

Ecotourism and Community Participation

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ABSTRACT

The term ecotourism generally refers to environmentally responsible or sustainable tourism. The extent of care and attention a homeowner puts into their house should be applied to ecotourism. Low-impact visitor behaviour, understanding and gratitude for local cultures and biodiversity, support for ecotourism conservation efforts, sustainable benefits to local communities, visitor participation in decision-making, and educational components for both the visitor and the ecotourism visitor are all characteristics of ecotourism. Ecotourism can also supplement maintenance and protection costs for protected areas and other natural areas. Ecotourism can also provide a sustainable economic development alternative for local communities with limited livelihood options. For rural people, ecotourism generates new sources of income and livelihood. This allows impoverished rural residents to expand their livelihoods and creates economic incentives to preserve natural resources. However, the extent to which these people benefit from ecotourism is contingent upon their participation in and control over the tourism industry. Ecotourism and community participation are the study's essence. This paper contends that community integration necessitates skill development and capacity building through the training of village adolescents in tourism business skills. These adolescents can establish a village-level institution to operate the ecotourism enterprise for rural community capacity building, infrastructure development, and profit sharing. Additionally, this institution would contribute to the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity. At the conclusion of the study, a structure for operationalizing community-based ecotourism management was proposed.

Keywords: ecotourism; sustainable tourism; local communities; local cultures; biodiversity; Community Participation.

INTRODUCTION: WHY BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IS REQUIRED?

Biodiversity is not only important but crucial for human development and growth due to the goods and services rendered by it. The worth of natural products and services is assessed to be approximately 33 USD trillion per year (Costanza, 1997). The global economy largely depends on biodiversity for products and processes. About 40% of the global economy is contributed by biological products and processes which are dependent on biodiversity for their production (CBD, 1992). India is the second largest populous country in the world and a very high proportion of its population depends on forest and natural resources for their livelihood (Wagh & Jain, 2016). A significant number of protected areas in the country provides an essence for ecotourism development and therefore generates new income and livelihood opportunities for the people living in the vicinity of these areas in the forest and rural settings (Das, 2017). Rural people are also dependent on forests resources to meet the requirement of fodder and firewood.

Taking into account the everincreasing anthropogenic pressure and impact of infrastructure development on forests, forests resources required to be assessed from biodiversity perspectives. This would help to suggest appropriate conservation measures. Assessment of flora and fauna species which form an integral part of animal ecology, in wildlife-based protected areas is indispensable before any significant conservation measures can be taken (Edet & Ijeomah, 2012). Assessment of species diversity is also helpful to the conservationists and protected area managers to evaluate the complexity and resources of these forests (Jayakumar & Nair, 2013).

CHALLENGES TO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Biodiversity loss has been taken place on a global scale at a faster rate than that of its natural extinction (Kiss, 2004). The 21st Century is facing two main different yet related global issues which are poverty and environmental degradation. One assessment suggested that about 25% of the total species found in the world could go extinct in the few coming decades at a rate of loss of 27000 species annually (Wilson, 1992). Some major factors responsible for the loss of biodiversity are exploitation of natural resources, consumerism and very high per capita resource demand. The society's attitude towards use of resources, the failure of economic systems and existing policies concerning with the use and valuation of environment and its benefits are the root causes responsible for accelerating the loss of biodiversity (Costanza et al., 1997). To check the further loss and to conserve the existing biodiversity, many protected areas in the form of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and nature and community reserves have been established around the world. Most of these protected areas specially in developing countries, were set up in the wild in distant and peripheral regions where in many cases marginalized and poverty-stricken people were residing (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011).

The benefits and cost of conservation are distributed disproportionately among the people. The benefits of protected areas in terms of bequest and existence values are greatly enjoyed by the global citizens (Balmford & Whitten, 2003). On the other hand, the costs of conservation in terms of seclusion from resource use, displacement etc. are borne by the people living in the vicinity of the resources (Matiku, 2008). People living close to the biodiversity rich areas prone to the problems of restricted rights of access to the resources for instance collection of fuel and firewood, fodder and NTFPs, involuntary displacement, (Pimbert & Pretty, 1997), loss of crop and livestock due to raiding of wild animals (Studsrod & Wegge, 1995). Generally, in developing countries, the needs of the local people are overlooked when protected areas are established. The rights of the people to access to the natural resources are restricted which sometimes result in lack of support and non-cooperation by the community in conservation (Nepal, 2000). As a result, of late the conservationists and international agencies including United Nations have started given attention to poverty alleviation while planning and implementing conservation programs (Redford et al., 2008; Adams et al., 2004; Roe, 2008; Upton et al., 2008). Even though conservation and poverty alleviation are two different

issues, however these cannot be dealt with separately in biodiversity-rich area as poverty compromises success of conservation measures to a great degree that if issue of poverty does not addressed, the conservation of biodiversity will most likely fail (Sanderson, 2005; Adams et al., 2004).

Creation of protected areas like park and wildlife sanctuaries has been the common strategy for conserving the biodiversity which excludes livelihood activities of the people in the protected areas (Western & Wright, 1994; Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000; Geoghegan & Renard, 2002). Local livelihood is considered antagonistic to conservation in protected area approach. Protected areas are established with demarcated borders where unauthorized people are not allowed to take up livelihood activities. People are supposed to use resources outside of the protected area and plants and animals are kept inside the protected area. Although protected areas have been considered most common approach for conservation, in developing countries where large number of rural populations living in and around the protected area, the implementation of this strategy remained a challenging task for protected area managers and staff (Lele et al., 2010; Rands et al., 2010). Enforcing protected area boundaries also problematic because of insufficient government resources, inaccessible sites, and weak management abilities to forcefully control people from unauthorized activities within the boundaries of the protected area and faulty legal system which cannot deliver justice in a time bound manner. In developing countries where rural and distant populations already suffer social and economic inequalities, establishment of protected areas further limit livelihood opportunities of marginalized people. It is also not politically correct to consume financial resources on conservation of biodiversity when people are suffering poverty and their essential needs are not provided. Ecologically also, protected areas are rarely big enough to accommodate sufficient populations of big carnivores and to sustain crucial ecological functions sustainably for a longer period.

Protected areas can provide an essence for ecotourism industry due to rich biodiversity and natural landscape inside these areas. Locals also get a chance to generate some revenue from tourism activities. Local people can be engaged in ecotourism by direct employment, leasing land to community or providing them license for ecotourism management, community engagement in ecotourism by giving them equity in the ecotourism venture or profit share scheme. A community can also take up ecotourism business activities independently such as selling handicrafts, local cuisines and cultural performances to tourists (McNeely & Mainka, 2009; Wells et al., 1992; Upton et al., 2008; Adams & Hutton, 2007). The protected areas as the basis of tourism development have been long accepted. In Africa national parks were also set up to save natural landscapes from development that might bring up these areas under for instance mining or agriculture by the shortsighted governments (Bowman, 2011). It is being recognized worldwide that the cost and benefits involved in biodiversity protection is disproportionately distributed among the stakeholders. The cost is generally borne by poor people

living around the protected areas in developing countries which are rich in biodiversity (Adams et al., 2004).

The World Conservation Union argued that without the cooperation of local people, sustainability of protected areas was not possible (IUCN, 1992) and further suggested that protected areas should be looked as islands of biodiversity in the ocean of sustainable human development. The protected area should extend its advantages outside their boundaries. Poverty alleviation should not be held hostage to conservation. Conservationists should keep in mind that while conservation is the primary goal for them, pursuance of this goal should not compromise the livelihood of the poor and should not add to the poverty. This approach of conservation was adopted at the fifth World Congress in 2003. The approach resulted in certain activities viz. codes of conduct for conservation organizations, social impact assessment of protected areas, and compensation of opportunity cost of conservation in protected areas to the locals. Some conservation strategies may generate financial opportunities for locals, for instance non extractive use of resources through ecotourism. Conservation through creation of protected areas has been the approach for some time and still prevailing around the world. Protected areas are increasingly being established worldwide to protect biodiversity and maintain ecosystems for current and future generations (Baral et al., 2008). Consequently, it is now being expected from the protected areas to also extend their benefits from conservation to sustainable development and poverty alleviation in rural settings (Snyman, 2014; Simpson, 2009; Anup & Parajuli 2014; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

To achieve this goal of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development hand in hand, it is necessary to integrate protected area management with a broad sustainable development planning agenda (Shoo & Songorwa 2013; Govan et al., 2006).

ROLE OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Top-down exclusionary and fences and fines have been the traditional approaches for protection of the biodiversity that disregards the livelihood activities of the rurals (Susan, 2011; Adams & Hutton, 2007; Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000). These approaches alienate people from conservation programs and face the failure as people turn opponent. People become more underprivileged as their rights to the resources are curtailed. Recognizing these problems conservationists have been designing and exploring new approaches in the area of biodiversity conservation, one such approach is to link the livelihood of the people with the conservation (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). In last decades conservationists started engaging local communities around protected areas to achieve dual objectives of conservation and economic development. Politically the right to resources of the local people has been recognized and political processes are also becoming favorable to support economic development of local communities (Wells et al., 1992). The conservationists realized the necessity to generate livelihoods for the locals to achieve the goal of conservation. Initially indirect linkages between livelihood and

conservation were explored. Indirectly linked approach was found to be difficult to implement and unsustainable specially in the absence of external funding (Tiwari, 1990; Kanaujia et al., 2013; Wells et al., 1992; World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 1992).

Indirectly linked approach also did not bring any significant behavioral change in the people and they did not associate themselves with the conservation. Indirect linkage approach did not deter people completely to use and exploit resources in the core areas even after the prohibitory laws and norms were forcefully imposed. Most likely people also tried to expand the economic activities allowed in the buffer zone to the core area or in other words tried the expansion of buffer zone into the core area. These approaches also did not provide any incentives to people to stop external threats for instance clear felling of trees by an outside logging company or hunting and poaching of wild animals for wildlife trafficking or unsustainable harvesting of fish and aquatic resources by outsiders (Jones, 2010; Susan, 2011; McNeely & Mainka, 2009). People or the community did not take action to stop external threats and therefore no local body of people existed to respond to the external threats to the biodiversity. To overcome the issues of internal and external threats to the biodiversity, the conservationists in 1990s started working on new approaches which would address the dual objective of livelihood and biodiversity conservation. The new approaches were centered on creating livelihood activities which were biodiversity dependent or in other words linking livelihood with biodiversity conservation directly (Wells et al., 1992; Adams & Hutton, 2007; Berkes, 2009; Western & Wright, 1994). This linked incentive strategy was basically relied upon developing dependent relationship between local people with the biodiversity. Those livelihood opportunities were created for the local people that were based on existence of biodiversity and its non-consumptive use and this drove to the people to stop the external threats as these threats would compromise their livelihood. In such way, livelihoods not only compatible with conservation but also promote conservation. The strategy acknowledges the role of people in biodiversity conservation and provides opportunities for creation of livelihoods for instance setting up of an ecotourism business enterprise (Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000).

RURAL COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CURRENT LIVELIHOOD SCENARIO

As per the estimates of poverty by World Bank in 2015, about 10 percent of the world's population which constitute about 734 million people lived on less than \$1.90 a day. Impoverish conditions compel rural people to unethical behavior and extract economic benefits from protected areas illegally. Illegal activities taken by the locals for direct economic benefits may include hunting, poaching, illicit felling of trees, grazing, and collection of prohibited substances from forests. Indirect benefits include corrupt practices exercised by state agencies and their staffs for granting license for use and access or rent seeking for allowing or overlooking illegal practices and frightening locals with punishment for actual or fictional

trespass (Berkes, 2009; Wells et al., 1992). Traditionally the approach to combat the illegal practices was of exclusion. The traditional strategies were to contain illegal activities were forceful policing, spreading awareness among community and community outreach and in some instances sharing some part of the revenue with the community for engaging community in some management activities. Outreach activities do little to those who were engaged in illegal activities and teaching hungry and grieved people about rules and law does not make much sense. In such situations persuading people does not work when economic benefit to break the law are high as in the case of poaching (Adams et al., 2004; Rands et al., 2010). The intense policing of the resources was also not economically feasible as cost of it can be huge (Simpson, 2009), and the practice of indiscriminate power by protection agencies may be problematic (Adams & Hutton, 2007).

IMPORTANCE OF CREATION OF LIVELIHOODS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Pro-poor tourism is a kind of tourism which is operationalized in a way that generates net benefits to the poor (Harrison, 2008). As poor gets benefitted from the income provided by the tourists, it can further bring development in the area. The people get employment in tourism businesses; they also set up and run their own tourism enterprises, and earn income from tourism. Tourism also creates a market for the locals where they can sell goods viz. farm produce, handicrafts and services to the tourists (Wildes, 1998; WTO, 2005; Scheyvens, 2007). Tourism also improves linkages between supply and demand and reduce leakages by creating market for local goods and services (UNWTO, 2004; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011). The revenue collected by taxing the income from tourism can be further spent for the welfare of the rurals viz. creation of local infrastructure, education and health (Scheyvens, 2007). The rural people many a times not equipped with the necessary skills and resources to run tourism-based businesses (WTO, 2005). In rural areas capacity building activities can be taken up which will equip people with necessary skills, knowledge and capital to set up and run tourism enterprises (Ahebwa, 2012; Puntcher et al., 2017). This will also help to avail skilled human resources necessary to cater quality services to the tourists which are many a times missing in rural settings (Victurine, 2000). Skill development and capacity building will also lead to the socio-economic development of the rural communities (Stone, 2015).

TOURISM IMPORTANCE AND IMPACT

Since the beginning of the 21st Century tourism has become world's largest industry (Bhattacharya et al., 2003). Tourism is a phenomenon which has many aspects as it includes some aspects of show business, some of commodity trade both national and international. It has an important component of entertainment and sometimes it also has some adverse effects on area where it is practiced. Being multifaceted phenomenon, it is difficult to carry out complete analysis of it (Stronza, 2001). Greenwood (1989) mentioned that tourism was the biggest scale movement of goods, services and people that the mankind had possible ever seen (Stronza,

2007). Tourism is an important promoter of economic development and social and political change. These are important processes for sustainable development and conservation and people who are concerned with conservation and development have started considering ecotourism as an important tool to achieve the goal of conservation and development (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Tourism brings both tourists and locals before each other and gives them a chance to understand life of one another and also to mirror on their own life through the eyes of others. Sometimes this cross-cultural exchange results in indicating wide ranging theoretical issues in anthropology.

In simple words tourism is the flow of visitors from a tourist generating site to a destination site. A tourist is a person, temporarily leisured, who visits a destination site voluntarily far from home for the purpose of experiencing a change (Smith, 1992). In spite of tremendous potential, tourism so far not resulted in macroeconomic development as expected (Stronza & Pêgas, 2008). Besides in some instances tourism appeared to be posing some kinds of social vices like prostitutions, drugs peddling and currency black markets (Trumbull, 2001). Additionally, tourism also caused overcrowding, extravagance and pollution which results in environmental degradation (Hunt et al., 2014). Employment opportunities generated because of tourism were seasonal and disrupted existing subsistence practices of the people. Another consequence of tourism induced development is that it brings out heterogeneous wealth distribution among host community which further results in social conflict. For the people living in the destination areas, tourism is largely a promoter of their socioeconomic development, cross cultural exposure and interactions and provide them avenue to display their culture and traditions. For the tourist's tourism is a temporary freedom from the structure of everyday life. Tourism can also bring out the quest of human for the new experiences.

Tourism oriented to address the poverty can play a major role in accomplishing the development goals by creating an additional source of income in poverty-stricken areas (WTO, 2005; Scheyvens, 2007). Long and Wall (1996) established that tourism has potential to give necessary stimulus to village economies for their diversification (Schellhorn, 2010). People who get a chance to participate in tourism related business activity and share an tourism related economic benefit are less likely indulging in practices which deteriorate the resources and show their interest in conservation. In favorable conditions, ecotourism can present a viable source of livelihood to the rural community and support their wellbeing besides motivates people to protect forests and wildlife (Stem et al., 2003). As biodiversity and species richness broadly increases with decrease in latitude, the subtropical and tropical countries which constitute mostly developing countries accommodating the highest number of species and encompassing overwhelming biodiversity (Gossling, 1999). However, these countries are also facing persistent problems of excessive population growth, leading to over exploitation of natural resources, expansion of agriculture, deterioration of natural habitat causing loss of biodiversity (Johnson et al., 2017).

In developed countries the demand for ecotourism is very high and ever increasing and protected areas are preferred destinations for ecotourism. Therefore, ecotourism could be utilized as an instrument for relocating financial resources, overcoming the socio-economic disparity and achieving the goal of biodiversity conservation (Gossling, 1999). As per IUCN's WCPA all categories of protected areas with the exception of strict nature reserves permit ecotourism (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011).

CONCEPTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF ECOTOURISM

Alternative tourism incorporates various forms of tourism which are appreciative of natural resources, social and cultural values of community and which approve both hosts and guests to share positive and valuable interaction and mutual experiences (Horiuchi, 2012; Smith et al., 1992). Ecotourism has gained tremendous attention in recent years and has become one of the most popular forms of the alternate travel. Initial publication supported by Conservation International described ecotourism as a form of tourism motivated mainly by the natural history of an area including its native cultures (Stronza, 2001). Ideally ecotourism which is nonconsumptive use of resources of the destination site, appreciate natural and cultural resources of the area, support local conservation efforts by providing attention and revenue, and generated livelihood opportunities to the locals (Powell & Ham, 2008). TIES defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the wellbeing of local people. WTO considers ecotourism as the most important segments of tourism (WTO, 1991).

The concept of ecotourism developed in 1980s and this concept primarily evolved to support the sustainable practices of tourism. During this period the environmental consciousness had gained impetus since its start in 1960s (Lascurain, 1996; Bhattacharya et al., 2003). The birth of ecotourism could be marked with the onset of whale watching which started in the 1960s in response to the depletion of the hump back whale and blue whale. Both the species hump back whale and blue whale were declared protected in 1967 and 1966 respectively (Lascurain, 1996). With the increase in the environmental consciousness, the model of ecodevelopment gained momentum during the period. The eco-development model holistically incorporated ecological, social and cultural goals with development. The concept of ecotourism helped realized the ideas of eco-development into application (Weaver & Lawton, 2007). Ecotourism is a practice which adds value to the nature and dependent on non consumptive use of nature and therefore can help achieve the goal of sustainable tourism development (Rinzin et al., 2007). Ecotourism has multiple definitions. Ecotourism was first defined by CeballosLascurian as "Traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas" (Fennell & Dowling, 2003). All definitions of ecotourism emphasized on some basic common elements as mentioned by (Bhattacharya et al., 2003).

- i. Ecotourism contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources
- ii. Ecotourism contributes to the socio-economic development of local people
- iii. Ecotourism comprises an educative and learning experience
- iv. Tourists and the tourism industry expected to behave responsibly
- v. Ecotourism consists traveling in small groups and serviced by small scale businesses
- vi. Ecotourism discourages and only allows minimum possible use of nonrenewable resources
- vii. Ecotourism emphasizes the participation of the local community in ecotourism businesses and employment opportunities for the locals

Ecotourism's primary benefit is that it maintains ecological balance through nondestructive and non-consumptive utilization of natural resources and also promotes conservation and local development by providing economic benefits to the locals. Ecotourism is better alternative to many sustainable harvesting initiatives and provides consistent return per hectare which is far more competitive with many current land uses (Lascrain, 1996; Wunder, 2000). Additionally ecotourism support protection and management of protected areas by providing necessary finance through tourists' entry fee. Ecotourism can also offer a reason to justify the economics of setting up a protected area. It can create awareness among visitors to support conservation at the ecotourism sites which they visited and also back in their home countries (Wells et al., 1992; Stem et al., 2003). Successful tourism initiatives may attract increasing interests and greater number of tourists to the sites which is contradictory to the concept of ecotourism which depends upon a minimal impact approach. In some cases, tourism can cause serious impacts for instance generation of huge quantity of solid waste, habitat disturbance beyond repairable limits. This can cause serious damage to the natural resources upon which success of ecotourism endeavor depends.

Tourism can also cause damage to the cultural and social fabric of the local communities (Brandon, 1996). Further, Brandon (1996) suggests that the commodification of culture is very serious harmful impact of tourism as it makes people and their cultures marketable commodities. Furthermore, in many cases the revenue generated through ecotourism businesses goes to outsiders who run the businesses and local people hardly get any share of the revenue and in such cases, ecotourism contributes minimum to the local development. Ecotourism constitutes part of a broader strategy which was employed to achieve goal of conservation. Ecotourism was used as an alternative development mechanism in this strategy to achieve conservation. The projects and programmes for conservation and development adapting to this strategy were known as integrated conservation and development projects (Wells et al., 1992). These projects were implemented on the ground that locals would participate in protection of natural resources when they are offered some economic incentives or they would have better economic alternatives over the exploitation of natural resources.

Ecotourism has been recognized as a prospective instrument for sustainable rural development in agenda 21, specially for vulnerable environments, helps in

reducing harmful impacts that conventional tourism produces such as environmental pollution and degradation of biodiversity (Foucat, 2002). Establishment of protected areas has been the trend in the past and still very common around the world for conservation of biodiversity and protection of world's ecosystems for present and future generation (Baral et al., 2008; Vodouhê et al., 2010). Over the years the demand has been increasing to manage protected areas in such a way that they also make some contribution to sustainable development of the areas where they set up and generate economic benefits to the local societies (Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2006). Many studies have suggested that to make protected area strategy effectively operational in protecting biodiversity and bringing sustainable development, protected areas strategy required to be made part of a broader planning and program for sustainable development (Wunder, 2000; Das, 2017; Lele et al., 2010). Therefore in developing countries which are generally rich in biodiversity, this is a big challenge to design conservation strategies which are effective to achieve goals of conservation and development simultaneously (Bookbinder et al., 1998). Ecotourism is one such strategy that has been identified and recommended as best instrument for achieving both biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development. It is considered practically operational mechanism to achieve both economic development and conservation which also brings awareness among visitors and make their attitude positive towards protected areas and conservation programs (Kiper, 2013). Locals can use ecotourism as an alternative livelihood activity to generate economic benefits. This will help them to give up unsustainable resource use which will reduce pressure on natural resources and physical environment (Sabuhoro et al., 2017). Ecotourism has been defined in many and various ways however in most cases experts emphasize some common attributes of ecotourism as low impact on nature, contributing to biodiversity conservation and generating economic benefits to the local communities (Hunt et al., 2014; Das & Chatterjee, 2015).

The definition of ecotourism by TIES (1990) not only emphasizes contribution to conservation but also on generating benefits to the locals as a requirement to categorize a tourism as ecotourism (Adhikari & Fischer, 2011). To encourage communities to participate in conservation and to realize goal of conservation for long term, it is necessary that a reasonable part of revenue generated from ecotourism must go to the local communities living in and around protected areas. This will compensate the cost of protection and conservation worn by these communities directly or indirectly (Wildes, 1998). A major reason of failure of many conservation programmes is that these programmes do not have provisions to facilitate local communities with tangible economic benefits which cause these communities turning against the conservation activities leading to the failure of the programmes (Lele et al., 2010; Shoo & Songorwa, 2013). Destinations receive numerous economic and social benefits due to tourism development (Bien, 2010; Chand et al., 2015). Nevertheless tourism development and expansion of tourism businesses also accompanied by many costs, which have impact on the life of the host communities (Jones, 2010).

The success of any tourism development project relies on the cooperation of the local people (Stone & Nyaupane, 2016). In the absence of the support of the local people the sustainability of the tourism development project is vulnerable. Therefore local residents must be the part of decision making process of any tourism development project to ensure its long term success (Fennell & Dowling, 2003). In any planning process for tourism development must include impact analysis on the local community and community's perception towards tourism development. It is also necessary to acknowledge the community participation is an essential part of sustainable tourism (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). UNWTO organized a meeting in 2005 of representative group of United Nations specialized agencies, governments, industry and leaders from civil society. The meeting held in New York to adopt a declaration concerning MDGs. The experts recognized the increasing importance of tourism for socio-economic development especially in developing countries. The declaration adopted states that tourism could be used as an effective instrument to alleviate poverty, environment protection and generation of employment opportunities for local communities, women and youth. The declaration recognized tourism as the prime and at times the lone source of sustainable socio-economic development (WTO, 2005; Schellhorn, 2010). All most all definitions of ecotourism emphasize on protection and conservation of environment, minimization of impacts on environment and natural resources, and preservation of local culture and socio-economic development of local community (Foucat, 2002). Ecotourism is a segment of nature based tourism or nature tourism. Nature tourism is explained as visit to comparatively undisturbed or pristine natural areas and comprises about 15% of all types of tourism (Gössling, 1999).

ECOTOURISM, SUSTAINABLE RURAL LIVELIHOODS, AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

UNWTO adopted a resolution in 2013, entitled "Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection." The resolution recognizes ecotourism as a key instrument to alleviate poverty, environment protection and achieving sustainable development (UNWTO, 2013; Kala, 2013). This incident made ecotourism to become a widespread tool for resource and biodiversity conservation, supporting the perspective of many that the biodiversity should contribute to the cost of its conservation by producing economic benefits to the locals. To develop ecotourism as an instrument for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood, it is essential that it be developed and managed in a manner whereby all threats to global biodiversity are minimized and options for sustainable livelihoods are created. Many studies suggested that tourism broaden people's attitude towards natural resources and importance of biodiversity conservation. Also minimized people's reliance on natural resources. Many studies acknowledge tourism predominantly small-scale ecotourism with local ownership business ventures as a mechanism to support the livelihoods of the locals residing near protected areas (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011).

Biodiversity conservation was linked with socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation during the fifth IUCN world park congress in 2003 held in Durban, South Africa (IUCN, 2003). The recommendations of the congress consist of drawing strategies to support local communities by creating economic benefits for them and also paying them complete opportunity cost of conservation by setting up protected areas in developing countries, assessment of social impact on the communities due to establishment of protected areas, and popularizing non consumptive use of natural resources as ecotourism (Adams et al., 2004). Numerous studies have found that the inter relationship between livelihoods of the people and biodiversity conservation (Adams et al., 2004; Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000; Upton et al., 2008), ecotourism and promotion of livelihoods (Harrison, 2008; Ashley et al., 2000; Croes & Vanegas 2008; Cattarinich, 2001; Adhikari & Fischer, 2011; Romero Brito et al., 2016) and biodiversity conservation and ecotourism development (Langoya & Long, 1997; Krishnamoorthy, n.d.; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011; Anup & Parajuli, 2014; Puri et al., 2018; Salafsky et al., 2001; Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000; Okazaki, 2008; Victurine, 2000) are vibrant, multifaceted, and locally specific so much so that that there is no single framework applicable to examine the intricate relationships among these global issues. Chambers and Conway's (1991) definition of sustainable livelihood put forward certain criteria to fulfill for categorizing a livelihood to be sustainable. According to them a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, when it maintains or enhances its capabilities and assets, and when it provides sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation, and when it contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term.

The sustainable livelihood approach emphasizes on making livelihood people-centric, receptive, participatory, involved multi sector partnership, involved linkages at a macro micro-level (Krantz, 2001). SL acknowledges the necessity to enhance and diversify skills, capacities and livelihoods of the rural people by learning and implementing various activities including activities which are not farm based (Adams et al., 2004). There exists a complex relationship between biodiversity conservation and tourism. Many a times the relationship between biodiversity conservation and tourism seems to be complementary and, on many occasions, it seems to be competitive. Tourism in protected areas justifies their establishment for biodiversity conservation as tourism generates revenues and livelihood opportunities in the area (Brandon, 1996; Rands et al., 2010; Ross & Wall, 1999; Weaver & Lawton, 2007; Ingram et al., 2014). People are provided with alternative livelihood opportunities due to ecotourism development in the area which help them to abstain from older livelihood options that are based on consumptive and exploitive use of natural resources such as agriculture, forestry and mining (Victurine, 2000).

Tourism development brings both direct and indirect incentives to the people. Direct incentives include employment to the locals, market for local goods and indirect incentives include development of local infrastructure, sanitation and health facilities in the area, awareness and education etc. These incentives to the

locals bring positive change in their attitude towards natural resources and biodiversity conservation and they become aware and sensitive to the conservation of biodiversity (Stem et al., 2003; Puntischer et al., 2017; Ross & Wall, 1999; Rinzin et al., 2007). Tourism development may also have some adverse effects on biodiversity. Unrestrained and mismanaged tourism can be detrimental to the natural resources causing irreversible harm to the biodiversity (Coria & Calfucura, 2012). Tourism more often occurs in ecologically vulnerable areas and unrestrained tourism in these areas may impact wildlife, vegetation and ecology of the area (Hunt et al., 2014; Adams & Hutton, 2007).

A framework developed by Budowski (1976) described the relationship between biodiversity conservation and development. This framework suggests three types of relationship as, symbiosis, coexistence and conflict between biodiversity conservation and development. Another study by Cater (1995) suggested four types of relationship between biodiversity conservation and development. The four types of relationship result in four situations, as win-win, win-lose, lose-win, and lose-lose. A conceptual framework to describe the relationship between biodiversity conservation and development was proposed by Salafsky and Wollenberg (2000). This framework presents three scenarios, namely direct linkage, indirect linkage and no linkage scenario. In these three frameworks mentioned above, the scenarios which were presented as symbiosis, win-win, and direct linkage scenario may represent best relationship between biodiversity conservation and development. Because this scenario emphasizes on establishing interrelationship between biodiversity conservation and socioeconomic development of local communities by integrating livelihood activities of the people with existence of biodiversity.

The no linkage scenario on the other hand based on traditional approach to conservation which considers people responsible for biodiversity loss and degradation and emphasizes on exclusion of people from biodiversity rich areas. The indirect linkage scenario based on the assumption that if people are provided with alternate livelihood activities or economic incentives they will stop livelihood activities which are based on exploitation of natural resources and biodiversity (Lele et al., 2010). Following this approach, local people who were residing inside the protected area were provided with restricted access to use the natural resources and were allowed to carry out certain activities in the buffer zones (Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000). This made people to continue livelihood activities which are based on consumptive use of natural resources and made them dependent on external economic support, which is not sustainable in long term and there are always chances people falling back to their previous livelihood activities in the absence of external support. Therefore, direct linkage scenario presents ideal relationship between conservation and development. Ecotourism activities are recommended mechanism to establish direct linkage between conservation and development. Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) described following linkages between biodiversity conservation and ecotourism development.

Empowerment through education, training and participation: locals get empowered as they have access to information, conservation education programs,

forests and traditional use rights, and influence in planning and decision-making process. Skill development and capacity building: people get chances to involved in skill development training, participate in economic activities which provide income to the people, sometimes they get chances to avail small loans to start economic activities. Economic benefits: tourism provides employment opportunities to the people, they also have local market for farm produce and nonfarm produce, they also get opportunities to start tourism-based microenterprises, and tourism development also brings collective economic benefits in the area.

Biodiversity conservation and environment protection: people participate in biodiversity conservation program, protection of forests in the buffer zone area, they also participate in awareness program related to biodiversity conservation and environment protection. People get sensitized about resource conservation which leads to reduce pressure on forest and natural resources. Infrastructure development: tourism development also brings creation of local infrastructure in the area, conservation infrastructure like trails, forest roads, fences, etc., tourism superstructure creation, and development of specific tourism products.

Ecotourism has been identified as an ideal strategy to attain both the goals of biodiversity conservation and economic development. In other words, ecotourism is now taken as a mechanism which helps attain both development and conservation and bringing awareness among people toward conservation (Hearne & Santos, 2005). Ecotourism offers a means by which people can receive economic support and this helps reducing pressure on the physical environments as people abandon unsustainable resource consumption practices (Shoo & Songorwa, 2013).

ECOTOURISM AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

People from the community participate in tourism in many ways. Some members of the community may take part directly in ecotourism activities as becoming tourist's guide, performers etc., other people may take indirect roles in tourism and may become supporting staffs, food suppliers ect. (Stronza, 2001). Lately local communities are gaining interest in participating in tourism activities and partnering with government agencies, NGOs, and private tourism businesses to plan and operate tourism businesses in their area. This is empowering the local communities and the community operated tourism activities are getting more importance and being liked by the visitors. Community based ecotourism (CBE) management may be understood as a ecotourism activity which is facilitated under the community control and active participation of the community members who have the ownership or management control of the natural attraction (Okazaki, 2008). UNWTO prescribed some planning principles for ecotourism are as follows:

A. Draw strict conservation measures to the natural areas to conserve the flora, fauna and ecosystems and preserve existing archaeological of historic sites in the area.

B. Set up firm carrying capacity standards so that there is not over creation of tourism infrastructure and over use or exploitation of the natural resources by the visitors or overcrowding of the area.

C. Create small scale tourism infrastructure at locations suitable environmentally, use designs which are based locally, use local building material, use devices which are based on energy saving principles, and set up proper mechanism for proper disposal of waste material.

D. A visitor center may be created which displays about the site and local conservation techniques should be evolved and promoted.

E. Codes of conduct for ecotourism management should be prepared and disseminated among tourists and tour operators and strict adherence to these should be monitored and enforced.

F. Well trained tour guides should be availed to the tourists who provide correct and accurate information about the site to the tourists, inform and educate tourists about the biological diversity of the area, local and specific conservation techniques and strictly follow themselves and make visitors follow prescribed conservation measures during the tours.

G. Engage local community in tourism development, provide them employment in tourism activities and businesses, support income generating activities for them, arrange local visits as village tours if appropriate and inform the visitors about local culture, economic activities of the locals and how to be respectful to the local culture and traditions.

Ecotourism is considered as having a very important role in protection of natural resources and providing sustainable livelihood to the locals particularly in biodiversity rich areas located largely in developing countries. When rural people who are living adjoining to the conservation areas get economically benefitted, offer support to the conservation programs to the maximum (Shoo & Songorwa, 2013). Tourism destinations get many social and economic benefits from tourism development. Local community may also get affected in many ways from tourism industry, as the growth of tourism also accompanied by many costs to the host community and their life get affected due to tourism development (Sabuhoro et al., 2017). Success of the tourism development can not be ensured unless there is cooperation of the local population (McShane et al., 2011). Tourism decision making process should focus on local resident and residents should be given important role in tourism planning process and impacts of the tourism on community should be considered from community's perspective in planning process (Chand et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

The framework largely used by researchers making effort to study community attitude towards ecotourism development is based on social exchange theory (SET). SET is in general a sociological theory, concerns with explaining the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interacting scenario. In tourism scenario, SET indicates that local inhabitants' cooperation is depended on

their assessment of the benefits and costs from the development of the tourism industry (Andereck et al., 2005). The local residents are interested to participate in an exchange with the industry if they assess that the benefits are greater than the costs. Similarly, a local community is expected to cooperate with ecotourism development if they perceive economic benefits are greater than the cost involved to them (Croes & Vanegas, 2008; Smith et al., 1992; Ingram et al., 2014). The research on community's attitude towards development gaining popularity over the years, some researchers also carry out many studies based on understanding the determinants of community support and developed theoretical models based on SET. They developed a framework which proposed that community connection, economic gain, use of tourism resource base and environmental attitudes are some of the determinants of the people's perceived social, economic and environmental impacts (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Jurowski et al. (2002) criticized the model and suggested that aggregating the impacts into three categories is too simplistic. They proposed another model which classified the impacts into cost and benefits and assessed their effects on people's attitude. The model also included two more determinants of attitude, the state of economy locally and concerns of community. Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) further added to the above models and delimited the impacts into five categories as economic benefits, social benefits, cultural benefits, social costs, and cultural costs. Gursoy, Chi and Dyer (2009) further expanded the model developed by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) and suggested that the perceived economic, social, and cultural benefits, the perceived social and cultural costs and state of the local economy are determinants of people's support for tourism development. Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) proposed an assessment of community satisfaction for evaluation of people's perceptions of tourism impacts and attitudes toward tourism development as an applicable concept.

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