

Potential for Agro-Tourism Enterprises in Ramaroshan of Acham District in Nepal

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Abstract

Ramaroshan is an attractive tourist destination of the Sudurpaschim province which is located in Ramaroshan Rural Municipality of Achham district. Sudurpaschim province is one of the major provinces and rich in agricultural genetic resources, biodiversity, historical places, and socio-cultural phenomenon. Agriculture is a mainstay of this province contributing 35.5 percent of the GDP and generating more than 80 percent of provincial employment. This study has explored the opportunities on agro-tourism enterprises. This study has used a mixed approach with qualitative and quantitative information from major stakeholders at province and local levels. Primary sources of information comprise SWOT analysis, focus group discussion (FGD), Key Informants Information (KII), Consultative meetings, and observations whereas secondary sources of information gathering from various publications, existing policies and strategies at national and sub-national levels.

Ramaroshan has immense potentials for agro-tourism enterprise development due to the strength of pristine, vibrant, and panoramic natural view comprising of floral and faunal diversity; having the richness of socio-cultural uniqueness; situated near to the road, agricultural and livestock diversity; and prioritization by the Government sector. Marsi rice, maize, millet, barley, naked barley, foxtail millet under cereal crops, Amaranths, Fiddlehead fern (niuro), bamboo shoot (tusa), Nettle (sisnu), potato, buckwheat, yak pate sag, fedade, dadu, jaluko, mushroom, watercress (panisag), khiraula, colocasia, yam under organic vegetables, Walnut, peach, plum, apple, pear, golden raspberry, Oleaster (guyelo), wild bayberry (rukh kaphal), Asian barberry (chutro), Himalayan blackberry (kalo ainselu), Strawberry (bhuikaphal), black mulberry (kimbu), wild Himalayan cherry (paiyu), wild pear (mayel) under fruit crops and Achhami naumuthe cattle, local buffalo, local poultry under livestock. Coriander, garden cress, turmeric, ginger, chilli, wild garlic, local tomato, Nepalese pepper (Timur), Bhangro (nettle) are most potential enterprises under Spices and condiments.

Keywords: agro-tourism, enterprise development, agriculture, tourism

Introduction

Nepal topography is potential for agricultural and tourism development. Agriculture, is the economic backbone which contributing 26.2% to GDP and employing over 60% of the population (CBS, 2021). Recently, agriculture activities in and around the touristic place are seemed like most lucrative components to attract the tourists. The integration of socio-culture, agriculture and eco-culture is a model of modern tourism. Thus, the integrated, inclusive, and competitive approaches to agriculture and tourism could synergistically boost local, provincial, and national economies.

The term 'Agro-tourism merges agriculture and tourism, offering visitors farm and food-related experiences for leisure, learning, or participation. It boosts farmers' and related businesses' incomes. World Tourism Organization (1998) describes "involves accommodation being offered in the farmhouse or in a separate guesthouse, providing meals and organizing guests' activities in the observation and participation in the farming operations." This is a hybridization of two components farming and tourism which entails articulating synergy of people, culture and cultivation with local resources. Agro-tourism is the practice of farmers utilizing their farms as tourist destinations, centered on principles of connection, complementarity, and non-prevalence between agriculture and tourism (Sonnino, 2004).

Sudurpashchim province is ranged from 109 m (Kailali) to 7132 masl (Mt. Api) and coordinates between 28⁰22" north to 30⁰09" north latitude and 80⁰03" East to 81⁰25" East longitude (MoLRAC, 2020). The province includes nine districts namely Bajura, Bajhang, Doti, Achham, Darchulla, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Kailali, and Kanchanpur. The three major cities in terms of population and economy are Dhangadhi, Bhimdutta (Mahendranagar) and Tikapur. Most of portion of area is covered by Himali belt (40.6%) followed by hill (34.54%), and Tarai (24.86%). It has one sub-metropolitan city, 33 municipalities, and 54 rural municipalities (MoFAGA, 2019). The province is overwhelmed by poverty and 50.8% of the population fall under poverty (CBS, 2011).

Status of Agriculture Sector of Nepal and Sudurpaschim Province

Agriculture sector is a backbone of national economy, employment, and food security in Nepal. This sector contributes 26.2 percent of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (CBS, 2021). In Nepal, more than 80 percent of the rural people are engaged in agriculture for their livelihoods and income. Agriculture in Nepal has grown steadily over the past decade. Production increased by 5.1% in the last fiscal year.

The country has potential for agricultural activities in the country due to having vivid agro-climatic regions, numerous niche and indigenous genetic resources, abundant water resources, and increased demand. Recently, Government has emphasized in agriculture sector by increasing annual budget and creating enabling environment at its provincial and local level. However, production and productivity of agricultural commodities are at a lower level in comparison to other developing and our neighbouring countries. The most probable reasons in lowering production and productivity of agricultural products are inadequate input materials, lack of technologies, insufficient irrigation facility, and limitation in market system development. Moreover, lack of conservation of genetic resources, adequate information and education technologies, limited crop and livestock diversification, and improper postharvest handling and processing are the key lacunas in the field of agriculture.

Sudurpaschim province is one of the major provinces and rich in agricultural genetic resources, biodiversity, historical places, and socio-cultural phenomenon. Agriculture is a mainstay for most of the people of this province in which more than 80% of the population is depended on agriculture. The province has only 20.78% of land of cultivable and 18.55% of land is cultivated. According to MoLMAC 2020, nearly 3% of the population is landless and about 52% of population has less than 0.5 ha of land. A big portion of the land is under unirrigated condition where only 9.82% of the land has irrigation facility.

Status of Tourism Sector in Nepal and Sudurpschim Province

Nepal has tourism sector possesses a significant comparative advantage, supported by its exceptional natural and cultural heritage. This sector holds the potential to be a cornerstone of the national economy. The mountainous terrain, religious sites, and distinctive cultural and archaeological treasures represent invaluable assets for tourism development. Recognizing tourism role in economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation, the Nepali Constitution prioritizes its development. A strategic roadmap has been outlined to transform Nepal into a globally sought-after destination by safeguarding and promoting its rich natural, cultural, and historical legacy. This determined plan targets an influx of over 2.5 million tourists and the generation of nearly 900,000 employment opportunities by the year 2025 (MoF, 2020). Tourism in Nepal was growing before the COVID-19 pandemic. Nepal aimed to attract 2 million visitors in 2020 but had to postpone this due to the outbreak. In 2019, tourism contributed 2.7% to the economy, employed

200,000 people, and brought in over a million visitors. Most tourists came for leisure, followed by trekking, religious visits, and other activities (NTS, 2019).

The tourist inflow in the province is very low due to untracking of the total tourist in coming in the province. There are only two immigration office; Mohana of Dhangadi and Gaddachauki of Kanchanpur. After the federal system, there is no institutional development for tracking tourist. There are some checking points i.e. Tikuniya, Chisapani, Rakam, Jite in the East and Darchula in the west. Likewise, there is no proper tracking of tourists by air at each airport i.e. Dhangadi, Sanfebagar, Bajura, and Bajhang. As per tracking record in 2020, total 1197191 foreigners were arrived in 2019 in the country and only 3125 tourists visited in Sudurpaschim province.

Conceptual Framework of Agro-tourism

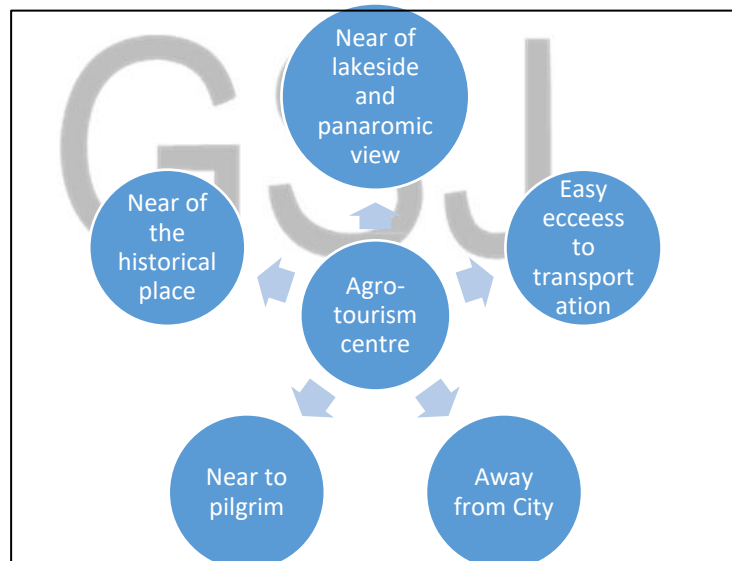
Agro-tourism is not a new concept and has been recognized worldwide since nineteenth century. However, initiation of this phenomenon is new for some countries and it is more important for agrarian countries like Nepal. In this approach, two major sectors agriculture and tourism are merged together and considered as two sides of a coin. Agritourism is a relatively new type of tourism that involves people visiting rural areas for leisure and spending money on farm-related activities. It is also referred to as agricultural tourism, farm tourism, or farm stays. This concept primarily focuses on tourism activities undertaken by farmers themselves, utilizing their own farms as destinations (Kokko, 2011).

The terms "agritourism" and "rural tourism" have often been used interchangeably (Hegarty & Przezborska, 2005). However, while rural tourism encompasses a broader range of tourist activities in rural areas, agritourism specifically focuses on tourism activities directly related to agriculture (Ohe, 2020). Essentially, agritourism involves farmers utilizing their farms as tourist destinations, generating income beyond traditional agricultural practices (Fleischer & Pizam, 1997). This includes a variety of activities such as farm stays, agricultural experiences, wine tours, and farm-based entertainment. The goal is to provide visitors with authentic rural experiences while creating sustainable livelihoods for farmers and their communities (Wimalaratana, 2014).

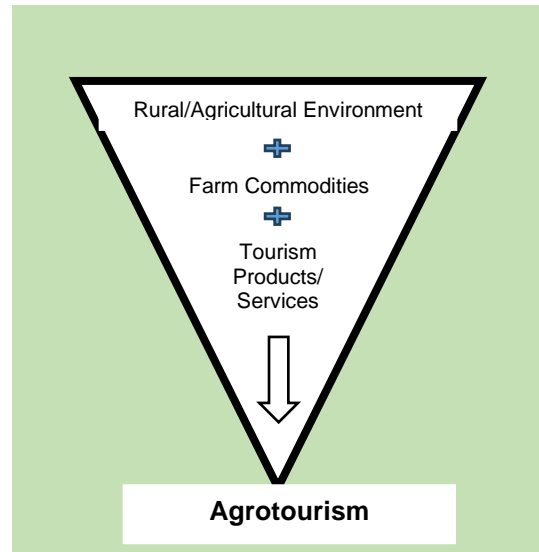
'Agritourism' has emerged as a strategic approach to revitalize agricultural regions experiencing economic challenges and to cater to growing public interest in rural experiences. Lobo (2001) defines agritourism as leisure-based activities on operational farms, offering visitors

opportunities for enjoyment, education, or hands-on participation. This encompasses a wide range of experiences, from farm tours and overnight stays to outdoor recreational pursuits. Importantly, agritourism has been shown to contribute to preserving cultural and historical resources, with agritourism farms demonstrating a higher likelihood of heritage conservation efforts compared to non-agritourism farms (Barbieri, 2013). 'Agritourism' is a type of alternative tourism that shares many of its core principles. It emphasizes preserving local cultures and improving community economies. Specifically, agritourism involves attracting visitors to agricultural areas for leisure and educational purposes. As a commercial enterprise, it generates additional income for farmers by offering farm-based experiences such as tours, farm stays, and agricultural demonstrations (Mahaliyanaarachchi, 2017).

Agritourism ventures can encompass a wide range of activities, including outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, horseback riding), educational experiences (farm tours, cooking classes), entertainment (festivals, camping), hospitality (farm stays, guided tours), and direct sales of farm products. The success of an agritourism business is heavily reliant on its location. Ideally, it should be easily accessible with attractive natural surroundings and ample parking. Given that urban dwellers often seek rural experiences, establishing agritourism ventures near cities can provide a substantial customer base (Kumbhar, 2010).



Moreover, agro tourism is an integrating approach that integrates farming with tourism. Agritourism offers several advantages, including job creation, expanding markets for local products. It has increased agricultural productivity, promotion of agro-based industries, bridging the urban-rural divide, and improving the livelihoods of rural communities. Tourist can visit the farm and harvest the products their own hand in fresh is a peculiar characteristic of agro tourism. The opportunity to harvest fresh fruits directly from the orchard and savor their taste on the spot is a highly



appealing prospect for many tourists. Combining this experience with an overnight stay on a horticultural farm, surrounded by nature and the farm's fresh produce, can create a truly unforgettable and enriching getaway. Many farms recently developing on the trekking route along the tourism place are an example of agrotourism spots in the country.

History of Tourism and Agro-tourism in Nepal

Nepali tourism industry has its roots in the mid-20th century. Prior to 1951, the country was closed to foreigners under the autocratic Rana regime. The successful ascent of Mount Everest in 1953 by Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary marked a turning point, drawing global attention to Nepal's stunning Himalayan landscapes. With the dawn of democracy in 1955, Nepal opened its doors to international visitors, issuing tourist visas for the first time. The tourism infrastructure began to develop with the first five-year development plan in 1956, including the establishment of Nepal's first hotel, the Royal Hotel. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a surge in hippie travelers seeking spiritual and psychedelic attraction. While this period was marked by the availability of marijuana and hashish, the subsequent government ban in 1973 ushered in a new era for Nepali tourism (Shrestha, 2017). The country transitioned from being a haven for counterculture to a destination for adventure seekers and cultural explorers. This period laid the foundation for Nepal's tourism industry, which has since evolved into a significant contributor to the national economy. Government of Nepal has initiated by developing Tourism master plan in 1972 and during the 1970 to 1980 decades, several tourism related infrastructures were implemented. In 1998, visit Nepal year campaign was created for tourism promotion. In 1999, Nepal Tourism

Board and the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) were established to promote the tourism.

The origin of the agro-tourism has a long history and it was started with the human civilization and cultivation. The term "agro-tourism" is often said to have originated in Italy during the 1970s and 1980s, when staying on farms, known as "agritourism," became a popular way to enjoy the countryside (Rilla, 1999). Between 1970 and 1980, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand embraced agritourism as a way to diversify their income. In Italy, this was called "agritourism," while in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, it was known as "farm stay holidays" (CCHASP, 2013). In 1985, Italy passed a law to regulate and promote farm stays.

Agro-tourism has been informally practiced in Nepal since ancient times. In the past, traders traveling to Tibet would stay in local homes for bed and breakfast due to the lack of hotels and other hospitality services in rural areas, benefiting rural households (Regmi, 1972). By the early 19th century, a new form of tourism called ecotourism or rural tourism emerged as an alternative to mass tourism (Thapa, 2013). There are three stages of development of history on agro tourism development; primary, middle, and advance phase. Formulation of tourism institution and products of agriculture were consumed as food and drink directly or indirectly are some of the example of primary form of agro tourism. Homestay tourism has been a part of Nepali culture since ancient times, rooted in the belief that "Guests are God" (Atithi Devo Bhava). The concept of community-based ecotourism began in the late 1980s with a pilot project in Ghandruk, a Gurung village in the Annapurna Conservation Area (MoCTCA, 2020). Sirubari of Syangja district was the homestay established in 1998 during the national tourism campaign of Visit Nepal 1998 and piloting in 2002-2007 under the project of Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP). Now in Nepal, homestays are becoming a part of agro tourism and have gaining popularity to attract tourists in rural periphery. As per National Tourism Statistics (2019), there are at least 245 officially registered community homestays and 79 private homestays across 13 districts in Nepal, providing a total of 597 rooms and 1,006 beds for visitors (MoCTCA, 2020). Private farms developed at and around the homestay along the route of tourism places are the positive indicators for stepping-up agro-tourism sub-sector in Nepal.

Relevance of Agro-tourism in Context of Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal includes policies to promote tourism as a key part of the national economy by developing various places and heritage sites into tourist destinations. With proximity

to large populations in neighboring countries, both tourist arrivals and the length of stay are expected to grow. In the fiscal year 2018/2019, Nepal saw 1.197 million tourist arrivals, with tourism contributing 2.7% to the GDP. It provides direct employment to 200,000 people. The average tourist spent USD 48 per day, and the average stay was 12.7 days (NPC, 2020).

Agritourism is a relatively new concept in Nepal, even though the country has a long history in both agriculture and tourism (Maharjan & Dangol, 2018). It is gaining attention as a means for poverty alleviation and rural development, both in Nepal and globally (Bhatta & Ohe, 2019; Bhatta et al., 2019). In Nepal, agritourism focuses on promoting local foods, small rural businesses, homestays, handicrafts, and low-impact transportation (Park & Yoon, 2011). The agriculture sector in Nepal includes forestry, fishery, hunting, and farming, and much of the country's industrial activity revolves around processing agricultural products like pulses, jute, sugarcane, tobacco, and grain. Agriculture is central to Nepal's economy, and sustainable development hinges on the effective use of tourism, handicrafts, high-value, low-volume agricultural products, non-timber forest products, and local human resources (Pandey, 2011). Under the vision 2020, The Government has initiated its strategies improving livelihoods and spreading benefits of tourism. According to tourism master plan 2008, Bajhang, Doti, and Kanchanpur districts from different ecological belts under the Sudurpaschim province were identified as tourism epicentre. In line with this vision, the strategy includes the promotion of various forms of tourism such as ecotourism, village tourism, community-based tourism, agro-tourism, cultural tourism, pilgrimage and spiritual tourism, educational tourism, health and wellness tourism, and special interest tours.

Institutional Development for Agro-Tourism Promotion

According to the new constitution of Nepal, tourism governance for the development, promotion and management functions of tourism is regulated and facilitated by the Institutional framework under the three-tiers of government system. This tourism governance is implemented and facilities by various levels of units and institutions as foundation of the nation. In Nepal, many public and private organizations are established for the development and promotion of tourism and agro-tourism sector in the country.

‘Tourism Development Board’ was the first Government Office in the sector of tourism and established in 1957 after the formation of first five years periodic plan. ‘The Department of Tourism in Nepal was established in 1959 under the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and

Transport to develop the tourism sector. In 1976, the Ministry of Tourism was created to further promote tourism in the country. The Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) was founded in 1966 to support the hotel industry and influence governmental regulations and social aspects of tourism. The Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), established in 1973, focuses on promoting mountaineering in the Himalayas, protecting the interests of Nepali mountaineers, and raising awareness about preserving the beauty of the Himalayan region for future generations.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), established in 1975, is the United Nations' specialized agency for promoting responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism, headquartered in Madrid, Spain. The Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) was formed in 1979 by trekking operators to establish sound business principles and regulate the rapidly growing trekking industry. The Nepal Association of Rafting Agencies (NARA) was registered in 1989 to promote rafting and kayaking (river sports) in both national and international markets. 'Homestay Association in Nepal' (HOASN) was initiated in Sirubari (Syangja District) and Ghalegaon (Lamjung District) after the Government started the rural tourism concept in its plan in 1997. The aim of homestay in Nepal is to promote the rural enterprises by community managed hospitality. 'Nepal Tourism Board' is a national tourism organization of Nepal established in 1998 by an Act of Parliament in the form of partnership between the Government of Nepal and private sector tourism industry to develop and market Nepal as an attractive tourist destination. A well-developed institutional framework is developed due to new structure of federalism which is framed at three-tiers of government system.

- Public Institutions: Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Department of Tourism, Department of Archaeology, Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM), Nepal Mountaineering Academy, Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC), Buddhist Philosophy Gomba Management Committee, Taragaon Area Development Committee, Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment (MoITFE), Divisional Forest Offices (DFOs).
- Tourism Industry Associations (TIAs): Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN), Nepal Association of Tours and Travel Agencies (NATTA), Rafting Agencies Association of Nepal (NARA), Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN), Restaurants and Bar Association of Nepal (REBAN), Homestay Association of

Nepal (HOSAN), Village Tourism Promotion Forum Nepal (VITOF), Tourist Guides Association Nepal (TURGAN), Airlines Operators Associations of Nepal (AOAN), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

- Other Private Sector Associations: Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Nepalese Chambers and Commerce (NCC), Confederations of Nepalese Industries (CNI) Sudurpaschim Tourism Entrepreneurs Society (STES), Provincial level Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI-Sudurpaschim Province).

Policies on Tourism and Agro-Tourism in Nepal

Formal tourist accommodation development in Nepal began with the first five-year development plan in 1956. The country's first registered hotel, the Royal Hotel, was established by a Russian and featured 40 rooms and 50 beds. Recognizing tourism as a key driver of development, the government launched the first "Tourism Master Plan" in 1972. 'Tourism Act 1978' (2035 BS), amended several times, the latest in 1997; is the first and major policy document governing the tourism development in Nepal. 'The Tourism Policy 1995 (2052 BS) and 2009 (2065 BS)' is the major policy governing the development, promotion and management of tourism in Nepal. The policy has emphasized on the diversification of tourism products and has tried to link tourism with poverty alleviation. It has identified tourism sector as an important vehicle for economic and social development and has emphasized for the expansion of tourism activities into the relatively undiscovered remote destinations, and promotion of eco-tourism and rural tourism. Other relevant regulatory framework include, Nepal Tourism Board Act, 2053 (1997), Civil Aviation Act, 2015 (1958), Civil Aviation Authority Act, 2053 (1996), Nepal Air Service Corporation Act, 2053 (1996), Immigration Act, 2049 (1992), Labour Act, 2048 (1992), Key regulations governing the operation and management of tourism sector include Nepal Tourism Board Rules, 2055 (1998), Hotel, Lodge, Restaurant, Bar and Tour Operator Regulation, 2038 (1981)- last amended 2013, Homestay Operating Procedure, 2067 (2010), Hiking Related Rules, (2002), Mountaineering Expedition Regulation, 2059 (2002), Rafting Regulations (1996), Civil Aviation Rules (1996) Civil Aviation Accident Investigation Rules (1967), Aviation Safety Regulations (1989), Airport Operation Regulations (1981), Immigration Regulation, 2051 (1994), Internal Procedural Directive (2013) and so on.

‘Travel and Trekking Agencies Regulations 2062’ governs all activities associated with the registration, licensing, renewal and control trekking and travel related activities including registration and renewal of trekking agencies and travel agencies; issuing professional license to trekking guides and tour guides; monitoring, supervising and controlling trekking and tour operations. ‘Rafting regulation 2063’ governs all activities associated with the operation of water tourism activities including registration of rafting agencies; issuing license/permission to the rafting agencies for operating rafting, angling and other related activities and issuing license to river guides. ‘Hotel, Lodge, Restaurant, Bar and Tourist Guide Regulations 1981’ (2038 BS) deals with all activities associated with the operation of Hotel, Lodge, Restaurant, Bar and Tourist Guide including registration and control of Hotel, Lodge, Restaurant, Bar etc.; issuing license to Tourist Guide etc. In 2009, Government of Nepal put forward the tourism vision 2020 which is main documents for the next 10 years and emphasized to the private sector's involvement for the tourism development. ‘Homestay Operating Procedure 2010’ is the most progressive and community friendly legal framework intending to encourage and support the rural poor and marginalized communities to establish and operate homestays by utilizing their own culture and natural surroundings.

The Government of Nepal has developed the partnership guidelines on tourism infrastructure and produces in 2020 to enhance the partnership for infrastructure and produces related to tourism sector at various level among the State, Province and Local. Another landmark document produced by the Government of Nepal is ‘Tourism Vision 2020’ which was main guiding document for economic reform of the country through overall tourism development. National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 2029 (1973) last amended in 1992 is the master legal document governing the operation and control of eco-tourism in all protected areas of Nepal. Other related conservation policies that governs the development and promotion of ecotourism in protected areas include, National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Regulation (1974), Wildlife Reserve Regulation (1978), Himali National Parks Regulation (1980), Buffer Zone Management Regulation 2052 (1996), Buffer Zone Management Directive 1999 (2056 BS), Conservation Area Management Regulation 2057 (2001) etc. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2020) is the guiding policy document for all conservation related activities, including ecotourism promotion. Forest Act (1993), Forest Policy (2015), National Wetland Policy 2013, Forestry Sector Strategy (2016-25) etc. all have also recognized ecotourism as one of the alternative

livelihood options and economic tools for biodiversity conservation. Forest Policy 2015 has opened new avenue for the operation of eco-tourism activities in the national forest (including community forest areas) and protected forest.

‘Constitution of Nepal’ (2015) is the top policy and governance document for Nepal under which various acts, bylaws and regulation and directives are formulated and implemented by state government, provincial governments and local governments. In 2016, the Government of Nepal has brought a 10 years National Tourism Strategic Plan (2016-2025) for tourism sector. Agriculture sector focused when the first periodic plan (1956-1961) and identified sectors for poverty reduction. The periodic plans have emphasized on agro-tourism.

The first five-year plan (1956-1960), was the benchmark policy document for agro-tourism and had emphasized on agriculture and tourism development by exploring model farms, preserving and disseminating the cultures, lakes, spas, flora, fauna, the Himalayas and fountains. All periodic five years and interim plans are main documents for agricultural, tourism and agro-tourism development in the country. ‘Agriculture Development Strategy’ (ADS) was formulated and implementation in 2015 as a strategic document for 20 years from 2015 to 2035 for the development of overall agricultural sector in the country. The "Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project" (PMAMP) was launched in 2016 with the goal of specialized agricultural production. The project organized its programs into four categories based on product-specific areas: pockets (10 to 100 hectares), blocks (100 to 500 hectares), zones (500 hectares), and super-zones (1,000 hectares). Gender mainstream strategy 2063, Agro-biodiversity policy 2063, Agribusiness Promotion Policy 2063, Livestock Policy 2068, Pasture Policy 2068, floriculture Policy 2069, Nepal Seed Vision 2013-2025, Agriculture Mechanization policy 2071, Science and Technology Policy 2061, Forest Policy 2071, Land Use Policy 2069, Climate Change Policy 2070, Industrial Policy 2070, Irrigation Policy 2070, National Tea Policy 2057, National Fertilizer Policy 2058, and National Agroforestry Policy 2076 are policies made by the Government of Nepal.

Methods

For the agro-tourism study and investment plan, the information was collected from primary and secondary sources. Existing policies and practices launched by different agencies were carefully reviewed. In overall, the collection of data, gathering the information and analysis, presentation of data. The study analysis relevant information on agro tourism sectors and

institutional arrangement to generate the final report. The study gathered the data/information from different offices i.e. Ministry of Home and Affairs (MoHA), Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), Ministries of Federal Affairs and general Administration (MoFAGA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), National Planning Commission (NPC), Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Trade Promotion center, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) among other agencies and publications. Primary and secondary sources of data were used to come into the assigned task.

Desk Review

The mission reviewed the Agro-tourism policies, national plans, and strategies along with international practices from published and unpublished documents related to agro-tourism. The review was strongly focused on the existing situations. The fact data/figures were collected and analyzed to present the existing context for the agro-tourism development. This includes policy, strategy, program, modality, approach, and system, process adopted/practiced by Federal, Provincial and Local Governments. In addition, the relevant research & studies were carried out by researchers which were reviewed to generate the broader idea and picture. The mission collected the relevant data from the Ministries, Directorates, Planning Commission at Provincial and Federal level, libraries of DCC, Municipalities, I/NGOs, and Private sectors in Achham, Doti and Kailali districts. Furthermore, literatures were reviewed that are available in Nepal Tourism Board, HAN, FNCCI, Eco-club, cultural groups and private sectors.

Field Study

The qualitative techniques were adopted during the field study. The study team visited the Ramaroshan of Achham district. Different tools and techniques were adopted and used during the field study. Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant's Interview, stakeholders' consultations and appropriate PRA tools were used to gather the information.

Results and Discussion

Ramaroshan is beautiful and scenic place which is composed of different landscapes, rivers, views and hills, lakes, fountains, flora, fauna, historical and religious places.

4.1 Features of location

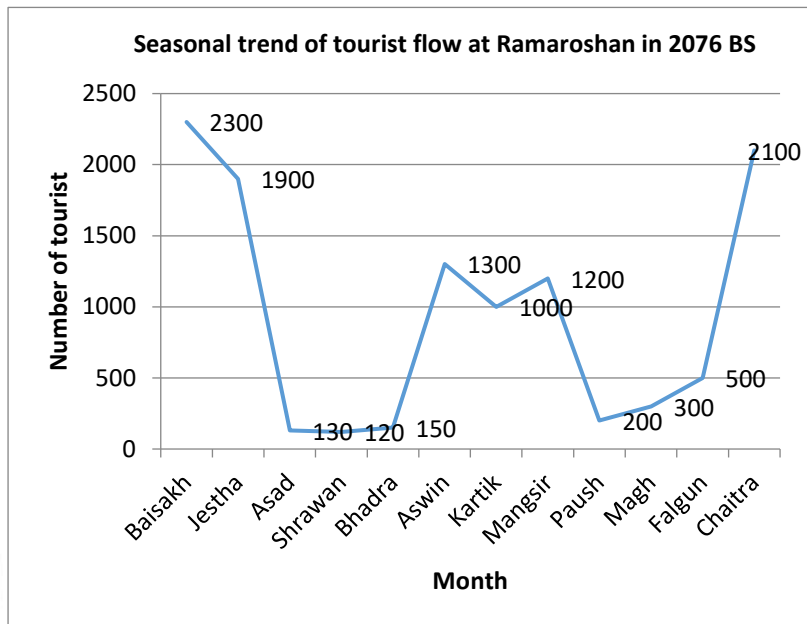
- Landscape (khanda and patan): Eighteen landscapes are distributed in plain and sloppy aspect (Minimini, Roshan touka, Roshan Jigale, Roshan Bagphal, Rame Roshan, Dalyan Rame, Patal Dalyan, Gerha Jaidekhola, Jiune Patal, Chilfugagra, Bagfal Gorekot, Dadadi Pinalekhi, Salimkot Gagrebarju, Chirkitte Khala Pokhar, Netakot Sakot, Rame Ragade, Kinimini Sindure, Pinalekhi Totke), (District profile, 2075)
- Rivers: Kilash khola, a river originated from Ramaroshan
- Views and hills: Badhimalika, Khaptad, Bhdhiganga basin, Mt. Api and Saipal, Chakadanda, Dadilla, Gelli hanne gada, Bagfal, Dadani, Chindeni, Thepche, Gorekot, Amarapata, Nadai, Sarpako Ganti (District profile, 2075) (NTDP, 2021).
- Lakes: Twelve lakes (Jigale, Batulla, Lamidaha, Lissedali, Tauletal, Tallo Dhaunne, Mathillo Dhaunne, Gagre, Daundetel, Dalyana, Rame, Geraha) (District profile, 2075), Only four lakes are good in condition and rest are in degrading in condition (MoF, 2017)
- Fountains: Bange, Dalyan, Kinimini Fissane, Aulaghat Kailash Khola, Ramaroshan gagan, Badachamal, and Daidekhola.
- Flora: Rododendron (Laligurans both red and white), Quercus (Kharsu), Kaphal, Uttis, Sallo, Gobre Sallo, Lauth Sallo, Angeri, Lokta, Dubo, Pirrejhar, Bojho, Talsche jhar, Bains, nilo Kamal, Halahale, Banmara, etc. (MoF, 2017)
- Fauna: Mammals: Tute muso (Himalayan pika), Ban Kharayo (Indian hare), Chituwa (Leopard), Syal (Jackal), Kalo wot (Eurasiam otter), Malsapro (Yellow throated marten), Guna (Nepal grey langer), Bandel (Eurasian wildboar), Kasturi (Alpine musk deer), Ratuwa (barking deer), Jharal (Himalayan tahao), Ghoral (Common ghoral), etc. Birds: Munal (Satyr Tragopan), Phakrans (Koklass pleasant), danfe (Himalayan monal), Kalij (Kalij pleasant), Jalhans (Mallard), Gidhha (Bearded vulture), Madan Chhanchar Winged black bird), Bhadrai (Long shrike), Sunthodre Lampuchhre (Bille dblue magpie), Kalo titra, etc. Reptiles: Hariyo bhagutto, Lekali bhyagutto, Dhugre chheparo, Musa khane sarpa, etc. Fish: Asala, Gadela, etc. (MoF, 2017).
- Historical Places: Rame Kharka, and Shiva mandir. There are two lanscapes; Rame and Roshan at a walking distance of half an hour. Rame, a herdsman was come first and another herdsman Rashun came later in this place. Later, these names were combined as Ramakrishna (NTDP, 2020). Tadigaira Palace made during the Baise and Chaubise Rajya (Kathayat, 2016).

- Religious places: Rame mandir, Batule mandir, Shiva mandir, Nilkantha mandir, Dademosta mandir, Khaparmosto mandir, Kailashe mandir, etc

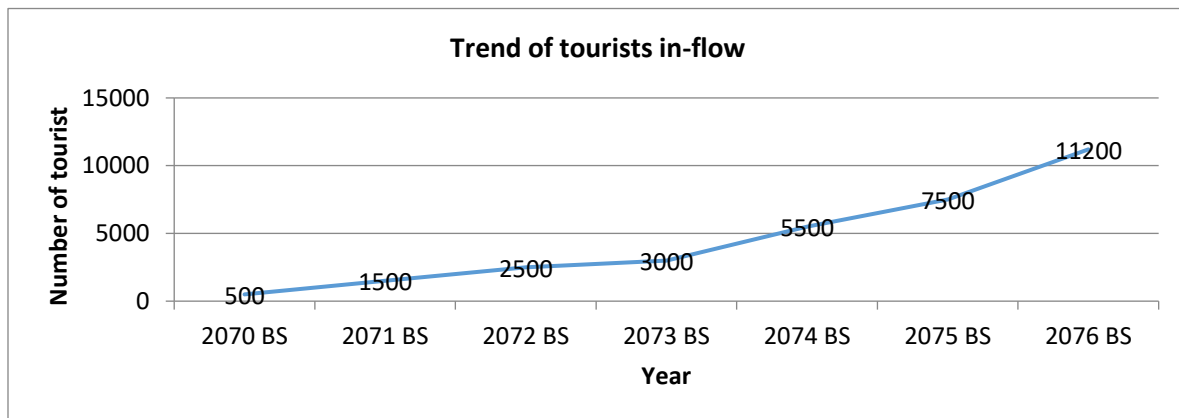
Trend of tourist in-flow

The Ramaroshan place was seen as tourist destination from 2070 BS FNCCI district chapter Achham organized tourism year. Before that only local people were seen as tourists. The visit of local people and outside of the district gradually increased after 2070. Government of Nepal has

declared the tourism year in 2011. Then, the place was put in the major tourist destination in the country. The record of the tourist in-flow and out-flow was not found in systematic, however, a private hotel (Sita Hotel) has maintained the register and on the basis of that record, the figure is estimated. The figure shows that 11200 tourists were visited in the year



2076 that is maximum number of tourists visited to the site. In 2077, tourist inflow was totally nil due to COVID 19 pandemic. Only 5 foreigners had visited to the sites in 2076 BS.



Source: Trend of tourist flow in Ramaroshan (Source: Sita lodge)

Tourist inflow is fluctuated by season in a year. The peak season of tourist inflow is six months from Chaitra to Jestha and from Asoj to Mangsir. About 80% of the tourists come in Chaitra,

Baisakh, Jestha, Asoj, Kartik, and Mangsir. Remaining 20% tourists come in other months. Extreme rainy season and extreme winter season are not suitable for coming tourists. Out of the total visitors, about 75% come from different places of the district and about 25% come from outside of the district. According to record, about 80% of visitors are service owners and students under the age of 40.

Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis

The place is filled up by various strong aspects such as natural view of lakes, forest, landscapes, flora and fauna. Not only these things, but also rich in agricultural and livestock diversity and has potential for many high value crops like potato, walnut, apple, citrus, seed production, and livestock like cattle, buffalo, goat, sheep, and poultry which are locally available. But poor electricity supply, lack of internet facility, inadequate awareness among local people, weak product diversification, and seasonal road are the major hurdles of this place. However, there is an opportunity to promote by utilizing the existing natural resources, socio-cultural attraction, infrastructure and institutional development. The site has threats such as managing waste and pollution in and around the site, managing hotels and restaurants in the site, and ensuring the year round road network.

Strength	Opportunity
Natural assets (12 lakes, 18 landscapes, Shiva temple, natural view, fountains, flora and fauna)	Natural potential for tourism development (God gifted natural resources are available) which can fully expand in the future.
Richness of social-cultural diversity (different folk songs such as Deuda, Hili, Bhuwa dance, rateuli, etc.)	Socio-cultural assets can be utilized in the activities of tourism in different way
Accessible to roads, irrigation, electricity, and phone. Available of night stay facility i.e. 4 lodges, boating, trails, etc.	Possibility of expansion and improvement of road, irrigation, electricity, hotels and homestays
Having an agricultural and livestock diversity (different kinds of cereals, vegetables, fruits, flowers, spices, local cattle, buffalo, hill goat, sheep, local poultry)	Comparative and profitable crops can be expand considering the tourism prospects
Supported by Governments (made Ramaroshan tourism Dev. Board, tourism master plan,	Possibility to add other institutions like HAN, NTB in Federal, provincial and municipal

preparation of picnic spot, boating, sanitation, sign board keeping, etc.)	
Weakness	Threats
Inadequate in awareness to the local people on tourism development	Legal aspect to manage the hotels and restaurants in and around the site
Lack of internet facility	Environments (waste and pollution management)
Poor in electricity supply (irregularly in electricity)	Road expansion through Kailash river
Seasonal road (not having year-round road facility or black topped)	
Lack of sustainable plan for hotel management	
Weak products diversification/food value	

Major Strategies and Recommendations

Ramaroshan is one of the hotspots for agro-tourism development in the future. Currently, some of the activities such as food diversification, harvesting of crops, displaying of agri-products, etc are some examples of agro-tourism being amplified by community and hotels. The overall development of the agro-tourism, the following strategies should be undertaken;

- Crop production, conservation, promotion, and diversification: commodity wise promotion activities; conserve and promote the niche and indigenous agricultural and livestock crop; a package and demonstration of organic farming; demo of niche products, fishing, live crop harvesting, seedling transplanting, rice transplanting, rice day celebration, potato day celebration, seed production, etc.
- A package of processing, and postharvest handling (sorting, grading, pack-house construction, cold store, rustic store, cellar store, establishment, branding, labeling, packaging, storage, transportation, etc.), involvement of tourists in these activities.
- Food value identification and food festival
- Promotion of agro-enterprises such as handicraft making from woolen, allo, lokta, bhangro, sisno, bamboo, etc. and product diversification,
- Construction of parks, picnic spots, homestay, community lodge, trekking rout to Badimalika, fountains, educational spot, child park, seminar and meeting hall, Agri fare spot, landscape design, sport spot, drinking water, swimming pool, public toilet, dustbin, waste management, etc.

- Documentation of tourist inflow, making museum, displaying the historical places in paper, library, e-library, etc.
- Develop the areas for study/research purpose in and around the site.
- Awareness campaign/training packages for agro-tourism to the visitors/students/needful people.
- Institutional development: Agro-tourism unit should be established as separate unit in the rural municipality.
- Policy: Agro-tourism regulation and master plan development.
- Capacity building: Training to homestay/community lodge holders/members, training on food diversification/cook/hospitality, etc.
- Technology promotion and Market development and linkages

Conclusion

Ramaroshan is the most feasible site among the sites located in the districts. The site is rich in agricultural and livestock diversity. The panoramic view of the place makes this more attractive and pleasant. On the other side, people of this place have ability to organize the guests as a host and have pleasant hospitality to welcome them. The road is getting upgraded and there will be a year-round connectivity within 2-3 years. Facilities of drinking water, temple, path, etc are developed. However, provisions of internet facility, parks, chautari, etc. are not established yet. The site obtains 81% which is the outstanding score for the agro-tourism potentiality.

It is potential site for agricultural high value crops such as *marsi* rice, millet, fox millet under cereals, off-season and organic vegetable production, seed production of broad leaf mustard, amaranths, many local livestock such as Achhami naumuthe cattle, local buffalo, local poultry, etc. Some of the indigenous fruits like walnut, plum, peach, different berries, etc. show the site more attractive, lucrative, and feasible.

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