

# People, Resource and Livelihood in the Trans-Himalayan Region: A Case Study of Upper Mustang, Nepal

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## Abstract

*Upper Mustang is occupied 2,567 sq. of land of northern Mustang with distinct biophysical and socio-economic specificities. The area is characterized by the high altitude, cold climate, semi-desert environment and rain shadow of Dhaulagiri and Anapurna Himal. Livestock and tourism are potential development opportunities in the region. Less than one percent of the total area of upper Mustang is occupied by agriculture but it is possible only in the summer season. Single cropping pattern, except Chhusang VDC of south, is basic characteristic of agriculture. Alcoholism, livestock feeding and poor and traditional processing are key causes of the food deficiency. Small business and temporarily migration are coping strategies of the local community during the food shortage. Apple and Seabuckthorn are potential fruits. Production, processing, market and transportation are core constraints for the development and promotion of agriculture and fruit in the region. About 42% area of the region has occupied by pastureland. But the quality of pastureland has been decreasing due to the increasing livestock density and poor management of pasturelands. Increasing tourist's interest in the region has increased the people's expectation; but it is handled by the relatively richer people of the region. Remoteness, seasonal migration, seasonality of agriculture, mass illiteracy, high expectation and low participation of people in the development activities, encroachment of historic walled city are core development issues of the region.*

**Key Words:** *Upper Mustang, Livelihood, Migration, Development Potential, Tourism, Agriculture.*

## Introduction

The concern for the environment has grown rapidly since the early 1970s. During 1970s many national parks and conservation areas were established all over the world. Brundtland report "Our Common Future" in 1987 was more concerned about the sustainable development and environmental management in the local, regional, national and international levels. Sustainable

development is a multi-dimensional concept covering socio-economic and environmental aspects of the development through team effort, partnership between the various arms of government and community including the private sectors, based on trust, equity and integrating diversity.

Nepal started initiative to protect unique biodiversity since 1973 by promulgating the National Park and Wildlife Conservation

Act 1972 (2029 B.S). At present, Nepal has 10 national parks, 3 wildlife reserves, 6 conservation areas, 1 hunting reserve and 9 Ramsar sites and 12 buffer zone covering 23.46% land of the country (www.dnpwc.gov.np, www.forestrynepal.org). Experiences have shown that the sustainable development of the country will not be possible without the establishment of protected areas through participation of the local people living around them. Because of this, Nepal introduced participatory management concept for the environment conservation and development.

Upper Mustang region, as a part of Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), is a (semi) arid and semi-restricted conservation area of Nepal with rich physical and cultural diversity, and Lo Manthang is the heart of the region (fig.1). The world famous travel guide 'Lonely Planet' has included Upper Mustang in the third position among the world's ten best tourism destination sites for 2013 (The Himalayan Times, 2013-5-11). In this background, this paper tries to discuss the development potentials and livelihood opportunities of the local people living in the region, focusing agriculture, livestock and tourism.

### **Objectives of this Study**

The general objective of this paper is to trace out the people's adaptation in the Upper Mustang Region. The specific objectives are;

- to assess the development potential and opportunities in upper Mustang, and
- to discuss the livelihood strategies and people's adaptation in the region.

### **Methodology**

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Data were collected through:

- Dialogue and discussion with the local people, ACAP and Conservation Area Management Committee (CAMC) representatives and saving and Credit Group [s] members of the region).
- Focus group discussion particularly with women and Dalits.
- Case studies with tourists and successful entrepreneurs.

The primary data were collected from each settlement located along the main routes between Kagbeni to Nyamdok and Nifuk regarding the existing situation and possible enterprises development in an area. The discussion was concentrated in the development potential, constraints and opportunities in the region and sources of livelihoods of the local communities in the region.

The location of interaction, interview and discussion were selected randomly from the settlements developed along Kagbeni to Nyamdok route. (See Figure 1).

The secondary information was collected from the concerned government line agencies. Interaction with the staff of the line agencies had also been conducted before discussion with the local people. District Agriculture Development Office (DADO), District Livestock Office (DLO), District Development Committee (DDC)/ Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP), ACAP, District Women Development Office (DWDO), District

Cottage Industry had been consulted before discussing with community people and resource persons. Relevant publication [s] and their existing and proposed activities for the development of upper Mustang area had

also been reviewed. ACAP/National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) (then King Mahendra Trust for Natural Conservation (KMTNC) had also been consulted for the information and related publication.

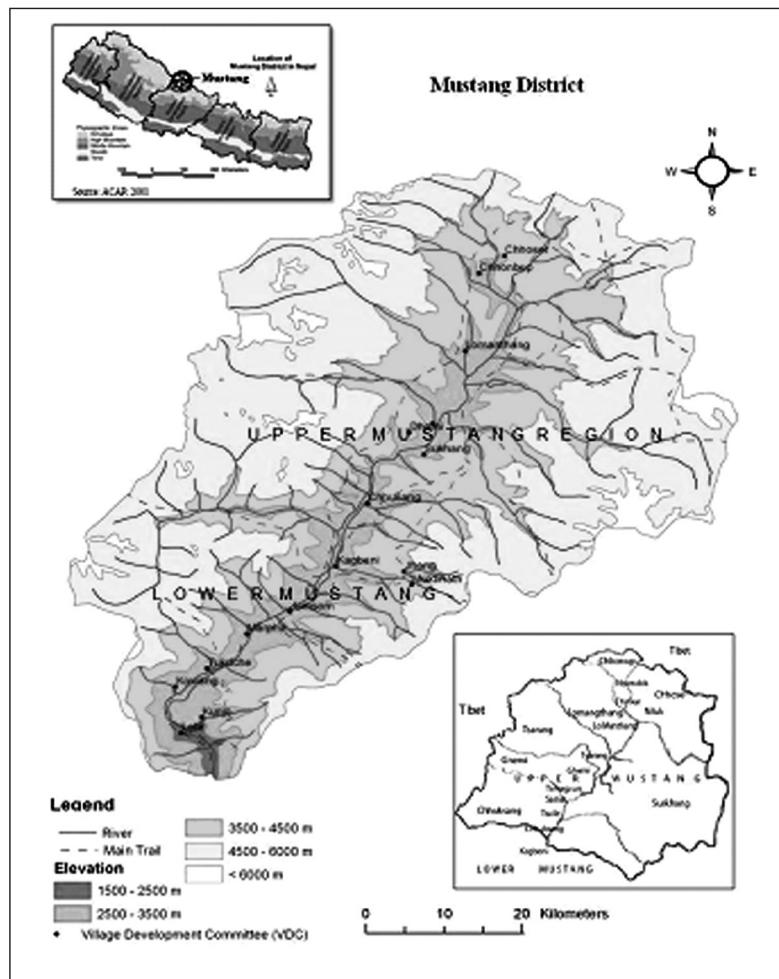


Fig. 1: Location of Upper Mustang Region

## Geo-Historical Setting of the Region

Upper region is located in 28°47'39" North to 29° 19'54" North latitude and 83° 28' 56" East to 84° 15' 16" East longitude of Nepal and has occupied 2,567 sq. km of the northern Mustang. The area is characterized by the high altitude, cold climate, semi-desert environment and rain shadow of Dhaulagiri and Anapurna Himal.

Upper Mustang is a [semi] restricted conservation area of Nepal and has rich in the physical and cultural diversity. Lo Tsho Dyun (also called Lochhoden Area-see ICIMOD, 2005.10) referred to the area above Kagbeni includes Chhusang, Ghami, Charang, Lo Manthang, Surkhang, Chhonhup and Chhoser Villages of Trans Himalayan region reflected to the medieval "Seven Districts of Lo" contain 33 settlements with 3,834 population and 1,104 household in 2011 (CBS, 2011). Lo Tsho Dyun is also known as 'Mustang' originated from the word "Lo Manthang", which means the "plain of aspiration" (Tulachan, 2001).

Lo Manthang is quite popular in this region due to its historical, cultural and political centrality and was popular for salt route between Tibet and India in between 1400 and 1600 AD (Wegner, Nina, n.d). Lo Manthang is the capital with a historical walled city under the regime of the Mustangi Raja Jigme Parbal Bista, 22nd successor of the king Ame Pal. Ame Pal was the founder of Mustang. After the unification of the kingdom, Lo remained autonomous (kingdom) in their internal affairs. After the democratic movement in 1951 the district has come under the jurisdiction of Nepal and the foreign tourists were completely

banned to enter the region due to conflict between China and Tibet. Lo was a popular site for the (Khompa) guerilla movement over the Tibet. Consequently, the Nepal Government has declared Mustang as a restricted area. Since 1970, after the end of the Khompa movement, the district mainly lower Mustang has been open for the tourists (ACAP, 2003). However, the government has made amendment in the prevailing rules and regulations so that the tourists get permission the region and at the same time people have been mobilized for the conservation and development of the region.

The region is rich in bio- physical diversity including semi arid topography and a distinct and seemingly weird physical features that some people have even been tempted to call it to have been possessing a 'lunar landscape'. It is also very much renowned as the habitat of some globally recognized wild species like Snow Leopard, Tibetan Argali, Kyang, and Blue Sheep. It is estimated that there are more than 200 plant species, 28 mammals, 2 amphibians, 63 birds and 2 reptiles (KMTNC, 2002).

Normally 5-10 degree Celsius temperature is recorded during the winter in the daytime. Mud and stone-mud houses are seen in the region due to lack and expensive timber. Even if there would be some rainfall, the area would suffer from the potential natural havoc like occasional landslides, erosion, slum and other forms of mass wasting because of the fragile landscapes. Slippery surface, frequent mass movement and other kinds of surface disaster changes the region into an 'isolated platform'. The major [local] trails in the

region become extremely dangerous and relatively impossible for the pack animals and people during the rains.

## **Development Potentials and Opportunities**

### *Agriculture*

About one percent area of upper Mustang has been occupied by agriculture. Due to distinct environmental specificities with their own social and economic background, single cropping system, except two at the lower areas of the region having potentiality of green vegetables and cereal crops, are basic features of agriculture.

The region has potential for the fresh vegetables and demand of such vegetables have been growing steadily due to the increasing tourist flow and the movement of local people in the region, which has brought significance changes in the food habits of the local people. ACAP's community oriented development activities have also been encouraged especially after 2000 AD through training and awareness to the local farmers by providing small technical and financial assistants. Increasing tourist flow in the region, enough water sources for irrigation, increasing people's expectation in the tourism and related income generation activities, changing food habits and high potential of the local market; the area has experienced high potentiality of the green and fresh vegetables. Potato, cabbage, cauliflower, onion, carrot, radish, beans, garlic, tomato and green leaves are increasing in popularity within the community in recent years. But due to the short growing periods and the cold climate, more patient and

careful farming practices are required in this field. Chhusang, Tsaile, Dhyagar, Ghami, Gheling, Charang, Marang, Lo Manthang, Thinkar, Dhi and Surkhang are potential settlements for the vegetable farming. In contrast, none of the above villages have vegetable farming practiced for any additional income generation. They grew potatoes for their own consumption. Some people now have grown fresh vegetables in their land in order to feed the tourists and they have been found to be highly successful and appreciated.

But fresh vegetable farming in the region is not easy. Various obstacles including environmental, social and economic ones have been found to have been hampering their efforts. Harsh climatic condition obviously has a negative role to play and the cultivation of the fresh vegetables is not possible in winter. Even though, there is enough source of water for irrigation, the irrigation is poor practiced. The area has only one local market e.g. Lo Mangthang, for the local people who do not have market management and channel networks. Lack of collection centers, responsible authority or the institution, revolving shops, suitable price level, transportation and storage are common problems found in the region. The important obstacle is the low level of training and awareness programmes for the income generation activities among the local farmers. Therefore, local people need to be encouraged through training and material supports and cooperation for the fresh vegetable farming. UMBCP has encouraged the local people for green vegetable farming by providing suitable technical and financial support, like green house and farm materials.

Wheat, Uwa, barley and buckwheat are major cereal crops of the region. Effects of seasonality have been perceived in the sowing and harvesting of such crops in the region due to weather uncertainty. Chhusang, Tsaile, Dhyagar, Ghami, Dhakmar, Dhi, Lo Manthang, Surkhang and Thinkar are major pockets for the production of the cereal crops. Wheat, barley, buckwheat and even oilseeds are sown in the land on March and April and harvested in the months of June, July and August in upper areas (Lo Manthang) whilst the sowing of such crops will be done in November and December and harvested in June and July at lower area (Chhusang). Wheat, and barley are winter crops and bean, maize, potato are summer crops at Chhusang and Tsaile while such cereal crops are found in summer in above area. Therefore, two different seasons of agriculture has been identified in upper Mustang region. Low precipitation, high rate of evaporation, dryness and inadequate irrigation facilities, traditional processing practices (i.e. Pani Ghatta) and lack of mills and modern processing industries are common obstacles for the production of cereal crops in the region.

About 20% cereal crops have been used to make alcohol; Jand and Raksi. It has been estimated that about 26% of the total cereal crops have been used to feed the livestock in the district in year 2057/58 BS. Processing loss and post harvesting losses are recorded as other causes of the food shortage in the district (DADO, 2058/59).

## **Fruits**

Apple and Seabuckthrong are potential fruits in the region. Apple at the lower areas and Seabuckthrong at the upper areas of the region are getting popular in the recent years. Peas, Apricot (Khurpani) and Aru-bakhada are other potential fruits of the region but have less significance. Chhusang, Tsaile, Dhyagar and Tetang of Chhusang VDC are potential villages for apple but beyond that point, production of apple has been decreased due to the severe cold and high altitude. It was estimated that about 18,000 to 24,000 Kg. apples which are supposed to be the loads of 300 to 400 mules (Khachhads) are exported to Beni of Myagdi District in 2002 from Chhusang VDC (Dahal and Dhakal, 2003).

Seabuckthorng (local name: Tora or Chichi), a kind of wild fruit used to make juice in the local villages, which is potential at Dhakmar, Ghami, Charang, Marang and Lo Manthang villages. In 2002, Dhakmar village had made 180 liters juice of seabuckthorn and sold at Rs. 80 per liter at the local market (Dahal and Dhakal, 2003). Seabuckthron juice making training was also conducted at Lo Manthang and Dhakmar (Ghami VDC) to selected 30 women of these villages according to the programme designed by ACAP/UMBCP in order to share people's experiences and maintain relations between natural resources, tourism and income generation activities.

Longer distance of market, poor management system, inadequate transportation, absence of collection centers, lack of training to local farmers regarding seeds and diseases control, management, grading and processing are core problems in

the agriculture development in the region. Poor price of the product due to presence of middleman and their intervention pose serious threat to local farmers. Some farmers have direct contact to the nearest market Beni (Myagdi District), which is about 76 KM far from Jomsom; making it very difficult. The same situation has been found in promotion market of Seabuckthorn. All problems therefore can be categorized into three broad group viz. production, processing and market and transportation. Distant market and its poor management and fluctuations of cost of transportation are among important push/pull factors.

### **Animal Husbandry**

Livestock is the main source of income of the northern areas of region. Among others, sheep and goat are recorded more potential for the purpose of income generation, meat and wool. Chhoser, Surkhang, Ghami, Charang VDCs and Samar, Venna, Yamda (Chhusang VDC) are (identified) potential pockets particularly for sheep and goats. But, no additional efforts have been made in the past except some tree plantation, grass seed distribution and pasture land management through ACAP/UMBCP, but has still being a core issues in the regional development and sustainable livelihoods of the local poor people. District Livestock Office (DLO) has been encouraging the local communities for livestock farming through the formation of several interests groups but they have no very eagerness due to distance, inaccessibility and seasonality.

Pastureland management, grass promotion and wool processing are core

issues for the livestock development in the region. However, about 42% land of the total area are occupied by pastureland. Samar, Venna, Yamda, Lo Manthang, Dhi and Chhoser are major pastureland recorded in the region. Household economy of Chhoser VDC entirely depends upon animal husbandry. Each household of Chhoser VDC has produced more than 200-Kg. of wool at summer season. According to the local people six Sheep and Goats are enough to produce one Kg. raw wool, which has price of Rs. 50-60/Kg. in the local market (whilst it will about Rs. 2,000/Kg. after processing). But the quality of pastureland has been decreased due to increased livestock density during winter on the one hand and inadequate irrigation facilities and local grass species on the other hand. Chhoser of the north and Lete of the south are main entry and exist points of livestock to Tibet and Pokhara/Kathmandu from the region.

Demand of grass for livestock particularly for stall feeding and pack animals like horse and mule has been found high. Grass promotion and encourage to the local people towards the grass farming therefore will be a strong opportunity for the income generation of the local poor people. The cost of grass in the region is found relatively expensive, for example Rs. 20 / Mutha (about one Kg.). But very few people have been engaged in these activities which have caused significant change in their income level and livelihood. However, poor pastureland management and conservation for future generation are major challenges. In addition, existing pasturelands are quite dry and have only local species.

## Tourism

Tourism is getting popularity in the region. It has been partially re-opened for the limited numbers of group tourist (i.e.1000) since 1992. Tourism therefore is being a source of livelihood of the local people since then. However, the development of tourism as a main source of livelihood has not been owned by the community as a whole. Selected and comparatively well-off people of the community are involved in tourism activities having little training and supporting materials. But, still large numbers of poor people do not have access in this field due to weak networking, poverty and illiteracy. Channeling and networking of rich people in the tourism sector has discouraged to involve the poor community. Although, the rising tourist's interest in the region has increased people's expectation and poor people are also interested to participate in this field. Since 1993 to 2010, altogether 18,097 foreigners were travelled in the region. In 2013, altogether 3344 foreign tourists were visited Lo Manthang (Fig.2).

Recently, the government charges USD 500 to each foreigner against the previous entry fee of USD 700 for the 10 days after 2009; and additional USD 50 per additional day charges. Hotels, lodges and campsites are generally run by wealthier people and they have good social-economic and institutional networks, which ultimately has discouraged the local poor people involved in the tourism activities. Tourist Management Sub Committee (TMSC) has been controlled by Conservation Area Management Committee (CAMC). But TMSC is composed of the relatively known and wealthier people having good socio-economic and political networks. This fact shows that the access of local communities having low socio-economic, political and institutional networking in this field, is reported very poor. However, tourism in upper Mustang region is providing employment opportunities, changing food habits, increasing quality of life, improving local infrastructures and ultimate contributing to promote the regional development.

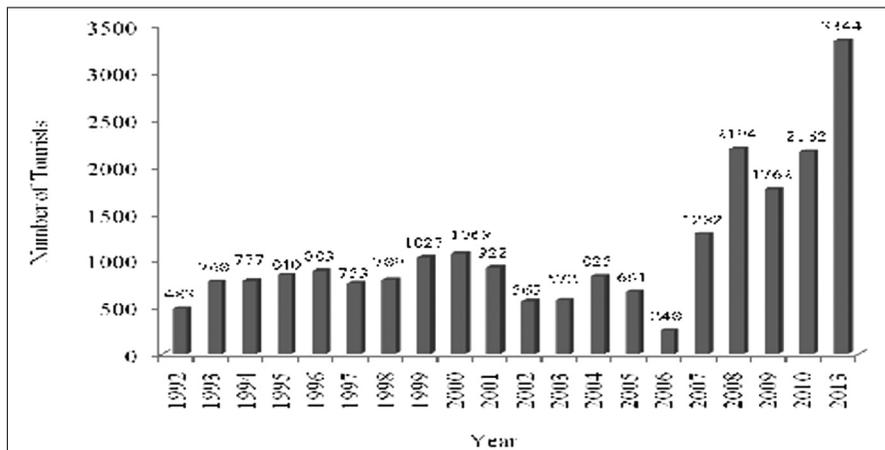


Fig.2: Tourist Arrival in the Upper Mustang Region by Year

Source: The Himalaya Times (2010/08/02), Kantipur Post 2069, Ramyata Limbu 2014 (www.aljazeera.com, 13 Jun 2014)

## Tourism Attraction in Upper Mustang Region

Physical environment, culture and ways of life and people's adaptation practices are attracting tourist in the region. Wind carved topography in the hidden region is more valuable not only to the foreigners but also for the domestic tourists. Sand and small pieces of rock mobile with their high speed of wind create distinct forms of topography in the region. Such landscapes have been considered spiritual attracting for many tourists. Vertical cliffs, a kind of Gara topography, dry uplands and shreds topography resulted due to wind erosion are common topography of the region. Two major wind routes can be observed in the region: first, in the summer season, wind flows from the south corner of the Kaligandaki Basin while in the winter it occurs from the northern Tibetan frontier resulting severe cold and snow fall.

Traditional cultural and heritage are other attraction sites of tourist over the region. The region is rich in cultural homogeneity. Gompa, Chhortain and Mane

[wall] are important symbolic materials and the respectable resources of the whole region. Among the other, Mane near Ghami (after crossed the river 'Chhuchangbo') is long and attractive. Besides this, there are many Manes at along the trekking route near Charang, Lo Manthang and Ghami. 'Chhurteins' and 'Gumba' are also important, which were made in the medieval periods having a religious value.

Another characteristic of the region is the way of life of the people and their adaptation processes. It is assumed that many people of the isolated areas of upper Mustang were residing in the cave in the past for the purpose of protection from the Khampa Guerilla on the one hand and severe cold climate on the other. Nifuk cave is one of the best examples of such practices, where 45 rooms, 5 storey and number of windows, having passage and well interconnected two side rooms including a separate kitchen and pray rooms have been recorded. Many monasteries are still in the wall and rock having nice flourishing environment in the northern Mustang. Table 1 shows that the tourist attraction sites in Upper Mustang.

Table 1 : Tourist Attraction Sites in Upper Mustang Region

Sites	Description
Kagbeni	Village of Medieval appearance, Ancient forts and Monastery, Semi-arid landscape
Tetang	Medieval appearance, Cave and Monastery
Chhusang	Cliffs, Monastery
Tsaile	Landscape scenery (Kali Gandaki Valley)
Samar	Monastery, habitat for bird watching
Ghilling	Green valley, sacred Monasteries
Ghami	Hidden valley, ruins of forts of Mustangi Raja, Ancient Monasteries. Long Mane Wall, Stunning cliffs of different colour, Landscape

Dhakamar	Ancient cave and Monasteries, Stunning cliffs of different colours
Marang	Ghar Gompa
Charang	Monasteries, Sightseeing of BlueSheep
Lo Manthang	Historic walled city, Capital city of Lo, historic palaces of Mustangi Raja, Jampa Lakhang (Multi-storey) Shakya pa seet, Monasteries, Landscape scene, Thubchen Gompa, Ruins of forts around city, Hot Springs
Namgyal	Monastery and bird watching
Thinkar	Summar palace of Mustangi Raja
Chhoser	Spectacular Multi-storey cave building, cave monastery, cave village, Attractive semi-arid landscape
Yara	Attractive Landscape, spectacular canyons, sightseeing of blue-sheep
Damadar Kunda	Famous pilgrimage site of Hindu

Source: Dahal& Dhakal 2003, Guni& Guni(n.d), ICIMOD 2008, Limbu 2014, Tsechu 2012.

The world famous travel guide ‘Lonely Planet’ has included Upper Mustang in the third position among the world’s ten best tourism destination for 2013 (Himalayan Times 2013-5-11). Many Rangelands (34 pasture units) are distributed in Upper Mustang, both winter and summer, with different sets of defined practices and traditional grazing right (NTNC 2008) which is also attracted to the tourists in the region.

## **Modernization and Sustainable Livelihood**

### ***Towards Modernization***

Few years ago, Upper Mustang was connected only through traditional trails. Transporting people, goods and services was possible only through the pony, yak, or dzo (yak-cow hybrids). But now, this is rapidly changing. The government of Nepal is constructing a road that is connecting

Upper Mustang to southern cities (i.e. Pokhara, Baglung and Beni and ultimately Kathmandu and other parts of Nepal), and Tibet (China) at the north. Now that trucks and tractors from Pokhara can bring rice, fresh produce, and caseloads of modern goods into the area in the space of a day, new general stores offering illegal copies of Indian and western movies and other modern sundries have shoehorned themselves in next to centuries-old stables and monasteries. The new road has brought new businesses that have brought new lifestyles and behaviors. Accessibility would increase the demand of local products e.g. apple, buckwheat, juice, sebukthrong etc in urban areas like Pokhara and Kathmandu.

From China, a road extends through Tibet right to the Nepali border, where Mustang sits among the Himalayan peaks. South of Mustang, from Pokhara, a major artery leads to Kathmandu, and then to the markets of India. In Lo Manthang,

for example, a new “Korean store” is the crowning jewel of a main thoroughfare just outside the city’s fortress walls and received a huge, positive response. The store offers floor-to-ceiling wooden crate shelves crammed with such Korean-imported delicacies as canned coffee and gourmet instant noodles. It became an immediate hit with Lo Manthang’s youth, who visit just to sit on the store’s steps. With its rows of gleaming soft drinks and loitering clientele sporting Western clothes, the store feels like an anachronistic glitch within the medieval city of mud-brick walls (<http://www.globalonenessproject.org/>). Youth people’s favorite accessories are wrap-around sandal and Adidas style of shoes from India. Over the span of a decade, segments of the highway have been bulldozed out of Mustang’s desert landscape, slowly allowing 4x4 vehicles access over the terrain. What exists now is a crude, unpaved road. Travel time has been cut down from days to hours for those who can afford to pay for a ride. It’s a sea change for the Loba, who for centuries knew themselves to be weeks away from any other civilization (<http://www.globalonenessproject.org/>).

The road has brought significant changes in the values and practices of the Loba living in the region. The packed and whitewashed mud-brick houses that were once iconic of the Loba’s Tibetan roots may be completely replaced by cement or wood buildings, changing the regional identity of Mustang. As the road nears completion, more Loba are planning to pool their money to purchase a communal truck or tractor to share among neighboring farms. Therefore, new roads booming business and livelihood

diversification in the ancient walled city of Lo Mangthang. Although, many people fear a cultural overhaul that may lead to the loss of their language and intimate knowledge of the land, as well as ancestral Loba crafts, skills, and traditions. Roads have raised some new issues which may have long term implication on the overall development of upper mustang. Direct impacts would be reduced price of goods and commodities. Such cases have been found in Lo Manthang where the prices of the commodities have been reduced by 30-40% (NTNC, 2008. 20). Road will brought a significant changes the scale, scope and pace of development activities and will generate far reaching impacts on all dimension of local economy including the pressure on culture and environmental specificities in the region. Roads may also cause impacts on biodiversity. Change settlement patterns, some are disappeared while other are expansion along the road side, cropping pattern and land use are also expected to change. But like in other developing communities, a sudden influx of modernity can also mean an influx of modern cultural nuanced problems.

### ***Migration and Trade***

Trade is integral parts of the people for survive. Many people of the region are engaged in the trading activities with Tibet and India. More than 75 % people of the region have migrated temporarily to the lower area like Pokhara and Kathmandu inside the country and Banaras, Ludhiyana, Dehradun and even Assam of India for the purpose of small trade and also to protect

themselves from the severe cold in the winter season. Trade with Tibet would be possible only in summer season. Sweater, Jimmu, dried medicines, salt, Chhurpee are major items of the trade. Sweater traders will move to India particularly Banaras and Ludhiana while majority of the migrants remain inside the country around Pokhara, Butwal, Baglung and even Kathmandu.

Trade is an important aspect of migration and a usual phenomenon of the region. Nomadism or semi-nomadism or transhumance or temporary migration or seasonal migration (whatever the terminology) is a form of migration in the region for less than 6 months from November to April. This migration is regarded as a coping strategy of the people. Therefore, types, pattern, causes and consequences of the migration in the region is distinct than the migration of the other areas in Nepal. Migration in this region is a complex phenomenon and has interconnected with various physical, social, cultural and economic specificities of the region. On the one hand, it is a form of forced migration due to cold winter and on the other hand it is a usual practice of the local community since the very beginning. Migration therefore is no longer a simple event but an extremely multi-faceted phenomenon encompassing other issues, such as social status, health, environment, identity, politics and the relationship to land holdings and domesticated animals (Tulachan, 2001).

After the harvest of summer crop, groups of young people leave the region. Flying to Pokhara is their first choice while

some move to southern hill districts by road or on foot via Myagdi and Baglung districts. About two third population of the region will migrate, except some young single male and poor who are unable to move and have not been networking to the place of destinations. Four destinations of the migrants have been identified in the region. The first destination is Pokhara for those who are able to move out of upper Mustang but cannot move beyond that point due to weak networking and poverty. While settling in Pokhara, they will involve themselves in the vendor or hawker or pocket trade of either Jimmu or other dried mountain herbal medicines. They prefer either money or food grains for survival. Second destination is India (particularly Banaras, Ludhiana and Dehradun) for those who have enough money and are able to move to India by crossing the border. They will have destination Banaras at first, Ludhiana and Dehradun at the end. Sweater trade and meeting with their relatives are two important causes of the migration up to Ludhiana (Tulachan, 2001). Third, destination is Kathmandu for those who have enough money for some definite length of time basically for religion and meeting their relatives. The fourth destination consists of Baglung, Myagdi and other Terai towns for those who have weak networking and money. People of the last destination will be engaged in the Jimmu trade inside the country.

The migration and long journey for the longer period will not be easy. Some people will keep their livestock and goods at the lower villages of Mustang while

other will take with them up to Baglung, Myagdi, and Pokhara. Long journey creates various obstacles including linguistic barriers, negotiating through the different cultural and social landscapes; insuring the security of goods, animals and personnel dealing with climatic variations, alien diet and unfamiliar disease (Tulachan, 2001). Counterpart of migration has also been perceived in the region. Every year Tibetans traders descended towards Lo Manthang having large herds of sheep and goats and yak with commodities like salt, wool butter and Churpe.

### **Concluding Observation**

Physical and cultural specificities and the distinct human adaptation processes attracted many interested groups, scholars and individuals in the region. Harsh climatic condition, seasonal migration, semi-arid environment, poor pasture management and inaccessibility are challenges for the sustainability of people and place in the region. Road connects (Upper) Mustang to northern Tibet and southern cities makes people's livelihood diversification. Tourism is getting popular source of income but it holding by relatively well-off people of the region.

Promotion of the fresh vegetable through providing training, skill and material support will increase people's capacity to cope during the shortage period. Intervention of the collection centres and resolving shops will encourage the local people for income generation activities, which ultimately helps the tourists and local people as well. For the promotion of wool and pasmina, protection

of pastureland is essential, which could possible only through the management of irrigation, grass seeds distribution and rotational grazing system. Fresh vegetables and grass promotion, at present seen as an alternative source of family income in the region. Emphasized community based tourism through providing suitable training and infrastructure development particularly through the mobilization of relatively poor and vulnerable families found essential in the region.

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