

# Tourism Prospects in Paudur Village: A Case Study

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## Abstract

*The Paudur village is situated on Paudur ridge above 1200 m high from sea level. The panoramic view of the Himalayas in the north, the hills and knolls seen in the east, west and south, and the bird's eye view of the intermontane Pokhara valley and Phewa Lake at arm's stretch allure people towards it. Once it was a farm village transformed into 'a ghost village' when the major trekking route to Jomsom from Pokhara opportune local community to open hotels and cater meals and accommodation to the travellers. The Pokhara-Baglung highway changed the whole scenario along the trekking route and the lucrative hotel business disappeared for good. Although a large open space, very rich natural scenery, accessibility to the market, enough drinking water, power/ electricity, and security are available there, no tourist-based activities like hotels, restaurants, resorts and recreational spots are seen here. This paper has tried to describe the factors that are available to boost the tourism potential of this village.*

**Key Words:** 'Ghost village', homestay village tourism, recreational activities, trekking route

## Introduction

Nepal, the Himalayan country in South Asia, is popular for its natural beauty. Its natural beauty looks like a piece of magnet to attract people from various parts of the world. Pokhara, the intermontane valley almost in the central part of Nepal is well-known for its beauty, and every year, thousands and thousands of visitors visit this valley to quench their thirst for the loftiest mountains of the world. Paudur village lies about 25 km northwest of this valley. Prior to the completion of Pokhara-Baglung highway, the most important trekking route to Jomsom and Thorong La Pass had traversed through this village. This route was always crowded by mass tourism. As per [UNEP \(2013\)](#), tourism is one of the most promising drivers of growth for the world economy ([Neupane et al., 2013](#)). Similarly, [WTO \(1995\)](#), considered tourism as an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of national societies and international relations ([Neupane et al., 2013](#)). Likewise, the influx of trekkers on trekking routes to Jomsom from Pokhara via Paudur village provided a golden opportunity to serve trekkers in many ways. Meal and shelter were two most important needs, and local people made these needs available to the trekkers and in return trekkers/guests paid a good deal of cash amount to the local people. Majority of the households left their village and moved along the trekking route making their original

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place almost a 'ghost village'.

Later, Pokhara and Baglung highway and regular bus services between Pokhara and Baglung wiped out the earning source of the households along the trekking route. All the hotels along the trekking route disappeared for good. The proprietors of the hotels changed their profession into farming or moved to Pokhara and others places for new jobs. Today, once a bustling village of over two hundred households has converted into a village of about ten households. On the other hand, a trekking route to Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) from Pokhara via a neighbouring village called Dhampus which is approximately two and half hours walking distance from Paudur was uncovered by the path missing European couple while returning from Ghandruk (Gurung, 1998). Since then, a mass of trekkers started using this route to visit ABC heavily.

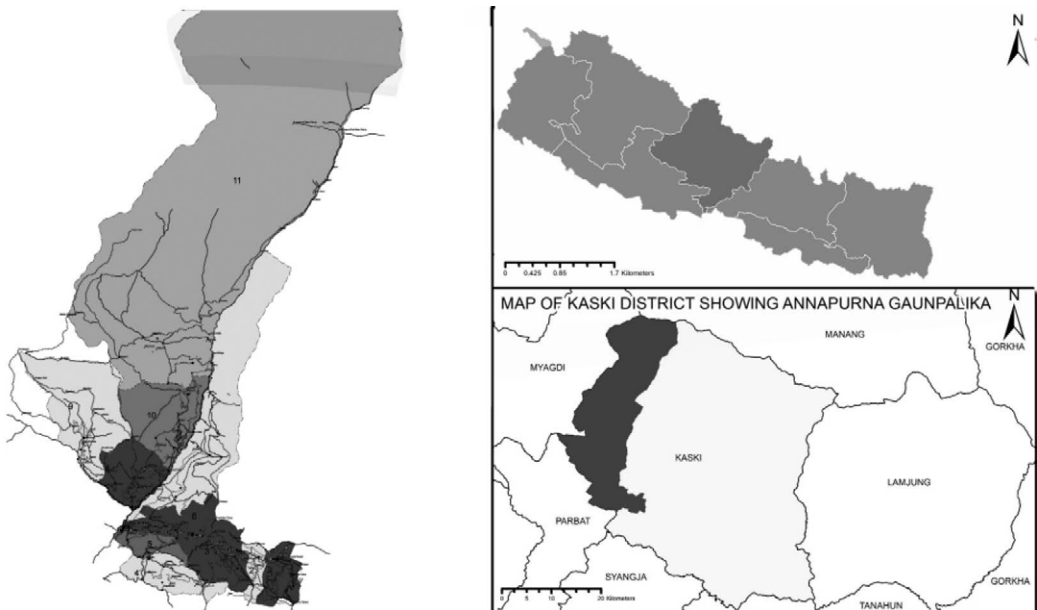
As the time went on, a road branched off to Dhampus from Pokhara-Baglung highway at Lewaday reducing the flow of European trekkers via Dhampus. Local people instantly modified their trekking-base hotel to home-stay village tourism and the target of the proprietors changed into internal tourists/guests from Pokhara and other cities of Nepal. Situation is the same as Dhampus village in other neighbouring villages: Ghale Gaun, Sikles Lwang and Ghandruk. All these villages have well-established village tourism bringing a lot of cash income among the households. On the other hand, Paudur village which is not less than any other village in terms of scenery, space, accessibility, drinking water supply, power/electricity, marketing and recreational spots like hiking, wilderness, and bird- watching are way behind in this field. The authors of this paper have tried to reveal the hidden trove of this village directly related to tourism.

## **Location and Geography**

Paudur village lies 25 km northwest of Pokhara metropolis in Annapurna Rural Municipality-3. It is on the upper Paudur ridge below the top (kot or fort). Pokhara-Baglung highway runs via the lower adjacent part of the village. The ridge in this part ranges between 1400 m and 1700 m from the sea level. The ridge has northwest to southeast orientation. The eastern end of the ridge looks like a little spur having a very steep slope on three sides with a little saddle on the western side. The ridge gains its elevation continuously westward up to Thaplay is the hub of Paudur, Sallyan, and Talchini ridges. Paudur Kot is the highest peak of this village. Further west of the Kot, the ridge extends almost at the same elevation up to Lakhary and it gains its height again up to Thaplay (about 2000 m). Both the northern and southern aspects of the ridge dip down sharply a few meters and undulate making a gentle slope suitable for human settlement. The ridge immediately west of the Kot has no sharp ridge but a very gentle slope useful for crop cultivation. This part has several springs and ponds. These springs and ponds supply water to rivers and rivulets that flow down to Phewa Lake.

Because of its altitude and prevailing monsoon wind, this place has a warm monsoon climate with warm and rainy summer and warm and dry winter. Vegetation is mostly deciduous in nature. Trees like alder, poplar, chestnuts, pine, and others are common (Stainton, 1974).

Figure 1  
Study Area



As said earlier, once there was a large village on the southern slope just about a hundred meters below Kot and the part between Kot and the village is under hay grass at present. Leaving their home, people from this village moved on to the roadside of the trekking route and served food and accommodation to the travellers. But, after the highway, the whole scenario has changed. There are no tourist base hotels and restaurants along the highway and the village is almost out of household. The ridge has a lot of barren land. In such a case, it looks relevant to assess the factors that support tourism in the village.

### Study Method

This study is completely based on prevailing natural and cultural elements of the village which the authors have observed and noticed their characteristics (elements) for a long period of time. The discussion of the subject-matters uses a simple descriptive method. Important elements/factors associated with the study are scenery, landscape, climatic condition, accessibility, and the process of development. All these elements have been discussed without the application of any parametric or nonparametric data derived from primary or secondary sources. Since the paper describes subject matters without data, the authors have not employed any inferential technique and model to discuss the problem. In other words, overall discussion depends upon a general explanation of the tourist related factors of the study area.

### Supporting Factors of Tourism in Paudur Village

Certain factors are mandatory to produce a congenial environment for tourism. In the absence of these factors, tourism is not possible. In the context of tourism in Paudur village, the following are the important factors creating a congenial environment for tourism.

*Scenery.* [Ferreira and Sanchez-Martin \(2022\)](#) stated that 'Indeed, the landscape can offer a variety of services and experiences that can influence the perception, preferences, and degree of satisfaction of its enjoyment. For this reason, it becomes interesting to understand why some landscapes may be more attractive than others. For example, the scenic beauty of rural landscapes has an important meaning, for different reasons, for urban people and for rural people.

The excerpt describes 'landscape' as an important element to human beings that can be used for various purposes and 'scenery,' The product of landscape is so important that modern-day tourism depends on it. Nepal, the Himalayan nation, is not an exception. The loftiest Himalayas in Nepal are well-known for their scenic view in the world. These mountain ranges extending from Dhawalagiri to Langtang Himalaya range can be seen from various parts of Paudur ridge. Similarly, the eye-catching view of the high mountains ranges on the foot of the Himalayas seems so amazing on the horizon that the viewers no longer wish to leave it watching.

Several transverse and longitudinal hills with V-shaped valleys and river made plains followed by the meandering course of Andheri Khola, Harpan Khola, and Lewady Khola produce the perfect eye-catching profile of the surface. Phewa Lake with a little isle on it called Barahi and a large open tectonic valley, Pokhara creates a mesmerising view to look at. The northern crystal-clear Himalayan ranges look extremely beautiful in winter whereas the foothills and valleys look very attractive during the end of summer since all the hill slopes and valleys are under lush forest and matured paddy. In addition to this, human settlements scattered sporadically on the hill and mountain slopes create a unique silhouette on the face of nature. In short, scenery that can be seen from the ridge is extremely attractive to the travellers. Therefore, the pristine atmosphere and beautiful scenery seen from this village depict the prosperity of tourism.

*Physical space.* Suitable space is necessary to run tourist-based activities and the village under the study possesses spacious land suitable to run various activities related to tourism. Satellite imagery (GIS/RS) is widely used to collect info related to both physical and man-made features of the surface. The geographic information system applied to tourism management is the preferred platform of tourism information ([Sivarajah & Yogarajah, 2019](#)). Using satellite imagery and eyeball observation, anyone can uncover the surface features suitable for various tourism related activities of the present study area. The east ridge of Kot has steep slopes on both sides with a very narrow crest suitable to see the Himalayas to the north and Phewa Lake and Pokhara valley to the south. Below the ridge have terraces with a very limited number of houses here and there.

Likewise, the ridge west of the Kot doesn't have a sharp crest but has almost a flat surface having a very gentle slope to the south. This part is wide, having farmland used to cultivate dry crops once in the past but has become a huge open fallow land at present. This portion is suitable for various activities associated with tourism. This is the same place where an ordinary person from the village has made drinking water available to picnickers. Today, on weekends and other holidays, the mass of picnickers gathers here regularly generating sufficient cash to the local organiser of the village. A large open space, suitable for tourism, depicts the feasibility of tourism in this village.

*Climate.* Altitude between 1200m and 1700m plays an important role in keeping the atmosphere cool in winter and warm in summer in this village. This village lies in the tropics and the climate in the tropics is mostly hot and rainy in summer but dry and warm in winter. However, this is not the case in this village. The inverse relationship between temperature and altitude keeps the climate warm in summer and cool in winter. Generally, 10C drops down at every 169m rise on land. In other words, altitude keeps this place warm in summer and cool in winter. In this perspective, the climate of this place seems healthy throughout the year. In addition to this, except for three rainy months (June, July and August), the days are clear, and the sky looks azure. Climates equate in nature favour both the hosts and the guests involved in tourism.

*Flora and Fauna.* Flora and fauna refer to wild plants and wildlife. This village is rich in plants and wild animals followed by birds. The northern aspect of the ridge is under community forest cover. It contains many varieties of plants. Among the plants, chestnuts, alder, pine, poplar and other fodder plants are common. Beyond this community forest, all the hills and ridges are covered by government forests. The common plants of these forests include chestnuts, alder, high altitude pine and lianas. Rhododendrons also grow wild in this forest. Hunting and poaching wild animals and birds are prohibited. Spotted deer, hares, and barking deer are common herbivores whereas leopard, fox, and jackals are major carnivores of the forest. Some forests having tall trees have wild languor and monkeys enjoying wild fruits and berries. Wild birds include chir cheer pheasants (kaaleej), spiny babbler, doves, bulbul, and many other varieties of raptors. During the beginning and ending periods of winter, many types of migratory birds are seen here. Kot is regarded as an important place to watch migratory birds. Travelers who enjoy bird watching visit this place frequently.

*Accessibility.* The village is just 25 km away from Pokhara metropolis on the way to Jomsom. Pokhara-Baglung highway runs via this village to Baglung and Beni. It is just a half-hour bus ride from Pokhara, and a local road bifurcates towards Bhadauray via Lakhray from Pokhara-Baglung highway. Apart from these roads, there are foot-tracks to visit surrounding villages and high hills from this village like Dhampus, Sallyan, Panchasay (high hill), Australian Base Camp/Panachau, Thaplay and other places. In other words, there is no difficulty visiting by bus or travelling on foot to Pokhara and other important places from this village. [Ding et al. \(2016\)](#) also revealed that convenience of transportation and parking and distance from public facilities are crucial criteria for selecting the location of a home stay.

*Water for domestic use.* Prior to the piped drinking water supply, the village used to fetch drinking from locally available ponds and springs. There are some natural ponds and springs fifteen minutes' walk from the village. Now, the village has piped drinking water supply from the neighbouring high hills located north to this village. Villagers have enough piped water supply for domestic use. Piped water supply to Lakhray for picnickers and holiday makers is made available by a local proprietor of a single lodge/hotel of that place. If an additional amount of water is necessary, it can be made available from local springs and ponds located in higher parts of this ridge.

*Electricity.* Life becomes miserable without electricity in the modern age and tourism is not possible to run successfully without electricity. This village under the study relates to national power grid under the rural electrification scheme of Nepal. Each household gets

electricity regularly. Travel businesses like hotels, restaurants and recreational activities, need electricity. Since the village is already connected to the national power-grid, anyone interested in opening tourist related businesses can open hotels, restaurants, or other activities in this village.

*Marketing.* Pokhara metropolis is a regional city that can supply all the materials and manpower necessary for tourism. Physical facilities like shelter (buildings), vehicles, furniture, utensils, etc. are necessary for tourism. People interested in tourism can bring all these materials from Pokhara. Similarly, if local communities fail to supply green vegetables, cereals, milk and other food stuff for the hotels, all these can be easily supplied from Pokhara. In addition, food stuff that are not manufactured in Nepal can also be supplied by this regional city, Pokhara.

*Skilled manpower.* Well-trained hands are essential to run some tourism-based activities although local people can do blue-collar jobs like dish washing, cleaning, sweeping, etc. There is no need to worry about unskilled workers, but trained manpower is not available in the community. Well-trained manpower is available in Pokhara and whenever necessary, proprietors can hire trained manpower from this regional city. Trained chefs, waiters, guards, and others are produced by various tourism and hotel management institutions based in Pokhara.

*Recreational activities.* Life in the city is mostly hectic. People must do their job on time to make their living. Some are involved in multiple jobs, and some are seen busy with the same rut day by day. They look entirely fed up with their life and suffer from depression. Such a condition is detrimental to their efficiency. Because of this, they need a break to revitalise their mental and physical condition.

Nepal's capital Kathmandu and touristic hub Pokhara are not very far from this village. People in these cities look apathetic to their job working long hours. The present trend shows people from these cities visiting villages where they can enjoy typical food, and peaceful environments that are totally different from the bustling city life. As said earlier, this village, Paudur, possesses a suitable site to enjoy the crystal clear and panoramic view of the Himalayas, beautiful Pokhara valley and Phewa Lake, followed by variegated hills and streams on the horizon. They enjoy many things that could be made available by the tourism developers. They can go on hiking to Panchasay (approximately 2300 m), Panecho (2300m)/ Australian Base Camp, and Thaplay (approximately 1900 m). These high hills are important wilderness that are approximately one to three hours walking distance from Paudur. Those who cannot go hiking can travel along the ridge located either side of Paudur Kot.

At present, Lackhre (Kumar Danda) is a very popular picnic spot where groups and groups of picnickers visit frequently at weekend and on other occasions not only from Pokhara but also from towns like Syanja, Damauli, Lumlay and Khairany. Apart from hiking, people can travel to various places by foot tracks in the Annapurna region. This place is equally important to watch migratory birds in winter. In addition, open places are available to build playgrounds and swimming pools, viewpoints and towers. As mentioned by [Sadykov et al. \(2023\)](#) that the mountain region of Republic of Kazakhstan is an important tourist potential destination benefiting both the government and local communities in many ways. Likewise, the geography of the village under discussion



seems favourable to develop both resort and recreation activities that can benefit local people and the government to a great extent.

**Security.** Travelers avoid unsecured places but prefer to travel to places that are secure. In other words, security is inevitable for tourism development. This village is free from both natural and cultural hazard like landslides, air pollution, flood, drought, robbery, rape, gangster, riots and hostility against stranger. Local authorities are aware of the law and order in this place. In addition, this place is not a remote village - just 25 km away from the regional city, Pokhara. If any mishap occurs, security forces can reach there at once. Besides this, there is a police check-post at Nagdanda, just two and half km away from the village. From the security viewpoint, the village is safe to run tourist base activities smoothly.

## **Key Findings**

Based on the above discussions, the following key findings of the study have been identified:

- The trekking route to Jomsom via Paudur village had changed the settlement, occupation and income source of the local community.
- After the advent of the highway between Pokhara and Baglung via Paudur village, it had a negative impact on catering service. Consequently, many people left their village for good. This fact made the farmland open barren land which can be used for tourism purposes.
- Scenery, space, accessibility and climate have produced a congenial environment for village tourism related to internal tourists.
- This village is an awaiting land for tourism and tourist-based activities can thrive here soon.

## **Conclusion**

Once when there was no highway construction between Pokhara and Baglung, the trekking route to Jomsom from Pokhara had caused local households to move and settle along the trekking route serving meal and accommodation to the travellers. After the highway construction, travel business along the trekking route disappeared. Villagers who had moved on the trekking route didn't return to their original home, instead, some settled along the highway, and some moved to Pokhara and other towns to find jobs, quality education, health services, and business opportunities. This process made the village 'a ghost village' and the farmland transformed into open fallow land. As mentioned by [Neupane et al. \(2013\)](#), in the context of the Bhaktapur Darbar Square, Ministry of Tourism, Nepal has regarded this place as an important international heritage of the world and is well-protected, but at the adjoining part of the Durbar Square, the compact lanes and alley of the dwellings are totally detested area for all. Likewise, the present study area, although it has a very congenial atmosphere for tourism, seems far away from tourist base activities.

Paudur village is rich in its scenic view, and the climate is temperate and healthy. It has

a large open space to build buildings and recreational structures necessary for tourists. Till now, neither local people nor outsiders have uncovered the congenial environment hidden in this village for tourism. It is a more potential one as compared to tourism villages in other countries. For example, Jaffna as stated by Sivarajah and Yogarajah (2019) has become an important tourist area in Sri Lanka, but it has a humid and hot climate, which is not that much suitable and comfortable for people: although the Sri Lankan government has managed the prerequisites of the tourist that has greatly attracted the number of tourists from various parts of the world. It is quite sure that once people uncover the hidden attractions of this Paudur village, tourism can flourish here in a short period of time. Since the guests are mostly from Pokhara and other urban areas, homestay village tourism and resort hotels have a good scope in this place. In the context of the tourism development, Spain and Portugal have managed in international natural reserve called Tagus International Natural Reserve along their border (Ferreira & Sanchez-Martin, 2022). This well-managed natural reserve has become an important tourist potential centre of these nations. In the case of Paudur village, no attention has been given by the local authority

#### *Funding*

The author declared having received no funding for this study.

#### *Conflict of interest*

The author declared having no conflict of interest associated with this study.

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