



Department *of* Tourism,  
Recreation & Sport Management  
College *of* Health and Human Performance

# IMPACTS OF COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM ON THARU INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN NEPAL

Smrittee Kala Panta and Brijesh Thapa, PhD  
University of Florida

---

# Acknowledgements

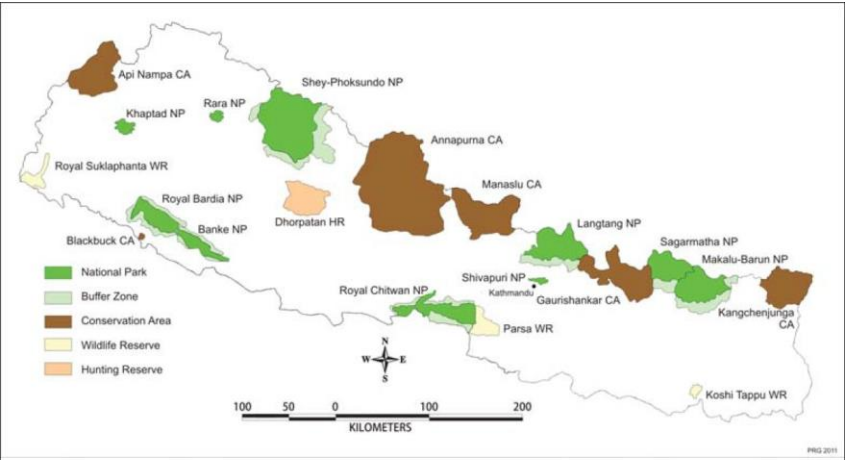
- Dr. Sandra L. Russo, Dr. Sarah L. McKune & Dr. Stephen Holland
- Tropical Conservation and Development(TCD) program Research Grant, University of Florida
- Indigenous men and women of Dalla village
- Field assistants and transcribers
- Bardia National Park Office, Thakurdwara, Bardia, Nepal
- Homestay Management Committee, Suryapatuwa, Bardia, Nepal

# Introduction



<http://www.freeworldmaps.net/asia/nepal/location.html>

Ecotourism has been regarded as means for integrated conservation and development in protected areas of Nepal



Base map adapted from Nepal Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation 'Protected Areas of Nepal'.

Copyright: Piper R. Gaubatz and Stan Stevens

**PAST**

- Strict Protection
- Species focused
- Control in resource use
- Island approach
- Centralized and government controlled

**PRESENT**

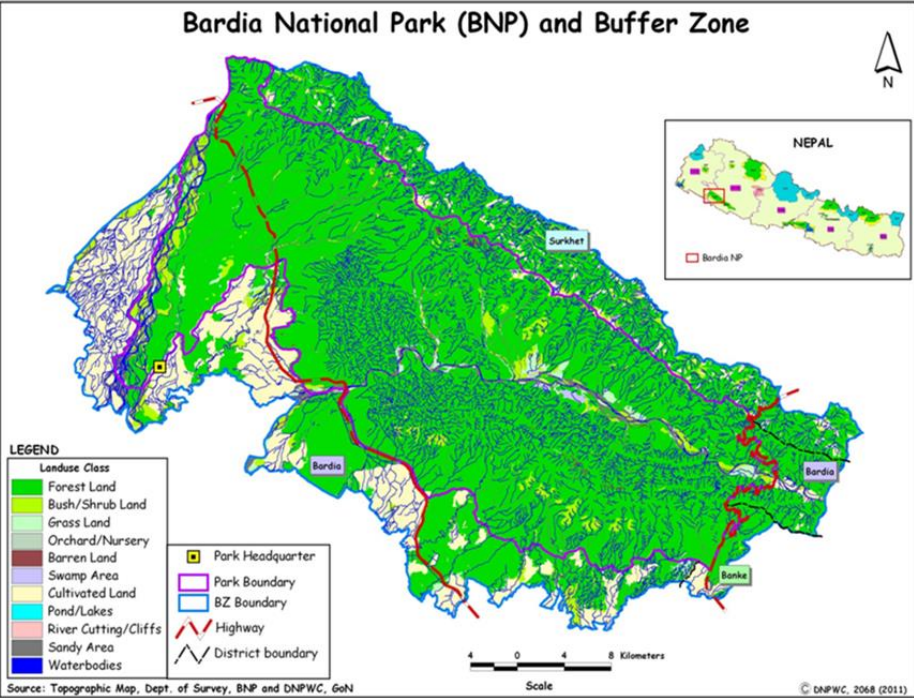
- People's participation
- Ecosystem focus
- Resource and revenue sharing
- Landscape approach
- Decentralized and opened to NGO and private sector involvement
- Eg: Buffer Zone program



(Source: Budhathoki, 2005a)



# Introduction



## Human-elephant conflict around Bardia National Park

Posted on 13 November 2006 | Comments

BBC Sign in News Sport Weather Shop Earth

**NEWS**

Home Video World US & Canada UK Business Tech Science Ma

Science & Environment

## Attacks prompt Nepal to cap wildlife growth

By Navin Singh Khadka  
Environment reporter, BBC News

18 January 2013 Science & Environment

World Home U.N. Conflicts Terrorism Disasters Global Economy Environment Religion Scandals Regions

## Elephant herd attacks Nepal village, killing 1 and injuring 2

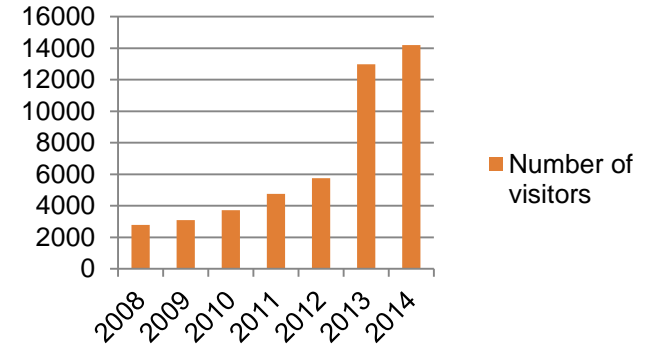
Published December 28, 2016 · Associated Press

# Introduction

बर्दिया राष्ट्रिय निकुञ्जमा पाईने महत्वपूर्ण जनावर तथा पंखीहरु

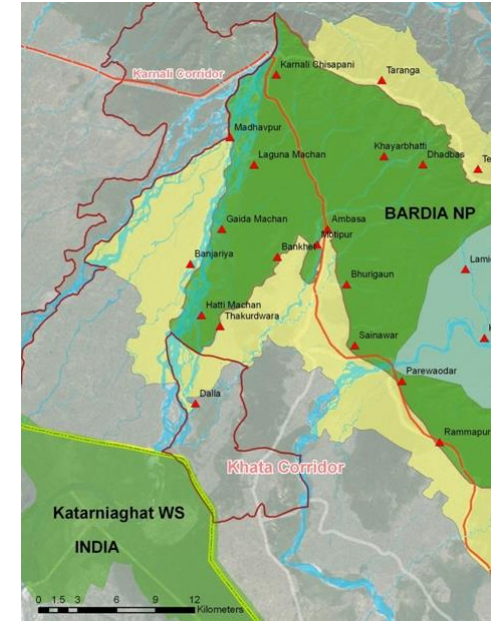


## Trend of visitor's flow in BNP



# Introduction

Homestays as community based ecotourism (CBE) enterprise in Dalla village



**What has been found?**

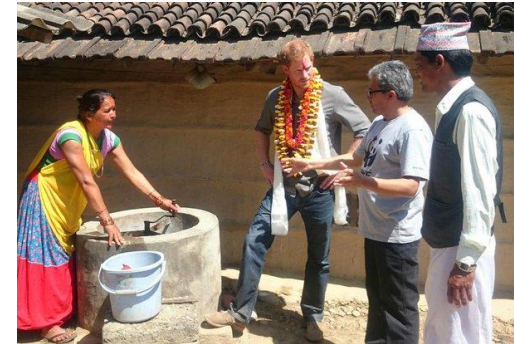
Impacts of ecotourism on indigenous community is contextual.

**Where is the research gap?**

Limited studies have investigated the impacts of CBE on indigenous communities in lowland parks of Nepal

**What is this study about?**

Assessment of homestays as CBE and its impacts on Tharu community



# Introduction: Tharu indigenous community



“Tharu”=Farmer



- 13.5% of the total population or 3.96 million of Nepal's estimated 29.4 million population
- Also in Bihar and UttarPradesh states of India
- Several endogamous sub-groups of Tharu
- Dangaura Tharu in western Terai: Dang-Deukhuri, Banke and Bardia districts

# Methodology

Preliminary field visit in 2015

- Familiarization with the research context
- Exploratory study on women homestay entrepreneurs



Literature review



Empirical study in 2016

- Case study approach
- Three focus group discussions (one FGD with members of homestay management committee only)
- Survey with 44 head of households in Dalla village
- Survey with women operating homestays
- Participant observation
- Data analysis methods: MANOVA and correlation tests, thematic coding, content analysis



# Results

“We started homestay in our community to earn extra income, conserve our culture and to show other people how we are conserving our forests and wildlife....We have met our objectives to some extent.” Chairman, Khata bio corridor homestay management committee, Dalla

- **22 households engaged in Community-based ecotourism as “Khata bio corridor homestays, Dalla” under homestay management committee.**
- **\$10-\$13/per day package inclusive of lodging and food**
- **Homestay visitors: mostly domestic tourists and some international visiting BNP**
- **Average yearly income from homestays was found to be \$654 for 2015**
- **About 10% of income from visitors is kept by the committee to invest in conservation and development.**



# Results

## Benefits of homestay as perceived by homestay operators

### Benefits at community level

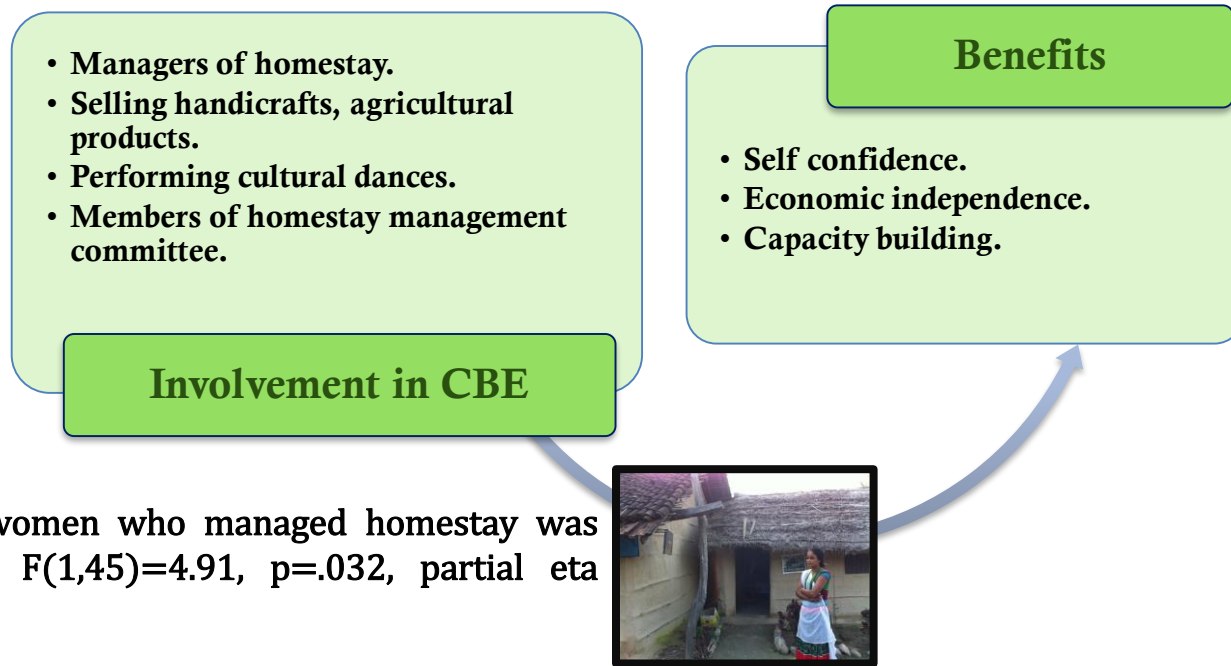
- Funds forest management activities
- Homestays as local market for agricultural products
- Improvement in infrastructure such as roads
- Increased awareness about health and sanitation issues
- Fund for local community development activities
- Community pride
- Preservation of Tharu culture
- Employment opportunities for women

### Benefits at household level

- Increased cash for household expenses and children's education
- Reduced dependency on landlords and land sharks for credits
- Capacity building programs
- Increased self-confidence to speak with outsiders
- Increased assistance from different conservation organizations
- Networking opportunities with renowned and influential people
- Improved sanitation and personal hygiene
- Improved relation among family members
- Efficient utilization of agricultural production such as vegetables

# Results

## Ecotourism-Women's empowerment nexus



Self-confidence of women who managed homestay was significantly higher  $F(1,45)=4.91$ ,  $p=.032$ , partial eta squared = .098

# Results

- Homestay operation was associated with decrease on dependency on fuelwood as main source of energy in the households ( $r=-.382$ ,  $n=44$ ,  $p=.011$ ).
- There was moderate positive correlation between homestay operation and level of participation of households in user groups ( $r=.458$ ,  $n=44$ ,  $p=.001$ ).
- There was small positive correlation between homestay operation and frequency of participation in user group meetings ( $r=.289$ ,  $n=44$ ,  $p=.047$ ).

# Results

## - Expansion of wildlife habitat to Shiva community forest Benefits and costs of buffer zone program

	Benefits	Costs
Men only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for livelihood diversification</li><li>• Funding for infrastructure development</li><li>• Wildlife damage compensation</li><li>• Fencing for protection against wildlife</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased manual for farming</li></ul>
Women only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for biogas installation</li><li>• Increased access to credit</li><li>• Increase attendance in village meetings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased manual for biogas</li><li>• Limited availability of timber and firewood</li></ul>
Both women and men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forest and wildlife conservation</li><li>• Increased income from tourism</li><li>• Increased availability of forest products</li><li>• Equitable distribution of forest products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crop and livestock damage due to wildlife</li><li>• Increased insecurity</li><li>• Restriction in livestock grazing in community forest</li></ul>

# Conclusion



- At present, Khata bio corridor homestay have many positive impacts on Tharu indigenous community of Dalla village.
- The homestay provides a successful example of CBE owned and managed by indigenous community.
- With the increase in visitor flow, there is possibility of increase in negative sociocultural and environmental impacts
- It offers an evidence of the prospect of community managed homestays for sustainable development of indigenous community.

# Conclusion

? Equitable distribution of cost and benefits of conservation



# Implications

- Need for building capacity of the Tharu women and men for planning and leading ecotourism development in their community
- Market linkage with local and international ecotourism operators
- Better linkage of tourism with other forms of livelihood





# Your visit to Dalla homestay could empower the Tharu community



Thank you