics Office (2024) found a significant reduction in poverty rates in Nepal over the last two decades; however, there is still a significant difference between different locales, and more importantly, the long-term viable panacea is still unknown. Especially focusing on remote areas of Nepal where multidimensional poverty is more severe and other alternatives are minimal, tourism could act as an economic stimulus to such regions that could contribute to alleviating multidimensional poverty (Nepal Desk, 2023). Furthermore, adequate expansion by tourism might result in positivity in infrastructure development, educational institutions, healthcare accessibility, and housing conditions, which could be beneficial for eradicating multilayered poverty (Nepal Desk, 2023). Regrettably, to date, to the best researchers' knowledge, to date, there remains a lack of studies investigating tourism as a vehicle for reducing multidimensional poverty in Nepal. From that perspective, we felt that a more robust investigation using econometric modeling is imperative as it serves a dual purpose; at first, it will elucidate the extent to which tourism development in Nepal contributes to eradicating multilayered poverty, and secondly, it will also help to uncover underlying barriers to persistent poverty cases and rectify sustainable solutions to it.

1.3 Research question

1) To what extent does tourism development in Nepal aid in the alleviation of multilayered poverty cases, and what are its key barriers associated with persistent poverty in Nepal?

1.4 Research objectives

- To analyze and investigate linkages between tourism development and multi-layered poverty cases.
- To evaluate different factors that hinder the alleviation of multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal and how tourism could act as a catalyst.

- To identify how tourism initiates influences income generation, education, healthcare provisions, and housing situations that collectively act as a solution to alleviate multilayered poverty cases in Nepal.

1.5 Study Motivation

Exploring the impact of tourism on multifaceted aspects of poverty in Nepal might offer a unique way of viewing traditional forms of research, which are widely seen in research on "tourism and poverty reduction." While one can, to some extent, say that income generation helps to reduce poverty cases, poverty does not lie only in income aspects as there are several aspects such as economic output, educational aspects, sociocultural aspects, income generation, women empowerment, and oppression awareness. While researching tourism-related initiatives on these aspects would allow to know the strength and relationship of these factors on multidimensional poverty cases.

More importantly, the insights from this dissertation's findings can be later utilized in other similar developing countries facing relatable challenges. The Sustainable Development Goals include Goal 1, "poverty to zero," Goal 4," quality education," Goal 8, "Decent work and economic prosperity," and Goal 10, "Reduced any forms of inequalities." When assessing these factors, it seems evident that poverty has multifaceted dimensions, and aiming to reduce poverty cases through a single indicator is highly "recalcitrant." Therefore, this dissertation aims to find how these aforesaid factors help to reduce multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will discuss an in-depth understanding of tourism and multidimensional poverty. It will also discuss the recent Nepalese situation of multidimensional poverty and link it to tourism's potential to combat it. Furthermore, this chapter will provide the different stakeholders' engagement with the tourism sector to reduce poverty. Theoretically, this chapter will provide prior researchers' positive and negative findings related to tourism and poverty cases will be presented. This chapter will also examine theories such as Amartya Sen's capability approach, Human Capital theory, and social exchange theory. Lastly, it will provide a conceptual framework and hypothesis formulation.

2.1 Tourism and Poverty

Tiny as it may seem, poverty is not merely a situation where people need more money to meet their needs or they are low-income earners. It covers dimensions that relate to human rights, welfare, and opportunities in aspects like education, health, standard of living, and services (Alkire & Santos, 2014; Almeida-García et al., 2016). The dominant poverty metric has also adopted the income metric, primarily by assessing poverty with a focus on monetary poverty or income poverty, which is the capacity or inability to afford a minimum standard of living defined by the World Bank (2018). However, this method has a cue that misses the essential aspect of defining the poverty level, hence the acceptance of the multidimensional poverty index (MPI).

Multidimensional poverty thus embraced the fact that poverty is not just income poverty but all-around poverty composed of mutually interconnected deprivations that hinder the respective capacity of an individual or a household to live a worthy life, as Alkire & Santos (2014) highlight. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), is a widely recognized measure that considers deprivations in three dimensions: literacy rate, life expectancy at birth to capturing the health, education, standard of living with each of these being composed of several indicators (Croes & Vanegas, 2018).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an agenda that was set in 2015 and aimed at tackling some of the world's most pressing problems, including poverty (Chen, 2016; United Nations, 2015). Tourism has been defined as a significant contributor to development and is directly targeted in its agenda, including in the so-called WASP goals in SDG 8 (Decent work and economic prosperity), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production), and SDG 14 (Life Below Water). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has explained that tourism is an approach to managing and eradicating poverty, especially in developing countries, because it opens windows for employment opportunities that assist communities in achieving integrated and sustainable development (Croes, 2014; UNDP, 2021). Multidimensional poverty is not only concerned with income perspectives; it also accounts for indicators such as years of schooling, housing conditions, nutrition and healthcare, and infant mortality, which are considered transparent and trusted forms of measurement of poverty that have standardized global comparison (Oxford Poverty and Human Development, 2021). The notion of multidimensional poverty has been incorporated in Nepalese national development goals (Oxford Poverty and Human Development, 2021).

The recent 15th Nepalese development goals have aimed to lower the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) from its present level of 28.6% to 11.5% (Oxford Poverty and Human Development, 2021). However, Nepal has substantially improved in lowering multidimensional poverty, maintaining 17.4% in 2019, i.e., 12.7% less than in 2014 (Oxford Poverty and Human Development, 2021). Additionally, a total of 3.1 million Nepalese escaped from extreme poverty over a span of five years (Oxford Poverty and Human Development, 2021). The major factors that lead to persistent multidimensional poverty in the Nepalese region are dominated by years of education and health conditions (Oxford Poverty and Human Development, 2021). At the same time, the tourism industry in Nepal has witnessed significant growth. Prior to the Covid-19 era, i.e., 2017-18 witnessed an unprecedented volume of tourists, with a total of over 940,000 visitors and consequently boosted the Nepalese economy by an extra 1.9 USD and provided over 1,027,000 jobs in total by the Nepalese tourism sector (Dooley, 2018). Considering the significant growth of the business, using tourism as a vehicle to alleviate poverty cases in Nepal may be an immensely potent solution (Dooley, 2018).

In this case, several researchers have established that the growth of tourism has a significant positive relationship with the reduction of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MDPL). Various opposites have been identified as to how tourism can eliminate multidimensional poverty (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021). At first, it helps to generate employment opportunities, both direct and indirect, which, in turn, provides income for communities that engage in tourism (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012). This is why it can aid in reducing the level of income poverty as well as enhancing the quality of life (Hampton et al., 2018). Secondly, tourism generates employment for women, which improves women's economic status and decision-making ramifications in homes (Ferguson, 2011; Turong, 2014). It can help reduce the multi-faceted aspect of poverty in areas like education, upbringing, and health.

Third, tourism can catalyze investment and development in constructing physical infrastructures like roads and bridges, water and sanitation systems, and telecommunications networks (Gossling et al., 2015; Tung & Cuong, 2020). It can enhance the standard of living and human being index by enhancing access to some basic amenities in the local community. The fourth benefit of sustainable tourism includes cultural and environmental conservation; this can enhance the preservation of occupants, social structures, and cultures, defend traditional living standards, and increase environmental sustainability (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). Finally, tourism can enhance social capital, organization, and governance systems at the community level, as demonstrated by the works of authors Croes et al. (2020) and Truong (2014). It can thus be beneficial in helping empower the communities and developing ways to fight dimensions of poverty (B. Zhou et al., 2023).

The tourism sector is one of the most critical source in the Nepalese economy since the country is well known for its beautiful scenery, culture, and trekking destination (Shrestha, 2020). The industry has expanded in growth and is directly correlated to GDP and employment in the developed and developing world. Major attractions are natural, like Mount Everest, and historical religious places like Lumbini- the birthplace of Lord Buddha, and many others, like Kathmandu valley and its Durbar squares, are under UNESCO world heritage sites (Shrestha, 2020). This aspect of a composition of nature and heritage contributes to the influx of tourists, which in return supports the industries of tourism and travel, hotel and transport, among others, and the local art and culture (Shrestha, 2020).

With its substantial economic contributions and potential for community development, tourism is a powerful mechanism for poverty reduction in Nepal (Shrestha, 2020). In that context, this

paper will analyze the historical context of poverty, the critical roles of various stakeholders, including the government, private Sector, NGOs, and tourists, and the impact of international initiatives such as the SDGs and MDGs to demonstrate how a collaborative approach in the tourism sector can significantly alleviate multidimensional poverty in Nepal (Shrestha, 2020). Therefore, it will be structured into several key sections: a scholarly review of tourism as an economic tool, an analysis of the historical and current state of poverty in Nepal, an exploration of the roles of various stakeholders in poverty reduction, and an evaluation of international initiatives such as the SDGs and MDGs. Each section provides insights into how tourism can drive economic growth and reduce poverty.

2.2 Sustainable Development Goals, Tourism, and Poverty Reduction

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established in 2015, outline the process of dealing with various problems, such as poverty (United Nations, 2015). Tourism is considered a significant factor in development today, is incredibly sustainable, and has been given specific attention to several global goals (Saidi et al., 2023; Salinas Fernández et al., 2022). Tourism is integral to SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth, as this element focuses on economic growth while ensuring complete and productive employment for all and decent work conditions (United Nations, 2015). As the tenth target of SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that generates fewer negative impacts and supports the development of local traditions and products (Turismo, 2018). It is most closely related to SDG 14 (Life below water), which focuses on improving the management, enhancement, and sustainable use of marine life for tourism, which is significant in coastal and island countries (United Nations, 2015).

According to UNWTO, tourism has been proven to alleviate poverty in developing nations over the years, where tourism can lead to social and economic opportunities to empower communities (Zhao & Xia, 2020). Tourism, as a source of foreign exchange earnings, can develop other sectors of the economy, create employment, and alter income distribution patterns, thereby helping reduce poverty levels (Croes, 2014; Turong, 2014). Integrating tourism advancement with the SDGs will promote the potential benefits of tourism while promoting solar-induced development, social equity, and cultural protection (Tung & Cuong, 2020).

However, there have been mixed reviews concerning tourism's advantages regarding multidimensional poverty and its limitations and consequences. One consideration is the issue of inclusion—the distribution of the benefits themselves can be unequal, with some population groups, including low-income populations or those living in rural areas, not gaining access to, or gaining access to only some of, the benefits at all (Hampton et al., 2018; Truong, 2014). It could worsen inequities and deprivations that already exist in the education system (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). Moreover, the failure to manage tourism, or unsustainable manner and method, could result in a lack of conservation of natural resources, pollute the environment, and cause negative impacts on local people's lives (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012; Turong, 2014).

In addition, tourism may lead to the distortion and deconstruction of cultural human assets and tangible and intangible local culture, with little ownership and involvement of indigenous people and communities in decision-making regarding tourism (Turismo, 2018). At times, many tourism earnings may go to outside players, thus providing value to actors outside the local loop (Croes & Vanegas, 2018; Salinas Fernández et al., 2022). It may bring about the problem of earning a living and keeping a check on the opportunity and scope of development that is sustainable (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021). Last but not least, the development of tourism in a community can cause people living in these areas to be evicted or change their source of livelihood, including fishing or farming (Ritchie & Zhao, 2007).

In the following paragraphs, the discussion aims to analyze the role and contribution that tourism can and has played in improving different dimensions of poverty with the point that tourism's effectiveness cannot be generalized since it depends on the degree and type of tourism development, local body politics, community engagement and application of sustainable tourism solution (Alkire & Santos, 2014; Croes & Vanegas, 2018). To this end, the positive impacts of tourism while minimizing the negative impacts to enhance balanced growth is imperative (Almeida-García et al., 2016). It encompasses encouraging a suitable mode of tourism that embraces social, cultural, and economic relations in a particular society, equitable sharing of the revenue accruing from tourism amid protecting environmental and cultural resources, and encouraging local people's involvement and power in the tourism industry (Chen, 2016).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stress the urgency of examining poverty in relation to prosperity and livelihood conditions (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2021). The SDG Goal 1 prioritizes ending extreme poverty in all formats and is especially focused on expanding poverty reduction campaigns beyond developing nations and covering all forms of poverty (Winter & Kim, 2021). In order to eradicate poverty by all means, it is imperative to understand different facets of poverty and their root cause (Y. Zhou & Liu, 2022). This corresponds to Cupples's (2013, p. 14) view that development is not only viewed as a scholarly endeavor but should have practicality and generate a better standard of living for the general public in their daily lives. Bringing into Nepalese perspective, Nepal holds considerable potential for tourism development and is celebrated for its raw beauty, landscapes, and majestic Himalayas (Tamang, 2023). Nevertheless, despite such potential to attract tourists, Nepal has persistently grappled with multidimensional poverty (Goli et al., 2019). We found linking tourism development to eradicating multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal is scantily rare as much of the research is only linked to one form, i.e., income growth. Therefore, a comprehensive exploration of tourism in conjunction with alleviating multidimensional poverty is a worthwhile investigation. Assessing poverty only through the prism of income or economic growth might not be beneficial as it overlooks the different multidimensional nature of poverty. A thorough consideration of additional factors would ascertain whether tourism development substantially minimizes poverty cases in Nepal or is merely oratorical.

2.3 Overview of Tourism and its Potential in Nepal

According to the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (2017), it was in 1951 when Nepal formally opened its borders to tourists. The country's first Tourism Master Plan, developed in 1972, depicted the state's dedication to developing the tourism sector (FNCCI, 2017). Since then, the Government of Nepal partnered with the private sector and has collaborated to create the industry (FNCCI, 2017). On one side, the private sector progressively took the operational lead while the government worked diligently to develop the necessary infrastructure and introduce regulatory reforms to grow the industry (FNCCI, 2017). For instance, the 1995 Tourism Policy sought to expand the tourism sector in the country and make it Nepal's priority (FNCCI, 2017).

Tourism is understood as people's movement to places different from their everyday surroundings for various purposes, such as recreation (Adikari et al., 2020). Consequently, tourist

operations are an economic indicator that comprises numerous backgrounds, such as accommodation services, transportation systems, recreational services, and cultural events (Calero & Turner, 2020). It brings enormous income to the government, provides new workplaces, and encourages investments in construction services (Adikari et al., 2020).

Tourism affects the economy of Nepal in direct, indirect, and other associated ways (Min et al., 2020). Direct effects include accommodation charges, eating places, and available activities (Min et al., 2020). Remote impacts affect the industry's facilitators, such as manufacturers of products and services required by hotels and restaurants, which impact the tourism business (Adikari et al., 2020). Induced effects are performance that arises from employees' spending in the tourism sector, creating further spending to impact the economy (Adikari et al., 2020).

Tourism can boost economic development by earning foreign exchange, increasing GDP, and balancing payments (Shrestha., 2020). It also contributes to regional development as people engaged in the resource generate income and employment opportunities in rural and less-developed regions (Rai, 2020). In addition, tourism promotes cross-cultural understanding and conservation, impacts society positively through increased social relations, and ensures the development of the environment through investment (Rai, 2020).

The official statistics show that Nepal has recently experienced significant growth in its tourism sector, as the number of tourists significantly grew from 2006, when the record was at 380,000, to a whopping 800,000 by 2013 (FNCCI, 2017). Additionally, data indicates that most tourists (about two-thirds) visit Nepal for holidays, pilgrimages, or trekking expeditions (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). Moreover, more than a third of these individuals are aged 30 to 45, with more than 20% coming from India (FNCCI, 2017). More importantly, the FNCCI (2017) further established that the tourists' average stay in the country is approximately 13 days, and most of the time they visit in March, October, and November compared to other months.

In a recent plan launched by the Nepal Tourism Board to promote tourism, the goal was to ensure that the number of annual arrivals for international tourists to the country would surpass 2 million by 2020 and create more than 1 million jobs in the tourism sector (FNCCI, 2017). By 2018, the number of star hotels in the country was slightly over 105, homestay facilities were

close to 230, and standard tourist hotels were almost 700, with occupancy between 40% and 80% during the peak season (FNCCI, 2017). Another crucial aspect that significantly stands out as a significant contributor to the potential of tourism in Nepal comprises the mountains, with the country being home to 8 out of 10 highest mountains on the planet (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). More importantly, the state has at least 20 protected areas, covering a whopping 23% of the whole land area in the country, comprising one hunting area, three wildlife reserves, six conservation areas, and ten national parks (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). Official data indicates that the land in Nepal is only 0.1% of the entire earth's land mass, but in the context of biodiversity, the country is home to 8.9% of birds, 4% of mammals, 3.72% of butterflies, and 2.8% of plants found on earth (FNCCI, 2017).

Despite being an essential sector in the country's overall development and registering higher growth rates than other economic sectors, it still accounts for only 6.7% of the nation's GPD in 2023 and 2024 (World Bank Data, 2022). The significant opportunities in this sector include hotels and restaurants, in which the Government of Nepal has consistently injected stimulating investment to bolster tourism infrastructure (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). The other leading area of potential is adventure tourism, as Nepal is an ideal destination for individuals seeking outdoor activities, including paragliding, jungle safaris, mountaineering, white water rafting, rock climbing, bungee jumping, hot air ballooning, canyoning, canoeing, bird watching, mountain biking, and trekking (FNCCI, 2017). It is worth noting that the country lacks adequate indoor recreational activities, implying a massive potential for investing in amusement parks, golf driving ranges, skating rinks, theme parks, laser tag centers, bowling alleys, and water parks (FNCCI, 2017).

2.4 Contextualization of Multidimensional Poverty in Nepal

In most states, the term poverty is perceived in the context of income poverty, implying that individuals lacking money are perceived to be poor (UNICEF Nepal, 2021). However, in broad terms and underlying reasons, researchers have identified different dimensions of poverty and various factors contributing to it, including lack of quality education, poor health conditions, availability of clean drinking water, lack of electricity, and suffering from malnutrition, among others (Jamieson et al., 2004). Considering all these factors, it becomes clear that poverty entails income poverty and comprises multidimensional issues affecting people's lives

(Jamieson et al., 2004). Based on the 2021 Nepal's Multidimensional Poverty Index, the primary factors contributing to multidimensional poverty in the country include lack of proper schooling, nutrition, health conditions, clean fuel for cooking, sanitation, appropriate assets, and housing materials (Winter & Kim, 2021). Therefore, multidimensional poverty does not just reflect people's poverty from different angles but also depicts different effects and levels of poverty, which are essential for stakeholders to identify the hidden causes of poverty along with the specific levels of vulnerability experienced by the poor people (Medina-Muñoz et al., 2016).

Nepal has seven provinces and seventy-seven districts, with the eastern region being more developed than the west (UNICEF, 2021). Based on the Nepal 2019 MPI report, more than half of the population resides in rural areas lacking clean energy. Thus, most people depend on firewood, while education and health could be better coordinated and developed than in urban areas (Nepal MPI, 2021). More importantly, most people need to learn about nutritious food and a balanced diet, and geographical factors create significant challenges in creating employment opportunities and service delivery (MPI Nepal, 2021). Scholars agree that this is how multidimensional factors contribute to the poverty problem in Nepal. However, after focusing efforts to address issues of hygiene, awareness of nutrition, providing free meals to children at school, providing clean fuels, and working on sanitation, Nepal managed to gradually achieve a massive reduction in its multidimensional poverty, from 30.1% from 2014 to 17.4% in 2019 (MPI Nepal, 2021).

UNICEF Nepal (2021) acknowledges that Nepal has made some tremendous progress in its efforts to reduce poverty as measured using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), from 30.1% (NMICS 2014) to 17.4% (2019 NMICS) in the five years (UNICEF, 2021). Based on the most recent MPI report has confirmed that the state is headed in the right direction in connection to its dedication to attaining its vision for 2030 and its ambition of 'Prosperous Nepal - Happy Nepali' (UNICEF, 2021). In 2019, about 5 million individuals, or 17.4% of Nepali citizens, qualified to be categorized as multidimensionally poor, with an MPI of 0.074, as the most significant number of these individuals are deprived of nutrition, assets, years of schooling, clean cooking fuel, and housing materials (UNICEF, 2021). It is worth noting that regarding the indicator weights, nutritional deprivations and years of schooling offer the

highest contribution to the unending multidimensional poverty across the nation (UNICEF, 2021).

In the global context, the 2019 MPI value for Nepal (0.074) was lower than the MPI value recorded for Bangladesh in the same year of 0.104, which UNICEF also computed using the NMICS survey. This value was also much lower than virtually all South Asian states except the Maldives (UNICEF, 2021). The research established that the MPI for Nepal matched that of Botswana, one of the least poor states across Sub-Saharan Africa, and was also equal to Nicaragua (located in Latin America) and just a little less poor than Kiribati (UNICEF, 2021).

2.5 Evaluations of Tourism Impacts in Nepal

Traditionally, tourism's influence has been measured with employment and contribution to the Gross National Product (Baral & Rijal, 2022). In most cases, the overall impact of tourism on the economy is valued by assessing the effects of tourism expenditures through induced, indirect, and direct investment using a "multiplier effect approach" (Aryal et al., 2019). On the other hand, tourism growth is primarily measured through the surge in the value of tourism spending, international arrivals, tourism disbursements, bed occupancy, and length of stay (Pasa, 2020). However, none of these dealings offer the means to determine the scale of tourism's impact on the country's poor communities or even the trends emerging from the overall drop or rise of poverty (Baral & Rijal, 2022). At the same time, the existing body of literature cites the significance of tourism in the "Least Developed Countries" (LDCs), the marginalized, rural areas, and developing countries with very little or no account of the effect of tourism on the individuals living in abject poverty (Poudel et al., 2016). As such, the context of tourism development as a means of nurturing economic growth in a state or region has thus been made in general terms with a concentration on economic growth and modernization (Pasa, 2020). The assumption has long been that any development associated with tourism will ultimately benefit the people living in poverty through the "trickle-down" effect. Adhikari (2018) analyzes how Nepal has been shifting its poverty measures from unidimensional to multidimensional, adopting MPI as a significant achievement. It was found that historical context, the policy implications, and the statistics analysis provide a broader narration with additional dimensions that help us understand the importance of policy shifts toward Multidimensional poverty reduction.

Tourists substantially impact local economies in Nepal, contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction in various ways (Kc et al., 2021). Tourist spending on accommodation, food, transportation, and recreational activities injects significant revenue into the economy, supporting businesses and creating jobs (Kc et al., 2021). For example, tourists visiting popular trekking routes such as the Annapurna Circuit and Everest Base Camp spend money on local guides, porters, lodges, and teahouses, directly benefiting the local communities (Kc et al., 2021).

Tourism stimulates the growth of ancillary businesses, such as souvenir shops, handicraft markets, and cultural performance groups (Kc et al., 2021). These enterprises provide additional income streams for local artisans and performers and preserve traditional crafts and cultural heritage (Kc et al., 2021). The influx of tourists also encourages investment in infrastructure development, including roads, airports, and communication networks, which further support economic activities and improve the quality of life for residents (Kc et al., 2021).

Moreover, tourism can lead to the development of new economic sectors. For instance, adventure tourism has created opportunities for white-water rafting, paragliding, and mountain biking, attracting niche markets and diversifying the tourism sector (Kc et al., 2021). This diversification helps stabilize the local economy by reducing reliance on a single type of tourism and spreading the economic benefits across different regions and sectors (Kc et al., 2021).

There is no doubt that tourism development leads to employment for people in the lower economic and social classes. However, growing evidence indicates that tourism development enriches expatriate and international companies and local elites while generating low-status and low-paying employment for the rest of the population (Jamieson et al., 2004). Moreover, poor planning and management of tourism leads to the destruction of ecological systems, damages cultural and social traditions and lifestyles, and raises the cost of living for the locals (Winter & Kim, 2021). It was not until recently that the stakeholders in the tourism sector development started seeking to address the impacts of tourism on reducing poverty by drifting away from the macroeconomic impact related to tourism and focusing on specific effects on poverty (S. Gautam et al., 2023).

In Nepal and other states focusing on promoting tourism, a growing trend has been witnessed with the stakeholders realizing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into poverty reduction and that the policy efforts directed toward reducing poverty can only be attained if there is a concerted and specific move made to enhance the well-being of the individuals stricken with poverty in developing countries (Paudyal, 2017). Within tourism planning and development departments, a similar realization trend has been witnessed as individuals have acknowledged that tourism development may not lead to poverty alleviation and that it is necessary to develop pro-poor tourism practices and policies (S. Gautam et al., 2023).

Nepal has manifested this new policy, facilitated by the focus on regional and international levels, as implemented through the programs and policies supported by international organizations like the ADB, ESCAP, and WTO (FNCCI, 2017). Policymakers and development economists typically use the term pro-poor to differentiate the general types of economic development from those directly meant to positively impact impoverished people's lives (Rogerson et al., 2013). They must stay within the economic ladder (Winter & Kim, 2021). These interventions directly focus on mitigating poverty and moving beyond the "trickledown" theory, thereby generating more excellent net benefits for people experiencing poverty (Baral & Rijal, 2022). However, it is worth noting that Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) is not a product directly emerging from the tourism sector. However, an overall approach is meant to unlock opportunities for impoverished individuals (Lama et al., 2018).

An excellent example of PPT initiatives comprises the community-based homestay programs implemented in Nepal's rural areas, including the Annapurna Community Homestay Project case study. The initiative showcased how the revenue generated through tourism homestays directly benefits the local households, thus alleviating poverty (Medina-Muñoz et al., 2016). Another vital case study involves the development of revenue-sharing mechanisms through the Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), which enabled the local communities to benefit from the revenues generated from tourism activities in the Annapurna Conservation Area and other protected areas (Gupta et al., 2023). The initiatives were developed to empower these local communities to actively engage in natural resources management and sustainability to generate revenue to fight poverty (Lama et al., 2020).

Nepal, being considered as a developing country in the world, has struggled with pervasive poverty for decades (World Bank Blogs, 2022). In the 1980s and 1990s, the poverty

rate was alarmingly high, with more than 60% of the population currently living below the poverty threshold (World Bank Blogs, 2022). The agrarian economy, heavily dependent on subsistence farming, could not sustain the growing population, leading to widespread poverty and underdevelopment (World Bank Blogs, 2022).

Nepal's poverty trends slowly improved throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Khanal, 2012). Laxman Lamichhane briefly explains the Liberalization, Privatization, and Bureaucratization policies introduced in the 1990s to support economic growth and decrease poverty (Khanal, 2012). Although it grew slowly, political instability, civil war over ten years (1996-2006), and natural disasters like the 2015 earthquake further slowed it down (Khanal, 2012).

Nevertheless, there have been some positive trends in recent years. As of 2010, the poverty rate slashed to approximately 25% due to the upward trend of agricultural production, overseas remittances, and developmental schemes (Khanal, 2012). By bettering education, health care programs, and other infrastructures, the government contributed to poverty reduction, though the gap between urban and rural inhabitants persisted through the 1990s (Khanal, 2012).

2.5.1 Major Causes and Contributing Factors to Poverty

The persistence of poverty in Nepal can be attributed to several interrelated factors:

1. *Agricultural Dependency*: Over 60% of people depend on agriculture, but the industry still needs to grow and modernize (Magill, 2020). Poor access to the markets has locked the village poor into poverty (Magill, 2020). The inability to till the land and cultural practices of ranching with small portions of arable land worsen it (Magill, 2020).

2. *Political Instability*: Political instabilities, the feudal system, severe communication barriers, system diameters due to fluctuating governments, and even a decade-long Maoist rebellion completely destabilized economic activities and development projects in Nepal (Magill, 2020). Policies were taken haphazardly, resulting from political instabilities; poor governance, corruption, and poor services compounded poverty (Magill, 2020).

3. *Geographical Challenges*: Nepal has multi-terrain topography and districts that are hard to reach; hence, infrastructure development is challenging and expensive (Magill, 2020). Despite relatively high levels of development, many rural communities still need to be on-limits, preventing people from getting an education, seeking medical assistance, or finding suitable employment (Magill, 2020). This also makes trade and ease of doing business difficult as far as the geography of this country is concerned (Magill, 2020).

4. *Natural Disasters:* Natural disasters like earthquakes, landslides, and floods are common in Nepal, and the country is highly vulnerable to them (Magill, 2020). For example, the 2015 earthquake had a substantial impact on the degradation of human lives and property; again, it slowed down the development process and left many families in poverty (Magill, 2020).

5. *Lack of Industrialization*: A lack of industrial growth has prevented employment opportunities outside the farming industry from increasing immensely (Magill, 2020). Due to the variety of economic opportunities, most Nepalese need to work in other countries, thus af,fectinaffectingnomy through remittances and making them prone to dependency (Magill, 2020).

6. *Social Inequality***:** Caste, gender, and ethnic disparities contribute to unequal access to resources and opportunities (Magill, 2020). Marginalized groups often face discrimination, limiting their ability to break the cycle of poverty (Magill, 2020). Gender inequality, in particular, affects women's access to education, healthcare, and economic participation (Magill, 2020).

7. *Education and Healthcare***:** Despite improvements, access to quality education and healthcare still needs to be improved, particularly in rural areas (Magill, 2020). Poor education outcomes hinder economic mobility, while inadequate healthcare services lead to high morbidity and mortality rates, further impoverishing families (Magill, 2020).

2.5.2 Current State of Poverty in Nepal

According to the latest data, Nepal's poverty rate has further reduced, with around 20.3% of the population currently living below the poverty threshold (Van, 2022). This improvement is attributed to continued economic growth, increased remittances, and targeted poverty reduction programs (Van, 2022). However, poverty remains a significant challenge, particularly in rural and remote areas (Van, 2022). The poverty reduction has been uneven, with urban areas experiencing more significant improvements than rural regions (Van, 2022). Urban centers like Kathmandu have benefited from better infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities (Van, 2022). In contrast, many rural areas still lack basic amenities, leading to a stark urban-rural divide (Van, 2022).

Nepal's HDI rank also has upgraded, indicating health, education, and income uplifting for the country (Van, 2022). Nevertheless, inequality undermines the country's success in attaining equitable development (Van, 2022). Hunger, substandard hygiene, and lack of cleanliness affecting the procurement of clean water are still a common experience in many places, affecting the quality of life and economic development (Van, 2022).

2.5.3 Recent Economic and Social Changes Impacting Poverty

I. *Economic Growth and Remittances***:**
Economic growth has been driven by agriculture, tourism, and services sectors. Remittances from Nepalese working abroad continue to be a lifeline for many households and contribute significantly to the national economy (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021). In 2019, remittances accounted for 28% of Nepal's GDP, providing vital income for families and supporting local economies (G. Bhattarai & Subedi, 2021).

II. *Infrastructure Development:*
Significant resources have been spent on constructing roads, bridges, and other hydroelectric and electrical installations (Sapkota et al., 2021). Better communication systems have promoted more connections to transport links and the market. These developments have facilitated employment opportunities and boosted economic activities, especially in formerly inaccessible areas (Sapkota et al., 2021).

III.   Education and Health Improvements:

Measures taken by the government and non-governmental organizations to enhance education and health have paid off. With technology, primary and secondary education enrollment and literacy rates have also risen (Sapkota et al., 2021). Health advancements have led to the reduction of under-five mortality and enhanced maternal health, thus boosting health (Sapkota et al., 2021).

IV.   Social Protection Programs:

The government has implemented several measures to protect vulnerable groups. Poverty reduction interventions, unconditional transfers like cash and food aid, and other in-kind interventions like free health care have cushioned the vulnerable groups and households that mostly faced economic shocks and natural disasters (Sapkota et al., 2021).

V.   Tourism Development:

The tourism industry has demonstrated it can bounce back and, on many occasions, has indeed posted growth, although it has experienced hiccups in the form of disasters and COVID-19 (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021). Therefore, the attempts to develop sustainable tourism and introduce new objects of interest to tourists remain appropriate and presume high revenues and possibilities for creating new workplaces (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021).

VI.   Policy Reforms:

The Nepalese government has implemented policies to enhance the governance structure, the quality of public services, and economic growth (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021). Measures taken to fight corruption, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and attract more foreign investment are thus strategies that are meant to enhance economic progress and reduce poverty (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021).

VII.   Challenges from COVID-19:

The global COVID-19 pandemic constituted a daunting challenge, which affected the national economic operations and increased poverty levels in the short term (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021). Adverse effects of the closures included reduced tourism earnings, people becoming unemployed, and a decrease in workers' remittance (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021).

However, recovery efforts and vaccination campaigns have reduced the impact, and the economy is slowly returning to life (Bhattarai & Subedi., 2021).

2.6 Nexus between poverty reduction and tourism development

Researchers have developed a significant interest in this topic concerning the nexus between tourism development and poverty reduction and engaged in debates with practitioners and policymakers (Pradhan et al., 2022). As highlighted in the previous section, tourism holds the potential to bring positive changes in society by alleviating poverty while at the same time presenting some significant risks and challenges that may worsen the existing inequalities. Scholars agree that tourism can be perceived as pro-poor if it offers the following items. The first item is when the economic gain occurs by creating part-time or full-time employment or developing SME opportunities through the sales made to tourists or tourism businesses (Khan et al., 2020). Another factor is if it generates other livelihood benefits like access to clean potable water and roads that ultimately benefit people experiencing poverty, including enhanced access to education or health and better market access (K. Bhandari, 2019).

The third criterion is when tourism development creates the capacity and opportunities for engagement in decision-making, allowing low-income people to improve their livelihoods by securing better access to tourism enterprises and tourists (Goodwin, 2002). Therefore, for the key stakeholders to make a sound case for the benefits of tourism for poor communities and individuals, it is vital to move beyond the ideologies of "trickledown" and multipliers to identify the specific benefits to such individuals and their communities (Sharma, 2007). An excellent example of a monitoring case lies in the initiatives developed by Lama et al. (2020) to facilitate the access of local communities in the Himalayas to the tourism market by developing and complementing the existing livelihood strategies (Goodwin, 2002). The program succeeded because the stakeholders focused on accountancy instead of economics when reporting in detail concerning the specific poverty influences from the tourism initiatives perceived to reduce poverty . The initiative further sought to precisely identify individuals meant to benefit and the extent to which they would benefit through auditable terms other than financial gains (Rogerson et al., 2013).

Various studies have established numerous positive findings on this nexus, including generating income for low-income people, developing infrastructure, and creating entrepreneurship (Saville, 2001). Scholars agree that PPT, implemented in the protected areas of Nepal and supported by international organizations or other initiatives, creates employment opportunities (Ashley et al., 2001). In most cases, the tourism sector generates many jobs, including hotel staff, tour guides, and artisans, offering these individuals a steady flow of income for their households and ultimately lifting them out of poverty (Roe et al., 2004).

Another positive aspect of tourism development is the infrastructural improvement to support the utilities, transportation networks, and roads as part of investments to bolster tourists' experience in these regions (Hiroyuki, 2011). When the governments make these developments in the rural regions connecting the protected areas with the game reserves and animal parks, the benefits support not only the tourism sector but also the local communities in the region, leading to greater access to the markets and essential services, thus contributing to the reduction of poverty (Tolkach et al., 2012). The third aspect involves the provision of opportunities supporting local entrepreneurship activities in the local communities, especially in small-scale enterprises like local cuisine, handicraft production, and homestays (Hiroyuki, 2011). When such ventures are supported within the local communities, the impoverished can use Nepal's diverse cultural heritage, natural resources, and innovative ideas to generate extra household income (Ashley et al., 2001).

Conversely, negative findings have also emerged from research, including inequality, environmental degradation, and erosion of cultural values (Rogerson et al., 2013). Studies have established that despite generating significant economic benefits associated with tourism development, these initiatives worsen the inequalities in poor communities (Bhandari, 2019). Huge businesses and wealthier people usually enjoy a disproportionate share of the revenue captured through tourism, leaving the marginalized groups comprising people with low incomes with limited access to these benefits (Khan et al., 2020). Another negative issue is environmental degradation, mainly caused by uncontrolled development in the tourism sector, which leads to the overexploitation of natural resources and ecosystems on which highly impoverished communities depend for their livelihoods, such as fishing and farming (Pradhan et al., 2022). As a result, the long-term sustainability of the development is undermined by the degradation and worsened poverty in the affected regions (Lama et al., 2020). The third

negative issue is the erosion of cultural values, which leads to the commodification of the local heritage for commercial benefits that end up marginalizing the local and indigenous communities living in poverty and relying on such cultural practices for their livelihoods and identity. Ultimately, these individuals are further hit by social exclusion and worse poverty (Gupta et al., 2023).

2.6.1 Examples of Tourism-Driven Economic Upliftment Globally

There are several examples of countries that managed to utilize tourism to develop their economy and fight poverty. One example is Costa Rica, which has shifted to developing eco-tourism to change its economy (Simon, 2021). The country boasted of its diverse and unique wildlife and natural endowment, which largely contributed to the cases of many tourists who visited the country in large numbers (Simon., 2021). The income yielded through tourism boosted the government's revenue and increased employment opportunities, especially in the countryside. Specific eco-tourism strategies in Costa Rica have provided relations to natural resources for conservation, better infrastructure facilities, and even better quality of life for the denizens (Simon, 2021).

Another example is Thailand, where tourism is the leading economic sector. The country has much to offer tourists: story, art, and warm sand beaches attracting numerous tourists. Tourism significantly affects Thailand's economy (Fakfare et al., 2022). It is responsible for equal to or more than 20% of its Gross Domestic Products and helps millions of people across many lines of operations. The Thai government has continuously invested in tourism development and the promotion of the tourism industry, which has enabled to continued growth, poverty reduction, and development of regions (Fakfare et al., 2022).

In Africa, for instance, Rwanda has used tourism to reconstruct the economy after the genocide. Therefore, the government prioritized gorilla trekking adventure products and marketed the country as safe and ideal for tourism (Rurangwa & Whittaker, 2020). Money has also been reinvested in conservation and other community-based initiatives that have consequently reduced poverty levels in Rwanda (Rurangwa & Whittaker, 2020). This success indicates how Rwanda, using the model of developing a tourism industry, can change an economy through strategic planning and brand (Rurangwa & Whittaker, 2020).

Bhutan provides a model for high-value and low-impact tourism (Johns & Namgyal, 2017). The policy that restricts tourists' arrival and charges higher daily rates guarantees that

tourism brings significant revenue to the country without compromising the value of cultural and natural heritage (Johns & Namgyal, 2017). It has given Bhutan the financial potential to fund social services, health care, education, and infrastructural development, greatly enhancing the population's well-being over time (Johns & Namgyal, 2017).

2.6.2 Relevance of These Examples to Nepal

Nepal can learn a lot from these examples and improve its tourism sector to improve its economy. Like Costa Rica, Nepal has a tremendous stock of natural and cultural resources whose benefits eco-tourism can effectively utilize (Kc et al., 2021). As seen in the case of Nepal, it would benefit from supporting sustainable practices and funding conservation by appealing to visitors interested in the natural world, which creates the potential for positive economic growth (Kc et al., 2021).

The rapid growth in Thailand supports the importance of medical tourism with other diversifying attractions, and equally strong infrastructure has made it the 18th most popular tourist destination across the globe (Pizzurno et al., 2014). For this reason, Nepal needs to develop several tourism activities, such as cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and medical tourism, among others, to attract different tourist niches (Kc et al., 2021). This means investing in better transport, better accommodation, and better communication networks in the tourism industry since these often give tourists a better reason to return.

In this instance, the Rwandan case of focusing on a specific type of tourism, gorilla trekking (Rurangwa & Whittaker, 2020), proffers lessons for the Nepalese tourism authorities regarding developing such tourist attractions. Some advanced areas in Nepal, including the Himalayas trekking and touristic sites in Lumbini, can be explored and advertised as super concentrations of tourists (Kc et al., 2021). Local cultural and experiential tourism products require active engagement of local communities in development; doing so will increase the appeal of these niches and ensure fair distribution of tourism returns (Kc et al., 2021).

Bhutan's high-value and low-impact tourist policy exemplifies how controlled tourism can work (Johns & Namgyal, 2017). To this end, Nepal may consider policies allowing tourism without compromising the environment and sharing cultural uniqueness (Kc et al., 2021). The qualifying standards for differently categorized national parks and other heritage sites should

allow tourist entry charges to help catalyze conservation and guarantee sustainable tourism (Kc et al., 2021).

Nepal's tourism development must involve the government, private Sector, NGOs, and communities to realize these objectives (Nyaupane et al., 2022). When there is teamwork, the comprehensive attributes of tourism planning and its actualization will be implemented and improved (Nyaupane et al., 2022). Developing human capital by providing necessary training and capacity building for existing and potential entrepreneurs and service providers will ensure that the quality of tourism offerings is improved and employment generation is achieved (Nyaupane et al., 2022).

Tourism has the potential to uplift Nepal's economy by generating revenue, creating jobs, and promoting regional development (Nyaupane et al., 2022). By learning from successful examples globally and adopting a strategic, sustainable approach, Nepal can harness its tourism potential to reduce poverty and improve its people's living standards (Nyaupane et al., 2022).

2.7 Tourism on multidimensional poverty alleviation – positive findings

Several research works have produced evidence on how tourism development is associated with poverty reduction, a concept encompassing several dimensions. Academic scholars have also pointed out numerous ways tourism benefits can be pursued to eliminate MDOP. First, tourism opens up opportunities for direct employment through some sectors like accommodation, food and beverage services, transport, and recreational activities (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021). This is because the mall could also create other small employment opportunities within other supporting sectors, such as the agricultural sector, construction, and manufacturing industries (Turismo, 2018). They offer a source of income and livelihood for the local populous, thus contributing to eradicating income poverty and enhancing decent living, including shelter, hygiene, and other necessary utilities (Hampton et al., 2018). Moreover, when domestic tourists spend their money on food, transportation, accommodation, and other income, it can provide funds needed for education, health, and any other dimensions of deprivation faced by the households (Gossling et al., 2015; Zhao & Xia, 2020).

Secondly, it is essential to supply women with employment in tourism by giving them monetary stability and enhancing their decision-making power in any given home (Ferguson, 2011). Women's empowerment can be a significant challenge as young girls and women in many developing countries experience constraints in employment and income generation, leading to poverty in all facets (Brooks et al., 2023). Tourism can help women find employment opportunities in the tourism sector through human resources in hospitality and crafts made for tourist consumption, local business, and independent working capital (Saidi et al., 2023; Salinas Fernández et al., 2022). If directed to the rights processes, these increased sources of income may benefit different facets of poverty, for instance, education and health among children, as women, in general, assume the headship and control over the utilization of resources in the (Ritchie & Zhao, 2007; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008)

Thirdly, the advancement of tourism promotes investments in social and physical infrastructure, which consists of roads, water and sanitation facilities, and telecommunication and energy infrastructure (Hampton et al., 2018; Jamieson et al., 2004). In most cases, these are the common infrastructural developments that need to be carried out to accommodate tourism activities, enhancing the experience obtained by the visitors (Salinas Fernández et al., 2022). But they are also advantageous for residents since they facilitate a means of obtaining the necessities of life with more ease and convenience in performing everyday chores and thus boost the quality of people's lives (Gossling et al., 2015; B. Zhou et al., 2023). For instance, education and access to improved water sanitation improve health, while transport infrastructure improves access to education, health, and employment opportunities (Jamieson et al., 2004).

Fourthly, sustainable tourism could promote cultural tourism, including the protection of heritage and other sources of cultural revenue; this could help support traditional sustainable cultural lifestyles (Jamieson et al., 2004; Turong, 2014). Some of the significant types of tourism include ecological tourism, cultural tourism, and community-based tourism, which depend on the baseline of the preferred natural and cultural resources, implying that there is positive feedback for the protection of tourist resources (Saidi et al., 2023). These can assist in combatting facets of poverty concerning Natural Capital Account, which considers the distribution of natural resources and the degradation of traditions, or cultural capital account, which entails the misuse and destruction of people's heritage, hindering sustainable means and concrete types of livelihoods (UNDP, 2021).

Lastly, through tourism development, social capital, community and organizational structures, and governance structures can be cultivated (Turismo, 2018). Since various tourism projects commonly involve utilizing resources and subsequent decision-making at the community level, they potentially contribute to the maturation of local informal institutions, associations and organizations, and decision-making processes (Chen, 2016). This social capital and institutional capacity helps communities reduce donor dependency and facilitate collective action advocacy in poverty reduction efforts concerning multiple dimensions of poverty and participation in decision-making processes of distribution of resources and development priorities (Croes, 2014; Tung & Cuong, 2020). Thus, these positive results indicate that tourism development, which is ecologically sustainable and driven by innovation and investment, can offer a progressive approach to dealing with the MD-index and reducing vulnerability in developing countries through job creation, social empowerment, and environmental and cultural protection (Truong et al., 2020; Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021).

2.8 Tourism on multidimensional poverty alleviation – negative findings

However, based on the studies, tourism also has negative impacts and challenges for multidimensional poverty. It clarifies the adverse effects and challenges explored by some studies (Zhao & Xia, 2020). Another dimension is the social impact of tourism on tourism and benefit distribution, where particular sectors of the population (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021). Such an imbalanced transmission increases pre-existing social disparities and prolongs deprivations throughout income, education, and opportunities.

Furthermore, as Ferguson (2011) and Hampton et al. (2018) noted, poorly executed and unsustainable tourism can escalate to social vices such as social injustice, deforestation, and pollution of water bodies, resulting in contravenes of the population's livelihood (Brooks et al., 2023). It can erode other facets of poverty, such as presenting a human face regarding environmental impacts, natural resources and wealth, and the sustainability of traditional production systems that rely on natural capital (Almeida-García et al., 2016).

Also, tourism plays its part in transforming culture and tradition in dealing with plasticization and gradually diminishing cultural assets and traditional way of life, especially

since the local community can not control or actively participate in selling their services or products (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). These aspects of culture can have implications for elements of poverty that reflect the loss of cultures and social connectedness and the loss of other capital stocks that make human beings flourish (Saidi et al., 2023; Salinas Fernández et al., 2022).

Another challenge that can be identified is economic drain or leakage, where a considerable proportion of tourism earnings are channeled to non-local aspects, thereby denoting little benefit to local populations (Croes et al., 2020; Turong, 2014). It could lead to economic bondage, discourage the possibilities of sustainable local development, and cycle income poverty and deprivations concerning employment (Ritchie & Zhao, 2007).

Last but not least, tourism development helps alter the locality of original inhabitants from their usual living areas or traditional means of subsistence, including fishing or farming (Hampton et al., 2018). This displacement can deepen multidimensional poverty, eroding people's rights to land, shelter, and other livelihood systems.

These are all negative findings that point to the need for adequate scrutiny of tourism development, adequate and effective community involvement in assessing tourism's negative impacts on their communities, and the development of sustainable measures to manage tourism's impacts with the main aim of enhancing the reduction of poverty in the different dimensions (Salinas Fernández et al., 2022; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008).

2.8.1 Barriers to tourism-based poverty reduction

Significant barriers hinder the effective implementation of tourism development's potential to reduce poverty in Nepal and other regions. These obstacles emerge from systemic issues caused by infrastructural limitations, financial constraints, institutional capacity, and government policies (Gurung, 2015). Understanding these barriers is vital to designing avenues for harnessing the full potential of tourism development to alleviate poverty, particularly in developing and low-income countries like Nepal. The first barrier is the need for better design and implementation of government programs to support tourism (Hoque et al., 2022). Most governments often need more formal avenues for prioritizing the tourism sector, which is critical in offering tourism services, especially in urban areas (Sharma, 2007). When the state

authorities fail to implement targeted programs and issue support, the sector cannot significantly contribute to the efforts directed toward reducing poverty (Bhandari, 2019).

Another barrier is the lack of recognition by the aid agencies, who, in the Asian context, often ignore the potential of tourism growth to fight poverty, support infrastructure development, and gender inequality (Paudyal, 2017). The governments need to initiate collaboration between the local stakeholders and aid agencies to demonstrate the potential of tourism in effectively mitigating poverty at community and individual levels (Shakya, 2016). Another issue that scholars have established as a significant barrier is the need for proper education and training for officials put in charge of tourism development and poverty reduction (Shakya, 2016). This lack of training significantly limits their ability to design and execute the strategies meant to leverage the potential of tourism to alleviate poverty (Shakya, 2016).

Pasa (2020) further argues that limited access to credit is a significant barrier to leveraging tourism development to enable low-income people to participate in the tourism economy. Nonetheless, most vulnerable people need access to crucial financial resources, making it impossible for them to invest in SMEs and ventures related to tourism and benefit from tourism development initiatives (Shakya, 2016). Studies also cite the need for organizational capacity constraints on both sides of the non-governmental and government organizations to respond effectively to the opportunities associated with tourism development (Shakya, 2016). The obstacle limits the ability of these organizations to design and implement initiatives necessary for maximizing the tourism benefits that reduce poverty. The lack of crucial market knowledge by the communities, regions, and governments for designing pro-tourism strategies and commodities limits the effectiveness of the tourism development initiatives to reduce poverty by failing to give tourists the products and services they demand (Winter & Kim, 2021). Other issues include regulatory challenges and infrastructural deficiencies (Bhandari, 2019). In most rural regions, home to most of Nepal's protected areas and impeccable tourist attractions, outdated bureaucratic red tape and regulations can suffocate innovation and hinder the development of advanced tourism services and products (Upadhayaya & Upreti, 2011). Reducing administrative barriers and streamlining rules are critical for fostering a favorable environment that nurtures tourism development (Bhandari, 2019). Concerning infrastructure deficiencies, most of these rural regions with high poverty levels have poor transportation and communications infrastructure, which is vital in effectively supporting the tourism industry (Upadhayaya & Upreti, 2011). To overcome the identified barriers, the government must

initiate collaborative efforts to unite all stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs, and aid agencies.

2.9 Opportunities and Recommendations for Enhancing the Role of Poverty Reduction in Nepal

In Nepal, the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme developed the foundation for the country to develop initiatives that focus on supporting the rural poor population, particularly the ethnic minorities, lower cast groups, and women living below the poverty line (Paudel Khatiwada et al., 2017). Since the program was specifically designed to improve people's living standards and attain sustainable tourism development, the country can leverage its initiatives to develop the institutional mechanisms for supporting sustainable tourism activities by implementing village tourism projects in places like the Annapurna Conservation Area (Bhandari, 2021). Initially, the project was developed with the help of a foreign agency. However, this paper recommends that such initiatives be rolled out in partnership with NGOs to ensure the attainment of the SGDs, focusing on poverty alleviation (Shah, 2022).

Scholars recommend the application of the Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) concept when implementing all of the future Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme initiatives, as the initial program was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Netherlands Development Agency (SNV Nepal), Department of International Development (DFID, UK), and rolled out by the government of Nepal for US$ 5.2 million (Kharel, 2006). With the support of NGOs and international agencies, such programs can be implemented in multiple tourist destinations across different districts. However, the recommendation is also to engage local entrepreneurs, community organizations, village governments, local NGOs, and user groups (Kharel, 2006). Most importantly, when designing these programs, it is vital to conduct thorough studies to identify the commercially viable sites for tourism development with the highest potential to contribute to reducing poverty and greater economic benefit sharing to the more significant population (Kharel, 2006).

To successfully implement tourism development strategies to alleviate poverty, it is recommended that these disadvantaged individuals have resources to export by tapping into their natural environment and rich cultural heritage (Jamieson et al., 2004). In this case, the opportunity is to provide the outside catalyst and assist these locals in identifying these

resources and helping them at the grassroots level through PPT concepts like TRPAP, Village tourism, and the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (Kharel, 2006). Such programs have proven that PPT has the potential to succeed only if the local institutions are strengthened and local people's traditional rights are respected (Baral & Rijal, 2022).

When implementing tourism development initiatives to reduce poverty, scholars further recommend such programs to ensure that the locals being targeted by such programs can participate actively. The idea is for the entire program to provide employment and be managed by the locals, while the outsiders only play the role of facilitators (R. Bhandari, 2021; Esu, 2012; Milovanovic, 2017). More importantly, making the pro-poor tourism initiatives part of the country's conservation and sustainable development is vital instead of implementing it as a stand-alone development (Pasa, 2020). Another essential factor identified by the researchers is ensuring proper product packaging by identifying suitable tourism products within the rural community, establishing suitable business modes for supporting such initiatives, and ultimately creating a complete supply chain for identified products (S. Gautam et al., 2023).

Other crucial factors recommended for effective poverty development through tourism are to ensure the commercial viability of the products being developed in the local communities and prevent any product leakage by encouraging the state to consume locally produced commodities and services for waste reduction, sustainability, and development of rural supply chain (Poudel et al., 2016). These ideas are also bound to fail if the state solely focuses on addressing the issue of infrastructure development. The recommendation from researchers is to keep the build-up directed toward infrastructure at a minimum. The stakeholders must fund it through grants and all the available mechanisms for cost recovery to be executed at grassroots levels to support the locals living in poverty (Lama et al., 2018).

Most importantly, it is worth noting that each local community has a unique cultural heritage and natural resources determined by their specific geographic location, implying the need for product differentiation when implementing the PPT, ensuring that every community has a well-developed niche market to command better prices and command suitable pricing standardization (Lama et al., 2020). An excellent example of a region to consider is the Annapurna Conservation Area, a high mountainous region home to over 1,000,000 people living in dense poverty (Pradhan et al., 2022). When the project enjoyed considerable success, it encouraged the government to allow the NGOs to control more conservation areas and

replicate the ACAP's success in other state regions (Bhandari, 2019). Even though the Sirubari had limited influence due to its implementation in a single village, its model has been successfully replicated in other places by TRPAP in conjunction with the private sector, spreading the project to different regions of Nepal (Goodwin, 2002).

2.10 Different Stakeholders' Engagement with Tourism to Reduce Poverty

One of the significant challenges facing the initiatives to reduce poverty through tourism development is overcoming the previously identified barriers, which necessitates the involvement of critical stakeholders and deploying a wide range of development practices and policies (Rogerson et al., 2013). The available body of literature now provides adequate evidence for understanding the key tourism stakeholders and their vital role in advancing the quality of life of communities and individuals (Milovanović, 2017). Whereas the emphasis has always been that interventions must be implemented through government-led initiatives, scholars have proven through their stakeholder analysis that a wide range of stakeholders must actively engage in the intervention process (Saville, 2001). The figure below provides an overview of the key stakeholders identified by scholars for implementing PPT.

Figure 1: *Key Stakeholders*

Source: (Jamieson et al., 2004).

2.10.1 The poor

Research shows that in most cases, poor individuals, expected to be the recipients of tourism plans and policies, are included in the process (Jamieson et al., 2004). Since they are the targeted beneficiaries of the PPT initiatives, low-income people must be perceived as the key stakeholders involved in every phase of policy planning and eventual implementation (Jamieson et al., 2004). As the key stakeholders, they are in the best position to identify critical challenges contributing to multidimensional poverty and the best community development practices to alleviate the using tourism development as a vital policy tool (Jamieson et al., 2004).

Collaboration between private businesses and local communities is essential for sustainable and inclusive tourism development (R. Shrestha et al., 2023). Many private enterprises recognize the value of engaging with local communities to create authentic and enriching tourist experiences (Shrestha, 2020). By involving locals in tourism activities, businesses help ensure that tourism's benefits are widely distributed and that local cultures and traditions are respected and preserved (R. Shrestha et al., 2023).

Programs like community-based tourism and homestay are the best examples of adequate partnership arrangements (R. Shrestha et al., 2023). Private companies, therefore, engage residents in the area by allowing tourists to live closer to the local people, practice local customs, and, in the process, be educated about the community's cultural practices (R. Shrestha et al., 2023). This, in turn, is not only a tourist attraction for different kinds of tourism and adventure but also an opportunity for local people to earn an income and obtain employment (R. Shrestha et al., 2023).

Training and capacity-building activities provided by private companies assist the local players and workers acquire abilities that enable them to engage meaningfully in the tourism business (R. Shrestha et al., 2023). These partnerships enable locals to develop staying power, something that will cause them to do all that is within their power to protect their cultural and natural endowments while at the same time reaping off tourism (R. Shrestha et al., 2023).

2.10.2 Private Sector

The private sector has a well-developed and complex network comprising a set of relationships with multinational corporations, national enterprises, and countless local tourism businesses (Jamieson et al., 2004). Based on the available body of literature, it has become common knowledge that every tourism enterprise is guided by business practices and principles that substantially support tourism as a poverty reduction tool. However, multinational corporations may have different interests and stakes in their quest to assist in alleviating poverty through their activities (Jamieson et al., 2004). Therefore, engaging the private sector in the discussion is vital to harmonize their interests and align them with their social responsibilities regardless of their geographical regions of operations (Jamieson et al., 2004).

The private sector is critical to developing and expanding tourism in Nepal (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024). They are the primary implementers of services offered, including accommodation services, transportation services, and guided tours; even hotels, resorts, travel agencies, and tour operators directly involved with providing tourist experiences rely on the imaginations used to sell tourist experiences (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024). They play a pivotal role in pursuing tourism promotion in Nepal by using marketing techniques and employing other mediums, such as social media and global affiliations, to draw the attention of tourists worldwide (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024).

The private sector plays a vital role in providing jobs to people directly or indirectly through their outlets in the market, including tourism and travel, transport and communication, sales and trading sectors, and the service industry (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024). In this regard, private businesses spend their resources on training and capacity-building to attain or develop human resources capable of delivering exemplary service standards (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024). It contributes to tourists' experience and local workers' development. It makes them happy as they get a steady and stable income and better prospects for career advancements (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024).

Besides, the strategies implemented by private businesses are more progressive and eco-friendly. From environmentally conscious and sustainable hotels and lodges to responsible tourism adventures such as hiking and culture-based tours, the private sector has embraced sustainable practices to satisfy the ever-expanding demand in the responsible tourism markets (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024). In this way, they contribute to the

conservation of heritage resources in Nepal, which would not be available if commercial exploitation of global tourism increased literally to higher degrees (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2024).

2.10.3 Different levels of government

Whereas poverty is primarily presented as an individual and local problem, national government policies must be implemented as a tool for pro-poor tourism development tool due to their potential impact on poverty alleviation (Jamieson et al., 2004). For instance, involving the local and provincial governments is vital because the administrators at the grassroots levels have a better insight into the best way to implement national policies to alleviate poverty (Jamieson et al., 2004).

The Nepalese government has recognized tourism as a critical economic growth and poverty reduction driver (Badal, 2019). Over the years, several policies and initiatives have been implemented to promote tourism and leverage its benefits for poverty alleviation (Badal, 2019). One of the primary policies is the "Nepal Tourism Vision 2020," which aims to attract two million tourists annually and create significant employment opportunities (Badal, 2019). This vision focuses on enhancing tourism infrastructure, promoting new tourist destinations, and improving service quality (Badal, 2019).

In order to actualize this vision, the government has embarked on several infrastructural developments such as airport building and expansion of roads and hotels (Badal, 2019). For instance, the size of Tribhuvan International Airport could be improved, or the Gautam Buddha International Airport could be established to enhance the tourism sector and connection (Badal, 2019). Further, there are also government incentives for private participation in the area of tourism where tax incentives, exemption from duties on the import of tourism equipment and implements, and ease in business regulation are some (Badal, 2019).

The government has also made efforts to reinforce the destination image of Nepal as a tourist spot free from risk and appeal through marketing strategies and advertisement involvement in international tourism fairs (Badal, 2019). These endeavors are oriented to popularize Nepal's cultural values, tourism opportunities, and the country's natural beauty. Another important aspect has been the focus on protecting the natural environment and

Indigenous people as more and more attention has been paid to the long-term development of the tourism sector (Badal, 2019). Also, ecological tourism has been promoted, where people in the communities that host these attractions are entrusted with the responsibility of tourism; this way, they benefit from the income realized by these companies (Badal, 2019). This includes homestay, cultural tourism, and local guide training schemes that create human resources and income for such communities (Badal, 2019).

Successes and Challenges Faced by the Government

The government's efforts in promoting tourism have yielded several successes (M. K. Chaudhary, 2018). The increase in tourist arrivals has contributed to GDP growth, job creation, and foreign exchange earnings. Tourism has played a crucial role in uplifting rural economies by providing alternative income sources and reducing migration to urban areas (M. K. Chaudhary, 2018). Community-based tourism has empowered local communities, preserved cultural heritage, and promoted environmental conservation (M. K. Chaudhary, 2018).

However, a country's government must overcome challenges in optimizing tourism to fight poverty. The instability of political leadership has resulted in Ramsey's policies shifting and needing to be more sustainable over a long-term basis (M. K. Chaudhary, 2018). Political factors have also continued to pose significant challenges to the effective and efficient implementation of tourism projects and deter foreign investors (M. K. Chaudhary, 2018).

Another area of concern is infrastructure development. Still, today, some places need more proper means of transport, hotels, and communication, though much improvement has been noted. This hampers the achievement of this capacity and the potential of attracting and hosting tourists in remote and rural regions (D. Chaudhary, 2023). Furthermore, occasional natural calamities like earthquakes and floods have affected the social amenities, thus impacting tourism through closure, and many resources are often rendered to restore them.

Moreover, the COVID-19 outbreak paralyzed Nepal's tourism industry by adversely affecting foreign tourists and their earnings (D. Chaudhary, 2020). The government offered incentives to boost domestic tourism and bailout money to the affected tourism industries and employees. However, the recovery has been lagging, and the future consequences of the pandemic on the tourism sector are unknown (D. Chaudhary, 2023).

Private businesses ' investment in tourism infrastructure is vital for the growth and sustainability of Nepal's tourism sector. Private enterprises construct and maintain hotels,

resorts, lodges, and guest houses catering to diverse tourists (Shrestha, 2020). These investments are crucial in providing the necessary facilities and amenities that enhance visitors' comfort and satisfaction (Shrestha, 2020).

Besides, private accommodation companies facilitate transport means such as tour buses, rental cars, and adventure vehicles to enhance the ease of transport and make it enjoyable (Shrestha, 2020). Adventure tourism operators incur various costs in facilities and equipment for trekking, mountaineering, rafting, paragliding, etc., so Nepal is an optimal location for adventurers(Shrestha, 2020).

Moreover, private investors are constructing complementary facilities such as restaurants, cafes, and shops for visitors' consumption (Shrestha, 2020). This is also a critical aspect of contemporary transport, where online booking platforms, mobile applications, and social media advertisements, among others, are essential in expanding the market reach. The flow of private sector investment is supplemented by international investors who bring capital, technologies, and global best practices (Shrestha, 2020). Such partnerships may result in establishing excellent amenities and services of international standards to support the development of the tourism industry, thereby making Nepal a favorite tourism destination worldwide (Shrestha, 2020).

2.10.4 Development organizations and international aid agencies

Studies indicate that many aid agencies need to recognize tourism as having significant potential that can be used to drive their development activity (Jamieson et al., 2004). In the past, some aid agencies even opposed the legitimacy of issuing aid for tourism initiatives (Jamieson et al., 2004). However, this issue has gradually changed in Nepal since the World Tourism Organization, in conjunction with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, agreed to create the "Sustainable Tourism as a Tool for Eliminating Poverty" (ST-EP) initiative for exploring the potential to facilitate a community of donors involvement and securing multistakeholder support to support poverty reduction policies (Jamieson et al., 2004). Scholars recommend that these initiatives be directed toward supporting capacity building and development of SMEs, as opposed to focusing solely on funding national airlines and hotels (Jamieson et al., 2004).

NGOs have a great potential to influence tourism development because of their direct role in poverty alleviation in low-income countries (Jamieson et al., 2004). These NGOs are among the leading stakeholders worthy of inclusion in the process due to their wide range of rural development projects and groups focusing on natural and cultural heritage conservation while at the same time addressing the prevailing business development issues (Jamieson et al., 2004). However, only some NGOs have focused on pro-poor tourism initiatives for decades, showing low interest in this area (Jamieson et al., 2004).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are pivotal in Nepal's development and poverty reduction landscape. These organizations often bridge the gap between government efforts and the needs of local communities, especially in remote and underserved areas (Mishra & Aithal, 2021). NGOs and INGOs contribute to poverty reduction in several key ways:

1. *Capacity Building and Training:* They also provide training and capacity-building services to enhance the capacity of the local community (Fuseini et al., 2022). This includes skills development training and education, community awareness campaigns, and information platforms that include conducting informative workshops on sustainable activities acceptable in the tourism business sector regarding adequate client engagement (Fuseini et al., 2022).

2. *Community Development Projects*: Such organizations are bound to embark on projects that can enhance infrastructure and healthcare, education, and even sanitation (Fuseini et al., 2022). In this fashion, these NGOs and INGOs help meet the minimum physical requirements for creating numerous economic activities like tourism(Fuseini et al., 2022).

3. *Advocacy and Policy Influence:* International NGOs and INGOs promote sustainable tourism and poverty reduction strategies (Fuseini et al., 2022). They engage with government organizations to formulate and execute pertinent policies and procedures for society's betterment (Fuseini et al., 2022). These factors endeavor for their voices to be heard by the powers that be, particularly on policies affecting people with low incomes and the vulnerable (Fuseini et al., 2022).

4. *Resource Mobilization:* NGOs and INGOs mobilize resources from international donors, foundations, and private sector partners (Fuseini et al., 2022). These resources fund various development projects to enhance tourism infrastructure and services. The additional funding helps to scale up successful initiatives and reach more beneficiaries (Fuseini et al., 2022).

2.10.6 The Tourist

Throughout the past two decades, researchers have found a growing number of tourists seeking to improve the conditions of the people in the destinations they visit for holidays (Jamieson et al., 2004). Therefore, they have identified the need to provide tourists with opportunities to participate directly in the initiatives to mitigate poverty by making them aware of the available opportunities to improve the residents' well-being across the region (Jamieson et al., 2004). Therefore, the government and non-governmental initiatives need to make tourists aware of the direct impact that their spending can have by supporting the local supply chains specifically developed to support the poor communities' products and services and other charitable giving opportunities aimed at achieving the same objectives (Jamieson et al., 2004).

2.11. Responsible Tourism and Its Effects

Sustainable tourism reduces adverse effects on the environment, employees, and society and enhances favorable influences. Responsible tourism has been on the rise, with many practices adopted in Nepal; this helps in the mutual relationship between tourists and hosts or society (Kc et al., 2021).

Sustainable tourism implies that all human activities are to be carried out responsibly, embracing aspects like pollution, use of environmentally friendly products, and conservation. Responsible tourists also seek to consume sustainable products, resulting in more demand for green tourist products and services (Kc et al., 2021). This change encourages local businesses to engage in environmental conservation, replenishing the depleted natural resources. It also cultivated awareness of socio-cultural responsibilities regarding hospitality and the

preservation of cultural diversity (Kc et al., 2021). Tourists who show respect and care towards their hosts and culture benefit both parties and contribute to the conservation of cultural identity and cultural products (Kc et al., 2021). Artists and artisans benefit from tourists' contributions by patronizing various cultural items, including handmade artifacts and other cultural shows (Kc et al., 2021).

Sustainable tourism supports fair economic returns where local people sustainably benefit from tourism. This entails encouraging the development of tourism projects that are locally controlled and driven, with the locals also gaining in terms of the benefits they derive from the tourism business (Nepal et al., 2022). The ideal tourist behaves in a way that enhances the communities' welfare by interacting with them, offering to eat in local restaurants, and relating with locals as opponents through hiring their services, like guided tours (Nepal et al., 2022). Tourists play a pivotal role in local economic development by creating tourism revenue jobs and reinforcing infrastructure development (Nepal et al., 2022).. Responsible tourism further enhances these benefits by promoting sustainable practices, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring that economic gains are equitably distributed (Nepal et al., 2022). By supporting responsible tourism, tourists can contribute to Nepal's tourism sector's long-term sustainability and prosperity (Nepal et al., 2022).

2.12. Community Involvement in Tourism

Community involvement is crucial for the sustainable development of tourism in Nepal (Nepal et al., 2022). Engaging local communities in tourism activities ensures that the benefits are widely distributed and that tourism development aligns with the resident's needs and aspirations (Nepal et al., 2022). Community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives are a prime example of successful community involvement, where local people actively participate in and benefit from tourism (Nepal et al., 2022).

The CBT interventions help local communities plan, develop, and implement tourism products. These are attractions in KHPA, such as homestays, guided tours and services, cultural performances, and KHPA's cuisine (Nepal et al., 2022). CBT, in this sense, engages people in the communities to be visited directly and deems them capable of managing tourism activities (Nepal et al., 2022). It, therefore, contributes to better economic returns, improved living standards, and strengthened social entities. Community participation also helps maintain cultural values (Nepal et al., 2022). Local people explain their living patterns, manufacturing,

and other activities to tourists, thus contributing to cultural exchange. It enhances the visitors' journey and ensures that the people of a given country are proud of their history and promote it for further appreciation (Nepal et al., 2022).

Moreover, involving communities in tourism planning helps to mitigate potential negative impacts. Residents can identify and address environmental degradation, cultural commodification, and social disruption (Nepal et al., 2022). This participatory approach ensures that tourism development is sustainable, inclusive, and respectful of local values and resources (Nepal et al., 2022).

2.13 Local Entrepreneurship and Its Role in Poverty Alleviation

In the Nepalese tourism sector, local entrepreneurship is crucial in utilizing tourism as an agent of poverty reduction. Tourism benefits the local emperors and helps build a synergy of vents where residents can obtain many forms of income that reduce vulnerability to market shifts (Devkota et al., 2020). Tourism and entrepreneurship cover a wide area. Many people engage in entrepreneurship by establishing small-scale businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shops, and service providers like tour guides, travelers, and other adventurous and cultural services (Devkota et al., 2020). Today, local players with different information and understanding of their regions can develop more competitive and exciting tourist products for consumers (Devkota et al., 2020).

Some valuable measures to support local entrepreneurship include training, access to financial resources, and mentorship (Devkota et al., 2020). Most training programs offered to entrepreneurs give them knowledge and skills in business acumen, marketing, and customer service, improving their skills and knowledge in managing better and more successful ventures (Devkota et al., 2020). Financial means for credit and grant support make it possible to start and develop activities that create added value and improve the situation in the territories (Devkota et al., 2020). Most local business people make their profits and reinvest them in the local economy, leading to increased economic activities within the communities. They may employ people from the community, buy goods and services from within the identified community, and patronize community projects, thus expanding the tourism economic multiplier effect (Devkota et al., 2020).

2.14 Case Studies of Successful Poverty Reduction Projects

1. ***Community Homestay Program by Community Homestay Network (CHN):***

The Community Homestay Program, spearheaded by the CHN and supported by several NGOs, is an example of how tourism can positively impact a community's development (Haselschwardt et al., 2024). It relates to local families opening their homes to tourists to offer them a more homemade feel. In exchange, the host families learn manners of hospitality and best practices in tourism as an economic activity (Haselschwardt et al., 2024). Through this critical strategic intervention, the income status of participating families has increased while women have been engaged in economic activities, and their status has also improved (Haselschwardt et al., 2024). This has also helped create and build between tourists and host communities (Haselschwardt et al., 2024).

2. ***Trekking Guide Training by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD):***

ICIMOD, an INGO promoting sustainable mountain development, has launched a trekking guide training in collaboration with other local INGOs (ICIMOD, 2024). It focuses on youth who have yet to be employed or are experiencing joblessness in rural districts, who will be equipped with skills and certification to operate as trekking guides (ICIMOD, 2024). Since the implementation of this program, many youths have been employed, decreasing unemployment and poverty levels in these areas (ICIMOD, 2024). The trained guide also offers tourists a safe and quality trekking experience. It thus helps Nepal sustain its image as the best trekking destination in the world (ICIMOD, 2024).

3. ***Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP):***

It was a UNDP-funded initiative carried out in six districts in partnership with the Nepalese government and other local non-government organizations with the primary goal of combating poverty by promoting tourism (UN Digital Library Nepal, 2024). They include enhancing physical facilities, creating tourism offerings, and boosting the resilience of stakeholders (UN Digital Library Nepal, 2024). They achieved one good result in advancing the communitarian gospel of tourism, where local people were empowered to offer homestay facilities, conducting guided tours and cultural troupes (UN Digital Library Nepal, 2024). This ensured the communities' direct economic advantage and attempted to maintain the local culture and traditions (UN Digital library Nepal, 2024). This paper has assessed TRPAP's

multiphase strategic plan, which is attributed to increasing living standards in the targeted areas (UN Digital library Nepal, 2024).

2.14.1 The Role of SDGs, MDGs, and Other Initiatives in Poverty Reduction Campaigns

Overview of Relevant SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an amalgamation of 17 global goals initiated by the United Nations in 2015, aimed at addressing a broad range of global challenges, including impoverished issues, income inequality, environmental issues and climate change, and marine-life degradation, etc. (National Planning Commission, 2017). Several SDGs are directly relevant to poverty reduction and tourism in Nepal:

1. *SDG 1: No Poverty*—By 2030, Aim to eradicate extreme poverty for everyone everywhere (National Planning Commission, 2017). This goal ensures that everyone has equal access to economic resources and essential services.

2. *SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*—Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns and economic growth that occurs through environmental and social outcomes regarding the generation, distribution, and consumption of wealth (National Planning Commission, 2017). It also focuses on the benefits of selling tourism, such as employment opportunities, promotion of culture, and local brands (National Planning Commission, 2017).

3. *SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities*—Ensure that cities and human settlements are safe, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient (National Planning Commission, 2017). This goal emphasizes accessibility, inclusive urbanization, and sustainability in using cultural and natural heritage (National Planning Commission, 2017).

4. *SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production* deals with responsible consumption and production for sustainable development. It encompasses support for

environmentally friendly tourism, boosts economic growth through job creation, and supports local arts and crafts (National Planning Commission, 2017).

5. SDG 17: The Partnership for the Objectives focuses on the ITD means of implementation and reinvigorates the global collaboration for development (National Planning Commission, 2017). It points to a set of means based on partnerships involving governments, the private sector, and civil society as key to realizing sustainable development for all.

2.14.2 Implementation and Impact in Nepal

The Republic of Nepal has demonstrated progress and innovation in the SDG, finding ways around its limitations and embracing the opportunities of its context (National Planning Commission, 2017). As with the NMFNs, the Government of Nepal has mainstreamed the SDGs as part of its central planning process to emphasize poverty alleviation, economic development, and sustainability (National Planning Commission, 2017).

1. SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. In fiscal year 2020, various social equalities and protection measures, such as food aid, vouchers, and health safety nets, to support vulnerable groups were provided in Nepal (National Planning Commission, 2017). These undertakings have helped reduce poverty despite challenges by identifying different challenges that are hard-to-reach to the targeted population (National Planning Commission, 2017).

2. *SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth* —Tourism is one of the most significant economic players from a Nepalese economic standpoint. Some of these measures have included improving infrastructure, improving tourist facilities, and marketing Nepal as a safe tourist destination (National Planning Commission, 2017). Tourism has provided numerous employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, and has revitalized the local economies (National Planning Commission, 2017).

3. *SDG 11: Reducing inequality*—Helping citizens gain better access to resources and job opportunities is a goal of Sustainable Development projects in Nepal's cities, especially those in the two fastest-growing cities, Kathmandu and Pokhara (National Planning Commission, 2017). Tourism has been instrumental in supporting initiatives to safeguard cultural and natural sites, acting as a motivation to protect important places (National Planning Commission, 2017).

4. *SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production* –Measures are being taken to support and encourage sustainable tourism activities, including eco-tourism, proper waste disposal, and green technologies (National Planning Commission, 2017). It is worth noting that NGOs and private sector agents have a central role in promoting these practices in a way that minimizes tourism's impacts on the environment or the population (National Planning Commission, 2017).

5. *SDG 17: The Goals in Partnership*: Grant-Based Approaches: Nepal has strengthened partnerships with intergovernmental organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, and private sectors to implement the SDGs effectively (National Planning Commission, 2017). There is an increased emphasis on increasing capacity among participating organizations, fundraising, and providing more efficient and widespread development interventions (National Planning Commission, 2017).

They have produced several positive outcomes, as shown below. Poverty rates have declined, employment opportunities in tourism have increased, and sustainable practices are becoming more widespread (National Planning Commission, 2017). However, it requires continued monitoring and evaluation as political instabilities, inadequate infrastructure, and the effects of natural disasters are some challenges counteracting the possibility of achieving the SDGs (National Planning Commission, 2017). This also demands long-term commitment, which can only be achieved when all stakeholders in the country persist in implementing the state's development plans and programs to realize these objectives goals. The gains achieved are made available to all its people (National Planning Commission, 2017).

Therefore, in this way, it is crucial to conclude that the Nepalese experience in implementing the priorities of the global sustainable development agenda based on the SDG has been instrumental in poverty reduction in the country (National Planning Commission, 2017). Based on the UN-SDGs, where goal orientation is clear on issues to do with poverty elimination, economic progress, sustainable urbanization, resource consumption reduction, and international co-partnership for inclusive development, Nepal has been witness to huge strides in the journey towards the building of an importunate and resilient society (National Planning Commission, 2017).

Summary of MDGs Related to Poverty Reduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were mainly comprised of eight international development goals initiated following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, which was aimed to achieve by 2015 (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Several of these goals were directly focused on lowering poverty cases and improving living conditions in developing and least-developing countries:

1. *MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger* – Aimed to reduce the proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day by half and those who suffer from hunger. This goal sought to lower the number of people who are living in an extreme poverty and ensure food security for all (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

2. *MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education* – This goal aims to ensure that all children, little boys and girls, have the opportunity to complete primary education. One of the determinants of poverty is education, which renders education a key to eradicating poverty (United Nations Development Programme, 2024)..

3. *MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women* – This goal was Focused on the eradicating of disparities between gender that concern primary level and secondary level of education that are vital for women's economic upgrade (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

4. *MDG 4: VP5: Reduce Child Mortality* – It aimed to lower the under-five mortality rate by almost two-thirds (National Planning Commission, 2017). Luckily, healthy children will attend school, and thus, the families will benefit from their income-generating abilities (United Nations Development Programme, 2024)..

5. *MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health* – Aimed to lower the maternal mortality level by three-quarters and accumulate global access to reproductive health (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Improved maternal health contributes to better economic stability for families (United Nations Development Programme, 2024)..

6. *MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases* – Focused on halting and beginning to ultimately minimise the spread of these diseases, which disproportionately affect people with low incomes and hinder economic development (United Nations Development Programme, 2024)..

7. *MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability* – Aimed to merge the fundamental guidelines of sustainable development into country policies formulation and program organization, lowering the cases of biodiversity losses and halving the ratio of people who are still far from sustainable access to pure drinking water and basic sanitization facilities and awareness (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

Achievements and Shortcomings in Nepal

1. *MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger* – Nepal made significant progress in eradicating poverty, with the ration of people residing below the national poverty threshold decreasing from 42% in 1996 to 21.6% in 2015 (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Food security also improved, with substantial reductions in the prevalence of undernourishment (United Nations Development Programme, 2024)..

2. *MDG 2: Achieve Universal access to Primary Education*— Primary school enrolment rose to over 95 percent in 2015, a success compared to the Mithe Millennium Development Goal. This shows that Nepal has done well in improving this Sector

(United Nations Development Programme, 2024). This improvement resulted from increased government investment in school construction, free and compulsory textbooks supply, and the midday meals initiative (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

3. *MDG 4: Improve Child Health* – Child mortality was significantly reduced as the rate of deaths of children below the age of five years reduced from 142 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 36 in 2015 (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). This was done through enhancing healthcare delivery systems, immunization efforts, and enhancement of human nutritional regimes (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

4. *MDG 5: 10 Improve Maternal Health*—Nepal has done much better in decreasing the maternal cases of mortality ratio from 539 of 100,000 live births in year 1996 to 258 in 2015 (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).. Elements such as the availability of maternal healthcare services and an expanded proportion of skilled birth attendants helped to improve this factor (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

5. *MDG 7: On Efforts to Ensure Environmental Sustainability*—The goals for increasing improved water resources and sanitation were achieved; 87.4% out of the total population had access to improved drinking water sources and 62% to improved personal hygiene and sanitatizing facilities by 2015 (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

Shortcomings:

1. *Persistent Poverty* – Despite the progress, a significant portion of the population still lives in poverty, especially in rural and remote areas. Economic inequality remains a challenge, with marginalized communities often left behind (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

2. *Gender Equality and Empowerment (MDG 3):* While there were improvements in girls' education, gender disparities persisted in other areas, such as economic participation and political representation (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Women continued to face barriers to accessing equal opportunities and rights (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

3. *Combating Diseases (MDG 6)* – Although there were successes in reducing the incidence of some diseases, challenges remained in effectively combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Health infrastructure and services were often inadequate, particularly in remote regions (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

4. *Sustainable Development* – Environmental sustainability efforts were hampered by rapid urbanization, deforestation, and climate change impacts (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Balancing development with environmental conservation remains an ongoing challenge (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

2.14.3 Other International and Local Initiatives Aimed at Poverty Reduction

Beyond the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), numerous international and local initiatives have contributed to poverty reduction in Nepal (Lipper et al., 2021). These initiatives often focus on holistic and multi-faceted approaches, addressing various dimensions of poverty through innovative programs and partnerships (Lipper et al., 2021).

1. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):

IFAD has been involved in rural development and poverty eradication in Nepal for several years. Projects initiated to fulfill its mission include projects meant to increase agriculture yield, food availability, and incomes within the Agricultural sectors in Rural areas (Lipper et al., 2021). These are achieved by offering micro-finance services, encouraging proper farming and farming methods, and forming markets where, via a particular operating organization, IFAD supports agriculturists and rural people (Lipper et al., 2021).

2. World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB):

Both organizations have supported many programs in Nepal for construction, education, and health facilities. All these projects are humanitarian because they provide vital services and employment and catalyze the economy of the areas that house such projects (Lipper et al., 2021). For example, the ADB-funded Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project focuses on delivering water supply and sanitation infrastructure in urban-based societies to enhance health and quality of life directly (Lipper et al., 2021).

*3. **Local NGOs and Civil Society Organizations:***

Local NGOs play a critical role in addressing poverty at the grassroots level. Organizations such as the Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) and the National Federation of Youth NGOs Nepal (NFYN) implement community-based education, health, and livelihood development programs (Lipper et al., 2021). These initiatives often involve direct engagement with local communities, ensuring interventions are tailored to specific needs and contexts (Lipper et al., 2021).

2.14.4 Case Studies of Successful Initiatives

The Small Farmers Development Programme (SFDP) by ADB and the Government of Nepal:

Therefore, the poverty reduction initiative known as the SFDP was indeed successful. It started in the seventies to raise the quality of life for small farmers by providing them with credit facilities and training to embrace all the aspects needed by the farmers (Fortin et al., 2020). Thus, the involvement of farmers in small groups and cooperatives through the launching of SFDP allowed them to improve the reception of the necessary resources and information and exercise more control over markets. Additionally, the program had ramifications such as the improvement of capacity in production within an agriculture camp, increase in income, and shortage in food supply (Fortin et al., 2020). It has been enlarged in its present form over the years and franchised and, as such, turned into the Nepalese farming copy (Fortin et al., 2020).

The Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF):

Established by the Nepalese government with vision and funding from the World Bank, PAF was intended to reach the poor and marginalized sectors. They provide direct cash commitments for income generation schemes, income generation activities, construction activities, and capacity building (World Bank, 2017). Therefore, one can establish that there exists corroborative data on the poverty reduction gear famously known as the SFDP (World Bank, 2017). It was started in 1970 to improve the quality of life and conditions of small farmers, and it provided credit activities, training, and other resources to the farmers. Through the development of small farmer groups and cooperatives, the implementation of SFDP increased farmers' potential for mobilizing resources, information, and marketing (World Bank, 2017). The impacts of the program included increased number capacity in an agricultural setting, income improvement, and scarcity of food. It has been expanded in its present form over the years and cloned, which means it is a copy of the Nepalese farming model (World Bank, 2017).

The Social Mobilization and Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihoods (SMESL) Project by RRN:

This local program aims to eliminate poverty within vulnerable sectors by promoting social mobilization and community development. It involves education, health, and livelihood, emphasizing supporting women and other vulnerable persons (Fortin et al., 2020). SMESL has also successfully promoted the establishment of women's savings and credit groups, which provide financial services and business management to women. These groups have allowed women to mobilize resources to start income-generating ventures, get enhanced incomes, and thus exercise more control over their economic destiny (Fortin et al., 2020). However, the project has generally enhanced healthcare and education, improving communal well-being (Fortin et al., 2020).

2.15 Overall Summary of the Literature

The literature review has highlighted crucial issues related to the nexus between tourism and poverty reduction, multidimensional poverty, and tourism potential in Nepal. The findings from the review showed that significant growth in tourism in Nepal has been supported by initiatives dating back as early as 1951. Despite the challenges experienced in the sector, the

industry has been making a significant contribution to the economy, even though it only accounts for 6.7% of Nepal's GDP. More importantly, adventure tourism is one of the most significant opportunities in the country, offering a wide range of outdoor activities. Nonetheless, challenges like lack of indoor recreation and inadequate infrastructure activities persist, indicating considerable potential for investing in bolstering tourism development. More importantly, Nepal contends with multidimensional poverty, with factors like lack of access to clean energy, health, and education contributing to deprivation. Therefore, efforts addressing these issues show positive progress, leading to a drop in multidimensional poverty from 30.1% in 2014 to 17.4% in 2019. Targeted interventions are still vital due to the persistent disparities between urban and rural areas.

The review further explored the effect of tourism on reducing poverty. It has been established that while tourism has the potential to create employment and improve infrastructure, it also poses risks like erosion of cultural values, environmental degradation, and inequality. Therefore, pursuing pro-poor tourism initiatives, including revenue-sharing mechanisms and community-based homestays, is crucial, as it has successfully addressed these challenges. Nonetheless, amid the benefits of tourism in alleviating poverty, the initiatives still face significant barriers, including regulatory challenges, lack of access to credit, and poor government programs. Recommendations developed through the review include leveraging international support, engaging key stakeholders, and pro-poor tourism strategies.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured set of notions, presumptions, and guidelines describing crucial ideas, theories, and underlying concepts and their interconnectedness in the research model (Leshem & Trafford, 2007; Wilson et al., 2010). It enables an extensive grasp of the underlying issues or phenomena that are being researched. In order to ensure shared comprehension, fundamental ideas and predictors are identified and structured in detail in a conceptual framework (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). The framework, which is usually based on existing or widely accepted theories or concepts that enable the researchers to a theoretical base, explains the interrelationship between adopted variables and ideas (Leshem & Trafford, 2007; Varpio et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2010). Along with that, it also focuses on incorporating any underlying presumptions (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). It articulates the parameters of the research, outlining how researchers will carry their empirical research ahead and what will and won't be part of the investigation in the research (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). Though the conceptual framework may serve different purposes, it's the primary reason for research is to offer an organized method for gathering and analyzing the responses that align with the adopted research questions and hypothesis – eventually making the investigators' comprehension of the research issue more transparent and achievable (Leshem & Trafford, 2007; Varpio et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2010).

Furthermore, it facilitates a meaningful interpretation by connecting the gathered responses to the adopted ideas and theories (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). Therefore, a dissertation on "*The impact of tourism development on the reduction of multidimensional poverty in Nepal,*" for instance, would comprise the following concepts in its conceptual frameworks: income equality, economic growth, educational opportunities, women empowerment, oppression awareness, and socio-cultural settings. The prevalence of poverty has been prevalent in Nepal for several decades, and most of the research, such as (K. Bhattarai & Karmacharya, 2021; M. K. Chaudhary, 2018; Shakya, 2016; Sharma, 2007) explored by researching tourism development's impact on poverty reduction; however, these researchers only focused on the role of income generation in tourism development. Therefore, this dissertation will adopt three existing theories highlighting how different aspects of multifaceted poverty issues are understood and how it could help alleviate such cases by using tourism as a stimulating force: Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, human capital theory, and social exchange theory.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework
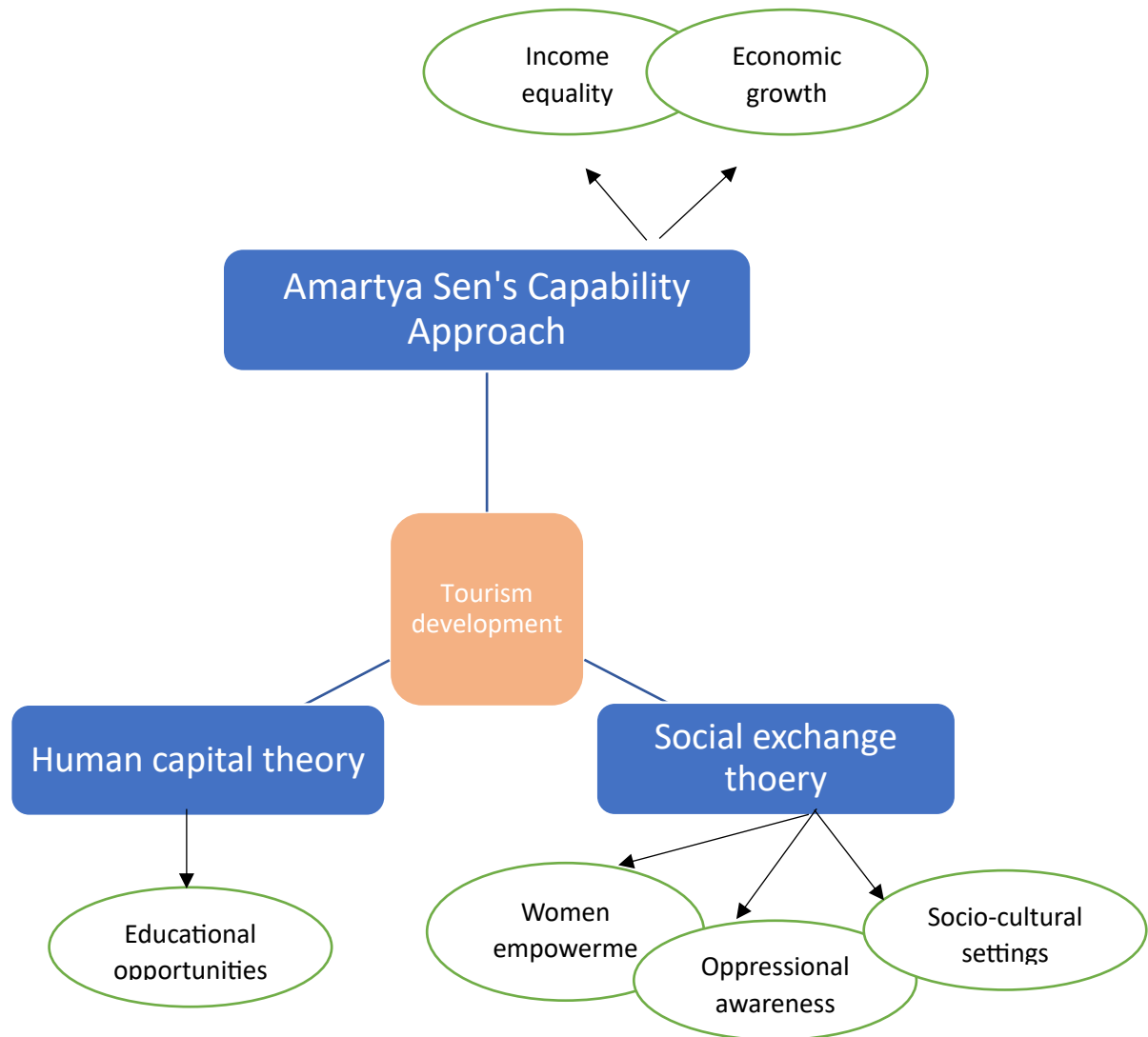
Source: Self-created

3.1 Amartya Sen's Capability Approach

Amartya Sen is the philosopher and economist who pioneered the capability approach and implemented it in evaluating the impact of development and well-being in different disciplines like health, philosophy, sociology, education, and law (Deneulin, 2009). Sen is also responsible for advancing development studies and economics through her approach, which drifts away from the inflated emphasis on growth and towards personal freedom, agency, and well-being

(Winter & Kim, 2021). In the context of the Capability Approach, the meaning of well-being differs depending on the purpose and context of its use (Robeyns, 2017). Even though contemporary philosophical records emphasize how well an individual's life is going toward achieving well-being, the capability approach distinguishes between the achieved well-being and the well-being freedom (i.e., well-being opportunities) (Robeyns, 2017).

Sen criticizes the conventional ideology of development that mainly focuses on income and commodities (opulence) and the traditional economic welfare view that perceives people's well-being in the context of utility (desire fulfillment, happiness, or choice) (Winter & Kim, 2021). In contrast, he contends that development and well-being must be assessed based on people's ability to attain the valued functions (Sen, 1999). Similarly, Den Braber et al. (2018) explored the impact of protected areas (PAs) on poverty in Nepal. They found that PAs, particularly those with high tourism levels, meaningly reduced poverty without aggravating inequality. Gerlitz et al. (2015) developed the Multidimensional Poverty Measure for the Hindu Kush–Himalayas (MPM-HKH) and applied it to 23 districts in Nepal. Their studies revealed wide variations in multisectoral poverty levels across these districts, mainly affected by factors including education, health, material assets, energy, water and sanitation, social capital, and the availability of the delivery of services.

Sen's capability approach primarily focuses on two major concepts, comprising functionings and capabilities, in which Sen (Sen, 1995) stated that when the attained functionings make up the people's well-being, then their ability to achieve these functionings will make the individual's freedom (or the actual opportunities) to be in a state of well-being. Capabilities define what individuals can become or accomplish, while functionings highlight their equivalent or resulting achievements (Robeyns, 2017). This approach thus offers insight into the multiple dimensions of the well-being concept, which include aspects like the physical qualities like being well nourished, sheltered, and adequately clothed and escaping avertible morbidity (Winter & Kim, 2021). Other elements include more complex issues involving social achievements, like actively participating in community life and publicly appearing without feeling ashamed (Winter & Kim, 2021).

The capability approach requires poverty to be perceived as a condition in which individuals are deprived of their basic capabilities to function, including the lack of real opportunities to

select from to attain the minimum level of well-being (Winter & Kim, 2021). Therefore, an absolute requirement exists for an individual to escape or avoid poverty, but how the person may choose to do this varies depending on their social contexts and relative circumstances (Sen, 1983). More importantly, this capability approach recognizes that the way toward attaining well-being differs for each person, considering human beings' diversity and agency (Sen, 2002).

The concept holds that freedom is related to one's capabilities or ability to attain things they value and to liberty with the actual process (Sen, 2002). This concept thus involves the people's freedom to make personal decisions, allowing them to actively determine the course of their lives rather than being passive recipients of the benefits of crafty development programs (Sen, 1999). The notion of agency also emerges from the approach in which Winter and Kim, (2021) highlight the ability of people to commit and chase after things they consider valuable. In other words, what truly matters is that all individuals have valuable opportunities or freedoms (capabilities) to lead the type of lives they desire, accomplish what they wish, and become individuals they want (Winter & Kim, 2021). Whereas the capability approach is primarily people-centered, it does not perceive people their freedom in isolation, as it recognizes that the identified options available to an individual significantly depend on their relations with other people, implying a strong influence by the public policy and social circumstances (Drèze & Sen, 2002). Even though this approach traditionally focused entirely on the person's well-being, scholars propose acknowledging collective capabilities (Murphy, 2014). The idea was clarified by Robeyns (2017) that the collective capabilities should be identified as the subset of the personal capabilities, including the individual capabilities that may necessitate them to take part in a group or a collectivity realization action, which may also benefit the group at large (Ibrahim, 2006).

The concepts surrounding the functions and capabilities are also multidimensional, making assessing these concepts and the network a complicated process, mainly due to the diverse aspects of human nature (Winter & Kim, 2021). According to Sen (2002), the capability approach's conceptual framework comes with numerous ambiguities that make it hard to understand and discuss. Various scholars, like Hick (2012) and Nussbaum (2003), criticized Sen for his failure to give a specific list of functions and capabilities, leading to ambiguity and

complexity that make it challenging to attain practical application of the model (Winter & Kim, 2021).

On the other hand, Sen and individuals supporting his capability approach framework hold that the emerging ambiguities must be perceived as the potential strengths of the model because they reflect the functionings of individuals and the diversity of their capabilities (Winter & Kim, 2021). These scholars further point out that the approach presents a rich and unrestricted nature, making it very useful in dealing with the plurality of issues in a wide variety of contexts, as it offers a decadent way to understand what entails a good life while at the same time taking into consideration the human diversity (Winter & Kim, 2021).

The current study draws on the identified strengths of the capability approach as the main theoretical framework in studying the influence of tourism development on reducing poverty, as it has the basis for considering the contextualization of multidimensional poverty. By taking this approach, the researcher moves away from solely analyzing the issue based on income-focused poverty and has the basis of including multiple dimensions of poverty. Even though the lack of income has been identified as a critical factor contributing to the individual's capability deprivation and is an essential way to attaining one's freedom and well-being, it only acts as a rough proxy of what an individual considers to be intrinsically meaningful, or their capabilities (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2017). Thus, the current research paper focuses on how poor individuals use their resources (both non-monetary and monetary), which is achieved through tourism, to attain the functions and capabilities they perceive to be valuable. The study also assumes that poverty-stricken individuals can articulate and analyze the different dimensions of poverty and their valued freedoms in the same context of multiple dimensions on the same basis supported by Sen's Capability Approach (Winter & Kim, 2021).

Tourism development is believed to reduce poverty in developing nations. In their study, Njoya and Seetaram (2018) investigate the impact of tourism development on poverty reduction in the poor segments of the population. Some poverty indices investigated over time include the poverty headcount, poverty gap, and poverty severity. The dynamic GCE model employed in the study accounts for various sectors of the economy, focusing on the distribution of resources from the traditional sectors to tourism-related industries (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). The model incorporates the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) to offer a more comprehensive approach to

measuring poverty to complement the poverty headcount, poverty gap, and poverty severity (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018).

Poverty is an important factor in Amartya Sen's capability approach. Sen suggests that poverty deprives people of freedom and the ability to function in society (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). As such, the poverty dimension is a significant factor in this review. According to Njoya and Seetaram, tourism development increased the GDP, export earnings, employment, and wages for the local people. Statistics show that in 2005, over 40% of Kenyans lived below the poverty line, and the poverty severity was 7.7 (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). Still, the simulation shows that tourism development would reduce the poverty headcount by 1.83 by 2020. A 5% increase in inbound tourists would cause a 1.83% reduction in people living beyond the poverty line (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). The poverty gap would be reduced by 3%. The urban and rural poor experienced the impact of tourism-driven economic growth that resulted in income and labor demand growth (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018). The positive outcomes of the two variables significantly reduce the poverty headcount and poverty severity. In urban and rural areas, tourism development decreases the poverty headcount, the poverty index gap, and the poverty severity index and increases household income. The economic impact of tourism development in Kenya trickles down to benefit the rural people. The local levels experienced an increase in income, and labor demand, which reduced poverty levels (Njoya & Seetaram, 2018).

Suparman et al. (2024) conducted an empirical study to uncover whether tourism development can alleviate poverty in a province in Indonesia. Most studies in the past examined the impact of tourism development on the national level if positive impacts trickle down to the local levels. However, Suparman et al. (2024) identified this gap and sought to bridge it by incorporating the national levels but focusing on the local levels. The study employs an empirical model to analyze secondary data by district derived from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) between 2011 and 2020 using the panel-data regression equation model to ascertain whether a relationship exists between tourism development and poverty alleviation at the local levels. The findings from this study are consistent with the previous one that tourism development can achieve economic development in developing countries. Like earlier studies, Suparman et al. (2024) acknowledge the bias in evaluating the impact of tourism development on macroeconomic factors such as GDP, tax revenue, and total foreign earnings.

Amartya Sen believes these factors offer a one-sided view or rather a superficial impact on development. As such, Sen recommended evaluating factors such as poverty alleviation in rural areas. High levels of poverty indicate that people lack functioning in society – in that they cannot live good lives characterized by access to healthcare, education, and basic needs. Countries mostly focus efforts on tourism development to realize national or regional economic growth. The focus on the national level makes poverty alleviation a subsidiary goal. As noted earlier, it is often assumed that the economic growth realized from tourism development trickles down to the people experiencing poverty and is evidenced in job creation and public welfare (Suparman et al., 2024). However, this study shows that the tourism sector did not show a positive impact on the various indicators at the local levels of Indonesia.

While poverty is understood as a tool for development and poverty alleviation, most of the research on tourism development focuses on income-based poverty (Winter & Kim, 2021). Therefore, most research fails to capture the multidimensional nature of poverty from the poor people's perspective. Winter and Kim (2021) use empirical methods to explore whether tourism development alleviates poverty in a Northeastern town in Brazil. The study uses a mixed-method approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods to find comprehensive findings. Winter and Kim (2021) managed to gather interviews from the residents on how monetary and non-monetary resources helped them achieve an improved standard of living from their poverty. Residents of Imbassai highlighted that monetary resources derived from tourism were important to improve their livelihoods on different fronts. Income from tourism was used differently – some used it to improve their local business, others bought bicycles to save time moving, and some bought televisions to attract more tourists to their premises (Winter & Kim, 2021). Tourism exposed the residents to international friends, giving them a better position in the community. Since most of these residents could not travel to learn about the different cultures, tourism allowed them to become culturally aware, which improved their education (Winter & Kim, 2021). Most of the poor people in the region described tourism as the primary source of income, which helped them pay for their shelter and food. The study meets various tenets of Sen's understanding of development. Notably, the tents focus on the individual welfare of people at the local levels, which this study satisfies. Considering that this study was conducted in 2021, it differs significantly from the studies by Njoya and Seetaram (2018) and Suparman et al. (2024), whose findings are mixed.

Therefore, assessing prior researchers' findings within Amartya Sen's Capability Approach in connection to tourism development and multidimensional poverty alleviation, we have postulated the following hypothesis:

H1a: Tourism development positively and significantly alleviates multidimensional poverty cases by lowering income inequality in Nepal.

H2a: Tourism development positively and significantly alleviates multidimensional poverty cases by offering economic growth in Nepal.

3.2 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) has been perceived as the fundamental economics concept focusing on the importance of investments in healthcare and education as the primary ways to better people's economic well-being and productivity (Milovanović, 2017). The theory was initially developed by economists including Jacob Mincer, Theodore Schultz, and Gary Becker, and it holds that individuals' health, knowledge, and skills are essential assets, similar to physical capital, and thus making investing in these areas brings significant yields in terms of development and economic growth (Milovanović, 2017). According to Kim et al. (Kim et al., 2009), intellectual capital should be perceived as a significant corporate asset in the context of the knowledge economy, as it makes it possible for organizations to attain superior performance in the long run. In this regard, intellectual capital is seen as comprising human, relational, and structural capital, which are directly connected to the core competencies of an organization, with human capital consisting of a stock of personality attributes, knowledge, and competencies that influence the ability to perform labor (Milovanović, 2017). They thus refer to the attributes attained by a worker through experiences and education to produce economic value (Milovanović, 2017). An individual's outputs thus partially depend on the rate of return on the human capital owned, with the additional investments meant to yield extra output (Milovanović, 2017).

Wang et al. (2020) stated lower overall educational improvement satisfaction, which might be the other side of tourism for the enhancement of education. The socio-cultural sides of the two studies shared the idea of the role of tourism in communications about culture and reduction in vulnerability. Wang et al. (2020) talked about tourism's corruption potential and delay in the

social development process; however, it was found that one of the primary roles of tourism in gender issues - a question of income gap and women empowerment.

Human capital entails the costs that organizations and individuals sustain on the procedures and activities leading to acquiring skills, talents, competencies, positive attitudes, and abilities (Milovanović, 2017). Researchers agree that these costs entail the medical care and education training expenditures and further state that the cost of human resources, quality, and quantity is essential for achieving competitiveness in the tourism sector (Milovanović, 2017). Development in the tourism sector is mainly achieved through the training, development, and education of the future managerial personnel working in the tourism firms because human capital accounts for the most vital resource that requires proper management for the tourism firms to attain sustainable development and survive the competition (Milovanović, 2017).

Since the service industry broadly supports tourism, human resource development is critical because of the increasing demand for better services from sophisticated customers (Milovanović, 2017). Scholars agree that for organizations to reach such a moving target, their quality of service must be supported through constant development of human capital through continual improvement, identification of development opportunities, and measuring progress (Milovanović, 2017). In Nepal, large organizations operating in the industry, especially the hotels, manage this function under the human resource management (HRM) department, which is tasked with attracting and retaining the best talent, motivating them, developing their skills, and developing supportive structure and culture for these employees to meet their targets and organizational goals (Hajiyeva & Teymurova, 2019). More importantly, the HRM also ensures that employees are highly motivated to improve the quality of their labor by offering them better rewards and training and selecting suitable candidates for the job (Hajiyeva & Teymurova, 2019).

KC et al. (2021) explored the role of the Nepalese tourism industry in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), finding that stakeholders recognize tourism's potential to address multiple SDGs, including poverty reduction, economic growth, and quality education. KC et al. (2021) noted significant challenges in policy implementation and coordination among stakeholders, which can impede the full realization of tourism's benefits. One of the significant roles in the HRM, as supported by the human capital theory, is workplace design and leadership, which are essential for organizations to issue the system to support

proper management of the organizational and natural resources (Fahimi et al., 2018). Under the compensation system, studies show that all firms must include awards based on the person's quality improvement and awards based on the team results to support group work, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge among employees as they learn from one another (Fahimi et al., 2018). If the individuals are educated, they acquire more excellent knowledge and skills necessary for alleviating various dimensions of poverty, primarily through the efforts to support tourism and tourist activities in the rural areas of Nepal. This means that all the critical stakeholders within the tourism sector, especially tourism organizations, government agencies, and NGOs, must redesign their efforts to facilitate educational initiatives for the locals and issue crucial assistance for the communities lingering in poverty by directing the benefits from the sector toward improving the health and education of such individuals (Hajiyeva & Teymurova, 2019). Such insights are a clear indication of the significance of the human capital theory in identifying the roles that tourism development can play in reducing poverty.

It has become common knowledge that tourism development directly and indirectly leads to job creation and alternative income avenues, particularly in regions with abundant cultural or natural attractions (Saville, 2001). According to Razzaq et al.(2013), whenever the country experiences significant tourism growth, the demand for skilled individuals in tourism management, hospitality, and other tourism-related sectors experiences growth. As a result, communities need the stakeholders to invest heavily in vocational training and education programs to equip individuals from less advantaged economic backgrounds to make the best of such opportunities. Education works toward enhancing their employability while at the same time fostering the lifelong learning culture since these individuals will yearn to better their skills as long there is a need to meet the evolving demands witnessed in the tourism industry (Croes et al., 2020). Previous studies have proven beyond any reasonable doubt that in most regions that experience robust tourism growth, there is a corresponding improvement in educational attainment levels, as most families prioritize their children's education as they perceive the increasing economic prospects. In these marginalized areas, income and educational opportunities for low-income families are crucial to alleviating multidimensional aspects of poverty (Kim et al., 2009).

Tourism development has also been found to indirectly contribute to healthcare improvement by introducing new habits and cultures that promote healthy lifestyles and behaviors in most

rural regions (Gautam, 2022). For example, in many destinations in countries like Nepal, which are known for offering adventurous outdoor recreational activities, tourism development helps to encourage the residents to engage in outdoor leisure pursuits and physical activity together with the tourists, which leads to a substantial reduction in the prevalent sedentary lifestyles with the related health problems (Gautam, 2022). Most importantly, when tourism destinations focus on maintaining high sanitation and hygiene standards to attract tourists, these practices also benefit the local population, especially when the big projects in such locations involve water purification and waste management (Gautam, 2022). Since health and education are some of the leading contributors to poverty, employing the human capital theory framework provides the best avenue to understand how tourism development helps alleviate poverty in the context of its multidimensional perspective.

The tourism sector in Malaysia has grown the country's gross domestic product from 9.4% in 2015 to 14.8% in 2016 (Kasa et al., 2020). The government launched Visit Malaysia 2020 in 2018 to attract over 30 million tourists, but the country needed to train over 500,000 graduates to help achieve this objective (Kasa et al., 2020). Since Malaysia identified an opportunity to grow its economy, but with tourism development, there is a need for better education to maintain the industry. As such, the growth calls for skilled human capital, and identifying this made Malaysia understand the need for a well-structured curriculum to prepare young people to offer high-quality services in the sector. Kasa et al. (2020) employ a qualitative method in this study to understand the phenomenology of those who will deliver well-structured curricula to aid young people graduate with the required skills. The study is important because it highlights the importance of improved education as a direct consequence of tourism development. While the study is also exploratory, it uses semi-structured interviews with key experts in curriculum development, combined with secondary data reviews, to achieve the objective. Malaysia should understand the criticality of education in preparing future workers in the tourism sector. Those offering education in the tourism sector must communicate with the tourism industry to prepare students effectively to work in this important sector. The industry should update the education sector on what to integrate into the curricula to prepare young graduates to offer high-quality services. In Malaysia, there is an Industry Advisory Board that is mandated to review the curriculum. Regular communication or dialogue is a necessity to improve this curriculum to instill necessary skills ranging from critical thinking, problem-solving, and managerial skills in the graduates (Kasa et al., 2020). A collaborative

effort between the sectors is essential to align the industry with global standards and ensure that the quality of education supports the sector entirely (Kasa et al., 2020).

Tourism development is attributed to medical tourism involving foreign travel for medical treatment or health services. Medical tourism is a consequence of the development of the tourism economy, which has been evolving. Indonesia is one of the developing countries that have benefited from tourism development. As a result, researchers from Indonesia and worldwide have conducted studies to help the country maintain the steady growth of tourism development using the human capital dimension. Some of these researchers include Supriadi et al. (Supriadi et al., 2024) who conducted a study to identify the role of healthcare in promoting tourism development. Supriadi et al. (2024) performed document analysis, and in-depth interviews conducted using video conferencing and analyzed data through inductive thematic content analysis. A major human capital issue from the data was the lack of specialist doctors in Indonesia. In a previous study by Suparman et al. (2024), the country benefited significantly from the growth of tourism development. The growth was reflected in the gross domestic product, but the benefits did not trickle down to the local levels. As such, the tourism development did not alleviate poverty, or improve the functioning of people at the local level. The same case applies, whereby the growth of medical tourism from tourism development is not correlated with the growth of human capital elements such as education and access to healthcare. Despite the promises of medical tourism, Indonesia lacks specialist doctors who can offer services under medical tourism. Apart from this, Indonesians do not speak English, which creates a significant language barrier, especially with English-speaking tourists. In Malaysia, the education gap was filled by creating a well-structured curriculum that prepared young people to offer services in the tourism sector, a move that Indonesia needs to emulate to leverage tourism development in the form of medical tourism.

Investments in human capital are linked to economic growth in developing countries. The human capital theory links high performance to human capital – developing countries with high levels of human capital have high performance (Folarin et al., 2017). In their study, Cardenas-Garcia et al. (2024) analyzed the relationship between tourism development and non-economic variables such as education and healthcare. Most studies have focused on the economic variables of GDP, income, and poverty. Still, Cardenas-Garcia et al. (2024) integrate non-

economic variables of human capital to offer a shift from the normal. People are the primary source of economic productivity in a country. Evaluating the value of human capital requires understanding the link between health and education. A healthy and educated person offers more value in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. The study uses a sample of 123 developing countries between 1995 and 2015, employing the Granger causality test and analyzing heterogeneous panels to ascertain whether causality exists. In their findings, Garcia et al. (2024) note that economic development includes other variables such as education and health. However, this study approaches development from a multidimensional perspective to understand the impact of tourism development on health and education. In this regard, the study reports that the level of tourism development plays a role in tourism specialization, whereby high tourism development tends to dictate tourism specialization. The observation was made in countries whose health accessibility and education levels were high, giving them the attractiveness as tourist destinations. Tourists tend to prefer such countries because they can access high levels of health, and they can avoid various problems, such as language barriers because of low levels of education. Compared to countries such as Indonesia where language barriers make it unattractive as a tourist destination, Malaysia is investing in education levels to attract more tourists.

Therefore, assessing prior researchers' findings within human capital theory in connection to tourism development and multidimensional poverty alleviation, we have postulated the following hypothesis:

H3a: Tourism development positively and significantly alleviates multidimensional poverty cases by contributing to quality education in Nepal.

3.3 Social Exchange Theory

Muler González (2020) argued that Social Exchange Theory (SET) emerged within the field of sociology and social psychology mainly from the works of various scholars, including Tibaut and Kelley (1959), Homans (1958), and Blau (2017) in the 1960s. Whereas Blau (1964) focused on the economic side of the theory, the research by Thibaut and Kelly (1959) examined individual exchanges for a better understanding of the dyads and complicated aspects of group mechanisms. On the other hand, Homans (1958) highlights the psychology behind the

instrumental behavior . At the basic level, SET limits its focus on the actions contingent upon the activities that reward other people's actions (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). The application of this theory is primarily related to its adaptability because the relationships between humans can be understood from the exchanges that take place in different contexts, which explains why SET has been implemented in various fields (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). The theory provides a substantial reference framework describing the nature of support residents at the different tourism destinations can gain through their benefits. It identifies the costs they endure (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). Since support is critical in management and sustainability, researchers have identified various conditions that lead to it from the perspectives of costs and rewards (Abas et al., 2021).

Scholars agree that SET offers a valuable framework that can be used to analyze social interactions and relationships in the context of tourism development, and it holds that people engage in social exchanges depending on their expectations to receive rewards and reduce their respective costs (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). When implemented in the tourism sector, SET provides insight into the interaction dynamics between host communities and tourists and the resulting cultural and social impacts (Abas et al., 2021). The theory suggests that the tangible or outright support directed toward developing tourism activities should be seen as the willingness to enter an exchange. At the same time, the residents choose the exchanges after they have assessed their costs and benefits.

At the core of SET is the ideology of reciprocity, which experts in psychology define as the situation where people engage in social exchanges to gain mutual benefits (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). Concerning the tourism development efforts in Nepal, this theory can easily be applied to provide an in-depth understanding of the exchange relationships established between the local communities lingering in poverty and the tourists (Abas et al., 2021). Tourists visit the protected areas and the local community settings to benefit from authentic cultural experiences, hospitality, and local knowledge. In contrast, these local host communities offer their cultural products, services, and heritage with the hope of gaining economic benefits and opportunities in return (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022).

Research in social exchange theory indicates that tourism development can generate positive and harmful cultural and social impacts on the host communities and individuals (Muler González, 2020). Through the SET's lens, it is possible to analyze these impacts regarding the level and nature of the interactions or exchanges between the locals and tourists and the ultimate results of these interactions (Sun et al., 2002). For instance, tourism plays a critical role in improving cohesion in the community as it helps foster a sense of pride within the locals' cultural heritage and facilitates more significant levels of social interactions between the visitors and residents (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022).

Research shows that tourism has considerable potential to strengthen the communities' social networks, leading to solidarity, cooperation, and trust among residents (Sun et al., 2002). On the other hand, studies have shown that tourism development poses significant challenges to cultural and social preservation since commodifying heritage and culture to support tourist consumption ultimately leads to the erosion of traditional values and practices (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). More importantly, the high influx of tourists significantly disrupts the social dynamics of the local communities, which further contributes to the sidelining of indigenous communities. Therefore, balancing the activities directed toward tourism development and safeguarding cultural integrity and authenticity is crucial.

Another vital aspect that emerges from SET is the empowerment of marginalized groups, as studies have established that tourism can empower marginalized communities, especially women, by offering them opportunities for economic participation, networking, and social interaction (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). In Nepal, where caste and gender discrimination persevere, tourism can be an effective catalyst for empowerment and social change, especially for women living in rural communities who can get employed from the tourism-related opportunities in tour guiding, handicrafts, and hospitality, thus providing income them with income and enhancing their autonomy and social status. Previous research shows that the participation of women in tourism leads to increased decision-making power for poor households, improved access to healthcare and education, and a higher level of involvement in initiatives for community development (Muler González, 2020). Additionally, tourism is essential in challenging traditional gender norms and roles by developing spaces for marginalized individuals, especially women, to showcase their leadership abilities, knowledge, and skills (Abas et al., 2021). By promoting social inclusion and gender equality, tourism

contributes to poverty reduction and sustainable development in different tourist attraction areas across Nepal.

Concerning the formal education and human resource development of future staff in the Nepali tourism industry, it is clear that the emphasis put on the sector is not adequate due to the limited faculty and institutions specializing in tourism, whereas the other institutions where students can learn about tourism, barely touch on this field as they primarily focus on the natural sciences or economics (Muler González, 2020). Since tourism has been allocated as a secondary priority in all learning institutions, it is not easy to develop highly qualified individuals to meet the needs of the ever-evolving modern tourism industry (Abas et al., 2021). Therefore, scholars recommend that educational institutions make long-term investments in their capabilities, including teaching material and equipment, curriculum design, staff competencies, and connection to the tourism industry and educational institutions in the country and abroad (Muler González, 2020). These elements necessitate adequate resource allocation and commitment to attain excellence to educate tourism staff. In contrast, the resources are increased to attract highly skilled labor and support educational institutions with the attention of authorities, students, and entrepreneurs (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022).

Tourism development facilitates social exchanges through the interaction of people from different cultures or genders and is drawn from the social exchange theory. For cultural exchange to happen, the outcomes of the interactions must be visible. The study by Ondicho (2022) offers insights into the social exchanges between the Maasai women and tourists who frequent the Amboseli region. The study uses cultural bomas tourism to examine the impact of tourism development on Maasai women in the Amboseli region, where tourism development is visible. The study's objective was to explore tourism development and empowerment of Massai women. The study derives data from an ethnographic study characterized by participant observation, interviews, and group discussions.

From the interviews, Ondicho (2020) found various manifestations of social exchanges between the women and the tourists. Some women mentioned their cultural interactions with tourists, which involved sharing of stories that improved their English language and communication skills. The social exchange theory highlights the process of interactions that results in benefits, and this provides an example of women pursuing learning to avoid language

barriers with tourists (Ahmad et al., 2022). The cultural bomas opened business opportunities for Maasai women who started selling cultural items. Some women learned beadwork skills to earn a living from the thriving tourism industry. The business opportunities created a platform for creativity and a shift from the previous roles of women in the Maasai community (Ondicho, 2022). In the traditional Maasai community, women did house chores, but with tourism development, some have found platforms to do business for economic value. The interactions between the Maasai and tourists influenced them to pursue political empowerment mainly out of the value they perceived they received from the tourists. Women from the Maasai community expressed that society gave them freedom to interact freely with the tourists. This was not something the traditional Maasai community would have allowed, but the overall exchanges between the women and tourists brought positive outcomes to society and the women.

Tourism can facilitate the empowerment of women in developing nations. Most studies focused on the economic benefits of tourism development. The studies examined the impact on employment, poverty, and increased foreign exchange earnings. Only a few have shifted to the social exchange paradigm. In some developing countries, women continue occupying low positions in society. However, tourism development has created platforms for social exchanges that challenge these traditional practices.

Wardhani and Susilowati (2021) conducted research from June to July 2020 using mixed-method research to examine the impacts of tourism development on Indonesian women in Indrayanti Beach. Primary data was collected from 48 participants, whereas secondary data was retrieved from Statistics Indonesia. Wardhani and Susilowati (2021) report that women's activities on the beach were evident in food processing, renting mats and umbrellas. Men dominated major tasks such as photography, management, and photo printing. The growth of tourism on Indonesian beaches gave women an opportunity to pursue economic freedom and financial stability. This way, women can contribute to alleviating poverty in the families. Tourism development promotes the socialization of women. Most women on the beach participate in social activities that encourage further development of tourism. Although tourism development on the Indonesian beach helped empower women to pursue economic independence, social exchanges between them and the tourists were unreported. The missing exchanges could point toward the role of women in society, especially in interactions,

especially when compared to findings from previous studies. In the study of Ondicho (2022), the Maasai women's social-cultural exchanges took place with the tourists, which influenced them to improve their education – particularly in learning English and their communication skills. In the Indonesian context, women have been empowered, but there seem to be limited interactions with foreign tourists. Also, compared to the Kenyan context, Maasai men were not evident in the social exchanges, pointing towards a shifting role of women in the society.

Most studies approach the social exchange perspective of tourism development in a positive light. Yet, there are instances of hostile social exchanges linked to tourism development, especially in developing countries. A special edition by Devine and Ojeda (2017) illustrates that violence and dispossession are some of the negative representations of tourism development, which must be highlighted. It is important to highlight that social exchange was linked to positive and negative emotions because outcomes are entirely dependent on the exchange involved (Ahmad et al., 2022). The theory acknowledged that negative social exchanges could consolidate stereotypes against women in developing countries. A study by Mitra, Chattopadhyay, and Chatterjee (2022) investigated the role of tourism development on gender inequality by analyzing data from 1995 to 2018. The researchers used regression to study the relationships and quantile regression to estimate the relationships between the variables. A non-linear relationship emerged between gender inequality and tourism development, suggesting instances of negative social exchanges for women in developing nations. Most studies have reported a positive relationship between tourism development on various aspects of gender, especially empowerment, economic development, and political empowerment (Ondicho, 2022). In his study, Ondicho (2022) found that the social exchanges between the Maasai women led to positive outcomes, where the women improved their English language and communication skills. However, Mitra, Chattopadhyay, and Chatterjee (2022) report that tourism development can expose women to exploitation and sexual harassment, which consolidates stereotypes about them, confining them to socially constructed spaces. Hostile social exchanges in tourism development are often disregarded, perhaps to maintain the positive benefits of tourism development. Highlighting the negatives of tourism creates awareness to condemn these prejudices against women. Societies, where discrimination against women is rampant, should empower them instead of exposing them to potential harm from an activity intended to create a positive impact on society.

Therefore, assessing prior researchers' findings within social exchange theory in connection to tourism development and multidimensional poverty alleviation, we have postulated the following hypothesis:

H4a: Tourism development positively and significantly alleviates multidimensional poverty cases by contributing to women's empowering activities in Nepal.

H5a: Tourism development positively and significantly alleviates multidimensional poverty cases by reducing social and caste-related oppression in Nepal.

H6a: Tourism development positively and significantly alleviates multidimensional poverty cases by rendering positive socio-cultural activities in Nepal.

3.4 Research Model

Figure 3: Research model
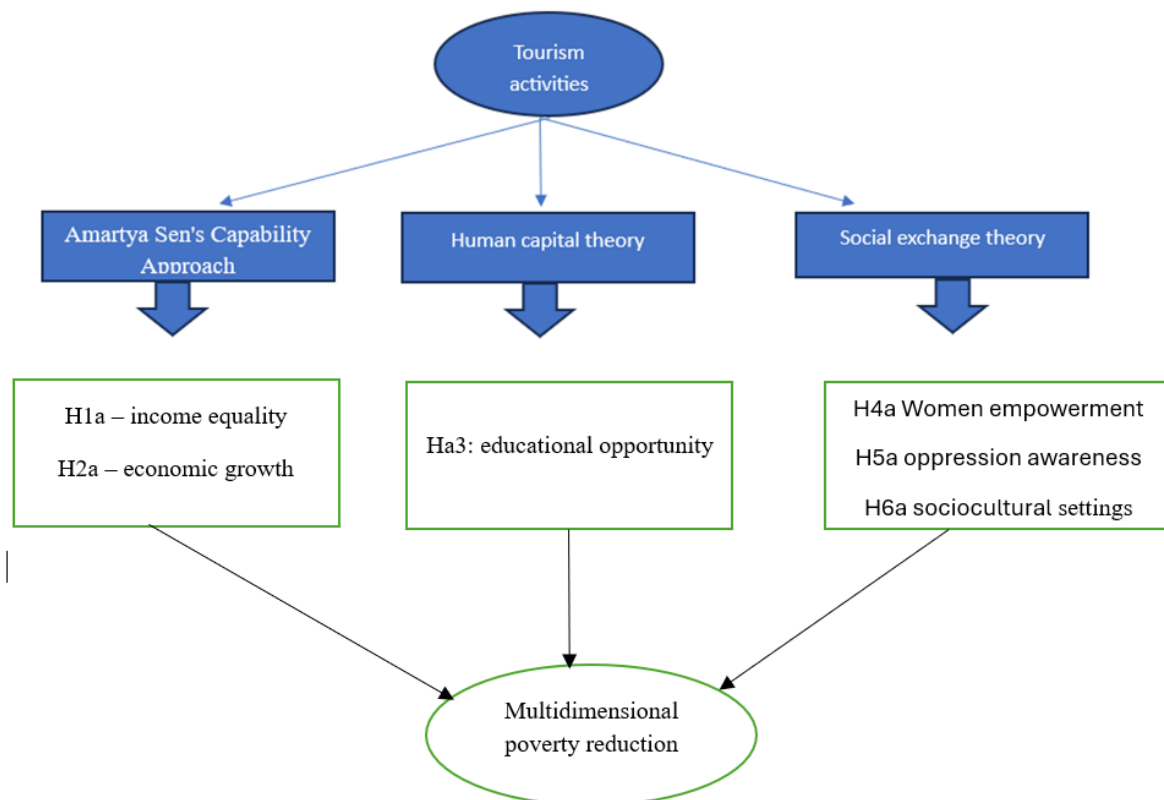
Source: Authors' creation.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter will discuss different methodologies, and the relevance of adopting particular methods out of possible alternatives will be justified. This section will also provide the rationale for selecting sampling techniques and ethical issues while conducting the research and sample collection. Before that, the selection of research philosophy, "i.e., Positivist," and its relevance selection will be presented, through which the justification for selecting a deductive approach to this dissertation will be provided. Thirdly, the linkage of the quantitative research method with the positivist-deductive route will be presented. Similarly, the relevancy of selecting an online survey questionnaire will be provided.

This dissertation will use the Saunders et al. (2019) research model to select suitable research design, philosophy, approach, and sampling techniques.

Figure 4: Research Onion
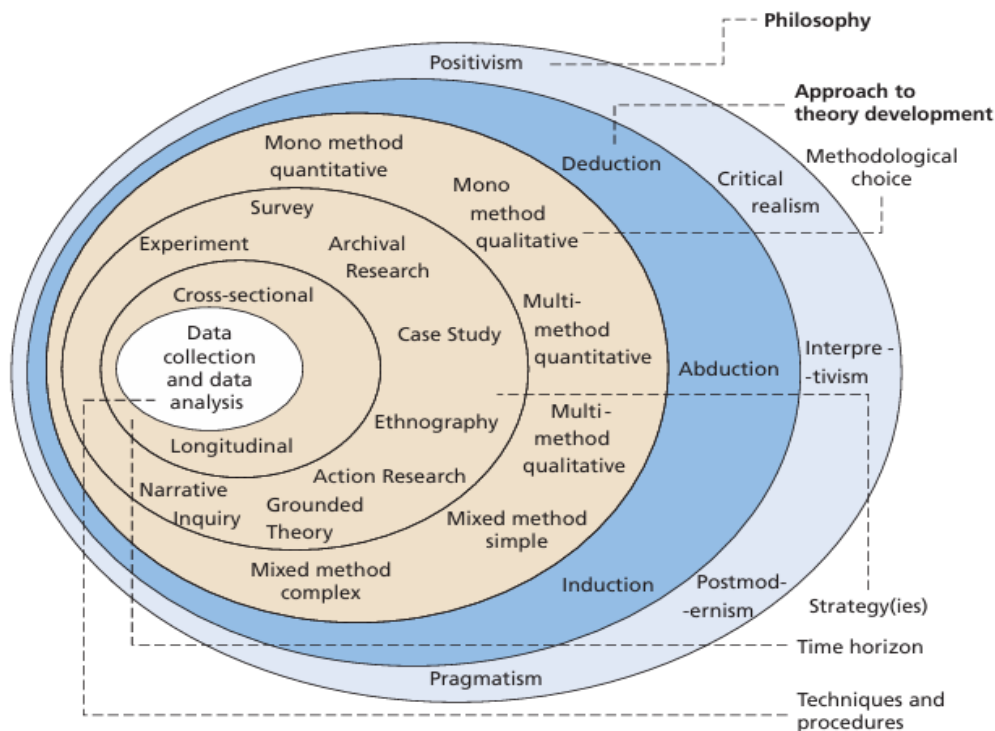
Source: Saunders et al. (2019)

4.1 Research Philosophy: Positivist Philosophy

This research is done under the positivist philosophy, which is based on the theory that reality is objective and can be observed from an external perspective. Positivism relies on measurable experiences that end up in mathematics to lead to statistical results (Saunders et al., 2019). It is compatible with my research purpose for an in-depth understanding of the impact of tourism development on poverty reduction in Nepal using accurate data collection and hypothesis testing. The research is designed to generate valid and impersonal contingencies of large societies by applying empirical methods. The words science and methodology are frequently tied together. The process's main components are testable empirical evidence and hypotheses that are subsequently tested through data observation and experiments (Eidlin, 2013).

Positivism allows the analysis of the effects of tourism on various dimensions of poverty, such as economic stability, educational opportunities, and socio-cultural development (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). Having data from quantitative surveys will furnish us with the basis for statistically sound analysis we can use to measure the variables precisely and find their relationships. The notion of atheism in its metaphysical sense is in line with this objective, allowing for conclusions that are well-founded in empirical evidence and, hence, are more probable to be valid and reliable (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020).

Positivism Philosophy relies on "measurement and reason," which believes knowledge is formed through a neutral quantizable observation (Eidlin, 2013). Positivism philosophers acknowledge that if something is impossible to measure in this way, then it is, and the reality is certainly unknown (Eidlin, 2013). Similarly, positivist philosophers recognize that scientific knowledge stems from gathering "theory-free" and "value-free" data from actual observation (Eidlin, 2013). If anything cannot be observed or measured quantitatively, then the formation of reality has zero importance (Eidlin, 2013). This is one of the main reasons why positivist research philosophy is usually connected with quantitative data collection methods (Saunders et al., 2019). Meanwhile, interpretivism, which is believed to be polar of positivism, assumes that reality lies on the subjectivity of individual feeling and is socially constructed, which means reality emerges from an individual's experience (Saunders et al., 2019). It might be different from person to person (Saunders et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, Interpretivists rely on "questioning" and "observation" to generate rich, nuanced findings closely associated with qualitative data collection. When relating this information to this dissertation, the aim is to find out how tourism-related activities within the Nepalese economic aspect, educational aspect, Socio-cultural aspect, income generation aspect, women empowerment, and oppression awareness help to reduce multidimensional poverty. These variables stemmed from three theories: Amartya Sen's capability approach, social exchange theory, and Human capital theory. To find how these variables affect multidimensional poverty, gathering objective-based realities rather than using an interpretive approach that relies on personal experiences and social constructs is relatively efficient. Therefore, positivism is the philosophy that best fits this dissertation. The selection of positivism philosophy for this dissertation stems from the given "Image:1, below".

Image 1: Comparison between positivist and interpretivism philosophy

Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Methods implied
Positivist Philosophers			
Objective, external, independent One actual reality (universalism) Granular (things) Ordered	Scientific method Observable and measurable facts Law-like generalizations Numbers Causal explanation and prediction as a contribution	Value-free research: The researcher is detached, neutral, and independent of what is being researched. The researcher maintains an objective stance	Typically deductive, highly structured, large samples, measurement, typically quantitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be analyzed
Interpretivist philosophers			
Complex, rich, socially constructed through culture and language, Multiple meanings, interpretations, realities, Flux of processes, experiences, practices	Theories and concepts too simplistic Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions, and interpretations of new understandings and worldviews as a contribution	Value-bound research Researchers are part of what is researched; subjective Researcher interpretations key to contribution Researcher reflexive	Typically, inductive. Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be interpreted

Source: Saunders et al. (2019, p. 145)

4.2 Research Approach: Deductive

Deductive research is applied, as the process begins with a theoretical framework and hypotheses based on the collected past experiences and knowledge (Reyes, 2004). Starting from this point, we collect empirical data and scrutinize its validity to determine whether we fully or partially agree with the hypotheses. This approach is relevant for the study of the impact of tourism on poverty alleviation because it is applicable for hypothesis testing and comparison of the specified theoretical models about mitigating poverty in economic ways, improving education, and social interaction with tourists against the actual world empirical data (Rashid et al., 2021).

The deductive approach is in line with the positivist philosophy as it begins with established theory and then uses it as a guide for research (Saunders et al., 2019). This technique not only guarantees that the research is strongly methodical and replicable, but it also clearly and directly outlines the relationship between theory and empirical evidence (Saunders et al., 2019).. By employing the scientific process of developing hypotheses from literature, the study can either validate or reject existing information that will advance knowledge and help improve the dialogue on tourism as a poverty alleviation strategy among academia.

The deductive approach refers to a scientific method where scholars observe to test or revise the existing hypothesis, which is used in this respect (Saunders et al., 2019).. Therefore, the deductive approach completely differs from the inductive approach. In fact, Saunders et al. (2019) acknowledge that positivist philosophy is closely interrelated to the deductive approach to test or revise a hypothesis. It is crucial to have quantifiable observation. Similarly, scholars use a deductive approach to confirm existing theories or models, which holds a top-to-bottom approach (Reyes, 2004).

Meanwhile, the inductive approach, which is related to the approach, looks for a grounded theory, which means developing a theory based on observation (Reyes, 2004). Each approach has its benefits and drawbacks, but it entirely relates to the researcher and which approach to follow to produce the best result for the research (Saunders et al., 2019). Since this dissertation has already adopted three theories through which hypotheses have been postulated, the deductive approach is more applicable because it enables the test of the hypothesis by collective observable and quantifiable data. If the set premises are met, the postulated hypothesis will be

accepted; otherwise, fail to regret the postulated hypothesis. The listed characteristics in "Image: 2" help to find why deductive is more suitable for this dissertation.

Image 2: Deductive and Inductive comparision

	Deductive	Inductive
Logic	In a deductive inference, when the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true	In inductive inference, known premises are used to generate untested conclusions
Generalizability	Generalizing from the general to the specific	Generalizing from the specific to the general
Use of data	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, and create a conceptual framework
Theory	Theory falsification or verification	Theory generation and building

Source: Saunders et al. (2019, p. 153)

4.3 Research Method: Quantitative

The study employs a quantitative research method, collecting and analyzing numerical data. This method is suitable for the research as it uses statistical tools to measure the extent of tourism's impact on different dimensions of poverty. Quantitative methods allow for collecting large amounts of data, which can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns, correlations, and causal relationships (Saunders et al., 2019).

The role of quantitative research in meeting the study's objectives is excellent because it quantifies how tourism impacts different poverty indicators. A systematic questionnaire reduces the risk of subjectivity among data collectors; however, data analysis is processed objectively with statistical methods (Rashid et al.,2021). Thus, this approach increases the

legitimacy of the study's findings and is the foundation for consequential policy and practice in the given field.

One of the significant differences between quantitative research and qualitative research is that quantitative research is mainly implied to gain insights about undergoing potions, reasons, and motives (Yilmaz, 2013). This basically implies gaining insights into the problem through quantifiable and observational measurements (Yilmaz, 2013). Also, quantitative-based research is implied chiefly when there is a need to develop ideas or hypotheses and later test them to know their relevancy (Yilmaz, 2013). Meanwhile, qualitative-based research is mainly utilized to uncover trends and patterns and develop nuanced findings (Yilmaz, 2013). Qualitative assessment is adopted chiefly to comprehend human attitudes or experiences, which relies on unstructured and explorative methods (Saunders et al., 2019).

Qualitative assessment is usually adopted to know the topic more profoundly, primarily through experienced interview sessions (Yilmaz, 2013). On the other hand, quantitative research is based on hard facts (Yilmaz, 2013). It has numerical forms of data whose primary function is to create a cause-and-effect relationship, which links this concept to this dissertation. The aim is to find a relationship between economic, educational, and Socio-cultural income equality, women empowerment, and oppression awareness. These independent variables are taken as a "cause factor" that will be observed in multi-dimensional poverty reduction. Hence, multidimensional poverty reduction is the effect. On the other hand, the impact of these variables on multi-dimensional poverty reduction is best possibly predicted by gathering a bulk of standardized data rather than having interviews with a few people.

This dissertation's postulated hypothesis requires numerical data, which can only be gathered using a quantitative method. Additionally, quantitative methods are comparatively believed to produce biased-free results compared to qualitative-based results because the research involvement remains external to research findings and data collection period (Yilmaz, 2013). Therefore, quantitative methods are also referred to as empirical research, which is used to develop generalized facts on the researched topic, which are highly possible by applying a survey or experimental research strategy.

4.4 Research Strategy: Online Questionnaire with Surveys

We intend to use the online survey questionnaire mainly as a data collection tool. Hence, delivery via social media channels is preferred as it is both time-efficient and excellent for broadcasting our message to a broad audience in Nepal. The survey uses a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate respondents' criteria for how tourism influences various parts of their lives.

The online questionnaire method has various advantages, such as time, cost, and wide availability, which enable timely data collection (Rashid et al.,2021). Additionally, it supports the diversity of the respondents and, thus, the accuracy of the sample (Rashid et al.,2021). The questionnaires articulated in the Likert scale result in a broader understanding based on the statements and help to measure participants' attitudes and feelings regarding poverty reduction and the role of tourism.

Simplistically, survey research is a technique of gathering responses from a large chunk of people by asking them for questionnaires and computing the results (Saunders et al., 2019). However, it is crucial to grasp a few steps before conducting a survey.

- Firstly, the researcher needs to identify who the participants will be
- Needs to decide how to deliver the survey, "i.e., face-to-face interaction online, etc."
- Distribute the survey to the appropriate number of participants.
- Analyze the response and formulate the results.

Therefore, surveys are considered to be one of the most flexible and convenient methods of collecting data (Saunders et al., 2019). Additionally, it's cost-effective and less time-consuming compared to its counterparts, like interviews or focus groups. More importantly, surveys are better compatible with both cross-sectional

and longitudinal studies (Sheppard, 2020). In this case, the cross-sectional data by surveying Nepalese people about the role of tourism in different aspects such as economic, educational, and Socio-cultural settings, income generation, women empowerment, and oppression awareness help to achieve multidimensional poverty reduction.

In this dissertation, the target population will be Nepalese citizens currently residing in Nepal, regardless of their socio-cultural and ethnic background. However, participants with decent knowledge about tourism activities and poverty in Nepal will be implied as actual participants. The survey questionnaire will be delivered to these participants using Facebook as a delivery channel. The survey questionnaires will be designed with closed-ended questions, and the nature of the questionnaire will be articulated in "First-Person." This way, participants can feel the questionnaire without any feelings of interrogation, which will eventually help to produce more responses.

4.5 Sampling Method: Snowball

A snowball sampling method is employed to identify and recruit participants. This technique is particularly effective in rural areas where formal lists of residents are not readily available. Initial respondents are asked to refer other potential participants, expanding the sample size through their networks.

One of the main benefits of snowball sampling is the ability to reach participants in contexts where accessing them is difficult (Kennedy-Shaffer et al., 2021). It utilizes the social connection of the first group of respondents to change the range of the sample, producing both systematically and individually different results. This approach is efficiently helpful in Nepal, where formal sampling frames might be challenging. Instead, relationships based on personal connections play

a vital role in recruitment. Snowball sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling in which new units or participants are recruited by other referrals to participate in the research project. Snowball sampling is handy in such conditions when researchers find it challenging to access the population. Therefore snowball sampling is also referred to as network sampling, which starts with one to two participants and later increases to a large chunk of participants' responses (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Snowball sampling is widely utilized in qualitative research; however, it also has characteristics compatible with the quantitative research method. Nikolopoulou (2022) claims the adoption of snowball sampling in these circumstances:

- Population is widely distributed and difficult to analyze.
- When the perceived distance between researcher and location is high, especially to geographically disseminated populations.
- When populations possess a sociocultural stigma or have ranges of shared interest.

However, snowball sampling also has drawbacks, especially related to misleading findings, because too many responses might settle on a region or characteristics. To mitigate this, survey forms were delivered from different regions rather than from single participants. This dissertation will adopt through this technique "see Image:3".

Image 5: Snowball sampling selection technique

Snowball Sampling
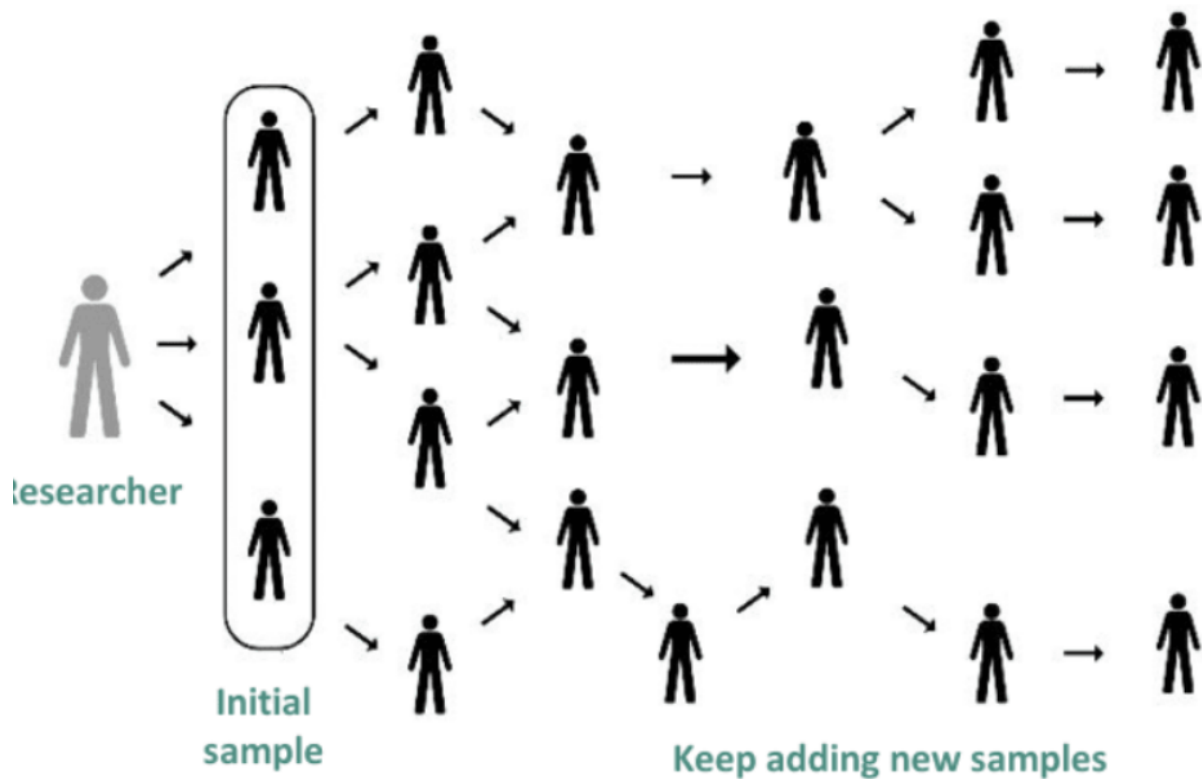
Source: (Gajendrakar, 2024)

4.6 Target Population

The study population to be investigated is the Nepalese people who reside in Nepal regardless of their socio-economic background. These zones are normally those at risk of poverty and stand to benefit the most from tourism development. Focusing on the given category helps to find approaches and solutions for using tourism to overcome poverty cases.

Infusing the research with the views of participants from all sorts of backgrounds who have their homes in the area most likely to be affected by tourism construction may give it great value. It represents the specific needs and circumstances of entire Nepalese areas and paves the way for focused action toward resolutions. This population has been specifically studied to convert the findings into facts and actions that are helpful and practicable for policymakers and development practitioners.

4.6.1 Sample size

Sample size refers to the process of selecting the right number of observations or responses from a larger set to use in a research sample. One crucial goal of a researcher is to anticipate the size of the sample that will ensure a comfortable cushion to provide statistically valid findings and help better resemble the population parameters (Fleetwood, 2018). Especially in today's diversified world, it might be too difficult to get information about each and every member of a particular population, though digitalization has made more things accessible (Fleetwood, 2018). The selection of a statistically significant size of the sample from the population requires certain assumptions: the size of the population, the preciseness of the estimate, and the level of confidence a researcher wants in the research paper. Since the actual size of the population of Nepal is known, as per the Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, the recently surveyed population of Nepal is approximately "29,164,578". One of the widely implied confidence intervals for research is 95% (Fleetwood, 2018); therefore, this research will interpret its results in a 95% confidence interval. Thus, the significance level of "error of margin will be at 5%"—and ".5" standard deviation as an estimation of the data spread out.

According to Fleetwood (2018), the sample size prediction equation follows this path.

Required sample size = "(Z-score)2 * StdDev*(1-StdDev) / (margin of error)2"

$$= ((1.96) *2 * .5(.5))/0.0025$$

$$= 390$$

In aggregate, a total of 390 responses would help to produce statistically significant results for this dissertation.

4.7 Data Analysis: Microsoft Excel and SPSS

Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used to analyze the data collected by online and paper surveys. These devices empower both statistical summary and extensional analyses. Descriptive statistics identify the data analyses, and inferential statistics, which include the analysis of correlation and regression, enable us to understand tourism development and poverty reduction.

Spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel, with a statistical analysis package like SPSS, enables the required data to be analyzed and the vital areas of each program to be combined (Kulas et al., 2021). The Excel facility serves for the first data investigation and sorting, and with SPSS, the user can do more advanced statistics to get more details. All these instruments are user-friendly, all-embracing survey data analysis instruments, which demystifies and makes it easy to comprehend survey results.

Descriptive statistics are the summary of the data, encompassing central tendencies as well. g. Such statistics as mean, median, and dispersion (variance, standard deviation, etc.) and probability distributions help us to describe (e.g., mean, median, and dispersion (variance, standard deviation, etc.) and probability distributions) and understand the data better. g. , standard deviation, range). These numbers refer to the entire data set and make detecting any changing tendencies or groups possible. Factor analysis, assessment of means and modes, autocorrelation, time series, and cross-section models will all be used to get to the root of the problem. Interrelation-based study establishes the level and type of relationship between various picture dimensions and tourism development. Regression analysis measures the effect of different factors in reducing multidimensional poverty by looking into predictors.

The statistics derived through descriptive and inferential methods are comprehensive enough to give the researcher an adequate understanding of the data, denying the researcher no chance for valuable conclusions on the influence of tourism on poverty reduction measures. These studies create evidence that gives strategies and actions that can be utilized by policy and practice, subsequently tapering the aim of reducing the poverty levels in Nepal.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns are of significant importance in this research. The researcher maintains a neutral position and ensures that the data collection and analysis are not biased. The strict observance of participants' data protection guarantees the anonymous and confidential treatment of the information (Stommel & Rijk, 2021). The directions for the survey questions have been crafted to neither introduce prefabricated undertones nor expose the participants to misleading information.

The research's Ethical standards must always be followed, as its integrity and credibility depend on its success. The two primary steps to consider during questionnaire design are guaranteeing complete anonymity and consent. Ethical considerations are incorporated into the research to ensure it is carried out responsibly and ethically, establishing public trust and cooperation.

The participants have explained the study's objectives, the role of their participation, and their rights, such as the right to quit whenever they want to. All participants in this survey will be informed about every process implication, and their consent will be obtained before the survey is completed (Stommel & Rijk., 2021). Hence, the research design addresses the issue of data security by keeping participant data in a secure place and using them for the research only.

The researcher ensures that the survey questions avoid bias and misinformation. The questions here are constructed to be clear, neutral, and not biased in any way, thereby producing unbiased answers. This is the cornerstone for the trustworthiness and accuracy of the encounters obtained, which improves data validity and reliability.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter will provide results collected from online survey questionnaires. It will also present descriptive and inferential statistics. In the descriptive statistics, participants' age, education, gender, marital status, qualification, and income status will be provided. Responses to core survey questions using central tendency statistics will also be provided. Lastly, the relationship between independent variables stemming from 28 core questionnaires will be implied as the "cause factor" of multidimensional poverty reduction, which will be the "effect factor." This section will also highlight any unexpected findings and patterns, and the overall reliability test of the adopted survey questionnaires will be provided.

A total of 392 responses were gathered from weeks nineteen and twenty using online survey questionnaires delivered via the social media platform "Facebook." The use of an online medium was imperative for the collection of quantitative data because the research population was Nepal, and the researchers are currently studying in Denmark. Therefore, online survey questions were delivered to various Nepalese Facebook pages, which are typically focused on exchanging community-based ideas, stories, and social messages. These Facebook were more accessible and comparatively faster to gather the data as compared to face-to-face interaction. However, it may come with a high chance of selection bias and duplicate responses; therefore, we encourage fellow referrals not to refer to those participants who have previously filled these forms. Additionally, any detected duplicate responses were discarded during the data filtration process. Thus, after discarding duplicates and incomplete responses, we ended up collecting responses from 392 participants out of 433 total participants.

In the first half of the survey, questionnaires related to participants' socio-demographic information. Therefore, this dissertation utilized six distinct socio-demographic categories: Gender, Age, Marital status, Occupation, income, and educational background. In the second half, questionnaires were arranged on a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree. Statements were articulated about how tourism has helped participants in multifaceted areas: economic aspect, educational aspect, sociocultural aspects, income, women empowerment, and oppression awareness. Since poverty is a multifaceted issue that does not necessarily touch the income aspect only. After assessing the literature, it was found that addressing poverty requires

a comprehensive approach with multidimensional aspects to create sustainable improvements in people's living standards.

5.1 Participants' Gender

Out of the total 392 responses gathered via online survey questionnaires, 51% were male participants, while 44% were female. This suggests that the survey responses were distributed fairly evenly among different genders. Only 2% of participants in this survey report were other than male and female. And 3% of participants wanted to keep their gender identity confidential.

Chart 1: Gender

PARTICIPANT'S GENDER (N=392)
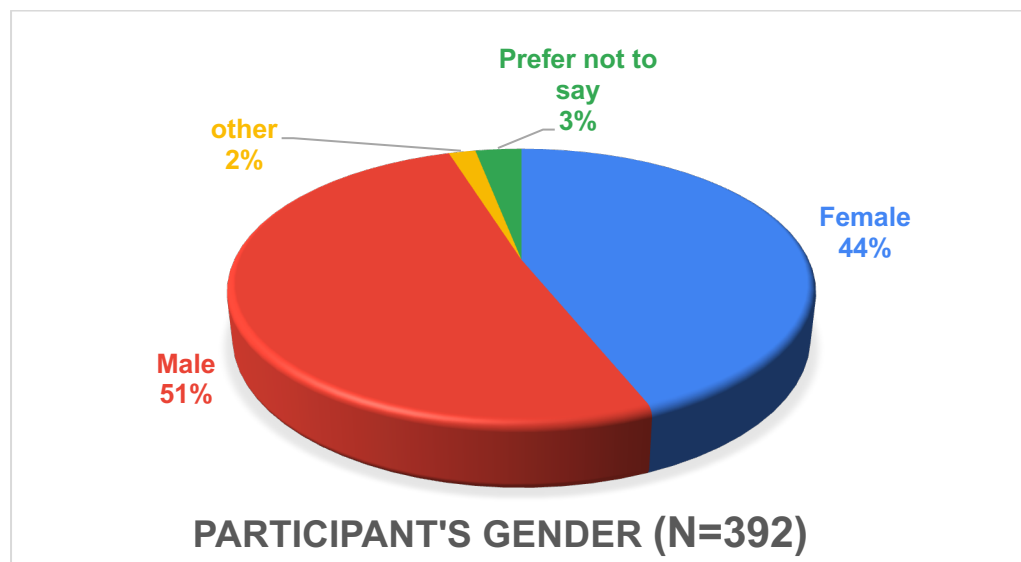
5.2 Participants' Age

Out of 392 responses, this survey report found that 27% of participants were aged 35 to 44, which is 106 participants. Similarly, 21% of participants belonged to the age group of 25 to 34, which equals to 82 participants. Using these two age groups, it is evident that young participants dominate this survey project, as 48% belong to the 25 to 44 age brackets. Similarly, 21% of participants belonged to the age group of 45-54. Only 7% of participants were 65 or older. One of the main reasons behind the responses clustered to young participants may be that they are more active on social media sites. Furthermore, the referrals from young participants might go to their closest ones instead of focusing on delivering to elderly

participants. Similarly, only 4% were found below age 18. It might be that these participants do not have active access to social media platforms from their guardians. Lastly, only 9% "of the 35 participants belonged to the age group of 18 to 24. Though the survey response is mostly clustered to young participants, it is not significantly clustered to a single age bracket.

Chart 2: Participants' age
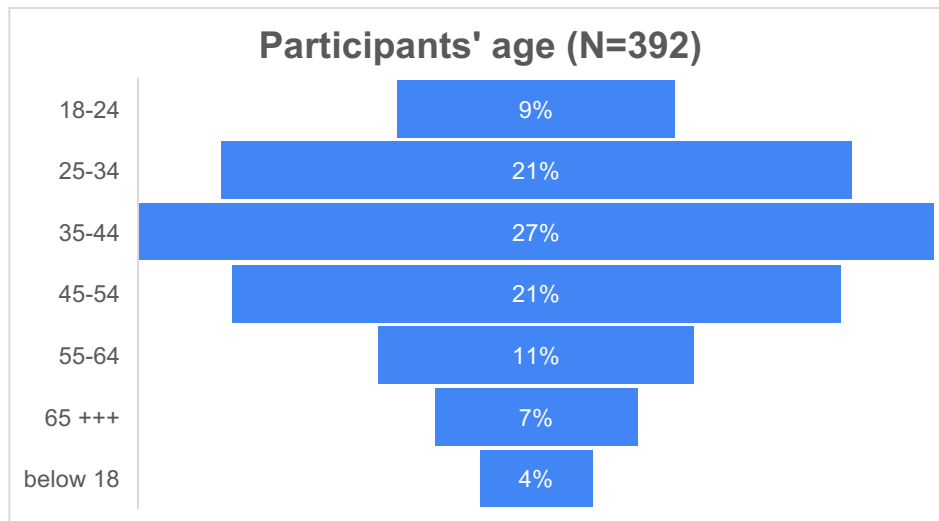
5.3 Participants Marital Status

Out of 392 responses, the majority of the responses were gathered from married persons, which is 60% (235 participants). Meanwhile, single participants were found in 31% (122 participants). In the context of the distribution of the survey from participants, the majority of the forms were accumulated to married ones. Meanwhile, only 4% of participants were found divorced, and 3% were found widowed. Meanwhile, eight participants kept their marital status confidential, which is only 2%.

Chart 3: Participants Marital Status

PARTICIPANT'S MARITAL STATUS (N=392)
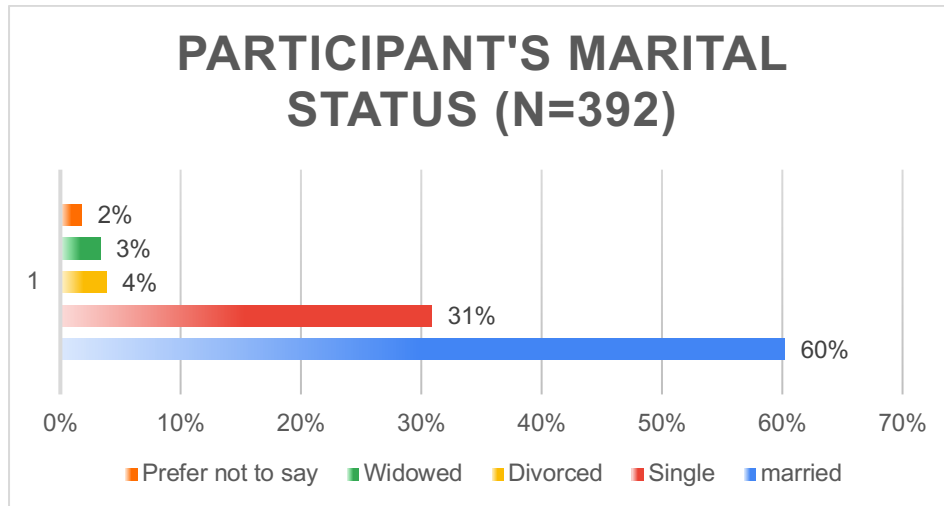
5.4 Participants Occupation Status

Out of 392 responses, the majority, "161 participants," were full-time workers, which is 41%. Meanwhile, part-time workers were found to be 21% of the "82 participants". 20% of participants were found to be self-employed. And only 10% out of 392 participants were found to be students. Meanwhile, only 5% were pensioners, which is clearly due to the low participation of elderly people in this survey project. Surprisingly, only 2% were found unemployed, which is 8 participants. When comparing these findings with the World Bank Data on unemployment, the surveyed participants had only a 2% unemployment rate as compared to the 11% unemployment rate of Nepal as of 2023.

Chart 4: Participants Occupation Status
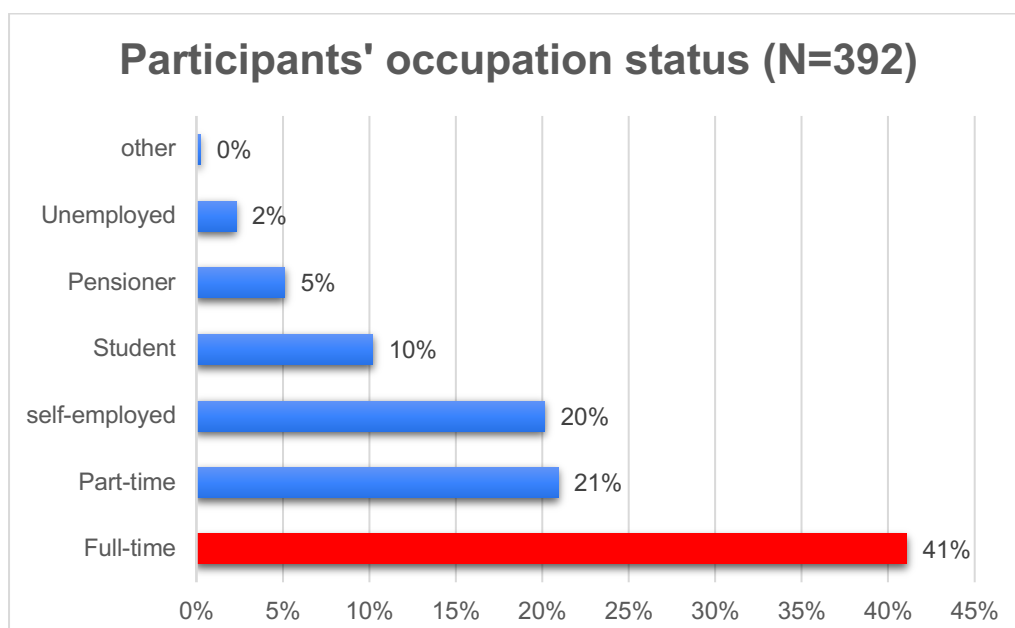
5.5 Participants income (monthly basis)

Out of the 392 responses, this survey report found that 29% of participants' incomes were between 60,001 and 80,000 Nepalese rupees per month. Similarly, 26%, which is 102 participants, had an income level of 80,001 to 100,000 Nepalese rupees. In aggregate, 55% of participants had incomes between 60,001 and 100,000. Meanwhile, 22% of participants' income has between 40,001 – 60,000 Nepalese rupees. 11% of participants have income between 20,001 -and 40,000 Nepalese rupees—meanwhile, only 11% of participants earned below 20,000 Nepalese rupees among the total surveyed participants. When comparing this survey to the recent survey by the Nepalese government Ministry of Labour (2024), the median salary was found to be 80,985" Nepalese rupee. Meanwhile, our surveyed participation median salary is comparatively low compared to the median Nepalese found by the government of Nepal.

Chart 5: Participants' income status
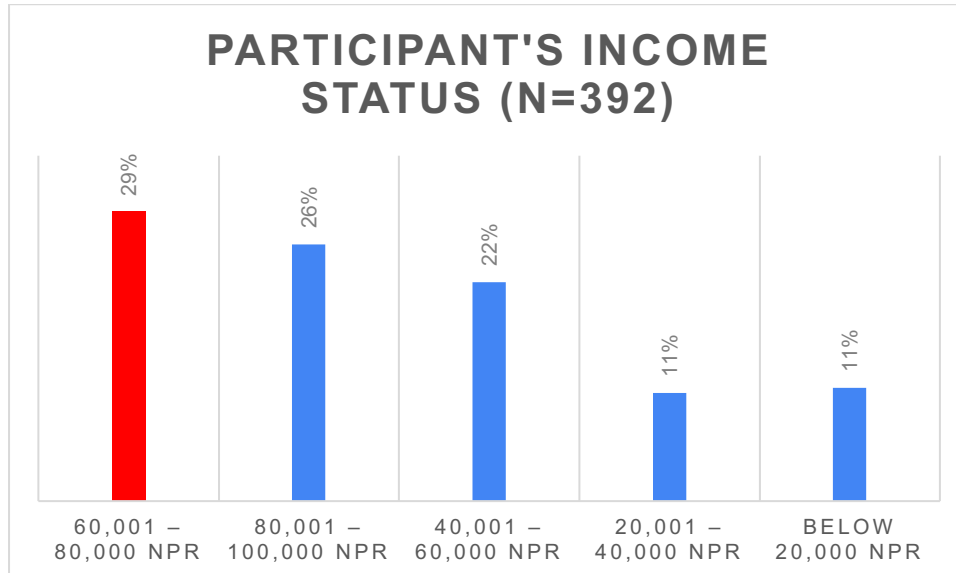
5.5 Participants' educational qualification

Out of 392 participants surveyed, 37% of participants had passed either college level or bachelor's degree, which is 145 participants. Similarly, 36% of participants had passed a

master's degree. Meanwhile, only 17% of participants had passed high school, and 8% had passed the school leaving certificate program. Only a marginal 2% (eight participants) had cleared the doctorate level of education. In aggregate, the surveyed participants are found to be educated.

Chart 6: Participants' educational qualification
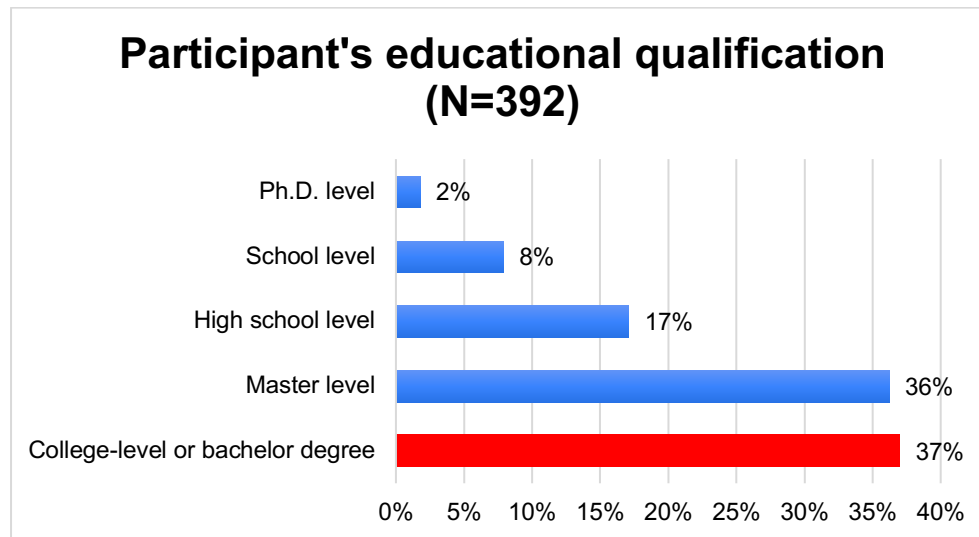
5.6 Responses to each survey question

A total of 28 questionnaires were asked for 392 responses, which were later changed to six independent variables and one dependent variable. For each variable, survey questionnaires were asked. The independent variables were economic, educational, socio-cultural, income equality, women empowerment, and oppression awareness. Meanwhile, the dependent variable was multidimensional poverty reduction. Therefore, each survey questionnaire's central tendency statistics will be presented in this section. Three statistical measures, mean, median, and standard deviation, will be adopted to assess how 392 participants responded in average to these 28 questionnaires.

When looking at each survey questionnaire's mean value on a 5-Likert scale in which strongly agree is denoted by 5 and strongly disagree is denoted by 1 for each statement, the average response from 392 participants is between "3 and 4", which indicates that response is inclined

to "left-skewed distribution". It suggests that participants, on average, agreed with the adopted questionnaires. Similarly, the observed media value of 4 indicates that 50% of responses "from 196 participants" ticked either agree or strongly agree on a 5-likert scale. This finding corresponds with the observed mean values as responses are tilted towards agreeable to each question. Similarly, the observed standard deviation for each questionnaire suggests that responses are closely clustered to their respective mean value, which subsequently justifies that responses are left-skewed.

Table 1: Survey questionnaire's response

Variables	Survey questionnaire	avg	median	st. dev
Economic aspects	1) I have observed directly how tourism has positively contributed to Nepal's economic growth.	3.7	4	0.9
	2) Tourism has given me career prospects and boosted different local companies in Nepal.	3.6	4	0.9
	3) Through tourism, I have seen an increase in revenue production for people and communities in Nepal.	3.8	4	0.8
	4) Tourism has made a big difference in our way of living for my community in Nepal and me.	3.8	4	0.8
Educational aspects	5) Tourism has improved my access to educational possibilities in Nepal, either directly or indirectly.	3.7	4	0.8
	6) I have noticed that tourist infrastructure and investments have boosted educational facilities in Nepal.	3.7	4	0.8
	7) Tourism has given me opportunities to develop my skills and learn in Nepal.	3.6	4	0.8
	8) The education programs and initiatives in Nepal funded by tourism have helped me a lot.	3.5	4	0.9
	9) Based on my experience, tourism has contributed to Nepal's cultural heritage and	3.8	4	0.8

Socio-cultural settings	customs being preserved and showcased in global markets.			
	10) I've seen firsthand how Nepali tourism fosters the country's traditional arts, crafts, and cultural customs.	3.8	4	0.9
	11) Through tourism, I was able to participate in cultural exchange and learn about diverse cultures in Nepal.	3.7	4	0.9
	12) Based on my observations in Nepal, tourism has aided in the preservation and promotion of local cultures and traditions.	3.8	4	0.8
Income equality	13) Based on my experience, tourism has helped lessen Nepal's income disparity among various socioeconomic classes.	3.7	4	0.9
	14) I have observed how tourism offers underprivileged communities in Nepal the chance to start their own businesses.	3.7	4	0.9
	15) From what I've seen, Nepal's tourism activities prioritize the equal sharing of economic perks.	3.6	4	0.9
	16) I believe tourism has provided a platform for economically deprived communities to get better jobs and increase earnings.	3.7	4	0.8
women empowernment	17) From what I've experienced in Nepal, tourism has given women the opportunity to work independently and start their own businesses.	3.7	4	0.8
	18) I've seen how tourism in Nepal encourages gender equality and women's involvement in tourism-related decision-making processes.	3.7	4	0.8
	19) I can affirm from my personal experience that women's growth and inclusion are given top priority in Nepali tourism projects.	3.6	4	0.9

	20) I think tourism has disrupted old gender conventions and preconceptions, promoting more gender parity and empowerment in Nepal.	3.6	4	0.9
opression awareness	21) Based on my experience, people are now more conscious of social concerns like caste and gender inequality because of tourism initiatives.	3.6	4	0.9
	22) I have seen firsthand how tourism-related activities foster communication and comprehension of social injustice and oppression in Nepal.	3.6	4	0.9
	23) As I have seen in Nepal, tourism promotes activism and advocacy for the rights and equality of underprivileged communities.	3.6	4	0.9
	24) I have witnessed a cultural transformation in Nepal toward inclusion, equality, and solidarity through tourism, which addresses the major issues of oppression.	3.7	4	0.8
multidimensional poverty reduction	25) From my perspective, tourism has played a substantial role in alleviating multidimensional poverty in Nepal.	3.7	4	0.9
	26) I have seen that tourism has improved living conditions and general well-being in Nepal.	3.7	4	0.8
	27) In Nepal, tourism has aided in the empowerment of underprivileged groups and people.	3.7	4	0.8
	28) Tourism initiatives in Nepal have given local populations long-term livelihood options.	3.7	4	0.8

5.7 Correlation analysis

This dissertation has adopted correlation analysis to find the relationship (linearity) between the postulated hypothesis. Correlation analysis is widely implied to find the association between quantitative variables. According to Schober (2018, p. 1766), there are several approaches to interpreting the correlation values, depending on the academic field, purpose, and accuracy. While most scholars have admitted that <.1 as negligible and >.9 is strongly correlated however, the values in between these are highly debatable (Schober et al., 2018, p. 1766).We have adopted Schober's interpretation in this dissertation as it seems more convincing and simplistic.

Table 2: Correlation values and its threshold for interpretation

Absolute Magnitude of the Observed Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
0.00–0.10	Negligible correlation
0.10–0.39	Weak correlation
0.40–0.69	Moderate correlation
0.70–0.89	Strong correlation
0.90–1.00	Very strong correlation

Source: (Schober et al., 2018, p. 1766)

The correlation analysis uncovers robust positive relationships between tourism development and critical poverty reduction indicators. Economic improvements and multidimensional poverty reduction, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.665, indicate a positive and moderated correlation, which suggests that as economic development due to tourism activities increases in Nepal, the chances of reducing multidimensional poverty are moderately impacted. This indicates that as tourism activities increase, economic conditions for the local population significantly improve, including job creation, increased income levels, and enhanced economic stability.

Educational facilities correlate positively and moderately with tourism development (r = 0,685). Tourism promotes better educational quality and availability, which can be caused by the revenue streams and infrastructure improvement that come with tourism. Also, tourism helps society relative to cultural growth, as the correlation coefficient reads zero. 0.791. This signifies concerns with the inter-group consequences, preservation of the culture, and community engagement. More importantly, when tourism-related investments come with

planning to preserve and promote the socio-cultural settings of Nepal, the effect can be seen strongly and positively on multidimensional poverty reduction.

Income equality has a strong positive correlation of "0. 789," indicating that tourism development has a high potential to minimize income inequalities between highly rich and poor in Nepal. By this implication, tourism is based on a relatively equitable income distribution, as it creates several work positions irrespective of the economic level of different social groups. On the other hand, tourist development, which is associated with women empowerment, is also positive together (r = 0.751). Women are given a platform for employment and entrepreneurship via tourism, which, in turn, strives to overcome inequality between men and women.

Social literacy and awareness of injustices also increase due to tourism development, as confirmed by the correlation of "0. 835". This signifies that through a significant investment in tourism-related development in Nepal, people can learn about oppression and social discrimination better and put this knowledge into practice; hence, society becomes more aware of suppression and social injustice, which in turn helps to minimize multidimensional poverty.

Similarly, the correlation between income equality and oppression awareness is positive and strong "0.824," which suggests that tourism-related development on oppression awareness, such as social and caste discrimination, helps marginalized people to flourish through which income generation starts to increase because of equal opportunities to education, sociocultural practices, which eventually helps to lower the income inequality.

The educational and economic aspects have a strong positive correlation of "0.719", which suggests that tourism has given a platform for education, which in return has given positive and strong perks in economic growth. Similarly, tourism activities focusing on women's empowerment will give positive and moderate returns to the Nepalese economy; the correlation value of "0.609" confirms the relationship. Similarly, tourism activities prioritizing women's empowerment in Nepal help foster income equality (0.834) among the rich and poor in Nepalese society. More importantly, oppression awareness has a strong and positive correlation with women empowerment (0.842), which means tourism activities in Nepal that promote oppression awareness help to strengthen women's participation and thus make them financially

and educationally independent. In fact, among all the variables, oppression awareness was found the most strong and positive correlation.

Table 3: Correlation analysin

	Economic aspects	Educational aspects	Socio-cultural settings	Income equality	women empowerment	oppression awareness	M.D poverty reduction
Economic aspects	1						
Educational aspects	0.719	1					
Socio-cultural settings	0.675	0.726	1				
Income equality	0.643	0.726	0.758	1			
women empowerment	0.609	0.684	0.686	0.834	1		
oppression awareness	0.612	0.699	0.722	0.824	0.842	1	
M.D poverty reduction	0.665	0.685	0.791	0.789	0.751	0.835	1

5.8 Multiple linear regression

This paper will adopt multiple linear regression analysis (MLR) to analyze the relationship and magnitude between the adopted independent and dependent variables. Multiple linear regression enables us to estimate how dependent variables are impacted or changed as the independent variables (Schober et al., 2018). When relating it to this dissertation, it enables us to find how tourism-related activities within economic and educational aspects, socio-cultural aspects, income generation, women empowerment, and oppression awareness help minimize multi-dimensional poverty in Nepal. Precisely, how tourism-related investments focusing on women empowerment help to reduce multifaceted poverty cases in Nepal. MLR is mostly implied in such cases where there are more than two or more predictors and one variable as dependent, and the goal is to detect a linear relationship between predictor and dependent variables (Schober et al., 2018).

According to Leite (2022), MLR is also one of the most widely used statistical methods because of its two characteristics: being simple to perform and having better interpretability. In the context of MLR prediction power, linear model such as MLR can outstrip different sophisticated non-linear models. The term multiple links to the predictor varibales. In this case, it will be economic and educational aspects, socio-cultural aspects, income generation, women empowerment, and oppression awareness.

The multiple linear regression analysis results support the correlation findings, which are dominated by the prominent predictive value of tourism development on multidimensional poverty reduction. The multiple R of the regression model is 088. The R-square has a value of 0.78; Tourism development accounted for about 78% of the total variance in MDPR. This enhanced R-square value validates the authenticity analysis model. This insignificant value ($p < 0.05$) demonstrates that the model relationships found are not accidental but true.

The regression analysis reveals that all independent variables—economic, educational, socio-cultural settings, income equality, women empowerment, and awareness of oppression—are significant predictors of multidimensional poverty reduction. This underscores the multifaceted impact of tourism development on poverty alleviation. The ANOVA results for the regression model further validate its significance, with a high F-value of 231.31 and a significance F-value of 0.00, indicating the overall model's reliability and the importance of the predictors in explaining the variance in poverty reduction.

In conclusion, both the correlation and regression analyses highlight the critical role of tourism development in reducing multidimensional poverty in Nepal. Tourism positively impacts economic conditions, educational opportunities, socio-cultural settings, income equality, women empowerment, and awareness of social issues, collectively contributing to poverty alleviation.

Table 4: MLR summary statistics

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.88
R Square	0.78

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Adjusted R Square	0.78				
Standard Error	0.35				
Observations	392				

ANOVA

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	6	172.47	28.744	231.31	0.00
Residual	385	47.84	0.124		
Total	391	220.31			

The multiple linear regression analysis follows an equation of:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \ldots + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon$$

Where,

y = is the predicted value of "multidimensional poverty reduction" – a dependent variable.

β0 = the slope "y-intercept" also means the value of the multidimensional poverty situation in Nepal when putting all independent variables at zero.

B1X1 = the coefficients regression of the first independent variable.

BnXn = the coefficient regression for subsequent independent variables.

Ɛ = error term captured by the model, "also known as the variations that are in the "y" estimate.

When bringing this equation into this dissertation's independent and dependent variables, the MLR model looks like this:

MDPR = β0 + β1 *Economic aspect + β2 * Educational aspect + β3 socio-cult aspects + β4 * income equality + β5 * women empowerment + β6* oppression awareness + Ɛ.

Where MDPR is a multidimensional poverty index (dependent variable)

Looking at "Table 5 – Regression parameter estimate, the economic aspect was found positively and strongly related to multidimensional poverty reduction (β = 0132, T = 3.399, P= 0.00) indicating that tourism-related activities focusing on enhancing local business and revenue generation activities in local communities help to reduce multidimensional poverty by 0.0132 times. Interestingly, this dissertation has found that tourism activities focusing on educational campaigns and skills development have an adverse impact on reducing multidimensional poverty reduction; the parameter coefficient of (β = -0.045, T = -1.021, P= 0.307) suggests that when tourism-related investment increases by one unit in any kinds of educational aspects it increases the multidimensional poverty cases by 0.045 times. However, the situation is still unknown in the long run because the primary data collection was based on cross-sectional data.

Similarly, tourism-related activities in maintaining socio-cultural settings have a positive and significant impact on reducing multidimensional poverty. The parameter estimate suggests that (β = 0.326, T = 7.59, P= 0.00), with every unit increase in the socio-cultural integrity of Nepalese society, the likelihood of reducing multidimensional poverty increases by 0.326. Similarly, tourism activities in Nepal, by prioritizing an equal share of tourism benefits to every person and providing a platform for income generation for economically deprived communities, help to foster income equality between the actual poor and the rich, which eventually helps to lower the multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal. The parameter estimates of income equality (β = 0.135, T = 2.466, P= 0.014) indicate that tourism activities that focus on fostering income equality by arranging startups, especially to economically deprived communities, help to lower multidimensional poverty, i.e., when a unit progress in income gap between rich and poor in Nepalese societies by tourist-related investment to economically deprived communities, the likelihood of reducing multidimensional poverty cases goes by 0.0135 times.

Meanwhile, women's empowerment was found to have a detrimental impact on multidimensional poverty reduction. The parameter estimates of (β = -0.004, T = -0.085, P= 0.932) indicate that for every unit of women empowerment activities that take place, the multidimensional poverty cases are negatively impacted by negligible "0.004" times. This indicates a further exploration of women empowerment and multidimensional poverty cases study by using longitudinal data. This dissertation has implied cross-sectional data, which

might be the reason why women's empowerment has a negligible, still negative impact on multidimensional poverty reduction cases.

Lastly, oppression awareness was found to be the most significant positive impact on multidimensional poverty reduction cases. Statistically, the observed parameter estimates of (β = 0.487, T = 9.393, P= 0.000) indicate that tourism activities that prioritize oppression awareness related to caste and gender inequalities, social injustice, and equal sharing of rights help significantly and positively on multidimensional poverty reduction. As one unit progresses on oppression awareness campaigns, it will reduce multidimensional poverty cases by 0.0487 times. After assessing all these independent variables' impact on multidimensional poverty cases, using a pecking order in terms of highly significant and positive relationships, we have found oppression awareness, sociocultural settings, income equality, and economic aspects to be significantly and positively impactful.

Table 5: Regression parameter estimate

Regression Weights		Independent variables	Estimate	S.error	T.value	P.value
Intercept			-0.13	0.108	-1.115	0.248
Multidimensional poverty reduction	<---	Economic aspects	0.132	0.039	3.399	0.00
Multidimensional poverty reduction	<---	Educational aspects	-0.045	0.044	-1.021	0.307
Multidimensional poverty reduction	<---	Socio-cultural settings	0.326	0.043	7.59	0.00
Multidimensional poverty reduction	<---	Income equality	0.135	0.055	2.466	0.014
Multidimensional poverty reduction	<---	women empowerment	-0.004	0.051	-0.085	0.932
Multidimensional poverty reduction	<---	oppression awareness	0.487	0.052	9.393	0.00

The significance level was measured at 5%.

5.9 Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha

One critical research factor is ensuring that the adopted questionnaires are consistent and reliable; therefore, a reliability test is crucial for any research. A reliability test within a research methodology is viewed as a statistical measuring tool that ensures the research findings' accuracy and credibility, eventually leading to more reliable and valid research outcomes. One of the widely used statistical tools to measure the reliability of the survey questionnaires is Cronbach's alpha test. Cronbach's alpha test helps to measure the internal consistencies of a set of survey items in which values are computed between 0 and 1 scale. The observed high value indicates that responses between items are highly reliable; meanwhile, the low value indicates that items are poorly organized and produce inconsistent results. Using Peterson and Kim (2013) as a reference for interpreting Cronbach's values, where less than 0.7 indicates that responses with a particular scale have inconsistent trends, is still acceptable. Meanwhile, values between 0.7 and 0.8 suggest reliability and values between 0.8 and above are highly reliable, but being too close to one might indicate redundant properties (Peterson & Kim, 2013). Therefore, all the questions implied in this dissertation were found to be reliable.

Table 6: Reliability test

Reliability test	Itesm used	Cronbach's value	Conclusion
Economic aspects	4	0.78	reliable
Educational aspects	4	0.87	strongly reliable
Socio-cultural settings	4	0.91	strongly reliable
Income equality	4	0.79	reliable
women empowernment	4	0.87	strongly reliable
opression awareness	4	0.74	reliable
Multidimensional-poverty reduction	4	0.88	strongly reliable

Note: Significance level 5%.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter will present a thorough interpretation of empirical results and the meaning and significance of those empirical outcomes. It will present findings from both theoretical and empirical sources. This section will further compare the research findings with prior researchers' findings, theories, and concepts. This chapter will also provide the results of the hypothesis test. Lastly, it will look for any possible patterns or relationships that may have developed.

6.1. Overall Findings

The results of this study indicate that tourism is a multi-dimensional poverty-reducing agent in Nepal. Collinearity and regression mean that all these phenomena of poverty interpretation, including education property, social and cultural situation, income equality, empowerment of women, and the acknowledgment of social problems, enhance tourism development. The data implies the situation when tourism pursuits bring an instant improvement of the host community's economic conditions, mainly the jobs created, and family incomes are no exception. According to the other point, tourists unlock their career prospects by finding and accessing the right educational platforms. Besides, they can also utilize this interactivity to contribute to the traditions more and more while improving social integration and cultural heritage. This paper, in particular, has found two factors, "oppression awareness" and "sociocultural settings," to look after as these factors are more crucial, and tourism investment in these criteria enables better results of low multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal. For instance, one unit of tourism investment in oppression awareness and socio-cultural settings reduces multidimensional poverty cases by 0.48 times and 0.326 times. It also provides clear evidence that a poverty reduction campaign is a daunting challenge as it has several components ranging from macro to micro factors, and balancing each component is even more daunting. Unlike prior researchers who studied the role of tourism in alleviating poverty cases via income generation or economic livelihood perspective, it seems reasonably fair as this paper has found a significant positive impact; however, it is significantly lower than oppression awareness and socio-cultural settings. Therefore, it is suggested that instead of focusing extensively on income generation from the tourism sector, investment in oppression awareness

and socio-cultural settings provides more likelihood of reducing multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal.

A total of 392 responses were collected using an online questionnaire survey of Nepalese who are currently residing in its territory. At first, questionnaires related to participants demographic profiles were asked, ranging from Gender, Age, Marital status, Occupation, income, and educational background. In the latter half, questionnaires were arranged on a 5-Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree, where one is strongly disagree, and five is strongly agree. Questionnaires were articulated about how participants have perceived the role of tourism development has helped in multifaceted areas: economic aspect, educational aspect, sociocultural aspects, income, women empowerment, and oppression awareness; these factors were designed as predictor variables, and multidimensional poverty reduction was designed as a respondent variable. A total of 28 survey questionnaires were administered for seven variables. Out of the 392 responses, the participants' gender ratio, especially males and females, was found to be pretty balanced: a female-to-male ratio of 0.86. similarly, most participants were found to be young adults compared to mature adults; out of 392 responses, participants between 25-44 years old were 48%. The reason behind the high participation of young adults could be due to the chosen social media networks as a channel for the distribution of the survey questionnaire. Based on several researchers' findings, such as (Hargittai et al., 2018; Keum et al., 2023; Molenaar et al., 2022) Young adults, such as adolescents and senior adults, use social media networks more than other cohorts. Meanwhile, this paper has found that the majority of the participants were married, "60% out of 392 responses"; a married-to-unmarried participants ratio of 1.93:1. This dissertation has found only 2% "out of the observed 392 participants" as unemployed which is significantly low as compared to World Bank Data on the unemployment rate of Nepal as of 2023 of 11%. Similarly, Out of the 392 responses, this survey report found that 29% of participants' incomes were between 60,001 and 80,000 Nepalese rupees per month. When comparing it with the recent survey by the Nepalese government Ministry of Labour (2024), our surveyed participation median salary is comparatively low compared to the median Nepalese found by the government of Nepal compared to 80,985 Nepalese rupees as median salary observed by the agency as mentioned earlier.

Tourism also positively affects income equality, which promotes a more equal sharing of financial resources among the population. Women's empowerment, driven by tourism, paves

the way for equality as both men and women get equal chances through the available opportunities. Moreover, tourism gives rise to an idea of social issues that neighborhood people become aware of and win the battle, contributing to a knowledgeable, socially conscious society. In summary, this observation precisely portrays the multifaceted nature of tourism development, which facilitates alleviating the multiple faces of poverty in poor rural areas of Nepal. Hence, it highlights the critical role of tourism development as a tool for socio-economic improvement.

The dissertation findings are mainly related to young adults, as the majority of participants surveyed in this dissertation were between 18 and 44 years old. Though the gender distribution was pretty balanced, the majority of participants were found to be married, in terms of their marital status. In fact, out of 392 responses collected, 60% responded that they were married. The perception and experience of our surveyed questionnaires might differ for married people compared to single people or other status holders. In the context of participants' occupation, most of the surveyed participants were found to have full-time jobs, which might be more secure and help lower poverty cases to some extent, as the chances of seasonal likelihood are absolutely zero. Lastly, the income of most surveyed participants was between 60,000 to 80,000 NPR, which is comparatively lesser compared to the median salary found by the Ministry of Labor of Nepal in 2024, "80,985" Nepalese rupee.

This chapter critically reviews the study's findings, discovering the complex linkage between tourism development activities and multidimensional poverty reduction in Nepal. The findings from this dissertation enable us to depict that tourism development in Nepal has an intricate association with multidimensional poverty reduction. One of the primary reasons behind such an intricate association could be an overreliance on cross-sectional data collected in a primary data form using survey questionnaires. Firstly, oppression awareness was found to have a positive and significant relationship with multidimensional poverty reduction. Oppression awareness entails addressing several forms of socio-economic inequalities and injustice that majorly affect marginalized communities. It covers raising consciousness about different forms of discrimination and injustice, such as caste-based inequalities and other social forms of excursions.

Community-based tourism designed to involve local communities, especially marginalized groups, will help raise their voices and find opportunities to showcase their living styles, culture, and traditions, through which these marginalized people can be economically independent and lower multidimensional poverty cases. Using this dissertation's findings as a reference, one unit's progress in oppression awareness through tourism-related activities helps lower multidimensional poverty cases by 0.487 times, which is the most significant among all the diagnosed variables. In addition, oppression awareness has a strong and positive correlation with women empowerment (0.842), which means tourism activities in Nepal that promote oppression awareness help strengthen women's participation and thus make them financially and educationally independent.

Similarly, this dissertation has found that socio-cultural settings have a significant favorable influence on multidimensional poverty reduction. The socio-cultural setting means amalgamating traditions, customs, events, and occasions typically held within a community. This dissertation has found that positive socio-cultural settings have the ability to foster a sense of belonging and social support, as these subsets are crucial for the social members' well-being and thus help to reduce poverty cases. Tourism initiatives can play a significant positive role in strengthening these settings by engaging in active social interaction and socio-cultural preservation, which eventually helps to minimize multidimensional poverty cases. The significant positive effect of sociocultural settings on multidimensional poverty reduction of "0.326" indicates that sociocultural settings can be utilized in economic forms without sacrificing any identity and estrangement feelings. In fact, this dissertation has found that tourism initiatives that foster sociocultural integrity by the unit will help to lower multidimensional poverty cases by 0.326 times.

Likewise, this dissertation has found income equality has a positive and significant impact on multidimensional poverty reduction. Income equality measures were crucial to this dissertation as they ensure that tourism-related benefits and opportunities, when distributed equitably to all community segments, significantly increase the chance of positively lowering multidimensional poverty. For instance, community-based projects designed to make equal participation from all segments of society and ensure that economic benefits are equally distributed, the likelihood of reducing multidimensional poverty cases goes down by 0.135 times.

This dissertation has also found that economic development had a positive and significant impact on multidimensional poverty reduction as one unit increase in tourism-driven economic development, the chances of multidimensional poverty cases to deduct by 0.132 times. Moreover, tourism-related activities that stimulate the local economy through supporting and promoting ancillary types of businesses, souvenir shops, and other relatable startups help the local community become economically independent and thus reduce the multidimensional poverty cases.

The relationship between women's empowerment and multidimensional poverty reduction was found to be negatively and insignificantly related, which underlines several potential reasons and implications. Though the coefficient is marginally low, it might hint that the present tourism-related initiatives might have failed to reach the actual target audiences, which could be due to structural barriers that are prevalent in Nepalese society, such as gender norms and discrimination. This might have limited women's active engagement in tourism-related decision-making activities. Additionally, other underlying factors, such as a low level of investment in women's empowerment with inadequate training and resource allocation, might have hindered the empowerment of their potential in Nepalese society.

Lastly, this dissertation has found that the educational aspect has an adverse and insignificant impact on multidimensional poverty reduction. One of the reasons behind such a negative impact of the educational element on multifaceted poverty cases could be due to below-par investment and resource allocation in those marginalized communities, which are highly affected by multidimensional poverty. From another perspective, the tourism sector's training and skill development program may not directly correlate to employment-related opportunities and eventually fail to grasp the economic perks. However, it could be evident that the survey questionnaires may have failed to penetrate the actual marginalized people, due to which their true image is still suppressed. The negative impact of women's empowerment and educational aspects has opened many roads to explore, and ethnographic-based research on locally marginalized communities could help produce more nuanced findings, which has failed to be made by this dissertation.

After assessing the overall results and discussion session, the overall postulated hypothesis in section 3.4's result is as follows:

The research examines complex phenomena of poverty, including multifaceted indicators such as income generation, economic livelihood, educational situation, women empowerment, and socio-cultural settings that are impacted by tourism development. It was found that tourism development was found evident factor for impacting multidimensional poverty reduction in Nepal. Out of the six hypotheses adopted in this dissertation, it was found that tourism development has a significant positive influence impact on income equality, economic growth, oppression awareness, and socio-cultural settings. Interestingly, tourism development was found to have a negative and insignificant impact on educational opportunities and women's empowerment. One of the potential reasons behind insignificant and negative relationships could be the failure to adopt longitudinal-based data. Since this dissertation is focused on survey questionnaires that hold cross-sectional data, it might suggest that these two predictors, in the short run, have a negative and insignificant relationship with tourism development. Additionally, educational quality and women empowerment activities take a long course of duration to see some comparable results, and the supply of these facilities cannot possibly to meet the required demand overnight; however, it could affect positively and significantly in the long run. Therefore, this dissertation opens some doors to research, especially on the relationship between tourism development and educational quality and women empowerment in Nepal, using both short-run and long-run differences.
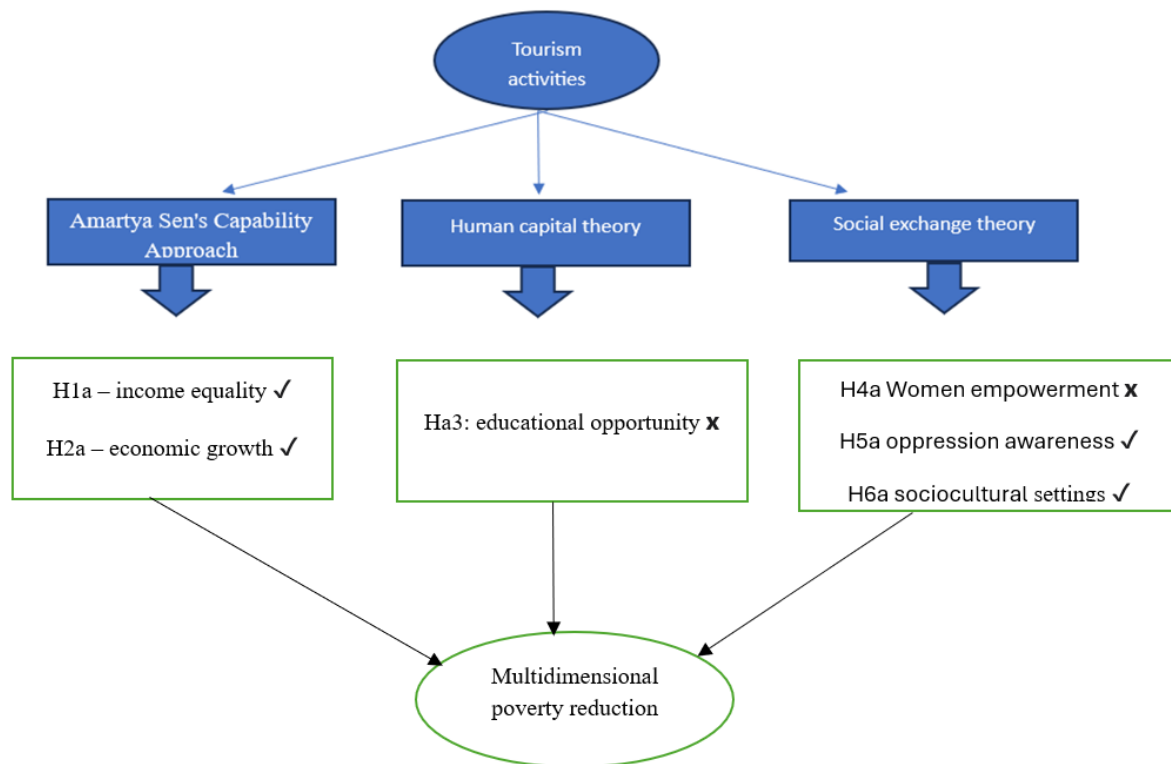
Hypothesis	Variables	Values	Accept/Reject
H1a	Income equality	(β = 0.135, T = 2.466, P= 0.014)	✓
H2a	Economic growth	(β = 0132, T = 3.399, P= 0.00)	✓
H3a	Educational opportunity	(β = -0.045, T = -1.021, P= 0.307)	x
H4a	Women empowerment	(β = -0.004, T = -0.085, P= 0.932)	x
Ha5	Oppression awareness	(β = 0.487, T = 9.393, P= 0.000)	✓
Ha6	Social-cultural settings	(β = 0.326, T = 7.59, P= 0.00)	✓

6.2 Comparison with Prior Research

i.   *Comparison with Wang et al. (2020) Study:*

Our research showed that tourism development is relevant to economic stability and educational opportunities, socio-cultural settings, income equality, women empowerment, and social problem awareness, which has immensely helped to alleviate multidimensional poverty in Nepal. Likewise, in the case of Fenghuang County, poverty is decreased due to tourism, economic conditions, employment, family income, and other factors. The two studies gave the same importance to the education gains brought by tourism, yet Wang et al. (2020) specified lower overall educational improvement satisfaction, which might be the other side of tourism for the improvement of education. The socio-cultural sides of the two studies shared the idea of the role of tourism in communications about culture and reduction in vulnerability. While Wang et al. (2020) talked about tourism's corruption potential and delay in the social development process, Both reports brought to the fore one of the primary roles of tourism in gender issues - a question of income gap and women empowerment. Our study has a specificity

very noteworthy – the societal issues were made more vivid through tourism, and the article of Wang et al. is relatively lacking this. Both regression models proved that tourism contributes to income growth in poor economies.

ii.   *Comparison with Den Braber et al. (2018) Study:*

Den Braber et al. (2018) investigated the impact of protected areas (PAs) on poverty in Nepal. They found that PAs, particularly those with high tourism levels, significantly reduced poverty without exacerbating inequality. This supports your findings that tourism development improves economic conditions and reduces multidimensional poverty. Both studies emphasize the role of tourism in poverty alleviation and highlight the importance of community involvement and equitable benefit distribution. However, Den Braber et al. (2018) also noted that the benefits of PAs do not spread to nearby areas outside the protected zones, suggesting a need for better policy integration to ensure broader benefit distribution, an aspect not covered in your study. Their findings on the time lag for newly established PAs to show benefits suggest that sustainable tourism policies require a long-term commitment. This aligns with your emphasis on sustained tourism development for poverty alleviation.

iii.   *Comparison with Gerlitz et al. (2015) Study:*

Gerlitz et al. (2015) developed the Multidimensional Poverty Measure for the Hindu Kush–Himalayas (MPM-HKH) and applied it to 23 districts in Nepal. Their studies revealed wide variations in multisectoral poverty levels across these districts, mainly affected by factors including education, health, material assets, energy, water and sanitation, social capital, and the availability of the delivery of services. It follows what our study discovered: that all these areas of our economy may be affected by tourism, including economic improvement, education or training, and cultural development. The studies are novel for advocating that all the choices of poverty should be addressed and not only the economic side is considered. At the same time, Gerlitz et al. underscored the need for local area-specific poverty alleviation strategies because the poverty composition was significantly impressive across different regions. Such discoveries were part of our research to look at the rural part of Nepal, which demands policy development to be more tailored to guarantee maximum utilization. First of all, Gerlitz et al. found that in mountainous areas, physical accessibility of services was a key source of poverty. Tourism

development can significantly strengthen services by upgrading infrastructure and connectivity, giving more access to these services. The results of both works mark a contribution to the body of knowledge on the impact of multi-faceted targeting and context-appropriate interventions for the reduction of multidimensional poverty, with the study tokenizing the role of tourism as another significant tool.

iv.   *Comparison with KC et al. (2021) Study:*

KC et al. (2021) explored the role of the Nepalese tourism industry in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), finding that stakeholders recognize tourism's potential to address multiple SDGs, including poverty reduction, economic growth, and quality education. This aligns with our study, which found that tourism development in Nepal positively impacts economic conditions (r = 0.665), educational opportunities (r = 0.685), and other socio-economic factors. Both studies highlight tourism's role in promoting sustainable development and poverty alleviation. However, KC et al. noted significant challenges in policy implementation and coordination among stakeholders, which can impede the full realization of tourism's benefits. Our study did not focus on these implementation challenges but emphasized tourism's direct correlations and predictive power in alleviating multidimensional poverty (R^2 = 0.78). KC et al. also highlighted the need for comprehensive strategies that include all tourism stakeholders to achieve the SDGs effectively. This complements our findings by underscoring the importance of an integrated approach to maximize tourism's impact on poverty alleviation. Both studies emphasize the critical role of tourism in driving sustainable development and highlight areas where strategic improvements are needed to enhance its effectiveness.

V. *Comparison with Adhikari (2018) Study:*

Adhikari (2018) analyzes how Nepal has been shifting its poverty measures from unidimensional to multidimensional, adopting MPI as a significant achievement. Our research corroborates Adhikari's argument that classic income-based poverty calculations evoke comprehensiveness in revealing the poverty crisis. Both papers stress one main factor: health, education, and living standards, which are involved in poverty assessment. The paper by Adhikari about MPI methodology, having a weighting of indicators and dimensions as factors, is similar to the way we implemented ours through threshold criteria and factors. The historical

context, the policy implications, and the statistics analysis provide a broader narration with additional dimensions that help us understand the importance of policy shifts toward Multidimensional poverty reduction. This may be casting light on our research from the context of the big picture of how poverty in Nepal has been measured in the past and now ties in with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

v.   Comparison with Banks et al. (2021) Study:

The Banks et al. (2021) study points to higher multidimensional poverty among people with disabilities in Vietnam and Nepal. This finding reinforces the results of our research on poverty dynamics in these regions. In the case of the monetary poverty numbers, no significant change was found in the possession of those with and without disability. However, what was apparent is that multidimensional poverty was higher among disabled citizens, indicating that the insufficiency of monetary measures alone is not enough. The integrated nature of this combination certainly dovetails into the multifaceted nature of our approach to considerations such as health, education, and livelihood standards. Banks et al. highlight individual deprivations as an indicator that crucial measures must be captured fully. The need for strategic appraisal is emphasized, viz, formation and implementation of inclusive policies. For both studies, the suggested solution is precisely pointing the finger at some particular interventions and social protection programs best designed for people with disabilities falling under broad issues of SDGs.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter presents a brief summary of both theoretical and empirical findings. Since this will be the last chapter of this dissertation, this section will provide the answer to the research question. Though the aim of this dissertation is to produce limitation-free findings, any limitation detected in this dissertation will be presented in this chapter.

This dissertation was designed to comprehend how tourism development helps reduce Nepal's multidimensional poverty situation. Therefore, three theories were adopted: Amartya Sens' capability approach, social exchange theory, and human capital theory as a theoretical build-up for this dissertation. Unlike traditional forms of research, which majorly implied income level as a "cause factor" to find its impact on poverty reduction cases, this dissertation has adopted six variables as a "cause" that would help to alleviate multidimensional poverty cases from Nepal: "economic aspect, educational aspect, socio-cultural settings, income equality, women empowerment, and oppression awareness. In this dissertation, how tourism-related initiatives and investment in these six factors were evaluated to reduce multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal.

A total of 392 participants' survey responses on aforesaid variables were assessed to comprehend the impact of tourism-related initiatives on various multifaceted poverty dimensions. In order to answer the first question, "To what extent does tourism development in Nepal aid in the alleviation of multilayered poverty cases?". This dissertation has found that tourism development in Nepal has a multifaceted but intricate association with multidimensional poverty reduction. The findings insights that tourism-related activities, especially oppression awareness, maintenance of socio-cultural integrity, minimizing income inequality, and economic progress through offering jobs and opportunities to oppressed communities and marginalized people, have a positive and significant impact on reducing multidimensional poverty cases in Nepal. However, it suggests that the current initiatives are still insufficient or not widespread enough to produce significant measurable findings, especially regarding two major factors: tourism initiatives and investment in educational and women's empowerment activities. These two factors were, in fact, found to be adversely impactful but insignificant.

Similarly, the correlation value of socio-cultural settings (0.79), income equality (0,78), and oppression awareness (0.83) provide concrete evidence that tourism initiatives enhance these aspects, which in return has offered a noticeable positive effect on reducing multidimensional poverty cases. Secondly, to the research question, "What are the key barriers associated with persistent poverty in Nepal?" This dissertation has found that the impact of tourism-related initiatives on minimizing multidimensional poverty, especially to two factors, educational and women empowerment, was found adverse and highly insignificant, which suggests that tourism-related benefits might not have reached the actual impoverished or deprived people. Furthermore, tourism-related initiatives still failed to produce broader socioeconomic developmental strategies where persistent gender and social inequalities have hindered the empowerment activities and thus stemmed from any forms of educational opportunities provided by tourism in Nepal.

The government of Nepal must realize and take tourism as high on its agenda as it can increase economic growth and reduce poverty in Nepal. It has aligned several policies and infrastructural development to boost tourism, employment opportunities, and standard of living. The private sector's continued expansion of investment in developing infrastructure to support tourism and availing support from the local communities. This has been achieved through the efforts of developing Nation's NGOs and INGOs, which, through capacity building and community development projects, have made their contributions through their activities. Several examples highlight that well-planned and sustainable tourism can become a significant driver of change for the betterment of the people on the local level and the planet as a whole.

Tourism can be effectively used as a mechanism for poverty reduction, provided it is both strategically planned and sustainably developed in Nepal. Therefore, as a critical economic sector, tourism can bring in sizable returns, contribute towards developing various employment opportunities, and help disseminate income across the populace by exploiting its diverse natural and cultural resources. Further improvement to infrastructure, pro-tourism sustainability policies, and active incorporation of locals are indispensable. Suppose strategic cooperation involves the Nepalese government, different private and public sectors, NGOs, and international alliances. In that case, tourism can be a key to sustainable development, further decentralizing poverty reduction programs across the unique and progressive Nepali society.

7.1 Research limitation

When assessing the insights this dissertation has produced in the context of how tourism-related initiatives on reducing multidimensional poverty reduction. However, despite so many valuable insights, there are still some limitations that should be kept unnoticed. At first, this dissertation relied heavily on self-reported data, which the researchers did not have much command of, and opened several areas for response bias. Though duplicated and incomplete responses were discarded during the data filtration process, it was difficult to access the progress of the survey project and how diverse the survey forms have passed over. furthermore, there is a high chance that participants might have ticked socially desirable options rather than their actual experiences related to tourism institutes, poverty cases, and different socio-cultural and economic circumstances. This may have affected the overall credibility of the findings. In particular, measuring aspects like oppression awareness and women empowerment are comparatively sensitive and subjective in nature. Secondly, this dissertation used a survey project to carry cross-sectional-based data, which has a drawback in effectively fostering a causality between multidimensional poverty reduction and tourism-related initiatives. Because it is hard to guess what situation or mental state a participant was in before responding to the survey is critical. Thirdly, this dissertation extensively focused on six predictors that were within the framework of Amartya Sen's capability approach, social exchange theory, and human capital theory; while these models are believed to be robust, other theories may have even more valuable insights, for instance, such frameworks that incorporate environmental aspects, political, and marketing aspects would have provided more holistic views to this research topic.

7.2 Managerial implication

The outcomes of this paper have many practical implications for policymakers, stakeholders, especially community leaders, and the tourism industry in Nepal. Firstly, the strong relationship between tourism initiatives and diverse dimensions of poverty implies that tourism can be implied as a tool for multidimensional poverty reduction. Therefore, policymakers need to prioritize their shifts on the effectiveness of tourism-related activities that address different

socio-economic and living standard aspects, not just using tourism as a means of income generation source. For instance, this dissertation has found that tourism initiatives on oppression awareness have the most significant positive impact on multidimensional poverty reduction. This suggests that poverty is deeply rooted in the Nepalese community as a part of social injustice and discrimination. Therefore, when working in tandem on this issue, the tourism board and policymakers would help to bring a favorable ground for healthy competition, and income inequality could lessen. Furthermore, tourism developers must focus on integrating community participation and ensure that tourism benefits are equally distributed and local voices are heard in every meeting and discussion. This could foster ownership and empowerment among communities and help reduce multidimensional poverty to some extent.

This paper also contributes noticeably to the theoretical discourse of social exchange theory, Amartya Sen's capability approach, and Human capital theory. This dissertation's empirical outcomes support these theories' capability approach by signifying how tourism initiatives enhance both individual and community capabilities and offer wider socio-economic perks, including income generation. However, some hypotheses were found to be adversely and insignificantly impacted, which indicates that further research is needed primarily on those variables, "i.e., women empowerment and educational impact on multidimensional poverty reduction."

7.3 Recommendations

While assessing the findings of this dissertation, we have found several recommendations that are worthwhile sharing for future research to deepen this research topic's meaning and findings. Researching this topic using longitudinal data might be more worthwhile as it helps to find how tourism and poverty situations have changed depending on time and different geography within Nepal. It will also help provide more robust findings, especially in the long run. Similarly, a mixed-method approach would have included both types of realities in this dissertation. Thus, further research by surveying locals and interviewing local authorities would have provided both sides' views on the research paper. Also, studying this topic by employing some external factors such as political stability and marketing opportunities would provide more insights into reducing multidimensional poverty through the help of tourism initiatives.

7.4 Personal reflections

Undertaking this master dissertation, "*The Impact of Tourism Development on the Reduction of Multidimensional Poverty in Nepal,"* has been an enlightening and life-changing experience for us, though the dissertation journey was full of challenges and difficulties. While doing this dissertation, one of the major difficulties we faced was navigating the complexity of multidimensional poverty and its linkages with tourism studies. The diverse nature of the causing factors ranges from socio-cultural to economic aspects to oppression awareness and women's empowerment, which requires an extensive literature review and an in-depth understanding of theoretical and practical insights. Apart from this, the major challenge for us was to gather survey data. However, the initial plan during the pre-proposal time was to research this topic in a qualitative way; however, it was later changed as the potential participants for the interview session were difficult to find as we were around 15 hours' flight distance from the actual study area. Though we had managed a few participants for the interview session, it was not an adequate sample for such an in-depth research topic. Also, during the collection of survey responses, the process demanded meticulous planning and preparation; however, the time difference and our work-study-daily routines made it difficult to find a suitable time for survey monitoring. From a positive perspective, working in a group was found to be more productive less time-consuming, and, more importantly, we found a low chance of deviating from the dissertation objectives. The coordination and consistent communication were positive achievements for us from this dissertation writing as we learned the importance of group discussions, mutual respect, and our roles. Additionally, the supervision from our instructor played the most crucial role in this dissertation. The invaluable feedback, especially in helping to structure the literature review, made us gain momentum for this dissertation. From an academic perspective, more insights about tourism initiatives and multidimensional poverty alleviation have made us understand the actual situation of the Nepalese economy, socio-cultural integrity, oppression issues, and women empowerment.

Overall, this master dissertation journey was a practical learning experience, and it not just made us academically equipped but practically skillful in research, teamwork, and critical thinking ability. This dissertation has made me think of social issues as part of opportunities.

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Annex

1.1 Survey results

Questions Responses **433** Settings

Section 1 of 2

The impact of tourism development on the reduction of multidimensional poverty in Nepal

B *I* U 🔗 🗙

Dear, valued participants! Your contribution is essential for meeting the academic standards of Aalborg University through this master's dissertation. Please provide your valuable insights, as they will significantly enhance our research. Please choose options based on your personal experiences or perceptions of the given statements. Be assured that your replies will be kept completely anonymous.

My age is between:

432 responses

- below 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 +++

20.4%
25.7%
20.4%
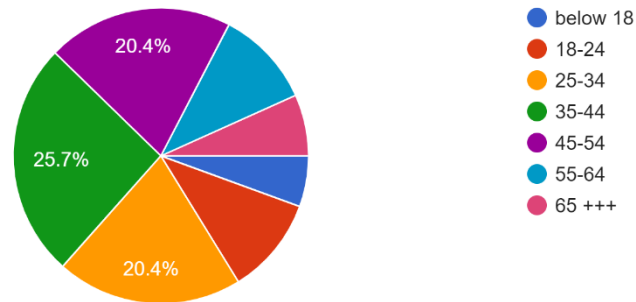
I identify my gender as:

430 responses

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- other

43.3%
52.3%
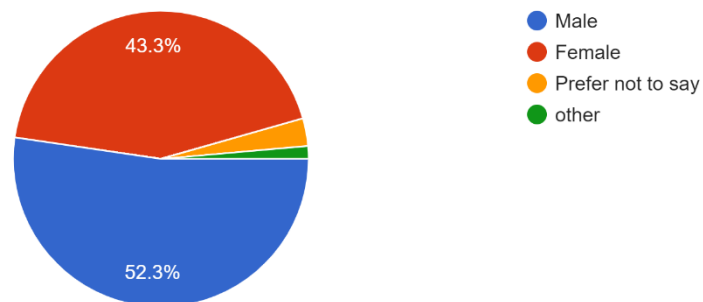
My highest level of educational attainment is:

431 responses

- School level
- High school level
- College-level or associate degree
- Master level
- Ph.D. level

33.4%
9.5%
18.3%
36.4%
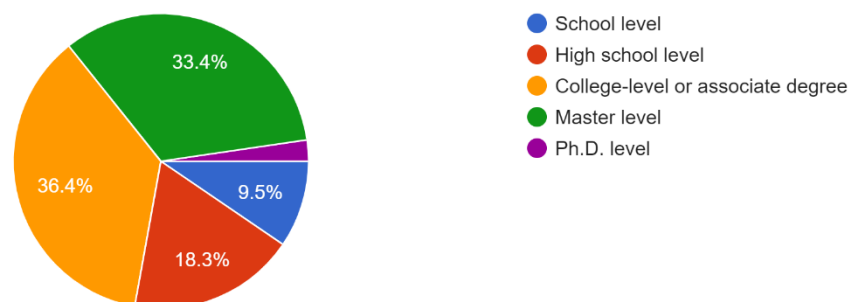
My average household monthly disposable income level is:
421 responses

- Below 20,000 NPR
- 20,001 – 40,000 NPR
- 40,001 – 60,000 NPR
- 60,001 – 80,000 NPR
- 80,001 – 100,000 NPR
- Above 10,000 NPR

23%
30.2%
11.4%
10.5%
21.4%
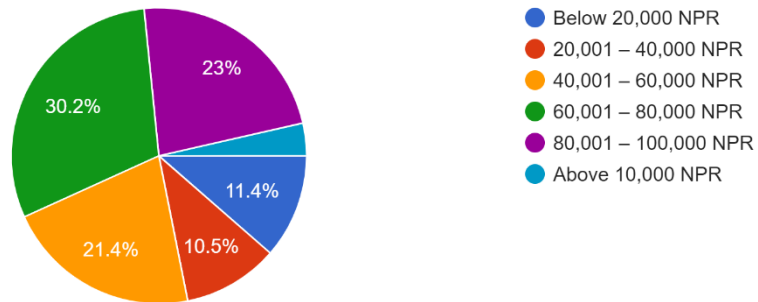
My current level of employment is:
431 responses

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Unemployed
- Student
- Pensioner
- self-employed
- other

10.9%
18.6%
22.3%
39.9%
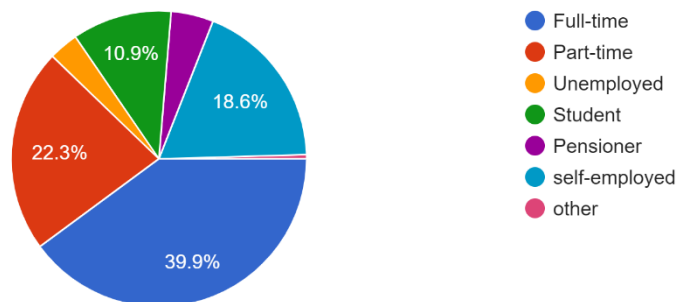
My current marital status is:
432 responses
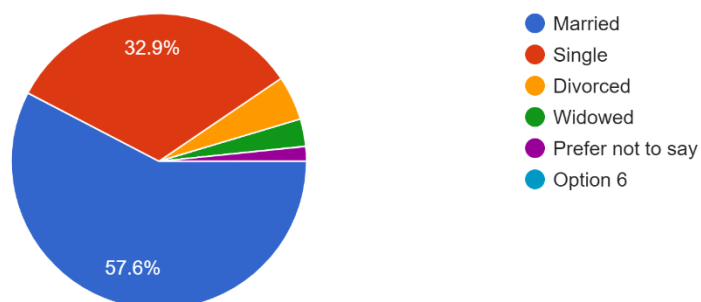
- Married
- Single
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to say
- Option 6

32.9%
57.6%

I have observed directly how tourism has positively contributed to Nepal's economic growth.

431 responses
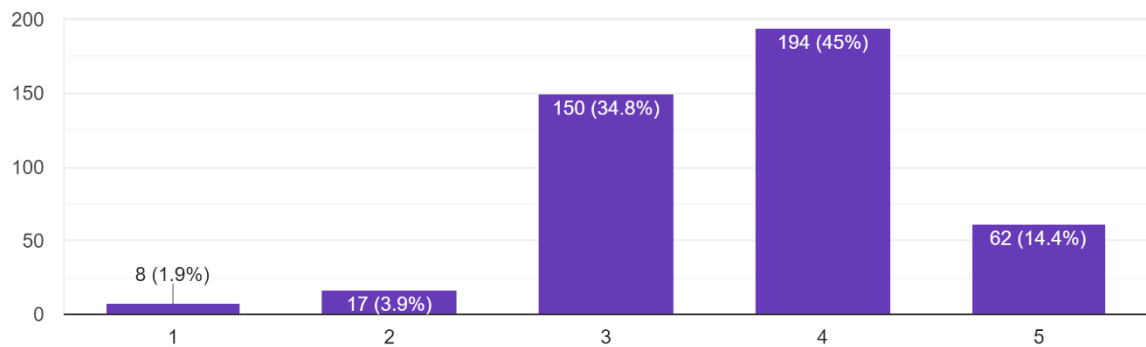
Tourism has given me career prospects and boosted different local companies in Nepal.

431 responses
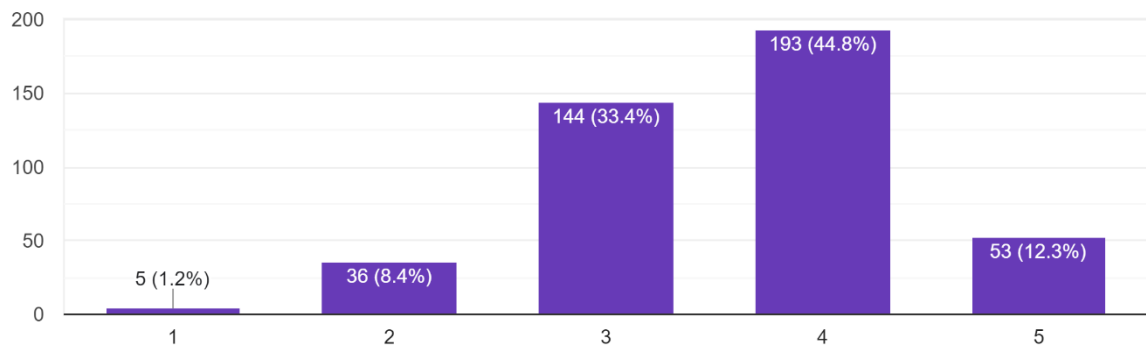
Through tourism, I have seen an increase in revenue production for people and communities in Nepal.

430 responses
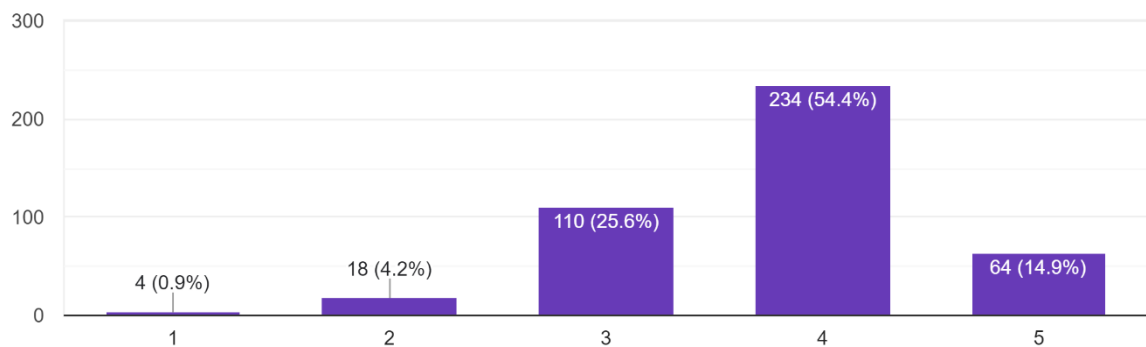
Tourism has made a big difference in our way of living for my community in Nepal and me.
431 responses
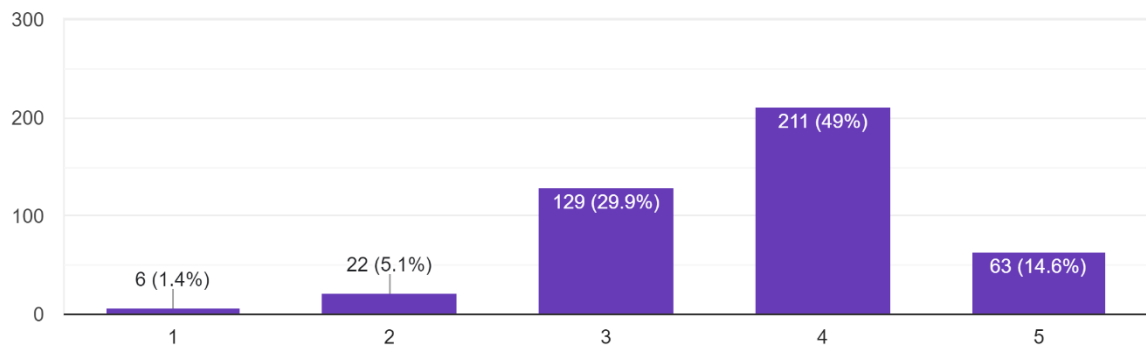
Tourism has improved my access to educational possibilities in Nepal, either directly or indirectly.
432 responses
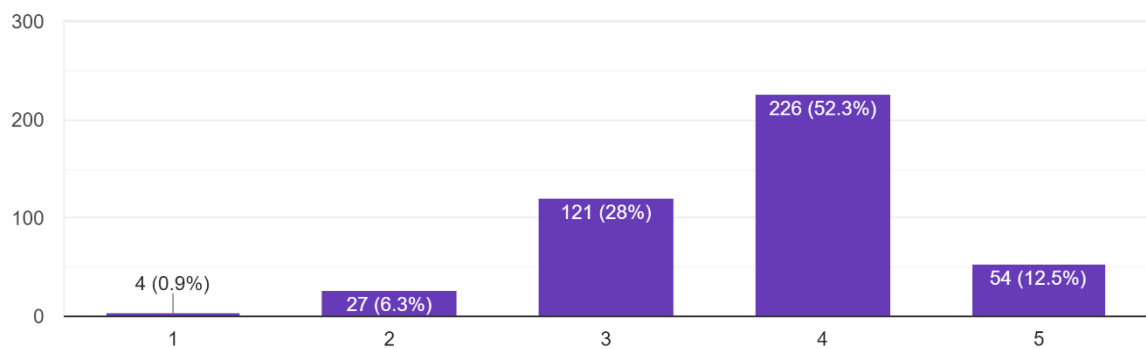
I have noticed that tourist infrastructure and investments have boosted educational facilities in Nepal.
429 responses
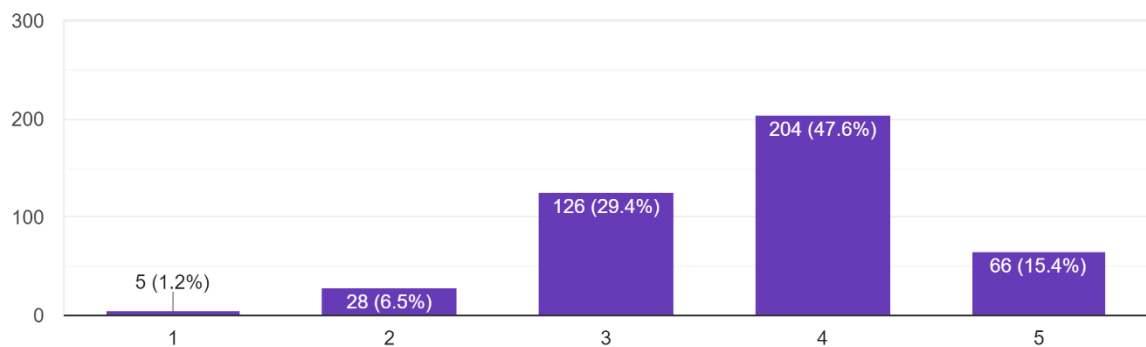
Tourism has given me opportunities to develop my skills and learn in Nepal.
431 responses
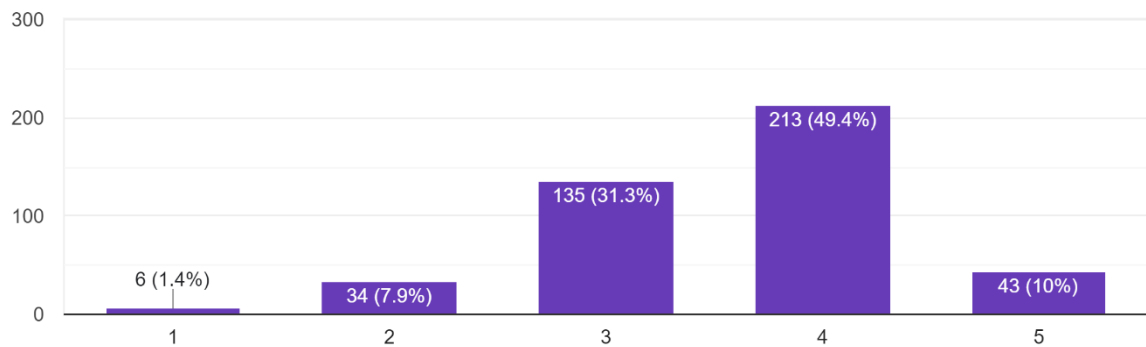
The education programs and initiatives in Nepal funded by tourism have helped me a lot=.
430 responses
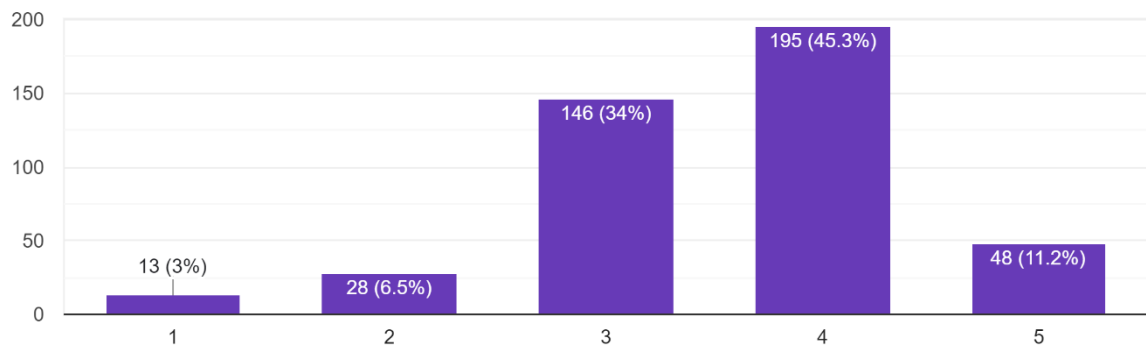
Based on my experience, tourism has contributed to Nepal's cultural heritage and customs being preserved and showcased in global markets.
430 responses
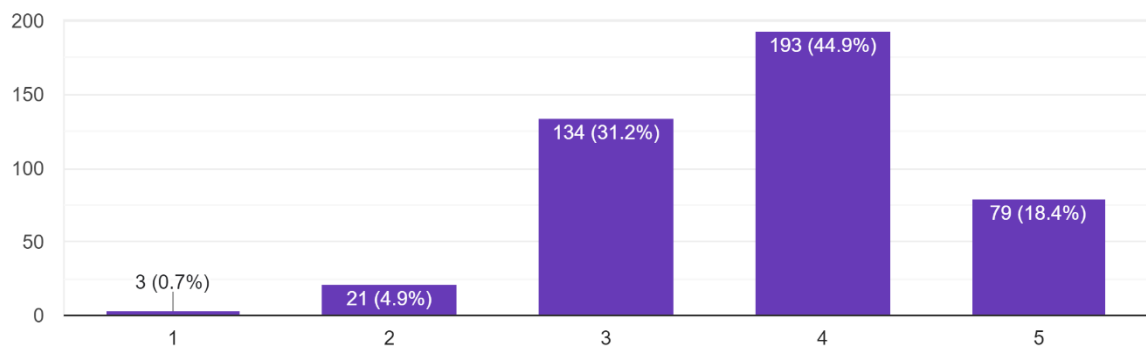
I've seen firsthand how Nepali tourism fosters the country's traditional arts, crafts, and cultural customs.

429 responses
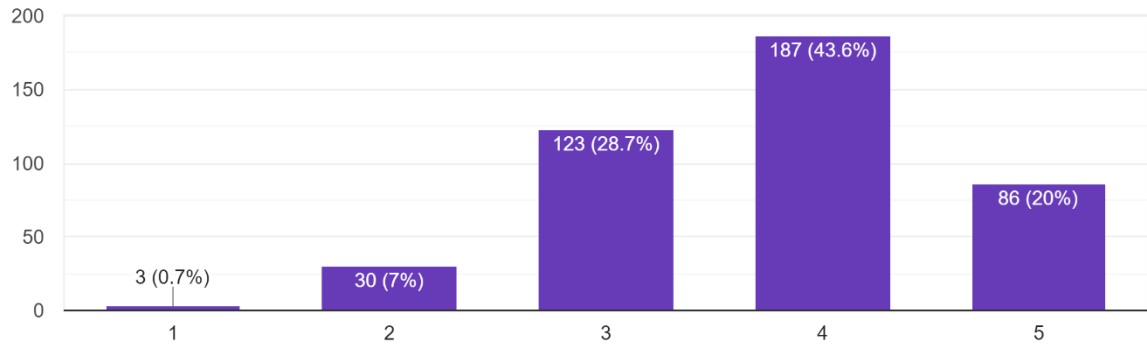
Through tourism, I was able to participate in cultural exchange and learn about diverse cultures in Nepal.

429 responses
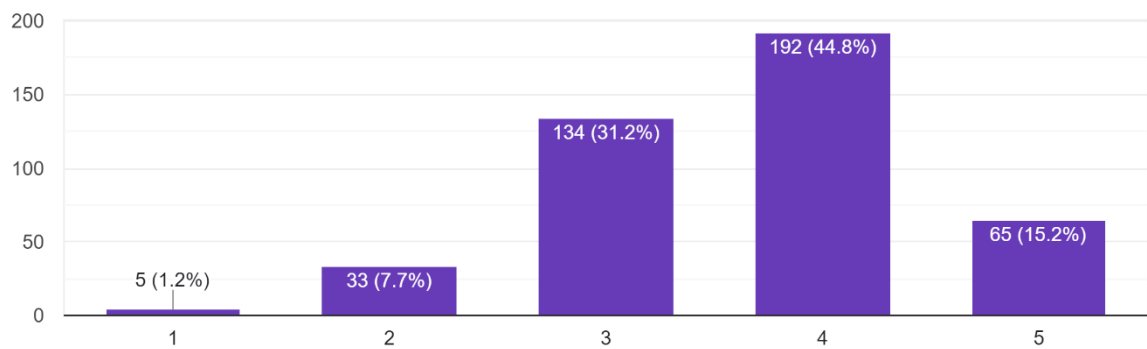
Based on my observations in Nepal, tourism has aided in the preservation and promotion of local cultures and traditions.

431 responses
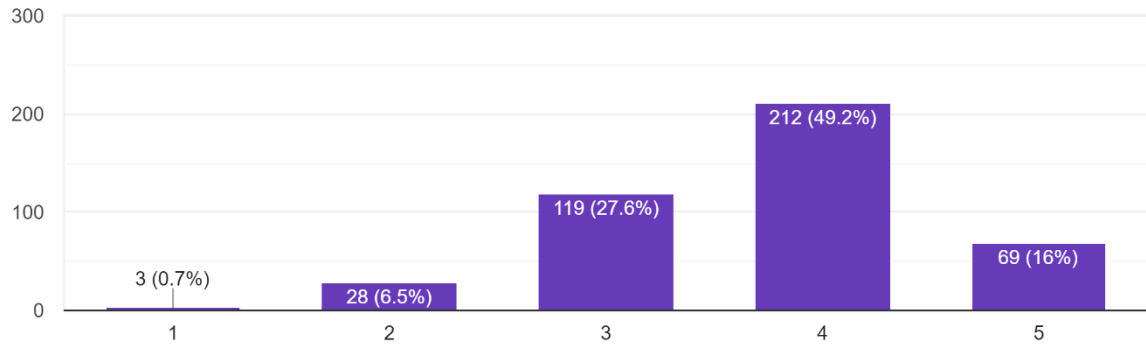
Based on my experience, tourism has helped lessen Nepal's income disparity among various socioeconomic classes.

430 responses
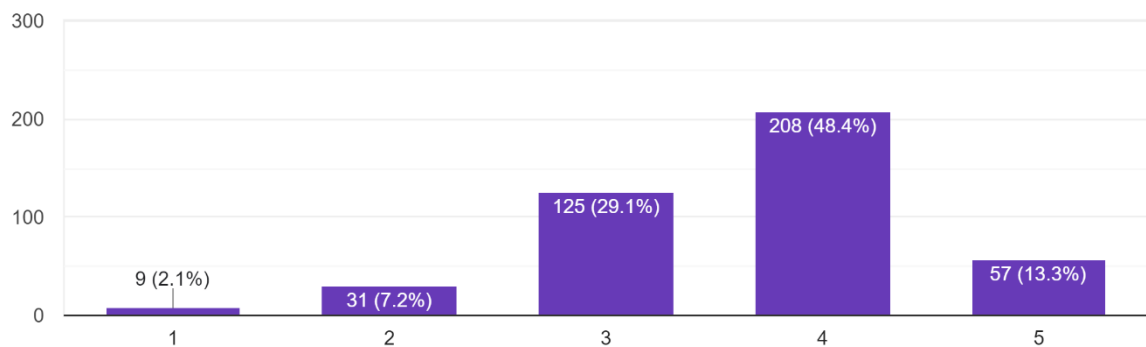
I have observed how tourism offers underprivileged communities in Nepal the chance to start their own businesses.

432 responses
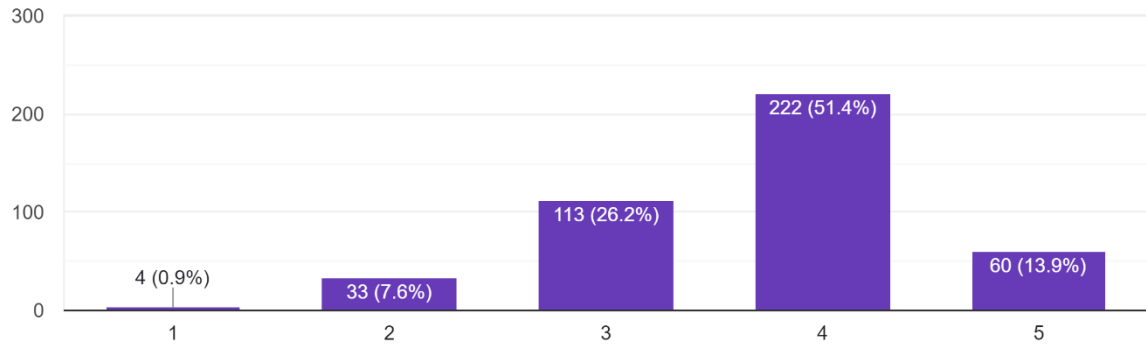
From what I've seen, Nepal's tourism activities prioritize the equal sharing of economic perks.

430 responses
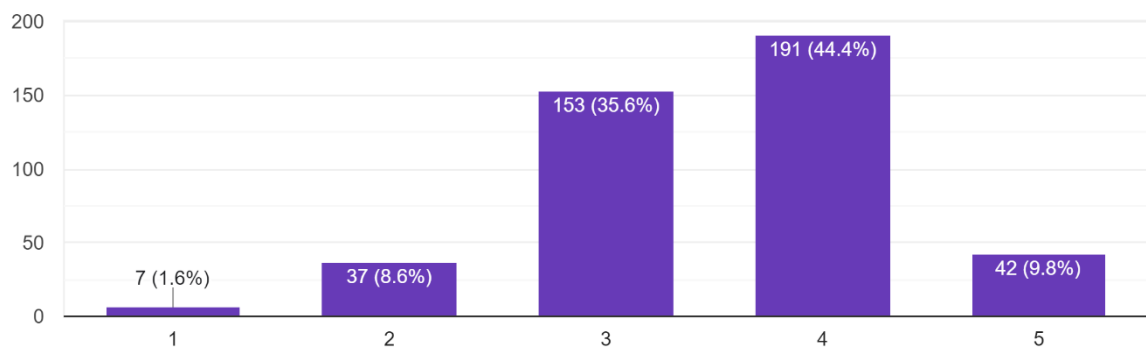
I believe tourism has provided a platform for economically deprived communities to get better jobs and increase earnings.

430 responses
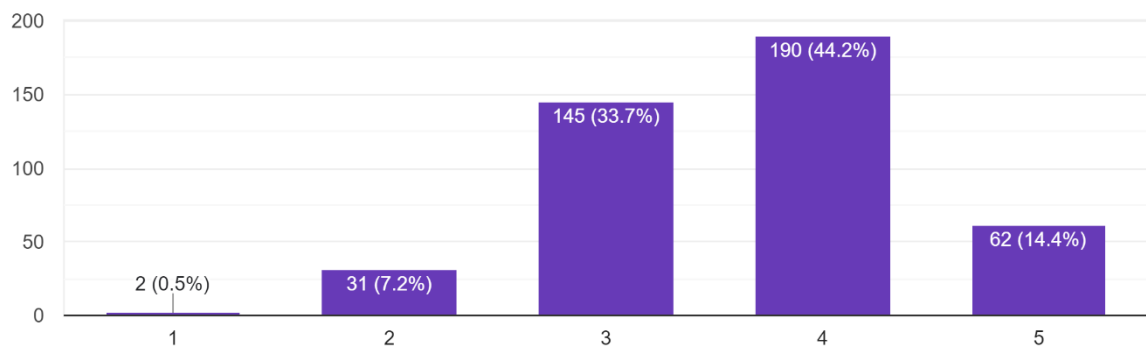
From what I've experienced in Nepal, tourism has given women the opportunity to work independently and start their own businesses.

431 responses
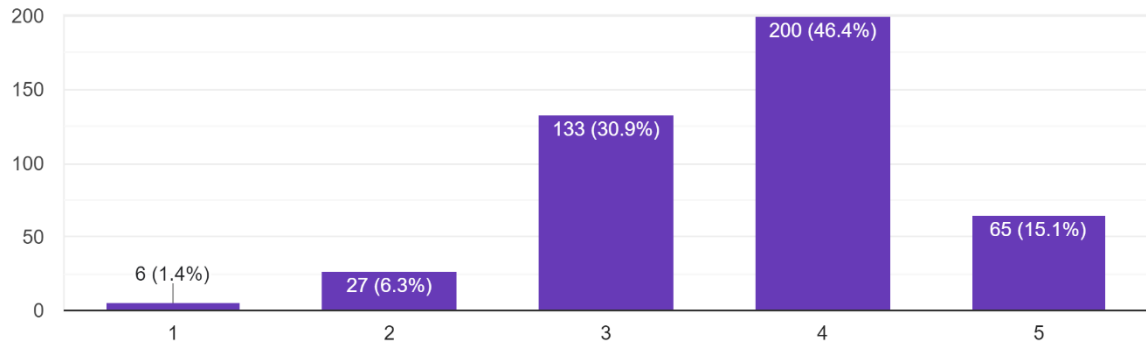
I've seen how tourism in Nepal encourages gender equality and women's involvement in tourism-related decision-making processes.

429 responses
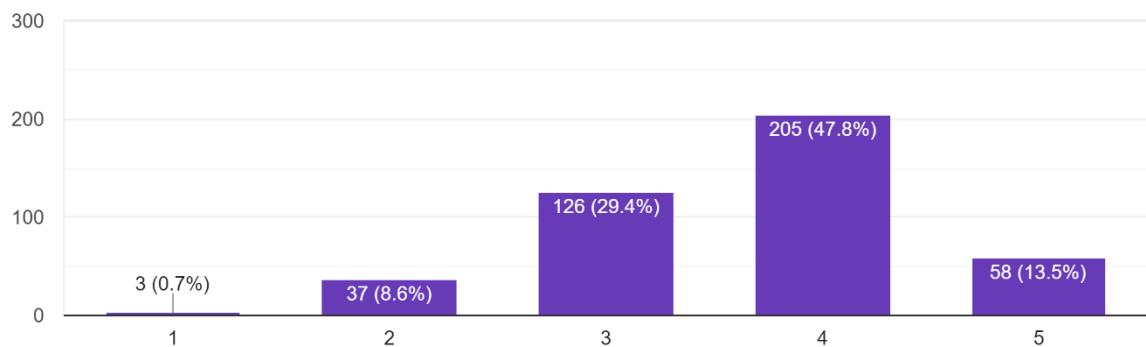
I can affirm from my personal experience that women's growth and inclusion are given top priority in Nepali tourism projects.

432 responses
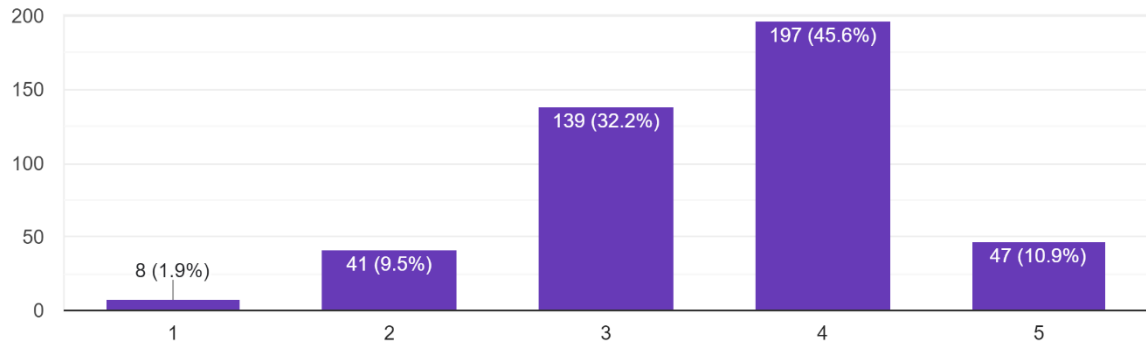
I think tourism has disrupted old gender conventions and preconceptions, promoting more gender parity and empowerment in Nepal.

429 responses
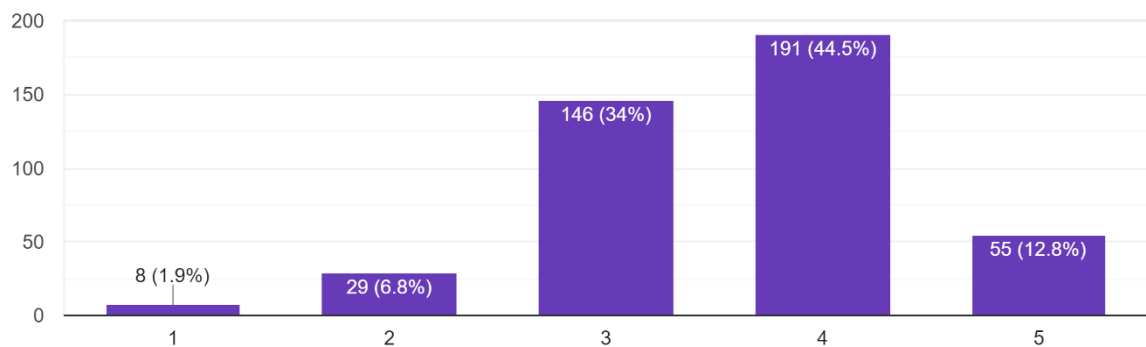
Based on my experience, people are now more conscious of social concerns like caste and gender inequality because of tourism initiatives.

433 responses
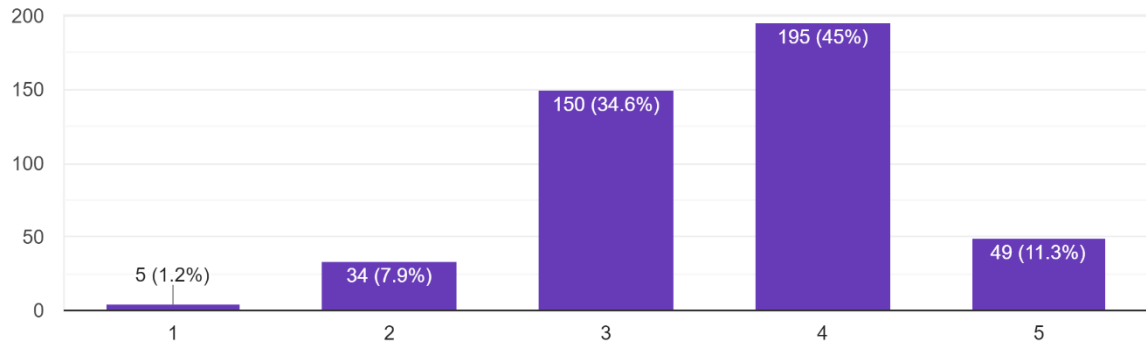
I have seen firsthand how tourism-related activities foster communication and comprehension of social injustice and oppression in Nepal.

433 responses
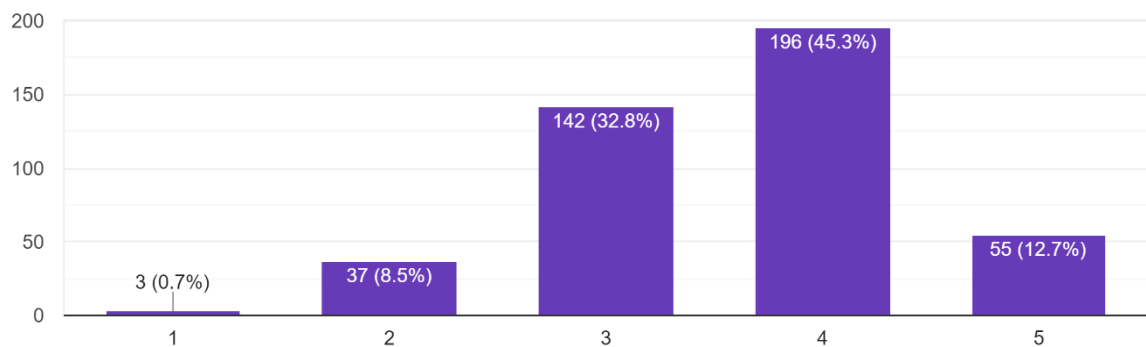
As I have seen in Nepal, tourism promotes activism and advocacy for the rights and equality of underprivileged communities.

428 responses
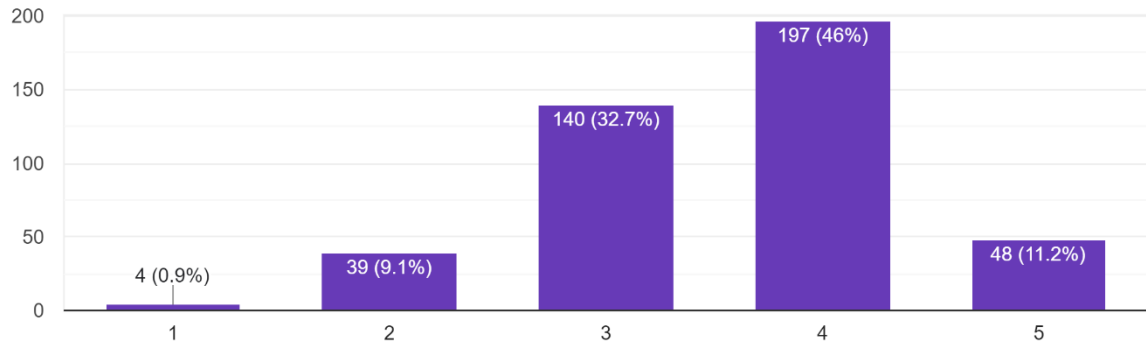
I have witnessed a cultural transformation in Nepal toward inclusion, equality, and solidarity through tourism, which addresses the major issues of oppression.

428 responses
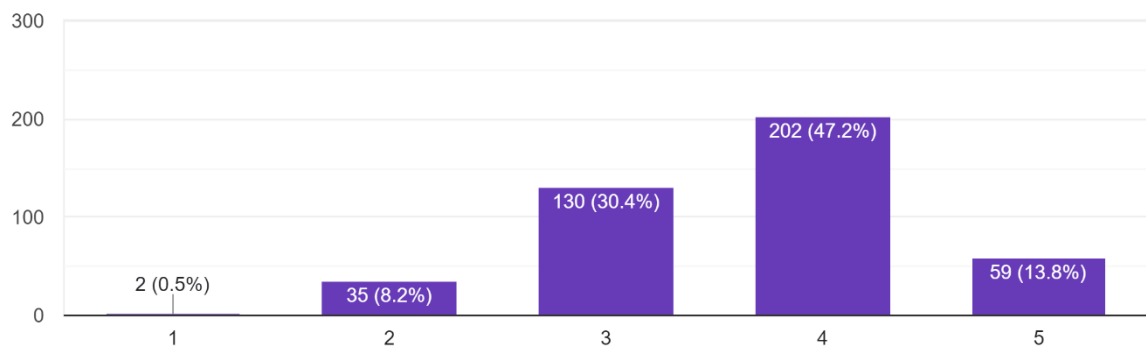
From my perspective, tourism has played a substantial role in alleviating multidimensional poverty in Nepal.

429 responses
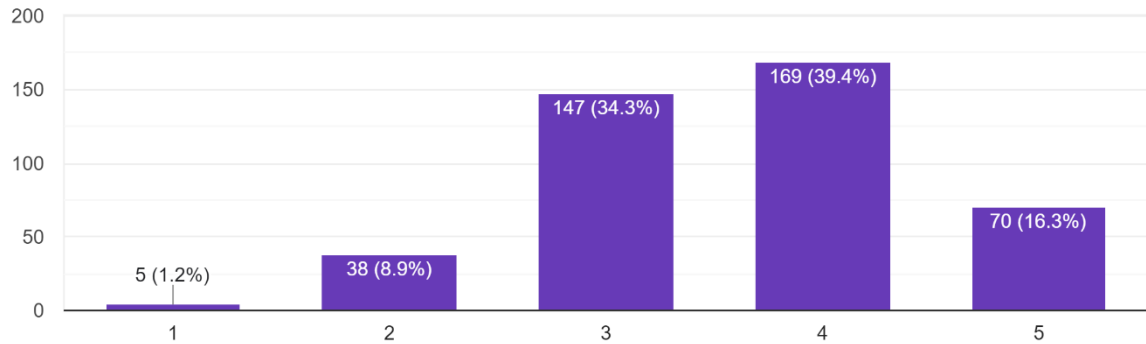
I have seen that tourism has improved living conditions and general well-being in Nepal.

431 responses
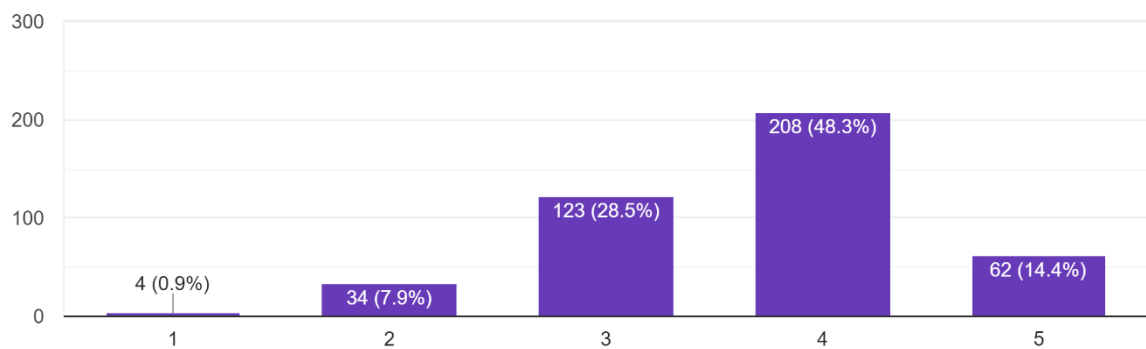
In Nepal, tourism has aided in the empowerment of underprivileged groups and people.

427 responses
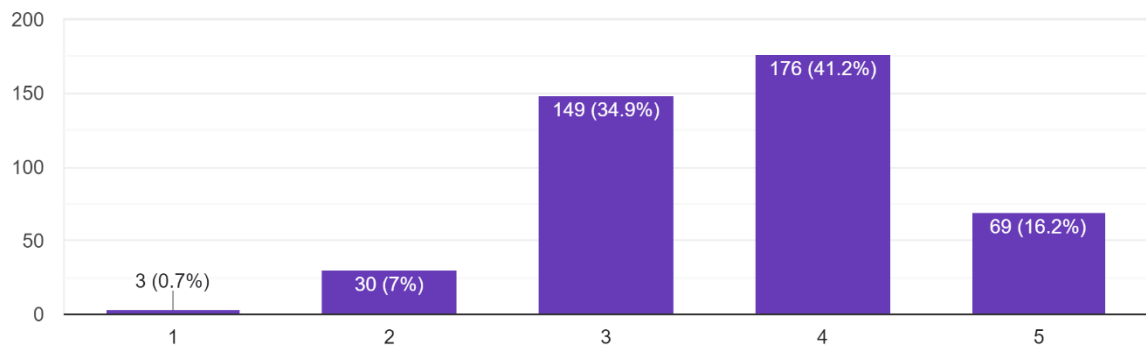
Tourism initiatives in Nepal have given local populations long-term livelihood options.

429 responses
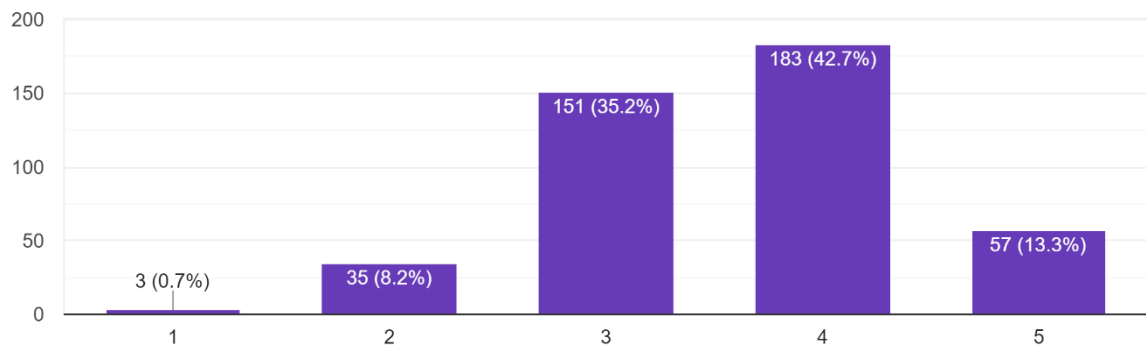
1.2 Survey responses in each variables

Economic aspects	Educational aspects	Socio-cultural settings	Income equality	women empowernment	opression awareness	multidimensional poverty reduction
3	3.75	4	3.75	4	4	4
4.75	4	5	5	4.75	4.75	4.75
4.5	5	4.75	3.25	2.75	2.75	4
3.75	2.5	4.5	4.75	3.5	4	4
3	2.25	4	2.5	1.75	3.5	4.5
4.5	3	4.5	3.5	2.25	2.75	3

2	2	2	2	2	2	2
5	4	4.5	4.25	4	4.75	4.5
3.75	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4.25	4.25	3.75	4.25	4.25
4	3	3	2.5	2.25	2	2.75
4.75	3.5	3.5	3.75	3.5	3.25	3.75
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	3.25	4.5	4	4.25	3.25	4.5
3.75	3	4.75	3.25	3.75	3.25	3.75
3.5	4	4.75	2.5	2.75	3.5	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.5	3	3	3	3.5	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	3.75
3.75	4	4.5	4.5	4.25	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4.5	4.25	4.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.5
3.5	4.5	3.5	3.75	4.5	4	3.5
4	3.75	4.75	3	3.75	3.25	3.25
4.75	4.75	4.25	3.5	3.5	3	3.75
4.25	3.5	4.5	4.25	3.75	3.5	3.5
3.75	3.5	4.25	3.5	3	3	3.25
3.75	3.5	4.5	3.5	3.25	3	3.25
3.5	3.5	4	3.25	3.25	3	3.25
3.25	3.75	4.25	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5
3.5	3.75	3.75	3.5	3	3.25	3.5
3	3.25	4	3	3	3	3

3.25	3.75	3	3.25	4	3.75	3.5
3.25	3.5	4.5	4.75	4	4	4
4.25	4.25	4	4.25	3.75	3.75	4.25
4.5	3.5	3.75	3.5	3.75	3.5	3.25
5	4.75	5	3.75	4	4.5	5
4	4	4.5	4	4.5	4.75	4.75
2.75	1.5	4.25	3.25	3.5	3.75	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	2.75	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	3.5	3.25	3	3.25	3.5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2.75	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4
3.75	3.75	3.25	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.5	3.25	3.5	3.25	2.5	2.75	2
5	5	4.25	2.5	2	2.75	2.5
3.5	2.75	3	3	2.75	3	4
3	3	3	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.75
4	4	4	3.5	3.25	3.5	2.75
3.75	3	3.75	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.5
3.75	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
3	2.25	3	2	2	2	2
3.25	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	3.75	3.75	3.5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.75	3	3	2.5	3.25	2.75	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3

3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4	4.5	4.25
4.5	3	3.5	3.75	3	3.5	3
4	3.75	3.75	3.5	4	3.5	3.5
2.5	2.5	2.75	2.5	3.25	2.75	2.5
3.75	3.5	3.5	3.25	4	3.75	3.75
3	2.75	1.75	2.5	3.5	3.25	2.5
2.75	2.75	3.25	4	4.25	3.5	2.75
3.25	2.75	3	3.5	1.75	2.5	3.5
2.5	2.75	2.5	3	3.25	3	3
3	3.5	3.25	3	2	2.75	3.75
3.25	3.5	3	3.25	4.25	3.25	3
3.25	3.5	2.75	3	2.5	2	3
3.25	4	3.5	3.25	3.25	2.75	3.25
3.5	3.75	4	3.75	3	3.5	3.25
3.5	4	4	3.75	3.75	3.25	4
3.5	3.75	3.25	4.25	4.25	4	4
4	3.5	4	4	4	3.5	3
2	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5	4	3.5
4	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	3.5	3.75
3.75	3.5	2.5	4	3.25	3.25	3
3.5	3.25	3.25	3	2.5	2.5	3.5
3.5	2.75	2.5	3.25	3	3	3
3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.75	3.5	3.5
3.25	3	3	3	2.75	3	3
3.5	3.25	3.75	3.75	3.25	3.5	3.25
3.25	3.75	3	3.5	3	3.25	3
3.75	3.5	4.5	2.25	2.75	3	3.75
3.5	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.25	3.25
3.5	3.5	3.25	3.5	3	3.25	3
3.25	3	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.5	4
4.75	3.5	4.75	3.75	4	4.25	5
3.75	3	3.5	3.5	3.25	3	3
3.5	3.75	3.25	3.75	3.5	3	3.5

3.5	3.75	3.75	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.75
4.25	3.5	4.5	4	3.5	3.5	4.75
3.25	3.5	4.75	4	3.75	4	5
4.25	3.25	4.75	3.75	4.5	4.25	4.75
4.5	4.5	4.75	4.25	4.25	4.75	5
4.5	3	4	4	4	4.5	5
2.75	3.5	3	4	2.25	3.75	3.5
4.5	4	4.75	3.75	3.75	4.25	5
3.5	5	4.5	4.25	3.75	4.25	4
3.75	3	2.5	3.25	3	3	3
3.75	3	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.25	3.25
3.5	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.5	3.75	4
3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.75	3
4	4	4	2.5	2	2	2.75
4	3.5	4	3	3	3	3
3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.5	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3.5	2.75	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.25
3.75	3	4.25	3.25	3.75	3.25	3.25
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.25	3.5	3.5	2.75	3	3.5	3.25
3.25	3.25	3.75	3.5	3.5	3.25	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3.25	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.25
4	3.75	3.75	3.5	3	3	3.25
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	3.5	3	2	2	2.75
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1.25	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2.75	2.25	2.25	2.75	2.5	2.75
2	1	3.5	3	2.5	3	3.25
3	3	2.75	3	3	3	3
3.75	4	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3
3.75	3.5	4	3.5	3.75	3.5	3
4.25	4	3.5	2.75	3.25	3	3.5

3.5	3.75	3.75	4	3	3.5	3.25
3.25	3.75	3.5	3	3	3.75	3.5
3.5	3.75	3.5	3.75	3.25	3.5	3.5
3.25	2.75	3	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
3.5	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3	2.75
3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.25	2.5
3.5	3.25	3.25	3.25	3	3.5	3
3.5	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5	3.5	3
3.5	3.5	3.25	2.75	3.25	3.75	3.25
3.75	3.5	3.75	3.75	3.25	3.75	3.75
4	4	4	3	3.25	2	2.75
3.75	4	3.25	3	4	2.75	3
4	3.25	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	2.25	2	2	2.75
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3.75	2.75	3.25	3	3	3	3.25
1	1.25	1	1	1	1	1
3.5	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.5	3.25	3.25

3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.5	3.25	3	3	3.75	3	3.25
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
2.75	3.25	3.25	3.25	2.75	3.5	3.25
4	3.5	4.25	3.5	4	4.25	4.5
4	4	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25	4
2.75	3	3	2.75	2.75	3.25	3
3.25	4	4	4	4	4	4
3.5	3	3	3.5	3.25	3.25	2.75
5	5	5	5	5	4.75	4.75
4.25	4	4.75	4.75	4.5	4.25	4.25
4	4	4	4	4.25	4	4.25
3.5	3	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.5	3.5
4	3.75	4.25	4.25	4.75	4.75	4.25
3.75	3.5	3.25	3	2.5	2.75	3
4	3.75	4.25	4	4	4	4
3.5	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.75	3
3.5	4	5	5	5	5	4.75
3.5	3.5	2.75	3	3.25	3.25	3
3.25	2.75	3	3	3.25	2.5	2.75
3.25	2.75	3.25	3.25	3.25	3	3.5
3.5	3	3.25	3	3.25	3.5	2.75
3.25	2.75	2.75	3	3	2.75	2.5
3.5	2.75	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3.25	3	3.25	2.75	3	3.5	2.5
3.25	3.5	3	3.25	3	3	3.5
3.25	3.5	3.75	3	2.25	3.75	2.5
2.75	3.75	3	3	3.25	3	2.25
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3.5	3.25	3	3.25	3.5	3.25	3
3.75	3.5	3	4	3.25	3.75	2.75
3.75	3.25	3.75	3	3.5	3.75	3
4	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.5	2.75	2.75
3.25	3.25	3.25	2.5	2.5	3.25	3.5

3.25	3.75	4	4	4	4	4
3.5	3.25	3.25	3	3.5	3.25	3
3.75	3.5	3.25	3.25	3.5	3.25	3
3.75	2.75	3	3.5	2.75	3.25	3
3	3.75	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	3.5
3	3.25	3.5	3.75	3.25	3.75	3.75
4	3.5	3.25	3.75	3.75	3.25	3.25
3.5	3.75	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3.25	3.75	3.75	3.25	3.5	3	3
3	3.5	3.5	3.25	3.5	3	3
3.75	3.25	3.25	3	2.75	3.25	3
3.5	4.5	4	4.75	4.25	4	4.25
3.5	3	3.75	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.5
3.75	5	5	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
4.25	4	4.25	4	4.25	4.75	4.5
3.75	4.75	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5
4	4.75	4.25	4.25	4	4.25	4.25
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
1	2	2.75	2.75	2	2	2.25
1.5	1.25	1.5	1.25	1.5	1.75	1.75
4	4	4	4.25	4.25	4	4
3.75	4	4	4	4	4	4.25
3.5	3.75	3.5	3.75	3.75	4	4
3.75	4	4	3.5	4	3.75	4
4	4	3.75	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	3.75	4	4	4
1.75	2	2.25	2	2.25	2	2
3.5	3.5	4	4	4	4	4
4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.5	5
4.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5
5	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.5	4
4	4	5	4	4.25	4.75	5
4.25	4	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25
4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.5

3.5	4	4	4.75	4.75	4.25	4.5
4.75	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25	4	4.5
4.5	4	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75
4.5	4.5	4.5	4.75	4.5	4.25	5
4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	5
4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5
4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25
4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25
4.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.25
4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.75	5
4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
4.75	3.75	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25
4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5	3.75
4	4.75	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5
4.25	4	3.5	4	3.25	3.5	3.75
3	3	3	2	2.5	2	3
4.5	4	4.25	5	4.25	4	4.5
4.5	4.75	4.5	4.75	4.5	4.25	4.5
3.25	3.25	3	3	3	3.25	2.75
3.75	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.5	3	3.5
5	5	4.75	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
4.5	3.75	3.5	3.75	4	4	4.25
4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5	4	4.25
3.5	3.75	3.75	4	4.25	3.75	3.75
3.75	2.5	3	2.75	2.75	2.25	2.5
4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.75	4
4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.75	4.25	4.25
4.25	4.25	4.5	5	4.25	4.5	4.25
3.75	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.5
4.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75	4.5
4.25	4	4.25	4	4.5	4.5	4.25
3.25	4.25	4	4.25	5	4	4
4	4.75	4.25	3.75	4	4.25	4.5
3.75	3.75	4	4	3.75	4.25	4.5
3.5	4.5	4.5	3.75	5	4.5	4

3.5	4	3.5	4	4	3.75	5
4.5	3	2.5	3.25	3	2.25	3.25
3.75	3.75	4.75	4.25	4.5	3.75	4
4	4	4	4	4.5	4.5	4
4	4	4	4	3.75	4	4
3.25	4	4	4.25	4.25	3.5	4
3.75	4	4.5	4.5	4.75	4	4
3.75	3.75	3.75	4.5	5	4.5	4
3.75	4.5	5	4.25	4	3.75	3.75
3.75	4	4	4	4	4.5	5
4	4	4	4.75	4.5	4.25	4.5
4	4.5	4.5	4	4	4	4
4	3.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	3.75	4
3.75	4	4	4	4	4	4
1.75	1.75	4.25	2.5	3	2.25	2.25
3	2.25	3.25	3.25	2.5	2.75	3
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3.5	3.75	3.25	3.75	4.5	3.75	3.75
4	3.75	4	3.75	3.75	4	4
4.75	4.25	4.25	4	3.5	3.25	4
3.75	4	4	4	3.25	3.75	4.5
3.75	3.75	4	3.5	4	3.75	4
4	4	3.75	4.5	3.25	3.75	4
4.75	4	3.75	4.25	4.75	3.5	3.5
4	4.75	4.5	4	4.25	4.5	4.25
4.25	4.75	4.75	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
5	4	4.25	4.5	4.25	4	4.25
4.25	4	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.75
4.75	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25
5	4	4.5	4	4.5	4	4.25
3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4.25
4	4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	4
5	4.75	4	4.5	4	4.5	4
4.75	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.75	4.25
2.5	2.75	2.5	3	3	2.75	2

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2.75	2.5	2.25	2.25	3	3.75	2.75
5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4	4.25	4.25
2.5	4	5	4.75	4	4.25	4.25
3.75	4.5	4	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
3.75	4	4.75	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25
2.5	3	2.75	3	3.25	3	3
3.5	2.75	3.5	3	3.25	3	3
3.25	3.5	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.25	3.75
3.75	4.5	4.25	3.25	3.75	3.5	3.25
4	4.5	4.5	3.5	3.5	3.75	3.25
4	4.75	4.5	4	4.25	5	5
4.25	4	4	4	4.25	4.5	4
3.75	2.5	3	2.75	3	3	3.25
3	3	3	3	2.25	2.25	3.75
3.75	4	3	3.25	3	3.5	3.5
3.5	3.25	4.75	4.25	4	4.25	4.25
4	4.25	4	4	4.25	4.5	4
3.5	5	4.75	4	4	4.5	4
4	4.25	3.75	4	4.75	4.25	4.5
3.75	4	4.5	4	3.75	4.25	4.25
3.5	4	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
4.5	4	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5
3	3.75	4	4	4.25	4.5	4
3.25	2.75	3	3.5	3.5	3	3
2	2.5	3.75	3.75	3	2.25	2.5
4.5	3.25	3.75	4.25	4	4.25	4.5
3.75	3.75	4.25	4.25	4	4	4.5
4.25	4	4.75	3	3.5	4	4.75
4	4	4	4	3.75	4.25	4
2.5	2	2	2	1.75	2	2
4.75	3.5	4.75	4	4.5	4	4.75
4.75	4.25	5	4	4	4	4.75
4	4	3.5	4	4	4	4
3.75	4	5	4.5	4.25	4	4.5

3.75	4	4	4.75	4.25	4.25	4.25
3.75	4.25	4.25	4	4.5	4.25	4.5
4.5	4.5	4.75	4.5	3.75	4.75	5
4	4.25	4.75	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.25
2.75	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	2	1.75
4.5	5	3.5	4	3.75	3.5	3.5
2.25	2	2	1.75	3	3	3
4	4.25	4.5	4	3.75	4.25	3.75
4.5	4.5	5	4	3.75	4.25	5
2.75	2.75	3	3.25	2.75	3.25	3.25
3.75	4	4	4.5	5	4.25	4.25
3.5	4	3.5	4.25	4.5	4.25	3.75
4.25	4.75	5	4.5	3.5	4	5
5	4.5	5	4.5	3.75	3	5
4.5	4	4.75	4.5	5	3.75	5
4.5	4.5	4.75	4.5	3.75	4.75	5
3.25	2.75	3	3	3.25	2.5	2.75
3.5	3	3.25	3	3.25	3.5	2.75
3.25	3.5	3	3.25	3	3	3.5
3.5	3.25	3.25	3	3.5	3.25	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
1	2	2.75	2.75	2	2	2.25
4	4	4	4.25	4.25	4	4
3.5	4	4	4.75	4.75	4.25	4.5
4.75	3.75	4.25	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25
3	3	3	2	2.5	2	3
4.5	4.5	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.75	4.5
5	4	4.25	4.5	4.25	4	4.25
4.75	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.25
5	4	4.5	4	4.5	4	4.25
4	4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	4
5	4.75	4	4.5	4	4.5	4
2.75	2.5	2.25	2.25	3	3.75	2.75
2.5	4	5	4.75	4	4.25	4.25
3	3.25	4	3	3	3	3

3.25	3.25	3	3.5	4	3.75	3.5
3.25	4.25	4.75	4.75	4	4	4
4.25	4.75	4.25	4.25	3.75	3.75	4.25
3.75	3	3.5	3.5	3.25	3	3
3.5	3.75	3.75	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.75
4.25	3.25	4.75	3.75	4.5	4.25	4.75
4.5	3	4	4	4	4.5	5
4.5	4	4.75	3.75	3.75	4.25	5