

Enhancement of feasibility and opportunities of ecotourism development around Jagdishpur Reservoir, Nepal

Sanjay MARASINI^{a1}

^aInstitute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

Abstract: The study on Jagdishpur Reservoir, Nepal's largest artificial lake and a key wetland, evaluates its potential as a sustainable ecotourism destination. Situated near the Lumbini World Heritage Site, the reservoir is rich in biodiversity, especially its avian population, with a Simpson diversity index of 0.73519, indicating high species diversity. In addition to bird watching, the area offers scenic lake views, cultural homestays, and proximity to significant historical and cultural sites, including Sagarhawa, Tilaurakot, and the Araurakot Asoka Pillar, enhancing its tourism appeal. Data collection included bird surveys, household and visitor questionnaires, interviews, and mapping tools. Both locals and visitors strongly support ecotourism development, seeing it as a means to improve livelihoods and foster community development. Bird watching emerged as the most preferred activity, followed by lake-related attractions and scenic beauty. Despite its potential, challenges such as inadequate tourism infrastructure, poor marketing, and limited guest management skills among locals pose barriers to growth. The study recommends capacity-building workshops, improved infrastructure, and collaboration with commercial stakeholders to enhance promotion and marketing. These efforts could transform Jagdishpur Reservoir into a sustainable ecotourism hub that benefits local communities and supports conservation initiatives.

Keywords: *Development, Diversity, Ecotourism, Jagdishpur, Perception, Reservoir*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Nepal is a landlocked country and rich in natural beauty. The country is bordering between two of the fastest-growing economies of the world- India in the east, south, and west and China in the north. Ecologically, Nepal is divided into three main regions Himalayan, Hill, and Terai. It is located between $26^{\circ} 22'$ to $30^{\circ} 27'$ north latitudes and $80^{\circ} 4'$ to $88^{\circ} 12'$ east longitudes covering an area of 1,47, 181 sq. km, accounting for 0.03 % of land areas of earth and 0.3% of Asia. The altitude ranges from 59m (Musaharniya) to 8848 meters (Mount Everest, the world's highest peak), and the climate varies from tundra to polar. The country has an average length of 885 Km from east to west and 193 Km breadth from south to north. The country's population is 29,192,480 ([CBS 2021](#)). Nepal is considered to be rich in biodiversity. Nepal is home to many wild varieties of plants and animals in addition to the scenic beauty created by various landscapes along the altitude. Nepal is rich not only in scenic beauty and diversity but also in culture. There are more than 142 ethnic groups in Nepal with more than 124 different types of languages ([CBS 2021](#)). There is unity in diversity in the country. There are different cultures, customs, festivals, and traditions which are the gift to the present generation from our ancestors. These festivals and

¹ Sent in December 2024, revised in December 2024, published in 2024, Correspondent: Sanjay MARASINI, Email: sanjay.marasini5@gmail.com