

3.4 Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Sector of Pokhara

Background

The sudden and dreadful outbreak of the pandemic of COVID-19 that started towards the end of 2019 and spread globally by the beginning of 2020 has caused an unforeseeable human and economic loss in Nepal. The Government of Nepal declared lockdown all over the country from March 24, 2020, to July 21, 2020, to minimize human and economic loss from the pandemic. Visit Nepal Year, 2020, which was announced to welcome as many as two million tourists in the country, was postponed in its early phase. Although the government had sufficiently invested in Visit Nepal Year, COVID-19 created a completely different scenario. Lockdown adversely affected road and air transportation, and as a result, it severely affected the business of hotels, restaurants, hiking, trekking, mountaineering, and other adventurous tourism. It reduced the arrival of foreign tourists by 80.8 percent in 2020, whereas comparatively it had increased by 2.1 percent in 2019 in the previous two years. Since the pandemic had serious effects on the tourism market, it also affected the production and transaction of goods and services.

During the same period, earning of foreign currency from the tourism sector declined to about seventy percent. The total number of foreign tourist arrival was 1,197,191 in 2019, whereas it decreased to 230,085 in 2020 and to 32,997 in 2021.

Compared to the previous years, it decreased by 80 percent in 2021. When passenger arrival from international flights at Tribhuvan International Airport decreased by 73 percent, the projected income by the end of 2020 was also limited to NPR 24,955,900,000, which was 70 percent less than that of the previous year. During this period, other economic activities except the basic ones came to a halt. After that, economic activities were intermittently operated due to full and partial lockdowns imposed by local governments until the end of mid-December 2020.

According to the survey report on the economic impact of COVID-19 conducted by the Economic Research Department of the Nepal Rastra Bank, in June-July 2020, 61 percent of industries and businesses were closed all over the country during the lockdown. The report mentions that 39 percent of industries and companies were operated fully or partially; they cut down the number of workers by one-fourth; they also cut down the salaries of workers by 18.2 percent; and production and transaction of 96.7 percent of industries and businesses by 73.8 percent. The fact that most industries and businesses were fully closed during lockdown shows that the outbreak of COVID-19 had a profound impact on the economy. Nepalese economy shrank by 2.1 percent in the fiscal year 2019/20 due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

COVID-19 declined the prospects of mining and excavation, production, hotel and restaurant, transportation, storage, communication, etc. The tourism sector was the most affected sector during the eight-month-long lockdown. World Bank (2020) report entitled “COVID-19 and Tourism in South Asia: Opportunities for Sustainable Regional Outcomes” states that COVID-19 has affected about 47.7 million employment of tourism sector of South Asia, and it includes some informal sectors in which women and vulnerable communities are involved. It is estimated that the GDP of the tourism sector will decrease by more than fifty million US dollars. It mentions that governments have already started emergency programs to protect small and middle-scale industries and save employment. The report remarks that South Asian countries should consider the tourism sector strategically while planning to evade the crisis and take this situation as an opportunity to reform the tourism industry while implementing the policies.

The tourism sector has been highly affected due to restrictions imposed internationally on the mobility of tourists after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic curtailed the human rights of workers in the tourism sector and their dependent families, mainly their right to free health service, right to employment, right to education, right to free mobility, right to trade and business, and other economic rights, etc.

This study report, conducted by Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) for Human Rights Yearbook 2022, presents the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment and livelihood of workers employed in the tourism industry in Pokhara city, which is one of the major tourist destinations of the country.

This study covers the situation of the workers, who were employed in the hotel and restaurant business, and who have lost their employment after the out-

break of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has had an immense impact on their education, health, food, and other fundamental economic rights. Besides, this study also covers the situation and status of the dependents on them. This study is expected to play an important role in identifying the position, identity, and problems of dependents on the tourism sector; incorporate and address their issues in plans, policies, and programs of the state.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to know the situation of workers directly involved in the tourism industry and their dependents after they lost their employment during the post-COVID period and recommend to the stakeholders to guarantee their rights. Other objectives are the following:

1. To make public the situation of workers of the tourism sector of Pokhara city and dependents on them,
2. To analyze the efforts made by the government and tourism-related stakeholders to guarantee security and protection of the workers during this period,
3. To lobby the concerned authorities to implement the recommendations of this study findings,
4. To suggest suitable suggestions for the revival of the tourism industry and business.

Research Methodology

Data and information about the study have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data sources include necessary data and information that have been collected from workers, who have lost their jobs in the tourism sector, entrepreneurs of the tourism sector, leaders, and representatives of tourism-related organizations through questionnaire surveys. Further, information has also been collected from discussions with the workers' organizations and

other stakeholders. Articles and news published in different media after the outbreak of COVID-19 have been taken as secondary data. Similarly, the COVID report published daily in INSEC online has also been taken as secondary data.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the workers involved in the tourism sector of Pokhara. Although the tourism sector of Pokhara is vast, this study has covered a limited area. It is mainly limited to situation study of the implementation of policies, programs, and commitments of provincial and local governments to minimize the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and livelihood of workers of the tourism sector of Pokhara. The study focuses on their return to the job after immunization against COVID-19. Besides, the study is limited to the problems faced by the workers of the tourism sector of Pokhara after they lost their jobs and the violation of economic, social, and cultural rights caused by lockdown during COVID-19.

Sample Collection for the Study Survey

The tourism businesses located at Pokhara city of Kaski district have been divided into the following five groups as per the nature of these businesses to collect primary data for the study:

1. Hotel and resort
2. Restaurant and Bar, c) Paragliding companies
3. Workers employed in trekking agencies/businesses
4. Boating business

Workers Employed in Hotels and Resorts

As per the information provided by the Hotel Association of Nepal, Gandaki Province Committee, the total number of tourist standard hotels in Pokhara Metropolitan City is seven hundred. Five hundred hotels have their own buildings,

whereas two hundred hotels are operated in rented buildings. It is estimated that such a standard of hotels needs two workers per room, which is equals to 12,928 workers that are required every day. (Hotel Association of Nepal, 2020). The Association mentions that this number has dwindled although no accurate data is available.

Restaurants and Bars

There are one hundred standard tourist restaurants and bars in Pokhara city. This number also includes *Dohari* and dance bars that provide meals and entertainment at Lakeside. According to the Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal (REBAN), by the end of 2019, almost one thousand and five hundred workers and employees were involved in these restaurants and bars with a ratio of fifteen persons per restaurant. Two thousand workers, including managers, waiters, cooks, entertainment artists, cleaners, and security guards, were directly or indirectly employed in these one hundred restaurants and bars. (Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal, 2020).

Trekking Business and Services

By the end of 2020, two hundred and twelve trekking entrepreneur agencies have been registered in Tourism Office, Pokhara, although exact data is not available at present. According to Tourism Office, Pokhara, the trekking business has created direct permanent employment for 1,272 people, whereas indirect employment is twice the figure. This business organizes three-day to twenty-five-day trekking packages in which trekking guides, porters, and managers are employed. Since this business mainly operates in the Himalayan region, it creates employment for small-scale hotels located in the area. Rather than domestic tourists, foreign tourists are more interested in this sector. This business, which had been seriously devastated after the 2015 earthquake and following the Indian

S.N.	Sector	Number of Businesses	Number of People Employed
1	Hotel and Resort	700	12,298
2	Restaurant and Bar (Night life Business)	100	2,000
3	Paragliding	65	1,000
4	Trekking Business	159	1,272
5	Boating Business Entrepreneurs	767	350
Total		1,791	16,920

blockade, had just got its momentum, but it was again severely affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. Generally, the Autumn and Spring seasons are good times for the trekking business. As per the data made available by the Trekking Agent Association of Nepal, Gandaki Province Office, there is an unnatural trend of the growth of the trekking business. Based on the transaction of 2019, there is an average of NPR 63,875 transactions per day. But the transaction of trekking business had decreased by almost NPR 52,273,972 (Trekking Agency of Nepal, 2020).

Paragliding

Nepal Air Sports Organization is the Association of companies that provide paragliding and ultralight services. Sixty paragliding companies have been registered in Pokhara, and fifty-seven out of them are in operation for business, whereas three companies are working as training institutes. A pilot can fly a maximum of three flights a day. Air sports generally depend on the weather. They fully operate for six months a year and do good business. On average, 2.5 people have been employed as a paraglider. Therefore, fifteen people on average are employed in a company with six paragliders. Based on it, a total of 975 people are estimated to have been employed in this sector.

Boating Business

Phewa Lake is one of the significant destinations for domestic as well as foreign tourists. Boating service is commercially provided on Phewa, Begnas, and Rupa lakes. There are seven hundred and sixty-seven commercial boats, out of which seven hundred and twenty-six are wooden boats, whereas the remaining forty-one are pilot boats, waiting for tourists at eight different ports. Out of the two boats have been separated for emergency rescue. Besides, the families of the fishermen have kept eighty boats for fishing. Four hundred fifty-five families are involved in this business, and 350 people are directly employed in it (Phewa Lake Boating Business Entrepreneurs' Organization, 2020).

The data provided by different related organizations where people are permanently or temporarily employed in the tourism sector are presented in the above table1.

Facts Data

Forty percent of foreign tourists who come to Nepal visit Gandaki Province. Almost one million domestic and foreign tourists are estimated to visit Gandaki Province annually, whereas their average stay in Gandaki Province is estimated to be five days. Foreign tour-

ists spend fifty-four US dollars on average, whereas domestic tourists' average spending is five thousand rupees. The tourism sector has created fifteen percent of employment generated in the province. Out of six hundred and six thousand jobs generated in the province, almost ninety thousand have been generated by the tourism sector (Labour Force Survey, 2019). And it is estimated to have a ten percent contribution to the total GDP of the province (First Five-Year Plan, Policy and Plan, Gandaki Province). During the fiscal year 2018/19 (2075/76 BS), the total national GDP of hotels and restaurants was NPR 56,270,000,000 (fifty-six billion, two hundred seventy million) rupees, out of which Gandaki Province contributed 19.6 percent, that is, 11,150,000,000 (eleven billion, one hundred fifty million) rupees (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

After the imposition of lockdown that started from the Eleventh of Chaitra, 2076, tourism entrepreneurs, employees, and daily wage workers suffered the most. As per the data of the Hotel Association of Nepal, 700 entrepreneurs are associated with the hotel and resort business. A total of 12,298 people have been employed in this sector. Similarly, 100 entrepreneurs are associated with restaurant and bar business, where almost 2000 people are directly employed. In totality, 21000 thousand people are directly employed in the tourism sector of Pokhara city. 1000 people are employed in 65 paragliding companies, whereas 1,272 people are directly employed in one 159 trekking agencies.

The provincial government has announced different programs to uplift the tourism sector that has been devastated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tourism Revival Program

As per the annual policies and programs prepared by the Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers, Gan-

daki Province, tourism policy and tourism masterplan have been formulated and prepared to develop the tourism sector sustainably. It has formulated the policy of generating employment, increasing income, poverty alleviation, agriculture, and industrial production growth, and creating a strong economy by operating tourism revival and promotion programs with a long-term vision of sustainable tourism development and forming the base of the prosperity of the province.

This policy and program aims to develop Gandaki Province as a tourist hub and Pokhara as touristic capital by developing tourism infrastructures such as tourist destinations, trekking routes, hotels and resorts, homestays, etc., by continuing the tourism promotion campaign of the province government.

World Tourism Day, 2021

The World Tourism Day is celebrated every year on September 27. World Tourism Association had set the slogan "Tourism for Inclusive Growth" in 2021. Accordingly, Gandaki Province also celebrated World Tourism Day, 2021 by inviting ambassadors of different countries to Nepal and heads of development partner organizations to the province to spread a good message that Nepal is open and safe for foreign tourists to revive the tourism sector of Gandaki Province that had been shattered by the effect of a first and second wave of COVID-19. Ambassadors and heads of development partner organizations were welcomed with different programs. They were taken to a two-day visit to other tourist places of Gandaki Province, including Pokhara. The program was successfully conducted in collaboration and coordination with the government of Gandaki Province, Nepal Tourism Board, Pokhara Metropolitan City, and tourism-related entrepreneurs.

Management of Business Life Protection Fund

Gandaki Province has managed

a business life protection fund. The government has established a fund of one billion rupees in the fiscal year 2020/21 to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism, transportation, agriculture, entrepreneurship, service sector, etc. Seven months after establishing the fund, an agreement was signed between Gandaki Province and Nepal Rastra Bank, Pokhara Office. There was the provision of providing soft loans through the fund from fifty thousand rupees to one point five million rupees considering the nature of business. The loan can be taken from eighteen branches of different “A” grade banks to conduct a transaction in local level governments of Gandaki Province. The office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers will deposit twenty percent of the fund in advance in Nepal Rastra Bank through a recoupment account.

For the fund’s operation, “Business Life Protection Fund Operation Procedures, 2020 had also been prepared. Affected areas have been categorized in the procedure:

1. Small scale and cottage industry/business loan: from one hundred thousand up to one point five million rupees considering the type and scale of business,
2. Small Scale Tourism Business Loan: from one hundred thousand up to one point five million rupees considering the type and scale of business,
3. Small Scale Transportation Business Loan: fifty thousand up to one million rupees considering the type and scale of business,
4. Small Scale Service Business Loan: fifty thousand up to one million rupees considering the type and scale of business.

Case Study 1

Devaki Nepali (name withheld), working in a *Dohori* Bar (Dohori is a folk duet song sung by two groups countering each other), a resident of Shukla

Gandaki-10, Tanahun, and living at Pokhara-metropolitan-5, Malepatan, has been involved in the nightlife business of Lakeside. She earns NPR 7,500 per month and supports the education of her children; one of her children studies in grade 9 and the other in grade 10. Being involved in the tourism sector of Pokhara, she had also opened a small restaurant. But she faced a dire situation due to the lockdown imposed by the governments after the outbreak of COVID-19. She did not have any other source of income except for working in the bar during that time, and therefore, she was compelled to sell vegetables to make an everyday living during the period of COVID-19. Her daily income during that period was limited up to three hundred rupees.

There was a fear of COVID transmission; her family was facing the problem of food; her children were deprived of getting education through the virtual system (online class) conducted by the schools during lockdown because they had neither mobile nor laptops, they had neither the Internet nor money to buy necessary gadgets. Due to the lack of money, her daughter could not get quick treatment when she was ill. The private hospital refused to treat her, so her daughter was sent to a faraway government hospital after arranging money. She had to go to the village to live during that time due to her inability to pay the rent of the room. She even had to take a loan to bear the everyday expenses of her family when she returned to her business in Pokhara after a year. She has not been able to pay off that loan to date.

She said that she did not get any rent waiver during the pandemic, and her house owner would demand to pay the rent on the very first of the month. He would sometimes threaten her to leave the rented rooms if they failed to pay the rent on time. She got an opportunity to work in the same place where she had to work after getting a vaccination against COVID-19. But the recurring waves of COV-

ID-19 have not allowed her to work without any anxiety. She is even deprived of getting a minimum salary. She says that she has been facing economic, physical, and psychological problems for two years, although the situation seems normal from the outside. She reveals that she is and psychologically fragile. Now also she does not get salary on time. She complains that no government agencies helped her when she faced many problems.

Case Study 2

Sumana Shrestha (name withheld), a resident of Kathmandu and living in Pokhara, has been working in a spa located at Lakeside for five years. She is unmarried and has got a sister living together in a rented room. Her sister is also temporarily working in a hospital. She gets NPR 12,000 as salary. During the first wave of COVID-19, she was forced to leave her job and the office she was working also had to be shut down. Her house owner waived her rent for a month, but she had to return to Kathmandu when the lockdown was prolonged. During the same period, she and her father tested COVID positive and were admitted to Man Mohan Hospital located in Kathmandu for further treatment. Due to not having health insurance, she had to ask her family for money for her treatment. She was discharged from the hospital after an extended stay of the hospital, but it took her a long time to be physically and mentally well. "On the one hand," she said, "my father was sick, on the other hand, I also was ill. How could I bear the expenses? So, I had to take a loan of twenty thousand rupees. I am worried about how I can pay the loan since I have no job. The income of my sister was spent in lockdown." She mentioned that she did not get any support from any authority or agency. Although she recovered from COVID infection, she was psychologically disturbed. She practiced yoga and meditation to get rid of this problem. Although she is studying at a college in Pokhara,

she has not been able to continue her study. When the lockdown was lifted, she returned to Pokhara, but her previous office was closed. So, she was forced to seek a new job. Because she had an experience of working in a spa, she got a job of her skill, but she was about to leave that job also during the second wave of COVID-19. Now she is working on a low salary. The spa owner complains that since there is no tourist, he cannot pay her a good salary. She expresses her dissatisfaction and unhappiness that the state has done nothing for the workers like her and others from Pokhara in general. However, she is happy that she has got regular income source, though sparse. She says, "But it seems like we cannot work in the spa for a long time."

Case Study 3

Sabin Bhulum (name withheld), resident of Gimli, Lalitpur and currently living at Dam side in Pokhara for ten years, sails boat to earn a living. It has been five years since he started this profession. His earning is from ten thousand to fifteen thousand a month. He has no other source of income and has to support a family of six, including his parents. He had to return to his village during the lockdown. He was compelled to spend the sparse saving of his previous earnings during that period. He said that the state did not help them during the lockdown. He started farming for his bearing the expenses. It took two years for him to return to his previous profession. He had to pay the rent although they did not live there for two years. He said that he had to take a loan to pay the rent. However, he has not been able to fully pay it.

Case Study 4

Anish Kafle, (name withheld), a resident of Tanahun and currently living in Pokhara-Metropolitan City-5, has been working in the trekking business for four years. As soon as the business season of mountain trekking started then the lock-

down was imposed, which badly affected his economic condition. He could not earn a penny in that season although it was rather easy for him because of his other family members being involved in other businesses. The lockdown was lifted after a long time and the tourism business ran smoothly as earlier, but he faced mental pressure. He tried to return to his previous job, but due to not being immunized against Coronavirus, it took him a long time to return to his last job. Besides, arrival of tourists also diminished. As per the advice of his family, he tried to take up another work, but he could not become successful. He said that he had lost his hope of a better job and attractive salary in this profession. Different waves of the COVID-19 pandemic have brought more uncertainty to this business. He mentioned that he was thinking of quitting this sector due to the government's indifference to revive this sector, although the country is well known worldwide through this sector.

Views of the Stakeholders

Hari Sharma, Chairperson of Hotel Association of Western Region

The tourism sector is the most affected sector among others due to COVID-19. A large number of workers employed in this sector have been deserted. Besides, hotel entrepreneurs have also been displaced from this profession. To make the tourism sector vibrant and lively, governments and stakeholders should make concrete plans to support the workers in their livelihood. Otherwise, there will be many problems in this sector even after the pandemic is over. It is going to be extremely hard for the business to continue unless the problems of workers are duly addressed in time. Many workers have been deserted in the last two years because the rights to education, health, and easy and free life of dependent children were not guaranteed. It is a challenge to make them return to this profession and fulfill the scarcity of hu-

man resources. For this, entrepreneurs, governments, and stakeholders should collectively make plans and implement them effectively.

As per the data of the Hotel Association of Nepal, Gandaki Province, fifteen thousand workers are dependent on the hotel business in Pokhara. But forty-five thousand workers are employed in the tourism sector of Pokhara. At present, the business should operate by giving at least minimum subsistence salary and wage to the workers. The government could neither provide financial compensation nor entrepreneurs could get support and grants from the finance sector. Due to this, the problem has been exacerbated. Therefore, workers were forced to be displaced from the tourism business. Some companies are trying their best of their capacity to face this situation. But not all companies and enterprises can do that. Many workers are compelled to work as part-time wage laborers due to the inability of the finance sector to provide loans to companies that are unable to pay salaries and facilities to workers. It is urgently necessary for the government to make plans and programs prioritizing tourism and transportation sectors.

Biplav Paudel, Member, Nepal Tourism Board

The tourism sector is a sensitive sector that such pandemics and calamities hit first. Tourism-related businesses such as hotels, restaurants, trekking entrepreneurs, adventurous tourism, tourism sports, etc., have directly suffered. There is an investment of more than two hundred billion rupees in the tourism sector of Pokhara alone. Due to the desertion of workers after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a shortage of workers in this sector. Those entrepreneurs, who can pay their workers, have paid at least minimum salary and other facilities to them, but not all entrepreneurs could do this to their workers. Workers also will undoubtedly be eased

if governments could support tourism entrepreneurs by managing financial loans during the period of lockdown. It is essential to realize that the government should protect and support entrepreneurs. It is not that the government has done nothing, but it has not been able to do as much as it should have done. The state should make separate plans for different tourism-related sectors such as hotels, restaurants, trekking, tours, etc. Only then can this sector be revived. This sector has been losing billions in the last two years. Even if everything goes normal, it seems to take four to five years to revive this sector. Workers have abandoned the tourism profession and have taken up other alternative jobs. It is also necessary to increase their work efficiency to get them back to this profession. It takes a long time to produce skilled human resources. Therefore, the governments and entrepreneurs should collectively make a common work plan.

Laxman Baral, Chairperson, Restaurant and Bar Association, Pokhara

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers have abandoned the tourism profession. It is estimated that almost four thousand five hundred workers were employed in one hundred restaurants and bars associated with us before the pandemic. But many workers have now escaped to other professions. It has not been easy to return to the previous situation even if the situation has slightly improved. It is necessary for the governments to prioritize the tourism sector and make policies to support this sector. The condition of workers and their dependents cannot be expected to be easy-going when investors and entrepreneurs are not safe at present. Most workers have opted for alternative professions after they deserted from the tourism sector. Most of them are employed as daily wage laborers in building construction companies, brick factories, etc. It is hard

for them to return to the tourism profession. Therefore, the shortage of skilled human resources will be a serious problem in the tourism sector even if the situation improves.

Analysis of the Study

1. Working Period

Participants or respondents of this study were involved in the tourism profession from one year to thirty-five years. Most of the workers employed in restaurants were in that profession between one year to three years, whereas those in the boating business were involved in that business for five years and more.

2. Status of Tourism-related Organizations and Businesses during Lockdown

The tourism business, in which all of the respondents were involved, was closed during the period of lockdown imposed from July 21, 2020 (Chaitra 11, 2076 BS). None of the sectors, except a handful of large-scale hotels that paid cooks and waiters only, could pay salary and wages to their workers. Those working in hotels and resorts and in permanent posts are found to have been paid twenty percent of their salary, and they were also included in social security trust by the institutes.

3. Duration Taken to the Revive the Profession post Lockdown

All of the respondents had revealed that when the lockdown was lifted, they returned to their profession after being vaccinated against the pandemic. For everyone to get the vaccination, it took almost a year.

4. Condition of Family After Losing Job

The study shows that the condition of families of seventy-six percent of the respondents after the loss of their job was not good.

5. *Alternative Source of Income*

The study shows that sixty-eight percent of the respondents do not have an alternative income source.

6. *Status of Transfer*

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents had either changed their profession or moved to their village.

7. *Restoration in the Same Institute/Office After the Lockdown*

Eighty-four percent of the respondents have returned to the same office/institute after the lockdown was lifted.

8. *Impact on Education, Health and Food of Dependent Children*

As shown in the study, the impact of COVID-19 and aftermath lockdown was more profound in the education of dependent children because they did not have adequate access to online and alternative means of education. The study also reveals that the consumption of quality food of dependent children was highly affected. The study shows that the parents could not provide their children with quality and balanced nutrition due to a sharp decrease in their income resources.

9. *Loan to Meet Regular Expenses During the Lockdown*

The study reveals that sixty-four percent of the respondents have taken a loan to meet regular expenses during the lockdown. Out of them, sixteen percent have paid their loan.

10. *Problems Faced After Leaving Business/Job*

Eighty-four percent of the respondents are found to have faced mental problems after they lost jobs, or they left their business. And they have been facing economic problems after that.

11. *Support Provided by Organizations during the Pandemic*

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said that they did not get any help and support from any organization during the pandemic.

12. *Support Provided by the Governments during the Pandemic*

Eighty-four percent of the respondents said that they did not get help and support from the governments during the pandemic.

13. *Decrease in Salary and Income after the Pandemic*

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said that there was a sharp decrease in their salary and income after the pandemic. They think that their employment is still uncertain because the business did not fully operate; the tourism sector is the most hit sector by the pandemic, the arrival of tourists has drastically dwindled, and different waves of the pandemic have occurred one after another.

Conclusion

- ▶ Those involved in the tourism sector have faced mental problems due to losing their jobs after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Dependent children of the workers who have lost their jobs have been deprived of their right to education.
- ▶ Those employed in this sector did not get help and support from government agencies.
- ▶ They have not got a guarantee of their jobs until the COVID-19 pandemic remains.
- ▶ During the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the workers employed in the tourism sector, permanently or temporarily, have lost their jobs due to a decrease in the number of tourists.

- ▶ Their monthly income has decreased and become irregular even if they were restored to their jobs.

Recommendations

- ▶ The government should make pre-plans and preparation to tackle such calamities and pandemics in the future.
- ▶ Although the tourism sector has started to revive, it is necessary to implement different programs for revival and support those involved in this sector.
- ▶ Necessary policies and workplans regarding job or business security and protection of entrepreneurs and workers involved in this sector should be prepared and effectively implemented.
- ▶ It is necessary to establish an emergency relief fund for the workers.
- ▶ Since Nepal is a country to attracts tourists, it is necessary to prioritize the tourism sector.

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