Tourist Related Accidents and Safety Policy in the Tourism Industry of Nepal

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ABSTRACT In Nepal, the tourism sector has become an important part of the country's economy, contributing significantly to GDP and employment. With its rich cultural heritage and natural attractions including the Himalayas, Nepal attracts a lot of tourists, especially for trekking and spiritual activities but so the increasing number of tourism related accidents poses huge challenges especially in road trips and adventure sports. Studies show that tourism related accidents in Nepal are influenced by factors such as poor-quality materials, negligence of drivers, and inadequate safety measures Adventure activities like trekking and rafting, combined with safety precautions the mismatch further increases the risk of disaster. Nepal has made progress in addressing these issues through policy implementation, such as improving road safety and promoting digital safety initiatives. Nevertheless, the implementation of these programs remains inconsistent, especially in remote areas. Security challenges in the tourism sector require comprehensive approaches including sound security measures, infrastructure development and digital integration and vulnerability to natural hazards Effective management of these risks is required greatly to ensure sustainable development of tourism in Nepal.

Keywords: Tourism, Safety, Accidents, Adventure tourism, Tourism Policy, Digital systems, Risk management

Introduction

The tourism enterprise has skilled remarkable growth worldwide, pushed by way of growing disposable incomes, multiplied connectivity and increasing cultural and nature-primarily based tourism UNWTO recorded 1.Five billion global visitors in 2019, and provided and in global monetary growth The important role played through the business enterprise and its emphasis.

In the context of Nepal, the tourism area has emerged as an vital part of the country's financial system, contributing to GDP and employment. With its rich cultural history and breathtaking landscapes consisting of the Himalayas,

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Nepal is a first-rate vacation spot for adventure and spiritual tourism The observe found that there is a substantial correlation among tourism and financial increase in Nepal, with tourists a extended attendance has a positive impact on GDP and forex income (Bhattarai et al., 2021; B. R. Dhungana, 2023). Faced with challenges such as climate change and the impact of global warming on mountainous areas, Nepal remains poised to boost its tourism sector with supportive policies and infrastructure development (Pokharel et al., 2017).

The growing mobility of vacationers globally has brought about a surge in tourism-related injuries, mainly avenue injuries, which can be one of the leading causes of injury and loss of life for travelers (Psarras et al., 2024). Studies in New Zealand highlights that motor vehicle accidents are a leading motive of morbidity and mortality among tourists, with men aged 20-39 maximum at hazard (Page et al., 2001).

This pattern is validated in Spain, where foreign drivers show higher rates of traffic accidents, leading to the importance of integrating tourist road safety measures into planning systems (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2020). Furthermore, participation in tourism comes with additional risks, as seen in New Zealand, where activities such as quad biking and whitewater rafting are associated with injury, with multiple frequency is from visitors who do not follow security guidelines (Bentley et al., 2000).

In Nepal, the rising number of injuries related to travelers, particularly road traffic injuries and accidents throughout adventure activities, has emerge as a critical difficulty (Sapkota et al., 2016). Road site visitors' accidents continue to be one of the main causes of loss of life inside the use of a, with geographical and human elements contributing to the chance, especially in areas like Kathmandu. Studies show that road consumer negligence, rushing, and overtaking operations are principal reasons of these accidents (S. Dhungana et al., 2024; Kuikel et al., 2022). Adventure tourism, which includes excessive-threat sports including hiking and rafting, additionally poses protection dangers. A loss of protection policies, mixed with the failure of travelers to comply with commands, has brought about accidents (Clinch & Filimonau, 2017).

Nepal has been trying to implement policies aimed at improving safety, especially road safety measures and the promotion of digital tourist safety measures. This strategy aims to prevent tourism-related accidents by improving infrastructure, strengthening regulations and using digital technologies to ensure a safe environment for passengers (Ojha, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2020).

Overview of Tourism and Safety

Tourism protection is a vital factor influencing traveler conduct and destination choice. Numerous research has highlighted that tourists prioritize protection while choosing journey destinations, mainly in regions with ability risks related to injuries, fitness hazards, or political instability. A observe on traveller perceptions of safety revealed that perceived risks can considerably deter journey to a destination, affecting its normal economic performance (Peattie et al., 2005).

Tourism-associated injuries also have a measurable financial impact. In destinations like Nepal, which rely heavily on tourism for revenue and employment, injuries related to tourists can result in a big decline in traveler numbers, lowering foreign exchange income and dangerous livelihoods in the region (Bhattarai et al., 2021). The economic results of injuries are regularly amplified by way of negative media coverage, that can deter potential vacationers from traveling.

Table 1

Aspect of Tourism Safety and Necessity for Improvement

Aspect of Tourism Safety	References	Importance for Tourism Industry Improvement
Political Stability and Safety	**Nepal:** Political instability, including the Maoist insurgency, has historically hurt tourist numbers (Hepburn, 2020; Thapa, 2004).	Political stability reduces risks and attracts tourists. Political instability or terrorism results in reduced demand and negatively impacts the country's tourism sector.
	Spain: After terrorist attacks, Spain experienced a decline in tourism, which rebounded with security measures in 2004 (Avraham, 2021).	
	Egypt: Terrorism led to a decline in Egypt's tourism	

	sector, but stability has shown a recovery (Bakota et al., 2022).	
Digital Security Systems	**Nepal:** Developing digital systems to enhance tourist safety (Shrestha et al., 2020)	Implementing digital technologies helps improve security measures, enabling real-time risk assessments, incident reporting, and crisis management, thus enhancing tourist safety and satisfaction.
	South Korea: Tourism uses integrated apps for real-time updates and alerts on local safety risks (Brennan, 2020).	
	Japan: Digital systems assist tourists in staying informed about risks and ensuring smoother travel experiences (Numonjonovna, 2023).	
Disaster Preparedness and Response	Nepal: Policies on disaster preparedness are critical due to frequent calamities, but more effective implementation is needed (Ghimire, 2015).	Preparing for natural disasters and quick recovery is essential to maintain tourist trust and return visits. Safety protocols and infrastructure for disaster management ensure minimal disruptions.
	Japan: Well-developed earthquake preparedness systems have helped Japan maintain its status as a major tourist destination (Chan et al., 2020).	
	New Zealand: After natural disasters like earthquakes, New Zealand's swift recovery has restored tourist confidence (Orchiston & Espiner, 2017).	
Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement	Nepal: Crimes against tourists, including sexual offenses, highlight the need for stronger enforcement (Upadhayaya et al., 2011).	Strong enforcement of laws, especially in tourist areas, is crucial to maintaining a positive destination image, reducing crimes against tourists, and ensuring visitor safety and satisfaction.
	Brazil: Increased police presence and a drop in crime during tourist events such as the Olympics (Azzi, 2017).	
	South Africa: Tourist safety zones were created to reduce violent crime and improve destination perception (George & Swart, 2012).	
Tourist Police and On-ground Security	Nepal: Tourist police exist but are perceived as underfunded and less effective in areas like Thamel (Gurung, 2014).	An effective, visible tourist police force reassures visitors, preventing crimes and providing assistance. A well-trained, equipped force improves safety perceptions and encourages longer stays.
	Thailand: Tourist police are highly visible, and well-trained units assist with safety and crime prevention, leading to higher tourist confidence (Santad & Ratchadapunnathikul, 2018)	
	United Arab Emirates (UAE): Well-established tourist police in Dubai have increased safety measures and tourist satisfaction (Michael et al., 2019).	
Safety in Tourist Hubs	Nepal: Key hubs like Thamel need improved safety measures and coordination between security agencies (Sharma et al., 2020).	Ensuring safety in key tourist hubs, including preventing petty crimes and enhancing infrastructure, improves visitor experience and increases word-of-mouth promotion, leading to growth in tourism.
	Paris, France: High crime rates in tourist hubs like the Eiffel Tower area led to heightened police surveillance and improved safety (Nesser & Nasr, 2024).	
	New York, USA: Times Square saw a drop in crime rates with increased police visibility and tourist safety measures (Mehta, 2020).	
Crisis Management (Pandemics)	Nepal: COVID-19 led to strategies that encourage domestic tourism, but international tourism remains severely impacted (Silwal et al., 2022).	Effective crisis management during pandemics ensures safety and resilience by maintaining health
	Italy: Strong health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic helped revive the Italian tourism sector	

	(Trono & Castronuovo, 2022).	protocols and exploring domestic tourism options, enabling the industry to recover faster post-crisis.
	Australia: Australia successfully managed tourism recovery by promoting domestic travel and maintaining safety protocols (Volgger et al., 2021).	
Infrastructure and Safety Measures	Nepal: Infrastructure, especially in rural areas, is insufficient to support safe tourism experiences (Neupane, 2019).	Improving transportation, healthcare, and emergency infrastructure ensures safe and comfortable travel experiences, leading to longer tourist stays and increased satisfaction, positively impacting revenues.
	Singapore: Efficient transportation and healthcare infrastructure make Singapore a model of tourist safety and convenience(Lee, 2010; Ward, 2022).	
	Switzerland: Known for its well-maintained infrastructure, Switzerland provides a high level of tourist safety and satisfaction (Chau, 2023).	
Public Awareness and Education	Nepal: Safety awareness among tourists and locals is minimal, particularly in key hubs (Sharma et al., 2020).	Educating both tourists and local communities about safety protocols helps to create a safer environment. This contributes to positive travel experiences and encourages return visits and recommendations.
	Japan: Public awareness campaigns on disaster preparedness have contributed to Japan's safe tourism reputation (Chan et al., 2021).	
	Germany: Extensive public campaigns on crime prevention and tourist safety have enhanced Germany's reputation as a safe destination (Cavlek, 2006).	

Source: Based on literature review.

Despite the growing frame of research on tourism protection, several gaps remain. First, move-usa comparisons of protection rules are restrained, mainly between growing and developed countries. This hinders the identification of high-quality practices that would be carried out. Second, there's a lack of unique research on unique risk factors in journey tourism, particularly in areas like Nepal, where this shape of tourism is distinctly famous but under-regulated (Shrestha et al., 2020). Addressing those gaps via complete studies can provide precious insights into how tourism locations, specifically in susceptible areas like Nepal, can improve protection requirements and reduce the incidence of injuries regarding travelers.

Methodology

This study is based on secondary data collected from Nepal Tourism Statistic, 2023. The research is based on descriptive, analytical and review-based approach to explore the tourist related accidents and safety policy in the tourism industry of Nepal. Moreover, the analysis of accident reports, government policies, and case studies related to tourist accidents and safety policy were made.

Results and Discussion

Tourism related Incidents in Nepal

Tourism related incidents are in the form of lost/missing, stolen/theft, fraud/cheating, robbery, pickpocketing, harassment/disputes, accidents, damage, attack/assault, snatching, threats, missing person, rape, misbehaviors, and kidnap as per the data provided by the tourism statistics. The Table 2 shows the tourism related incidents in Nepal.

Table 2

Tourism related Incidents in Nepal

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Source: Nepal Tourism Statistic, 2023.

Incident	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Lost/Missing	481	390	54	122	345
Stolen/Theft	102	93	9	22	82
Fraud/Cheating	24	28	8	18	33
Robbery	2	7	0	1	13
Pickpocketing	6	0	0	0	2
Harassment/Disputes	4	7	3	9	28
Accident	1	0	0	0	2
Damage	4	0	0	0	0
Attack/Assault	1	3	3	1	2
Snatching	1	4	0	0	1
Threats	0	0	0	0	5
Missing Person	0	7	2	4	4
Rape	0	0	0	0	0
Misbehavior	2	0	0	0	1
Kidnap	0	0	0	0	1
Other	5	1	0	3	13
Total Incidents	**633**	**540**	**79**	**180**	**532**

The information reflects the pattern of tourism related incidents in Nepal from fiscal year (FY) 2018/19 to 2022/23. This length includes the COVID-19 pandemic years (FY 2019/20 and 2020/21), which appreciably impacted international tourism, and its subsequent restoration in FY 2021/22 and 2022/23. The sorts of incidents include robbery, fraud, robbery, and harassment. An evaluation of this facts, in contrast with international developments, reveals comparable styles in other countries and helps highlight the direct correlation among tourism volumes and incidents concerning vacationers.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist-related incidents is clear inside the sharp lower in overall incidents at some point of FY 2019/20 and 2020/21. For example, misplaced/lacking cases dropped from 481 in FY 2018/19 to 54 in FY 2020/21, while thefts dropped from 102 to nine at some stage in the equal period. This decline may be attributed to the worldwide tour regulations that were put in vicinity in the course of the pandemic, which caused a pointy discount in tourist arrivals. Similar patterns had been determined international. In Spain, as an instance, there was a 77% decrease in overseas traveler arrivals in 2020, which corresponded with a decline in visitor-centered crimes (Ritchie, 2020). Likewise, the Maldives, which experienced a sizable lower in vacationer arrivals, saw a pointy decline in tourism-associated incidents all through the pandemic (Arakawa et al., 2021).

As travel restrictions eased post-pandemic, incidents involving tourists started out to rise once more in FY 2021/22 and 2022/23. Total incidents rose from 79 in FY 2020/21 to 532 in FY 2022/23, indicating a restoration in tourism hobby and a corresponding increase in incidents such as theft and fraud. Theft instances rose from 9 in FY 2020/21 to 82 in FY 2022/23, and fraud incidents followed a similar sample, growing from eight to 33 all through the same period. This sample is steady with other international vacationer locations that still experienced a resurgence in crime as tourist numbers rebounded. In Thailand, for example, petty crimes like theft and scams accelerated because the country noticed a tremendous return of tourists following the easing of tour restrictions in 2021 (Baker, 2021).

There was a significant increase in harassment and disputes, from 7 incidents in FY 2019/20 to 28 in FY 2022/23. This indicates that tensions between tourists and local communities increased as tourism recovered, which may be due to economic pressures and social conflict. Research shows that post-pandemic recovery in areas that depend heavily on tourism caused difficulties commonly associated with local tourist interactions. Increased conflicts

between tourists and locals have been reported as a result of conflict (Cohen, 2021). This shows that social dynamics between tourists and host communities can difficult, especially in times of economic uncertainty.

The records additionally suggest a regarding upward thrust in extreme crimes, along with robbery and threats, post-pandemic. Robbery incidents, which had decreased to 0 in FY 2020/21, rose to 13 through FY 2022/23, and threats, which had no recorded instances at some stage in the pandemic, reached five in FY 2022/23. This boom in violent or more extreme crimes aligns with observations in different nations in which tourism recuperation added a upward push in crook activities focused on vacationers. In South Africa, for instance, incidents of theft against tourists improved sharply as worldwide tourism resumed after the pandemic (Donaldson, 2022).

In conclusion, the data from Nepal demonstrates how the pandemic drastically reduced tourist-related incidents due to the sharp decline in international visitors. As tourism rebounded, so did the incidents, mirroring global patterns observed in other tourist-heavy nations. The rise in harassment, disputes, and more serious crimes as tourism recovered suggests increasing social and economic tensions in the host communities, emphasizing the complex relationship between tourism and local environments in post-pandemic recovery.

Table 3

Tourism Accidents Scenario at Global and National Level

Aspect	Developed Countries	South Asian Countries	Nepal
Digital Security Systems	Widespread use of advanced digital security systems, such as real-time GPS tracking and emergency response apps (Numonjonovna, 2023).	Digital systems in tourism safety are emerging but underdeveloped in some countries (Sharma & Arora, 2022).	Nepal has begun developing a digital tourism security system integrating federal and local governance. (Shrestha et al., 2020)
Tourist Police and On-ground Safety	Tourist police are highly organized, equipped with advanced training and resources (Michael et al., 2019).	Tourist police exist but can be underfunded and less visible in some South Asian countries (Santad & Ratchadapunnathikul, 2018).	Nepal has tourist police, but effectiveness is perceived as moderate, with a need for policy improvements. (Gurung, 2015), (Sharma et al., 2020)
Political Stability	Generally stable, low risk for political disruptions impacting tourism (Avraham, 2021).	Varies widely; countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan have experienced instability affecting tourism (Hasan et al., 2022) .	Nepal has faced political instability, including Maoist insurgency and government instability, which affected tourism. (Thapa, 2004)
Natural Disaster Preparedness	High level of preparedness with early warning systems, rescue infrastructure, and evacuation plans (Chan et al., 2020).	Varies; some countries are better equipped than others for disaster response in tourist regions (Bhati et al., 2016).	Nepal is disaster-prone (e.g., earthquakes), and digital systems for disaster preparedness are in development. (Shrestha et al., 2020)
Crisis Management and Recovery	Comprehensive crisis management systems in place, ensuring quick recovery post-crisis (terrorism, pandemics, etc.) (Trono & Castronuovo, 2022).	South Asian countries generally lack robust crisis management systems, affecting recovery post-crisis (Tuli & Vadiyala, 2022).	Nepal's tourism sector is vulnerable to crises, and the recovery is slow due to political and resource limitations. (Thapa, 2004)
Sexual Harassment and Crimes	Strict enforcement of laws related to harassment and crimes against tourists, supported by well-trained police forces (Azzi,	Enforcement varies, with some South Asian countries lacking strong protections for tourists	There are ongoing issues with crimes against tourists, especially women, and insufficient law enforcement

	2017).	(Nawaz, 2018).	in Nepal. (Brown, 1999)
Public Awareness and Education	Strong public awareness campaigns on tourist safety, with guides and information readily available to tourists (Chan et al., 2021).	Public awareness programs exist but may not be consistently implemented across regions (Telfer & Sharpley, 2015).	Nepal has limited public awareness initiatives, with tourist education primarily focused in key areas like Thamel. (Sharma et al., 2020)

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study highlights the essential hyperlink between tourism protection and the overall achievement of Nepal's tourism region. Nepal, famed for its herbal splendor, adventure, and cultural tourism, heavily relies on tourism for economic increase, contributing drastically to its GDP and employment. However, the speedy boom of tourism, especially journey activities, has brought about extended accidents and protection worries, emphasizing the urgent want for stronger, included safety guidelines.

Key demanding situations to tourism safety in Nepal encompass road site visitors' accidents and dangers associated with trekking, rafting, and mountain climbing. Poor road conditions, motive force negligence, and geographic challenges make a contribution to a high price of accidents, mirroring global trends in vacationer-heavy destinations. The loss of stringent safety guidelines and enforcement similarly compounds those troubles. Digital technologies, while of their early stages in Nepal, offer ability to decorate protection via real-time danger tests and emergency reaction systems. Successful examples from countries like South Korea and Singapore reveal the benefits of digital protection in enhancing tourist safety, though Nepal faces resource and infrastructure constraints, mainly in faraway adventure tourism areas.

Disaster preparedness is any other crucial difficulty, given Nepal's vulnerability to earthquakes and floods. While a few policies are in vicinity, effective implementation remains a task. Lessons from countries like Japan and New Zealand, recognized for strong disaster reaction structures, provide valuable insights for Nepal to reinforce its preparedness and recuperation efforts. Law enforcement and crime prevention are equally vital, as growing crime quotes in traveler hubs post-pandemic enhance concerns approximately vacationer protection. Strengthening the visitor police and growing their visibility are crucial to enhancing protection perceptions.

Public focus and schooling on safety protocols are restrained, especially in regions past primary visitor locations. Consistent, massive protection campaigns targeting both travelers and locals are critical. Additionally, political balance performs a pivotal position in preserving a secure tourism environment. Past political unrest has deterred tourists, underscoring the want for ongoing balance to help the implementation of safety regulations.

Economic results of tourism-associated accidents are vast, as they could cause declines in tourist arrivals, forex earnings, and bad media coverage that tarnish Nepal's recognition. Addressing protection issues isn't always most effective crucial for vacationer properly-being but additionally for the long-term increase and sustainability of Nepal's tourism enterprise. The research calls for a multi-faceted method related to more potent policies, higher enforcement, digital integration, disaster preparedness, and more suitable public awareness. By imposing those measures, Nepal can create a safer, more resilient tourism area, fostering continued economic development and making sure it remains an appealing vacation spot for visitors global.

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