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Linking Ecotourism Livelihood Strategies to Post-Displacement Homemaking in Internally Displaced Communities in Southern Nepal

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Linking Ecotourism Livelihood Strategies to Post-Displacement Homemaking
in Internally Displaced Communities in Southern Nepal.

Case Study: Buffer Zone Communities of the Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal

Sophia Ayame Graybill

March 23, 2018

A Master's Paper

Submitted to the Faculty of Clark University, Worcester, MA, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the department of the International Development, Community, and Environment (IDCE).

And accepted on the recommendation of

Dr. Anita Fabos, Chief Instructor

Abstract

Implications of Conservation-Induced Internal Displacement, and the Role of Cultural Tourism in Post-Displacement Livelihood Reconstruction.

Case Study: Internally Displaced Buffer Zone Communities of the Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal

Sophia Ayame Graybill

National park creation and ecotourism development often cause the internal displacement of local communities and shifts in traditional lifestyles. Loss of the physical and intangible *home* is frequently accompanied by changes to livelihood strategies that, for generations, supported a critical social order, set of power dynamics, and means of producing life meaning for people. Therefore, communities affected by displacement and confronted by rapid modernization often experience protracted risks and instability. This paper draws on information from thirty interviews in four communities surrounding the Royal Chitwan National Park in Southern Nepal to analyze how resettlement and ecotourism development have affected the way people live in the area, emphasizing the impact of shifting livelihood strategies on the post-displacement homemaking process. Findings suggest that loss of agrarian livelihoods has harmed communities with access to ecotourism jobs less, as financial security enables more time to be spent participating in cultural and family activities. Homestays and cultural museums also offer opportunities for communities to retain past culture, livelihood strategies, and ways of living while embracing modernization. However, the unequal distribution of these positive impacts suggests that the cultural diversity of the area is being underrepresented, harming the wellbeing of people and impeding the success of the area's cultural tourism industry. Greater emphasis on supporting marginalized communities will benefit both the homemaking process and wellbeing of people, and the success of Nepal's double sustainability goals.

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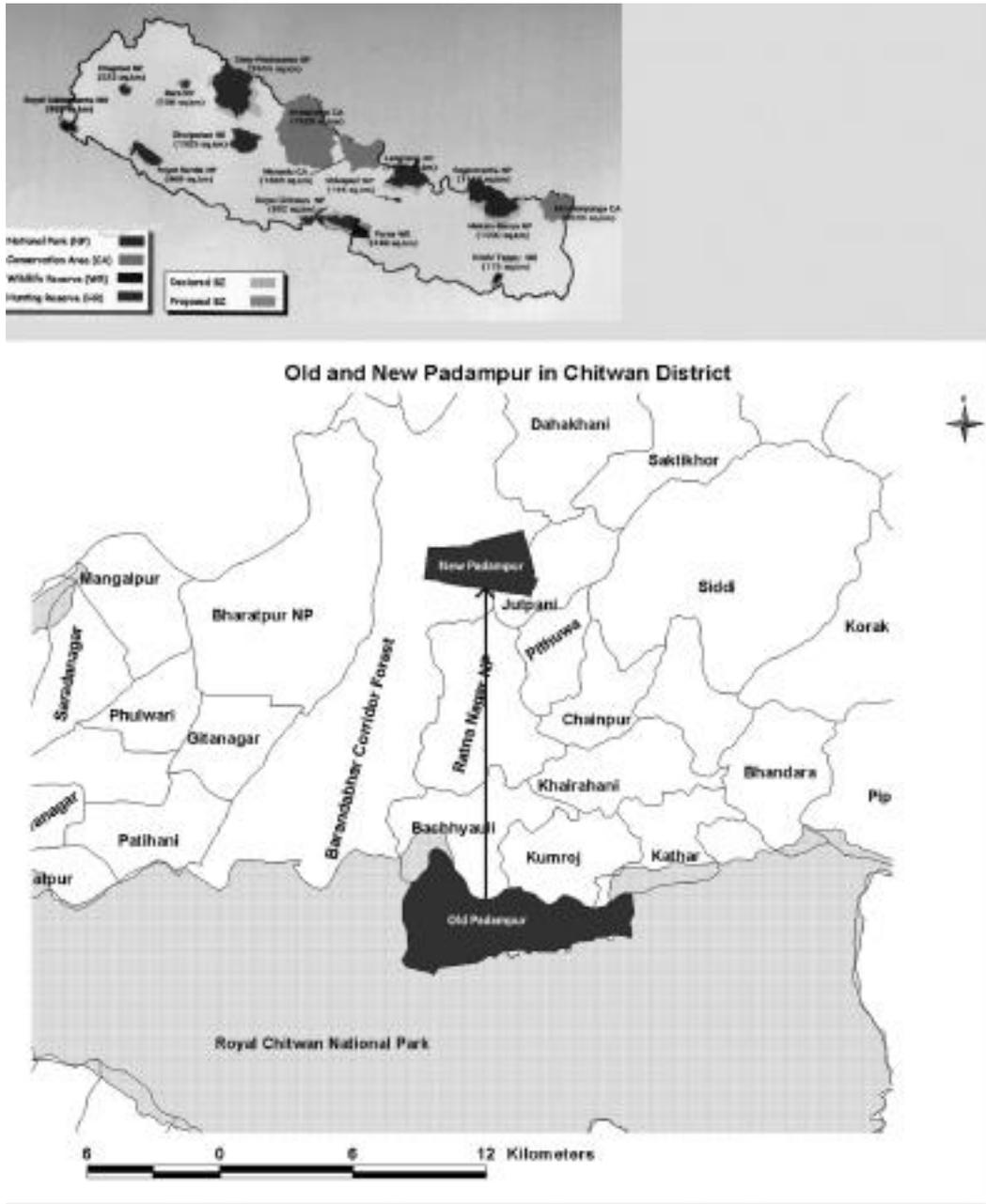


Figure 1. Map of the country of Nepal denoting conserved areas, and a focus map of the relocation of New Padampur community 20km north of their previous location within the RCNP. Relocation began in 2005. (Dhakal. et al, 2011)

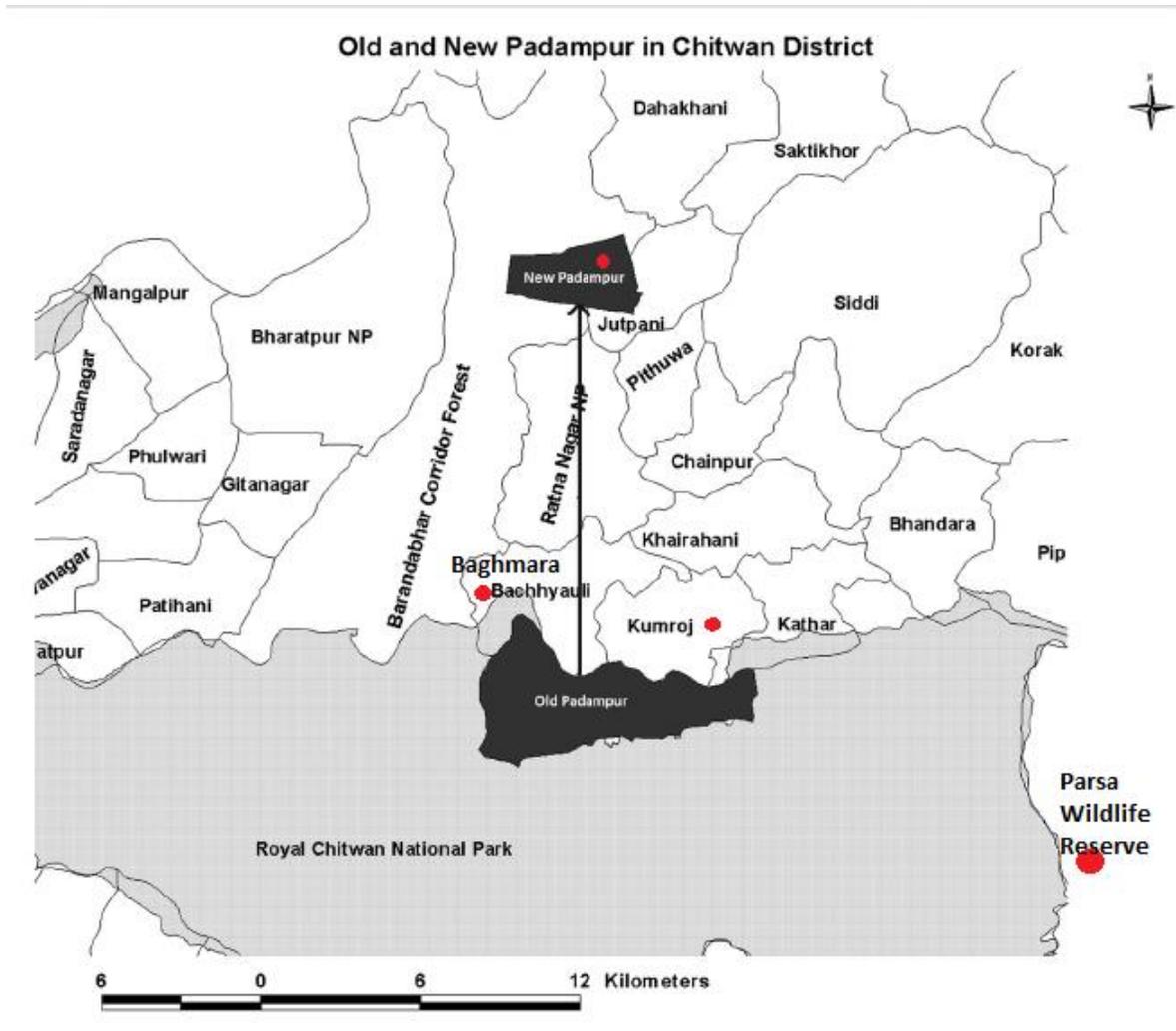


Figure 2. Same map as Map 1, however red dots and some labels were added to indicate focal communities in this research paper; New Padampur, Baghmara, Kumroj, and Parsa. (Dhakal. et al, 2011)

Table 1. Research participant demographics. CF = Community Forest. Colors describe caste; **red** = Tharu, **blue** = Bramen, **green** = Gurung, **purple** = Darai. Respondents with no caste identification color preferred not to provide their caste during the interview. Respondents missing ages did not to provide their age or did not know their age.

Baghmara	Age	Sex	Livelihood	New Padampur	Age	Sex	Livelihood
1	55	M	Social worker	15	60	M	Farmer and Vice Chairman of Thankola Community
2	56	M	CF guard	16	55	M	Farmer
3	40	F	Housewife	17	38	F	CF guard
4	35	F	Housewife	18	50	M	Farmer
5	33	F	Housewife	19	65	M	Farmer
6	/	M	Chairman of Baghmara CF	22	55	M	Farmer and politician
				21	61	M	Farmer, social worker, Chairman of Resettlement Committee
				22	52	M	Farmer and politician
				23	35	M	Secretary of Bimbola CF
Kumroj	Age	Sex	Livelihood	Parsa	Age	Sex	Livelihood
7	/	M	Chairman of Kumroj buffer zone CF	24	48	M	Hotel owner
8	/	M	Chairmen of Budi Rapti CF User Committee	25	23	F	Student; nature guide training
9	53	M	Farmer and Tharu Museum manager	26	44	M	Government conservation sector worker
10	58	M	Farmer and biogas construction worker	27	35	M	Business owner and head of Parsa Anti-Poaching Unit
11	28	M	Farmer and migrant worker in Qatar	28	50	M	Business man; hopes to open tourist hotel
12	64	M	Farmer, ex-forest guard	29	24	F	Unemployed
13	69	M	Farmer	30	/	M	Local researcher for Zoological Society of London
14	22	F	Farmer and homestay provider				

Abbreviations

RCNP – Royal Chitwan National Park

GoN – Government of Nepal

IRR – Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction model, created by Michael Cerna, World Bank.

IDP – Internally Displaced Person: *“Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border”* (UN OCHA definition from Brun, 2005).

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

VDC – Village Development Committee: Village-level local governing bodies that receive and manage funds from the national government and local NGOs (United Nations Development Program, 2009).

Introduction

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are frequently deprived of adequate support due to the failure of policy makers to comprehend the diversity and complexity of the concept of home and the integral role of livelihood strategies in post-displacement homemaking. The Constellations of Home concept (Brun and Fabos, 2015) is the basis of this paper, opposing the assumption that home for displaced people is static and singular, existing only as a place-based concept in the homeland. Rather, this paper adopts the constellations view; home is the multidimensional sense of belonging, security, and identity created by the interactions between people's day-to-day activities, cultures and traditions, and the nation-state system of borders and regulations. This constellation not only produces the individual home, but also a collective home organized by unique power relations and distinct social order. Home, therefore, is transported with IDPs across time and space as they move, and this paper analyzes the impacts of ecotourism development on the homemaking strategies of people post-displacement.

The process of homemaking can be analyzed from multiple perspectives; however, this paper seeks to understand how shifts in livelihood strategies impacts IDP homemaking. Livelihoods are understood as a compilation of choices and strategies that facilitate both finding a place in the world and producing life meaning (Carr, 2013). Livelihood strategies are not solely about making a living, but rather produce social order through maintaining power dynamics, mobilizing identity, and increasing self-determination. Livelihood strategies are, therefore, a core component of the homemaking process.

This paper analyzes the impact of conservation and ecotourism development in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP) on the homemaking process for communities that were either resettled out of the national park or that remained in their original location bearing witness to the area's rapid transformation. Thirty qualitative interviews were conducted in four communities surrounding the RCNP to understand how resettlement and ecotourism in the Chitwan Valley have affected the way people

live, emphasizing shifts in livelihood strategies. Findings indicate that traditional subsistence livelihoods have become almost obsolete due to the expansion of the ecotourism industry, but that opportunities to participate in the industry contribute to the homemaking process in a positive way. Improved economic stability enables people to accrue and spend more time engaging in cultural and community activities, including maintaining small plots of farm land for cultural purposes and to maintain traditional farming knowledge. Further, engagement in ecotourism activities such as homestays has helped community members maintain parts of their past lifestyles while embracing the present. However, ecotourism has not benefitted all people equally, necessitating that the government and NGOs provide better support to the most marginalized people whose narratives and cultures are being overlooked.

Literature Review

i. Conservation-Induced Internal Displacement and Ecotourism

Conservation-related ecotourism is a primary driver of internal displacement, recognized for its role in creating unstable conditions for human settlements and tipping the scales of these conditions (UNHCR, 2015). Conservation frequently discourages interactions between humans and natural ecosystems and often lead to ecotourism development that impacts traditional ways of life and displaces people (Cerna, n.d). This resettlement is often permanent, offering no opportunity for the displaced to return to their place of origin (Agrawal & Redford, 2009).

Conservation refugees and IDPs (Cerna, n.d) are suddenly faced with no option but to adapt to a rapidly changing world in which traditional subsistence livelihoods are being replaced by employment in the ecotourism industry. While ecotourism is intended to provide countries with valuable income-generating opportunities that simultaneously support ecosystems and local communities, the results of ecotourism have been less positive, often leading to the exploitation of natural areas, local cultures, and country hospitality (Higham & Luck, 2009). Studies suggest that the development of tourist hubs can lead

to local community marginalization and often offers limited opportunities to preserve traditional livelihoods, maintain access to traditional and spiritual lands, or easily access job opportunities in the tourism industry (Buscher & Davidow, 2016). Loss of traditional livelihoods is an acutely harmful impact of conservation and displacement, as livelihoods are a core component of community and household food security, income-generation, social status, tradition, and means of maintaining social structures including gender roles (Kabra, 2009). Further, “when technological change comes too fast and too soon for a society, it makes stable adaptations difficult if not impossible to achieve without severe pain, emotional stress, and conflict” (Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2003). Aggravating the situation is the lack of a comprehensive support strategy for IDPs, putting them at risk of protracted instability (Agrawal & Redford, 2009).

Thus, an interesting paradox exists; ecotourism offers opportunities to enhance national and household income, environmental preservation, and infrastructure development, but also threatens to disrupt traditional lifestyles, cultures, and livelihoods (Kabra, 2009). The impacts of ecotourism are particularly acute in displaced communities that are experiencing pressure to adapt to the cultures and lifestyles of host communities. Therefore, in situations where conservation initiatives have either directly caused human displacement or contributed to pressuring communities to resettle, there is a need to investigate how ecotourism can reduce the hardships experienced by displaced people. Without this analysis, the most marginalized groups of people may continue to be negatively affected by ecotourism, causing detriment to their wellbeing and to the success of cultural heritage preservation and double sustainability goals.

ii. Risks of Internal Displacement and IDP Homemaking

The concept of *home* is fundamental to human life experiences. Home provides security, a sense of ownership, identity, and a means of maintaining culture, tradition, and social structures. However,

physical and intangible aspects of home can be rapidly, and often permanently, disrupted in situations of displacement (Brun & Fabos, 2017). *Home* is characterized by three interacting concepts: the day-to-day activities of people, the cultural networks that connect and bond people to each other, to culture, and to place, and the nation-state system that defines home by borders (Brun & Fabos, 2017). Brun and Fabos describe home as a “boundless and porous” entity where these three aspects meet and interact to create a complex and diverse system in which individuals produce their own life meaning (2015). This multi-faceted definition of home, referred to as the *Constellations of Home*, was developed in response to the three institutionalized durable solutions for refugee crises that fail to comprehend the complexity of home (2017). In this paper, *Constellations of Home* is applied to IDPs who also frequently experience loss, risks, and an urgent need to re-establish home.

Michael Cerna explores the impacts of displacement on home in his Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction (IRR) model, focusing specifically on IDPs. He identifies landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of education, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common goods, and social disarticulation as common risks experienced by IDPs that affect their identity and sense of belonging post-displacement (Cerna & Schmidt-Soltau, 2003). Cerna argues that regardless of the cause of displacement, people in these situations face some loss, affecting their quality of life and their ability to re-establish satisfactory conditions post-displacement (2003). These risks are intensified by the failure or inability of local governments to provide adequate economic and social support to IDPs (Muggah, 2000) or to understand that “often feel like strangers in their place of refuge, where the local population may be from a different ethnic and/or religious group and/or may speak a different language. Consequently, IDPs may not feel welcomed, despite sharing the same citizenship as the host population” (Brun, 2005). Acknowledging the unique needs of each IDP is critical for supporting their process of re-establishing home.

Cerna's eight identified risks can be divided into two categories; loss of economic goods and opportunities, and loss of social and cultural capital. This paper focuses on the concepts of marginalization and social disarticulation in relation to how they affect people's sense of security, belonging, and identity, ultimately impacting strategies for homemaking.

Marginalization refers to the loss of social status, manifesting as a lack of economic opportunities, social exclusion, and in some cases exile from communities (Cerna, n.d). Marginalization often results from religious status, caste, or gender identification, and is compounded by the stress of resettlement and community re-organization. In these instances, power dynamics within communities change or are amplified, causing minorities to experience heightened hardships (Brun, 2005). Social disarticulation is what Cerna describes as an "impoverishment fact", leading to the loss of social capital including familial and cultural practices, traditional knowledge and ways of living, and social networks (Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2003). Loss of these capitals and continued marginalization of diverse groups of people can impede the ability of displaced communities to re-establish their identity and establish a place in the world. While Brun makes a critical point that displacement does not always lead to a breakdown of social structures and networks and can in fact reinforce and amplify them (2005, 17), there is still potential for marginalization and disarticulation to occur.

This paper argues that marginalization and social disarticulation deter IDPs from adopting new livelihood strategies, hindering the process of homemaking and re-establishing a sense of belonging and purpose. Without these stabilities, IDPs are more likely to experience protracted risks.

Study of Livelihoods in Displacement Settings

The study of livelihoods has evolved from an economic lens to one that recognizes the role of livelihood strategies in creating life meaning, making a livelihoods lens relevant to the study of IDP homemaking.

The ever-evolving concept of livelihoods stabilized briefly with the introduction of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in 1991 (Chambers and Conway). This approach defined a livelihood as a means of making a living, considered 'successful' when productivity is maintained in a changing vulnerability context without causing environmental harm (Chambers and Conway, 1991). This definition was further developed in the Livelihood Trajectory Approach, in which the progression of livelihoods was analyzed through changing social, political, and economic contexts (Sallu et al, 2010). While this definition attempted to incorporate the impact of social capital and individual goals on enabling or hindering the establishment of livelihood strategies, livelihoods themselves continued to be an economic concept.

More recently, the concept of livelihoods was reframed from being solely a means of producing material goods to a collection of livelihood strategies that create meaning in one's life (Bebbington, 1999). This reframing opposed the assumption that livelihoods are principally about maintaining and improving material conditions of life (Carr, 2013). Bebbington's Capitals Framework revolutionized the livelihoods lens, placing social and cultural assets, or capitals, at the forefront of understanding how and why people live the way they do. Bebbington's framework shifted the focus away from *how people make a living*, that assumes livelihoods are solely a means to produce income, towards a more comprehensive understanding of why and how people produce meaning in their lives through livelihood strategies. The Capitals Framework emphasizes social and cultural capital as both fundamental livelihood inputs and as intentional outcomes of livelihoods, producing meaning and transforming power dynamics.

Edward Carr's analyzes support Bebbington's framework, as he argues livelihood strategies function to achieve and maintain societal goals and social order rather than being primarily finance-oriented (2013). Carr's study of land tenure in the rural Ponkrum and Dominase communities in Ghana exhibit this, as "the distribution of livelihood resources was not optimized for household income, or indeed agricultural production for any purpose" (Carr, 2013, 92). In these communities, women actively support the

restrictive land tenure rules that both limit their productive and income-generating capacity and reinforce the expectation that women's primary role in the community is to cook, clean, and care for children. Carr argues that land tenure livelihood strategies in Ponkrum and Dominase produce and maintain social order, culture, and life meaning for community members (Carr, 2013). Support for these livelihood strategies that limit income generation and productivity suggests that maintaining social and cultural structures is given priority over increasing material goods or income. Carr's analysis also suggests that livelihoods a form of government, producing and reproducing power, mobilizing identity, increasing self-determination, and supporting cultural and social systems. Since home is "a site in which power relations of the wider society, such as relations in gender ethnicity, class, and generations are played out" (Brun & Fabos, 2015), livelihood strategies are an integral part of the homemaking process.

There is an intimate relationship between livelihood strategies and homemaking in maintaining social order, networks, and life meaning. Therefore, adopting a livelihoods lens is important for evaluating how communities re-establish both a source of income and a sense of belonging and purpose after displacement (Arnall et al, 2013). Arnall et al. argues that a livelihoods lens allows for a deeper analysis because it highlights how "social units draw on and transform different bundles of resources or assets into readily useable goods to respond to and cope with external sources of stress" (2013, 470). But beyond re-establishing income and food security, "[displacement] is also about planning for the future, rebuilding lost assets and making a life in the place of displacement" (Brun, 2005, 17). Livelihood strategies exemplify the ways in which internally displaced people re-establish meaning in their lives, by both adopting aspects of their new home and maintaining aspects of their old home.

Based on these arguments, this paper adopts a livelihoods lens through which to analyze the impacts of resettlement and ecotourism development on homemaking in communities in the Chitwan Valley of Southern Nepal. Conservation in the area has had a two-fold impact on communities, driving

resettlement and forcing a rapid livelihood shifts. Community agricultural and subsistence livelihoods are increasingly being replaced by employment in the ecotourism industry, bringing into focus how changes to the community's livelihoods affects their homemaking strategies and outcomes. A livelihoods lens proves useful for understanding how resettled and transformed communities address Cerna's risks in the face of rapid modernization.

Case Study: Royal Chitwan National Park Buffer Zone, Nepal

Nepal has an extended history of conservation-related internal displacement, highlighted by the forty-year period of mass displacement from the Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP) in Southern Nepal (Dhakal et al, 2011, Figure 1). Although the displacements occurred in separate phases, conservation of the RCNP was the common driving force, and in all cases resettlement and subsequent developments have transformed livelihoods.

From 1960 to the mid-1980s, the Government of Nepal (GoN) adopted the US's fortress conservation policies that were enacted during the establishment of the Yellowstone National Park in 1872 (Himmelfarb, 2006). These conservation policies called for the removal of humans from conserved areas and national parks to preserve pristine habitats and to prevent human-wildlife conflicts (Himmelfarb, 2006). Though intended to benefit both Nepal's people and wildlife, these policies have negatively affected local communities throughout the country. Nepal's largest conservation-induced displacement event occurred after the creation of its first national park in 1973; the 932km² RCNP (Nepal, 2002). Creation of the RCNP led to the violent removal of approximately 20,000 people from the park boundaries between 1964 and 1996 (Mclean & Straede, 2003). Opposition to the resettlement policy by community members resulted in the burning down of homes, threats of violence by park guards, and elephant raids to force community members out of the national park (Mclean & Straede, 2003). By 1996, forced displacement was ceased in Nepal due to global efforts to replace fortress conservation

with participatory approaches, and a 750km² buffer zone surrounding the RCNP was established, in which forests, grasslands, and a portion of national park entrance fees could be utilized by communities for development purposes (Kafle, 2005).

After Nepal's conservation policy changed, the sole remaining settlement within the RCNP boundaries was the Old Padampur Village Development Committee (VDC) that eventually resettled to the buffer zone, renamed New Padampur (Joshi, 2013). Old Padampur is a unique case of "participatory resettlement" (Dhakal et al, 2011), as in 1995 the community formed the Padampur Resettlement Commission to formally request support from the Government of Nepal (GoN) in their resettlement (Joshi, 2013). Prior to the creation of the RCNP, Old Padampur was predominantly an agrarian community. The community was self-sufficient, thriving on the area's fertile soil, ample water supply, and traditional agricultural knowledge. Once the RCNP was created, people began to diversify their livelihood strategies and work as park rangers and guards, however the agrarian lifestyle remained central to the community until resettlement began. According to community members, the safety of their lives and the security of their agrarian livelihoods were constantly threatened by wildlife attacks and persistent flooding, necessitating their resettlement (Joshi, 2003). By 2004, the VDC was resettled to New Padampur in the RCNP buffer zone, where some land and money compensation was provided by the government. Though their displacement has been called participatory and voluntary (Dhakal et al, 2011 & Joshi, 2013), previous studies have shown that New Padampur community members face new challenges of living in a rapidly modernizing, heavily touristed area (Dhakal et al, 2011). In particular, the community has experienced a drastic shift in livelihood strategies, transitioning from the agrarian strategies to jobs in the ecotourism industry that have made self-sufficiency almost obsolete.

A study of 72 households in New Padampur in 2013 found that total agricultural output had declined by 32% since 2005 due to a loss of 800 hectares of land and poor soil fertility, disrupting traditional

subsistence livelihoods and putting pressure on community members to enter the ecotourism industry (Joshi, 2013). Another study of 63 households in New Padampur in 2011 found that 60% of research participants believe caste, gender, and economic status cause some groups of people to be disproportionately affected by the relocation process. People of the Tharu caste were identified as bearing the greatest burden of the resettlement, as they lost access to the forests and land within the national park that held spiritual and cultural significance to them (Dhakal et al, 2011). Additionally, 63% of respondents stated their neighbors changed during the relocation, affecting social interactions and their sense of security. In both studies, however, participants overwhelmingly agreed that their overall quality of life improved since their relocation, owing to improvements in infrastructure, healthcare, education, income-generating opportunities, and free time. Many agree that their lives have become easier since the relocation. Thus, a tension exists between retaining traditional lifestyles and livelihoods, and adapting to a more modern, arguably easier lifestyle in New Padampur.

This research paper expands on previous studies in the New Padampur community, exploring the impacts of tourism development on livelihood strategies and homemaking after 2013, emphasizing the perspectives of the IDPs themselves. Differing from past studies of New Padampur, this study also seeks to compare the experiences of New Padampur to those of two other displaced communities living in closer proximity to the national park, and one community that will soon experience similar transformations in lifestyle owing to the new establishment of a national park.

Methods

Data was collected using a qualitative, semi-structured interview approach over a period of three weeks, facilitated by the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC).

Three communities in the buffer zone of the RCNP were selected as the focus of this paper; Baghmara, Kumroj, and New Padampur (Dhakal, et al, 2011, Figure 2). These communities have been engaged in

NTNC programs and were selected for this study due to the pre-established trust and positive relationship between community members and the Trust. The Parsa Wildlife Reserve community was later included in the study to provide perspectives from community members not yet influenced by the impacts of ecotourism development. The Parsa Wildlife Reserve was recently designated a national park and will begin to develop a tourist hub soon, however does not currently permit unlimited tourists inside the reserve. Interviewing community members from this area provided perspectives on current livelihood strategies and lifestyles, as well as hopes and fears regarding future development in the area.

Study participants from the four communities were pre-selected for cultural sensitivity and study design purposes. It is culturally insensitive in some Nepali communities to approach homes without prior notice, and given the timeline of the project, there was insufficient time to provide prior notice. Further, this study was conducted during the July monsoon period, and many community members were engaged in strenuous rice planting, preventing door-to-door random sampling. Instead, Shankar Chaudhary, Senior Nature Resource Conservation Assistant of NTNC, identified willing and able study participants, conveyed the purpose of the study to each participant, and translated interview responses.

The result was semi-structured interviews with a total of 30 participants from four communities surrounding the RCNP; Baghmara (n = 6), Kumroj (n = 8), Parsa (n = 7), and New Padampur (n = 9). Sample sizes are not representative of whole communities. However, responses represent considerable diversity, including men and women, members of the Bramen, Gurung, Tharu, and Darai castes, an age spectrum of 22-69 years, and both agriculturalists and non-agriculturalists (Table 1).

Community members were approached about participating via a phone call or direct conversation with Mr. Chaudhary and were asked for their preferred interview time and location. Present during interviews were the study participant, myself, and Mr. Chaudhary. Interviews started with approximately 30 minutes of structured qualitative questions (Appendix). Following these, interviews

were conducted as conversations during which participants were encouraged to openly discuss their experiences. Data was organized in Excel sheets, however due to the small sampling size, qualitative data was not coded to make quantitative conclusions.

The qualitative, participant-led structure was useful for collecting the first-hand accounts about the impacts of displacement and tourism development. Open ended, qualitative interviews also limited researcher bias and assumptions about livelihoods and homemaking.

Results

i. Impacts of Ecotourism on Livelihoods

There is a clear distinction in perceptions of how ecotourism has affected livelihoods between Kumroj and Baghmara, and New Padampur.

All respondents from Baghmara and Kumroj were agriculturalists before being resettled to the buffer zone. Currently, only half of the respondents from these communities have maintained their traditional agricultural livelihoods, and of these, all have adopted secondary jobs. In almost all cases, respondents now work full time or part time in a conservation or ecotourism-related job, including being national park guards, chairmen or leaders in community forest user groups, museum managers, and homestay operators. While ecotourism development resulted in the loss of subsistence livelihoods, respondents from Baghmara and Kumroj are hesitant to speak negatively regarding the area's development.

Respondents collectively agreed that ecotourism has had very positive impacts on their community's way of life, particularly regarding the steady flow of income into the region that enables the construction of more and better schools, healthcare facilities, roads, and better housing. Further, NGO presence in the area has brought developments in biogas and dairy production, enhancing household and community income. Kumroj became the site of Nepal's first biogas initiative, and now 80% of households in the community own a biogas generator and a toilet facility. Finally, a portion of park

entrance fees and income from ecotourism initiatives are channeled into community forest user groups surrounding the RCNP including Kumroj and Baghmara, enabling communities to self-develop. The self-determination opportunities of these communities have increased significantly, improving their perceptions of conservation and ecotourism. Some community members argue community forests are still too restrictive, taking away their freedom to use natural resources as they wish, however the general opinion is positive. Respondents from these communities unanimously agreed that their resettlement in the buffer zone and the subsequent development of the area has led to better education and skills training for the community, created more job opportunities, and has made life easier for people. Chairman of the Baghmara community forest stated that people in his community have far more free time since ecotourism was established, providing them with more opportunities to connect with their family and to enjoy life.

Perceptions of ecotourism in New Padampur are less positive, owing to the community's physical isolation from livelihood opportunities and difficulty creating social networks with other communities inside the buffer zone. Like Baghmara and Kumroj, all respondents from New Padampur were agriculturalists before being displaced. However, unlike in other communities, employment opportunities in the ecotourism sector are less accessible for New Padampur residents owing to their isolated location. Many respondents were unable to comment on the state of ecotourism in Chitwan because they had limited exposure to it, and others felt cheated by the lack of development around New Padampur. One respondent stated that the community was spending so much of their time trying to adapt to living in their new location that they had little time to invest in entering the ecotourism sector. To date, New Padampur has established a single wildlife watch tower and a few homestay operations that bring in meager income. Respondents also commented on the difficulties in maintaining subsistence livelihoods due to a lack of fertile soil and inadequate land compensation after the resettlement. In one instance, a family was only compensated one third of their original land, and the

parents have had no success in obtaining other work due to a lack of skills and job opportunities. So, while community members in Baghmara and Kumroj can maintain some farming while also diversifying, New Padampur residents experience a loss in both livelihood opportunities. The result has been concerns about food and water security, as families are unable to produce sufficient crops for subsistence and cannot afford to purchase food in markets. New Padampur community members are unhappy about their forced dependence on the markets, given their traditional self-sustaining livelihoods. A final impact of displacement and ecotourism development has been an increase in stress among New Padampur members, owing to more pressure to enter the job market, outcompete others, and make money to save. These pressures were not wide spread in Old Padampur since people lived off their farms and had a collective livelihood system. In New Padampur, the pressures of modernization have caused stress for families, changing the structure of their lifestyles and altering values.

While perceptions of ecotourism and modernization are split between communities in the RCNP buffer zone, perceptions of future ecotourism development in the newly designated Parsa National Park are generally positive. Parsa community members believe future developments in the area will bring improvements in education and healthcare, more job opportunities, and more wealth. One respondent, leader of the GoN's conservation initiatives in Parsa, stated that only 20% of community members reacted negatively to the decision to open the area to tourism, but the rest of the community are excited about the opportunity to economically benefit from tourism. Between 30% and 50% of future park revenue will be channeled into community development, forest management, and infrastructure improvements, offering residents a better quality of life. Those against the conversion are primarily concerned about the possibility of displacement, however there are currently no plans to relocate anyone according to the government conservation officer.

Impacts of Ecotourism on Culture and Society

In the above section, community members were asked about the impacts of ecotourism and displacement on their livelihoods from an economic lens. In this section, people were asked about changes to their culture, traditions, and ways of life, and whether the changes play a role in their ability to re-establish a sense of home in the RCNP buffer zone.

Respondents from Baghmara, Kumroj, and New Padampur unanimously agreed that the development of the area has changed traditional ways of life, merging cultures from around the world and limiting traditional lifestyles. However, opinions regarding this impact are mixed in each community, owing to different opinions about the importance of preserving tradition versus embracing modernization.

Regarding government support in preserving tradition and culture, responses have been negative. One respondent from Kumroj commented that tourism is the “first priority” of the GoN, and the needs and wellbeing of communities, including the vibrancy of their culture and traditions, are overlooked. A respondent from New Padampur commented that he and his friends feel forgotten about by the government and NGOs, as they received little to no support when they were resettled and after compensations were distributed. Apart from initial financial support, New Padampur is no longer of concern to the GoN.

Several community members from Baghmara and Kumroj emphasized the direct and harmful effects of tourists on their communities as well. Respondents focused on community youth who are more susceptible to the influence of tourists than older generations. Tourist’s culturally inappropriate language, use of alcohol and drugs, and revealing clothing have been adopted by many young people in Baghmara and Kumroj. While this impact has been less in New Padampur due to their distance from the main tourist hub, several respondents from each community including New Padampur discussed generational culture loss, whereby traditions are slowly being phased out in each generation as the

youth see little incentive to preserve it. Further, some people feel they have “no time for culture” (Chairman of Baghmara community), as they are under constant stress to work, make money, and accumulate savings. Respondents who noted this worry it is altering the very structure of their communities, reducing time spent developing family and community bonds, and altering what people find most important in their lives. The stress of adjusting and trying to enter a new job market has also limited the time available to community members, particularly in New Padampur, to develop networks and relationships within their community and in other communities, creating a sense of isolation and disarticulation from society.

Responses also indicated that ecotourism affects caste groups differently. According to one member of the Darai caste in the Kumroj community, aspects of his culture including festivals, traditional clothing, and communal eating have been lost almost entirely, as livelihood shifts have caused people to prioritize making money over community values. This respondent believes that although quality of life has improved for the community, this has occurred only at a material and basic needs level, with culture becoming more and more diluted over time. All respondents from New Padampur agree that the diversity and vibrancy of their cultures were stronger in Old Padampur, and the relocation has caused people of the same castes and religions to be separated, resulting in a loss of unity. The Tharu caste in particular has experienced loss due to their relocation owing to their displacement from spiritual forests inside the national park. There is no amount of compensation that can make up for loss of spiritual lands, according to Tharu respondents.

While in the minority, several respondents from each community had positive perspectives on the gradual phasing out of traditional lifestyles. Several respondents from the Baghmara community emphasized the increasing ease of life brought by developments in the area. In their opinion, not only do people have more free time to engage in cultural practices and family traditions, but the physical

structure of communities has changed for the better. Traditional houses in all three communities used to have thatched roofs and no running water or electricity, leaving people vulnerable to wildlife attacks and illness. However, because of park revenue, people in Baghmara and Kumroj have been financially supported in constructing concrete houses that keep heat inside and keep pests out, and people in New Padampur used their resettlement compensation to construct concrete houses. One respondent from Kumroj community stated that the entire world is becoming more modern, and the transformations being experienced should not be considered negative or harmful.

ii. Opportunities for Cultural Tourism

The final component of interviews focused on how tourism jobs have impacted culture and wellbeing. Emphasis was placed on homestay and cultural museum operations.

Homestays have been established in most communities near the RCNP, including New Padampur, Kumroj, and Baghmara. According to several homestay operators, tourists stay at their homes for a period of a day to a week, eating the local food, learning about local cultures, and in some cases participating in the day-to-day activities of the community such as feeding livestock and washing clothes. Homestay operators, who were all women in this report, unanimously agreed that tourism is disrupting cultures and traditions, however homestays have balanced these negative impacts. In their experiences, homestays offer the chance to preserve unique aspects of culture, as tourists want an authentic cultural experience. This means the homestay operators maintain traditional practices such as song and dance, cooking traditional dishes, and keeping traditional tukul houses and small farming plots functional in their communities. Respondents stated that homestays enable them to maintain some aspects of the past while benefiting from ecotourism. One homestay operator from the Tharu caste agreed that she felt more connected to her Tharu culture due to her livelihood strategy, as it gives her

and her children an incentive to continue practicing traditions. Respondents agree that homestays help to mitigate the culture loss and dilution.

A second interesting outcome of interviews regarding cultural ecotourism was the preservation of Tharu culture through the establishment of Tharu museums. The manager of the Tharu cultural museum in Kumroj believes he has maintained a closer connection to his Tharu culture due to his job in the museum. Tourists want to see authentic Tharu culture, so he and his friends who manage other Tharu museums in the buffer zone work to preserve traditional Tharu clothing, food, dance, song, and housing. The museums are also an outlet to inform tourists of the displacement that has occurred in the RCNP area, and the effects it has had on the Tharu people regarding loss of spiritual lands and home. Respondents described museums as being a representation of their lost homes.

Discussion

Results suggest that the displacement of communities, and subsequent development of the area, has had a two-fold impact on New Padampur, Kumroj, and Baghmara, affecting both livelihoods and culture. It is no surprise that respondents unanimously agreed that ecotourism has impacted traditional lifestyles and cultures of communities. Literature shows that while development often enhances health care, education, and employment, it can also cause tradition and indigenous knowledge to fall by the wayside. What is interesting about the results is the way livelihood transitions have affected beliefs about what is important in life and what components of life play the greatest role in the reproduction of home. These perceptions depended heavily on the respondent's proximity to the ecotourism hub and national park, as people farther away struggled to reap the same benefits as those living within the hub. While Baghmara and Kumroj communities are aware that tourism and modernization have diluting aspects of their diverse cultures and traditional ways of life, particularly among the younger generation, their ability to physically access jobs in the ecotourism sector has benefitted people economically and

culturally. Baghmara and Kumroj respondents agree that the societal transformations they have experienced provide new opportunities to diversify livelihood strategies, obtain more income, and devote more free time to family, community, and cultural events. With this new financial security, breadwinners can provide for their families in ways they could not in the past, producing new life purpose and goals. With the accumulation of income through new livelihood strategies, despite some loss of culture or free time, people feel empowered in their own homemaking strategies to enhance their quality of life and to engage in culture the way they want to, if at all. Life meaning for people in these communities is, therefore, reproduced through freedom of choice and ease of living that are brought about through new livelihood strategies. The role of age, caste, and gender were alluded to in interviews as factors impeding people's ability to benefit equally from new livelihood strategies, however the data is not robust enough to draw conclusions regarding this point.

In contrast, impacts have been negative for New Padampur, where community members lack prospects to diversify livelihood strategies, cannot access income-generating opportunities, and have less free time to devote to cultural or family events now than before they were displaced. Their lack of time to spend on cultural and family activities is due to the time-consuming process of shifting away from traditional lifestyles and adapting to a new workforce that continues to marginalize and overlook them. The lack of new livelihood opportunities has altered the values that give people's life meaning; rather than community festivals, communal eating, traditional dance, and social structures producing life meaning, money and savings have become the most important aspects of people's lives as they struggle to secure these. The inability to re-establish traditional livelihood strategies or to adopt new ones has limited the success of post-displacement livelihood reconstruction, impacting the process of homemaking. Without the security of food production or income generation, and without having the opportunity to develop livelihood strategies to reinforce notions of home, New Padampur faces an uphill battle of creating home a sense of belonging in the buffer zone.

These findings highlight the importance of understanding how ecotourism can limit these stresses. Community member's positive reactions to their involvement in both homestays and Tharu cultural museum management suggest that cultural tourism may be a solution for IDPs trying to maintain tradition while also establishing financial security for their families. Homestays and cultural museums offer the opportunity to boost income while maintaining a close connection to their traditions and past. Since tourists who participate in these activities tend to be interested in the cultures they are learning about, homestay operators and museum managers do not feel as though they are being exploited, but rather that they can educate others about the cultures they are proud of. Despite the criticism of cultural tourism as being exploitative, respondents who actively participate in these initiatives argue the opposite is true. While participating in ecotourism initiatives such as elephant rides, guided bird walks, and jeep safaris offer a stable income, museum and homestay management combine both aspects of money and cultural preservation. The two interviewed managers of the Tharu museums both discussed their feeling of being at home where they work, providing both their visitors and their children with information about their culture. Homestay operators also unanimously agreed that because tourists want an authentic cultural experience, their households and communities unify to preserve aspects of traditional life, including traditional housing, food, song, dance, and even farming practices. In preserving tradition, cultural tourism may offer the best solution to the conundrum faced by IDPs in the RCNP buffer zone.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The ultimate failure of displacement policy is an incomplete understanding of the intimate relationship between, and dynamic nature of, livelihoods and home in shaping people's life experiences. Financial security, while important, is not the ultimate goal of all livelihood strategies, and this misunderstanding often makes government support ineffective for addressing the stresses experienced by communities

who have been either displaced from their homes or who have witnessed the drastic transformation of their homes around them. Instead, livelihood strategies reproduce life meaning, a critical component of post-displacement homemaking. Without the reproduction of life meaning, people may be unable to establish a sense of security, belonging, or identity after displacement. Adjusting from the trauma of physical or emotional displacement is not as simple as finding a new income-generating strategy, as people still seek ways of producing meaning and a sense of home and belonging as the condition of their surroundings change. The Chitwan case study exemplifies the complexity of cultural preservation and modernization adjustment.

Livelihood strategies drastically change as communities undergo social transformations, causing hardships but also offering opportunities to re-envision life and an identity. This study concludes that homestays might provide a positive livelihood strategy for both making an income and creating life meaning through maintaining and reproducing aspects of tradition and culture. Homestays as a primary livelihood strategy in the RCNP buffer zone also offer opportunities to maintain secondary livelihood strategies such as farming. Though families no longer need to rely on traditional farming, they may choose to preserve this livelihood strategy for nostalgic reasons. Farming practices and knowledge are also highly valued by rural Nepali communities, and the ability to maintain these through homestays may offer an outlet to re-establishing a sense of home, belonging, and security post-displacement. For Parsa, homestays offer the opportunity for the community to engage with the ecotourism sector while limiting cultural dilution and generational culture loss. Thus, homestays enable communities to preserve their past while adapting to, and benefiting from, the rapid changes occurring around them.

These conclusions suggest that the double sustainability goal of the RCNP, to enhance biodiversity and preserve cultural heritage, cannot be fully achieved until marginalized people and communities in the Chitwan Valley are given greater support in their homemaking strategies. This will require that the GoN

and regional NGOs such as NTNC conduct research on which cultures are being highlighted and which are being ignored in the representation of the Chitwan Valley's cultural diversity. Failing to engage with geographically isolated and demographically marginalized people means overlooking an incredible wealth of knowledge and culture. This first and foremost puts people in jeopardy of experiencing Cerna's identified risks for a protracted period, harming their wellbeing and life satisfaction.

Additionally, ecotourism initiatives in the RCNP will fail to achieve cultural heritage preservation, affecting the success of the tourism industry that thrives on both the natural features of the area and its cultural diversity. Supporting New Padampur and other communities in a similar situation will have a two-fold benefit; improving community wellbeing and amplifying the success of the tourism industry.

Therefore, this paper recommends that the GoN and NGOs conduct further research regarding the representation of voices in the Chitwan Valley's cultural tourism industry. This paper identifies New Padampur as one marginalized community that has a population of people eager to embrace the tourism industry with unique cultures and histories, however it is likely that others exist at the periphery of the RCNP buffer zone. Once identified, these communities may benefit from community-led cultural tourism operations such as homestays and cultural museums. NTNC and other NGOs can play an important role in helping to establish sustainable cultural tourism operations that ensure equal representation of the diversity of cultures in each community. Based on information collected in this research, these actions will support critical livelihood strategies that contribute to homemaking for the resettled New Padampur community and will facilitate non-resettled communities in maintaining important aspects of their past while embracing a transforming world.

These recommendations extend to the Parsa National Park as it begins its transformation. NTNC and the GoN can prevent the hardships faced by New Padampur from affecting communities in Parsa by holding community meetings and establishing a plan for equal representation of all voices in its cultural tourism.

In many ways, Parsa is a blank canvas on which the true cultural diversity of the area can be highlighted. Through these efforts, the community will be supported in adopting new livelihood strategies and retaining aspects of traditional and culture as desired.

The conclusions of this report are robust, however the data collected in this study is not representative of the entire Chitwan Valley or of each focal community. The small sample size limits drawing conclusions about how caste, age, gender, and other demographics may affect the way and extent that internal displacement and ecotourism development affect local people in the Chitwan area. This is an important area for future research, as this data is needed to identify and invest in the most marginalized people in the area.

A more extensive study in the Chitwan area would also reinforce the conclusions of this paper regarding the recently designated Parsa National Park. With a clearer understanding of the factors that led to the internal displacement of people from the RCNP and the impacts that both conservation ecotourism development have had on those displaced and non-displaced people, vulnerabilities and risks can be mitigated more effectively in Parsa as the area transforms. Finally, a larger sample size would facilitate extrapolating the findings of this report to global instances of conservation-induced displacement or ecotourism development with more certainty. While this report draws conclusions regarding how conservation and subsequent ecotourism development affects local culture, livelihood strategies, and homemaking abilities in the Chitwan area, it does not make generalized statements about these phenomena elsewhere in the world.

It would also be beneficial to extend this research into an in-depth examination of how culture is being preserved and portrayed to tourists in homestay operations in the Chitwan buffer zone. This research would contribute to the discussion regarding authenticity and cultural preservation that questions what authentic culture is, and whether culture can be preserved given its dynamic nature. Who decides what

authentic culture is, and who is the benefactor of preserving culture from a single period? A more extensive study could also contribute to understanding the problematization of modernization; do communities themselves benefit from cultural preservation, or do scholars assume that cultural preservation is necessary? These questions are out of the scope of this paper, however the Chitwan buffer zone can serve as a unique setting in which to seek answers to some of these pressing questions.

Appendix

Questionnaire for Baghmara and Kumroj Communities

A. Demographics

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Current job or livelihood

B. Life Before National Park Declared

1. Were you born here?
2. If no: When and why did you move here?
3. Are you happy with your life here?
4. What challenges did you face?
5. Did you experience conflict with wildlife?
6. If yes, were you compensated?
7. What was your livelihood before the national park was created?

C. Life After National Park Declared

1. Do you feel your life has improved since conservation began here?
2. Do you experience less conflict with wildlife now?
3. Has your income increased?
4. Are there new challenges you face now that you didn't before the national park was created?
5. Has your community maintained its culture and traditions?

D. Perceptions of Tourism

1. Do you believe tourism has helped your community?
2. Do you believe tourism has helped the conservation of the national park?
3. Are there any negative aspects of tourism you have noticed?
4. Has tourism changed your lifestyle?
5. Has tourism impacted your culture?

E. Perceptions of Conservation

1. Does conservation in Chitwan benefit you?
2. Does conservation in Chitwan benefit the environment?
3. Is conservation more important now that tourism has grown in Chitwan?
4. Does tourism benefit conservation?
5. Is there anything that could be improved in the conservation of Chitwan and your community forest?

F. Local Perceptions of Participatory Conservation

1. Would you like to become more involved in the management of the national park?
2. If you managed the national park, are there any aspects you would change?

Questionnaire for Padampur Community

G. Demographics

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Current job or livelihood

H. Life in Old Padampur

1. Were you happy with your life in Old Padampur?
2. What challenges did you face while living in Old Padampur?
3. When you lived in Old Padampur, did you experience conflict with wildlife?
4. What was your livelihood in Old Padampur?
5. Did your community practice traditions such as dance, festivals, and cultural dress?
6. Was your community united?

I. Perceptions of Relocation

1. I understand your community requested to be relocated to New Padampur. Did you agree with this decision during that time? Why/why not?
2. What was the process of deciding to be relocated?
3. What were your feelings when the time came to be relocated?
4. What were your feelings when you found out tourism was coming to Chitwan?

J. Compensation for Relocation

1. Do you have the same amount of land now that you had in Old Padampur?
2. Did the government compensate any lost land? Was it enough?

K. Life in New Padampur

1. Do you feel your life has improved due to the relocation?
2. Does your life in New Padampur give you a feeling of security?
3. Do you experience less conflict with wildlife now?
4. Are there new challenges where you live now?
5. Has your community maintained its culture and traditions?
6. Is there unity among people in New Padampur?
7. Are you happy with your life in New Padampur?

L. Perceptions of Tourism

1. Do you believe tourism has helped your community?
2. Are there any negative aspects of tourism you have noticed?
3. Has tourism changed the way you and your community live?

M. Perceptions of Conservation

1. When you lived in Old Padampur, did you feel that conservation of the environment was important?
2. Do you believe conservation is more important now than you did when you lived in Old Padampur?

Questionnaire for Parsa Buffer Zone Communities

N. Demographics

- 1) Age
- 2) Sex
- 3) Current job or livelihood

O. Current Life

1. Were you born here?
2. If no: When and why did you move here?
3. Are you happy with your current life in Parsa?
4. What challenges do you currently face in terms of livelihood, access to clinics, education, roads...etc?
5. Were you compensated for wildlife conflicts?
6. Do you feel that the Parsa Wildlife Reserve has been successful in conserving the environment? Y/N
7. Does your community maintain traditions and cultural practices such as dance, storytelling, traditional livelihoods, and traditional social structure?

P. Perception of Transition from WR to NP

1. Were you and your community included in the decision to convert Parsa into a National Park?
2. Do you support this change?
3. What changes do you anticipate occurring due to this change, if any?
4. Is there anything you are concerned about now that Parsa will become a National Park?

Q. Perceptions of Tourism

1. Do you think tourism will affect your community's culture? Lifestyle? Livelihoods?
2. Do you think tourism in Parsa will be a good thing for the local people?
3. Do you think tourism in Parsa will be a good thing for the environment?

R. Perceptions of Conservation

1. Do you think it is important to conserve the environment in Parsa?
2. Do you believe conservation will become more important once tourism comes to Parsa?

S. Local Perceptions of Participatory Conservation

1. Would you like to become involved in the new management of the national park?
2. If you managed the national park, would you allow local people to use resources within the park?

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