

Preliminary report on Potential impact and opportunities for ecotourism in Annapurna Conservation Area

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Flow of tourist in Annapurna Conservation Area

The table 1 shows that the tourist flow was highest during 1999 and 2000 and then it drastically decreased in 2001 and 2002 with 14 % and 40 % respectively. As the country was in immerse insurgency period since 2000, so there was a drastic decline in tourist flow in Nepal which impacted a lot to Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) as well. After all in 2006, when the peace process started, again the tourist flow increased in ACA (Table 1). So this indicates that the insurgency period had a significant influence on flow of tourist.

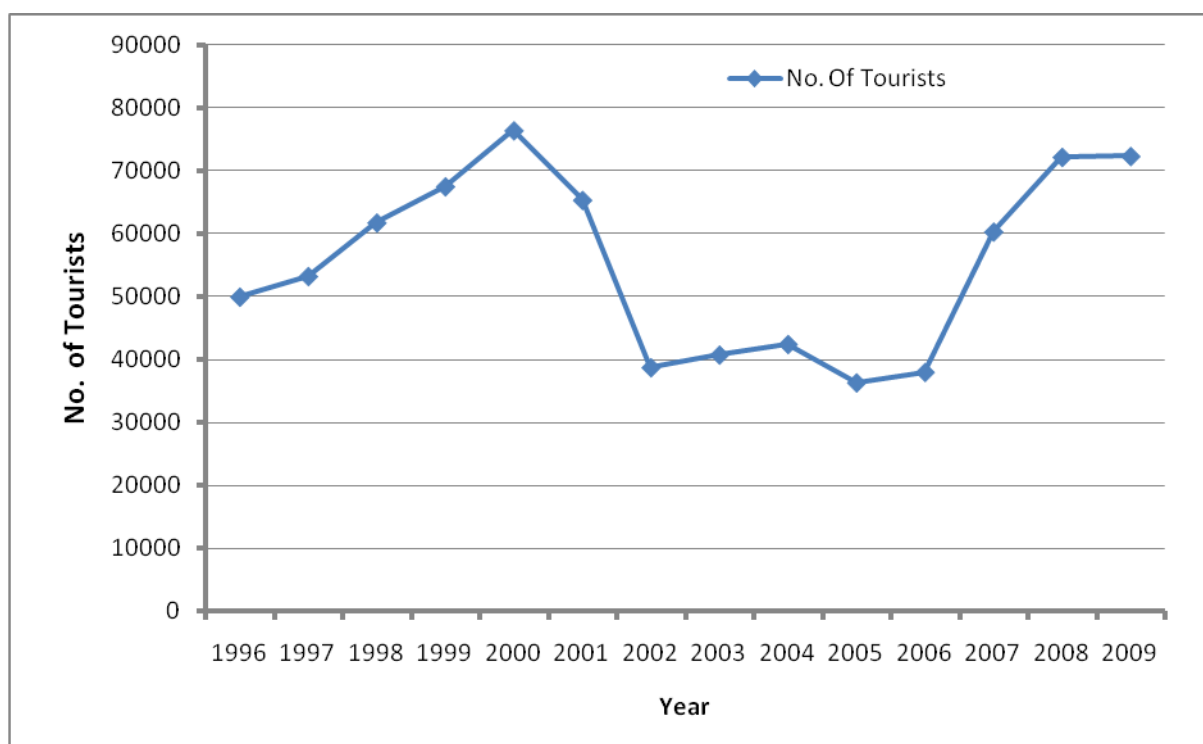


Table 1: Flow of Tourist in Annapurna Conservation Area since 1996

Source: ACAP 2009

Present flow of tourist in different trekking route inside Annapurna Conservation Area

Among the different trekking routes inside ACA, the Round Annapurna route seems to be the most famous with 28 % , 31 % and 25 % of tourist trekked in 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively (Table 2). Annapurna Base Camp trekking route stands on second position occupying around 20% of the tourist visiting ACA. Similarly Machhapuchre trek, which passes through Pipar forest and goes long way to Pipar, Kumai and Korchan area, attracted

0.08 %, 0.12 % and 0.16 % of tourist in 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively (Table 2). It may be due to lack of popularity and advertisement this trekking route has not been able to attract much of tourist. Though its recent figure does not show significant flow of tourist but in future, it holds ability to attract tourist as Machhapuchre trekking route is being redeveloped with co-ordination among different organization like Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN), ACAP and local village committee. So, it can be said that it will gain more popularity among the tourist in near future.

Year	2007		2008		2009	
	No. Of	% of	No. Of	% of	No. Of	% of
Name of Trekking Route	Tourist	Tourist	Tourist	Tourist	Tourist	Tourist
Round Annapurna	17408	28.88	22989	31.85	18472	25.54
Annapurna Base Camp	11793	19.57	14322	19.84	15839	21.90
Chandrakot	394	0.65	581	0.81	727	1.01
Dhampus	1312	2.18	588	0.81	742	1.03
Ghandruk Circuit Trek	2597	4.31	1930	2.67	4135	5.72
Gandruk Ghorepani Trek	5356	8.89	6991	9.69	7578	10.48
Ghorepani Punhill Trek	6821	11.32	8068	11.18	8968	12.40
Jomsom Muktinath Trek	5636	9.35	6293	8.72	6822	9.43
Jomsom Trek	5763	9.56	5659	7.84	6319	8.74
Khayer Trek	207	0.34	479	0.66	346	0.48
Mardi Himal Trek	190	0.32	317	0.44	230	0.32
Eco trek (Sikles route)	505	0.84	535	0.74	149	0.21
Bhujung trek	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.00
Barapokharai	7	0.01	0	0.00	0	0.00
Larjun	408	0.68	0	0.00	0	0.00
Dhaulagiri Trek	312	0.52	336	0.47	183	0.25
Manang	129	0.21	185	0.26	57	0.08
Nar Phoo	157	0.26	139	0.19	146	0.20
Tilocho tal	130	0.22	200	0.28	138	0.19
Upper Mustang	1029	1.71	2416	3.35	1245	1.72
Machhapuchre Trek	46	0.08	83	0.12	119	0.16
others	74	0.12	62	0.09	107	0.15
Total	60274		72173		72323	

Table 2: Recent flow of tourist in different trekking areas inside ACA

Source: ACAP 2009

Recent changes in Pipar Area of Annapurna Conservation Area

There have been recent changes in and around Pipar Area of ACA with development of different trekking route, increase number of domestic tourist, infrastructure development and increased ecotourism practice by local people. Figure 1 and 3 shows the different trekking route recently been announced by TAAN, ACAP and local people in and around Pipar area of ACA. Among these one of the trekking route passes straight to the Pipar Forest

via Karuwa village and goes up towards Pipar pond and turns to Kaumai and Korchan. This route seems to mostly affect the habitat of pheasants and wildlife in Pipar.



Figure 1: Machhapuchhre Model Trek and its code of conduct for visitors/ trekkers



Figure 2: Camp site being constructed on the way to Pipar at 2700m by TAAN and ACAP

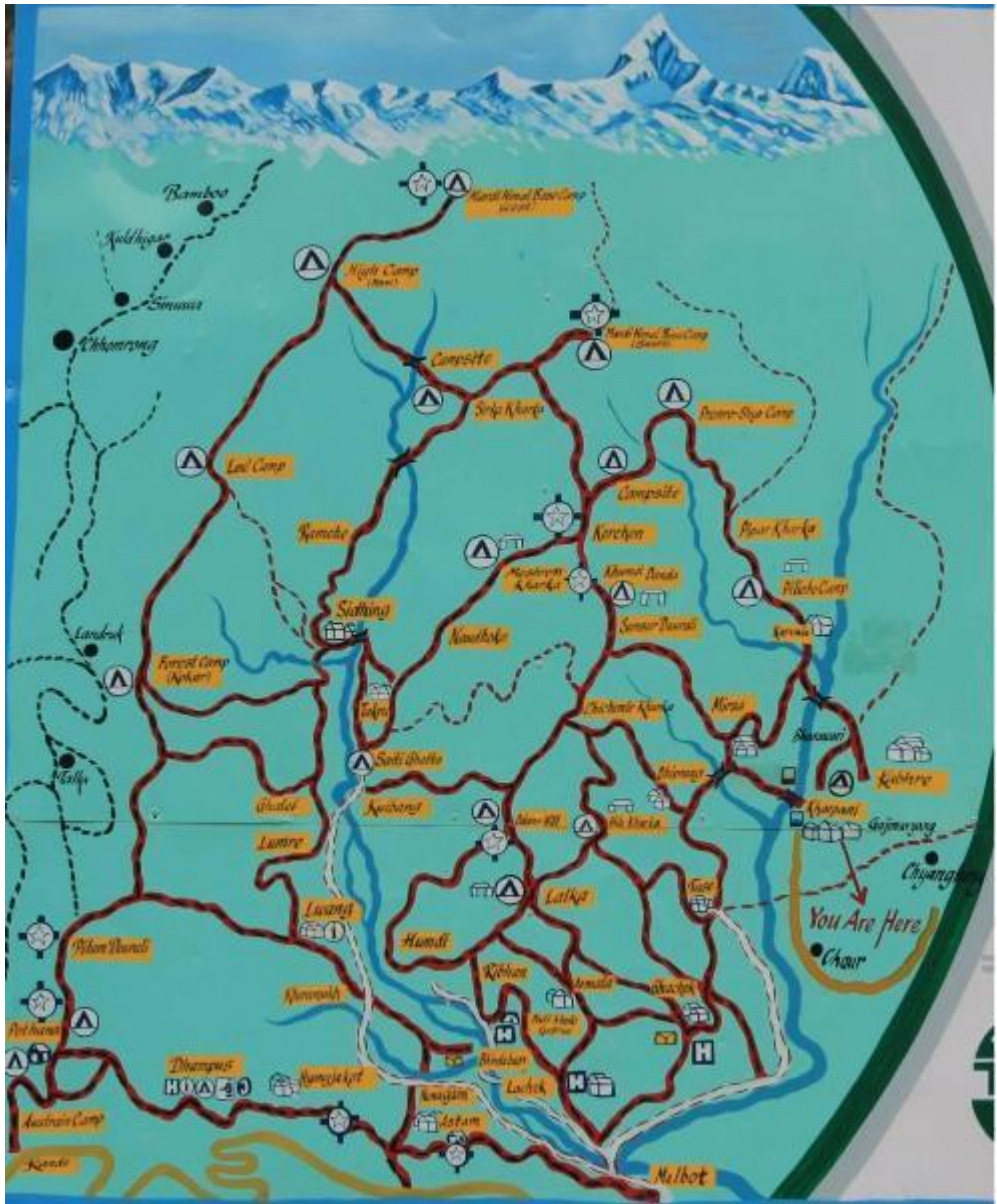


Figure 3: Recently announced trekking route (red thick line) near Pipar area

Similarly few camping sites have also been constructed on various trekking route. For example Figure 3 shows one of the camp site been constructed on the way to Pipar, Kumai and Korchan trek. This will definitely help to provide better shelter and camping for tourist which will have some effect on their attraction.

Additionally, with the development of motorable road from Pokhara to Kharpani, there is a frequent flow of public transport till Kharpani (the hot spring). Not only there is flow of people from Pokhara but also the Kharpani area has become a major picnic destination for students and people of Pokhara. During the recent visit we found 2-3 buses of students per day who come for the picnic and this number increases to 10-15 buses during weekends.



Figure 4: Kharpani (hot spring) area being developed as major picnic spot.

Apart from these developments, ecotourism practises has also been started by the local people in the area. Practices such as home stay and friendly lodges have been developed the in the villages like Karuwa, Mirsa and Dhiprang.



Figure 5: Eco-friendly lodges at Karuwa village which provide home stay facilities to tourists

Impact of tourism

Currently pollution seems to be the highest impact of tourism on environment. The Figure 6 shows some of the pollution being developed in the trekking routes in ACA and in Pipar area as well. These indecomposable pollutions do not only look ugly but have significant impact on wildlife and other species found in the area. Apart from these issues impact on bird habitat as most of the trekking route pass by the core area of bird's and wildlife'd habitat. More analysis on this is yet to be done and the cultural impacts are also yet to be determined.



Figure 6: Pollution being developed in the trekking routes