

# Impact of “Nepal Tourism Year 2011” on Tourist Arrival in Pokhara

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## Abstract

Tourism is a growing industry in Nepal. Pokhara is one of the major tourist destinations in Nepal. To foster the tourism industry in Nepal then government of Nepal decided on 2008 to launch a national tourism campaign “Nepal Tourism Year 2011” targeting to bring one million international tourists into Nepal in the year 2011. This paper focuses on analyzing the impact of Nepal Tourism Year 2011’s advertisement campaign on tourist arrival in Pokhara city. Also it attempts to highlight the impact of network and information access on tourism arrival. A sincere attempt has also been made to investigate the impact of NTY in bringing international tourist in Nepal particularly in Pokhara.

**Keywords:** Nepal tourism year 2011, tourism, Pokhara city, campaign

## 1. Background

Tourism connotes traveling for pleasure and escaping from familiar surroundings and monotonous daily routines. The metaphor of life as a journey is a powerful one that resonates across time and cultures. The theme of travel runs through all the great literatures of the world. In the European tradition, there is the archetypal myth of Ulysses sailing out beyond the known world, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, or there is Dante journeying through Hell and up Mount Purgatory into the extraterrestrial Realms of Paradise (Berger 1978, p.34). Great epic poems in most of the languages narrate adventurous journeys, Knightly quests, dangerous and fantastical voyages, and journeys by sea and on land, journeys in the space and even to supposed hell. In fifth century before Christ period Herodotus, a King of Greek, visited many countries in Europe and learnt much about the peoples and places (Archer & Cooper 1998, p.71). Roman wealthy travelers developed tradition of visiting sanctuaries in Egypt and Greece for thermal bath and be in relax for some days (Bhatiya, 2006, p.49). The Hindu mythologies also do narrate so many fables of travelling, earth to space flight of angels and gods. Likewise eastern literature is not less remarkable in travel accounts. Angels’ travelling from Heaven to earth, from land to ocean and from ocean to Himalaya is very common in mythical

stories. Kalidash, a renowned Sanskrit poet in his epic Meghadoota recounts how a yaksha, a subject of King Kubera, God of wealth, after being exiled for a year to central part of India for neglecting his duties, convinces a passing cloud to take a message to his wife Alaka on Mount Kailash in the Himalayan mountains (Wilson, 1813). Travel Records of foreign travelers like Megasthenes, Fahien, Huen Tsang, Al Beruni in India in ancient times; Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta, Nicolo Conte, Abdur Razak, Dom Manuel in Medieval times; writing of Robert Burton, Edward Gibbon, Hakluyt, Mark Twain, in colonial times give us a picture that travelling is a human phenomenon and it certainly reveals new information about various aspects of human life.

Of course, the travelling does have certain purposes. The purposes may differentiate due to time, places, people and cultures yet travelling naturally brings peoples from different backgrounds together and they have to establish host-guest relationship as well as possible. Visitors in host communities expect and seek newness in service, merry-making and other needs, which demands more professional skills for their contentment. This requirement makes guests and hosts get closer, try to understand each other and establish new relation and friendship in a warm hospitable manner. The exchange of pleasantries between tourist and residents directly and indirectly affect various aspects of recipients. Tourism provides travelers an opportunity to explore new places, meet new people, to learn new things and in return, to learn more about themselves from the point of view of how other people see them. Therefore, Tourism is a bridge between people (Seth, 1997, p.7).

Tourism always comes in a myriad of disguises and that can have both good and bad social, environmental, economic and political consequences, depending upon its size and form, the extent to which its growth is controlled or not controlled and, most importantly, the respect of the viewer (Vergar, 1998, p.108). In this sense, observation, studies and analysis on the various aspects of tourism impacts are essentials.

### **Tourism in Nepal**

Nepal is a small landlocked Himalayan country in South Asia that overlaps with East Asia, bordered by Tibet of China to the north and by India to the south, east and west. Though a small territory, the Nepali landscape is uncommonly diverse, ranging from the humid Terai in the south to the lofty Himalayas in the north. There are eight in Nepal out of the world's

top ten highest mountains including Mount Everest (29,035 ft; 8,850 m). The climate of Nepal varies from cool summers and severe winters in north to subtropical summers and mild winters in south. Similarly, "Atithi Devo Bhava" (Guests are Gods) is embedded in Nepali culture. Natural attractions, cultural values and archeological beauties are the main attractions for the tourists in Nepal, these sources of tourism potentiality so far have not been exploited properly (Palikhe, 2006, p.2). Fundamental things that are needed for the mass tourist inflow require transportation access, security, accommodations and other hospitality services. Nepal's limited air access to the international market, poor infrastructure and lack of limited and poor marketing strategies have resulted in slow and limited tourism growth in Nepal (Bhatia, 1997). So Nepal has to improve much for tourism development in the days to come.

Tourism history of Nepal is very short. Tourism Development Board was established in 1957 AD. In 1959 AD government established the Tourism Department and it recorded tourism activities. Tourism Master Plan was made in 1972 and the country now began to function in periodic system of implementation of tourism plans and policies. When Ministry of Tourism was set up in 1977 AD then the tourism activities, policies and plans began to be more effective and the country gradually approached to introduce Nepal to many potential places in the world from which travelers could make Nepal a visit destination. Nepal Tourism Board has been actively playing various promotional roles for the tourism development in the country.

### **Nepal tourism year history**

On April 12, 1996, then His Majesty's Government had declared the year 1998 as Visit Nepal '98 in order to further enhance the image of Nepal as a special destination for the visitors. According to Nepal Tourism Board Report (NTB2011), the main theme for the event "Visit Nepal 1998" was "A sustainable habitat through sustainable tourism" and the slogan was "Visit Nepal '98 - A world of its own". This program had given an experience of enhancing tourism as well as introducing Nepal to the general people all over the world. The marketing slogan told that there is a 'world' in Nepal that tourists needed to discover or further explore for themselves.

The Government of Nepal again decided on October 25, 2008 to launch a national tourism campaign "Nepal Tourism Year 2011". This

announcement reflected the government's anticipation to bring into Nepal at least one million international tourists by the year 2011 and tourism industry's exigency to organize a tourism promotion campaign for wider impact. Amidst such a hope and happiness the country, on Jan 14 the country, kicked off its Tourism Year 2011 (NTY-2011) campaign to draw 1 million visitors and make tourism earnings to get rid of poverty and slow economic drive it had been facing for a long time. Nepal Tourism Board was given primary responsibility to promote Nepal Tourism Year 2011 aggressively in the international arena.

Nepal has a mission to bring large numbers of visitors from India and China, Nepal's immediate neighbors. Target from these two emerging nation was 365,000, which accounts a whopping 30 percent of the total target. India has been targeted 265,000 while target from China is 100,000. Nepal received 25,000 visitors from China and above 100,000 visitors from India in 2010, according to annual tourist arrivals data of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal.

The campaign was said to have been also designed to focus on mobilizing the networks of the Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) communities, Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad, INGOs, airlines, and national and international media. Similarly, friends and well-wishers of Nepal, tourism academicians and celebrities were also to be approached in order to highlight the campaign internally as well as internationally. And the campaign was also called Visit Nepal Year 2011. New trekking trails for adventure tourists as well as sports like paragliding, rafting, canoeing and home stay were the new products to lure tourists during the year expecting that it truly substantiate the spirit of Nepal tourism brand- "naturally Nepal, once is not enough!".

Objectives of Campaign for Nepal Tourism Year 2011 were:

- Establish Nepal as a choice of premier holiday destination with a definite brand image.
- Improve and extend tourism related infrastructures in existing and new destinations.
- Enhance the capacity of service providers.
- Boost community capacity in the new areas to cater the need of the visitors.
- Promote domestic tourism for sustainable growth of the industry.

Campaign Targets

- Achieve one million international visitors.
- Encouraging more investment on tourism infrastructures.

As reported by NTB the government had allocated Rs 230 millions for NTY 2011. The NTB held promotions at the JATA World Travel Fair, Japan in September 2011, in the United States in October and in Britain and China in November of the same year (NTY report 2011). Both private and governments agencies held various promotional activities within and out side the country to inform and attract tourists. Likewise ample use of print and electronic properties in the potential tourist market was in need. This research was designed to explore whether the Tourism Year Program 2011 had been well advertised in the market and it produced its impacts in potential tourism market in the world and it helped bring tourists in Nepal, particularly in Pokhara in significant number or not.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

Growth in tourism depends on the national policy as well diplomatic relation to international level and publicity of national heritages through multiple media of communication to the grassroots level of the people of the potential places of tourists all over the world. For it, national tourism plans and program must be effective. This study was particularly focused to investigate the information channel through which the visitors heard of Nepal and Nepal Tourism Year 2011 and what particular thing inspired, motivated and attracted him or her to visit Nepal, particularly Pokhara.

Advertising strategies have to be worked out based on a comprehensive research in tourist markets where the advertising campaign was proposed to be launched. Segment must have to be identified to whom the advertisement message was to be addressed and selection of the media had to be done with great care to get best result. Seth(1997)says advertising has to be supported by other tools of promotion– public relations efforts, direct mail., sale calls on travel agents, agency liaison through familiarization tours of the host country, media relation etc(p.308-9).

According to David Ogilvy if your advertising has no big idea, ‘it will pass off as a ship at night.’ This statement implies how important the value of effective advertisement is. Of course tourism advertising can be defined as paid public messages designed to describe, praise of information on an area or destination. This can be done with newspaper, magazines, radio television, brochures as many other forms of media. Since advertising

is a way of communicating with the consumers when their identity is not known and when the advertiser is not directing in touch with them (p.295), it must be done carefully to convey successfully of what is intended to.

So this study was particularly concerned to investigate whether the NTY program brought expected tourists in Pokhara in 2011 and did significant impact on tourism arrival. It also aimed to identify which activities are to be highly promoted and very essential to project to increase the tourist flow and lengthen their duration in the region. Therefore the study had endeavored to find out answers to the following research questions:

- Did the Nepal Tourism Year 2011 Program reach on the information media of the countries from which tourists Visited Nepal?
- What information particularly inspired, motivated and attracted the tourist to visit Pokhara?
- Did any tourist, who had already visited Nepal, come here because of this program?
- Did most tourists got informed about it before their arrival to Nepal or heard of it after their entry in the kingdom?
- What particular thing in Pokhara region attracted the visitors?
- What remark they particularly make to promote tourism in Pokhara?

### **3. Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to find out the impact of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 advertisement campaign on tourist arrival in Pokhara valley. The specific objectives are:

- To find out the impact of Network and Information access on tourist arrival.
- To investigate major sources of tourist attraction in Pokhara.
- To identify the problems and prospects of tourism in Pokhara.

### **4. Limitation**

This study had some limitations. Since it is a research on the impact of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 program launched by the government of Nepal on potential international tourists the research interview schedule was conducted with only those tourists who were visiting Pokhara in 2011 specially between 1<sup>st</sup> July to the end of March 2012. The interviews were

carried out on structured and written forms to be answered, and same questions were asked to all interviewees. The sample size was limited (151) and field study was narrowed. Therefore its findings may not be generalized in every situation and every part in the country or in the world.

The theoretical frame work of the study was directed on the concept that net work of information from any medium can inform and influence recipients yet the information conveyed is most important for perception, envision and generating images that inspire and motivate for visiting a place.

## **5. Theoretical background**

Tourism at present has been much prosperous business industry of many countries in the world. It has been the world's largest industry with the over 10 percent GDP globally, directly related to tourism activities: in 2011, according to United Nations World Tourism organization (UNWTO) international tourist arrival grew by over 4 percent, reaching to 982 millions, and it generated dollar 1030 billions. As per prediction of WTO's *Study Tourism: 2020 Vision*, 1.5 billion tourists will be visiting foreign countries annually by the year 2020, spending more than that of US\$ 2 trillion. Tourist arrival will grow by an average of 4.3 percent and receipt from it by 6.7 percent. This book also outlines 12 megatrends that will shape the sector and offer advice of how to better complete product development and marketing will need to match each other closely, based on the travel motivators of 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Study Tourism: 2020 Vision* calls these motivating factors the three E's- entertainment, Excitement and Education. Whatever may be the motivating factors, information about destinations needs to be disseminated to those who are potential visitors of any possible. The most effective and common medium of conveying the information at modern period are the means of communication such as print media, electronic media and human media. Present trend of tourism development indicates that tourism is a global phenomenon and no country will be excluded from this imperialism. It has to deal with intensive globalization and has become complex to analyze (Castells, 1996). Information technology to narrow the distance of information has enriched tourism world with cosmopolitan characteristics and it has been more complex to define.

Theoretically, I have projected this study to channel through one of the recent social theories- informationalism. Informationalism according to Manuel

Castell, is mode of development in which knowledge and information highly influence the factors of production. Castles examines the emergence of a new society ,culture, and economy in light of revolution , begun in the United State in the 1970s in information technology(Ritzer,1981,p.583) This new revolution in information technology, its net work system throughout the world, that has developed into, as Castells calls them, two forms: informational capitalism and informational societies.

The informational system has brought increasingly profitable global economy. Tourism development is one of the mostly influenced and affected sectors of information technology. The information system is global because it has the “capacity to work as a unit in real time on planetary scale (Castells, 1996, p.92; Ritzer, p. 584) Agents in tourism economy fundamentally depends upon the capacity to generate process and apply efficiently knowledge based information. Since tourism industry is not simply information based, but also an informational, for it encompasses whole identities of culture, society and people within the society. The whole social system in which people work must be included in diffusion and implementation of the new technological paradigm. If any society can not make this informational system more effective in global touch scale, it may suffer from grave negative consequences. China and India, two giant neighboring nations of Nepal, are generating this system but Nepal’s attempts to this field have not been in competitive scale. So it must be closely studied and make an immediate corrective measures in its development. Tourism industry is importantly related to most effective series of net work of information (Castells, 1996; p.373: Ritzer, p.584). Castells thinks the emergence of culture of real virtual image setting is due to the development of multimedia. Out of the fusion of mass media and computer, a real system in which reality is captured and fully immersed in virtual image setting , in the world of make believe , in which appearances are not just on the screen through which experience is communicated, but they become the experience. Similarly, we have entered an era of time less time in which information is instantly available anywhere on the globe. The information net works are open and capable of unlimited expansion if any society or nation does want and have economy to expand. The system is dynamic and innovative without disruption. But its utility and success depends how effectively a state can establish its network system , In Castell’s view, according to Ritzer(2012) a weak country like Nepal is increasingly powerless in this new world the globalization of economy



and its dependence of global capital market. Tourism of course is a global market and its impact on state economy depends on the “make believe virtual image setting” and its advertisement information media nationally and internationally. Poor states have been unable to protect their welfare programs because imbalances around the globe will lead capital to gravitate towards those states with low welfare cost (585). Nepal “informationally” is in the same state as defined by Castells. This study therefore will provide a glimpse on the position of our state through this theoretical prospective also. The computer and information flows according Castells have created series of problems such as the exclusion of great parts of the world. He says even some pockets in the United States are affected from the system and its rewards. Whether Nepal is in exclusion or in the informational net work system in the globe will be somehow visualized from this study.

The present development and trends of tourism in the world is going –up ration on every field. Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Many new destinations have emerged, challenging the traditional ones of Europe and North America. Despite occasional shocks, international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth—from 277 million in 1980 to 528 million in 1995, and 983million in 2011(WTO,2011). According to Tourism Towards 2030, UNWTO’s recently updated long-term outlook and assessment of future tourism trends, the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide is expected to increase by 3.3 percent a year on average from 2010 to 2030. This represents some 43 million more international tourist arrivals every year, reaching a total of 1.8 billion arrivals by 2030. In the past, emerging economy destinations have grown faster than advanced economy destinations, and this trend is set to continue in the future. Between 2010 and 2030, arrivals to emerging economies are expected to increase at double the pace (+4.4% a year) of those to advanced economies (+2.2% a year). As a result, the market share of emerging economies has increased from 30 percent in1980 to 47 percent in 2011, and is expected to reach 57 percent by 2030, equivalent to over one billion international tourist arrivals. (*Source: UNWTO Tourism Highlights:2011*).

Many countries in the world in recent decades have launched different kinds of visit offer and programs to attract tourists. China National

Tourism Administration has repeatedly introduced tourism programs with tourist theme to promote a tourist theme every year.

Tourism is the largest service industry in India, with a contribution of 6.23 percent to the national GDP, and 8.78 percent of the total employment in India (Paneru, 2010). India welcomes more than 5 million annual foreign tourist arrivals and 562 million domestic tourism visits. The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4 percent annual growth rate.

The China National Tourism Administration promotes a tourist theme every year; 1992 was "Friendly Sightseeing Year." Then came "Landscape Tour", "Tour of Cultural Relics and Historical Sites", "Folk Customs Tour", "Holiday Tour", and "Ecological Environment Tour." From 2000 to 2004, the themes were "Century Year", "Sports and Health of China", "Folk Arts of China", and "Culinary Kingdom of China", and "Catch the Lifestyle".

In 2010, The Taiwan Tourism Bureau had announced its 2011 marketing campaign, which featured three key elements: Tour Taiwan 100, Authentic Taiwan and Great Service in Taiwan. Tour Taiwan 100 saw the introduction of over 100 new tours and different experiences on the island. From celebrity spotting to Yulin Puppet Shows, the tours fell into one of 10 themes: customs & religion, local culture, aboriginal tribes, hot-springs, innovation tours, contemporary culture, hiking, tracking celebrities, eco-touring and biking. The tours were designed to help visitors maximize their time and make the most of their experiences on the island.

Similarly, the launch of the new image for Sri Lanka Tourism had declared the Year 2011 as "Visit Sri Lanka Year", Costa Rica included in the 2010/2011 list of "The Developing World's 10 Best Ethical Destinations."

Many countries like a Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia Suriname Maldives and so many others have had recent trends of attracting tourists through visit year program. 2011 was the visit year of Sri Lanka and Thailand. Competition is there in every field of informationalism and Nepal has to go through it and maintain its position in the global market.

As we give a glimpse in the world tourism scenario we can realize how competitive the international tourism Market is and how challenging it is for Nepal because the tourism rank reception and revenue collection

Nepal is almost to the bottom lines. According to WTO Report of 2011 international tourist arrivals grew by 4.6 percent and reached 983 million worldwide, up from 940 million in 2010. Europe, which accounts for over half of all international tourist arrivals worldwide, was the fastest-growing region, both in relative terms (+6% tied with Asia and the Pacific) and absolute terms (29 million more visitors). The Middle East (-8%) and North Africa (-9%) were the only regions to record a decline in arrivals, due to the Arab Spring and political transitions in the region. International tourism receipts for 2011 was estimated at US\$ 1,030 billion worldwide, up from US\$ 928 billion in 2010 (+3.9% in real terms), setting new records in most destinations despite economic challenges in many source markets.

In 2011, world tourism continued to rebound from the set backs of 2008-2009, in a year marked by persistent economic turbulence, major political changes in the Middle East and North Africa, and the natural disaster in Japan. Worldwide, international tourist arrivals (i.e. overnight visitors) grew by 4.6 percent in 2011 to 983 million, up from 940 million in 2010 when arrivals increased by 6.4 percent.

The top 10 ranking by international tourist arrivals in 2011 were France, USA, China Spain, Italy, Turkey, United Kingdom, Germany, Malaysia and Mexico respectively. There was only a minor change in 2011. Turkey moved up one position to sixth place (with 29 million tourists) overtaking the United Kingdom. There were no changes in the top 10 ranking by tourism receipts.

### **A glimpse on international tourist arrivals to Nepal**

A glimpse on international tourist arrivals to Nepal via air in 2011 increased by 21.5 percent as compared to arrival figures of 2010. A total of 545,211 entered the country via Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) – about 100,000 more than what the country had welcomed a year ago, according to statistics prepared by Immigration Office at TIA. Similarly, total arrivals through land routes till Nov, 2011 reached 190,924. Arrivals from China recorded the highest growth with arrivals of 45,400. Share of Chinese tourists in total arrivals increased by 8.3 percent, second only to India that had market share of 26.7 percent. More than 145,000 Indian tourists visited Nepal during the year. The market share of Asia (excluding South Asia) increased from 18.6 percent in 2010 to 20.2 percent in 2011. Drop in arrivals from Europe in 2011 meant its share in total arrivals dropped to 28.3 percent from last year's 30.9 percent. Total arrivals from

Europe during the year stood at around 155,000. Top five countries of nationality were India, China, Sri Lanka USA and UK respectively. Male tourist arrival in 2011 was 352,059(48%) and female was, 384,156(52%). Similarly the tourist arrival by purpose of visit in 2011 was 4 percent for holiday/pleasure, for trekking 11 percent, expedition 1 percent, business 2 percent, pilgrimage 9 percent, official percent, conference/meeting 1 percent, rafting 0 percent, travel/visit 54 percent, study/research 1 percent, others 4 percent not specified 10 percent. Similarly average length of stay in 2010 was 12.67 days and in 2011 it increased only 13.12 days. All these figure shows that there was no significant increase in tourist arrival in Nepal and the Impact of the tourism campaign of 2011 particularly in the international market does not seem to be much effective in bringing international tourists in Nepal. Tourist arrival by sex in 2011 shows that male arrival is lower than female: there were 352,059(48%) male and 384156(52%) female. Among them 213176 were the age group between 32 to 45 years, the highest number among five age group categories of years -0-15, 16 -30, 31-45, 46-60, 61 and over. The lowest group was of the age between 0-15, the total number in this group was 32795.

The figures released by Immigration Office, Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) reveal that visitor arrivals in initial three months in the country of 2012, compared to the same month last year, have increased by 37.2 percent. All regions have shown positive growth in the third month of 2012. The arrivals from South Asian region, have gained overall positive growth of 61.4 percent. India which constitutes the major market of Nepal, has recorded robust growth of 68.6 percent with 6,606 more visitors compared to March 2011. Visitor arrivals from Sri Lanka have gained positive growth with 116.1 percent along with Bangladesh (19.7%) and, Pakistan (19.5%). India, which is the largest source market for Nepal, has been increasing since the very beginning of 2010. A robust growth of 29.7 percent has been observed in the arrivals from the South Asian region during the first three months of 2012, in comparison to the same period last year. Arrivals from Asia (other than South Asia) have also recorded positive growth of 21.5 percent in aggregate. Visitor arrivals from China, one of the fastest growing tourist markets for Nepal, have sustained the remarkable growth of 47 percent, compared to the figures in March 2011. Similarly, other Asian countries maintained the upward trend of previous months with Japan (12.3%), Malaysia (4.6%), South Korea (24.8%) and Thailand (27.7%). An overall positive growth of 42%

has been observed from the European markets with arrivals from UK, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Poland and Russia up by 27.5%, 85.9%, 109.1%, 13.9%, 183.8%, 103.7%, 238.8% and 53.6% respectively. However, the arrivals from France, Italy and the Netherlands have declined by 3.9 percent, 1.6 percent and 7.7 percent respectively compared to the same month last year. Tourist arrivals from Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada and have increased by 5.3 percent, 16.5 percent, 13.7 percent and 38.1 percent respectively.

To sum up, tourism industry in the world is rapidly increasing and in Nepal it is still in slow pace. However some indication of growth shows tourism potentiality and prosperity in the days to come. For the sustainable tourism development effective measures should be taken and to compete in the tourism market our own informational society should be organized and its network must be global to bring desired consequences from it.

### **Pokhara as a Tourist Destination**

Pokhara, a small valley in the western region of Nepal, is most popular destination for both national and foreign visitors. It is starting point for many of Nepal's most popular trekking and rafting destinations" (K.C, 2000). However it does not have long tourism history. The valley was opened first by air in 1953, then by jeep in 1957 (Lamsal, 1997). Temperate climate, panoramic view of the mountains, greenery hills, lakes, and ethnic and cultural diversities are some of the properties that make Pokhara a well-facilitated place for the visitors (Khatiwada, 2000). Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist Scholar and the first foreigner to visit Pokhara, in 1899, said "all my travels in the Himalayas, I saw no scenery so enchanting at that which enraptured in Pokhara" (Shrestha 2000). Tourists who visit Pokhara express pleasant experience. Toney Hagon, a famous foreign writer in Nepal, who traveled on foot all over Nepal during 1950's, also commented that "Pokhara is certainly one of the most extraordinary and most beautiful places in the world" (Shrestha, 2000). Such comments made sureness of tourism industry in Pokhara but professionalism in civil society appeared only after establishing some tourist standard hotels like Fishtail Lodge (1969) and New Hotel Crystal (1973), and in- flow of the visitors and researchers gradually increased then-after Pokhara began to be developed as the tourist destination (Khatiwada, 2000).

### **6. Study Area**

This research study was carried out in Pokhara city. According to Tourism

Office Pokhara total tourist arrival in 2009 was 203000. The increase in 2010 is 13.4 percent. Nepal Tourism Statistic 2008 specifies that almost 30 percent tourist come to Pokhara for holiday pleasure and almost 25 percent visit for mountaineering purpose alone. This must be why the author of A Glimpse of Pokhara writes, “You have not seen Nepal if you have not been to Pokhara; Pokhara valley is a hanging garden of the earth. It is one of the paradises on the earth”.

This area is therefore very appropriate place to make an analysis of the Nepal Tourism Year 2011 campaign and make immediate evaluate and analysis of the campaign to enhance such program. The field is mainly Phewa Lake area. It is ward no. 6 and 7 of Pokhara Sub-metropolis in Kaski district.

## **7. Methodology**

This study applied a comprehensive research design. It endeavored to identify impact of Nepal Visit Year 2011 Campaign on tourist arrival in Pokhara and major motivating factors for tourists Pokhara region. The approach to the research is direct contact with the respondents in the study zone. The research design for this purpose was exploratory and descriptive. Primary and secondary sources of data were used in the study. Primary data was obtained from direct interview with the help of questionnaire schedule. The total international tourists who were visiting Pokhara especially in Lakeside during the last three months of 2011AD and initial three months of 2012 AD was the study population of the study. Tourists at pleasant mode and leisure activities at park, hotels, travel and tourism offices, sight seeing spots and trekking route were visited and interviewed. They were selected so as to represent different continents and countries in proportionate to their presence at such spots. The secondary data was collected from NTB service office, Pokhara, its websites, hotel, tours and travel agencies and libraries. However, this study mainly depended on primary data to answer the research questions and objectives. From these tourists, 151 respondents were selected using purposive and convenient sampling method for this study through direct observation and interviews with semi-structured questionnaires.. Informal talks about some topics relevant to the research questions and objectives were also accomplished so as to affirm and verify unclear data.

## **8. Demographic Characteristics**

This study showed that the average gender ratio of the tourist arrival

in Pokhara is not so difference. It was around 10 percent. There were 83(55%) male and 69(45%) female. Generally it is believed in our social and cultural background that male are much freer to travel than female. They are also economically independent to decide to spend their income themselves and they can enjoy more freedom to travel. But, with modernization, particularly in developed countries, the cultural as well economic progress has brought changes in the mobility of people and consequently it has increased the number of women travelers in the world.

Most of the tourists in Pokhara are found between the age group of 20-40 and 40-60 years accounting 39.7 and 36.4 percent respectively. The lowest percentage of the tourists(9) is from age group below 20 years. Tourists with age group 60 and above was 17.9%.

Greater number of the respondents was from Asia (40.4%), dominantly from neighboring countries of Nepal-India and China. The second highest continent of tourist arrival is Europe (28%). The third place was occupied by the North America. And the lowest arrival percentage was from South America. It covered only 2 percent of the total arrival.

There was significant difference in the age of gender and arrival percentage. The percentage of male tourists between 40 to 60 years was less than that of female tourists of the same age group, accounting 15.2 percent and 21.2 percent respectively. Tourists below 20 were less even than the tourists above 60 years old. It can be concluded that people enjoy or can manage travelling during their youth.

To access whether Nepal Tourism Year 2011 had been able to carry its advertisement campaign to the potential tourists market in the world or not and whether the tourists who have arrived Pokhara had got its information in their home country or not is one of the objectives of this research. For it various relevant questions were asked to find out if visit year 2011 had been to them.

Tourists make decision to go to new place after various considerations: leisure time, money, season, weather, climate, cultural program, fair, visit offers, etc. when asked how long ago the respondents started thinking of coming to Nepal and made decision on it, most of the respondents answered that they didn't have any long cherished plan to visit Nepal. Almost 17 percent of the respondents accepted that they had planned to visit these country years before though majority (36%) of the respondents

had decided to visit Nepal just a few months ago. Twenty percent of respondents had decided to visit Nepal in their adulthood. Those who were found to have known Nepal in early age are mostly from Asian countries. However, they did not accept that they planned to visit it due to the information they received from the Nepal Tourism Year Program. The impact of Visit Nepal Year was found insignificant in their decision.

## 9. Discussions

### Use of information media and its impacts

The major sources of information to measure the respondents' source of knowingness of Nepal and Pokhara included in the questionnaire were print media, electronic media and personal relation. Out of 253 multiple responses, maximum percent (55.73) of the responses have electronic media as the major sources of Information and Network followed by print media and personal relation, accounting 55.73 percent and 17.39 percent respectively. Modern tourism seems to be highly affected by electronic media. Almost all respondents accepted that they used electronic media particularly the internet to gather information about their travel destination. They agreed that internet is the primary source of the information media through which they knew more about Nepal as well as Pokhara. Among 275 responses, almost 36 percent of the respondents had a response that they use travel books and other travel and tourism related documents, more than 82 percent of the responses do use internet, only 17 percent of the responses ticked the column of TV for information collection about their visit destination. To sum up, most of the foreign visitors in Nepal are found to have used electronic media to collect information for their travel activities and purposes. Though the internet option is fairly higher than other TV and radio, the second and the third options are also not insignificant for tourism promotional purpose. 26 percent role of print media and 17 percent coverage of personal relation functioning as an information media to the prospective tourists in Nepal also are not less remarkable. Nevertheless, the focus and priority must be given on uploading authentic and reliable information about tourism heritages of Nepal and Pokhara in internet.

In response to the question 'how many times have you been to Nepal?' and 'how long are you going to stay in Nepal this times?' Almost 32 percent visitors in Nepal are repeat visitors. It is very important figure to make tourism business in Nepal sustainable. Though Nepal has been in



unfavorable tourism situation in the last two decades, yet encountering such a high percentage of repeat visitors is remarkable in this sector. If we can improve tourism facilities and promote our tourism heritage in the international market with an effective advertisement network then Nepal's tourism industry will prosper very rapidly.

Like wise the duration of visitors' stay in Nepal is not so humiliating for the tourism entrepreneurs because around 60 percent visitors stay here (just 1-2 weeks). However, those who were here for trekking (48.3%), research study (2.6%) and business purpose (7.9%) stayed more than two weeks. Visitors stay depends upon the host's quality of service on the one hand and visitors' time availability. People in modern world are busy and staying in a country more than a week can't be easily managed. So the Nepal should need to improve the service quality and attract more and more tourists to increase the frequency and duration of stay.

When asked whether the respondents knew of Nepal Tourism year 2011 in their country or elsewhere before leaving to Nepal, most of them said "No". Out of the respondents who said 'yes'(93%), 14.6 percent said they heard it before they came to Nepal and 85.4 percent said it came into their light after their arrival in Nepal, particularly through newspapers and tourists leaflets. Much more they saw the brand of the program in tourist office notice board, poster boards, hotels and travel agents. Visitors' responses indicate that huge number of the tourists during and after the tourism year hardly knew about the program before coming to Nepal. Then the figure tells that the impact of the tourism advertisement campaign to bring one million tourists from the international market must have been slightly affected. No significant numbers of tourists have been influenced by the program in their own places.

Almost all respondents who heard of Nepal Tourism Year program before their arrival in Nepal said they expected special service charge reduction offer from it. They had envisioned some remarkable celebration at tourist markets to impress tourists in Nepal. Those who happened to know about the tourism year after their arrival here also said they expected some special program at community levels that would reflect 'tourism specialties' of the places. Rather, most of them commented they could not meet any special program of entertainment, fair and any cultural activities targeted to tourists. Those who were in Pokhara during street festival and

at Christmas said it was nice time for them to be in Pokhara and said they luckily met the moment but realized that it was not organized for the international visitors. And some suggested the governments should have offered free visa.

Another pertinent open-ended question to the respondents was posed to know what impression of Nepal Tourism Year in general the visitors had had during their stay in Pokhara. Most of them said they were deeply influenced and impressed by public and entrepreneurs' rhetoric of Nepal Tourism Year but they got quite surprised when they found no remarkable programs. The facilitations are not much effective. No special programs were organized to impress and increase the tourist arrival. So most of the visitors showed unwilling to point of any remarkable impression having had generated during the stay in Nepal (outside Pokhara) as well as in Pokhara.

### **Major sources of tourist attraction in Pokhara region**

In response to the question of what information or image inspired, attracted and motivated them to visit Pokhara, then majority of the respondents (53%) answered very comfortably and instantly that panoramic view that either appeared on print or electronic media attracted them to visit the place. Many tourists said natural phenomenon of Pokhara as the most attractive factor and those who enjoyed the cultural heritage got influenced by the cultural and social values of Pokhara region were found to have returned from trekking and community based field works. Some pointed that easy access to maintain trekking is one of the major attractions for them to visit Pokhara. Visits to Muktinath, a pilgrim destination from Pokhara is another motivation some respondents illustrated. It is very meaningful illustration because not only the nature but 'human nature' that is socio-cultural activities and other host-guest cordiality, acceptability and hospitality can play much important role in pleasing the visitors of a particular place. Therefore the business entrepreneurs, the planners and social agencies should give careful consideration on the first person responses of experience and evaluate such responses critically and creatively. Therefore, the concerned agencies and the public have to make strategies for sustainable development and environment conservation plans for sustainable tourism industry in Pokhara region

Likewise majority of the tourists visit Pokhara for trekking purpose (48.3%). The entertainment purpose(25.7%), sight seeing( 7.3%) and

pilgrim(7.9%) others that can provide entertainment. Visiting country side villages, communities for research purposes also seems to be probably increasing, for it represents almost 3% of the respondent. Data of Continent –wise purpose of visiting Pokhara shows that Asians are ahead in trekking purpose (23.2%) and in the least are Oceanians and Africans- each 2 percent. But in sight seeing purpose both the oceanian and the Africans are in higher position. The Europeans’ and Asian in sightseeing purpose are almost in the equal status. In academic and official visit the oceanians and Europeans are in the top level and each occupies 7 percent. For adventure trekking the Asians are the lower position though the South Africa does not have any figure. The Asian arrivals in Pokhara is much high in figure and its position in adventure purpose is very low

Analysis of the gender-wise purpose of visiting Pokhara indicates that women are much ahead in official and academic visit than men. They are also leading men in pilgrim purpose. Similarly they are not less man in business visit in Pokhara. In other purposes men are leading women: in trekking and adventure visit women are relatively less but they are almost equal in sightseeing. Therefore in tourism promotion program and activities no special priority is need to give in a particular area because of the gender purpose of visiting Pokhara. Whatever tourism activity and facility is needed for the tourists it can be almost equally necessary for both genders of the visitors. The following table shows gender –wise figure of purpose of visiting Pokhara.

The age wise purpose of visiting Pokhara in the following table shows that visitor of 20-39 age groups enjoys adventurous activities and trekking. The age groups visitors between 40 -59 are also appearing high in trekking and particularly in sightseeing ahead. Similarly the same age group people visit Pokhara for business activities. In official both age groups -20-39 and 40-59 are equal in percentage. For pilgrim the last age group is high and the second age group- that is to say visitors between 20- 39 are less in percentage. Visitors below 20 seem to be high in pilgrim. Perhaps more children are brought by their parents for the pilgrim.

### **Problems and prospects of tourism in Pokhara**

A place is accepted as a tourism destination primarily because of its natural heritage and secondarily due to its socio- cultural heritage. Hotels restaurants, transportation and other tourism service facilities are within manmade heritage. So the problem and prospects of tourism primarily

concerned to human capacity to come with the problems from natural difficulties. If a place is naturally attractive and it is difficult to reach then road construction or rope way or cable car service can be provided for the tourism promotion. Cable car to Manakamana temple in Nepal can be taken as an example in this reference. Tourism problem and prospects in Pokhara has to taken in an early stage on its development. If the city gets developed in an inconvenient way, tourism prosperity of the future gets harmed because of manmade problems such as filth, congestions. Natural beauty and attraction get spoiled. In this research it is endeavored to fine out some problems and prospects of tourism in Pokhara from the perception and expression of the tourists themselves. So the findings can be taken as an authentic voices and fundamentals of the tourism developments in Pokhara for future.

Many visitors commented that government facilitation and service responses from the authorized persons in tourist service centers need improvement. Respondents suggested for the fast internet service, some demanded for safe trekking. Likewise some recommended for the investment of the tourism service charge to improve service facilities in tourism industry.

Almost 12% tourists made complaint that the tourism hospitality in Pokhara need improvement. In response to what tourism services in Pokhara region the tourists found unsatisfactory, most of the respondents (62) wrote that 'the internet' was very slow. This was an open question there were different responses. Some (23) pointed out government office service as less prompt and troublesome. Similarly, few respondents (16) said 'health service'. Some of them ( 13) reacted that most of the service provider agents gave guests the impression that the visitors were "opportunities to earn as money as you can". Few (9) said the "tourist guides service providers are mostly untrained, less responsible and money minded". Expensive taxi fare, unhealthy motivation for hotel booking etc were some of the other areas of service where the visitors expressed their grudge.

Whoever visited Pokhara was found willing to narrate the natural beauty and other tourism attractions around Pokhara. It seems that the most effective and reliable agent to advertise tourism properties of Pokhara can be the visitors themselves. Every respondent tick- marked and even assured the researcher that he would recommend Pokhara as one of the

best destination for holiday making, trekking and adventure purposes.

Though majority of the respondents said it was their first visit to Pokhara, yet their will to visit this place again implies that there are and will be repeat visitors in Pokhara. Among the respondents, around thirty three percent was found of repeat visitors. This will certainly go on increasing in future because the trend of visiting Pokhara from different countries is increasing.

Above 77 percent of the respondents said they would certainly manage to visit Pokhara next time. Remaining 33 percent expressed their wish, yet remained in hesitation to say firmly that they could manage it. Yet, tourism properties of Pokhara as they commented are rich, attractive and motivating ones to the foreign visitors.

Though most of tourist/respondents readily said they knew, only after their arrival in Nepal, about the tourism year program of 2011 being celebrated in Nepal yet no one could confirm that their visit to Pokhara was decided because of the advertisement; for they did not get any message to influence them to plan for the visit.

Most of the respondents felt that tourism attractions of Pokhara were well advertised within the country but they are hardly found concertized in the international market. And almost all of them agreed that effective advertisement strategies to the target places must be done in order to illuminate peculiar tourism attractions of Pokhara region.

It was quite dissatisfying to know that almost all respondents said that they did not find any published information property in their home country. There were around fifteen published information items for travelers in Nepal, yet the international visitors had not seen any of them in their own countries. However, they agreed that they abundantly found the materials in Nepal and also in Pokhara. Therefore it can concluded that Nepal's advertisement strategies had been not effective in the international tourism markets.

Though the respondents said they had not got any noticeable and memorable impression of the Nepal Tourism Year program in Pokhara, yet they expressed their view that the entrepreneurs and the common people in rural communities were found quite enthusiastic to have the message and impact in the local communities. This reading from every respondent can be considered a significant impact of the tourism year. Though its

impact during the year and subsequent three months after the end of 2011 seemed no remarkable, yet it brought its positive impacts and increased in tourism arrivals in Pokhara in later months of 2012 as well as 2013.

Majority of the respondents remarked that concerned authorities of the tourism and hospitality industry, the tourism entrepreneurs as well as the citizens should improve basic physical infrastructure of tourism attractions, maintain clean and healthy environment ,much responsible and sincere tourism service, and justifiable utilization of tourism service charge to facilitate tourism industry in the region. Respondents who arrived Pokhara region for trekking purpose also recommended Pokhara to develop as a start or end point of Annapurna Range Trekking Route.

### Summary

This study focused its research activities on impacts for ‘Nepal Tourism Year’ advertisement campaign of the government of Nepal and tourism and hospitality industry agencies. Since Nepal Tourism Year aimed at bringing one million international tourists in the country during the year with expectation of subsequent impacts in consecutive years, study and evaluation of the program is very essential. Pokhara is the second destination of tourists from abroad and impact of national program must be apparent here if its impact has been on the process. Success of the program can easily be evaluated according to the responses to some relevant queries asked to the international tourists in Pokhara. The following table summarizes the major findings in figures.

SN	Content	% Response
1.	<u>Visitors from</u>	
	Oceania	8.6
	Asia	40.4
	European visitors	27.8
	Africa	7.9
	North America	13.2
	south America	2
	Visitors below 20	6
	Visitors Age 20 - 40	39.7
	Visitors 40-60	36.4
	Visitors above 60	17.9
	Male visitors	55
	Female visitors	45

2.	<u>Media used to know information about Pokhara</u> Printed media electronic media personal relation	26.88 55.73 17.39
3.	First time visitors Repeat visitors	62.3 37.7
4.	<u>Duration of stay in Pokhara this time</u> Less than a week more than a week	42.4 57.6

### **Analysis of Survey**

SN	Content	%Response
5.	<u>Heard Nepal Tourism 2011 before arriving Nepal</u> Yes no	7.9 92.1
6.	<u>Purposes of visiting Pokhara</u> Trekking Sightseeing Business Pilgrim Entertainment Research and official visits	48.3 25.8 7.9 7.9 7.3 2.3
7.	<u>Most likely tourism Heritage</u> Natural scene Social and culture heritage Tourism and hospitality service others	53.0 11.9 27.8 7.3
8.	<u>Improvement needed</u> Transportation Accommodation Government office service recreational activities the internet health service tourist guides unfair competition	42 19 23 21 62 16 9 13

9.	<u>visit again</u> Yes no	77.5 22.5
10.	recommend Pokhara as a visit destination yes	100
11.	<u>Comment on Nepal Tourism Year</u> Successful Disappointing Only on words, not in action Hellish Bandha waste of money not so bad no comment	23.2 21.9 15.2 15.2 9.3 9.9 5.3
12.	<u>Particular expectation about Nepal tourism year</u> free visa reduced tourism charge cultural shows warm receptions package offers Nothing Others	29.80 24.50 17.88 14.57 4.64 5.96 2.65
13.	Is Pokhara well-advertized? Yes Needed	36 64

*Source: Field survey*

## Conclusion

The 'Nepal Tourism Year 2011' is one of the efforts to introduce Nepal as a tourist hub for those who really wondered of natural phenomena. Pokhara is introduced as a most attractive place for Mountain panorama, particularly the range of Annapurna Mountain, and its reflection view in Phewa and Begnas lakes. It is known also for the green hills, temperate climate and cultural diversity.

Most of the tourists during this study were from economically rich countries and culturally 'travel and adventure seeking' communities. Tourists arrived for various purposes, but most of them were for entertainment and adventures. That's why tourism development and sustainability seems to be in these two categories. According to the respondents' comments, natural and cultural heritage around Pokhara became major source of



the satisfaction during their trips. This refers that we have to conserve and preserve both phenomena for tourism prosperity and sustainability. Majority of the respondents agreed that material in internet web-sites were used on making decision to visit Nepal as well as Pokhara they looked travel books, pamphlets and similar types of printed information properly for travelers and learnt more about Nepal. Likewise, some tourists were found repeat visitors. All visitors expressed wish to visit again. In Pokhara, tourist stay-duration is satisfactory (1-2 weeks) and most of them wished to have made their stay –program longer. This means that if Pokhara is well-advertised and tourists get informed earlier (before their plan to visit Nepal), they would certainly increase their stay duration in Pokhara.

The findings from the questionnaire indicated that the impact of advertisement campaign of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 in international area is not so satisfactory because very few respondents only accepted that they heard of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 in their hometown. Yet they were not influenced and motivated to plan to visit Nepal and Pokhara. They came here because they had already planned to visit this country. Whoever heard of it yet had or made no remarkable expectation from the program. He/she simply thought of having an opportunity to observe community based program to highlight visit year spirit and community identities. Therefore there was not any remarkable surprise and wonder about the program from visitors in Pokhara. Most of them said they learnt about Pokhara through print and electronic media. Many visitors were found to have arrived Pokhara after arriving Nepal. So most of the tourists in Pokhara come here for its natural beauty and adventure goals and they responded that they were quite satisfied from their visit here, simply expressing some grudge on delay and indifferent responses from the tourism service centers, money minded dealings of service providers, slow internet, unreliable safety mechanism and lack of tourism package programs. Yet all tourists happily and enthusiastically accepted that they would recommend Pokhara as one of the best tourism destinations for various purposes. That wish indicates that tourism and hospitality industry in Pokhara region will prosper rapidly if the government of Nepal makes good plans and the public as well as the entrepreneurs support it in words and actions. The findings of some repeat visitors and all respondents' interest and wish to visit Pokhara again, of course, provide more authentic clues to confirmation that Pokhara region is going to be hubbub of tourism industry soon.

To sum up, this study is one of the earliest observations on the impact of tourism campaign launched by Nepal Tourism Board, government of Nepal in order to increase the inflow of tourists from neighboring countries as well as from countries abroad. Though the target-number of tourist arrivals was not materialized it is not so unsatisfactory number to illustrate here. The total number of tourist arrival in Nepal in 2011 is 736135 and the country failed to meet its one million targets, yet the effort has been positive. since this study was conducted among the international visitors ,it gave an glimpse of our international market and it tells us that Nepal has to do much program to introduce Nepal and its socio-cultural as well as natural heritages in order to get it identified as one of the 'best tourist destinations in the world.' So the border implication of the findings can be within the observation, attention and study of policy makers and business people in tourism and hospitality sectors in order to develop appropriate environment and activities for tourism in Pokhara region. The tourists need to feel that they deserved much in visiting Pokhara and ready to recommend their both friends and foes to visit Pokhara once. Then it will generate the feeling - 'once is not enough'.

### **Recommendations**

This study did a sincere effort to investigate impact of Nepal Tourism Year in bringing international tourists in Nepal and particularly in Pokhara. Of course, it found out some considerable issues that should be evaluated analyzed and even tested from different parameters so as to see the interconnection and impacts in tourist arrivals in Pokhara even some months to come. Impact of such a social and development program would not come forth in noticeable scale and degree immediately and at a time; it takes gradual process, yet it can confidently be said that the impact of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 could not generate expected impacts on tourism development. Whatever findings it has got ,were resulted from first-hand-experience and primary sources. The conclusions are reliable and recommendable. So the findings will be much helpful to the government and other tourism entrepreneurs to evaluate the actual situation and environment of the tourism business and make further plans and policies accordingly. Hence, this study recommends the following points to be brought into action:

- Declare tourism year program only after sufficient advertisement to the potential sources for tourists' arrivals to Nepal and Pokhara.

Advertisement impacts must be evaluated before launching the program at least two years earlier from the tourism year declaration.

- Develop good tourism infrastructure, offer of certain package programs to different tourism activities, trained tourist service providers, reliable information peace, political stability and tourism security must be well-maintained.
- Use both print and internet media to expose tourism properties in words and images, priority on the community based tourism attractions tourists-shopping centers, parks and sport centers and other entertainment spots which will increase tourists stay duration .
- Organize mechanism to control negative impacts of tourism development and make plans for sustainable as well as judicial tourism development plans, policies and strategies.

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