**Conservation OF Culture and Tourism INTO Economy of Dhulikhel**

**Introduction**

Dhulikhel is one of Nepal's oldest cities and a popular tourist attraction in the country. Dhulikhel is in the district of Kavrepalanchowk, at the eastern end of Kathmandu Valley. Dhulikhel is an important historical trading town on the primary trade route connecting Nepal and Tibet, with a rich cultural history, breathtaking vistas of Mount Everest, and a lively diversity. Dhulikhel is currently connected to two highways, the B.P. Highway and the Aranico Highway, which connect Kodari, a Tibetan border town, with Kathmandu, Nepal's capital (Dhulikhel Municipality, 2016).

Dhulikhel, like the rest of the world, recognizes the great allure of the tourism industry. Recognizing its economic benefits, tourism serves as a channel for the transfer of resources from industrialized to developing countries. This business is a key source of hard currency and jobs, especially in a developing country like Dhulikhel, which has a high unemployment rate. Tourism, in addition to producing jobs, serves as a regional policy tool, promoting equitable resource allocation. Furthermore, in our ever-changing global environment, it helps significantly to political and social understanding by encouraging cross-cultural dialogue and international collaboration. Dhulikhel cannot afford to ignore the tremendous global changes that are reshaping the travel and tourism business.

Dhulikhel, located in the heart of Nepal, exemplifies the country's incredible diversity. It is surrounded by the magnificent Himalayas and gives a breathtaking view of snow-capped peaks. Dhulikhel has a vibrant local culture as well as a rich cultural history. It serves as a gateway to some of Nepal's most well-known attractions, including Mt. Everest, Lord Buddha's birthplace in Lumbini, and the sacred Pashupatinath Temple. The region's distinctive flora and fauna, cultural tapestry, and ease of living all add to the region's popularity as a tourist destination. Dhulikhel exemplifies Nepal's cultural, ecological, and spiritual treasures.

Tourists love the market attractions of the town. Greater expansion is permitted by the area's pleasant temperature, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, stable environment, kind and welcoming populace, and natural surroundings, which include parks, woods, lakes, rivers, and mountains in addition to other attractions.

The tourism industry in Dhulikhel is expanding. Because of its closeness to Kathmandu, visitors are welcome to stay for longer than a day.

Despite being one of the most significant economic sectors in Dhulikhel, tourism is underappreciated. There are many opportunities to increase tourism by putting on thoughtfully planned events that emphasize the significance of this outstanding cultural asset.

**1.2 Some facts about Dhulikhel**

Area of Dhulikhel Municipality: 54.62 sq.km.

Total Number of Community Forests 8.53 sq. km.

Total Number of Community Forests: 36

Altitude: 1550 m (5,085.3 ft).

Total Wards: 12 Ward

Density of population: 582 Average

Total Population: 37000

Household’s size: 4.5

Growth rate of population: 0.65

No of Households: 7040

**Climate in the City**

Climate: Subtropical

Minimum: 0 degree Celsius

Maximum: 35 degree Celsius

Average (Yearly): 1500mm

**2. Destination Overview of Dhulikhel**

Dhulikhel lies around 30 kilometers east of Kathmandu, on the path to Tibet. It is frequented by local tourists as a day or weekend excursion from Kathmandu, as well as international tourists as a day trip or on their route from Kathmandu to the Chinese border, where they participate in adventurous activities.

Dhulikhel, one of Nepal's most prominent medieval villages, serves as the administrative capital of Karvrepalanchow, the Kavre district. Dhulikhel is located at the crossroads of two major highways, the Araniko Highway, which connects Kathmandu to the northern border with China, and the BP Highway, which connects to Nepal's eastern lowlands. Located 1,550 meters above sea level, is known for its clean air, sceneries, stunning vistas, and village charm.

**3.Dhulikhel’s Tourism Assets**

Dhulikhel's cultural and tourism assets provides a snapshot of important tourism attractions, the obstacles associated with their development and/or sustainable management, and potential to further enhance assets or overcome growth constraints.

Tourism assets include distinct destinations in its own right that rely largely on geography, experiences, or human capital, as well as physical infrastructure that facilitates tourist transportation and visitor experience.

**3.1Existing tourist attractions**

Existing tourist attractions A Culture and Tourism Map and List showing existing tourist destinations is presented below:

**IMG**

**3.2.Dhulikhel Tourism Landscape**

Dhulikhel, located in the foothills of the Kathmandu Valley, is one of the most famous places in Nepal for viewing stunning Himalayan views. In clear weather, snow-capped peaks of the Himalayan ranges from Mount Langtang (7,234m) in the west to Mount Everest (8,848m) in the east can be seen. Mount Annapurna (8,091m), Mount Ganesh (7,429m), Mount Phuribichyachu (6,637m), Mount Gaurishankar (7,134m), Mount Lhotse (8,516m), and 15 more mountains may be seen from various parts of the city.

Long views of agricultural land, including terraced rice fields and wooded regions, provide excellent chances for sight-seeing, particularly between October and March, when monsoon clouds lift to reveal panoramic views of beautiful mountain ranges.

**3.3.Adventure tourism**

Dhulikhel is a popular hiking and trekking destination, as well as some mountain riding and cycling, due to its clean environment, beauty, and links to cultural places. Cycling and mountain riding, in particular, have the potential to expand in popularity.

There are also several activities in the area, such as canyoning, bungee jumping, high rope, rafting, and bird viewing.

**3.4 .Agriculture tourism**

Agriculture is the most common land use in Dhulikhel. Dhulikhel has attracted agriculture-related value-added companies like as cheese making with farm-gate retail and homestays.

Homestay Programs in Dhulikhel

**3.4.1 Bhatte Danda Homestay**: Bhatte Danda homestay is the first homestay program started in Dhulikhel. It was started with the inauguration of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 (On 14th January 2011). It was established by joining hands of the people living in this community. It is also known as the Mahila Samula Homestay (Women’s Community Homestay). The organic foods are provided to the tourists. The Tamang culture can be observed in this homestay and the tourists can learn the lifestyle and tradition of the Tamang community. The homestay also organizes hiking and trekking in and around Dhulikhel. They also manage for the river rafting in the Bhotekoshi River. (GOEC-GIDA-Next JV , 2019)

**3.4.2 Phoolbari Homestay:** Phoolbari Village is one of the villages located near Dhulikhel Municipality next to Patlekhet village. Phoolbari (Garden in Nepal) resembles the garden of different caste and culture of the people living in the village. The village lies at an altitude of 1800m above sea level. It is about 1-hour drive from Dhulikhel. The people are friendly and cooperative. The homestay program has been successful for providing services to the tourists. One can have both natural and cultural elements in this area. (U.Regimi, 2016). (GOEC-GIDA-Next JV , 2019)

**3.5 Tangible and Intangible Heritage**

Dhulikhel's constructed fabric and continuous customs indicate a robust living legacy.

Dhulikhel's living heritage is both 'intangible' (cultural practices) and 'tangible' (physical).

"Intangible" heritage is directly related to living cultures, the built environment, faith, customs, folklore, arts and handicrafts, music, and people's daily lives.

Dhulikhel is a melting pot of several communities, including Newars, Brahmins, Chhetri, Tamangs, and Dalits, whose traditions illustrate Dhulikhel's strong living cultural heritage. There is a rich and dynamic tradition of religious festivals (jatras), such as Dashain, Tihar, Gai Jatra, Bisket Jatra, and Navadurga Jatra.

**3.5.1Dhulikhel is blessed with many tangible built heritage assets including:**

**Ward 5's central "Old Town" area is distinguished by:**

Two to four-story Newari-style residences with terracotta brick (both plain and decorative varieties), mud plaster, terracotta gabled roofs, open windows and intricately carved wooden doors and windows (lintel, sill, and jamb), window shutters, lattice windows, a variety of window styles, decorative door columns on the ground floor.

Pagoda style temples, stone carved statues, shrines and hitis are found around the temples and within the streets and large central courtyards (chowk)

Intimate scaled medieval stone paved streets.

Other temples outside the old town include Shee Khandapur, Kali Temple, Gaukhureswor Mahadursthan and Hazaar Sindhi. Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of sites of heritage interest.

**3.6 Tourist accommodation**

Dhulikhel has a diverse choice of accommodation options, and new accommodation premises are the Municipality's fastest expanding business category. Accommodation options include budget hotels, luxury hotels, and rural homestays. The majority of lodging is concentrated in urban Bazar regions, and it is projected that this trend will continue.

Dhulikhel has training colleges that teach students how to run their own enterprises or work in the hospitality industry. This is a significant resource for delivering high-quality lodging.

Major Hotels and Lodges in Dhulikhel include:

* Hotel Mount View Pty Ltd, Dhulikhel
* Gaia Holiday Home, Dhulikhel
* Hotel Gaurishanker Mountain View Pty Ltd, Dhulikhel
* Dhulikhel Mountain Resort Kwawa, Dhulikhel Municipality
* Himalayan Horizon Hotel Sun and Snow Pty Ltd, Dhulikhel
* Dhulikhel Lodge Resort, Dhulikhel

**3.8 Tourist Information**

The Dhulikhel Tourist Information Centre opened in December 2017 to give information and promote the district's tourism attractions. It is on the major route that leads into the old town.

The Centre is open from October to March and seeks to keep visitors longer.

**4. Economic Impact**

Tourism revenue is expected to provide a growing part of Dhulikhel's foreign exchange revenues based on current trends. The IUDP team's fieldwork also revealed that many people work directly in hotels and restaurants, and tourism directly generates a large number of full-time jobs for locals. Tourism also contributes to the revenues of other tourist-related services, such as arts and crafts production, primary producers, and so on.

As a result, the tourist industry has the potential to significantly enhance people's living standards in Dhulikhel municipality by providing long-term job opportunities. However, earnings distribution into the Municipality's rural sections remains unrealized.

Economic development is a combination of policies, programs, or activities aimed at increasing the potential for long-term, sustainable economic growth. Dhulikhel Municipality, for example, is crucial to it.

Economic growth that creates jobs, enhances the local tax base, promotes environmental sustainability, promotes social equity, and assists individuals in living better lives.

**4.1 Major Economic Activities in Dhulikhel**

The Municipality has several very evident factors, such as market closeness and environmental circumstances that provide a competitive edge for a variety of economic sectors, as follows:

**4.1.1 Agriculture**

Agriculture is the region's most important economic activity since it offers both a living and a source of employment. The majority of people are employed in the production of cash crops such as rice, maize, and vegetables. In 2070/2071, Dhulikhel Municipality produced 42,540 tons of agricultural products on 7586 hectares of land (District Agriculture Development Office). Seasonal vegetables are cultivated year-round, while off-season vegetables are grown in irrigated greenhouses to provide markets in Dhulikhel, Bhaktapur, and Kathmandu. Cash crops such as mustard, sunflower, lentil, beans, and spices are grown alongside vegetables. Fruit harvests are produced in the region for sale in Kathmandu, but in small quantities and with significant production constraints.

**4.1.2 Forestry**

There are Sal (Shorea robusta) forest, pine (Pinus roxburghii) forest, and an intermediate zone of mixed forest in the hills of Dhulikhel zone. The background study section 'Resource' includes a list of all forests and forest-based goods. The sustainable utilization of forest resources such as medicinal plants and wood may produce significant economic value

**4.1.3 Trade and Business**

Dhulikhel has a minor commercial sector known as Dhulikhel Bazar, which houses the major banking institutions and retail establishments; however, the primary commercial center is situated in Banepa, a municipality close to Dhulikhel.

**4.1.3.1 Business and commerce**

Dhulikhel has a tiny commercial area known as Dhulikhel Bazar, which houses the major financial institutions and retail companies; nevertheless, the core commercial hub is located in Banepa, a nearby town.

**4.1.3.2 Corporations of a Large Size**

The Radha Krishna Biscuit Factory, Noodle Factory, and Cheese Factory are all major employers in Wards 5, 6, and 9.

**4.1.3.3 Small Businesses**

Production of polythene pipes, plastic printing, furniture production, and sewing services are examples of small businesses in the municipality.

**4.1.4 Transportation and Logistics**

Two of the most major national roadways link Dhulikhel. The Araniko highway connects Nepal with China, whilst the B.P highway connects the mid-hills and the terai. Dhulikhel serves as an important transportation and logistics center. Throughout the day, trucks stop at the bus stop adjacent to Sarathi Mart before returning to the roads at night. They transport building supplies such as sand and concrete from one area to another. Dhulikhel also serves as a major travel hub between Kathmandu and the Terrai area.

**4.1.4 Tourism**

Dhulikhel Municipality possesses natural, cultural, and religious attractions, which, along with its closeness to Kathmandu, has resulted in the establishment of a thriving tourism sector. The Municipality caters to domestic and international tourists by providing conference facilities and promoting education and health tourism through the Kathmandu University, Kathmandu University Hospital, and government services.

**5. Economic Impact**

According to current trends, tourist earnings will grow its part of Dhulikhel's foreign exchange revenue.

According to the IUDP team's field survey, tourism directly provides a huge number of full-time employment for local inhabitants, with many individuals employed directly in hotels and restaurants.

Tourism also has an economic impact.

Income from different supplementary services for guests, such as arts and crafts production, primary producers, and so on.

As a result, the tourist industry enhances the lives of Dhulikhel residents by giving long-term job prospects.

It has the ability to significantly improve circumstances.

However, the revenue sharing amongst municipal regions has not yet been implemented.

Municipalities help the economy by lowering municipal taxes on firms and industries with 25 or more employees.

**6.Major issue**

The major tourism development issues of Dhulikhel city are:

1. Hotel accommodation and tourist attractions are concentrated only in and around the bazaar area, and there are not enough tourist and leisure facilities outside the city center or near major tourist attractions to meet the needs of tourists.
2. Most rural and emerging areas have great potential but remain underutilized for tourism.
3. There is a critical need to safeguard and efficiently manage the development of major historical and landscape values within the municipality, which is located distant from the city core.
4. To optimize tourist experiences of intangible and tangible heritage, a more integrated strategy is required.
5. Tourist attractions are deteriorating and require long-term repair and increased accessibility.
6. Access to tourist destinations and activities is limited due to poor direction and a lack of adequate, high-quality signage.
7. Dhulikhel's branding and internet advertising as a tourist destination, including attractions, characteristics, culture, and festivals, are lacking. Some places' quality, such as accessibility, service, and presentation, might be enhanced.
8. Yes, it will benefit Dhulikhel's prestige.
9. Dhulikhel is a well-known tourist attraction.
10. A lack of direction and adequate, high-quality signage restricts access to 4,444 tourism sites and experiences.
11. Dhulikhel's lack of branding and internet advertising as a tourist destination, including locations, features, culture, and festivals. • Some places' quality, such as accessibility, service, and presentation, may be improved.
12. Yes, it will strengthen Dhulikhel's reputation.
13. Dhulikhel is a well-known tourist site.
14. The operator requires extra training.
15. It is critical to have access to drinkable water, dependable energy, and road connections.

**6. Intervention/Strategies**

Taking into account the potential and constraints in Dhulikhel Municipality, the Conservation, Culture, and tourist Development Plan is based on six primary tourist objectives:

1. Utilization of Dhulikhel's historical, social and architectural heritage
2. Utilization of the municipality's natural and scenic attractions
3. Utilization of agricultural land for agrotourism
4. Maximization of nature-based adventure tourism
5. Municipality-wide Expansion and improvement of the range of tourist accommodation in
6. Improvement and maintenance of tourism infrastructure.
7. Coordinate human resources activities to engage with the tourism industry, including marketing, and ensure action is taken.

Specific measures are taken to support these goals. Few of them are following:

**6.1 Heritage**

1. Develop a heritage strategy to prioritize your heritage efforts.
2. Building on the Heritage Survey prepared by the Technical University of Berlin and Kathmandu University, formally protect and preserve the significant heritage sites identified in Districts 5, 6 and 7 through Land Use Zones and Ordinances.
3. Establish historic preservation guidelines to help community staff and property owners make decisions about historic buildings based on best practices.
4. Establish a Heritage Advisory Committee to support heritage decision-making.
5. Establish a heritage walk in the Old City of District 5.
6. Establish and promote heritage walks including: - Ugrachandi Nala (Karnamaya) Temple - Panauti Indreswar - Nala Karmapa Buddhist Monastery - Namma Buddha Tour/Hiking Improved signage, interpretation and information about important places in Dhulikhel.
7. Promote the cultural festival in Dhulikhel and increase the number of visitors.
8. Work with local communities to develop a high-quality, accessible museum to properly archive, display and promote the heritage that is important to Dhulikhel.
9. Develop incentive programs through tax relief or heritage grant programs to encourage the preservation and regular maintenance of private heritage assets.

**6.2 Tourism for Adventure**

To optimize nature-based adventure tourism, construct and/or connect new and existing walking routes to create a series of new treks.

Create or link a network of bike paths, both on and off the road.

Conduct a feasibility study for the development of adventure tourism components such as bungee jumping, rope walks, and a cycling path to a waterfall at Devitar.

**6.4 Tourism based on agriculture**

Encourage the growth of homestays and organic agro-tourist regions in order to shift agriculture areas toward agro-based tourism.

Farming in order to lengthen guest stays in Dhulikhel and share the economic benefits of tourism with the rural parts of the Municipality.

**6.5 Tourist Facilities**

Municipalities should encourage the development of tourist accommodation by enacting active planning policies, by-laws, and land zoning to assist the building of such facilities in order to grow and improve the provision of tourist accommodation throughout the municipality.

Outside of the city center, 4,444 tourist attractions are accessible to persons of all abilities.

**The duties of the Tourism and Promoting Advancement Officer are:**

To manage programs to advance tourism within the Region.  
To work with engineering/infrastructure.  
To work with town planning/building to advocate for the improvement of visitor foundations.  
To co-ordinate the showcasing of tourism.  
To back the Dhulikhel Natural and Tourism Advancement Committee.

1. **Recommendations and Action Plan**

Dhulikhel has historically been an important natural and cultural center in Nepal. Dhulikhel, which is rich in cultural, architectural, and historical landmarks and located in a world-class scenery, has suffered from a lack of promotion to attract tourists, and possibilities to celebrate are underutilized. Local communities, particularly underprivileged populations, can be more meaningfully engaged in tourism. There is scope for concurrent infrastructure development, business mentorship, increase in accommodation, protection, and management.

The Plan consists of a range of Destinations and Actions. It Comprises:

1. Tourism Development Plan
2. List of Future Tourism Places
3. Potential Religious tours/trekking/cycling routes
4. Implementation Action Plan

**Conclusion:**

Dhulikhel's blend of culture and tourism has resulted in financial prospering while safeguarding its wealthy past. This beneficial connection attracts visitors, generating revenue for local companies and contributing to community betterment. The town's commitment to preservation ensures the authenticity of its social personality, promoting a unique encounter for visitors. In any event, it is critical to maintain a delicate balance in order to avoid over-commercialization. Dhulikhel is an example of how the merging of culture and tourism has not only safeguarded tradition but also supported long-term financial prosperity.