Chapter 8

Infrastructure Development in Developing Countries: Issues of Tourism, Cultural Configuration, and Service Alignment

Raj Kumar Bhattarai
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

ABSTRACT

Physical infrastructure development projects mobilize a huge number of diversified workforce, their associates, and relatives to and from the project sites and surrounding areas from initiation of the projects to post-completion period. This chapter focuses on Nepal government’s National Plan and reviews the Plan’s priorities of the last 60 years concerning project tourism at one part; and the opinions of key informants, socio-cultural patterns, project specifications, and tourism statistics on the other. The analysis indicates a clear fragmentation of the plan, cultural configuration, and infrastructure acceleration efforts. It concludes with a notion of urgency of integrating infrastructure project specifications with the cultural configuration of the actors. It proposes a strategic tripartite model for tourism development in order to achieve sustainable economic growth in developing countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advancement of tourism in a developing country primarily depends on the natural beauty and man-made infrastructure. The tourism infrastructural settings are public goods available to the public at large. The settings are facilitating and adding values to the socio-economic lives of the entire society by making an ease in the mobility of factors of production as well as supply and delivery of goods and services around the country.

Infrastructure development projects increase the mobility of people to and from the project sites and adjacent areas as well. There are flows of people all over the country from around the world in relation to the projects. The people are not only moving physically but they are moving their cultural configuration and value preference along with them. The culture of an individual cannot be isolated from him or her that is why wherever the person goes his or her culture is following. The visitors need services based on...
the project specifications and/or their personal interests. A well alignment of cultural configuration, infrastructural acceleration, and services composition is necessary in order to develop tourism in a developing country.

Cultural configuration consists of an individual’s entire patterns of spending time in his or her life. Some individuals are quite smart in balancing their professional life and personal life as well, but some are unable to do so. Some are rigid in their cultural preference and some are quite liberal too. An individual looking quite liberal in one cultural setting may be too rigid in another cultural setting. There are culture specific compelling commitments of every professional in every part of the society. Comfortable cultural configuration within diversification contributes in the endeavor of maintaining harmony among the personnel involved in infrastructure development projects.

Tourism is one major contributor in the economy of the developing countries like Nepal. The countries are underdeveloped and they need substantial amount of resources for their infrastructure development. Poor infrastructure cannot help to make the industries competitive in global market. When developing countries put their high priority on tourism development, integrate their strategy of tourism development with the alignment of cultural configuration, infrastructural acceleration, and service composition than there is possibility of sustainable economic development.

Advancement in tourism begins with the development of infrastructure as well as service marketing. There is strong interdependence between economic development and infrastructure development in an economy. A well-established infrastructure is fueling in the economic activities by providing ample avenues for socio-economic activities. It increases actors’ confidence level and also makes the supply chain as well as value delivery chain reliably efficient at one part and helps in mitigation of operational risks on the other part.

1.1. Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure consists of the natural as well as manmade structural settings. The natural setting refers the geographic beauty and its climatic environment whereas manmade setting refers the availability of physical, operational, socio-cultural, and economic infrastructures in the country.

The Himalayas, mountains, picks, valleys, rivers, rivulets, flora and fauna as well as the flat land, lakes, lagoons, seas and oceans including the wildlife and sealife are natural things and beauties of a country. The climatic environment indicates the weather conditions and seasonal variations that are making the movement of people (un) comfortable as well.

The manmade structural settings refer the physical infrastructure like roads and corridors, ports and airports, buildings and bridges, canals and tunnels, transmission lines and networks. Economic infrastructure covers the fiscal and monetary institutions and systems like money market, capital market, commodity market as well as banking and financial institutions. The operational infrastructures include the systems and procedures concerning transportation, accommodation, healthcare, information and communication, entertainment, security and so on. The socio-cultural infrastructure refers the religions, cultural configurations, beliefs, norms, and values inherited in the country.

Tourism infrastructure, therefore, is the totality of structural settings and systems that are facilitating the tourism regulators, service providers and the services recipients- the tourists. An integration of the national tourism policies and strategies with the structural settings is necessary for the development of tourism in developing countries.

1.2. Tourism Development

Tourism refers the mobility of persons for the purposes of business, services, meetings, healthcare, pilgrimage, and similar other activities