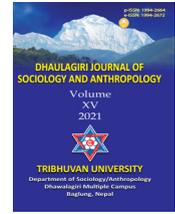


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# Interface between Education and Tourism around Panchmul Area of Aandhikhola Rural Municipality of Syangja District

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v15i01.41930>**Abstract**

This study explores the interface between education and tourism constructs through a qualitative approach and multiple case study research methods. The key objectives of the research were to look at the interface between informal education and tourism, to appraise the interface between non-formal education and tourism as well as to explore the interface between formal education and tourism development activities in the study area. In-depth interviews of 6 males and 3 females from the education program and another 6 males and 3 females from the tourism development program were undertaken by applying the purposive sampling principle. Likewise, 3 FGDs and participant observation techniques were also applied for developing multiple forms of genres, which were generated through re/productive socio-cultural and economic structures of Panchmul. The findings reveal that education plays a functional transformative role in tourism development that is supported by the theory of practice, capability approach, and sustainability approach. Based on the findings, this study has also developed a strategic interface model and strategic framework for tourism development that can be applied in the Panchmul area and other similar places. Hence, knowledge generated from this study is equally fruitful to readers, local development stakeholders, and policymakers and planners in central, provincial, and local levels of governments in Nepal.

*Keywords:* tourism, education, homestay, hospitality, interface, Panchmul, tourism and rural development

**Introduction**

Tourism represents a journey of tourists for making entertainment through various tourism activities within a short period. Over the past decades, tourism has been becoming the largest and fastest-growing economic sector in the world. The 2019 annual research of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), which covers 185 countries and economies, and 25 regions of the world, reveals that the sector accounted for 10.3 percent of global GDP (8.9 trillion US\$) and 330 million jobs, or 10.4 percent of total employment in 2019 (WTO, 2020). Even in Nepal tourism generated 6.7 percent of the total economy (NRs 231.0 BN or US\$ 2,051.4 MN) and visitors spending is NRs 93.9 billion (US\$ 833.8 MN) that is 30.8 percent of

total exports and created 1,034,000 employments which is 6.9 percent of total employment (MoF, 2020). The figure indicates that tourism revitalizes the national economy that offers opportunities for economic growth, social and cultural development, and enhances community cohesion (Dashper, 2014). However, planning and implementing successful tourism does not require large capital investment but required the local sensitized effort to organize, control, and minimize the negative socio-cultural impacts (Kunwar, 2006). Owing to that, for over the last 25 years, the world has seen massive growth in rural tourism to experience natural rural life and livelihood, peaceful environment which relieves from the stress and constraints of urban life (Costa & Chalip, 2005). Following this, a pro-poor tourism strategy is being implemented for sharing the



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tourism benefits to the marginalized people (Hall, 2007) at the community level, which also aligns with rural tourism development-related issues. In rural tourism visitors' experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling, and sightseeing (UNWTO, 2021).

Nepal can be a popular rural tourism destination in the world because of its natural beauty such as gorgeous mountains, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, green forests, caves, natural sceneries, panoramic landscapes, and rare flora and fauna (Kunwar, 2006). A splendid array of mystique natural as well as cultural heritage is the major product of Nepali tourism attractions (Joshi, 2008). The traditional Hindu-Buddhist philosophy on tourism proves that hospitality is our culture. In fact, hospitality and tourism is a collective industry consisting of tourism and other hospitality-related businesses. The direct and indirect tourism beneficiaries are technically considered hospitality businesses because they rely on strong customer service to generate revenue. They must provide a welcoming, enjoyable experience to their guests by emphasizing the importance of strong, positive customer service. Witchayakawin et al., (2020) also identified the seven most important factors: ownership, outside support and supportive policy, marketing, value creation, and supply chain, empowerment and people potential, leadership, and partnership for managing hospitalities in community-based tourism. The above-mentioned information makes clear that contributions of education are vital in tourism development activities including hospitality management.

Education is a means for purifying intellectuality, maintaining high personal aspirations, and determining the position of self-actualization. From the development viewpoint, education is one of the most important tools for reducing poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights, and conserving the environment (Hall & Midgley, 2004). Education is considered as one of the three dimensions of human development along with life expectancy and a decent standard of living. Further, education is a way of learning in informal, non-formal, and formal settings that is deliberate, intentional, purposeful, and organized (UNESCO, 2015). Informal education incorporates educational entitlement achieved from less (or non) organized institutions. Informal education may include learning activities that occur in real workplaces, communities, and daily life activities; either on a self-directed, family-directed, or socially-directed basis. Non-formal and formal education is supposed to attain a certain degree of certifications from any organized institution.

However, the education that we have been receiving has been reproducing inequalities and social relations of production. Present-day education is supposed to legitimate these social inequalities through meritocracy (Kellner, 2006). In the understanding of Marx, the transformed educated persons will be associated with bonds and tribes, and they will work in the morning, go

fishing in the afternoon, and read Plato at night (Marx, 1847, 1999). Transformative education can foster rural development activities based on four bases of sustainable development: equitable prosperity and opportunity; healthy and productive natural systems; democratic governance; and economic progress (UN, 2015). The transformative value of education supports fostering economic growth and appropriate value for society and maintains a general level of culture and civility in the polity.

In Nepal, after practicing a modern education system designed by capitalists in the 1950s, people started using education as a means for achieving social status, employability, and overall development (Parajuli, 2007). For young people and their parents, school education has been offering a possible escape from the rural areas with farm activities as agricultural activities have been regarded by many as the occupation of last resort (Tadele & Gelle, 2012 as cited in Pant, 2016). Class disparity in education has become so much greater and more wicked than before that there is little hope for the poor to close these gaps and catch up with the rich (Shrestha, 2009). Educational policies are failed to produce creative and competent human power having a strong feeling of nation-state who can equally benefit the self, society, and nation. Despite that, most of the educated individuals are migrating from the rural areas into the urban areas (including markets and administrative headquarters) for looking employment opportunities and enroll their children in private schools. A general experience shows that educated persons are not involved in farming and entrepreneurship, but they are getting tired of struggles to join government jobs. It is probably because capitalist elites often design modern education systems for educational hegemony and manipulate the behavior of individuals (Bruke, 1992).

This might be the reason, Community Learning Centers, as the local educational institutions outside the formal structure then started various learning options and opportunities, responding to the diverse needs of the rural communities living in a complex situation (Sharma, 2014). The learning center follows the normative principle of education as a common good, which has to be understood in the changing context of society, state, and market (UNESCO, 2015, p. 72). The normative principle is constituted by goods that humans share intrinsically in common and that they communicate to each other, such as values, civic virtues, and a sense of justice in tourism destinations. Even from functionalists' point of view, informal, non-formal, and formal processes of education and learning facilitate minimizing the socio-economic gap between rich and poor and foster social inclusion. Nonetheless, most of the educated persons are not directly involved in tourism. Thereby, due to the lack of an adequately skilled local tourism workforce, the tourism business seems inadequately developed in many developing countries (Kaplan, 2004). In the mid-1990s, the Ehrlich primary school efforts program was implemented

in Tiberias which is also one of the poorest cities in Israel. The program was designed to cultivate desires among students to do better for their community and education through teaching elementary skills in community tourism. This six-year field-based program transformed students into community activists who even analyzed the socio-economic impact of tourism on their communities. This program was also implemented in Jerusalem and another district where tourism was a part of the local fabric (Gartner, 2002).

In Nepal, monetized and income-based rural tourism was lately introduced; although, saints, intellectuals, and interested travelers would travel for learning and entertainment. Sirubari village of Syangja was the first rural tourism destination in Nepal (Upadhyay, 2008). But nowadays, rural tourism has been initiated in many potential rural areas of the country. The educational status of the local stakeholders thus can play a transformative role in rural tourism development. But the current educated individuals have no curiosity to link their knowledge with real practices in the society (Koirala, 2015, pp. 41-43). Rather, around 36,19,41 educated Nepali youths (33,91,38 male and 22,803 female) were involved in foreign employment in the fiscal year 2018/19 in which 1.5 percent were skilled, 23 percent semi-skilled and 75.5 percent unskilled (MoF, 2019). This might be the reason that some of the critical thinkers argue that the educational system is the design of the dominant capitalist only for the reproduction of their ideology and culture (Kellner, 2006). Thereby, under the federal structure, the Constitution of Nepal (2015) has institutionalized the new course in rural development. It has provisioned a three-tiered government system; federation, provinces, and local levels (CAS, 2015). There is a provision to use fiscal powers and distributions of sources of revenue among the devolved governments through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration to achieve a common national goal. According to this goal, the federation, provinces, and local levels shall protect Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, autonomy, national interest, overall development, multi-party competitive democratic republic, and federal governance system, human right/fundamental rights, rule of law, separation of power and check and balance, and equitable society based on plurality and equality, and inclusive representation and identity. Even with the changing organizational structure, the government is planning to reform the institutional capacity of local governments. For that instance, High-level Administration Reform and Monitoring Report, 2016 recommended the government to mobilize at least 60/70/115/140/160/190/350 (excluding town polices, teachers, drivers, and sanitation workers) human resources at levels for effective implementation of 22 devolved powers (MoFAGA, 2017) which are directly and indirectly related with tourism development activities.

Owing to tourism development in Nepal, 11,72073 international tourists visited in 2018 contributed 7.5

percent to the Gross Domestic Product (NRs 2.876 billion) and also created employment for the 427,000 people (NTB, 2019). The contribution of the tourism sector to Gross Domestic Product is targeted to contribute by 9.29 percent by 2025 in Nepal (MoCTCA, 2017). However, it is difficult to achieve proposed goals and targets with the current level of investment and infrastructure in the rural tourism sector. Even due to the global Coronavirus pandemic and ongoing restrictions to international mobility, an international tourist arrival has declined by 74 percent in 2020 compared to 2019 (UNWTO, 2021b). Asia and the Pacific region also have experienced a 35 percent decrease in tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2020. This might be the reason WB has projected the Nepali economy will grow by only 0.6 percent in 2021, inching up from an estimated 0.2 percent in 2020 (WB, 2020). In Nepal, there are about 200,000 people who are directly employed in hotels, restaurants, trekking, mountaineering, airlines, and other tourism subsectors in Nepal (ADB, 2019) are significantly affected by the pandemic. Pandemic resulted in 332 million US\$ loss in the hospitality sector until July 21, 2020 (Xinhua, 2020) and resulted in 14.37 percent loss to the Nepali economy (Shrestha, 2020).

On this background, on one hand, it is factual that the devolved powers to the local government are directly or indirectly related to education and tourism development, which are eventually the foundation for rural development. It is because rural development itself is a process of conserving and mobilizing natural resources, maintaining rural infrastructure, fostering commercial agriculture, ensuring food security, and transforming rural life and livelihoods (Chaudhary & Pasa, 2015). Even education and tourism recognize similar intervention principles, such as focusing on poverty reduction, emphasizing community involvement, and gender issues (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization and food and Agriculture Organization, 2003). Hence, tourism for rural development strategy can be fruitful in a socio-culturally diverse country such as Nepal, which belongs to 125 caste/ethnic and 129 lingual groups (Gorkhapatra Daily, 2019). Even, there are more than 36,000 highly potential villages for offering rural tourism services (Pradhanang, 2007). This might be the reason; the federal government has also realized tourism as the lead sector of the economy and identified 100 new tourism destinations in the country (MoCTCA, 2018). However, in practice, rural tourism activities are highly concentrated in Langtang, Khumbu, and Annapurna regions and are being operated by migrant entrepreneurs or outsiders (P. Sharma, personal communication, October 4, 2016). Prof. P. Sharma is a Key advisor at the Village Tourism Promotion Forum and an Emeritus Professor at Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University. Moreover, most of the tourism entrepreneurs in Sauraha, Nagarkot, and Bhaktapur are not locals or native people (Banskota, 2012). Literature has also indicated that in extreme cases,

up to 80 percent of tourism-related businesses in small towns and villages are owned, managed, or controlled by incoming or non-local entrepreneurs (OECD, 1994).

On the other hand, Inchon Declaration has also suggested teachers/educators conduct transformative research agendas for transforming the daily life activities of the rural people (UNESCO, 2016). However, the interface between education, tourism, and rural development has not yet been appraised in Nepali academia that could develop a strategic interface model and strategic framework for tourism and rural development. I realized that there are vertical, horizontal, and circular educational processes for development. The vertical process gives more focus on formal education, horizontal process mentions the equal role of education. And the circular process means learning/performing as a continuous process that occurs simultaneously in any environment. Hence, the idea is how one construct contributes to others in the circular process of education (an academic position that transformed me from a Waiter to a Lecturer by working in the tourism sector for twelve years in India) (Pasa, 2018). Hence, my professional background, personal interest, and theoretical knowledge on research constructs (knowledge gaps) motivated me to explore the interface between education and rural tourism development in Panchmul (Annapurna region) Nepal. This study aimed to appraise perceptions/experiences of the participants who are applying rural tourism as one of the strategies for rural development, as the interface is regarded as interlocking relationships and multiple discourses for the knowledge generation process (Long, 1989). In doing so the objectives of the study were to look at the interface between informal education and tourism, to appraise the interface between non-formal education and tourism as well as to explore the interface between formal education and tourism development activities performed in the Panchmul area of Aandhikhola rural municipality of Syangja District.

### **Methods**

This study applied multiple case study method (comprehensive researcher strategy) that has helped to understand the contextual historical and cultural settings of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). That is inevitable for understanding multiple cases through causes and outcomes of the studied constructs, education, and tourism development (Yazan, 2015). Therefore, I purposively selected 18 articulating case groups/participants (i.e. 12 males and 6 females who were the representatives of community people of Panchmul) for gathering narrative information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In doing so, the maximal purposive sampling method was applied to establish diverse variation so that findings can increase the likelihood (Creswell, 2014). Diverse variations were established by following four aspects of sampling; event (Panchmul areas), setting (different socio-cultural contexts), artifacts (manmade objects), and actors (local development stakeholders) (Creswell, 2009).

According to the 2015 Constitution of Nepal, legislative, executive, judiciary, political parties, social organizations, media, private sectors, and civil society are regarded as local development stakeholders in federal Nepal. Hence, this study generated primary information from elected representatives, politicians, administrative staff, teachers, social workers, members of homestay management and development committee, local youths, parents, and students through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and observation techniques. More specifically, 18 participants (i.e. 6 males and 3 females from the education program & another 6 males and 3 females from the tourism program) were selected for conducting in-depth interviews. The interview guideline was prepared based on nine themes: knowledge on education and learning process; perceptions on indigenous knowledge; outcomes of homestay tourism; challenges of tourism development; practices of students learning and performing; tourism-related activities in school; challenges of youth drain and mitigation measures; use of vocational training in homestay tourism; the advisory role of educated individuals in tourism development. Likewise, 3 FGDs were conducted with community people and tourism entrepreneurs; local intellectuals, youths entrepreneurs, and parents as well as students studying in school level education in the community school of Panchmul hinterland. The FGD guideline was developed based on nine themes: educational investment; out-migration of educated youths; family migration from the village; involvement of educated youths in tourism; involvement of educated youths in rural development; challenges of tourism; challenges of rural development; potentiality of tourism development and prospects of rural development. More so, for observation research issues, an observation checklist was developed for understanding youth involvement in socio-cultural and economic sectors; learning life skills to the children from cultural structures; awareness-raising and skill development training programs conducted by government and non-government mechanisms; involvement of trained individuals in tourism, agriculture, and non-agriculture activities and local leadership and tourism development components. Finally, the interview and groups discussions were transcribed and analyzed by applying thematizing, description, and holistic analysis (Yazan, 2015). For that purpose, the construct education is thematized into informal, non-formal, and formal education whereas the construct tourism development is thematized into Varna or caste system as cultural/social capital, tourism infrastructures, family self-sufficiency, use of forest resources, and tourism entrepreneurship.

### **Findings**

#### **Panchmulat a Glance**

The name Panchmul was borrowed from Panchmul, which means five stone tapes giving natural drinking

water. According to hearsay, the taps stand as the symbol of five Pandava brothers who themselves extracted drinking water during their exile around Panchmul. In recent years, a drinking water project has replaced these taps with cemented ones, which are located in the venue of Shree Trisahid Secondary School. Panchmul is presently situated in Aandhikhola and Arjun Chaupari Rural Municipalities in Syangja District of Gandaki Province. Ward numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are located in Aandhikhola whereas 3 and 7 are situated in ArjunChaupari. The Aandhikhola is formed by merging Aandhikhola, Phaparhum, Setidhoban, Banging Deurali, Bihari Chaitra, Chilaunebas, and Panchmul (except 3 and 7 Wards) VDCs. The total population of Aandhikhola rural municipality is 25,554 (12,319 female and 13,235 male) with 4,070 households (Municipal Profile, 2017).

There are three reasons behind selecting this field; i) for education, the literacy rate of Panchmul is 100 percent, which is the highest in the district. Even literacy rate of Dalits and Janjati groups are higher than the other Dalits and Janjati groups living in other parts of the country (Village Profile, 2016), ii) for tourism, Sirubari community homestay, which was started in April 1997, is the first village tourism destination in the country, and is located in Panchmul. It has won the National Youth award in 1993, the Pata-gold award in 2000, and International Mountain Development award in 2004 (Upadhyay, 2008) and the Best homestay award 2018, iii) for rural development, Panchmul is rich in cultural and natural diversities. Brahmin, Gurung, Dalits, and Muslim people are living in mutual harmony and with strong social connectivity. Besides, it has >2222 hectares of forest land, >1600 hectares of agriculture land, >500 hectares of pasture land. The local people perform farming activities in 878.88 hectares of agricultural land and also have conserved forest land that benefits the 1073 households. Majorities of the households (88.52 percent) are still using firewood for household uses. However, the trend of using electricity, biogas, liquefied petroleum gas, and kerosene is increasing annually by 7.31 percent, 2.76 percent, 1.34 percent, and 0.53 percent respectively (Village Profile, 2016). In this regard, my participants have reflected that the increased consumption of the liquefied petroleum gas has further increased dependency on India and the forest growth has got a positive correlation but growth of community forestry is maintaining ecological balance, adding natural beauties and also helping to reduce women drudgery in Nepal (S. Pandey, personal communication, November 6, 2017). In my observation, conservations of jungle resources are not enough. There is a need to establish agro-based enterprises, handicrafts making and herbal plant processing centers, and diversified tourism activities in more potential areas of Panchmul (see in Table 1).

Table 1. Components of Tourism in Panchmul

Components	Categories
Accessibilities	-Four hours trek from Arjun Chaupari- Arghaudi- Sirubari -5 hours trek from Putlai Bazaar-Daraun-Majhkateri-Sirubari -4 hours trek from Naudanda-Seti Dovan-Hile Danda-Sirubari
Accommodations	-Sirubari community homestay run by Gurungs/Dalits -Paying guests in Rajswora run by Brahmin -Hotel and guest house in Panchmul run by Gurung and Brahmin
Attractions	-Thumro Juro, the highest peak of Panchmul hilly range (2300 meters)  -Maidan Kharka (Natural playground) on the way to Thumro Juro -Sirubari Community forestry (500 hectares) -Gumba, Buddha Park, Shiva, and Panchakanyatemple, Dahare Deurali
Amenities	-Traditional musical instruments Panche Baja -Cultural program (Rodi, Jhyaure) -Religious and cultural feasts and festivals
Activities	-Homestay, organic local food, sight-seeing, trekking, hiking, paragliding, jungle walk, film shooting, and documentary
Advertisements	-Descriptive information (maps, magazines, guidebooks, videos). -Hosts request guests to visit again in the villages -Networking with tour and travel agents (info@glorioso-himalaya.com) -Babirsingh Gurung, cell number: 9806589871, 9816122449

Source: Observation, October 18 to 27, 2018

### The interface between Informal Education and Tourism Development

Informal education includes learning activities that occur in the workplace, community, and in daily life, on self-directed, family-directed, or socially-directed bases (Pasa & Kharel, 2020, p. 150). Tourism is not a new phenomenon to the people living in rural areas having informal knowledge. However, they are developing their cosmos on tourism directly from Hindu philosophy. In the ancient period, there were traditional and informal types of the education system (Luitel, 2012). Religious institutions

had taught Vedic knowledge (see in Table 2) and the Varna or caste system to the students.

Table 2. Summary of Hindu Philosophy

Themes	Vedic Knowledge
Creator	Lord Krishna(conscience) himself is the creator in the form of Brahma
Value system	Krishna is considered to be the supreme god and the source of all
Cosmos	The whole cosmos is started and end in the lord Krishna himself
Believe system	Governed by spiritual (Para) and physical (Apart)
I	Not a physical body, but the soul, lord Krishna reside in the body
Life	Without self, there is no life
Death	Inevitable phenomena for rebirth

Source: Swami, 2016

The Varna had been categorized under four groups; Brahmans (priests), Chhetri (rulers), Vaishyas (traders), and Sudras (servants). According to Table 2, Verna is a system based on the aptitude of a person. Allegorically it is mentioned in 10-2-90 of Rig-Veda that the Brahmans symbolize the mouth of Brahma as its duty is studying and teaching the Veda. The Chhetri equates to the arm of Brahma and has the duty of protecting all creatures and offers the oblation at the sacrifice. The Vaishyas Varna signifies the thighs of Brahma that has the duty of herding cattle and tilling the soil. The Sudra Varnasymbolizes the feet of Brahma and the duty of serving the Brahman, Ksatriya, and Vaishyas at the sacrifice (Subedi, 2009). But the people of my study location have been equating the Varna as caste and thereby using these caste groups of people in the stipulated works.

This makes it clearer that the Hindu philosophy and the Varna system are major affecting factors for tourism development in Nepal. Even in this study, such factors are directly or indirectly affecting the perceptions of duty bearers and beneficiaries on tourism. Hence, in this section, I have reported how community people apply their informal knowledge acquired in cultural contexts and workplaces for supporting tourism development assets (see Table 3).

Table 3. Informal Education and Tourism Development

Thematising Assets	Functions for Tourism Development	Verna's Choice as Tourists
Cultural/Social capital	Social cohesion with religious feelings	Brahman, Gurung and Dalits
Tourism infrastructure	Mobilizing basket funds for such projects	Gurung, Brahmin, and Dalits

Family self-sufficiency	Learning and earning from tourism	Gurung, Brahmin, and Dalits
Forest resource	Environment-friendly tourism activities	Brahman, Gurung and Dalits
Tourism entrepreneurship	Planning-developing-promoting rural tourism	Gurung, Dalits, and Brahmin

Source: Field Study, 2018

The thematic information highlighted in Table 3 indicates that Dalits are playing Panche Baja (five types of traditional musical instruments) for the guests and get benefitted from the homestay. Informal education particularly acquired from Gurung cultural practices found supportive to perform homestay tourism in Sirubari village. From the same village, Dalit community members also apply their traditional knowledge and skills for tourism development. Accordingly, in the peripheral village of Sirubari, Dalit and Gurung community members found positive with homestay tourism activities around Panchmul Village. They are indirectly benefitted from tourism and planning by offering homestay services so far. But in peripheral villages of Sirubari, the informal learning acquired from a Brahmin culture has been found not aligning with the homestay tourism development. This is because their culture does not prohibit them to serve hard drinks and non-vegetable dishes in general and even women are not supposed to offer homestay activities openly.

However, in hinterland areas, some Brahmin people are offering hotels and restaurants and providing guest services to the guests and visitors. Informal education has been contributing to preserving traditional knowledge and skills and supporting cultural tourism. In short, empowerment of Gurung and Dalit women, improving the socio-economic status of Gurung and Dalits, establishing mutual relationships between them, earning through cultural heritages and forest resources are major outcomes of the interface between education and tourism development. The study was done by Pasa and Adhikari (2019) also reveal an insignificant relationship between the educational status of the respondents and promoting the local products for ecotourism development in Sundarijal and Mulkhark settlements located in ShivapuriNagarjun National Park. The respondents having informal education are more conscious of this matter. They wish to please the tourists by offering locally grown agriculture, dairy products, and ethnic food, costumes, and dresses.

### The interface between Non-formal Education and Tourism Development

The role of non-formal education is vital in supporting tourism development assets. Tourism is a kind of business

that needs various communicative and occupational skills. Local people from Panchmul Village are also acquiring various non-formal knowledge and skills, and applying them for tourism development. In this section, I have presented how such skills are applied for supporting tourism development assets by the community people (see in Table 4).

Table 4. Non-formal Education and Tourism Development

Thematising Assets	Functions for Tourism Development
Cultural/Social capital	Working for social cohesion with religious feelings
Tourism infrastructure	Mobilizing basket fund for physical infrastructures
Family self-sufficiency	Learning and earning from tourism activities
Forest resource	Environment-friendly tourism activities
Tourism entrepreneurship	Planning, developing, and promoting tourism activities

Source: Field Study, 2018

The thematic information presented in Table 4 also indicates that non-formal education has been contributing to generating tourism development assets. Further, after participating in capacity/skill development training, hospitality management, and culinary art training Gurung women of Siru bari are gaining empowerment, becoming interactive, and working as a change agent in the community and society. The mother group and Tourism Development and Management Committee have provision to collect 5 percent basket fund from tourism earning (NRs. 51, 00,000 annually) that has been implementing tourism infrastructure and forest resource management related projects. Pasa (2020) also argued that the capacity/skill development training program implemented in Amaltari village has played a significant role in transforming rural livelihood. The awareness level of local people who participated in such training is offering homestay tourism service facilities more effectively and efficiently.

### The interface between Formal Education and Tourism Development

Formal education (cf. schooling) uplifts the socio-economic condition of the individuals, establishes a good social relationship, develops economic efficiency, and enhances civic responsibility (Dhakal, 2003). Thereby in this section, I am trying to appraise how highly educated community people are working for supporting tourism development assets in Panchmul (see in Table 5).

Table 5. Formal Education and Tourism Development

Thematising Assets	Major Functions	Role of Formal Education
Cultural and social capital	Social and cultural	Leadership and networking role
Tourism infrastructure	Physical	Design/implementation of projects
Family self-sufficiency	Economic and cultural	Involving in tourism-based earning
Use of forest resource	Environmental	Mobilization of forest resources
Tourism entrepreneurship	Social and economic	Planning for tourism development

Source: Field Study, 2018

The thematic information reported in Table 5 shows that formal education has been contributing to playing leadership, advisory, and networking roles for the development of tourism infrastructures and local entrepreneurship. Educated Brahmin youths have also started to engage in tourism entrepreneurship and by offering Homestay in Bhakimle and are planning to start in Rajswora and Majhkateri areas around Sirubari. They are challenging the caste-based occupation (culturally prescribed) due to their Varna attitude (attitudinally ascribed occupation) which motivated them to involve in the tourism business. Accordingly, Dalit youths are also joining Army, Police, teaching, bureaucracy, and involved in foreign employment like Gurung and Brahmin youths. Koirala (1996) also claimed that Dalits with schooling were ensured social mobility, identified avenues to economic betterment, developed socio-political awareness, encouraged their children to attend school, and began to question untouchability in a study at Bungkot village of Gorkha District. Pasa and Bishwokarma (2020) also argued that Dalits are still far behind to cooperate with so-called non-Dalit into the frame of caste-based social structure. Thus suggested to implement 5Es approach (envisioning-educating-empowering-ensuring-encouraging) for promoting Dalit in national mainstreaming. School education is not yet linked with tourism and agriculture. At this point, I have understood that there is a "weak connection situation" between formal education and tourism development. Although the four years' computer engineering program is important, these seem out-of-context, and in our case, the tourism promotion needs programs of hotel management and agriculture-related graduations. All in all, my findings show that education is playing a functional transformative role on tourism development assets in Panchmul. However, my participant Ms. U. Gurung (Secretary of Sirubari youth club and member in Homestay Association of Nepal and Mr. C. M Poudel (Advisor of Deurali Community Homestay<sup>1</sup> Bhakimle and a member of the Homestay Association

<sup>1</sup> The name is borrowed from Dahare Deurali Temple situated on the top of a single rock is the highest peak of Syangja District (3100 meters).

of Nepal) have shown transformational leadership for promoting homestay tourism. Ms. Gurunhas been managing homestay services for a couple of years but can own the best homestay award 2018.

Mr. Poudel is an exemplar who is involved in journalism, cooperative work, and also operating Syangja Pokhara hotel and restaurant nearby Siddha Pokhari, Bhaktapur. But he is thinking that he still needs to extend his cooperative natural health<sup>2</sup> with Vedic and Spiritual/health tourism around Panchmul. In this line, Pasa (2020) also argued that due to the involvement of educated local youths in Amaltari Buffer zone Community Homestay Tourism Development, this homestay has performed more effectively and efficiently than other homestays operating throughout the country. The educated youths are becoming accessible and accountable and also playing a quality leadership role for tourism development and management.

**Theoretical Reflections and Strategic Interface Model**

**Theoretical Reflections**

I assume that without a scholastic and theoretical understanding of how any society works, it might be futile, debunking, and superficial to make a critical reflection on any culture (Turner, 2005, p. 4). Hence, this study has interpreted the research issues from Bourdieu’s theory of practice, Amartya Sen’s theory of human capability, and the United Nations’ sustainability approach to development. The findings of the study based on my reflections show that informal, non-formal, and formal education are equally interfacing with tourism development assets. I have understood that the role of duty bearers and homestay service providers from Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts; habitus, social field, and capitals that provided grounds for their productive and reproductive practices (Maton, 2008).

Because of productive habitus; perceptions, believes and feelings of the host community members, they are applying homestay tourism as an alternative source of livelihood strategies in the social field (Thieme, 2006). I have found a heterogeneous social field in Sirubari tourism destinations where duty bearers and beneficiaries or agents are achieving social, economic, and cultural benefits (Thomson, 2008). According to the theory of capability, I have understood that by involving in/formal education and vocational training, research participants have increased their capability, a set of vectors of functioning (capabilities/well-being/development) that leads to the freedom of choices by which a person can alter one way of living to another (Robeyns, 2003). Similarly, according to the sustainability approach on development, Tourism Development and Management Committee (TDMC) is forming human, social, physical, financial, and natural capital through institutional efforts. It has also been conserving/mobilizing local resources with

2= Health and Health Nepal (certified by Ministry of Health), a natural therapy center established in Sallaghari, Bhaktapur offering Acupuncture, Physiotherapy, and Yoga/Meditation techniques

better cooperation/collaboration with government and non-government agencies (Hada, 2007). Even Gurung and Dalits youths who directly and indirectly benefitted from homestay tourism activities are becoming happy and motivating with the participatory leadership style of TDMC. Mwesigwa (2018) also reveals that democratic leadership style has a significant effect on the degree of employee performance in the hospitality industry

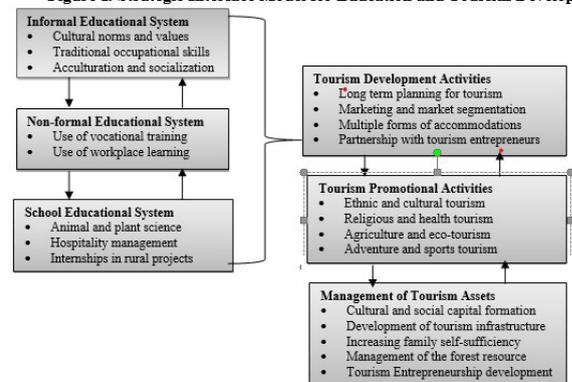
**Strategic Interface Model**

I affirm that the circular process of learning/performing can bring prosperity in Panchmul having many gray areas in the education and tourism development sectors. For education, it suggests that priority must be given to offering tourism and agriculture-related technical education and other vocational training to the formal education graduates of different levels. For tourism, the availability of natural scene/scenery, religious spots, and farmlands of Panchmul can offer yoga, meditation, health, sports, religious and agro-tourism activities.

Unfortunately, I have come across with an understanding that the local development stakeholders are not doing sufficiently accordingly in the sector of tourism development. Thus, these two interfacing areas viz., education and tourism demand a contextual strategic interface model (see in Figure 1) that is something different from the impact analysis model of homestay development based on production functions of tourism in Nepal (Sedai, 2018, p. 58).

In this model, the roles of actors/stakeholders are regarded as major inputs and products. And the earnings from tourism and enhanced sustainable rural livelihood are regarded as major outcomes and impacts. Contrary to this, my model has appraised the role of informal, non-

Figure 1. Strategic Interface Model for Education and Tourism Development



Source: Developed by the Researcher, 2018

formal, and formal education on tourism development assets. In the particular context of tourism development, the informal educational process helps to preserve and share socio-cultural values and norms, traditional occupational knowledge, and skills. Similarly, the non-formal educational process helps to produce skilled youths and encourages local youths to use their workplace learning. Finally, the formal education process helps to offer agriculture and tourism-related subjects at local levels. Besides, based on empirical

findings, I have also developed a strategic framework for tourism and rural development activities that is applicable in the potential areas of Panchmul (see in Table 6).

Table 6. Strategic Framework for Tourism and Rural Development

Projects	Why	How	Outcomes
Preparing the tourism and agriculture development plan	Promoting tourism and agriculture sectors for generating rural economy	Collaboration among local development stakeholders	Gives framework for agro tourism development and promotion
Organizing workshops for tourism development planners	Building capacity of the ward representative, staff, and local intellectuals	Collaboration among local government, tourism experts, and conservationists	The capacity of the local development actors will be enhanced
Organizing hospitality management, handicraft making, and food processing training for the local people	Developing trade-related knowledge and skills	Collaboration among government, non-government agencies, and local consumer committees	Generate employment opportunities and conserve biodiversity
Maintenance of religious sites: Madhukunda, ThumroJuro, Goru Jure, and Dahare Deurali	To attract the religious tourists	Collaboration among local government and local consumer committees	Conservation and utilization of the religious sites
Conservation of lakes located at Goru Jure and make the waterfall and swimming pool at Dharu	To attract the number of tourists fond of water sports cum religious visits	Collaboration among local government and local consumer committees	The utilization of water resources and the number of adventurous tourists will be increased
Conducting cultural festival at Sirubari during Loshar, Trade fair (Mahotsab) at Panchmul during Dashain, and sports tourism at Bhakimle during Balachurtadashi	To attract the number of tourists fond of cultural programs, trade fairs, and sports like bull-fighting, mountain bike, football, volleyball, and athletics	Collaboration among local government, youth clubs, father and mother groups, tourism management committees	Conservation and utilization of natural and cultural resources and the number of tourists will be increased
Offering paragliding from Thumro Juro and Dahare Deurali	To attract the adventure tourists	Collaboration among government and tourism entrepreneurs	Earning revenue and conservation of open spaces
Offering campaign and campfire facilities to the guest at Maidan Kharka	To attract international tourists fond of campaign and sunrise	Collaboration among tourism committee, mother groups, and youth clubs	The staying days of the guest will be increased
Celebrating Ropai festival at Panchmul, Sirubari, Bhakimle, and Tribeni	To attract tourists interested in agricultural activities	Collaboration among local government and homestay committees	Agro tourism activities will be promoted
Offering diploma level hotel management and agriculture-related program in Janhit and Tri Sahid secondary schools	To produce skilled and knowledgeable human capital in the hospitality and agriculture sectors	Collaboration among local government, Ministry of Education, and concerned stakeholders	Local educated and skilled local youths will be mobilized in tourism and agriculture development
Preparing the visual documentary of the touristic sites and uploading it in websites and social sites	To publicize the local tourist attraction in the national and international tourism market	Collaboration among govt., non-govt. agencies, tourism entrepreneurs, and community homestay.com	This will help to promote tourism marketing and tourism market segmentation.
Establishing the Travel Companies at the central and provincial level by the local entrepreneurs	To promote the tourism-related business in the Municipality	Collaboration among local government, private sector, and local investors	The flow of national and international tourists will be increased
Keeping the digital information boards at Sirubari and Dahare Deurali	To disseminate the tourism information about the tourism products and sites	Collaboration among local government and tourism development committee	The tourists will get different information
Keeping the sign-posting at different strategic locations	Showing directions about trekking routes, homestay, religious & cultural sites	Through the collaboration of the Municipality with the tourism development committee	Tourists will be self-aware of the different tourism destinations

Source: Field Study, 2018

Along with strategic framework for tourism and rural development (see Table 6), this study also has enlisted the following strategic focuses to perform transformative interfaces between tourism and rural development activities in Panchmul:

- Encouraging and supporting to offer homestay at Panchmul, Rajswora, and Majhkateri.
- Providing financial and moral support to the Panche Baja and Bhajan Samuhas.
- Offering Spa tourism (Healing with medical or mineral waters in the spa) and Beauty tourism (Massage, facial treatment in homestay or spa) services at Sirubari and Deurali homestay.
- Branding the Vedic Tourism at Brahmin dominated villages (i. e. Bhakimle, Panchmul, and Rajswora) and offering holistic tourism (Body, mind, spirit treatments), spiritual tourism (Pilgrimages, ashrams, meditation), and yoga tourism (Asanas and meditation).
- Developing Bhakimle, Panchmul, and Rajswora as pockets for buffalo and crop farming.
- Developing Tribeni, Majhkateri, and Hile as pockets for goat, vegetable, and kiwi farming.
- Establishing the herbal processing center at Tribeni, Sirubari, and Hile villages.
- Utilizing 1000 Ropanis pasture land of Dalits by establishing a community farm at Sirubari.
- Establishing handicraft and agro-based enterprises at Dahru, Panchmul, and Majhkateri hinterlands.
- Linking the local trekking routes with, Gahnte Deurali, Halo Gadehe, Dahare Deurali, Goru Jure, Thumro Juro, Madhu Kunda, Aandha Andhi Daha, and Hile Danda.
- Developing round tour trials by linking Putali Bazaar-Darau-Satau-Hile-Majhkateri-Panchmul-Bhakimle-Aruchaur-Rapakot-Arjun Chautari-Helu
- Developing foot trials in proposed trekking route starting from Pokhara-Panchese-Arther-Thulipokhari-Khum-Deurali-Bhakimle-Sirubari-Rapakot-Mahashila-Lankhu

### Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study came up with the conclusions informal, non-formal, and formal education are equally contributing to rural tourism in Panchmul. However, religious and cultural structures are determining educational interface with tourism development activities. Though, cultural structures are contextual and cultural specific guided by religious norms and values. People develop socio-cultural and economic practices based on cultural structures. That permitted the people whether tourism activities can be performed for livelihood or not? And, tourism will culturally and socially be accepted or not? Cultural practices are thus guiding daily life and livelihood of the community people offering homestay, paying guests as

well as hotel and restaurant services around Panchmul.

During rural tourism development and management, local stakeholders are simultaneously applying their knowledge and skills acquired in informal, non-formal, and formal environments. Informal knowledge and skills are acquired from tradition, culture, workplace, and day-to-day interactions with neighboring villagers and others. Non-formal knowledge and skills are acquired from different training and exposure visit programs. Vocational and basic education, as well as higher education, are acquired from school and University. However, perceptions of community people on tourism development vary among the different ethnic groups. For them tourists visit only for entertainment, having hard drinks and non-vegetable dishes. They are unknown with different types of tourism and tourists. However, formal education is playing a functional and limited transformative role in rural tourism development activities. Very few local intellectuals are playing advisory and leadership roles and planning to offer health tourism, wellness tourism, adventure and sports tourism, and agro tourism activities in potential destinations. In general, informal, non-formal, and formal education are playing a 'functional transformative' role in rural tourism development. But in particular, there is a 'weak connection situation between formal education and tourism as the tourism promotion needs programs of hotel management and agriculture-related graduations at the local level. Overall, Panchmul can be a model destination for tourism and rural development with the transformative interfaces between education and rural tourism development in Nepal. Thus it is better to apply the strategic interface model and strategic framework collectively by actors and local development stakeholders of Aandhikhola rural municipality.

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