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INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TOURISM IN CHITWAN, NEPAL: OBTAINING SUSTAINABILITY IN THARU CULTURE AND TOURISM

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UiT the Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Sports, Tourism and Social Work

Campus Alta

ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is one of the most important elements of tourism. We can see remarkable efforts of concerned people and agencies to develop tourism potential and to discover new cultural sites in a number of places. Even the cultures of remote and less-discovered cultural sites are growing attraction to tourists. On one hand, people are trying to develop tourism on bases of cultural heritage but, on the other, they are worried about the loss of their prehistoric cultures. For many people, tourism and preservation of culture and tourism cannot go together. For instance: like others, a number of indigenous communities around the world are interested in exposing their culture to tourists but, also are more worried about saving their culture. However, their interest in tourism and worry about the loss, in a combined form, has resulted in developing indigenous cultural tourism and conservation of culture, both.

Obviously, potential of tourism has brought challenges in preservation of culture. But there must be some ways in which both of them can be developed in a balanced way. So this thesis discusses on how tourism can be developed in indigenous cultural destinations without causing the local culture to decline or even revitalizing destination cultural assets and aspects. Local culture, of course, gets influenced by tourist cultures. But, tourism has the potential to encourage people to keep their culture conserved. For this reason, this thesis works on finding the practical ways to save and promote cultural values and practices WITH TOURISM, not avoiding tourism. Focusing on a destination Sauraha: centre for Tharu culture, the interviews taken at Sauraha and other data have been analyzed in the light of three theories: sustainability, authenticity and indigenous identity. Mainly, it observes the social changes at Sauraha Tharu community: a highly touristic area in Chitwan, Nepal; sorts out the causes of changes and finally discusses on promoting cultural heritage.

Key words: heritage tourism, indigenous culture, sustainability, cultural preservation, authenticity, performance of cultures, Tharu culture

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[The Cover Photo: A young Tharu girl getting ready for the cultural rally in the Khichara Mahotsab (The Tharu Cultural Fair 2015), Photo by: Raju Chaudhary]

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is the introduction to overall thesis. It begins introducing the main idea of the thesis. It's a slight description of the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism, and also the reaction of people on this relationship, especially of indigenous people. The following subchapters present short overviews on tourism in Nepal, cultural conservation and introduce Tharu people and Sauraha, their town. In the second part of this chapter, there are motivation, purpose and main research question of the thesis. Finally the chapter concludes describing 'organization of the thesis.'

1.1.1 Background

Culture is living expression of a way of life (Prideaux &Timothy, 2008: 4). It's the collective identity of a person. Our culture is our identity. We love the culture which we belong to. Culture is collective name for cultural heritages. Cultural heritages and assets are the bones of culture. People love their culture and also long to see other's culture and tradition. They travel away from home to observe others' culture and life styles. Then, culture is linked to tourism. People travel to different destinations with the desire to see others' culture. When we love our culture we feel proud when other people value our culture. We feel happy when others are interested in our ways of life. When we take our culture as our identity, we must feel happy when other people consider our identity as important. This makes cultural tourism as one of the most important and obvious phenomena in our society.

Cultural tourism, on one hand, is important for realizing the value of cultural heritages and on the other, it encourages people to conserve and even flourish cultural diversity. Anything important and valuable needs to be preserved. There is a need to preserve something if it is valuable. Tourist attraction adds value and importance to cultural assets. It adds charms to the culture so that the number of visitors increases and as a result, a number of business organizations open on the bases of cultural heritage. Job opportunities are created and the community with the potential

cultural heritage can be benefitted. A number of benefits including cultural exchanges and learning opportunity from the visitors are also possible.

However, the combination of culture and tourism is not free from side effects. When local cultural heritage is linked with tourism, it brings challenges, as well. The very culture can be at risk if it is exposed to unplanned tourism. Consequently, it may not be very easy to conserve. Like the issue of preserving nature in nature based tourism, the issue of conserving culture arises in cultural heritage tourism. The question of sustainability arises if we want to develop tourism on the bases of cultural heritages.

Preserving culture is preserving one's identity. Exposing culture to tourism is therefore, spreading identity, i.e. to make oneself known to other. In fact cultural assets have become one of the most important phenomena for developing tourism industry. Instead of avoiding tourists' interaction with local culture, it should be organized with a lot of care. And this is the starting point of this thesis.

Thus, this thesis inquires on how we can develop tourism based on cultural heritages without causing bad effects on culture. A famous heritage tourism destination has been chosen as the case study of this thesis. It's a town called 'Sauraha' in Chitwan, Nepal. Sauraha is famous as tourist destination in Nepal for two reasons: natural and cultural heritages. First, Sauraha is the main entrance point to the famous Chitwan National Park; one of the UNESCO-listed World Heritages. Second, this newly developed town Sauraha is the centre for observing Tharu Culture. People who come to visit national park have the bonus opportunity to observe unique Tharu style of living.

Cultural heritage tourism is one of the most important elements of tourism in Nepal. Nepal attracts the tourists from all over the globe not only by its natural beauty but also by its exotic/ special culture. Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal is known in the world as the city of temples, shrines and monuments. In addition to Kathmandu, there are many other destinations in Nepal, which are famous as cultural destinations. For instance: Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha is one of the most important cultural pilgrimages for the Buddhists in many countries. Mithila Painting in Central Terai Region is famous among cultural researchers and tourists.

Tharu Culture Centre accompanied by Chitwan National Park in Chitwan, Ghale Gaun Village tour to a famous Cultural and natural destination are a few examples.

Chepang community in the northern hilly region of Chitwan is the other important element of tourism in Chitwan. But this thesis concentrates on Sauraha and Tharu villages around it.

Decline of the culture and the copying the tourist cultures has become a matter of great worry at Sauraha and nearby villages. Some people also think that if the trend of change continues, the culture will be lost completely and there will be only those culture houses and museum to remind their culture. The issue of cultural preservation is a long debated issue. It seems that such issues are almost settled in developed countries like Norway, Australia. The Sami indigenous population in the north of Norway and their culture is one of the most important phenomena in northern European Tourism. Sami community, the only indigenous community in the Scandinavian countries is able to live modern lives while preserving the essence of their culture, as well. Tourism is well managed and is a developing business in the indigenous communities in many countries. But, it's a big issue in developing countries.

1.1.2 Tourism in Nepal: a short description

Even though Nepal has been known to the world for its natural beauty and cultural diversity, it does not have a long history of tourism development. The country was under the rule of autocratic Ranas for a long time until 1950s. It was declared a democratic state in the 50s however, due to various reasons the country remained in a kind of seclusion for other 40 years in the period of Kings direct rule. When the country achieved 'multiparty democracy' in 1990, it slowly opened doors to the outer world. Tourism sector was noticed as a potential sector for national income. Again in few years, Maoist revolution began and again the country was stuck into the 'civil war'. The flow of tourist decreased again because of the safety reasons in the civil war period. 'Nepal has emerged from the instability of the civil war years into a period of peace and (relative) political stability, the tourist trade is slowly recovering. In 2005, fewer than 300,000 tourists visited Nepal, compared with almost double that number in 1999'(Farmer 2012: 484).

Tourism industry began to revive from around 2006 after the Maoist-government war was settled. However the industry has been suffering from lack of transportation and hotel accommodation facilities. On one hand, transportation inside the country hinders the tourists from travelling and on the other hand the country is not air-linked directly with Europe, America and Australia etc.

'Thai Airways, Qatar Airways, and Gulf Air typically carry European tourists to Nepal, owing to the paucity of direct flights from European cities.' (ibid)

From the year 2007, some other airlines were added in service in addition to these four airlines. In May 2006 the government welcomed foreign investment into tourism industry.

The government of Nepal declared the year 2011 as Nepal Tourism Year to promote tourism industry in the country. The government has now prioritized tourism sector. New Tourism Laws have been passed and is working significantly to improve roads and airports. However, the government plan to build two international airports (one in Lumbini and the other in Bara district) has slowed down. The summary of tourist arrivals can be better explained through the following table:
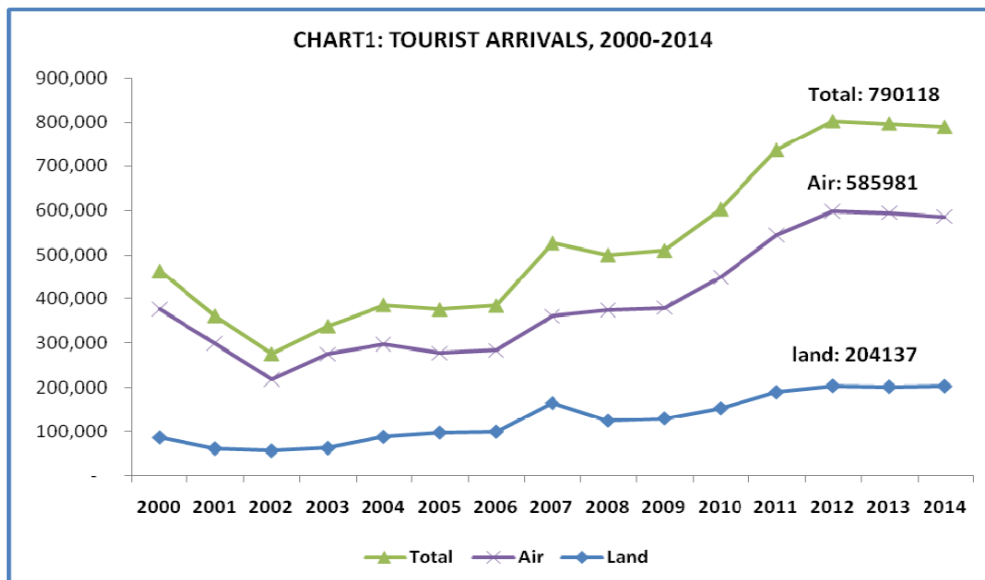
CHART1: TOURIST ARRIVALS, 2000-2014

Total: 790118
Air: 585981
land: 204137

The figure 1.1 shows that the number of tourist arrivals decreased sharply in 2002. The government and Maoist war was at a peak at that time. It slightly rose in the following years with a sharp rise in 2007. After 2011, the number seems steady.

1.1.3   Cultural Heritage Conservation in Nepal: a short overview

In the constitution which was declared in September, 2015 the Legislature Parliament of Nepal government Nepal characterizes the country as 'multiethnic, multilingual, multi-religious and multicultural' country. It's a kind of continuation of older constitutions of Nepal. In fact, the founder of modern Nepal, Prithvinarayan Shah declared Nepal as a garden of four castes and thirty six sub-castes (reference). It's a multicultural and multi-religious country. Even in the same religion, Hinduism, there are a number of different cultures based on the difference of geographical locations. The rituals of one community may not match with the other, even though they belong to same religion. Culture is given great value and preserved with a lot of care in many communities.

Amatya writes 'Nepal is endowed with an unusually rich cultural heritage. The magnificently carved temples, the numerous ancient stupas and monasteries are but a few of the outstanding achievements of the country (1987: 97).'

 Amatya (1987) has explained in detail about how cultural assets have been preserved in Nepal for a long time. According to him, after building monuments and monasteries, the ancestors and the ancient rulers established a system called 'Guthi' to look after such valuable assets of the society. Such 'guthies' were given authority and some fund either in cash or in the form of land by those who founded the heritage asset. Those 'guthies', then used to look after, conserve and develop such assets. There were many types of guthies: such as public, semi-public and private guthies. However, slowly in many places, the guthies were not able to accomplish their tasks of conserving such assets. In 1962, the Land Reform Act was passed and the lands of many guthies were registered to the farmers. To control the functions of remaining guthies, 'the Guthi

Samsthan was established in 1964. The main tasks of this agency were to carry out conservation activities of the cultural assets such as repair, renovation, conservation and development of the assets. Department of Archeology was established in 1970 for the purpose of renovation of valuable cultural sites. But neither The Guthi Samsthan nor the Department of Archeology could do their work effectively (ibid).

Moss & Wilson (1993:297) use the terms 'harmony in diversity' to talk about the cultural diversity in Nepal. They argue that generally cultural characteristics of Nepali Society can be divided between 'Hindu and Tibetan based blocs, each bloc itself comprises a complex mosaic of ethnic groups'.

Amatya (1987) puts that conservation of the cultural heritage provides a sense of individual and national identity and continuity and creates economic benefits by attracting tourists.

Amatya He says, preservation of cultural assets is not only a duty but also a part of their 'regular religious activity'.

1.1.4 The Tharu Community and Sauraha

According to the Central Bureau Report (2011), among 125 castes and ethnicity, Tharu population is the fourth biggest group in Nepal. On the basis of the census of 2011, there are 1,737,470 (6.6% of the total population) Tharu people in Nepal. The data shows that almost all Tharu people live in the southern plain (the Terai region of Nepal) with only around 3% in other regions.

Picture: 1.1 (Source: Kullabs.com Smart School web page)

[The above map of Nepal may not be an accurate one. In this rough sketch, we can see that the Terai region stretched from east to west on the south of the country. Chitwan district lies in the central region.]

Hedrick & Hedrick (1972: 164) defines the Tharu people as:

> -an ancient Nepalese group who lives in the Terai area. They are regarded by some as an aboriginal race whose ancestors were driven into the Terai by the Aryan and Mongolian invaders. The Tharus are skilled hunters and fishermen. The fish-nets used are beautifully fitted on wooded frames. The women do up their hair in knots or buns high up on the head and wear coarse-meshed black veils.

The Tharu people are believed to be the indigenous people of the Terai region. A significant number lives in the inner Terai valleys like Chitwan, Dang, Deukhuri, Sindhuli and Udayapur and also in Surkhet Valley in the Hilly Region in the Western Nepal. A small number of Tharu people live in India, as well.

Sauraha is a small town located at the main entrance of Chitwan National Park. It lies in the Bachhauli VDC, in Chitwan, the Central Development region in Nepal. Geographically it lies in the Terai-Madhesh Region which begins from lap of Mahabharat Range in the north and extends to the Border of India. This town is at a distance of around 20km from Bharatpur airport or

accessible by bus from Tandi (Ratnanagar) on East-West Highway. It is around 5km toward the south of Tandi Bazaar. On one side there is Rapti River and The Chitwan National Park. On the other side there are other small villages with Tharu and other people.

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Picture: 1.2 (source: Bachhauli Village Development Committee, photo gallery)

The town, Sauraha is in the centre of Tharu villages where tourists can meet and get to know about them. Many of the visitors stop at Sauraha for several days and learn about Tharu life style. Their unique styles of houses, family structures, food and clothing are amazing attractions among tourists.

1.2 Motivation of the Study

Tharu people at Sauraha are worried that their youngsters are forgetting their culture and tradition. Many people blame the tourism industry for this decline in cultural practices. Because of the Chitwan National Park and remarkable Tharu culture, they cannot avoid tourism. Instead, the number of tourist is increasing day by day and so are their influences. Because of many reasons, they do not want to avoid tourism, either. When I visited Sami Park in Karasjok, Northern Norway, I found that they have managed that cultural assets can be preserved. It can add to the attraction of the place for tourists. And if it is managed well, the tourists influence on the local culture can be minimized. I also read in some articles about how indigenous cultural destinations are managed so that they can attract more tourists and have very little influence of them. I finally decided to conduct a research about Sauraha Tharu Community as an indigenous

cultural destination, influence of tourist culture and most importantly the ways of minimizing tourism-culture tension at Sauraha.

1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Question

The main purpose of this thesis is to sort out the reasons for cultural declination at Sauraha and more importantly find solutions to unwanted cultural changes especially that are caused by tourists' arrivals. It is also aimed to distinguish social development, modernization and cultural declination. The thesis, therefore answers the following research questions:

How can we promote indigenous cultural tourism without disturbing cultural heritage?

Sub-questions:

- What kinds of changes are observed in indigenous culture which is a tourist attraction?

- What are the main reasons of cultural declination or changes? Why are people unable to preserve their culture? Is tourism the only reason for cultural change or is there anything else?

- How can we preserve vulnerable indigenous culture so that it remains as equally important cultural attraction to tourists even in future? Is conservation of culture same as being conservative of traditional values?

Similarly, when we talk about cultural heritage, we should think about cultural heritage and tourism both. Cultural assets are of great value for those who they belong to. So this study aims at finding the ways to promote balanced and sustainable development of culture and heritage.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This master thesis has been presented in eight chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction of the concept and also the introduction of the Tharu community and culture as this

is the main focus of the thesis. The second chapter presents the literature review. It defines the indigenous culture, cultural heritage and cultural heritage tourism etc. It also presents information on the major aspects of Tharu culture and history. The third chapter is the chapter for theoretical bases for the thesis. It puts lights on some close –to- the- topic theories such as authenticity, indigenous tourism and sustainability. Sustainability of cultural tourism has been focused on in the sustainability part. Introduction and some examples of successful indigenous tourist destination are presented in chapter two. Debates and controversial issues are in chapter three.

Methods for the preparation of this paper and the issues of methodology have been discussed in the fourth chapter. It first explains the concept of methodology and then further puts the selection and use of method and some other issues that are related to methods and methodology. It introduces validity, reliability, research ethics and reflexivity on one hand and describes in short about interviewees/informants that participated in the interviews. There is a detailed explanation on how the data have been analyzed to discuss the findings of the research. Chapter five, six and seven contain the analyses of the main data each focusing on one of the major research questions. Chapter five concentrates on 'Understanding Cultural Changes.' And this chapter is further divided into smaller units like: changes in dresses and ornaments, changes in festivals and celebrations, other changes etc. Chapter six discusses on 'discovering the reasons of cultural changes'. Chapter seven analyzes the responses that are aimed at solving the problems of cultural degradation. The final chapter concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Basically, this chapter concentrates on two sorts of elements regarding cultural heritage tourism: definitions and explanation of major aspects of tharu culture. The first part deals with the definitions and meanings of main terms and ideas that are to be dealt in the thesis afterwards. And the second part contains the information on major aspects of Tharu culture at Sauraha.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Cultural heritage tourism

'Cultural tourism' the term contains two words –'culture' and 'tourism'. So, in the simplest form, meaning of the word can be that 'it is that sector of tourism which is connected with cultural heritage of a particular community or place in at least one way'. The visit of person/persons to other place/destination in order to see or enjoy others' culture in some ways is cultural tourism. The nature of such visits can vary depending on the diverse motifs of the visitors or different type of cultural assets. Broadly, cultural assets can be categorized into two groups: tangible and intangible. Tangible assets are those cultural objects which can be touched. For instance: monuments, statues, historical buildings and many other things which are culturally important are in this category. They exist physically. In contrary to these, intangible heritages are intellectual parts of culture. They exist in culture but not physically. Songs, traditional skills, myths, beliefs, stories some arts etc are the examples of intangible cultural heritages.

Basically, cultural tourism is a bit vague term, because it is not easy to clearly mark a line between cultural tourism and other ones. Nowadays, tourists are sold package tours which contain cultural destinations along with others. So, almost all tourists visit cultural tourism destinations as a part of their tours. And also the cultural tourists visit other attractions simultaneously.

The terms 'cultural heritage tourism' have been defined by many scholars on different bases. Some of the definitions have been presented and discussed here.

In the words of Sofield & Birtles *(1996: 398)* '*Cultural tourism may be narrowly defined as: visiting museums, old buildings, galleries, and so on; attending concerts, art exhibitions and festivals; going on a pilgrimage; and undertaking other culturally motivated travel'.* Old buildings and monuments are protected with a lot of care and various service centers are opened around them so that tourists can go there and spend their vacation. Concerts, exhibitions and festivals are organized in such a way that they exhibit cultural shows or historical elements of a particular community can be shown to the visitors. Festivals and concerts are attended not only by the locals but also by a large number of externals and foreigners.

They define it more broadly as: *the travelers' desire to experience the culture of a region or a country. (Sofield & Birtles, 1996: 398)*

The definition of cultural tourism given by the National Trust for Historical Preservation focuses on travel to cultural destinations to learn in an enjoyable way. According to *the National Trust for Historic Preservation cultural heritage Tourism is 'travelling to historic and cultural attractions to learn about the past in an interesting and enjoyable way' (*Laws & Pan, 2008: 61).

 The World Tourism Organization (1992) defines heritage tourism as 'an immersion in the natural history, human heritage, arts, philosophy and institutions of another region or country' Laws & Pan (2008: 61).

Visiting culturally important heritage sites is a kind of respect to those heritages. Internal tourism to cultural destinations can be seen as the people's love and respect to those heritages. We can see such tourism in Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Buddhist people visiting Lumbini can be taken as pilgrimage but non-buddhist visiting such place can be taken as cultural tourism.

So, tourists who visit heritage sites are called heritage tourists. The heritage sites can be varied such as museum, theme park, culture centre, or a monument etc. All who visit such places are cultural heritage tourists. But they can have different interests and therefore can give different level of priority to the heritage destination. For instance: some visitors are interested on heritage site alone. They have a deep study of heritages when they visit. But, some visitors are not actually interested in such things but still visit them when they are on the way to other sites, or when they are included in their package tour.

2.1.2 Indigenous Culture and Indigenous Cultural Tourism

The United Nations, which designated 1993 as the International Year for the Indigenous Peoples of the World, described indigenous people as *'*minorities and tribal populations with special problems related in particular to discrimination and deprivation of basic human rights, and with special needs concerning education, health, economic development and the environment*'* (quoted in: Sofield and Birtles, 1996: 399) But, being minorities, poor or deprived of rights do not define them. These features only characterize them. People who are continuously living in a particular place from prior to the beginning of modernization and those following the culture of their ancestors are indigenous people. In most countries indigenous people are minorities and are considered to be tribal people. They are believed to be poorer, less educated and more conservative than others. Most of them have suffered from discrimination and deprivation of their human right. They are either neglected or marginalized by the nation in many countries. In Nepal, a number of indigenous communities are protesting and raising their voices for their rights.

Indicators of the social demographic characteristics of many indigenous people in North America, Australia, and many other parts of the world have led some to describe the culture of indigenous people as a 'culture of poverty' (Frideres quoted by Hinch & Butler 1996: 15) Primitiveness and poverty is always linked with the indigenous community.

The condition of some indigenous communities is even worse in Nepal. Lack of education, health facilities, conservative traditions, superstition are but a few of their problems. Tharu people, having lived in the Terai region (often called the 'granary of the country') are in a bit better condition. Except some groups which live in remote areas, many of them have the facility to education, transportation and health services. In Chitwan, for instance almost all families send their children to schools. All Tharu villages in Chitwan are linked to roads and they have hospitals not so far from their villages.

Also if we talk about the indigenous people of the World, their condition may not be same in all places. Because of the special plans of the government and many other reasons, they are no longer characterized by having problems and lacking basic needs like education, health etc. But

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of course, being minority group and being considered as tribal group may be common features of indigenous people around the globe. Living in remote areas, and being minority group has resulted in discrimination and have been forced to face a number of problems. Even the problem of language can put them to exclusion from mainstream social activities. But, at the same time, living in remote and wilderness areas, having special culture and their way of life has created a lot of tourism potential. The true cultural tourists are being more interested to visit such destinations. One of the major characteristics of indigenous people is their unique culture. Because of their unique culture, tourists are attracted.

Worldwide, indigenous peoples are becoming more involved in the tourism industry (butler and Hinch 1996; Price 1996; Zeppel (1998:60) Culture based tourism has spread to remote areas where indigenous people live.

Indigenous cultures are frequently the main attraction for tours visiting wild and scenic natural areas such as the Amazon Borneo and Oceania. Native lands in developed countries are also a growing focus for indigenous tourism (Lew and van Otten 1998). Zeppel (1998: 60)

> The renewed spirit of ethnicity, reinforced during 1993 by the United Nations' Year of Indigenous Peoples, is restoring pride in heritage. This suggests the possibility that indigenous culture, if commoditized with due regard for cultural dignity and ethnographic integrity, and presented on its own turf, may prove to be a cornerstone for Native American economic survival and cultural renaissance. The common goal is therefore to make tourism profitable and a mechanism to reinforce the traditional cohesive elements of their culture. (Smith, 1996: 287)

Indeed, the indigenous need for deriving income from land, cultural resources and new economic ventures coincides with a growing tourist demand for indigenous cultural experiences. Environmental, cultural and spiritual aspects of indigenous heritage and traditions are especially featured in ecotourism, cultural tourism and alternative tourism markets (Zeppel, 1998: 60).

Indigenous tourism is that segment of the visitor industry which directly involves native peoples whose ethnicity is a tourist attraction (Smith, 1996: 283).

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According to Hinch & Butler, Indigenous tourism refers to tourism activities in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction (1996: 9). Obviously culture is one of the major aspects of indigenous people. Their culture is believed to be primitive and unique. The primitivity and uniqueness make the culture attractive and appealing for other people. Therefore tourism that involves indigenous element is indigenous tourism. However, only the involvement of indigenous people in tourism business based on other destination or other kind of activities cannot be called indigenous tourism.

Zeppel quotes Butler & Hinch *(1996)*; Price (1996) Worldwide, indigenous peoples are becoming more involved in the tourism industry (1998: 60). Culture based tourism has spread to remote areas where indigenous people live.

2.1.3 Scope and Significance of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritages have become one of the most important factors in attracting tourists. Its scope is increasing day by day. Old forts and monuments are preserved and transferred into heritage site. On one hand people are turning into modernity but on the other they are getting fonder of primitive cultures and traditions.

Tourism is fast becoming the biggest industry in the world, 'The Greatest Show on Earth'. The life blood of much of the industry is heritage (Boniface &Fowler 1993: xi). Modern means of transportations, relatively better security management of many countries have and many other facts have led the people to travel more than before and have fun in life.

Hinch & Butler (1996: 3) argue that tourists have been always fascinated by the opportunity to see and experience others' cultures. According to them the Grand Tour of the well educated Elizabethans was aimed at learning from other cultures. And this fascination has been maintained for last four hundred years.

It is often argued that tourism is soon going to be the biggest industry in the world providing largest number of employment. Similarly, cultural tourism is expanding remarkably.
 'Throughout the world, cultural tourism is flourishing and expanding. There is a growing desire

by millions of travelers for access to 'primitive' societies, a hunger to taste if only briefly their traditional ways of life, a wish to see, experience photograph their 'exotic' practices' (Sofield & Birtles : 396)

In tourism settings, heritage and culture may be used for a variety of purposes, (Laws & Pan, 2008: 61) including entertainment, preservation, information, education, profit and propaganda. The same cultural practices which are normal and ordinary for the local people can be extraordinary and exotic for the visitors. The visitors can get entertainment and education or information and the hosts get economic profits. The satisfaction of both parties can result in preservation of cultural assets.

Heritage is, according to a variety of commentators such as Alzua et al. (1998), Palmer (1999, 2003, 2005) and Timothy and Boyd (2003), a prominent and increasingly important part of tourism (quoted in Ross 2008: 273).

International tourism has demonstrated remarkable and consistent growth over the past half century, averaging 6.2 per cent annual growth since 1950 (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008:17)

NEPAL: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL & TOURISM TO EMPLOYMENT
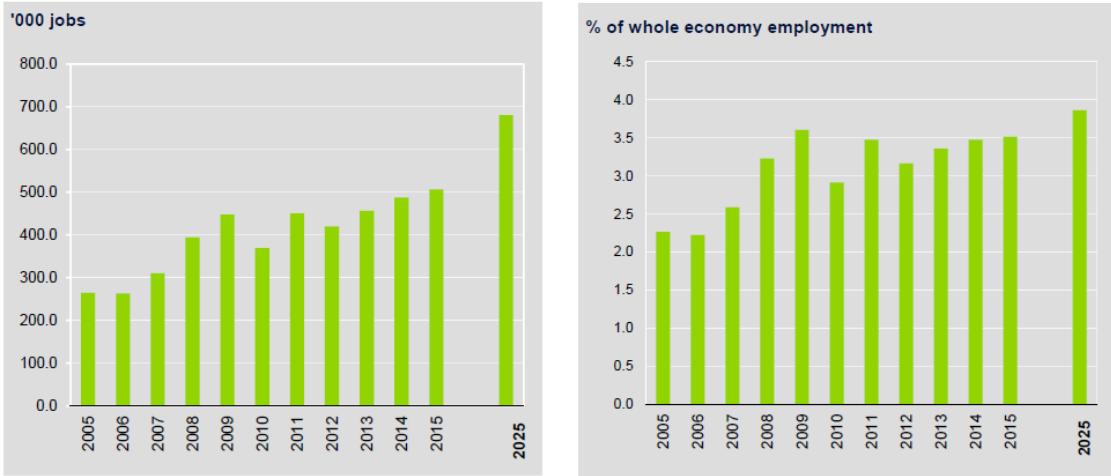
Figure: 2.1 (Source: World Travel andTourism Council, Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2015, Nepal)

The figures above show how travel and tourism has contributed in job creation and economy. The first figure shows that the number of jobs that travel and tourism has created is increasing

with a little fluctuation. It shows in the year 2015, the total of 500,000 jobs is created directly by travel and tourism. The figure also projects that nearly 700,000 thousand people will have been employed in the field of travel and tourism in Nepal. Similarly, the second figure shows the percentage of contribution of the sector to national economy. The trend shows that contribution percentage is increasing with some fluctuation. It is projected that in the year 2025, this sector will contribute nearly 4% of the national economy.

According to Rakesh (1994), the Nepal Terai has been a major share-holder of the rich cultural heritage of Asia.

2.2 Major Aspects of Tharu Culture

When it comes to Tharu people and the tourism based on their culture it's worth learning some of the major aspects of tharu culture. History of Tharu community is presented in brief in the following pages. Tharu festivals and celebrations are discussed afterwards.

Picture: 2.2 A common Old modeled Tharu house near Sauraha. (photo by: Prakriti Aryal, 5th May, 2015)

2.2.1 History of Tharu Community

Tharu population is one of the major groups of Nepalese Terai. They are believed to have lived in these areas since several hundred years back. Moss & Wilson (1993:297) mention Tharu people as the 'descendents of the Terai's earliest inhabitants.

In the eleventh century, the Arabian traveler Al Beruli used the name for forest-dwellers in the Mithila region of the eastern Terai, but until well into the twentieth century these Tharus were probably not even aware of the existence of the people in the Dang Valley in the western Terai or in Chitwan who were also called Tharus. (Whelpton 2005: 180/181)

The word 'Tharu' was in fact simply a label for the forest-dwellers whose arrival predated that of settlers belonging to the main North Indian Hindu castes. Because Tharus were frequently dominated by the newer arrivals, the term also come to be used for slaves in general and also simply as an insult. Nevertheless, some Tharus were major landowners and in the 1940s a group of them founded the Tharu Welfare Society, which was officially recognized by the government just before the collapse of the Rana regime. After 1951, the Tharu Welfare Society expanded its activities and by 1980 its biannual conferences were attended by representatives from all of Nepal's Terai districts and from Tharu areas across the border in India (Whelpton 2005: 180/181)

Tharu people call themselves 'bhumi-putra' (son of the land). Agriculture is the main occupation among them with some involving in tourism related business and some other jobs recently. They have lived in those areas more than 6 hundred years. Preservation of their culture through culture house and museum has been very important issue there. They are considered to be brave and resistant people since they are the only community to have lived successfully in Nepalese Terai throughout the smallpox and malaria epidemics.

In the codification of Nepalese law in the famous Mulki Ain (National Code) of 1854, declared by Jang Bahadur Rana, the prime minister of that time, Tharu people were placed in the third rank (next to the lowest ones). Even though the 'regulating in minute detail the whole structure of caste distinctions, are considered to be bizarre by modern standards' (Whelpton ,1987: 6), caste discrimination is still existing as a social evil in Nepal.

Tharu community in Nepal is turning into modernity due to many reasons. Bista (1972) agrees that the Tharu community is undergoing tremendous changes. There is a wave of reform among educated young Tharus. They have changed their food habits, reformed their religious practices and introduced modern education.

2.2.2 Major Tharu Festivals

Festivals are parts of culture. Festivals are celebrated to continue tradition. They have religious values. Normally, festivals are celebrated with the people of one's own community. But at Sauraha, the Tharu festivals have special meaning. Even though, Tharu people have modernized themselves to a greater extent, their tradition and culture can be seen in their festivals. There are two interesting things: they follow traditional styles in the festivals. In almost every festival at Sauraha, there are some tourists involved. Tourists who arrive there in festival time are invited by local people (who they come to contact with, for example: tourist guides, elephant mahaut, culture house employees or even shopkeepers etc.) They have interesting tradition. They serve food on banana leaves. They prepare a number of food varieties. They serve one or two items at a time and keep serving different varieties a little of everything at the interval of three to five minutes. In the mean time, home-made wine is served.

Like many other communities, tharu people celebrate a number of festivals throughout the year. They share some festivals such as holi (Phaguwa in their words), Deepawali (Soharai in their words) etc. with other communities. However they have their own ways of celebrating these festivals. The following are their major festivals and their descriptions:

a. Pitri Aushi

It is a festival to remember the deceased ones and is celebrated after 7th day of Jitiya festival and is called Yamosha in Tharu language. It is celebrated in remembrance of departed soul ('*pitri*'in Nepali word). In the morning, Tharu clean their yards with mud mixed with cattle dung. A wooden mat known as *parka* is placed in the yard and two small pieces of green grass is placed on it. Family members of the deceased ones bathe taking a piece of *kush* (a dried grass having religious significance) in their hands.

b. Soharai (Tihar)

Tihar begins 16 days after Dashain, the biggest Hindu festival and is celebrated for 3 days worshipping Goddess Laxmi (Goddess of Wealth according to Hindu mythology. Tharu people make bread from rice flour and give a name corresponding to each structure of the bread. In the middle of the yard, they make a bamboo pillar decorated with colorful flowers. The head of the

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family starts worshipping by offering chicken, bread and *raksi* (a homemade wine made from rice). They decorate cattle especially cows and oxen and feed a liquid mixture made from white gourd, sacred grass, rice husk and salt, cooked a day earlier.

c. Jitiya

It is celebrated for three days on the month of September. Tharu women take a fasting and bathe in nearby rivers. Tharu women and girls, dressed in new clothes (especially in white and black color), sing in their own local dialect. They dance making circles. Tharu people worship Jitbahan god where *Jit* means victory and *bahan* means vehicle.

d. Phaguwa

Colored festival of holi is called *phaguwa* in tharu language. It is celebrated for three days and final day is purnima, the full moon day in the month of Falgun (around March/April) Youth of village get together and burn a chor (thief)-a temporary shed from mustard straw at night in their farm. Before burning *chor*, mukhiya (in the past every village used to choose mukhiya (chief) for the village) of the village worship the holy god inside the shed by sacrificing chicken, egg and bread. Finally all participants take a *tika* (red or colorful mark put at the forehead as blessings from ash of burned *chor* and bathe in river.

2.2.3 Tharu Museum and Culture Houses at Sauraha

The flow of tourist at Sauraha, the consciousness of the community in preserving tangible culture and the multicultural friendly constitution of Nepal resulted in the establishment of the Tharu museum at Sauraha in 2005 with the name Sauraha Tharu Museum and Research Centre.

For the tourists who visit Sauraha in non-festival time, the culture houses (for intangible) and museum for (tangible and intangible) culture serve them with cultural taste. It was established for conserving culture and to convey information to Tharu culture. Traditional equipments of Tharu people like wheel cart, Janto (stone grinding mill), equipments used when a baby is born, funeral ceremony, marriage ceremony and traditional tharu dresses are the main attraction for the tourists within the museum.

Normally two tharu people work within the museum at present. But for the welfare of the museum, the Museum Management Committee is formed every two years which comprises eleven members.

The cultural museum gives tourists a lot of information about Tharu Culture, Tharu life styles and above all the development history of Tharu people. According to a staff member working in the museum an average of 200 tourists visit the museum per day. Entry fee for the museum is Rs 10 for the domestic tourists and Rs 25 (around Nok 2.00 / $ 0.25) for the international tourists per person.

Museum, to some extent run on the basis of visitors fees. Besides these, National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Biodiversity conservation centre (BCC), volunteer from international country provide fund for running the museum.

There are two cultural houses at Sauraha. They are: a. Tharu Cultural Program b. New Sauraha Cultural House

Both of these cultural houses are privately owned business companies. Each of them has hired three groups of performers each of 10-15 local tharu young men and girls.

'Tharu Cultural Program' is older and was established fifteen years ago. New Sauraha Cultural House was established nearly three years ago. Owner of Tharu Cultural Program is from newar community and next one is from local Tharu community. According to the owners, the purpose of both cultural houses was to show tharu culture through cultural dances and performances. Main program or main dances within both cultural houses are: a. Dapping Dance (Jhamta nach) b. Stick Dance (Lathi nach) c. Thekara dance d. Damfu dance e. Peacock dance (Mayur nach) f. Jhumra dance g. Single stick dance/Fire dance (Akel lathi nach/Aago nach) h. Jhilli Dance etc.

These cultural houses open only in the evenings for the dances and other performances. Around 135 tourists visit the Tharu Cultural Program and nearly 95 tourists visit the New Sauraha Tharu Cultural House per day (according to the managers).

Apart from these cultural houses and the museum, Tharu cultural performances are organized in almost all hotels on demand of tourists.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL DISSCUSSION

This study on the effects of tourism on the indigenous culture draws on three major theories and issues namely sustainability, indigenous culture and authenticity. Cultural tourism and conservation of culture seem to be opposite to each other. For this reason, sustainability on cultural tourism has been taken as the major theory for this thesis. Similarly, 'authenticity' has been taken here for the authenticity of cultural product is considered as one of the main requirements of tourism. And both, sustainability and authenticity have been discussed in relation to indigenous cultural heritage. Moreover, in order to understand the tourism potential of indigenous culture, performance of local culture, Indigenous identity and debates on tourism-indigenous culture, as well, have been presented in this chapter.

3.1 Sustainability in cultural tourism

In cultural tourism, culture and tourism are like two sides of a same coin. Or in other words we can compare cultural tourism with a cart and its wheels. Culture and tourism are two wheels of a same cart. The cart cannot keep going if any of them stops working. Thus to keep the 'cart' of cultural tourism going smoothly forever both of its 'wheels' (culture and tourism) should be taken good care of. For this reason, the theory of sustainability has been taken as main theory in this thesis.

Pearce (1988) points out that at its simplest, sustainability means 'making things last'-what is being made durable can be an ecosystem, an economy, a culture, an industry, an ethnic grouping and so on. (quoted by Milne, 1998: 35) The base of cultural tourism is 'culture' of the destination, either tangible or intangible or both. So, the 'culture' should last so that it remains as an attraction for the tourist in future. However, in the name of conserving culture, if tourists or tourism industry is avoided, there is no existence of cultural tourism. In cultural tourism, the visitors expect authenticity and diversity of cultural components and the hosts want their culture be promoted and protected both economically and culturally. So, sustainability in cultural tourism means 'making both of these things last' forever. More ever, tourism should be managed

to help culture revive and promoted, and 'culture' should have the capacity to attract more tourists in future.

In this study, the meaning of the word 'sustainable' has been borrowed from the meaning of 'sustainable development' which was given by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) and combined with cultural tourism. Their 1986 report (our common future) defined 'sustainable development' as '…development which meets the needs of presents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Milne, 1998: 35). Therefore, sustainable cultural tourism development refers to the balanced development of tourism and cultural assets.

It sounds better elaborating this point in two different ways: first, the development of culture or tourism at present should not compromise the potential of each of them in the future. For instance, cultural assets should not be over used and should not be put at risk. In the same way tourism also should be managed so that the flow of tourists can keep constant or grow in future instead of decreasing. Second, development of one phenomenon should not hamper the other. For example: if we think of only conservation and tourists are unwelcomed, tourism cannot flourish there. And if we do not control and manage tourism well and do not care conservation, the heritage can be destroyed or get extinct.

When the subject of sustainability comes in the field of tourism, eco-tourism or nature based tourism comes in our mind first because it is a big issue globally. However, importance of sustainability in social and cultural issues cannot be less emphasized. Mowforth & Munt, put 'the second key word in our analysis of tourism is sustainability, a notion that at its most basic encapsulated the growing concern for the environment and natural resources, though sustainability has also had increasing resonance in social and economic issues (2009: 18)

There are cultural heritages of varying natures. Historical monuments, museum, forts and special buildings in many places are given a lot of care nowadays. A large number of holiday makers and learners gather there excitedly to view and learn about these things. Tangible cultural assets are somehow conserved in many places even though they are at risk of getting extinct in some places. However it's not easy to conserve intangible cultural assets such as our traditions, art, songs, dances, rituals etc.

It is obviously more difficult to conserve intangible heritages in indigenous communities. Arrivals of city people (richer and more modern people visiting such destination), economic pressures and poverty in many such places, marginalization from the state, lack of education or advent of modern education (only concerned with national affairs) and many other things have made conservation of indigenous culture almost impossible in many places.

Because the main focus is on tourism on indigenous setting, this thesis is more concerned with obtaining sustainability in such touristic places where indigenous culture is a major attraction and also where it is at risk of extinction. From both of these angles, Tharu culture and tourism at Sauraha, Chitwan has been chosen as a quite appropriate subject to analyze. Issue of sustainability is a major issue among Tharu people living in Sauraha and its vicinity. Because of the famous Chitwan National Park, the number of tourist is increasing day by day. And hardly any tourist visiting Sauraha and the national park go without having the taste of Tharu Culture.

For this reason, some examples of successful indigenous tourism development are presented here. Zeppel (1998: 65) puts that aboriginal groups are developing tourism and conserving their culture hand in hand. They have transferred their native places in to tourist attraction. In fact they have control over planning and running tourism ventures in their homeland. According to Zeppel (ibid), one of the successful aboriginal tourism centers is Manyallaluk: the Dreaming place, in the Northern Territory in Australia. It is Aboriginal-owned and –operated tourism venture. He further mentions that at Manyallaluk, the cultural tours are organized by native guides who provide the tourists 'package tours'. The tourists are taught and are given chance to practice traditional skills such as basket weaving, spear throwing, bark painting, fire lighting on their own. While coach tours and self-drive visitors are welcome at this community, 'the people of Manyallaluk make it clear that it is their country and they alone have the right to show it to others' He puts:

> The success of Manyallaluk has derived from Aboriginal input and control over tourism development. Tourists are restricted to the homestead area unless on a guided tour and further requested not to enter the community living area. (Zeppel, 1998: 66)

However, this is not sufficient or maybe misfiring in some cases. Control over tourism is important and at the same time, they should be aware of what they are offering for which they are having tourists in their places.

3.2 Authenticity

Cultural tourists want to experience 'authentic culture' of the destination. It is presumed that authentic culture of the particular community is the main reason behind tourist visits. And also it is believed that 'authenticity' must be maintained to flourish cultural tourism. Because, 'authenticity' of cultural assets' is taken as the major base of cultural tourism.

So, the theory of authenticity has been associated here as a back bone to gain sustainability in cultural tourism. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word 'authenticity' as 'real or genuine: not copied or false; true and accurate; made to be or look like the original. According to the dictionary authenticity means something 'genuine' or 'real', like that personally signed photograph. It is the state of something being authentic or legitimate and true. In simplest form, authentic means real or true.

There is a lot to discuss about authenticity when we talk about cultural tourism. For MacCannell the essence of all tourism is the quest for authenticity that he considers absent from everyday modern life (mentioned in Mowforth & Munt, 2009:75). But the question of authenticity is not settled although it has always been discussed in a number of tourism literatures. Because, *what is consistent about, in the debate on authenticity is its inconsistency* (Prideaux & Timothy, 2008:6). Authenticity in cultural tourism can mean different things for different people.

Some communities have unique cultural assets; tangible and intangible. Those assets such as arts, dances, rituals or different cultural objects in themselves are authentic culture. If the very objects are conserved in museums and culture parks, they are authentic. But in the course of time, those objects and practices are lost or get extinct. Since they are culturally important and attractive for tourists, they are produced again and kept in museum. Such objects are commoditization of the real objects and are not real. Similarly, people cannot be celebrating festival and performing cultural dances every time the tourists visit them. That is why, they

assign a group of performers to present such performance when tourists want them and such performance may not be genuine.

When culture of particular community becomes attractive for the outsiders, it has potential to flourish tourism. The culture saved by the local people becomes a buyable object for the visitors. In the views of Cohen (1998) tourism as an economic activity has been bloomed for the commodification of cultures. Objects and performances that were once created for local consumption become geared towards the tourist market and consequently are said to be exploited, debased and trivialized (Cohen, 1988, quoted by *Hang, 2008:52)*

The process of showcasing cultural activities for the purpose of entertaining tourists and earning money results in commoditization of culture. Commoditization decreases the value of culture and authenticity is lost. 'Such commodification can therefore be seen to destroy the authenticity of local cultural products and relationships and lead to the staged or faked experiences created specifically for external consumers' (MacCannell, 1976 mentioned by *Hang (2008:52)*. And such loss of authenticity is damaging to the host community and to the experience of the visitors. So, it's like a vicious circle: presence of authenticity is necessary for attracting tourists, tourists' visits results in commoditization, commoditization causes the loss of authenticity and loss of authenticity decreases the charm of culture and therefore decreases the number of tourists' visits.

  In his views, people have begun to live modern lives. Modern lives are characterized by use of machines, routined activities and very busy times etc. Traditional ways are too slow and boring for them. However, as city people love countryside and long to stroll in the wilderness, people who are occupied with modern gadgets and controlled by modern ways long for the traditional and ancient things. For those who have forgotten their ancient culture especially, want to see and satisfy the quest of their past. Probably this is the one of the major reasons behind cultural tourism. People can realize the meaning of their own culture by seeing others' culture, as well. Whatever the reason is, but cultural tourism has been given more attention in academia and in practice recently.

According to MacCannell it is not possible for the tourists to experience real and genuine culture and events. Instead, they are replaced by a variety of artificial objects and activities. He uses the word 'staged authenticity' to refer to such pseudo events and artificial activities. A Chinese

tourist visiting Sami Theme park at Karasjok, Norway bought a knife made in Sami traditional way. Seeing this, a fellow tourist remarked 'I am sure it's made in China.' It's not to worry where it was made, but it's an example that tourists worry for the loss of authenticity. It can be an example of 'staged authenticity'. People may doubt that the object (the knife in above example) may not have been made there by local people; however, they buy it as a memento of their visit and their experiences with local culture. He says that modern tourists always seek for authenticity but their authenticity-seeking nature is the real cause of the loss of authenticity. *Hang (2008:52)*

However, there are tourists who want to get entertained by any means whether it be cultural or natural heritage. Quoting *Miksic, 2002,* Laws & Pan (2008: 63) put that *the quest of authenticity may not be important to all. Visitors to heritage sites often expect to be entertained… Presenting sites to visitors in appealing ways is a matter of importance to modern managers. 'Interpretation involves making information available and interesting to visitors before, during and after their visits"*

According to Lowenthal (1985:215) 'no account can recover the past as it was, because the past was not an account, it was a set of events and situations'(quoted in Prideaux and Timothy 2008: 5).

3.3 Indigenous Identity, Culture and Tourism: some debates

The debates on the relationship between indigenous culture and tourism have been associated to the theory of cultural tourism. Since, this thesis focuses on a particular indigenous group it is fruitful to discuss on it here. The discussion on their relationship helps to theorize indigenous cultural tourism.

The first point is concerned with the blame that tourism on 'indigenous culture is a kind of exploitation. It's a kind of new colonization on them.' Hinch & Butler (1996: 15) put a question for discussion whether indigenous tourism is simply another form of colonial exploitation or an effective mechanism for development within indigenous communities? There are some scholars who think that indigenous tourism is a form of colonialism. It is obvious that the tourists coming

to visit indigenous destinations are relatively more modern, richer and more fortunate than the host indigenous people. The local people have to perform their cultural practices on demand of the tourists since they are paid for. Often the things in destination are organized the way tourists want. Local people may not be ready to except all these things.

Secondly, often indigenous people are not included while making decisions about projects related to them. Or even if some of them are included in discussion, their voices are neglected. This may put their culture and norms at risk. So, if the local people do not have a control over tourism industry based on the indigenous culture, it can put a bad effect on people. Local people may be forced to feel 'other' by the tourists. If they are not assured of their respect as the host, tourism on their cultural attraction cannot flourish well. Economic benefits with social respect can lead to sustainable development of the society. Sofield and Birtles agree with United Nations 1992:17) that 'projects which are imposed without the sometimes lengthy consultations with traditional decision-making institutions based on debate and consensus characteristic of many indigenous communities may bring dissension rather than improved conditions'. According to them a good knowledge of indigenous society is necessary for any projects that are related to those indigenous people to be successful. Therefore 'it is important to involve indigenous peoples in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects affecting them. (United Nations 1992:17)

Third, the question of modernization is an another issue while conserving traditions and cultures. One cannot deny the fact that indigenous culture is one of the major phenomena of cultural heritage tourism. Sofield & Birtles argue 'Presentation and transmission of cultural heritage for tourism by indigenous communities embodies a number of desired outcomes.' (397) It is given great importance, in practice and academia. In almost every country, people seem to be trying to develop tourism industry on the base of indigenous culture. Indigenous culture is taken as exotic, unique and natural (far from modern artificial practices). Their being in relatively remote areas of the country, having conserved traditional practices, far from using modern equipments have been utilized by tourism industry as potential for tourist attraction. However, while calling them exotic and culture-loving, we are calling them old fashioned and conservative, as well. We are taking them as back-warded, uneducated and uncivilized in comparison to other mainstream people. So, on one hand, indigenous communities should be given opportunity to develop their

life styles, modernize, educate. And on the other hand they should save their culture, which in turn, gives them identity, and also the manifold benefits by linking their culture with tourism.

 One more of the issues is related to displacement or resettlement of indigenous places. Sometimes the whole community is displaced from their original place in order to make a way dam or national park etc. or for other reasons. Whatever the reason is, the result may be negative to those people who have special relationship with land and nature. Indigenous peoples are often characterized by their especial relationship with land and nature. Foremost among these (the characteristics) is the special relationship which indigenous peoples have to the land and nature. (United Nations 1992:17) The tharu people in Nepal call themselves the 'children of the land'. The Rautes of Western Nepal want to be called the 'people of the jungle'. So, this relationship can have a number of implications when it comes to the policy level. Monetary compensation or other kinds of rewards are sometimes not enough for them if it comes to their displacement from the place where they have been living.

3.4 Conclusion

The thesis evolves round these three theories to find a set of practical ways which can ensure a sustainable development of cultural heritage tourism on an indigenous community. The theory of sustainability has been assessed by two other theories: authenticity and indigenous identity. In the case of indigenous community, extra care should be given to the norms and values of indigenous people. In fact, specialty in cultural values makes them distinct from others. The local indigenous people should try to maintain 'authenticity' of their culture so that their culture keeps attracting tourists. In case of the absence of absolute authenticity, different modes of it (staged authenticity, existential authenticity or post-modern authenticity) may be maintained. Theoretically, sustainability in indigenous cultural tourism stands on the balance between tourism stake holders and cultural conservation.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Methodology focuses on the best means for acquiring knowledge about the world (Denzin &Lincoln, 2008: 184). It is the base for making plans and deciding the strategy of the research work. How a researcher carries out the research work depends mainly on what kind of methodology he or she follows. And therefore, the researcher chooses the methods that fit the nature of his or her research. According to Silverman (2006: 15) 'methodology' defines how one will go about studying any phenomenon. The term methodology refers to the way in which we approach problems and seek answers. In the social sciences, the term applies to how one conducts research. Our assumptions, interests, and purposes shape which methodology we choose (Taylor & Bogdan 1984: 1).

This chapter begins by providing an overview of the philosophical positions in social science research and continues by addressing the research method, research area, and data collection. Following this, the reliability and validity as well as the ethical issues related to the study is discussed. The final section elaborates the data analysis of the study.

4.1 Philosophical Positions of Methodology

According to Guba & Lincoln (1994:108), 'methodology' ranges from positivism to constructivism. Its 'positivism' point posits closer to natural science and 'constructivism' to social science. The former states that the reality exists and the latter believes that reality is constructed and therefore always relational. For example, *the positivist researchers assume that the 'real' reality is pursued by an 'objective' inquirer and experimental methods are used to verify the hypothesis, whereas the constructivists believe the relationship between researcher and the things to be researched as interactional and dialectical.* (Guba & Lincoln,1994: 108, 109).

As the subject matter of this study is social phenomenon, the constructivist methodology has been followed here.

The researcher in this research tries to discover what people think about the causes of social changes. The thesis is to analyze the view of people about the causes of declination of a particular culture. Based on the constuctivist methodology (assumption of knowledge) the researcher here tries to discover not the only fact but one of the facts (one of the truths).

4.2 Research Method

'Those of us who aim to understand and document others' understandings choose qualitative interviewing because it provides us with a means for exploring the points of view of our research subjects while granting these points of view the culturally honored status of reality.' (J. Miller and Glassner 1997:100 quoted in May, 2001: 127)

Since this research is aimed at finding how tourism can revitalize local and indigenous culture, qualitative research methods have been chosen. The main tools for the analysis applied here are in-depth interview and observations. The semi-structured in-depth interview is considered quite effective for understanding human behavior and their reasoning. Such interviews can help the researchers to go deep into the experiences of the informants and also to the facts behind such experiences and reasoning. Taylor & Bogdan argues that researchers develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories (1984: 5). It not only explores what the informants say but also gives ground to analyze why they say so. Document analysis and analyzing the text also are used in this study.

Flick opines that qualitative researchers are interested in accessing experiences, interactions and documents in their natural context and in a way that gives room to the particularities of them and the materials in which they are studied. (2007: xi)

The phrase qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data: peoples' own written or spoken words and observable behavior (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984: 5).

4.3 Research Area and Field of the Study

It is mentioned in chapter one that Tharu community is the biggest group in Nepalese Terai region and quite a large area has been occupied by them. Normally they live in the length of around 900km (i.e. from east to west of the country). Economic and social condition of Tharus in the eastern Nepal can differ from that of living in the central region or the Western Terai. Even 'tourism' can mean different things depending on the access of tourism industry to them. And it was not possible to study about all of them. Keeping all these things in mind, this thesis has been aimed at studying the condition of Tharu-Tourism relationship in Chitwan (inner Terai) especially at Sauraha in Bachhauli Village Development Committee.

To study this element (relationship between indigenous people and tourism) Sauraha and Bachhauli area is quite special. There is a direct and dense link between Tharu people and Tourism (tourists, service providing people and service companies) at Sauraha. The Tharu villages around and in Sauraha, their involvement in Tourism related business, the museum, Tharu culture houses have been a good combination for the researcher to select this area as the research area and field for this thesis.

4.4 Limitations of the Study and Generalization of Findings

This study is aimed at studying the condition of Tharu people and the tourism based on their culture in Chitwan. It cannot represent the condition of all Tharu people and the tourism throughout the country. There are varieties in the cultural practices and difference in the level of understanding. Tharu people live in the southern plain from east to the west of Nepal. In many of those communities, tourism and its effects are not noticed as it is done in Chitwan. Therefore, the finding of this study may not be applicable everywhere. Moreover only a handful people have been interviewed and only the available documents have been analyzed. So this is not necessarily the view of all Tharu people and the conclusion of all documents. The interviews were taken in Nepali language and there can be some kind of meaning gap when it was transcribed in English.

4.5 My Role as a Researcher

First of all I visited the Tharu Museum at Sauraha. Clearly there were many reasons behind visiting this museum. First, I was looking for some data from the museum. Secondly I wanted to talk to the staff members in the museum about cultural preservation. Above all, I wanted to get a link to meet, talk and interview the chairman of the Museum Management Committee. The next day when I met the chairman, he was very happy to talk about cultural preservation. In addition to the interview, he suggested many other things for instance: where to visit and whom to talk and take interviews etc. In fact, observation, photographing and interviews began instantly.

There was only one culture house at Sauraha when I visited Sauraha a few years ago. But, this time I knew that one more culture house has been opened there. I talked with the managers formally and informally, took interviews and observed the cultural programs.

Similarly I visited some hotels and interviewed the managers and staff members as well. The managers of the hotels were interviewed because they were also playing a role in conserving local culture by organizing cultural shows in their hotels.

In the next round, I selected some local people for the interview. It was a random selection.

While I was collecting data, taking interviews and taking photographs, I was quite aware of my prejudices and pre-knowledge about Tharu Culture and Cultural preservation. I tried my best not to get the interviews and information affected by my previous knowledge and experiences with Tharu people. It was not possible to 'stay away from areas in which they (the researcher) have deeply felt commitments as Jack Douglas argued (quoted in Taylor & Bogdan (1984: 20), but maximum care was given not to be influenced by the pre conceptions about tharu people.

However, everyone must also consider that research is never 'value free' (Becker, 1966-1967; Gouldner, 1970; Mills, 1959quoted in Taylor & Bogdan, 1984: 20).

4.6 Data collection

This study uses both the primary and secondary data about indigenous tharu culture and tourism based on it and also tourism affecting it. The in-depth interviews have been the main source for primary data and document study, the secondary data. The sub-section below introduces the in-

depth interviews and their uses in this study. It also presents what and how the secondary source has been applied in this study.

4.6.1 A brief description of the informants

The main data for this study are the in-depth interviews. The interviews were taken with sixteen people in total. The informants have been categorized into four groups: the chairman of the museum management committee, culture house managers, hotel manager and local people. All four groups of the informants are from Sauraha, many of them being Tharu people. This categorization was created so that the informants can be asked certain questions. The following part presents a brief introduction to each of the groups.

First group: the chairman of the management committee (The Tharu Museum and Research Centre): In the beginning of data collection, I met the in-charge of the museum. He was inquired about the museum and also about the chairman of the museum management committee. The chairman was interviewed the next day. He is an inhabitant of Bachhauli VDC and is the chairman of the eleven-member-management committee of 'The Tharu Museum and Research Centre at Sauraha. According to him, he along with the members of his committee work voluntarily to manage and develop the museum.

Second group: the culture house managers: In this category, there are two informants: the managers of both of the culture houses. Both of them live at Sauraha. But one of them is not from local Tharu community although he has been living there for a long time.

Third group: The Managers of Hotels at Sauraha:The hotels at Sauraha are responsible for developing tourism. They have direct links with tourists. They should be responsible to conserve local heritages, as well. They organize cultural shows hiring local performers. They have employed local people in service for tourist. The managers of some hotels were chosen in which Tharu Cultural Programs were conducted. Five persons were interviewed in this category. They are as follows: 1. Manager of Tree Tops Resort. (Not a Tharu but lived in the Tharu village since her birth). 2. Director of Traveling and Marketing at Chitwan Gainda Lodge. (Interest: bird watching.) 3. President of hotel association Nepal, Sauraha (HAN) (Occupation: Manager of

Rain Forest Hotel). 4. Manager of Royal Park Hotel. (Address: Bachhauli-2.) 5. Managing Director of Eco Adventure Resort (Address: Bachhauli-2)

Fourth group: Local Tharu people: Four local Tharu people were interviewed. The informants were chosen randomly. They are as follows: 1. A student, aged 30, from Bachhauli VDC 2. A farmer (Aged 35), from Bachhauli VDC 3. A Tharu woman (house-wife, aged 35), from Bachhauli VDC 4. A local tharu boy, aged 22) from Bachhauli-6, works as a tourist guide

4.6.2 In-depth Interviews

Even though, as Fontana & Frey argues, 'asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first, interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings (1994: 361). Because, as they say, the words written or spoken, can have a number of ambiguity and unclear meanings regardless the care we give to formulate questions and code the answers. There is always something lacking but we can't disagree Taylor & Bogdan who claim, social scientists rely largely on verbal accounts to learn about social life (1984: 77) and cannot underestimate the value of interviews as a tool in qualitative researching, either.

In their (Taylor & Bogdan) words, by in-depth qualitative interviewing we mean repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words (1984: 77).

As this study is planned to be one of qualitative researches, in depth interviews are taken as the major tool to shape the research. Semi-structured and open ended questions were used in the interviews. Interviews were taken with the local people, some others who are mainly involved in tourism related business, local heritage management and those who are concerned with cultural preservation. As May argues, flexibility for the informants to talk freely and freedom of discovering meaning are utilized in the research as these are the characteristics of qualitative research method. (2001: 125).

4.6.3 Observation and field report/photographs

Observation can be of two types: participant and non-participant. This means, a researcher can observe the things and activities in two ways: one- observing from a certain distance and two- observing the activities while participating in such activities. Both of these methods are widely used in the process of collecting data. 'The phrase participant observation is used here to refer to research that involves social interaction between the researcher and informants in the milieu of the latter, during which data are systematically and unobtrusively collected.' Taylor & Bogdan (1984: 15).

To collect data and to take interviews of the people, I (the researcher) visited Sauraha for several days, met local Tharu people and took their photos when they were in their casual dresses and in their usual activities. In addition to the formal interviews, there was a lot of interaction and inquiries with the managers of culture houses and chairman of the museum.

4.7 Secondary data

My trip to Nepal in February 2015 provided me a good opportunity to access a number of materials along with the chance to interview the people at Sauraha. During the field visit, a lot of materials have been collected from different sources. The materials range from the one-page brochures of the hotel at Sauraha to bulky books on Nepalese culture and society. The magazines published by Tharu Kalyankari Sabha and some booklets published by the Tharu museum have had a great value in analysis of the data.

In depth interviews was the main tool to collect data and the method also included document analysis, and observation.

With their consent, photos of the local people were taken to analyze the changes in their dresses. Their traditional houses and some other traditional equipment were photographed. Some clips of cultural dances were taken while visiting Tharu Cultural Houses. Before beginning formal interviews, some of the local people were asked in detail how they celebrate their festivals.

4.8 Other Issues of the Methodology of Research

There are several other issues that are important to be considered in methodology. For instance: validity, reliability, research ethics, reflexivity etc. To produce a good quality research these things are quite important. They are discussed in a short detail in the following pages.

4.8.1 Validity and Reliability

Silverman (2006: 282) agrees that qualitative research cannot have a 'thermometer' to measure its reliability. However he mentions Moisander and Valtonen's suggestion of the two ways to *satisfy reliability criteria in non-quantitative work.* First, *it is done by making the research process transparent* describing research activities and data analysis process in a clear detail. Second, it is done by making *'theoretical transparency'.* The analysis and interpretation should be based on the theory which must not be vague or have double meaning. In short, we can maintain reliability and validity in qualitative data by the means of transparent research method and theory.

When a research is done, the researcher wants his or her research finding reliable and valid. Neuman argues that both (validity and reliability) ideas are important in establishing the truthfulness, credibility, or believability of findings. In simple terms reliability refers to dependability. It measures whether we can rely on the findings or not. Similarly, validity refers to capacity of being logically sound. According to Neuman reliability means dependability or consistency. Validity suggests truthfulness and refers to the match between a construct, or the way a researcher conceptualizes the idea in a conceptual definition, and a measure. It refers to how well an idea about reality 'fits' with actual reality (2000:164).

4.8.2 Ethical considerations

Due to several reasons, ethical issues have been considered quite carefully in this research. The first reason is that the research is based on interview data. Before starting the interviews, the

informants were asked for the consent. They were informed everything about the nature, purpose and possible consequence of the research.

The second reason is that inquiry and research on vulnerable indigenous people can be a bit serious. In the beginning of interview some people looked doubtful. While this research was carried out, 'Tharuhat' was protesting against the government demanding a Tharuhat Pradesh (separate Tharu State) in the upcoming constitution of Nepal. Sarantakos opines, '*Social Research involves researchers and respondents, and is based on mutual trust and cooperation, as well as on promises and well-accepted conventions and expectations'* (1998).

Good research is more ethically legitimate as it is worth people investing their time for taking part in it and revealing their own situation or giving an insight into their privacy. Flick (2007: 8)

A researcher must always be very careful about the ethical issues and it is especially very important when he or she is dealing with indigenous issues. The consideration of research ethics is important as it deals with the issues of research participants' rights and welfare along with the researcher's obligation to the subjects. It is crucial to be attentive about the knowledge of indigenous tourism selected for the study and to preserve anonymity and safeguard confidentiality. Moreover, the informants were provided with the opportunity to decide whether to participate in the investigation by disseminating them the information and explanation of the benefits, rights, risks and dangers involved with their participation.

Similarly, consent was taken for using the tape recorder at the beginning of the interview.

At the outset of the interview the informants were also clarified that the information provided by them will only be used for study purpose and will be completely confidential in order to avoid any negative impact on their daily life or in the future.

4.8.3 Relevance of the study and reflexivity

This research is aimed to contribute to the knowledge of the heritage managers. And also for the local people whose culture has been a tourist attraction or who encounter tourist for any reasons. Since, it has been a long debated issue, this study tries, to some extent, to help settle the debates.

There can certainly be some kind of reflexivity in the paper because I have been living with these indigenous people for a long time. But, I have tried my best to be as positivist as possible though it's certainly not possible to be completely positivist. The data are analyzed with the light of management ideas that are followed in different tourism ventures in developed countries such as Norway, Australia and New Zealand etc.

4.9 Data Analysis

There are a number of books on 'cultural heritage' and on preserving them. Moreover, many articles and journals have been published which focus the indigenous culture. Since, cultural heritage tourism is one of the major branches of tourism we find a number of books and articles about this subject matter.

However there are very limited publications about Tharu culture and its relation to tourism. The data was first categorized into three groups on the basis of three sub themes that support main theme of the paper. To make it easier to analyze the themes the main themes have been divided as i. understanding cultural change. ii. Discovering the reasons for cultural change. iii. Solutions to cultural changes. These three themes are dealt in the following three chapters: chapter five to seven. The interview data are further divided into smaller points. For instance: chapter five (Understanding cultural changes) has been divided into five small points: i. changes in dresses and ornaments iii. Changes in festivals and celebrations. iii. Other changes iv. Identifying the vulnerable groups. The second theme 'the reasons for changes' has been discussed in chapter six. The findings are further classified into four sub-categories. Similarly chapter seven (solutions to cultural changes) has been divided into five subtitles: awareness/education, timely conduction of festivals and programs, economic support, advancement of the museum and finally local people's involvement.

CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL CHANGES

Culture is the collective form of all practices, knowledge and pattern of life of its members. And these practices change as per the understanding level, economic changes and many other things in and near the society. In the views of Prideaux and Timothy (2008:4) 'Culture is often one of the victims of progress, and the rhythm of daily life that for millennia was determined by the demands of seasons must now change and be determined by a new rhythm created through membership in the global economy'.

But if pattern of life changes because of economic changes or education level, it may not be the issue to worry. Yet, if it changes merely copying the pattern of other's culture (copying the culture of tourists for example), people do worry a lot.

Mowforth & Munt (2009:104) argue that when the visitors with different habits, styles and values are introduced in the society, the tradition, styles of life and norms of the people begin to change. '*Culture of course is as dynamic a feature of human life as society or economy; so the processes of cultural adaption and change are not assumed by all in all cases to be a negative effect*'. But cultural sustainability, according to them, means to the capacity of its people to conserve their special elements which distinguish them from others.

To understand the changes in cultural practices, the informants were asked to describe the changes they have experienced in the area. Most of the informants informed about a number of changes in the society. Some persons were asked a few sub-questions as well. After going through their responses, different sub-themes were created. To deal with such sub-themes separately, this chapter has been sub-divided into five sub-titles each containing one of the sub-themes. For instance: the first subtitle deals with the changes of clothes and ornaments that local people wear. The second subtitle discusses about the responses given by the informants about changes in festivals and celebration. The third topic analyses the discoveries found about other changes in the local society. The fourth sub-chapter discusses on what they informed about change-affected groups among local people. Finally the last sub-category is about the trend of modernization in Tharu people at Sauraha.

5.1 Changes in the dresses

From the interview, it was found that the most obvious change in the activities of people was the changes in their dresses. In fact, the common dresses have now become special ones. Such dresses can be worn in cultural programs only. Only very old people were seen in their traditional dresses. Differences in the types of clothes worn by older and younger generation can mean how the trend in clothes has been changing. We can no longer see the type of ornament worn by older generation in the newer generations.

To find the responses from the local people the informants were asked the following questions: What kind of clothes did they (different age groups and different sexes) use to wear and what kind of them do they wear?

This first category of question was asked with the local people and local informants of Sauraha only. These questions were not asked to the tourists. The hotel managers and culture house managers were also asked these questions. The answers have been analyzed here.

In the interview, all fourteen informants agreed that people's clothing has changed. A lady informant said '*In the past girls and women used to wear cholia, nahaa uporona and the boys and men used to wear mardani (dhoti) and phad (kachad)*'. However, we can see that only some of the older generation wears such dresses. Other people wear different clothes. Nowadays, the girls wear kurta and salwar (see picture:) and also t-shirt and pants etc(picture:). Women wear sadi and cholia (see picture:). And the boys wear shirt and pant etc.

Most of the informants said that they have found drastic changes in what people wear there. The newer generations do not wear what their parents and grandparents wear. Most youngsters wear what other people in the cities wear. The tourists fashion models are also copied. One of the informant said that the youngsters wear improper dresses nowadays. By 'improper dresses' he refers to short cloths which do not cover the body properly. Girls in the past used to wear long cloths and cover their body. Generally, in Nepalese societies, wearing short cloths like frock, skirts for the girls and shorts for the boys is not thought to be good.

Some of the informants informed that there is significant change in wearing ornaments. According to them, the youngsters wear lesser amounts of ornaments than the older generations used to wear. And they think that this is a positive change. For them there is nothing in wearing lesser amount of ornaments and less tattooing. One of the interviewee agreed that there is change in dresses and costumes but she denied that it's because of tourists dresses.

An elderly lady who participated in the interview opines that '*local people entertain watching tourist in modern dress and learn to wear such dresses'. Many local people do not wear traditional dresses anymore*. But in her views, tourism is not responsible for these changes. Tourist culture does not affect tharu culture.

The trend of change can be seen through these photographs, as well.

Picture: 5.1 An Elderly Tharu lady   Picture 5.2 A young Tharu woman

Picture 5.3 Tharu Children (Photos by: Ishwar Koirala, 28th Feb, 2015)

These three photos were taken on the same day near Sauraha. These people were casually working on their own when their photos were taken. They were requested to continue what they were doing. The photos of three generation clearly show the changes in their dresses. This is not the coincidence but a trend of changes at Sauraha and nearby villages.

The last decade has seen a lot of concern in the culture and the cultural and ethnic identity. After the election of constitution assembly, people of all groups and ethnicity have been raising their voices asking the special place for their rights in the constitution.

5.2 Changes in the festivals and celebration

Festivals are special occasions. They are important times to present and practice their culture. Wearing traditional dresses, special ornaments, performing rituals and celebrating dances and other forms of cultural performances are common in most communities. Tharu people observe a number of festivals and many of them are religiously important. Normally festivals are celebrated traditionally in many communities. Traditional dresses, food, ritual activities and dances are tourist attractions at Sauraha. As this thesis aimed at finding changes in cultural

practices at Sauraha the interviews were planned to inquire about changes in festivals and celebrations.

During the interviews, the informants informed that all of their festivals and rituals are celebrated as usual. But, according to them, there is remarkable difference in the activities of older generations and younger ones. The youngsters are not comfortable in wearing traditional dresses and ornaments. They want to wear modern types of dresses in their cultural performances also. The youngsters have not learnt the traditional skills which their elders can do. Most of them cannot dance their cultural dances and they do not like them, either.

A middle-aged man says, '*Yes, we celebrate all of our festivals, in the same way as we used to do in the past. There is very little change. But only the old and middle aged people are strict in performing the rituals. The young ones are more interested in entertainment than in rituals and traditions'.* They informed that they worship their gods and goddesses same way as they used to do in the past. However, there is tension among the older generation that the younger generation is not interested in these things at all. There are certain ways of worshipping and performing rituals which the young ones do not bother to learn. Many youths can dance modern dances but not the traditional ones which are culturally very important. They follow their festivals but the rituals are performed by the older ones in the family.

According to them, the older generation at present organizes the activities in festivals and celebrations. They collect what they need for celebration and rituals. '*Therefore, we cannot see any difference in the ways of celebrations. But we only worry that their youngsters will not be able to carry out all things in right ways'.*

One of the informants says *'We celebrate our festivals sometimes with even more values. But many new celebrations have been introduced. Now we celebrate birthdays of young children, New Year and many other festivals of non-Tharu communities.'* We can see that when people from different background live together, one's activities obviously affect the other. When they live together, they have different activities and celebrations together. They involve in each other's ceremonies and celebrate each other's festivals. At Sauraha, young Tharu people and others celebrate English New year, Christmas and many other festivals with the tourists. Lots of local people enjoy a lot in these festivals. Local people have started organizing programs and

parties for celebrating birthdays. It's a quite new trend in Nepalese societies. Giving Christmas gifts, New Year greetings and birthday gifts have become common at Sauraha. It can be taken as the direct influence of tourists. A few decades ago, as other people, they rarely heard about these things and celebrations. So, it seems obvious that the older generation complain. One of the participants of the interview says, '*No, the meaning of festivals has changed nowadays. These young people are following the traditions only because of the pressures from their parents and grandparents. And for them, festivals and celebrations are just for fun, nothing else.*'

5.3 Resistant groups and vulnerable groups

Changes in culture refer to the changes in the behavior and activities of people belonging to the community. Keeping in mind that the effect of incoming culture can be different in level depending on the difference in the group of people, the informants were asked who can be affected more by the activities of the tourists.

As the answer to this question, almost all of the informants said that young generations are more affected by the tourist activities. According to most of them the teenagers are more likely to be influenced by the visitors. They are more likely to copy what the visitors do. The reason can be that the youngsters are more mixed with the tourists. Many young people understand English language and therefore many of them are employed in different jobs there. They can talk with majority of tourists who visit there. They involve in different programs together with the tourists.

The older generation cannot mix up with new comers and tourists easily. Like in other communities most of the adult and older people are uneducated or have very little education. They spend their time either in their farm or in home. They cannot talk and understand English. They have very little chances to be mixed with and spend times with the tourists. Moreover they have so much internalized their cultural traits that they cannot easily forget or neglect those things. For them, learning other's language and others' activities is not very easy.

But it is this generation that is more worried that their youngsters are not respecting their traditions. '*Of course, it's the younger generations. They care nothing for their culture',* one of the informants complained. It is this generation, which values every cultural trait and therefore

wants the young ones to respect and continue their cultural activities. They are worried because they think that if the trend continues, their special identity will be lost one day. But some of them are little hopeful that young people will not forget their culture. One of them says, '*I think it's young people. But in recent years, many of them seem to worry about their culture. Even though they do not bother to continue their traditions, they love and respect their culture.*'

She says, '*there is a kind of cultural movement recently. Youngsters are more conscious about their culture and language.*'

5.4 Other changes

The interviews with local people and hotel entrepreneurs in Sauraha revealed a number of other changes in the activities of People in Tharu communities at Sauraha. Though it is difficult to distinguish them as cultural change or other changes, they have been presented here.

As one of the recent changes, a middle-aged man who was the manager of a hotel at Sauraha said, '*We used cactus thorn to make hole in nose and earlobes for ornaments. But now they use machine. We used 'janto' (stone grinding mill) for making flour and dhiki (a kind of traditional instrument for preparing rice) but we have electric mills, now*'. These kinds of changes may be the result of modern technological development. In these changes, we can see that only the instruments and the ways have changed. It shows that people still make holes in their nose and earlobes (especially girls and women) for wearing ornaments. And it also shows that people make similar food. Only the method of preparation has changed.

The another informant also agreed that they have noticed many other changes in the Tharu people's activities. According to him, traditional objects have been replaced by modern gadgets and other things. They used a cactus thorn to make tattoo. But, nowadays they use machine. Making tattoo is less common than in the past. Fishing with homemade nets and collecting ghoge (a kind of small snail) is very important for the older generation. But the youngsters are less interested in these things anymore.

All of the informants (local people group) reported that the trend of taking photo is highly increased among young tharu people. Many of them use their cell phones and even advanced

cameras to take photos. They can be seen taking photos here and there. Movie camera and other cameras are a must in any parties, programs, picnics and even in small gatherings. The informants referred this trend as an influence from tourists.

Some of them also reported of some bad trends in Sauraha. One of the bad trends (in their words) '*love affairs and dating are common and also open nowadays. These things were not practiced in public in the past. These were quite private and kept secret until the loving pair got married. But nowadays the youngsters can be seen dating openly at Sauraha as many tourists do there*'. Love affairs and dating before marriage is not considered to be good in Nepalese societies. People may not easily accept these things.

When they were asked about the positive changes due to tourism, they mentioned some of them. Because local people have different activities with tourists there, one of them said, '*local people have become more friendly, more comprehensive and flexible. They are no more reserved*'.

5.5 Conclusion

Culture is a dynamic entity. It consists of different activities of the people. And the activities of people keep changing in the course of time. Political situation of the country, level of education, economic structure and many other things play vital role in changing such cultural practices. In tourist-destinations, the activities of tourists who visit there certainly have some influences of them. The activities of the visitors affect the local people. Mainly the youngsters begin to follow their styles. However, we cannot label all changes as unwanted and harmful for the local cultures. Some evil traditions should be stopped and some good practices of the foreigners should be learnt as well. There is a kind of confusion among people on choosing right things.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCOVERING THE REASONS FOR CULTURAL CHANGES

People are always in search of better ways of life. They want to improve and advance their living structures. Old methods of different activities are replaced by newer and easier methods. Changed activities and ways of life result in changed values and norms in the society. In short culture keeps changing. 'Culture is rarely static, as it responds by adapting to the many social, economic and political changes that shape and then reshape society.' (Prideaux & Timothy 2008:4)

Tourism industry, in the community which has exposure to tourism, has been taken one of the strong force for social changes. Prideaux & Timothy (2008:5) mention the example of Carter who models '*the impact of tourism as an agent for social and cultural change, noting that many communities face the temptation to trade cultural expression for the economic benefits that tourism can provide*'.

They argue that cultures in many places are facing two major forces of change: '*globalization, which pushes towards uniformity, and tourism, which encourages commoditization but still seeks uniqueness*'. Because of media, transportation and migrations, globalization is taking place in many countries. It results in uniformity of culture. People from different places try to follow the best model of activities which in turn creates similar concepts and trends.

Sauraha, Tharu community seems to have faced many forces of change: tourism, globalization, national politics and modernization etc. The information collected from interviews also highlighted these agents of changes.   The informants were asked about the reasons for changes in the specific place Sauraha. The aim was to find out what the local people took as the main cause of social and cultural changes there. They were first informed about many of these changing factors and asked to choose the most remarkable one or a few. They were also asked to elaborate the reasons.

On the basis of their responses, the reasons have been categorized into four points:

6.1 In-migration:

Tharu people and other people live together at Sauraha and nearby villages. A large number of people from hilly regions have immigrated there. It seems that the villages are populated with both Tharu and non-tharu almost equally. As a result, they mix up in almost every activity. The children of both Tharu and non-tharu communities go to same school and college. They celebrate many festivals together. There is cultural exchange between them. The children go to school and mix up with students from other communities. The manager of the culture houses says '*None of the young tharu people wear what their parents and especially grandparents used to wear. There is a vast difference in many aspects of life. And there are many reasons behind it. The first reason is that they all mix up with people from other communities. People who have come to live there bring in different cultures. The tharu people are adopting slowly the living styles of other communities.*'

A tharu woman says '*many things have changed. But it's not because of only one reason. We live with other people in the same village. Daily we have different activities with other people. Wherever we go, in the bus or in the market areas and in the service centers for instance electricity offices, Drinking Water offices and everywhere we talk with other people. In work places like in the farm we work together. So we learn something from them and they learn something from us.*'

Most of the informants reported that migration of people from other communities has been a major reason for different changes in tharu people at Sauraha and nearby villages.

6.2 Tourism/Tourist activities:

Sauraha is one of the most touristic spaces of Nepal mainly due to Chitwan National Park. This small town is the main intrance to the national park. Elephant rides and jungle safari begins from there. There are a number of hotels to accommodate tourists. Elephant breeding center and museum also attracts domestic and foreign tourists there. As a result, tourists are seen throughout the year. Several informants informed that tourism is the second most important reason for

changes in the Tharu life styles. The manager of a hotel says '*Dresses are copied, styles are copied, yes, many things are copied'.*

There are many things that local people (both Tharu and non-Tharu) have learned from tourists. Mostly they imitate fashions from them.

The activities of tourists affect the local people to a large extent. Tourists visiting here are from different countries and therefore bring in different fashions. However, one of the informants denied that local people copy tourist cultures. She says '*there is no any link between tourist cultures and local tharu cultures.* Because, in their views, *tourists come from highly advanced communities with completely different cultures and therefore local people cannot copy them.* However, many of the informants responded that tourism and the tourists' activities are responsible for cultural changes.

6.3 TV and Cinemas

The other strong factor for social and cultural changes at Sauraha is reported to be TV and cinemas. In the words of one of the informants, who is observing the activities of tharu closely for more than 15 years, changes in cultural practices are caused by three main reasons: '*demand of time, global changes, fashion*'. It seems that changes are inevitable. When things are changing around, it changes here also. People watch TV and movies. Youngsters try to follow the fashion shown on TV. The youngsters are more interested to watch television and cinemas. They have television in every house nowadays. The fashion shown in television and cinemas are copied by the youngsters. *New fashions and cloths with the youngsters are the result of watching TV programs and cinemas. When they see different new type of cloth in television shows, they want those things with themselves. Right away, the businessmen make these things available. Love marriage, divorce etc are practiced in the community as such things are shown in television serials. But people have learned a lot of good habits from television including sanitation, use of modern toilets etc.*

6.4 Economic changes

Economic level of the local people at Sauraha seems to be is rising gradually. As in other places in Nepal, there is some improvement in farming system. Even though the exact data has not been found, we can see that bullock carts and wooden ploughs have been replaced by tractors, irrigation systems have been improved. Sauraha village has been transformed into a busy town. A number of luxury hotels have been opened. As tourist arrivals have increased, job opportunities have increased. New service types and enterprises have been introduced.

Almost all children and young people go to school and campuses and they are being more capable academically. Many of them are now involved in different government and private job sectors. As a result, they are being economically more sound.

When they were interviewed, many of the informants referred this economic change as a reason for cultural changes in the community. A lady informant said '*people have become richer than before. They have more money now and they can buy different things easily. They can buy readymade fashionable cloths and readymade food. Buying readymade things has changed the pattern of life. Instead of making wine at home, they buy it from market. They rarely go fishing and collecting 'ghoge' (a kind of shell) because these things can be bought in the market easily. The modern mills have replaced 'dhiki' and 'janto'.*

6.5 Conclusion

Even though many of the informants referred to Tourism, as the causes of changes in the society, they did not seem to be so negative like what Mowforth & Munt, (2009:55) quote in their book. They quote Srisang (1992) as '*instead of benefitting the people it (tourism) exploits them, pollutes the environment, destroys the ecosystem, bastardizes the culture, robs people of their traditional values and ways of life and subjugates women and children in the abject slavery of prostitution'.* This may be the case in some places where tourism maybe taken as negative forces. And also, this may be the result where the destination is not well-managed. But, no one in this research reported against tourism in such a way. Instead, they seemed to take tourism as a small factor for change which can be controlled.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WAYS TO COSNERVE CULTUREAL ASSETS

In the previous chapter, the reasons for the changes have been identified. The third category of the question was designed to collect opinions on solution for the unwanted cultural changes. In fact this chapter deals with the main subject matter of the thesis. The final set of questionnaires was aimed at finding solutions to cultural degradation, unwanted tourist-influences and cultural loss. However, the questionnaires focused on solving those problems on local culture which were caused by tourism directly or indirectly. And the other factors have not been accounted for.

The field study showed that culture of Tharu people is one of the very important aspect of tourism in Chitwan but it's secondary attraction there. The primary attraction is the Chitwan National Park. But the tourists do visit Sauraha and enjoy Tharu culture. Every activity they do at Sauraha is done amongst those people. In a way, the whole tourism industry at Sauraha evolves round Tharu people and their culture. So it's a destination that mixes both cultural and natural Heritage tourism.

Thus, the researcher has focused on getting data which can help develop sustainable Cultural tourism. The theme of the data has been categorized into seven sub-themes.

7.1 Awareness/education

First and foremost, 'need of awareness and education about the importance of culture' was given focus by most of the informants. They focused in the need of education and awareness to local people. When one of the informants was asked what kind of awareness is needed, he says, '*many local people do not care what is going on. They are happy with tourists and their activities but they are not aware of why tourists are coming to visit them. They should be taught the value of their cultural assets and also should be informed how they can do it. They should be well aware that it is their culture which is attracting tourists*'.

Amatya (1987: 103) argues 'Nepal Heritage Society, the Nepal and Asian Study Center of Tribhuvan University, radio, and press and, above all, local political leaders should realize its significance and recognize it as their duty to enlighten the people as to the need for the protection of their cultural heritage'. At present, there are a number of NGOs and INGOs trying to conserve nature and culture. They should try to educate and train people so that they know the value of conservation.

An elderly lady, a house wife says she does not have so much knowledge about these things. She says '*I don't know how these things should be done but, may be you have to tell people about them.*' The other informant says '*awareness programs should be conducted so that local people can do something in support of any important things; negative effects can be minimized by developing awareness and level of consciousness.*' The manager of the museum is hopeful that when literacy rate is increased and people are educated, such social problems will be solved. He says, '*literacy rate need to be increased. When people are educated, they will know what to do and how to do things*'.

7.2 Timely conduction of events and conference:

Another most common point for the conservation of culture has been found to be 'conduction of festivals and cultural programs.' Most of informants reported that festivals and cultural programs conducted in regular basis can help to conserve cultural assets. One of the informants says '*food festival, modern dance and exhibition of tharu culture need to be increased.*' According to him, different programs such as concerts and exhibitions can attract national and international tourist. Such programs can provide a good opportunity to expose and promote local culture.

Every year in December, around Christmas and New Year time, Elephant festival is conducted in Sauraha. They conduct elephant race, elephant football including many other races and entertaining programs. Usually food festival is also organized in the mean time. The culture houses and local youth clubs place stalls to present cultural things.

The other informant says '*such programs and festivals should be organized in other times of the year, as well. Local religious festivals are celebrated in each home and each village. They are*

not exposed to the tourists. Probably, they should fix a place in each village where people can gather and celebrate them. This can expose the local tradition to the visitors.'

7.3 Involvement of local people (joint effort with concerned others)

Amatya (1987: 103) writes that the effort of government is very essential for conservation of heritage. But the government alone cannot save the cultural assets of a community. He argues '*It is the people themselves who are the real owners and, therefore, it is their profound duty to protect it for their own good and for the betterment of coming generations*'. But, what is important is the policy for conservation. It is the government who makes policy for conservation.

The interviewees that participated in this research highlighted the need of local people's involvement in conservation. The chairman of Hotel Association Nepal, Sauraha committee says that local people and HAN (Hotel Association Nepal) should jointly work for the development of Sauraha whether it is cultural preservation or other issues. By the terms 'development of Sauraha', he refers to the sustainable development of tourism at Sauraha. The hotels in Sauraha play a good role to preserve local culture and to support local people economically. It was found that almost all hotels at Sauraha organize cultural shows in their hotels when the tourists demand. The local performers are hired to perform in the hotels. They wear traditional dresses and perform different dances and other performances.

He adds that new program should be increased.

7.4 Self motivation/self desire:

During the interviews, it was found that there is a kind of confusion among people. The older generation wants to continue with traditions and values. The younger generation thinks that these things are out of date. The older generation is less educated and therefore cannot control the younger generation which is more educated and modernized. It seems that unless the younger

generation feels the need to save their culture, it cannot be saved. Cultural values are lost if they only think of modernization.

But how does this self desire come in the mind of youngsters?

Mowforth & Munt, (2009: 262) present an interesting situation about how Sherpa people of Nepal have not been able to conserve their culture. It is the situation of Sherpa village at Lukla, nearest airport to Mt Everest. When Sir Edmund Hillary had climbed Mt Everest successfully, he was very happy and was grateful to the Sherpas. He decided to build a school to help those Sherpas. The school, when it was built, was taken over by Nepal government authorities.

> 'In these schools they teach nothing about the Sherpa-Tibetan culture- and nothing about their own 1200 year old written language, which is classical Tibetan, of course. Most of the Sherpa children growing up in Kathmandu… do not learn a word of Sherpa. If you get off the aero plane at Lukla…you are met by a whole group of youngsters who speak 'Hillary School English' to serve you. Over the years they have been completely incorporated into the tourist economy. Most of the younger inhabitants of this area don't know how to run their farm any more. (Mowforth & Munt, 2009: 262)

This example shows how cultural values are getting extinct and what is happening in policy level. This shows that the youngsters can and should be taught in schools to value their culture. From 2007, Nepal government has started to provide primary school education in native language in certain basis. After Multilanguage education program was implemented, the young children can learn about their heritage in their mother tongues such as Tharu language, Sherpa language etc.

This kind of efforts can certainly be effective in making people love their language and heritages. Love and respect for their culture encourages them so save it. Many informants in this research recommended that there should be self desire in the younger generation to save their culture. One of the informants says '*if you desire to do something, you will find some ways of being successful. So, local people should have self motivation. We should realize the value of our culture. But, it's not easy to sort out what should be left out and what should be conserved.*'

7.5 Economic support to conserve:

It is certain that fund is necessary to support cultural preservation. Without sufficient fund we cannot host any program. The museum and cultural houses need certain amount of fund to run. Some of the informants raised this issue in the interviews. According to them NGOs, INGOs and any other agencies that are working for conservation should utilize the fund transparently.

But one of the informants gave a different logic of economic support. According to him, for conservation of culture, the local people should be economically independent. First local people should be supported economically. When they are independent, they can determine what they have to do and how they have to do. He did not say clearly what kind of economic support he meant by 'economic support to local people'. But, economic independence is necessary so that they can make fair and fixed plans to control their society. Industries in the locale, whether they are tourism or other should, first try to benefit local people.

7.6 Advancement in Museum:

A few of the informants talked about this point. However, it is obvious that advancement in the museum is very fruitful for the development of tourism and conservation of local culture. The museum is situated right at the main entrance of the National Park. The Tharu Cultural Museum and Research Centre is merely a collection of materials, yet. Presently, the museum preserves the tangible assets. Of course, there are some kinds of arts and paintings etc. But it does not seem to be enough. In fact, the museum needs advancement. One of the informants says, *'...this is the only museum in the country which tries to save Tharu cultural assets and promotes Chitwan National Park based tourism. It should be advanced. The things that are in the museum right now are not enough.'*

He did not mention what things in particular be done in the museum but he wants to make the museum bigger and collect many things from the villages and be stored for example: the old and traditional ornaments, and special clothes etc. Now we can see the pictures of the people with such ornaments in the museum.

Museum and Theme parks can preserve some intangible cultural assets as well. In the Sami Theme Park in Karasjok, in Northern Norway, they have tried to preserve intangible culture in some ways. There, the visitor can try the traditional Sami way of regn-deer hunting. They have fixed a post with the horns of regn-deer at the top and the visitors are allowed to throw the rope just as Sami regn-deer herders used to do in the past. They have a small magical theatre in which 'A noaidi, an old shaman, tells a story of the Sami pre-Christian beliefs about t creation, life and death and how it is all connected.' the official website of Sapmi Park. The movements of the lights are created in such a way that the visitors feel they are living around a fireplace and hearing the story somewhere in a Sami village in ancient time. Sami traditional houses around the park and the real regn-deer make the lively feeling of the local culture there. (Source: the official web page of Sami Park, Karasjok Norway)

Similarly, in the Historical museum in Hamarfest in the North of Norway, we can see and also hear the drops of water falling from the ceiling of the ancient cave.

It shows that even the intangible aspect of culture can be saved in the museum and theme park. We can see such probability in the Tharu museum in Sauraha.

7.7 Other

Ghana Gurung et al suggests that tourist guides have special roles in developing sustainable development on tourism and culture. According to them, tourist guides are the mediators who can help the tourists to behave such a way not damaging local culture. *Gurung, Simmons & Devlin (1996: 107)'If environmentally responsible tourism has a goal of providing a quality tourist experience without causing intolerable ecological and social damage, then the tour guide has a very special role.' Weiler et al. 1991: 228 Gurung, Simmons & Devlin (1996: 107).* According to them, well-trained guides can be a good medium between tourists and locals. They not only can explain about cultural and natural heritages, but also can control the activities of tourists. They can inform the tourists about the norms and values of destination culture.

7.8 Conclusion

After analyzing all these interview data related to this theme, it is found that the local people, entrepreneurs and responsible people want 'tourism' in their community. Their recommendation aimed at controlling and managing tourism but not at avoiding or minimizing the visitor numbers. They agree that tourists' activities can be controlled by local people. Their suggestions like: awareness, self desire, local employment and involvement etc. are directed to themselves showing that improvement is needed on their own side. The conclusion of their solutions is that they themselves need to do a lot of things and doing these things is not impossible.

Indigenous culture nowadays is in concern in national and international level as well. In many countries they are especially recognized by the government and therefore given special attention to them. But if we see the history of indigenous communities in different countries we find them to have struggled a lot in some points of the history. They have fought against transformation to other culture, displacement from their land and extinction of their language.

Tangible heritage can be saved a bit more easily than intangible heritage assets. Intangible heritages are the practices and therefore should be practiced in some ways to be saved.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Tourism is like fire. It can cook your food, or burn your house down.' Robbin Fox in UNESCO, 2003 quoted in Leong & Cros 2008: 224).

To cut the long story short, the above mentioned line from Robbin Fox matches the conclusion of this research work. Going through the study of Tharu culture at Sauraha, literatures on cultural heritage tourism, the theories and interviews, it can be concluded that tourism has much more benefits for the society than drawbacks. Yet, for this, it has to be well managed. Like Robbin said, tourism is like fire. It is quite useful and fruitful for the society, if it is managed the way it should be. On the contrary, it can destroy all social values and norms if it is left uncontrolled.

Tourism, at its best, is an enriching experience for the visitor. It can benefit heritage and other sites, and provide employment, income and other benefits for host communities. But, if badly planned or managed, it can turn into a disaster for the visitor, the place and the host community. (Wight, 1998: 75)

Following the theory of sustainability and authenticity; going through the process of field observation and having analyzed the research data, a set of methods have been found to be useful to make a sustainable development of a cultural heritage destination. The overall study in the process of this research (field study and document study) has led to some confident truths, at least in the present situation of Sauraha and Tharu Cultural tourism. They are as follows:

First, **tourism is beneficial for the host community in many ways**. People at Sauraha were found to be very happy with the presence of tourism, except for some complaining very little. The growing number of enterprises, business and social agencies, bank and finance companies at Sauraha shows that job opportunities are increasing remarkably there. Cultural exchanges in cultural houses, voluntary works of many tourists in the field of education and conservation seem to be enriching the area. The number of hotels and restaurant alone can mean a lot about the potential of the place as a tourism attraction.

 Normally, tourism is taken as a good source of economic benefits for the communities where it can be developed. Creating employment opportunities, flourishing trade and business and

attracting bigger investments in local level tourism can prove itself a good means of economic development. 'Underdeveloped countries promote tourism as a means of generating foreign exchange, increasing employment opportunities, attracting development capital, and enhancing economic independence'. Briston 1982: 336 quoted in Mowforth & Munt, 2009:53. Apart from these, tourism can provide local people with the chance of cultural exchange, friendship with tourists. This is found to be quite true in the case of Sauraha.

Second, **tourism can affect local culture.**

As it has been discussed in the theory chapter, tourism leads to commoditization of culture but still seeks 'authenticity'. Commoditization leads to declination of real culture. And one more thing is that the activities of tourist from relatively more affluent societies really affect the local people. So, due to the presence of tourism, local culture faces double pressures. Local people in indigenous communities may not be that strong that they can avoid tourist impression.

Such pressures are further supported by other factors like modernization, economic changes, globalization, different kinds of medias, in-migration etc. So, tourism, along with these factors is responsible to cultural changes or cultural loss. This applies to the case of Sauraha and the tourism industry that is conducted amongst indigenous Tharu people.

Third, **Tourism should be welcomed, developed and planned in a good framework.**

The views of local people, the entrepreneurs (hotel managers and culture house owners here) and the tourism potential of the place Sauraha are so strong points that tourism should be welcomed there. It should be organized in a good framework but not be neglected or avoided in any case. In the case of Sauraha, this thesis ends with a quite optimistic note that tourism is the 'fire'; it cooks food, not 'burn' the house. But the concerned authority and local people should be careful in what pace of the flame 'the food' can be well-cooked.

Fourth, **negative effects of tourism can be controlled, reduced**.

In the presence of tourists and tourism industry, indigenous population cannot be untouched by these things, neither the other can be. The dilemma of authenticity, of course, creates some negative effects on their culture. But, there are ways to minimize and solve these problems. Proper management of the destination sites and control over tourists and tourism service

providers may help in reducing the risk of cultural loss. The economic benefits and cultural awareness due to tourism even help to revitalize and promote local culture. Many communities have taken tourism as a means to generate economic sources which in turn can be used to preserve the past. 'In an effort to preserve the past, some communities have turned to tourism as a means of preserving the past through a process of commercializing aspects of cultures and heritage that are threatened'. Page 11 Prideaux and Timothy 2008

In Sauraha, because of the tourist arrivals, the hotel managers are forced to organize cultural performances in their hotels; the culture house owners are interested to add the number of shows and varieties of performances and the museum management committee is excited to develop and advance the museum.

In conclusion, the following ways have been found to be useful to minimize or reduce cultural impression from the guests and to conserve local culture. The following are theoretic conclusions of the thesis:

First, **laws of sustainable development** should be implemented. There have been different laws of sustainable development depending on different field and areas. But, in Sauraha, it should fit the real demand of indigenous group and tourism. It should be investigated in detail what the indigenous people want their culture be treated like. And also, tourism should be organized the way it can benefit the tourists and the industry both. Sometimes, it may be difficult to come to the midpoint, but it's not impossible. Because, the attractive culture of the indigenous community works in two ways: works as a means to attract tourist and get economic and other benefits to the indigenous people; and it also works as attractive factor which lets people have exotic, entertaining or educative feelings.

Second, **authenticity** should be maintained. It's one of the key factors for developing sustainable cultural heritage tourism. It may not be easy to guarantee the pure authenticity in many cases. But, it also is the fact that all tourists may not desire to experience the pure authenticity. For the purpose of presenting to the tourists, the cultural assets should be reproduced which may lose some aspects of authenticity. But, the relative authenticity is enough in many cases.

Finally, the practical ways that have been derived from data analysis are very useful in the context of Sauraha. These methods may be used in other similar places, as well. These points are

the recommendations to those who want to manage cultural heritage tourism in indigenous communities:

First, **awareness** to the local people about the importance of their culture is a must. It is particularly very important in the case of Sauraha, because only the younger generation is educated. Most of the older generation people are uneducated or less educated. And also, the general education may not be enough to make those young people to learn the value of culture, their tradition and their language. So, those who are concerned about conserving culture should conduct awareness programs in different levels. They should be taught the meaning of their culture and importance of saving it.

Second, **conduction of cultural shows** in regular intervals can help to attract tourists (domestic or international. The number of events that are organized there should be increased so that cultural performances are more exposed.

Third, **involvement of local people** is a must to develop different aspects of the locality. In the case of Sauraha, for the development of tourism and conservation of Tharu culture, local people must be involved, both in planning level and implementation level. And they should be supported by local government and entrepreneurs etc.

Fourth, **advancement of museum** is another important element for conservation and to attract tourists. On one hand, the museum conserves cultural assets and on the other, it is a means of generating some fund in the form of entry fees. Similarly, the culture houses should improve their services.

In short, tourism at Sauraha is quite beneficial to the local people. While benefitting the local people, it certainly contributes to local economy which in turn adds to the national economy. For the loss of culture, the causing factors should be recognized. Tourism is one of them. Planned activities of local tourism service managers and local people can control tourist activities. Culture can be revitalized.

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