

Buddhism and Tourism: A Study of Lumbini, Nepal

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Abstract

Buddhism is one of the major religions in the world. About four hundred million Buddhist people and millions of peace-lovers around the globe admire to visit the holy places following the footsteps of the Buddha as the Buddha himself enshrined pilgrimage as an important act in the life of a peace seeker. Peace and happiness are the main pursuit of people longing for, but in many ways they are starving. Buddhism has been source and way forward for peace and happiness- this is how people have started realizing today. In pursuit of peace, billions of dollars worth Buddha images, Buddhist souvenirs and puja paraphernalia are sold every year in Buddhist sites of different countries that make local economy vibrant. There are many Buddhist heritage sites that have been explored, excavated, conserved, developed and promoted because of tourism activities all over the world. But very few studies have been done, so far, to understand relation between Buddhism and tourism. This study examines the relation between Buddhism and tourism in the context of Greater Lumbini Area, Nepal for planning, development, promotion and educative purpose. The findings of present study reveal

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that there is “complementary and positive relation between Buddhism and tourism”. It means promotion of Buddhism helps develop quality tourism in the GLA vis-a-vis development of tourism in the region promotes Buddhism and Buddhist sites.

Introduction

Buddhism is one of the major world religions founded in the sixth century B.C.E. on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama in Indian sub-continent, which, later spread to most parts of Asia through China, Korea, and Japan, and on to the West. Buddhism teaches individuals to reach the state of nirvana adhering to the path showed by the Buddha. Anyone can get enlightened with proper practice, wisdom and meditation (Agarwal, 2015, p. 1). Buddhism is an atheistic religious movement and the philosophy of correct way to live set fold by the Buddha, the enlightened one. Buddhism focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life. Buddhists regard him as an enlightened teacher who taught to free other beings from suffering. His teachings aim at eliminating ignorance by understanding the law of dependent origination, which is the root cause of sufferings (de Rooij & Koczan, 2015, p. 1).

Tourism etymologically, is meant for an action or process of leaving a point, traveling round and returning the same point again (Theobald, 1997, p. 6). Tourism is denoted as a variety of activities for Hinduism. Sanskrit literature mention different terms for tourism derived from the root *atan*, such as paryatan (going out for pleasure and knowledge), deshatan (going out to other countries primarily for earning), tirthatan (pilgrimage) etc. (Negi, 1982, p. 22). Tourism is an act of self-expression (like art, writing or speech), desire to enjoy freedom (freedom to spend, to movement, to experience); and to communicate these desires in commercial, aesthetic, physical, virtual, real, and emotional travel and tourism decisions and actions (Kunwar, 2017, p.5).

The concept of travel in Buddhism is seemed to have initiated by the Buddha himself. Pilgrimage got much importance as the Buddha treasured it as a sacred act for the followers of Buddhism. The Buddha mentioned four important places that should be visited with the reverence in heart and mind. They are: Lumbini: “Here the Tathagata was born! Buddhagaya: “Here the Tathagata became fully enlightened, in unsurpassed, Supreme Enlightenment!, Sarnath: “Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Law!, Kusinagara: “Here the Tathagata passed away into Nirvana! Further the Buddha said, “And whosoever, Amanda, should die on such a pilgrimage, with his heart established in faith, he at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness.” (Digha Nikaya - Mahaparinibbana Sutta No. 16, in Walshe (Trans.) (1995), pp. 263-264; Anguttar Nikaya - Sambejanya Sutta No. 120, in Bhikkhu (Trans.) (2012), p. 500). Naquin & Yu (1992) mention that very first group of people who engaged in Buddhist pilgrimage

in China were monks, scholars and literati, starting around 265 AD. Undertaking pilgrimage became common and the practice peaked during the Tang dynasty when many lay people, regardless of their social class, started making pilgrimages to the Buddhist Sacred Mountains of China (in Wong, McIntosh, & Ryan, 2013, p. 214-218). According to Bremer, it is very difficult to draw a clear dividing line between pilgrims and tourists because there is very thin line in-between these two phenomena. At present many religious and sacred sites in China are promoted as historical and cultural sites worth visiting for secular reasons in addition to their religious charisma. The monasteries and temples in China are not necessarily perceived by the Chinese Hans as holy, but often simply as interesting destinations that are worth a visit and provide a 'sense of cultural depth' (Zhang et al., 2007, p. 105). These studies show that Buddhist people first traveled to sacred sites out of faith for peace, good health, prosperity or merits. In due course of time, faith among some Chinese for sacred places declined but the trend of travel continued out of cultural sense for recreation, leisure, knowledge etc.

Buddhist people visit four major Buddhist sites (Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar), and other Buddhist shrines, in pilgrimage aspiring for religious merits and fortunate rebirth out of devotion to the Buddha's word. Tourists, irrespective of their color, caste, or faith around the world are attracted by Buddhist heritages as the Buddha's teaching of compassion, non-violence, peaceful co-existence and fraternity has become more relevant in today's chaotic world than ever before. Dignitaries like former US Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Bhutanese queen mother Ashi Wangchuk, Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and many others have commented, "The dream of my life has come true while being in Lumbini, the holy birthplace of Lord Buddha" on the visitors' book of Lumbini Development Trust during their Lumbini visit. There are millions of devotees who are eager to fulfill their lifetime dream of visiting major Buddhist pilgrimage sites quoted by the Buddha.

The Buddhist heritage sites of Greater Lumbini Area (GLA) encompass more than 200 historic sites mainly associated with the life of Sakyamuni Buddha and two earlier Buddhas namely, Krakuchhanda and Kanakamuni. A tourist route named "Lumbini Buddhist Circuit" connects the major Buddhist sites of the GLA (TRPAP, 2007, p. 41). The Buddhist route that encompasses the birthplaces of three Buddhas is found nowhere else in the whole world. The pilgrims will have very good opportunity to worship and pay homage to three Buddhas in a single trip. Despite a huge potential, tourism has not benefitted the region in a way it otherwise had to. Buddhism based thematic tourism development would definitely yield more benefit to the GLA and Nepal as in Mecca Madinah, Jerusalem and Vatican City. The study of relation between Buddhism and tourism in the context of GLA is undertaken to create new understanding to contribute to the quality tourism development in the region.

Literature review

The historic sites associated with the life of three Buddhas, namely Sakyamuni, Kanakamuni and Krakuchhanda in the GLA have been studied by Mukherji (1969), Fuhrer (1972), Rijal (1978; 1996), Pradhan (1979), Pandey (1985), Tange & Urtec, (1998), Guruge (1998), Gurung (1998), Kwaak & Brenes (2002), Bidari (1990; 2002; 2004; 2007; 2009) from the perspective of history and archaeology. These studies have explored, excavated, conserved and highlighted the historical past of GLA. These studies contributed to enlist Lumbini into World Heritage List and Tilaurakot and Ramagrama in the tentative list. Another group of scholars: DEVA (2004), Acharya (2005), Ghimire (2005; 2006; 2011; 2013; 2014; 2017), TRPAP. (2007), Nyaupane (2009), Rai (2010; 2011; 2013), Sapkota (2011), LDT (2011; 2012; 2013; 2017 a; 2017 b), Giri (2011; 2013; 2014), Bhusal (2012), Kunwar & Ghimire (2012), Baral (2013), ICOMOS Nepal (2013), UNESCO (2013), KC & Gewali (2014), Nyaupane, Timothy & Poudel (2015), Neupane, F. K. (2015), Panthi (2016), and Basnet & Neupane (2020) have focused on sacred complex, touristic destination, tourism development, development of Lumbini, history, peace, Buddhism, culture and religion. Some of these studies are related to bio-diversity, nature conservation and environment protection.

Review of previous studies shows a dearth of research in understanding of relation between Buddhism and tourism, at least in the context of GLA. The study of relation between the two may contribute to enhance the quality of thematic tourism in the region; therefore, this study aims at revealing the relation between Buddhism and tourism.

Conceptual framework of the study

Present study is carried out in three phases. In the first part of the conceptual framework, Buddhism and Buddhist heritages in GLA are analyzed and discussed. In second part, the study examines the cultural and heritage tourism in GLA. In third part, the relation between Buddhism and tourism is studied in the context of Greater Lumbini Area by employing triangulation (research method) of visitors' survey, field observation and in-depth interview. The study is concluded with the summary of the findings.

Methodology

Methodologically, mixed research method of qualitative and quantitative approaches has been employed in this research. Triangulation of questionnaire survey, in-depth interview, and field observation is employed to make the study findings more reliable and valid. Following sources of data and research method are employed in this study.

Field observation. The researcher carefully observed ten prominent Buddhist sites of Greater Lumbini Area. State of conservation, site presentation, infrastructure, and support service were cautiously observed at each of Buddhist heritage sites. The findings of the observation were carefully noted and recorded that were later cross examined with the data obtained from questionnaire and interview for verification. Field observation was undertaken by following the procedure given below.

Subject, population and sample selection. There are about 150 archaeological sites so far identified in the Greater Lumbini Area. Ten sites namely, Lumbini and Devadaha of Rupandehi; Tilaurakot, Kudan, Gotihawa, Niglihawa, Araurakot, Sagarahawa and Sisaniya of Kapilavastu district and Ramagrama of Nawalparasi district were visited at least three times as per the necessity of the study from 2015 to 2017. Necessary information and data were collected. Present situation of the sites was carefully studied.

Data collection procedure. Field data were collected primarily using the diary method; however, photography and audio/visual recording method also were employed. All possible important information from each of the sites was noted down in a diary. The screening and categorizing of the findings were finalized as soon as possible. Both participant observation and non-participant observation methods were adopted as per the demand of the situation.

Data analysis. Data collected from field observation was analyzed with the help of qualitative explanation. Words, sentences, and paragraph were used to analyze the data.

Visitors' survey. Questionnaire was executed as one of the most important instruments in this research. Two sets of questionnaires, one set for the domestic tourists and the other for the foreign tourists were prepared. The questionnaires were divided into different parts and contained both close and open-ended questions. The aim of the questionnaire included two parts: i) Inquiry about personal information of the respondent and ii) A set of five questions (What are you in Greater Lumbini? Do you know other sites around Lumbini? Are you Planning to visit any site of the GLA? Is Lumbini your main destination or secondary? How long do stay in the GLA?).

Subject, population and sample selection. Total 1193828 tourists visited Lumbini in 2014. Of them, the strata wise populations of research were: domestic- 902,621, Indian-154,216 and passport holder- 136,991. Keeping the annual visitors increment trend of Lumbini in mind, ten percent increment of the total visitors of year 2014 was estimated for the population of study that calculated to be 1313210. The sample size was determined by employing Taro Yamane formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n = number of samples

N = number of total populations

e = acceptable sampling error (95% confidence level and 0.05 significant level)

The total sample number was calculated 399.87 by using above formula which was round figured to 400. Stratified random sampling method was used in sample selection. Out of 400 total sample size, the strata wise sample size determined was 100 for domestic tourists (25%), 100 for Indian tourists (25%) and 200 for Passport Holder (50%) tourists according to their economic contribution and other significance in the tourism of the area. But 425 questionnaires were executed randomly among pre-stratified visitors found in the study area.

Data collection procedure. The questionnaire method was employed to collect the data from the tourists visiting the Greater Lumbini Area. 211 Passport Holders, 101 Indians and 113 Domestic visitors totaling 425 tourists were the size of the sample. The visitors' survey was executed as per the stratified random sampling method. The questionnaires in Nepali language for the domestic tourists and in English for the foreigners were prepared for the purpose of this study.

Data analysis. The data were processed by employing SPSS 2019. Numerical measurement such as: frequency, percentage, ratio etc. were used as a measurement tool to analyze the data. Analytical tools such as comparative table, ratios, percentage, and correlation regression analysis were appropriately used. After analysis of the data, the outcomes were meaningfully presented in line with the objectives of the study to answer the research questions.

In-depth Interview. In-depth interviews were taken with tourism related government officials, site managers, monastic communities, community leaders and experts in following ways.

Subject, population and sample selection. In-depth interview was taken with total of 8 key informants of related fields. Expert group was selected carefully who have deeper insight on Buddhism, tourism, marketing and planning, and occupational sectors. For which non-random purposive sample selection method was employed. Categorically, 3 monk/nun, 1 site managers, 1 heritage experts (heritage -1, tourism -1), and 2 from private sectors (Hotel Association-1 & Travel Association-1) were interviewed in a great detail for deeper understanding the relation between Buddhism and tourism (See Appendix).

Data collection Procedure. The experts were carefully selected so as to covering major fields of expertise. The experts were interviewed one by one from January 5 to November 20 in 2018. An interview lasted for one hour in average which dug into understanding relation between the two. The interviewees were informed about the purpose, the expected duration of the interview. The interviewees were assured of confidentiality of the information, and the use of the instrument. The key data were summarized immediately after the interview.

Data analysis. The data were transcribed and reviewed. The patterns or themes of the responses were grouped in a meaningful way. Qualitative descriptors were used to present the results. The results were described in unbiased manner but carefully interpreted in the line with objectives of the study.

Buddhism and Buddhist heritages in GLA

A Buddha is a fully enlightened one who has realized ultimate truth to free sentient beings from bondage or suffering. Nepali dictionary describes the meaning of the Buddha as 'wise, knowledgeable, rational and awakened person' (Sharma, 2012, p. 961). The term Buddha is derived from the Pali root *budh*, meaning 'awakened from the ignorance. Buddha is a person, who has attained supreme knowledge, wisdom, nirvana (salvation) and enlightenment; and is a flawless being who has got victory over all human frailties. Born in 623 BC in Lumbini Nepal, Sakyamuni Buddha was simply a human being like us. He got enlightenment after a long practice of meditation, penance and proper rationalization of phenomena, and became supreme human being, the enlightened one (Basnet & Neupane, 2020, p. 1).

The Buddha preached only about the true law of nature. He never taught Buddhism as a religion, as religion is conceived today, and the term 'philosophy' was not coined in those days. After his first sermon, the Buddha continuously preached his doctrine for 45 years. But he never wished to establish Buddhism as a religion. During expansion and evolution of Buddhism, after emerging of Mahayana sect, the Buddha was regarded as a god and his doctrines were established as religious commands, and thus Buddhism became a religion (ibid, p. 17). The concept of religion and philosophy came into existence much later the Buddha's lifetime. Today, Buddhism has been established both as a religion and a philosophy. Buddhism has qualities of both religion and philosophy as well. Therefore, the Buddha's sermon is both religion and philosophy. The doctrine of the Buddha propounded in 6th Century BC and taught for forty-five years in south east Asia later expanded around the globe. Today, the Buddha's doctrines of world peace are adopted as religion, philosophy and science. It is followed as a religion in almost half of Asia and is being a popular religion even in Europe and America. Similarly, Buddhism has been established as a prominent philosophy of peace, harmony and non-violence world over at present (Neupane, 2015, p. 8).

Buddhism is regarded as the science of spirituality that systematically teaches to remain in peaceful mental state and help others remain peaceful. Spirituality is derived from the Latin word *spiritus*, spirit, the essential part of the person (Piles, 1990), which 'controls the mind and the mind controls the body' (Neuman, 1995 p. 48). Chan (2006, p. 5) defines spirituality is an inherent quality of all humans that drives the search for meaning and purpose in life. Spirituality encompasses physical, psychological and social components (Henderson, 1967). Ambroz, & Ovsenik (2011 p. 75) opines that the concept of spirituality is often mistakenly swapped with religious beliefs which is not in reality. Recent studies have showed that spirituality is related to mental health and physical health in general and can be utilized for health benefits (Baker, 2003). Meditation is an important tool widely used in spiritual practices. Meditation helps overcome negative attitude to live a tranquil life. A study of Buddhists by scientists at the University of California has also found that meditation tames amygdala, the frontier part of the brain involved with fear and anger to overcome them (Conlin, 2004). Spirituality, in general, has recently become an important subject of research that has added a new dimension to the tourism industry. Spiritual tourism, also termed as religious heritage tourism, includes all the religions, sacred places, emotional attachment to these centers and infrastructure facilities for the tourists (Ghimire & Rai, 2015, 2). Spiritual tourism is the visit to the hearts and the minds of the sages at different places and especially at where existed the abundant civilized environments" (Tù, 2004). 'Interestingly, spiritual tourists have been classified as practicing pilgrimage, religious, special interest, cultural or experiential tourists by academic researchers' (Haq & Jackson 2009; in Haq, 2011 p.22).

Heritage is defined as abroad concept that includes tangible assets, such as natural and cultural environments, encompassing of landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments as well as intangible assets such as collections, past and continuing cultural practices knowledge and living experiences (ICOMOS, 1999, p. 1). Greater Lumbini Area is an outstanding heritage tourism circuit hallowed by the births Krakuchhanda, Kanakamuni, and Sakyamuni, the three Buddhas. It is the best place for Dhamma discourses, meditation, worship of Buddhas birthplaces, spend old age, a reclusive and spiritual vacation. The region also offers an ample opportunity for spiritual learning and self-realization, visit/worship Lumbini international monasteries, offering dan, pilgrimage to sacred shrines. These whole bunches of pious acts of self-purification, devotional pilgrimage, donations, worship, meditation etc. make spiritual/pilgrimage activities in GLA which is a lifetime dream of many aspirants and eager people around the world.

Greater Lumbini Area is extended in Rupandehi, Kapilavastu and Nawalparasi districts over an area of 5,260 sq. km in the southwestern plains of Nepal (LDT, 2017 b, p. 17). Verardi (2002) has listed 136 important archaeological sites only in the

area of Kapilavastu district between the Kodhi and the Banganga rivers (p, 40-44). Three Buddhas namely: Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Sakyamuni were born at Gotihawa, Niglihawa and Lumbini respectively within the radius of 30 km in Greater Lumbini Area. A pilgrimage to Greater Lumbini Area is a lifetime opportunity for Buddhists and peace-loving people around the world as they can pay homage to three Buddhas' birthplaces in a single trip. Lumbini, the birthplace of Sakyamuni Buddha was inscribed in world heritage site in 1997 while Tilaurakot, ancient Sakya capital city where Prince Siddhartha spent 29 years of his early life; and Ramagrama, single stupa containing original relic of the Buddha are in World Heritage Tentative List (UNESCO, 2013, p. 28). The GLA houses more than 200 archaeological sites associated with the life of three Buddhas namely Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni and Sakyamuni. Such circuit encompassing the birthplace of three Buddhas within the radius of 30 km. is found nowhere else in the world. The GLA is extended over an area of 5,260 sq. km in the southwestern plains of Nepal (LDT, 2017 b, p. 17). Verardi (2002) has listed 136 important archaeological sites only in the area of Kapilavastu district between the Kodhi and the Banganga rivers (p, 40-44) that exceeds 200 in the region. Major tangible heritages that are associated with the life of Sakyamuni, Kanakamuni and Krakucchanda Buddha include: Kudan, Gotihawa, Tilaurakot, Niglihawa, Sagarahawa, and Sisaniya of Kapilavastu district; Lumbini and Devadaha sites of Rupandehi district; and Ramagrama of Paresis district.

The GLA is very rich intangible heritages as the region is the melting pot of people from Himalayas, Hills and Teri. The region is multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious where dozens of interesting intangible heritages can be recorded but this study includes only languages, religions, and festivals of the region. The society of Lumbini area is composed of multi ethnic, multi lingual, multi religious and cultural group of people with majority of the Hindus and the Muslims. The fairs and festivals are the byproduct of religions and socio-economy in the society. The festivals are the part and parcel of the society which serves multi dimensions: as a mean of religious rituals and activities; a source of entertainment; and an opportunity share sorrows and happiness each other. All people celebrate international festivals; mainly, Nepalese nationals rejoice national festivals; and the ethnic communities observe their respective religious and ethnic festivals. However, best wishes and greetings are exchanged to each other among the religious/ethnic groups of people during these ethnic festivals; and festivals have been an important means to extend cooperation and harmony among the people in the GLA (Rai, 2010, p. 106 &107). The intangible heritages of GLA includes: sixty-two daily religious activities and one hundred fourteen annual Buddhist events and celebrations; and twenty-four national festivals that can attract large number of visitors to the GLA throughout the year round (LDT, 2017, p. 39-40).

Cultural and heritage tourism in GLA

Cultural and Heritage Tourism serves as a tool of economic development which drives the economic growth by attracting visitors from outside a host community, who are motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution (Silberberg 1995, p. 362). Such travel is focused upon experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, the visual and performing arts and special lifestyles, values, traditions, and events (Rosenfeld, 2008, p. 2).

Cultural heritage assets form the building blocks for cultural tourism (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Norman (2012, p. 20) roughly grouped spiritual tourist experiences into five varietal categories – healing, experimental, quest, retreat, and collective – that often overlap. Spirituality is not always characterized with religion. Spiritual tourists have described themselves in a number of different ways; as ‘travelers’, ‘seekers’, ‘pilgrims’, ‘devotees’, ‘conference/events/festival attendants’ and ‘adventurers’. ‘Interestingly, spiritual tourists have been classified as practicing pilgrimage, religious, special interest, cultural or experiential tourists’ by academic researchers (Haq & Jackson 2009; in Haq, 2011, p.22). Spirituality lies as a heart of culture and human civilization. Amram (2007) illustrates seven dimensions of Spiritual Intelligence (SI). These dimensions are worth reviewing in the context of Lumbini spiritual tourism development. These dimensions are as follows:

(a) *Consciousness*: Developed refined awareness and self-knowledge; (b) *Grace*: Living in alignment with the sacred manifesting love for and trust in life; (c) *Meaning*: Experiencing significance in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, including in the face of pain and suffering; (d) *Transcendence*: Going beyond the separate egoic self into an interconnected wholeness; (e) *Truth*: Living in open acceptance, curiosity, and love for all creation (all that is); (f) *Peaceful surrender to Self* (Truth, God, Absolute, true nature); and (g) *Inner-Directedness*: inner-freedom aligned in responsible wise action (Amram, 2007, p. 1).

Lumbini as such ‘spiritual destination’ demonstrates an appropriate milieu that the visitors can experience aforementioned dimensions (Ghimire & Rai, 2015, p. 3). There are certain attributes and characteristics that make Lumbini’s universal value outstanding as a world heritage site (UNESCO, 2013a p.5). Pilgrims and visitors come to Lumbini and express their religious and spiritual sentiments in various ways, often linked to their diverse cultures. They come to worship, meditate, chant, beat on drums, offer gold leaves, offer coins, incense or milk. They all come with the expectations of peace and harmony from the birthplace of the Buddha (ibid p.11). Many scholars designate Lumbini as *an unmatched spiritual destination of the Buddhist world. The spiritual feeling of being at the holy birthplace of the Enlightened One nurtures devotion*

and faith in their mind and fills their heart with purity, compassion and wisdom (Ghimire & Rai, 2015, p. 7). Tourists visit Lumbini for listening Dharma discourses from monk or nun; meditation and self-purification; spiritual learning and self-realization; visit/worship Lumbini international monasteries; offering dan; worship to the birthplace of the Buddha; pilgrimage to Kapilavastu sites; pilgrimage to Ramagrama sites; spend old age/breathe; spend a reclusive and spiritual vacation; and pilgrimage to Devadaha sites (Ghimire and Rai, 2015, p. 3). While touring Lumbini, visitors should start from the north to south, subsequently proceeding ahead to enter the Monastic Zone. They pray, meditate and worship in monasteries. Continuous prayers, meditation, and worship in monasteries help them increase faith and purify their mind. After having certain level of mental clarity, devotion, and faith, they are now eligible to enter the Sacred Garden, hallowed by the birth of the Buddha to realize apprehensive nature of impermanence. The historical monuments refresh history of the Buddha’s birth and make visitors sentimental in the sacred complex. Its sanctity and serenity transmit eternal peace and solace. Moreover, one can feel the Buddha’s blessing within the tranquility. The pilgrims may be overwhelmed by the spirituality of the complex and make vow to the teaching of the Buddha (Rai, 2010 p.19).

Government of Nepal has taken some initiatives to develop tourism through excavations of historic sites and conservation, infrastructure development and publicity campaigns. The government enforced Lumbini Development Trust Act, 1985 and established Lumbini Development Trust for the implementation of Lumbini Master Plan and the exploration, conservation and development of greater Lumbini Area. To publicize and promote the Buddha and his teachings in national and international levels, the Government of Nepal organized First World Buddhist Summit in 1998, followed by hosting of First International Buddhist Conference 2001, Second World Buddhist Summit 2004, and Second International Buddhist Conference 2018. The Government has also established Gautama Buddha International Award in 2011 and commenced to award from the same year. To further accelerate the promotion of Buddhism and Lumbini, the government organized Visit Lumbini Year in 2012.

Despite several problems, tourist visitation in Lumbini is gradually increasing, except in 2015, the years devastating earthquake shattered Nepal. Following table illustrates category-wise tourist visitation to Lumbini from 2014 to 2019.

Table No. 1: Six-year tourist visitation in Lumbini

Year	Nepali	Indian	Third Country	Total	Percentage difference of consecutive years
2014	902621	154216	136991	1193828	
2015	488852	130262	129180	748294	-37.32% (2014 & 2015)

Year	Nepali	Indian	Third Country	Total	Percentage difference of consecutive years
2016	1015158	134269	136253	1285680	71.81% (2015 & 2016)
2017	1251346	155444	145796	1552586	20.80% (2016 & 2017)
2018	1170571	193635	169904	1534110	-1.19% (2017& 2018)
2019	1178140	206171	174015	1558326	1.58% (2018 & 2019)

Source: LDT, Information Centre, 2014-2019

Total of 1193828 tourists visited in Lumbini in 2014. Category-wise tourist numbers in the year were: Nepalese (902621), Indian (154216) and Third country (136991). The number of tourists to Lumbini decreased by -37.32 % than in 2014 to be 748,294 in 2015 because of devastating earthquake and political instability. Tourist visitation swelled to 1,285,680 in 2016 which is increment by 71.81% than the previous year. Lumbini received 12,51,346 Nepalese, 1,55,444 Indian and 1,45,796 third-country tourists in 2017 totaling 15,52,586 that make 20.76 % increment to the previous year's total tourists' arrival. Lumbini had received total of 1,534,110 tourists in 2018 which increased to be 1558326 in 2019. 1178140 Nepalese, 206171 Indian and 174015 third-country visitors visited Lumbini in 2019 that makes 1.58 % increment in total comparing to 2018.

Speedy development activities of Lumbini Development Trust, wider range of publicity of Lumbini, better accommodation and road way facilities and combined positive impact can be identified as reasons of increment of tourist (LDT, 2018). It shows that promotion of Buddhism and Buddhist sites in the GLA has caused growth in tourist visitation in the region. This study therefore is undertaken to understand the relation between Buddhism and tourism.

Relation between Buddhism and tourism

The studies show that tourism begun with touring to sacred Buddhist shrines in many Buddhist countries. Pilgrimage is defined as travelling to a sacred/religious place as a devotee and is a form of tourism. According to Naquin & Yu (1992), Buddhist pilgrimage destinations are associated with apparitions of Buddhist Great Beings. Such sites became hallowed as sacred sites and evolved as the important Buddhist pilgrimage destinations. This is the case of Pu-Tuo, the earthly apparitions of Guan Yin, also known as Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the deity to which Pu-Tuo-Shan is exclusively dedicated, have been recorded in Buddhist scriptures and are believed in by many Buddhists. Subsequently, monasteries were built near the stupas. The Buddhist monasteries symbolically represent locations where the continuation of Buddha's teaching takes place and they become the symbol of Buddhism when and where the religion plants its roots in a new place (Keyes, 1987, p. 348).

Bremer tells that a review of the religious tourism literature reveals religious sites, while a few academic studies investigate the host/guest relationship at sacred sites and only a very few of those studies refer to the Buddhist religion. In addition, it is generally the tourists' side that is studied which are commonly concentrated in the motivations of the visitors of sacred sites and their behavior. He opines that pilgrims and tourists share four common concerns that are: both demonstrate a concern for space and deeply attach to special places. They have an articulation of identities. They keep pervasive concern with aesthetics; they regard much to the beautiful, uplifting and edifying things. And further, he opines that all things, all places and all experiences become potential commodities in the tourist economy; and Buddhism (religion) also becomes commodities without exception (Bremer, 2004, pp. 3-6).

Pilgrims and tourists are considered as dichotomous. Many literatures have portrayed dichotomous nature of pilgrims and tourists. Looking at the dichotomy between pilgrims and tourists, on the basis of WTO definition of tourist and the Oxford Dictionary definition of pilgrims, both pilgrim and tourist have to leave his/her home to get closer to the centre of his religion, a pilgrim thus is a kind of tourist (Wong, 2011, p. 37). Buddha, having formed a Sangha, the monastic community, entrusted with the mission to continue his teachings after his parinirvana. To ensure the lay people would continue to listen to the Sangha's preaching, the Buddha told Ananda, one of his principal disciples to arrange to build stupas at the crossroads enshrining the relics after his demise so that the members of the Sangha and lay Buddhist would thereby pay reverence to his relics. The Buddhist literature mention of eight relic stupas built enshrining Buddha's relics. Apart from devotional aspects, pilgrimage involves sightseeing, travelling, visiting different places and, in some cases, traveling by air or sea, etc. and buying the local memorabilia. (Gupta, 1999, p. 91). According to Turner and Turner (1978, p. 20) from tourism industry's perspective, there is no clear difference between a tourist and a pilgrim. They call a Christian in pilgrimage is a "tourist half a pilgrim and half a tourist". Too (2003) states this is how the Buddhists pay reverence and receive Buddha's teaching in an early form of the Buddhist pilgrimage and to absorb Buddha's teaching (in Wong, McIntosh, & Ryan, 2013, p. 216).

According to Buddhism, a man never gets birth on his own consent. He is bound to take birth because of the karma-klesha (passed defilements) of previous life. The cause of the man's birth is his own thoughts and actions. Human birth is an ample opportunity to free himself from endless ocean of sufferings (the vicious cycle of life and death) because liberation or nirvana from the defilements is possible only in human realm, and is impossible in other realms (Basnet & Neupane, 2020, p. 17). Devotees visit sacred Buddhist shrines in pilgrimage for forgiveness of their sins, peace, prosperity, good health and happiness in present life and rebirth in higher

realm as the Buddha himself told the importance of pilgrimage to Ananda. Hence, there is a deep relation between Buddhism and tourism but it has not studied yet.

The relation between tourism and cultural heritages has been studied in some places. Mrda & Scitaroci (2015, p. 8) has proposed a model to see the relation between tourism and cultural heritage. The main criteria of using the set of valorization model are: 1) the long-term protection of the area in the form of the cultural values, 2) the preservation of value, specifics and identity of the area by identifying, evaluating and preserving the heritage resources / attractions, and 3) the creation of socio-cultural and experiential aesthetic worthy and globally competitive tourism environment with positive effects on the state of the local community and local recognition (p. 8). In the past, conflict theory has formed the basis of most of the studies of relationships between tourism and other sectors. Mc Kerchera, Hoa, & Crosb (2005) has outlined a continuum reflecting different levels of maturity in the relationship between these two sectors. According to tourism and cultural heritage, seven different possible relationships are denial, unrealistic expectation, parallel existence, conflict, imposed co-management, partnership, and cross purposes (p. 544-546). There is dearth of studies on relation between Buddhism and tourism. Present study has studied the relation between Buddhism and tourism in the context of GLA as follows.

Findings of the study. Field observation, visitors' survey, and in-depth interview were undertaken to understand the relation between Buddhism and tourism in the context of Greater Lumbini Area. Some important findings were as follows.

Field observation. The researcher visited the study sites multiple times during study period, from 2015-2017. The researcher meticulously observed ten Buddhist sites and interviewed with the local people to deeply understand the relation between Buddhism and tourism. The researcher assumed that development of a Buddhist site will help promote the Buddha and Buddhism. For the comparative study purpose, number of tourists at a destination determines the quality tourism (the more tourist number the better tourism), though it is not only the determining factor of quality tourism. Development of ten destinations was studied under the headings connectivity, site presentation and conservation, utility and worship facilities and interpretation system, and then was compared with tourist visitation at the given destination. The findings are presented in following table.

Table No. 2: Comparative table of tourist visitation and development of Buddhist sites

Tourist Destination	Tourist Number in 2017	Destination Development			
		Connectivity	Site presentation and conservation	Utility and worship facilities available	Interpretation System available
Lumbini	1552586	Well-connected with broad black top road from all sides	Lumbini is being well developed according to well-planned Master Plan. The site is well presented and conserved.	All types of utility facilities such as toilet, restaurant, souvenir shop etc. are available to meet need of all visitor types.	Maps, signboards, notice boards, brochures, guides are available.
Tilaurakot	51604	Connected with black top road from two sides	The site is being conserved but not presented in a way that attracts more visitors.	Limited utility facilities are available but cannot meet the need of high-end tourists.	Limited maps, signboards, brochures, guides are available.
Kudan	36502	Connected with black top road from one side	Conserved to some extent but not presented in a way that attracts more visitors	No any utility facilities except one toilet are available.	Limited maps and signboards are available.
Niglihawa	24124	Connected with black top road from one side	Conserved to some extent but not presented in a way that attracts more visitors	No any utility facilities except one toilet are available.	Limited maps and signboards are available.

Tourist Destination	Tourist Number in 2017	Destination Development			
		Connectivity	Site presentation and conservation	Utility and worship facilities available	Interpretation System available
Gotihawa	22458	Connected with gravel road from one side	Poorly conserved and not presented in a way that attracts more visitors	No any utility facilities are available.	Limited maps and signboards are available.
Araurakot	18679	Connected with gravel road from one side	Not conserved and not presented well.	No any utility facilities are available.	Few maps and signboards are available.
Sagarahawa	15160	Connected with gravel road from one side	Not conserved and not presented well.	No any utility facilities are available.	No interpretation facility was observed
Ramagrama	7,787	Connected with gravel road from one side	Conserved to some extent but not presented in a way that attracts more visitors.	No any utility facilities except one toilet are available.	Few maps and signboards are available.
Bhawanipur (Devadaha)	3032	Connected with black top road from one side	Poorly conserved and not presented in a way that attracts more visitors	No any utility facilities except one toilet and some restaurants are available	Few maps and signboards are available.
Sisaniya	2145	Connected with gravel road from one side	Not conserved and not presented well.	No any utility facilities are available.	No interpretation facility was observed

Source: LDT, Information Centre, 2017; Visitor book of Kapilavastu & Ramagrama (2017); Personal Observation (2015 - 2017)

Buddhist sites namely, Lumbini, Tilaurakot, Kudan, Niglihawa, Gotihawa, Araurakot, Sagarahawa, Ramagrama, Bhawanipur (Devadaha), Sisaniya were visited

by 1552586, 51604, 36502, 24124, 22458, 18679, 15160, 7,787, 3032, and 2145 tourists (domestic and foreign) respectively in the year 2017. Above table shows that Lumbini, the destination with the largest tourist visitation has the best conditions of destination development indicators (connectivity, site presentation and conservation, utility and worship facilities and interpretation system) while Sisaniya received the least number of tourists in the year has the worst condition of tourism development indicators. The same pattern of relation between tourist visitation and tourism infrastructure development can be observed in other remain eight Buddhist sites. The table illustrates a sequential pattern that the highest the tourist visitation at a destination, the best the condition of destination development indicators; the higher the tourist visitation, the better the condition of destination development indicators; the lower the tourist visitation, the worse the indicators; and the lowest the tourist visitation, the worst the indicators.

While analyzing the reason of above pattern, it is evident that the pressure of tourists' number coupled with tourist activities at a destination compels the tourism authorities and private sectors to explore, excavate and conserve the Buddhist heritages at least for tourist consumption. The force of tourism also motivates site managers and tourism entrepreneurs to develop tourism infrastructures like connectivity, utility and worship facilities, interpretation system etc. Similarly, above table has also indicated that the sites where Buddhism is promoted well (site presentation and conservation, worship facilities, interpretation of Buddhist teachings and heritages) have higher number of tourist visitation and better tourism. Hence, the study findings clearly reveal that Buddhism helps develop tourism and vice versa- tourism promotes Buddhism in GLA.

Visitors' survey. Relation between Buddhism and tourism was studied with stratified random sample of 425 visitors in Lumbini. The relation between the two variables was examined with the help of cross tabulation of various factors. Cross tabulation of faith with identity of visitors in GLA; faith with their pre-knowledge about GLA; faith with their plan to visit any site of the GLA; faith with their priority to GLA; faith with their length of stay in the GLA; and preferred spiritual/pilgrimage activities in GLA were studied in the visitors' survey. The findings are discussed below.

Cross tabulation of faith with identity of visitors. The cross tabulation was studied to understand social distance pattern among 425 visitors. The survey findings showed that chronologically Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and others have stronger feeling of pilgrimage in Lumbini in order that showed social distance among the visitors in Lumbini.

Table No. 3: Cross tabulation of faith with identity of visitors in GLA

Faith/ Religion	What are you in Greater Lumbini?								Total	
	Pilgrim		Tourist		Both		Other			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Buddhist	39	54.2%	43	20.0%	38	36.2%	14	42.4%	134	31.5%
Christian	6	8.3%	92	42.8%	17	16.2%	7	21.2%	122	28.7%
Hindu	27	37.5%	41	19.1%	32	30.5%	9	27.3%	109	25.6%
Other	0	.0%	24	11.2%	11	10.5%	1	3.0%	36	8.5%
Non	0	.0%	15	7.0%	1	1.0%	1	3.0%	17	4.0%
Muslim	0	.0%	0	.0%	6	5.7%	1	3.0%	7	1.6%
Total	72	100%	215	100%	105	100%	33	100%	425	100%

Source: Personal survey, 2018

Above table illustrates that there is a pattern of clear social distance among the GLA visitors. The study reveals that the Buddhist have strongest feeling of pilgrims (54.2%) and both (tourist and pilgrim; 36.2%); then the Hindus have stronger feeling of pilgrims (37.5%) and both (30.5%); and then the Christians have feeling of pilgrims (8.3%) and both (16.2%); whereas, 'Others', 'Non', 'Muslim' categories of visitors have less or no feeling of pilgrims or both while being in the GLA. In reverse, Others, Non, Muslim categories of visitors have identified themselves as tourists or others largely.

Although above table depicts that the Muslim visitors do not visit Lumbini because of the faith in the Buddha, local Muslim communities have been kind enough to safeguard the Buddha's birthplace for centuries. Despite the richness of Buddhist heritage, Lumbini is surrounded by a predominantly Hindu (67%) and Muslim population (32%), with only 1% of the population Buddhist; and more Hindu temples and Muslim mosques are evident than Buddhist stupas in the surrounding area (Nyaupane, 2009, p. 170). The sanctity of Lumbini has remained fully intact despite its sandwiched positioning between the Hindu and Muslim communities. For the Buddhists, GLA is a beautiful oasis that should be visited by all for spirituality. The Hindus regard the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Lord Vishnu and hence is equally holy site for them as well while the Muslims regard it as their pride - world heritage property and source of income. Thus, Lumbini is one of the best examples of interfaith tolerance and harmony for the human civilization, the world can learn from.

It has been clearly understood that the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Christians have felt closer to Lumbini sentimentally and emotionally than 'other', 'non' and 'Muslim' categories of the tourists in GLA. The understanding of social distance

pattern of visitors in the region will help host communities to plan tourism according to the interest of market segments. However, local Muslim communities are kind enough to welcome every faith and creed of people from around the globe with the same modesty and hospitality.

Cross tabulation of Faith with their pre-knowledge. The cross tabulation revealed that Buddhist visitors know more about the heritages of GLA than other faith groups. It means the visitors with faith in Buddhism are more likely to visit more places and spend more money in GLA than other visitor groups because they are aware of abundant Buddhist heritages of the region. As Buddhist visitors have more pre-knowledge, they will plan for longer stay and more spiritual/tourist activities.

Table No. 4: Cross tabulation of faith with their pre-knowledge about GLA

Faith/ Religion	Do you know other sites around Lumbini?						Proportional % between Total & Yes
	Yes		No		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Buddhist	104	34.66%	30	24.00%	134	31.53%	77.61
Christian	83	27.66%	39	31.20%	122	28.70%	68.03
Hindu	76	25.33%	33	26.40%	109	25.65%	69.74
Other	21	7.00%	15	12.00%	36	8.47%	58.33
Non	12	4.00%	5	4.00%	17	4.00%	70.58
Muslim	4	1.33%	3	2.40%	7	1.65%	57.14
Total	300	100.00%	125	100.00%	425	100.00%	

Source: Personal survey, 2018

Above table shows that the Buddhist visitors are the cleverest of all faith groups who have more pre-knowledge about other historic sites of the GLA. The proportional percentage of the Buddhist between the “Yes response” and “total” was 77.61%. Other faith categories in descending order to know about the other sites are- Non (70.58), Hindus (69.72), Christians (68.03), Others (58.33), and finally Muslims (57.14). The study revealed that majority of the Buddhist knows about Kapilavastu, Devadaha and Ramagrama sites around Lumbini.

It can be assumed that Buddhism help develop tourism in the GLA because Buddhist people have more pre-knowledge about Buddhist sites around Lumbini than other faith categories and pre-knowledge plays important role in buying more tour packages and staying longer at the destination. Greater Lumbini Buddhist Circuit package can be sold to them while other faith categories need more information about the other historic site to sell the package. The visitors may not manage time

to visit other sites even though they are informed of the peripheral heritages at the destination.

Cross tabulation of faith with their plan to visit other sites. The cross tabulation was conducted to understand the relation between faith-based tourist categories and their plan to visit other sites in the periphery of Lumbini. The study showed that largest percent of Buddhists had planned to visit other sites around Lumbini than other visitor categories. Following table illustrates the cross tabulation of faith and visit plan of the 425 visitors.

Table No. 5: Cross tabulation of Faith with their plan to visit other sites of the GLA

Faith/ Religion	Are you Planning to visit any site of the GL						Proportional % between Total & Yes
	Yes		NO		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Buddhist	44	36.06%	90	29.71%	134	31.53%	32.83
Christian	38	31.15%	84	27.72%	122	28.70%	31.14
Hindu	32	26.23%	77	25.41%	109	25.65%	29.35
Other	5	4.10%	31	10.23%	36	8.47%	13.88
Non	2	1.64%	15	4.95%	17	4.00%	11.76
Muslim	1	0.82%	6	1.98%	7	1.65%	14.28
Total	122	100%	303	100%	425	100%	

Source: Personal survey, 2018

Above table shows that the chronological order of faith categories of the tourists from most eager to least interested is Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Other, Muslim and Non with their proportional percent between Total & Yes 32.83 %, 31.14 %, 29.35 %, 13.88 %, 11.76 %, and 14.28 % respectively. This table also illustrates that Buddhism helps transfer more tourists from Lumbini to other parts of the region.

The study shows that Buddhism helps develop tourism because larger percentage of visitors with Buddhist faith have plan to visit other Buddhist sites around Lumbini than other faith group. It can be assumed that Buddhist visitors regard GLA as the dreamland of their life. They plan for longer holidays in the GLA to fulfill their desire. When more people visit the peripheral areas of the main destination, it contributes to tourism development by increasing tourist length of stay, tourist expenditure, and maintaining carrying capacity of the destination. Thus, Buddhism helps to develop tourism in the GLA.

Cross tabulation of faith with their priority to GLA. The cross tabulation study revealed that the largest number of Buddhist and Hindu visitors called GLA, their main destination. Both Buddhists and Hindus regard Lord Buddha as their god. Such beautiful example of religious harmony helps promote Buddhism and tourism together. The survey findings on faith and their priority to GLA is presented in following table.

Table No. 6: Cross tabulation of Faith with their priority to GLA

Faith/ Religion	Is Lumbini your main destination or secondary?						Proportional % between Total & Main
	Main		Secondary		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Buddhist	72	37.71%	62	26.49%	134	31.53%	53.73
Christian	27	14.14%	95	40.60%	122	28.70%	22.13
Hindu	80	41.88%	29	12.40%	109	25.65%	73.39
Other	7	3.66%	29	12.40%	36	8.47%	19.44
Non	3	1.57%	14	5.98%	17	4.00%	17.64
Muslim	2	1.04%	5	2.13%	7	1.65%	28.57
Total	191	100%	234	100%	425	100%	

Source: Personal survey, 2018

The survey findings reveal that largest percent of Hindus (Proportional % between Total & Main; 73.39 %) have Lumbini the main destination and the Buddhist place themselves in second position (53.73%) after the Hindus. While verifying with short interviews, the researcher found that majority of the foreign Buddhist tourists do not come only Lumbini but also visit Bodhgaya, Savannah, Kushinagar and other Buddhist sites of Nepal and India during pilgrimage. So, it justified why the Hindus stood the first in priority setting. Nevertheless, the Hindus also regard the Buddha as the incarnation of the lord Vishnu; the belief also might have helped to result as shown in the table. The Muslim, Christian, Other, and Non faith categories lie in descending order with their proportional percentages 28.57%, 22.13%, 19.44%, and 17.64% respectively.

Tourists undertake more activities and spend more time and money at the main destination than in secondary destination. The study reveals that the group of visitors who believe Lord Buddha as their god (Buddhists and Hindus) regarded Lumbini as main destination of their tours. Hence, it is obvious that the Buddhists and the Hindus spend more time and money in Lumbini out of faith in the Buddha and Buddhism. Thus Buddhism helps develop tourism in the GLA.

Cross tabulation of Faith with their length of stay. The faith categories were tested with their length of stay in the GLA. The study found that the believers spent longer in the GLA than the non-believers. The survey result is presented below.

Table No. 7: Cross tabulation of Faith with their length of stay in the GLA

Faith/ Religion	How long do stay in the GLA?						Total		Proportional Cumulative Score
	Less than 1 day		1 day		More than 1 day				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Buddhist	25	29.76%	44	33.11%	65	31.10%	134	31.50%	308
Christian	13	15.49%	35	23.65%	74	38.30%	122	28.70%	305
Hindu	34	40.47%	48	32.43%	27	14.00%	109	25.65%	211
Other	3	3.57%	7	4.73%	26	13.50%	36	8.50%	95
Non	7	8.33%	6	4.05%	4	2.10%	17	4.00%	31
Muslim	2	2.38%	3	2.03%	2	1.00%	7	1.65%	14
Total	84	100.0%	148	100%	193	100%	425	100.0%	

Source: Personal survey, 2018

Points 1, 2 and 3 were allotted for 'Less than 1 day', '1 day' and 'More than 1 day' respective. And then proportional cumulative scores were calculated to understand category-wise length of stay in GLA. The study found that the Buddhist visitors spend longest time of all in Lumbini which is followed by the Christians, the Hindus, Others, Non and the Muslims with their respective proportional cumulative scores: 308, 305, 211, 95, 31, and 14.

The survey verified the assumption that believers naturally spend longer period of time the GLA than the non-believers. Length of stay determines the quality of tourism at a destination. It means the longer the length of stay, the higher the quality of tourism because tourists spend more money to buy tour packages, support services, shopping and entertainment, accommodation and food services while staying longer at a destination. The heritages and environments of the destination are conserved well when the host communities earn more from tourism. Thus Buddhism helps develop tourism and tourism conserves Buddhism in return.

Most preferred tourism types in GLA. Visitors' survey was executed among stratified random sample of 425 visitors in Lumbini to understand the chronological order of most preferred tourism types in Greater Lumbini Area. The survey findings unveiled Buddhism as the heart and soul of tourism in the GLA. Buddhism, Buddhist culture, archaeology, and spirituality are the main product of tourism in the region. The findings are as follows.

Table No. 8: Most preferred tourism types in GLA

Appropriate Tourism Type in Greater Lumbini	Preferred					Total	Score
	1	2	3	4	5		
Spiritual Peace tourism	14	9	58	94	250	425	1832
Pilgrimage tourism	27	25	77	85	211	425	1703
Culture heritage tourism	11	33	109	132	140	425	1632
Archaeological tourism	27	39	82	110	167	425	1626
Nature history (flora fauna and bird watching)	24	27	121	121	132	425	1585
General sight seeing	46	46	101	104	128	425	1497
Village rural tourism	32	52	131	107	103	425	1472
Medical wellness tourism	55	71	104	110	85	425	1374
Meeting, incentives, conference and exhibition tourism	67	62	116	87	93	425	1352
Cross border tourism	95	39	117	66	108	425	1328

Source: Personal survey, 2018

The study revealed that spiritual/peace tourism is on the top of all tourism types in the region with PCS 1832. It was followed by pilgrimage tourism; culture heritage tourism; archaeological tourism; nature history (flora & fauna and bird watching); general sightseeing; village rural tourism; medical wellness tourism; meeting, incentives, conference and exhibition tourism; and cross border tourism with their respective PCS 1703, 1632, 1626, 1585, 1497, 1472, 1374, 1352, and 1328.

The findings show that ten types of tourisms can be developed in the GLA. All type of tourisms is possible to develop in GLA but main categories are Buddhism based tourisms such as spiritual/peace tourism, pilgrimage tourism, culture heritage tourism, archaeological tourism. The core of these tourisms is Buddhism i.e. Buddhist spirituality, Buddhist history and culture, Buddhist archaeology, Buddhist pilgrimage etc. which attract larger tourist number toward the region. Nature history (flora & fauna and bird watching), General sightseeing, Village rural tourism, Medical wellness tourism, Meeting, incentives, conference and exhibition tourism and Cross border tourism fall under secondary category of the preferred tourism in the region. The study reveals that Buddhism helps develop tourism in GLA.

In-depth interview. Interviews were executed with a group of eight key informants: three Buddhist practitioners senior monk Maitri Mahasthvir (January 6, 2018); Ven. Nareshman Bajracharya, (February 9, 2018); Ven. Bhaddamonika, (January 6,

2018); Er. Saroj Bhattarai, Project Chief, LDT (January 10, 2018) representing site manager; Dr. Suresh Shrestha, Heritage Chief, DoA, (January 28, 2018) representing government; Sanjaya Bajimaya, First Vice President, NATTA, (February 7, 2018), representing travel agency; Sunil Shakya, MD, KGH Group of Hotels, representing hotelier (February 15, 2018); and Prof. Gitu Giri, Professor UT, (February 25, 2018) representing university.

Two main questions were asked to each of the key informants; and were followed by overarching sub questions. The main questions were: 1) How does tourism help in promotion of Buddhism in GLA? And 2) How does Buddhism help in development of tourism in GLA? Important themes/ideas coded from the transcriptions were as follows.

Table No. 9: Main themes revealed on how tourism helps in promotion of Buddhism in GLA.

Main themes revealed	No. of Opinions	%
Tourism generates income that can be used in conserving Buddhist heritages.	7	87.5
Buddhist festivals and events are organized for tourist consumption and they get continued.	6	75
Non-Buddhist visitors become aware of the Buddhist heritage sites, the Buddhist cultures and the teachings of the Buddha.	6	75
Infrastructures are developed around the Buddhist sites that secure the Buddhist heritage	5	62.5
State is motivated for state funding in and around Buddhist sites.	4	50
Tourism businesses campaign in publicity and marketing of the Buddhist heritage, cultures, history, archaeology etc.	3	37.5

Source: Personal interview, 2018

Six main themes were revealed from the in-depth interviews with key informants on how tourism helps in promotion of Buddhism in GLA. Above table illustrates a chronological order most important ideas on how tourism help promote Buddhism in the region. The reasons in order are tourism income conserve Buddhist heritage (87.5%); tourist events and festivals are promoted for tourism consumption (75%); Non Buddhist people know about Buddhist cultures and heritages (75%); infrastructures are developed in and around Buddhist sites (62.5%); state funding is

encouraged (50%); and tourism businesses campaign in publicity and marketing of Buddhism (37.5 %). Thus tourism promotes Buddhism in GLA.

Similarly, six important themes/ideas were coded from the transcriptions for second question. The interview revealed that Buddhism helps in development of tourism as follows.

Table No. 9: Buddhism helps develop tourism in GLA

Main themes revealed	No. of Opinions	%
Buddhist people visit the GLA out of faith despite facility conditions.	8	100
Visitors spend longer period of time in GLA at participate Buddhist festivals, events, conferences.	7	87.5
Buddhist festivals and event attract tourists from around the world.	6	75
Infrastructures developed before, during or after Buddhist events and festivals	6	75
Foreign investments (private and public) are attracted in the region	5	62.5
Interpretation systems, transports, support services, security arrangement are set up the state to meet the need during VIP visits from Buddhist countries and UN.	5	62.5

Source: Personal interview, 2018

The interview findings have set a chronological order thus: Buddhist people visit the GLA out of devotion (100 %); Buddhist festivals and events increases length of stay (87.5%); Buddhist festivals and events attract more visitors (75%); foreign investments are attracted in the region (62.5%); and infrastructures and support services are established before and during events (62.5%). Hence, the study reveals that Buddhism helps in development of tourism in GLA.

Hence, the in-depth interview findings reveal a complementary and positive relation between the Buddhism and tourism. Tourism helps in promotion of Buddhism, and Buddhism helps in the development of tourism in the GLA.

Conclusion

The study has identified a positive and complementary relationship between Buddhism and tourism. The study clearly showed that tourism helps promote Buddhism in Greater Lumbini Area because tourism income conserves Buddhist

heritage; tourist events and festivals are promoted for tourism consumption; Non-Buddhist people know about Buddhist cultures and heritages; infrastructures are developed in and around Buddhist sites; state funding is encouraged; and tourism businesses campaign in publicity and marketing of Buddhism. It was evident in the study that the pressure of tourists' number coupled with tourist activities at a destination compels the tourism authorities and private sectors to explore, excavate and conserve the Buddhist heritages and motivates to develop tourism infrastructures like connectivity, utility and worship facilities, interpretation system etc.

Similarly, Buddhism helps in development of tourism in GLA in many ways: Buddhist people visit the GLA out of devotion; Buddhist festivals and events increase length of stay; Buddhist festivals and events attract more visitors; foreign investments are attracted in the region; and infrastructures and support services are established before and during events. The study also found a pattern of social distance between the believers and non-believers. The believers of Buddhism were found more aware of Buddhist heritages around Lumbini, ready to stay longer and spend more money in the GLA. The core of tourism in GLA was identified Buddhism i.e. Buddhist spirituality, Buddhist history and culture, Buddhist archaeology, Buddhist pilgrimage etc. which attract larger tourist number toward the region and retain longer at the destination.

Hence, it is concluded that there is a complementary and positive relationship between the Buddhism and tourism. It means Buddhism helps promote tourism in GLA and tourism conserves Buddhist heritages and propagates Buddhist teachings of eternal peace, harmony and non-violence.

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