



What Tourism Security Means for Nepal?

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Analysis

Tourism and security are conceptually and practically interwoven phenomenon. Tourism security in general means a state of safety and security dominantly non-compromise-able for the tourists' visitations. This also states a condition where local tourism industries, host communities, and tourist destinations directly and indirectly dependent on tourism businesses feel safe and protected for their income, employments, and livelihoods.

As the home to World's highest mountains in a multi-ethnic federal democratic republic setup, Nepal is a popular tourist destination for adventure, recreation and ecotourism. Tourism is one of the most cherished inspirations for peace and prosperity in Nepal. Nevertheless, a number of security related factors (natural hazards, human-induced incidences, and health related weaknesses) also confronts this nation. The sporadic political conflicts, instabilities, strikes, social unrests, and the disputes between Nepal-India at the border area at present are on-going manmade security challenges appearing from wider external environments. Occasional intra-organizational conflicts between management and labour in corporate tourism establishments (e.g. big hotels, casino, airlines) resulting in some kind of mild violence are the intra tourism security challenges. Thus, tourism security appears as an integral part of social security system in Nepal. On the other side, sporadically occurring disastrous events like earthquakes, avalanches, landslides, floods, extreme snowfalls, etc. are nature borne security challenges for tourism in Nepal. However, such natural disasters are observed differently than manmade challenges as these(natural) incidents have evoked greater public, industry and outgoing tourists' understanding, tolerance, sympathy and supports.

As a matter of fact for tourism security, Nepal is also victim of unsecure destination image with the "generalization" of the perceived risk and "spill over" effects of security incidents largely exaggerated by unrealistic media publicity (as news generator for security related information to tourists) and negative travel advisories even though there is no real security threats to tourists. Nepal's tourism sector experienced the impacts of such media behaviour during the decade (1996-2006) long socio-political armed conflict and even experiencing today after the 25th April 2015 earthquake.

Since tourism essentially thrives under peaceful and secure environment, Nepal requires strengthening its coping strategies to prevent, reduce, manage and mitigate tourism crisis those emerge in the wake of various types of security incidences. Such strategies include formulating standardised tourism industry disaster response contingency plan, preparing nature and manmade hazards responsive (sensitive) Nepal type indigenous tourism strategies, applying safe trekking and mountaineering guidelines, developing early risk warning system for tourists in extreme weather conditions, reinforcing aviation and airport safety and security measures, effectuating tourist tracking (monitoring) and rescue system, excelling food and water safety and hygiene practices, applying tourist accommodation safe building code of conducts, and developing crisis communication skills, etc.

The proper planning and management of these strategies are imperative for mitigating both effects and perceptions for a politically toppled tourist destination like Nepal.

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