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Tourism Development and the Livelihood of Local People in Dhorpatan, Baglung, Nepal

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Abstract

The major aim of this study is to analyse how tourism influences the way of life for residents of Dhorpatan, Baglung. And it also identifies the livelihood of people in Dhorpatan. Tourism has become a central component of rural livelihood transformation in Dhorpatan. Widely recognized for the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, it is Nepal's only hunting reserve, the region has experienced gradual growth in domestic trekking, hunting tourism and community-based hospitality services. This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design to assess how tourism influences household income, employment, gender roles and socio-economic resilience. Quantitative data were collected from 160 participants through structured surveys. Qualitative insights were gathered from key informant interviews, focus group discussions and case studies. Findings indicate that the households derive partial income from tourism-related activities with tourism contributing to livelihood for income among participating families. Tourism has enhanced income diversification, promoted women's entrepreneurship in homestays and reduced seasonal labour migration. However, the benefits are unevenly distributed because of its infrastructural deficits, seasonal fluctuations and limited community access to hunting reserve revenues. The study concludes that tourism significantly contributes to livelihood improvement in Dhorpatan. Yet sustainable and inclusive governance mechanisms are essential to maximize equitable local benefits. This study will be fruitful for future researchers, students, and local bodies to prepare a plan for its betterment.

Keywords: Dhorpatan, development, employment, livelihood, tourism

Introduction

Tourism has developed into a major international industry that promotes both cross-cultural communication and economic growth. Countries like Indonesia, Brazil, Malaysia, Thailand, and Australia are popular travel destinations. Nepal's Dhorpatan region is currently renowned for its natural beauty, hunting reserve, biodiversity and cultural heritage. This study examines Dhorpatan's current tourism situation using structural functionalism and globalization theory. Previous studies have shown that tourism is a complex industry that influences social, cultural and economic development. The tourism industry directly employs over 122,745 people highlighting its contribution to Nepal's economic growth and job creation.

Dhorpatan region is one of the best destinations in tourism. It is said that rural development in Baglung district's remote and ecologically sensitive areas are fueled by tourism. Dhorpatan is only one of Nepal's hunting reserve locations. These protected areas both shape local livelihood systems and act as hubs for growth driven by tourists. In the Gandaki Province in western Nepal, Dhorpatan offers a unique example of conservation-based tourism tied up with traditional agricultural and pastoral lifestyles. In the past, Dhorpatan's population was based on labour migration, seasonal trade, cattle herding and subsistence farming. The establishment of the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve in 1987 brought about controlled trophy hunting and conservation management. This area attracted tourists from both domestic and foreign countries. In recent years improved road connectivity and increasing internal tourism have further expanded opportunities in homestay operations. Also guiding services, retail trade and agro-based enterprises.

Despite the growing tourism, there are still important concerns about its sustainability, inclusivity and potential poverty reduction. This study explores tourism impacts on local livelihoods and pinpoints structural issues. Also, presenting benefits from being distributed fairly. Tourism is the temporary relocation of a person away from their usual place of residence for more than 24 hours but less than a year for pleasure, business, or other purposes. Khatiwada (2074) claimed that organized services like travel, lodging and sightseeing are included in tourism. Negi (1990) defined tourism as all travel experiences and their outcomes. The 18th and 20th centuries saw the official recognition of the phrases "tourist" and "tourism" (Bhatia, 1997). Travel began as a method of livelihood in the past and gradually developed into organized tourism, especially after the Industrial Revolution.

Tourism can also have detrimental effects on society, making it crucial to manage the industry effectively to secure a promising future for tourism in Nepal (Kafle, 2022). Sherpa (2009) and Sapkota (2020) assert that tourism has raised sociocultural standards, infrastructure and employment. While numerous studies focus on Nepal's tourist industry, very few have specifically examined visitors to the Dhorpatan area. The current body of published literature is more concerned with biodiversity, hunting management and environmental preservation; this study focuses on the status of tourism possibilities and challenges. Therefore, it is necessary with tourist attitudes and usage patterns. Hence, in order to learn about the current state of tourism and livelihood in Dhorpatan of Baglung, this paper is

essential. This study focuses on current tourism situation of Dhorpatan. The main objectives of this study are to analyse the livelihood of people in Dhorpatan and to assess how tourism affects their way of life.

Methodology

The study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach focusing on analytical and descriptive research design, combining quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered concurrently to produce thorough analysis. Primary data were collected through a household survey of 160 households selected through stratified random sampling, Key Informant Interviews (KII); 18 participants (reserve officials, lodge owners, community leaders, tourism entrepreneurs, and teachers) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); four groups (women entrepreneurs, youth groups, livestock herders, marginalized communities). Structured and semi-structured household questionnaires were also utilized to identify income sources, employment, migration patterns, and tourism involvement. Primary data were collected with informed consent. Secondary data were collected from government reports, annual reports of the hunting reserve, published articles, books, and policy documents. This study is based on Livelihood Diversification Theory (LDT) developed by Frank Ellis in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Ellis, 2000). The study mainly focused on micro-level analysis of tourist inflow, local facilities, revenue generation and socio-cultural impacts.

Study Area

Deep gorges, low temperatures, fragile ecosystems, poorly developed soil, a restricted variety of crops, remote, isolated communities, low oxygen pressure, and low air humidity are all common characteristics of Nepal's mountain areas (Upadhyaya, 2006). Dhorpatan Valley lies in the Baglung district of Gandaki Province at an elevation ranging from 2,800 to 3,000 meters above sea level. The region is characterized by alpine meadows, forests, rivers, and scattered rural settlements. The total population of this municipality is 30,068 (NSO, 2021). There are 7485 households in Dhorpatan Municipality. The local population consists primarily of Magar, Chhetri, Brahmin, and Dalit communities engaged in agro-pastoral livelihoods. There is no good system of hospitals and health posts here. Even though the Burtibang Hospital has been built, adequate facilities are not available due to lack of resources and means (Dhorpatan Municipality Annual Report, 2081). Thus, it has been concluded that the road condition of Dhorpatan Municipality is poor, the health condition is also poor, and the mixed settlement of different castes and races, and the settlement of people who follow many religions and cultures is also respected in the field of art and culture.

Findings

Population

The total population of Dhorpatan Municipality, Baglung District in the fiscal year 2080/081 was 30068. Out of which, the male population is 13967 and the female population is 16101. The population of Dhorpatan Municipality Ward No. 9

in the study area is 3608. Out of which, the number of males is 1750 and the number of females is 1858. Tibetan refugees have also been living in Dhorpatan Municipality Ward No. 9 since 2006 BS. According to the data collected by the Reserve Office in 2056 BS, there were 46 families in Chentung, Pakhathar and Ekkhutte of the reserve and the total population of those families was 234. Although Tibetan refugees live in Dhorpatan most of the time, during the winter most of them go down to Kathmandu, Pokhara and Baglung and Beni for the purpose of escaping the cold and doing business. This community has a distinct language, culture and tradition (DHO. H.R. Report, 2081).

Around 2078/079 BS, the number of Tibetan families increased to 150 households and later in 2081/082 BS, this number is found to have decreased. Most of the Tibetans have migrated to Kathmandu and Pokhara (Dho. H.R. Report, 2081). Bishowkarma, Magar, Nauthar (Chhetri), Chhantyal, Thakali, Bhotias (Tibetan refugees), and Brahmin are among the diverse castes and cultures found in the Dhorpatan Valley. In the southern portion of the hunting reserve, people rely on traditional farming methods. The primary sources of income in the reserve's northern, higher-elevation areas are transboundary trade and animal husbandry (Aryal, 2008; Aryal & Kreigenhofer, 2009; Aryal et al., 2010). As mentioned above, a new Tibetan Buddhist temple is being built in the village of Pathathar, demonstrating the importance of religious places in the valley. The main occupations of the people are agriculture, animal husbandry, and foreign employment. The majority of the people here follow Hinduism, and some people also follow Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. The main festivals such as Dashain, Tihar, Teej, Shivaratri, Janai Purnima, Ram Navami, Lhosar, Christmas, and Maghe Sankranti are also celebrated.

Major Tourism Activities

Tourism activities identified in Dhorpatan area are mentioned in the following tables:

Table 1

Number of tourists visiting Dhorpatan area in five fiscal years 208/079-2081/082

S.N.	Financial Year	Foreign Tourists	Percent	Hunter-Tourists	Percent	Domestic Tourists	Percent	Total Tourists
1	2077/078	21	0.31	–		6682	99.69	6703
2	2078/079	64	0.64	20	31.25	9855	99.36	9919
3	2079/080	78	1.02	21	26.92	7567	98.98	7645
4	2080/081	106	6.69	18	16.98	15467	99.31	15573
5	2081/082	225	0.94	27	12.00	23467	99.06	23692
	Total	494		86		63038		63532

Source: Office of Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, 2025.

Above Table No. 1 shows the total number of tourists visiting the Dhorpatan area in the last 5 years. According to the statistics of the financial year 2077/078, the number of foreign tourists or foreign tourists is 21, i.e. 0.31 percent of the total number of tourists coming to visit that year. In the same year, the office of Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, Dhorpatan, gave the data that tourists did not come to hunt due to the effect of Corona. In the same year, 6,682 domestic tourists or 99.69 percent

visited. In the financial year 2078/079, 65 foreign tourists, 20 hunters and 9855 domestic tourists, totalling 9919 people visited the Dhorpatan area. Similarly, in the financial year 2079/080, external tourists increased slightly to 78 people, 1.02 percent, hunter tourists came to 21, and domestic tourists decreased to 7565, totalling 7645 tourists. In the financial year 2080/081, 106 foreign tourists, 0.69 percent, have entered. Among them, 18 hunter-gatherer tourists have entered, while domestic tourists have increased sharply to 15,467 people. It seems that 15,573 tourists visited the Dhorpatan area this year. In the financial year 2081/082, 225 foreign tourists entered. Among them, 27 hunter-gatherers have entered. In the same year, the number of domestic tourists increased to 23,467. This year, 23,692 domestic and foreign tourists visited the Dhorpatan area. Based on this data, it seems that tourists are increasing every year. The regulated hunting of Blue Sheep and Himalayan *Thar* is permitted in this area. Trekking and nature-based tourism, homestay and lodge operations, local guiding and pottering services are well managed. Sales of dairy products, meat, and agricultural products, as well as small retail and seasonal tea shops, are doing business.

Tourism has helped the locals make money through a variety of activities, including hunting tourism, trekking, homestays, guiding, and selling regional goods. This idea aligns with the livelihood diversification theory, which maintains that rural dwellers choose to work numerous jobs rather than just one in order to improve their income. A study by Ashley and Roe (2002) found that tourism in rural areas helps people create new income opportunities and improves their economic situation. This has also been observed in Dhorpatan, where increasing tourism has enabled locals to make money from a variety of sources other than farming.

Table 2

Tourist arrival status based on season in fiscal year 2081/082 (N: 23467)

S.N.	Month of the Year	No. of tourists	Percent
1	Spring season (Chaitra & Baisakh)	5304	26.60
2	Summer season (Jestha & Ashar)	3647	15.54
3	Rainy season (Shrawan & Bhadau)	4138	17.63
4	Autumn season (Asoj & Kartik)	4298	18.31
5	Winter season (Mangsir & Paush)	3479	14.82
6	Hemanta (Magh & Falgun)	2601	11.08
	Total	23467	100

Source: Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, 2081.

As per Table No. 2 above, the details of domestic tourists who visited the Dhorpatan area in the fiscal year 2081/082 are presented. In this table, the tourists who came from Shrawan month 2081 to Ashar 082 are counted and presented according to the season. Here, 22.70 percent of tourists have come in the spring season i.e. Chaitra and Baisakh. Similarly, 15.54 percent of tourists have come in the summer season i.e. Jeth and Ashar. 17.63 percent have come in the rainy season i.e. Shrawan and Bhadau. 18.31 percent of tourists have come in the autumn season i.e.

Asoj and Kartik. 14.82 percent of tourists have come in the winter season i.e. Mangsir, Paush and 11.08 percent of tourists have come in the winter season i.e. Hemanta i.e. Magh and Falgun. When this data is studied carefully, it is seen that tourists come to the Dhorpatan area in large numbers in the spring season. Tourism lovers call Dhorpatan Valley a mini Switzerland because tourists say that when it snows here, they can observe the scenery of Switzerland, says local businessman Mahadev Sharma. The head of the hunting reserve office said that the entry fee from the arrival of domestic and foreign tourists entering here in 2077/078 reached 2 million (Budha Magar, 2079). During this time, the flowers of Bunki and Lali Guras bloom, it is possible to go to the Bunki places, and the weather is not too cold, so tourists come here. After that, many tourists come in the autumn months of Asoj and Kartik. The weather seems to be favorable at this time too. This year, the fewest tourists have gone in the months of Magh and Falgun. It seems that fewer tourists have come because it is very cold at this time and the snow has melted.

According to the data, Dhorpatan's tourism is quite seasonal with the most visitors in the spring and fall and the fewest in the winter because of the severe cold and snow. While fewer people visit Dhorpatan in the winter due to cold temperatures and challenging travel conditions, springtime trips are associated with blooming flowers, pleasant weather and natural splendor. A study by Xie and Westlund (2020) supports this pattern by explaining how the demand for tourism in mountain and nature-based locations varies with the seasons, with pleasant weather drawing more visitors while unfavourable conditions discourage travel.

Respondent's status by occupation

The details of tourists have been analysed on the basis of profession to find out which profession the tourists who come to visit Dhorpatan area. The table below is presented to identify the occupation of tourists who have been sampled on the basis of occupation:

Table 3

Respondent's status by occupation (N= 160)

S.N.	Professions	Respondents	percent	Remarks
1	Foreign employment	15	9.37	
2	Business	21	13.14	
3	Employees	16	10.00	
4	Researchers	5	3.12	
5	Teachers	10	6.25	
6	Students	29	18.12	
7	Drivers	2	1.25	
8	Health workers	6	3.75	
9	Farmers	30	18.75	
10	Housewives	26	16.25	
	Total	160	100 %	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

According to Table No. 3, it was found that tourists who follow 10 types of professions came to visit the Dhorpatan area. It was found that there were 15 people who came back from foreign employment, i.e., 9.37 percent of the total 160 people. It was found that 21 people doing the most business, i.e., 13.14 percent of people, went to tourism. Employees 10 percent, students 18.12 percent, farmers 18.75 percent, and housewives 16.25 percent participated in the visit. In the visit, it was found that 3.75 percent of health workers, 6.25 percent of teachers, and the least number of engineers visited, 1.25 percent. According to the principle of participation, it seems that most of the tourists who do business on the basis of profession have come to Dhorpatan area. Economically strong, business tourists come to Dhorpatan with the intention of expanding their profession and entertainment (Nepal Tourism Board, 2023). It was found that the least engineer has reached. It seems that the business and the numerical situation of engineers are also low, and the representation is also low.

Travel behavior and location choice are heavily influenced by non-farming income sources and economic mobility, as seen by the tourism engagement of business owners, workers, farmers, and migrants. This matches with empirical data showing that tourism serves as a complementary economic activity and a livelihood diversification strategy in rural settings, allowing people from a variety of occupational backgrounds to devote resources to leisure, networking, and opportunity-seeking mobility (Tao & Wall, 2009).

Table 4
Socio-economic and demographic information of the respondents (N= 160)

Factors	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	85	53.13
	Female	75	46.87
Marital status	Unmarried	62	38.75
	Married	98	61.25
Age	Age 15-25 years	38	23.75
	Age 25-35 years	44	27.5
	Age 35-45 years	26	16.25
	Age 45 above years	52	32.5
Education	Basic level	55	34.37
	Secondary level	83	51.87
	University education	22	13.75
Family size	2-4 persons	84	52.5
	4-6 persons	37	23.12
	More than six persons	39	24.37
Caste	Brahmin and Chhetri	55	34.38
	Janjati	75	46.88
	Dalit	30	18.74
Monthly Income (In Rs.)	5,000-10,000	38	23.75
	Above 30,000-50,000	44	27.5
	Above 50,000-70,000	52	32.5
	Above 70,000 up to one lakh	26	16.25

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The wider livelihood diversification processes described by Livelihood Diversification Theory, which highlights that households use a variety of income-generating and mobility strategies to improve socioeconomic opportunities are reflected in the occupational diversity of tourists visiting the Dhorpatan area.

Table 4 shows that the demographic information of the respondents in the study area is differ. The sample is male-dominated, with more respondents being male. A majority of respondents are married, suggesting that most participants likely have family responsibilities, which may influence socio-economic behaviours, income allocation, and decision-making patterns. The largest group is 45 years and above (32.5%), followed by 25–35 years (27.5%). With more than half (48.75%) of the sample being older than 35, this shows a reasonably mature sample. The proportion of young people (15–25 years old) is relatively low. Just 13.75% of respondents had a university education, compared to almost half who had just completed secondary school education. This points to a population with low levels of higher education and a moderate level of education.

There is a trend toward smaller or nuclear family arrangements, with the majority of families (52.5%) having two to four individuals. Larger family structures are still prevalent, though, since nearly half (47.49%) have more than four individuals. Janjati (46.88%) is the largest group, followed by Brahmin and Chhetri. Dalits make up the smallest percentage. The demographic makeup of the research region might be reflected in this distribution. The highest income group (32.5%) makes between 50,000 and 70,000 rupees. Just 16.25% make more than 70,000 rupees, and nearly a quarter (23.75%) make between 5,000 and 10,000 rupees. This suggests a population with intermediate incomes and some economic inequality. Most of the sample is middle-aged or older, married, and male. Secondary education is held by the majority of responders. In general, families are modest to medium in size. The Janjati caste group makes up the majority. With a concentration in middle-income groups, income levels indicate a modest economic background. Most households rely on tourism as their primary source of income. Agricultural output is supplemented by tourism revenue, especially during the busiest travel seasons, mainly spring and autumn.

This is consistent with the study showing that in order to stabilize income and improve adaptability, rural households with a variety of sociodemographic profiles typically include tourism in their current agricultural and seasonal livelihood systems (Reardon et al., 2000). The demographic data in Table 4 above illustrates how participation in tourism-based economies is influenced by a combination of livelihood choices and socioeconomic traits like age, education, household size, gender roles, and income levels. The preponderance of middle-aged, married, and somewhat educated people indicates that risk-reduction techniques and home obligations play a major role in livelihood decisions, with tourism income serving as a supplemental rather than the primary source of income.

Perception of respondents on tourism and livelihood issues

Tourism provides long-term stability for a household's livelihood. Earnings from farming enable us to invest in other livelihood activities. Business has provided a better source of income compared to my previous job.

Table 5
Perception of respondents on tourism and livelihood issues (N = 160)
(Strongly agree=1, Agree=2, Neutral=3, Disagree=4, strongly disagree=5)

Statements	Responses (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Monthly income is increased due to tourism	10.0	50.0	16.7	20.0	3.3
Monthly income has increased significantly since business	3.3	46.7	10.0	33.3	6.7
Earning from driving has improved household financial security and stability	10.0	45.0	10.0	30.0	5.0
Able to save a portion of my earning regularly	10.0	43.3	3.3	33.3	10.0
Maintenance and other costs significantly reduce regular earning.	10.0	26.7	43.3	10.0	10.0
This work provides long-term stability for household's livelihood	20.0	43.3	5.0	26.7	5.0
Earnings from farming enable to invest in other livelihood activities	10.0	40.0	13.3	26.7	10.0
Business has provided a better source of income compared to previous job	10.7	43.3	10.0	27.7	9.3

Source: Result based on computed data/SPSS, 2025.

Monthly income is increased by 50 percent due to tourism. Monthly income is increased due to tourism, and 46.7 percent of respondents agreed. Earning from driving has improved household financial security and stability. 45 percent of respondents agreed. 43 percent of respondents were able to save a portion of their earnings regularly.

The natural beauty and diversity of Dhorpatan, the colorful and unique flowers blooming on the slopes of the Dhorpatan area, the herds of domestic animals enjoying the grasslands, the views of the mountains visible from the tops of the mountains, and the hiding of the clouds in the sky fascinate tourists (Masal, 2082). Despite high tourism revenue from hunting permits and visitor fees, locals largely do not see improvements in basic services or incomes (DNPWC, 2023). The continued poor road and transport conditions limit access and reduce tourism's trickle-down benefits to the wider community. Lack of education, health facilities, and consistent electricity constraints locals from fully benefiting economically from tourism activities. Locals say that rather than trickling down to the general public, tourism earnings are still concentrated at the government or service provider levels. Tourism growth has not alleviated food insecurity or agricultural challenges, which remain key livelihood concerns. The natural resources and other resources available in the area shape the livelihood.

This study has made an effort to examine the long-term impacts of climate change in the region. Studying the developments and changes that have occurred over the past 20 years has made it feasible. Despite some improvement and advancement in the livelihood, there are still a number of obstacles, according to the analysis of several studies and research from the past (Lamichhane, 2021). Youth

participation in guiding and hospitality increased significantly. Seasonal out-migration declined among tourism-engaged households. Increased financial control among women has improved household decision-making power and children's education outcomes.

According to the study of Jha et al. (2025), tourism serves as a major livelihood diversification tool but necessitates inclusive governance to guarantee an equitable distribution of benefits. Although tourism plays a major role in rural communities' savings habits, household financial stability and income diversification. The benefits are sometimes uneven because of structural and infrastructural limitations. Dhorpatan's findings show that while tourism boosts savings (43%), raises income (50%) and improves financial stability through tourist-related jobs (45%) broader community benefits are still restricted because of inadequate infrastructure and service delivery gaps.

Analysis based on factors that attract tourists

The question was asked about what attracted tourists to visit the Dhorpatan area. Based on the answers given by the respondents, the study has focused on the following factors. Based on these factors, what attracted the tourists who were selected in the sample the most and what attracted them the least is presented on a percentage basis.

Table 6
Analysis based on factors that attract tourists (N: 160)

S.N.	Factors of attract tourists	Respondent	Percent	Remarks
1	Dhorpatan valley	32	20.00	
2	Religious activities	25	15.62	
3	Hunting Reserve	23	14.37	
4	Buki Patan	19	11.87	
5	Mountains	14	8.75	
6	Horse riding	18	11.25	
7	Cultural fairs, festivals	17	10.62	
8	Domestic animals, wild animals and birds	12	7.5	
Total		160	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table No. 6 presents the details of the factors or topics that attracted tourists to visit Dhorpatan. Among the factors that promote tourism in Dhorpatan, the most important factor, or the factor preferred by tourists, is the Dhorpatan valley. The valley attracted 20 percent of tourists. Similarly, 15.62 percent of tourists were attracted by the religious activities of Dhorpatan, i.e. the Uttar Ganga Barah Temple, Gumba, etc. 14.37 percent of tourists were attracted by the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve in the Dhorpatan area. 11.87 percent of tourists were attracted by the Buki Patan in Dhorpatan, its flowers, red roses, and the natural beauty of the mountains. 11.25 percent of tourists were attracted by horse riding activities and were attracted by snow play and fun. Similarly, it was found that 7.5 percent of tourists came to explore the cultural fairs, festivals, lifestyles, etc. held in Dhorpatan or were attracted

by those themes tourists were found to have come to visit after being attracted by the domestic animals, wild birds, etc. The centre of attraction of Dhorpatan, the Dhorpatan Valley, which is a unique gift given by nature, proves that the valley itself is the main element of tourism attraction.

Development in mountain regions is lagging far behind due to their geographical location. According to Mair (2006), a region's biophysical foundation frequently determines the kinds of developments that are possible, and these locations and their economic histories are taken into account among national, continental, and global economies. Therefore, an area or country must discover possibilities for progress with whatever resources it has at its disposal through appropriate social, political, economic, and administrative processes (Panday, 1999). Visitors may enjoy the breathtaking Himalayan landscape in the Dhorpatan region, which is marked by spectacular mountains like Dhaulagiri and Annapurna as well as the gorgeous views from Bunki Patan. There are thirteen different species of flowers in the area, including Rakshasa and Dahitheki. In the months of Shrawan and Bhadaun, both local and foreign visitors traverse muddy roads to take in colorful flower fields, take pictures, and produce movies. Accessibility to Falgune *Dhuri* (top) requires pedestrian travel. Shepherds provide accommodations for tourists in cowsheds alongside established hotel facilities, allowing hundreds of visitors to experience rural life. The area is also home to several lakes, including Parmi, Mandre, Jalpa, and Putha Lakes, which draw tourists. Spiritual practices are linked to local water sources, with beliefs that bathing in them during the Purnima fair brings religious merit. Furthermore, the lifestyles, customs, and culture of Tibetan refugees, along with their Buddhist monasteries, add to Dhorpatan's significance as a study and tourist hub (Panta, 3rd Kartik, 2082). Similarly, religious activities, hunting reserves, and the scenic beauty of the place are accepted by tourists as elements of tourism attraction. This confirms that the natural beauty of Dhorpatan, religious activities, cultural activities, biodiversity, adventure travel, and hunting of wild animals are the center of tourist attraction here.

An empirical research demonstrated that integrated natural landscapes and socio-cultural heritage, which simultaneously support income diversification and reinforce reliance on environmental capital, play a major role in shaping tourism attractiveness in mountain regions (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). The results show that Dhorpatan Valley (20%), religious sites (15.62%), hunting reserve (14.37%), and other nature-based and cultural aspects like Buki Patan, mountains, festivals and biodiversity play important roles in Dhorpatan's tourism attraction. This pattern states that the strategic use of regional, natural, cultural and ecological resources to create a variety of livelihood choices is what gives rise to rural tourism.

Infrastructure and Institutional Challenges

Visitors to the Dhorpatan area were asked to describe the issues they experienced. The issues they encountered are universal issues. The difficulties encountered by the tourists who were chosen for the sample during their visit to the Dhorpatan area have been regarded as challenges. Visitors to the Dhorpatan area were asked to describe the issues they encountered. The issues they encountered are universal issues. The difficulties encountered by the tourists chosen for the sample

during their visit to the Dhorpatan area have been classified as challenges. Roads remain partially unpaved and frequently blocked during monsoon. Limited health facilities and digital connectivity.

Table 7
Challenges of livelihood (N = 160)

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Legal challenge	22	13.75
Unhealthy competition	45	28.13
Road and other infrastructure	70	43.75
Occupational challenge	23	14.37
Total	160	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 7 indicates that the hunting reserve revenue-sharing mechanisms provide limited direct financial returns to local households. Tourism is still very seasonal. In FY 2081/082, there were 23,692 tourists, up from 15,573 in FY 2080/081. Hunting permits and admission fees are Dhorpatan's main sources of income. There are 21 hotels and homestays in the area that can accommodate 281 travelers. There are 164 species of birds and 32 species of animals in biodiversity. Programs for homestays have improved cultural promotion and local involvement. Infrastructure constraints, such as bad roads and a dearth of communication services, continue to be significant obstacles. The region's market integration and changes in lifestyle have been impacted by globalization. However, the transformative potential of tourism is limited by inadequate infrastructure, seasonal variations and unequal revenue distribution. Infrastructure development, such as roads, internet, and medical facilities, should be given top priority in sustainable policy measures.

Even though the valley is starting to showcase the tourism industry's glittering promise, such development will necessitate local cooperation, communication, and some form of agreement among the region's numerous stakeholders (Nyaupane et al., 2019). It is obvious that more study is required to understand the problems that locals experience and to produce studies that more correctly reflect their unique perspectives on their resources. The goal of ongoing study is to discover community ambitions through more in-depth engagement with community stakeholders, such as mapping exercises (Cater, 2020). Additionally, these communities and stakeholders are advised to view tourism as a component of the solution rather than its saviour (Mair, 2012). Community-based tourism expansion. Equitable revenue-sharing from hunting tourism. Capacity-building programs for youth and women. Environmental conservation and waste management systems.

The ability of tourism to provide inclusive livelihood benefits in rural tourism settings is limited by inadequate infrastructure and weak governance structures which frequently lead to unequal participation and limited economic returns for local communities (Jamal & Camargo, 2014). Dhorpatan's tourism industry suffers institutional and structural obstacles. Most notable obstacles are inadequate road and infrastructure development (43.75%), unhealthy competition (28.13%), occupational restrictions (14.37%) and legal concerns (13.75%). These

restrictions demonstrate that although households use tourism as a way to diversify their sources of income, the effectiveness of this strategy depends on enabling elements like institutional support, market regulation, and infrastructure.

Contextual Studies on Tourism & Rural Livelihoods

This research indicates that tourism can boost the local economy in rural places, but it must be carefully organized to reduce negative social effects. Community homestay research shows how rural tourism can diversify livelihoods and benefit local stakeholders. Sports and cultural events can influence livelihood adaptation techniques, according to analyses of tourism's impact in rural Nepal. Research on historic tourism highlights the ways in which tourism impacts the social, cultural, and economic facets of local living, providing transferable insights relevant to the situation in Dhorpatan. According to this study, tourism has a major role in creating jobs, which is an important part of initiatives for improving livelihoods. Logistical obstacles that affect the benefits of tourism for locals are highlighted by observations regarding transport access to Dhorpatan.

Case studies

The Baglung district, referred to as mini Nepal, covers from the banks of the Kaligandaki to the head of Dhorpatan. In addition to its abundant biodiversity, Dhorpatan is well-known for its religious significance. Dhorpatan is a tourist destination that is rich in natural resources. One respondent had the following opinions about this:

A 48-year-old hotel entrepreneur from Dhorpatan Municipality 7 has been running his hotel in Dhorpatan Valley for 5 to 6 years, growing from 3 to 15-16 beds. The area boasts 24 hotels and homestays, with 21 operating. During peak tourist season, his hotel hosts 150 to 200 visitors monthly, with increased traffic in Bhadra, Asoj, Kartik, Chait, Baisakh, and Jestha. While domestic tourists typically stay from a few hours to several days, foreign tourists often choose to camp and self-cater. Religious activities, entertainment, research, tasting local products and observation of natural heritage have all contributed to the steady increase in tourism during the last five years. Kayat recognizes the difficulties, including costly transportation brought on by bad road conditions and arbitrary homestay rates that are made worse by the rush of seasonal visitors.

He put forward the need for improved management and uniform pricing among lodging establishments despite the lack of outside help for hoteliers. While his hotel provides meals and trekking guides, he notes internal struggles with organic material availability and employee retention due to cold weather. The findings indicate that the local government implements initiatives aimed at expanding tourism, including empowering local communities, organizing cultural events, and constructing facilities and infrastructure (Kandel, 2006). Prior to investing in a mountain tourism endeavour, local communities should make appropriate decisions about the types of tourism and tourists that are wanted. For rural communities, it can be beneficial to collaborate through central organizations and make sure that the district-based main committee handles tourism planning (Nirola, 2004). There exists a lack of training for staff and a consensus on pricing in the culinary offerings across

facilities. Kayat seeks financial, physical, and moral support to enhance the tourism experience in the Dhorpatan area.

Locals' perspectives on tourism, issues encountered during travel, opportunities or difficulties for tourism in the Dhorpatan area, elements that require improvement, recommendations to tourism-related organizations, the local government, hunting reserves, hotels, and homestays have all been gathered, and a case study has been carried out. The following are the respondent's details:

A 50-year-old resident of Dhorpatan Municipality outlines the evolution of his family's livelihood and the impacts of tourism on their community. Roshan explains how the flood of tourists who buy their products and stay there has indirectly benefited his family, which is mostly involved in raising animals and producing apples and potatoes. Their local economy has altered as a result of tourism; instead of relying on tedious mule transportation to produce sales, tourists now purchase their goods directly. Living circumstances have improved as a result, and guests have learned new customs.

However, there are obstacles, such as limitations imposed by the Reserve, which have made it more difficult for them to obtain natural resources that are essential to their cattle and farming operations. Their condition is made more difficult by the reduction in foreign aid, such as the lack of medical services previously supplied by white physicians. He also raises infrastructure concerns, such as the absence of electricity, which he claims would improve tourism and local business. In order to guarantee that their dairy and agricultural products reach consumers, particularly tourists, he emphasizes the necessity of developing tactics during off-seasons. Last but not least, he highlights the need for community improvements in hospitality and behavior and proposes that manufacturing organic goods could satisfy visitor needs, further integrating tourism into their economic growth. Kishan's story provides a thorough understanding of how local livelihoods, tourism, and the significance of infrastructure and community development interact.

Discussion

The results show that, in line with the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DFID, 1999), tourism in Dhorpatan makes a substantial contribution to livelihood diversification, higher household earnings growth in the areas of hospitality and leadership. Establishment of neighborhood associations and homestay networks. These studies draw attention to typical obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure, shortcomings in governance, and unequal benefit distribution. Agrotourism can boost local economic growth, according to data from other rural Nepalese communities. Homestays support sustainable livelihoods and cultural preservation, as shown by case studies from different parts of Nepal.

Tourism affects the financial, social, physical, and natural livelihood capitals. The findings demonstrate how house stays, agrotourism, cultural interpretation, and handicraft production enhance cultural preservation, diversify sources of income, and empower women and youth. However, there are still problems with seasonal labor, unequal benefit distribution, environmental stress, and cultural commodification (Jha et al., 2025). However, long-term effects are limited

by structural constraints. Gaps in the infrastructure restrict the number of visitors and business growth. Centralized revenue management reduces local multiplier effects. Seasonality increases income vulnerability, particularly during winter months. At the local level, homestay tourism was a significant factor in the rise in household income.

Cultural capital, which is made up of heritage, customs, and traditions, should be taken into account in any examination of local livelihood assets since local traditions contribute to the distinctiveness and character of communities (Cater & Miller, 2019). As was previously mentioned, local adolescents and visitors could be the target audience for festivals and other items like concerts, religious and cultural events, and sporting competitions (Nyaupane et al., 2019). According to Karki et al. (2019), a study carried out in the Amaltari community-based homestay village of Nawalpur, Nepal, likewise supports the researcher's conclusion that the first motivating element was an increase in household income. According to another study, community-based homestay tourism increases local involvement in the construction of physical infrastructure since residents actively promote their homestays and share more benefits with one another (Khatriwada, 2022). In the majority of developing nations, including Nepal, homestay tourism is a significant economic activity (Adhikari & Gautam, 2020). In rural areas, it is one of the most popular instruments for community development and conservation (KC, 2017). Dhorpatan is seeing an increase in tourism, especially from domestic visitors, which brings in money. Infrastructure deficiencies, governance gaps, and structural inequities continue to impede concrete livelihood gains (e.g., income, services, employment) for locals, notwithstanding revenue growth.

Research on rural and community-based tourism indicates that inclusive planning and investment are prioritized and that tourism can improve livelihoods through empowerment, diversification, and employment. Converting tourism growth into robust livelihood outcomes for the people of Dhorpatan requires targeted infrastructure upgrades, community involvement, and equitable benefit sharing. According to statistics, more than 23,000 domestic visitors came to Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve in a recent fiscal year, greatly boosting tourism income. The area's stunning scenery, religious sites, and trekking are attracting more domestic tourists than foreign ones, which has an effect on the type of tourism income that locals see. There is a chance to diversify livelihoods through tourism-related companies, such as hotels and community homestays, as they grow to accommodate guests.

The COVID-19 outbreak had a detrimental effect on household income, and many are currently struggling to make ends meet. Due to the lack of tourism-related revenue generation, the future of local homestay enterprises is more uncertain than before (Dahal et al., 2024). Participatory revenue-sharing and community-based tourism approaches improve local benefit retention, according to comparative studies conducted in other protected areas in Nepal. Equity and sustainability might be enhanced in Dhorpatan by implementing comparable procedures.

Conclusion

Dhorpatan's tourism industry serves as an example of the dynamic interplay between social structure, globalization, and economic development. Income, jobs, and social change are the outcomes of more tourism. However, infrastructure development, environmental conservation, and institutional collaboration are necessary for sustainable growth. By expertly integrating structural elements and managing the effects of globalization, Dhorpatan can enhance its reputation as one of Nepal's most popular tourist spots. Tourism has grown to be a significant source of additional income in Dhorpatan, Baglung. Nearly half of the households under study receive financial benefits from retail commerce, agro-based industries, hospitality, and guiding. Women have been inspired by tourism to launch their own companies, diversify their revenue streams, and figure out how to reduce migration. When managed sustainably and inclusively, tourism in Dhorpatan can be a long-term path to socioeconomic resilience. Training programs help locals become more proficient in hospitality, language, and business management; fair participation and sustained rural tourism depend on capacity building. By empowering residents to run businesses, deliver better services, and protect cultural artifacts, these programs raise income and improve quality of life. For effective management, local government and stakeholders must be involved. Based on the livelihood diversification theory, this study offers compelling evidence that tourism in Dhorpatan contributes significantly to households' economic recovery through a variety of revenue-generating activities like guiding, transportation, trading, hospitality, and agro-related services. The majority of respondents stated that their income, savings, and financial stability had improved. However, institutional issues prevent these advantages from being shared equally. Significant obstacles that restrict the fair distribution of tourism gains and impede overall regional prosperity include poor infrastructure, shoddy institutional arrangements, economic impediments, and unhealthy competition. Therefore, Dhorpatan's natural scenery, cultural and religious institutions, and biodiversity are the main draws for tourists. Strong governance and infrastructural development are essential to the long-term viability of these resources. As a result, tourism in Dhorpatan can be viewed as a developing but structurally constrained livelihood diversification strategy whose full growth potential necessitates more equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms among rural communities, better infrastructure, and inclusive policies.

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Authors Responsibility/ Contributions

SN	Authors	Responsibility/ Contributions
1	Saroj Raj Panta	Concept, data collection and Analysis, formatting, overall arrangement
2	Sudarshan Silwal	SPSS data arrangement
3	Ramchandra Baral	Methods and discussion
4	Mohan Kumar Paudel	Data transcription, APA 7th
5	Suveksha Panta	Literature review, AI improvement