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GOVERNANCE OF COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM IN BHUTAN: A CASE
STUDY OF NABJI TRAIL IN JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUCK NATIONAL PARK

By

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Post Graduate Diploma in Wildlife Management, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun

Thesis

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for the degree of

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in Resource Conservation

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ABSTRACT

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Resource Conservation

Governance of Community-Based Ecotourism in Bhutan: A Case Study of Nabji Trail in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park

Chair: Professor Jill M. Belsky

A limitation of Bhutan's controlled tourism policy of "high value, low impact" is that its benefits have not extended to rural communities in remote places. To provide such opportunities, a pilot project on community-based ecotourism known as the "Nabji Trail" was developed and opened in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP) in November 2006. The trail involves a walking tour across six villages including two ethnic groups, Monpa and Khengpa. Several tourism enterprises, including employment as porters, guides, cooks, selling handicrafts and providing cultural entertainment, are offered by local residents to raise income. Ten percent of all tourism earnings are required to be deposited into separate Community Development Funds (CDF) for the purpose of sharing benefits more widely. The funds as well as other tourism tasks are governed through village-level "Community Tourism Management Committee" (CTMC).

The few studies to date of the Nabji Trail have been fairly positive, although there has been a suggestion that governance issues may pose problems. This study aimed to provide an in-depth analysis of governance of the Nabji ecotourism trail with particular attention to the operation of the "Community Tourism Management Committee" (CTMC), and the distribution and benefits of the "Community Development Funds" (CDF) across the six participating villages. It also sought to understand household benefit and involvement in ecotourism in the context of their broader household livelihood activities. Questionnaires were developed and administered through personal interviews by the author to a random sample of 33% (N=68) of the total households in the six villages along the Trail, and to all available CTMC members (N=12). Data also included personal observations of conditions along the trail.

Participation as well as economic benefit was higher among households in the three Monpa villages compared to households in the three Khengpa villages. This is because household food security is higher and alternative income earning opportunities are more available for Khengpa households.

Four cross-cutting issues were found to influence tourism governance capabilities in the six villages: 1) lack of stable participation of Community Tourism Management

Committee (CTMC), 2) residents distrust of CTMC due to the misuse of Community Development Funds (CDF), 3) unequal wages for porter and pack pony services between villages, and 4) delinquent payments for porter and pack pony service. Many residents view the CTMCs as inefficient and ineffectual. The evidence suggests that there are many local governance problems that warrant assistance from the extra-local partners who helped to establish the ecotourism project and are responsible for oversight, including Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP), the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) and the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB). The study recommends their involvement to conduct a comprehensive review of CDF and CTMC bylaws and practices as well as intervene on a range of other local disputes that have emerged since the project began.

Acronyms

ABTO	Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators
CDF	Community Development Fund
CTMC	Community Tourism Management Committee
GEF	Global Environment Fund
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Plan
ITM	International Tourism Monitor
JSWNP	Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park
NCD	Nature Conservation Division
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NRED	Nature Recreation and Ecotourism Division
Nu.	Ngultrum, Bhutanese Currency (US\$1=Nu.44)
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RNRRC	Renewal Natural Resource Research Center
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TCB	Tourism Council of Bhutan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

Glossary

Ara	Local beverage
Chepon	Village messenger
Chhu	River
Dzongkhag	District
Geog	Block (Sub-district)
Gup	Elected Head of Geog
Khengpa	People of Nabji, Korphu and Nimshong
Kheng kha	Dialect of Khengpa community
Lhakang	Temple
Monpa	People of Jangbi, Wangling, Phrumzur
Mon kha	Dialect of Monpa
Tshechu	Annual Festival
Tseri	Shifting Cultivation
Tshogpa	Elected Village Head man

Chapter 1

Background

1. 1 Introduction

Tourism in Bhutan is permitted on a controlled basis complying with the “high value low impact” policy adopted in 1974 (RGoB, 2001). Bhutan hosted its highest number of tourists in 2010 totaling 28,463 international arrivals. This was an increase of more than 13,000 tourists compared with 2009 arrivals (Kuenselonline, February 11, 2011). Out of 27,707 tourist arrivals in 2009, only 72 tourists visited the very rural Nabji trail (TCB, 2009). Most tourists remain in urban areas; rural communities benefit very little from tourism (Gurung, 2008). Even villages located along the most popular trekking routes such as Jomolhari and Gangkar Puensum in northern Bhutan benefit little from tourism (RGoB, 2008; Gurung *et al.* 2008).

To meet the national tourism policy objective to provide income rural people, the Nabji trail ecotourism project was developed in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP) (Namgyel, 2005; DoT, 2007). It was the first of its kind in the country. It is an ecotourism project because its objectives, and the activities designed to meet the objectives, are concerned with maintaining cultural and ecological processes while earning tourism income. The Nabji ecotourism project builds on existing park strategies to assist resident park communities known as Integrated Conservation and Development Programs (ICDP), whose goals are to foster economic activities which provide supplemental income while enhancing the protection of ecological and cultural resources. The community-based approach is to build local capacity to be directly involved in

tourism management and ideally, to direct the effort to benefit local communities and households. The goal is to overtime reduce the need for outside assistance.

The Nabji community-based ecotourism project was a product of many agencies and people, in and beyond Bhutan. These include the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO), Department of Tourism (DoT) presently renamed into Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB), Wildlife Conservation Division (WCD) formerly known as Nature Conservation Division (NCD), Trongsa district, Korphu and Langthel sub-districts, representatives from the six participating villages and staff members from JSWNP, including a researcher and a tourism consultant from SNV, Bhutan. The Global Environment Fund (GEF) under United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and Tourism Development Fund (TDF) of Tourism Council of Bhutan funded the project. The five-day trekking trail is open seasonally from early winter (November) through early spring (April). DoT, JSWNP, ABTO, WCD and a consultant, were involved in designing the project and setting up physical infrastructure. The author as well was involved in setting up the project during its early planning and implementation stages.

The Nabji trail consists of a five-day trek through six villages, crossing beautiful and diverse forests, incredibly rich flora and fauna, farms, and cultural sites. The distance between campsites is about a 4-7 hour hike. The six villages have a combined population of 1352 people (RGoB, 2005). The trail officially opened in 2006. In that year campsites were constructed in the villages of Jangbi, Kuda, Nabji, Korphu and Nimshong. Every campsite includes basic amenities such as camping grounds to accommodate 5-6 four-person tents, water tap, toilets, a separate kitchen furnished with utensils, and a covered

pavilion for various uses such as dining and cultural performances. The campsites are located close to each village.

Governance of the Nabji trail was set up to involve many levels from national to local community, with the “top” playing a large role in establishment and ongoing oversight. At the community level, a local governing body called the ‘Community Tourism Management Committee’ (CTMC) was set up in each village and was comprised of 5-6 resident representatives. They were to be elected democratically from each village with both men and women eligible. The prime reason for setting up CTMCs was to develop local capacity to govern ecotourism activities in their respective villages. The responsibilities of CTMC are to manage the campsite and trail, administer ecotourism services, allocate the community development fund (CDF) and bridge the communication gap between communities and other stakeholders related to ecotourism issues and management interventions. The tenure of CTMC members is 1-2 years as specified in the bylaws that were crafted in consultation with the local communities (Namgyel, 2005). The CTMC hires members from each village to provide tourism services. These include employment as porters, guides, cooks, selling handicrafts and providing cultural entertainment.

Each CTMC established a local financial institution called the ‘Community Development Fund’ (CDF) for the purpose of holding and distributing tourism revenue in ways that benefit the local households and community. With seed money contributed by a tourism consultant, five CDF accounts were opened in the Bhutan Development Fund Corporation (BDFC) at Trongsa. The main source of CDF funds are campsite fees (US\$ 7 per tourist per night) and ten percent (10%) of total revenue generated from tourism

services. The revenue includes income earned from rotational porters, guides and cooks, which are mandatory services for all tourists who hike the Nabji trail. Optional services and additional revenue sources include cultural entertainment, stone bathes, and the sale of local farm products and handicrafts. (See appendix 1). As per the bylaws, the CDF is obligated to equitably distribute tourism revenues through various schemes including providing individual loans, supporting community or communal activities, and pay compensation for crop damage and livestock depredation by wildlife as funds are available.

A modest, but declining number of international tourists have trekked the Nabji Trail each year since it began in November 2006. In the first year, 45 international tourists visited the park; it increased two folds (91 tourists) in 2007; in 2008 there were 84, and the number declined to 59 in 2009 (ABTO, 2010).

Since its inception there have been a few studies conducted to provide information about socioeconomic impacts associated with ecotourism activities, as well as on governance processes. These studies found strong interest in ecotourism among the participating communities (DoT, 2007, Gurung, *et al.* 2009). The DoT (2007) found that tourism along the Nabji trail had produced income but led to income disparities across households in the participating villages despite CTMC's involvement in administering the ecotourism activities and their efforts to equitably offer income generating opportunities. The study also noted conflicts in the CDF governance by CTMCs in two of these six villages, so much so that Phrumzur and Nabji village residents voted no confidence in the capacity of their CTMC to govern their respective CDF accounts. Importantly, Gurung and Seeland (2009) noted that tourism revenue earned from the

porter and pony wages and sale of local products is very low in comparison to off-farm wages in the participating villages of the Nabji trail.

While suggesting important governance challenges and socioeconomic benefits, these studies do not provide specific detail on the main institutions for community management (i.e., CTMCs) and allocating tourism funds for community-wide benefits (CDFs). Also the trail has been in operation for two additional years since the last study has been conducted. Nonetheless there are plans underway for developing new community-based ecotourism projects elsewhere in the country (e.g. Wangchuck Centennial Park). As such, it is critical to have more recent information about community management and benefit, as well as lessons from the experience of the Nabji trail to inform new ecotourism efforts elsewhere in the country, and especially those intended to meaningfully involve and benefit rural residents and communities.

1.2 Study objectives

The main objective of this study is to provide in-depth analysis of governance of the Nabji ecotourism trail with a particular focus on the operation of the “Community Tourism Management Committee” (CTMC) and the distribution and benefits of the “Community Development Funds” (CDF) across the six participating villages; it also aims to suggest relevant and feasible recommendations to resolve reported conflicts. The study also sought to provide information on socioeconomic impacts and other challenges since the earlier studies have been conducted, especially data on household benefit and involvement in tourism in the context of their broader household livelihood activities.

1.3 Research questions

Three main research questions guided the study. These are:

Q1. How are ecotourism services and activities actually governed along the Nabji trail including management of service activities, setting prices and wages, collecting funds from ecotourism service providers, bookkeeping, and allocating income from the community development fund? How is it working and how can these be improved?

Q2. How do households in the participating communities perceive the governance of the Nabji trail, especially the operation of the local community tourism management committee (CTMCs) and community development funds (CDFs)? How is it working and how can these be improved?

Q3. What is the trend in household income generation from the Nabji trail ecotourism activities, especially in the context of its alternative livelihood strategies? Are project goals being realized and if not, how can these be improved?

The study aimed to answer these questions for each of the six participating communities, and also to identify where they exist key differences between villages as well as across the two major ethnic groups which inhabit the area, Mongpa and Khengpa, which are explained in more detail below. But first some key literature is presented on what is known about governance opportunities and challenges associated with community-based ecotourism, generally and in the Himalayan region.

Chapter 2

Literature review: Community Participation and Governance of Tourism in National Parks and Protected Areas

Ecotourism has been widely touted by developing countries as a tool for livelihood improvement of local people in conjunction with supporting the goals of biodiversity conservation in and around national parks and protected areas (Buckley, 2004; Fennell, 1999; Garrard, 2003; Weaver, 2001). A community-based approach has been suggested as particularly relevant to local livelihoods because of the promise to provide a better chance than top-down or state-led projects to enable local residents to participate in the design of ecotourism activities including local governance and benefits (Campbell, 2002; Murphy, 1988; Ross & Wall, 1999; Scheyvens, 2002). Some scholars assert that income benefits from ecotourism vary with the level of community participation as well with the types of tourism activities (Tosun, 2000). Others suggest that community involvement alone is not enough to insure successful ecotourism projects (Blackstock, 2005; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005; Li, 2006), specifically that community involvement does not in itself ensure the delivery of benefits to all groups within a community. The distribution of tourism income is also influenced by relations and communication with the private sector, including investors, developers, planners and managers from outside the community (Murphy, 2003).

Simpson (2008) argues that despite those who think the potential of community – based ecotourism is high, there are also many potential problems. Particularly significant challenges include: conflicting stakeholder agendas and jealousies, internal power

struggles and the capture of benefits by local elites (Blackstock, 2005; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005; Wyllie, 1998). Unequal revenue distribution and increased gaps between rich and poor within a community have been root causes of social conflicts in many community ecotourism projects (Cousins *et al.*, 2004; Belsky 1999). There are also significant gender differences in both the extent to which women, especially women of marginal socio-economic status, participate and benefit from community-based ecotourism efforts (Belsky, 2003).

The governance of ecotourism in parks and protected areas varies across the world. According to Graham, *et al.* (2003), governance is a process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine whom they involve in that process and how they keep accountable for their actions. Graham *et al.* (2003) suggests four governance models for protected areas: (1) government management; (2) multi-stakeholder management; (3) private management and (4) traditional community management. They suggest that government management can occur through two general approaches: (a) a national, provincial, state or municipal government agency or (b) delegated management from government to some other body. Multi-stakeholder management can occur as: (a) collaborative management or (b) joint management. Private management can occur as: (a) individuals; (b) not-for-profit organizations or (c) for-profit corporations. Traditional community management can occur with: (a) indigenous peoples or (b) local communities. While Eagles (2009) states that these approaches to tourism can be highly politicized, with strong views expressed according to one's philosophy of governance, More (2005) suggests that only public ownership will allow for or facilitate societal equity.

Public involvement, institutional development, transparency of decision making procedures, representation of divergent interests, conflict resolution, limits of authority, and leadership accountability challenge tourism governance in all four of the ecotourism management approaches described above (Frischtak, 1994). Graham *et al.* (2003) and Eagles (2009) assert that tourism management models should be structured using governance principles developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 1997). These principles are public participation, consensus orientation, strategic vision, responsiveness to stakeholders, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability to the public and stakeholders, transparency, equity and rule of law (Eagles, 2009).

Palmer (1998) classified two kinds of governance in tourism: formal and informal. Formal governance systems in tourism imply reliance on a prescribed system of rules or some form of legal intervention. For instance, the governance of the community fund of Chambok community-based ecotourism in Cambodia has been considered a success (Halley, *et al.*, 2006). People from nine host villages decide how funds will be used in the pursuit of common benefits (e.g., education, irrigation and meeting halls), while a committee that comprises nine members is actively involved in book keeping. In order to make a decision on any expenditure other than running costs, at least eight members of the committee must be in agreement. In order to ensure transparency and accountability of the Chambok community-based ecotourism fund, a superior local institutional body, the 'Natural Resource Management Committee' (NRMC), was formed by representatives from the community forest (CF), community protected area (CPA), community-based ecotourism (CBET), women's group, commune council, forest administration (FA) and the national park office. At the beginning of each year, the

committee prepares an annual plan regarding how community funds will be spent with clear objectives. Monthly reports are produced on income and expenditures which is publicly displayed and distributed to all stakeholders (Halley, *et al.*, 2006). This highly participative governance is believed to enhance the effectiveness of the local institutional body at the village level (PCP, 2007).

The effectiveness of local institutions also greatly depends upon individual leadership capabilities and experience managing common revenues. If leadership and experience are lacking, trust and cohesion in local communities are often weak (Jones, 2005, Eagles, 2009). Criticism and distrust regarding the leadership and experience of CTMCs who manage CDFs in villages along the Nabji trail has been recorded (DoT, 2007) and may be pose challenges to the performance and local term viability of the Nabji ecotourism project.

Chapter 3

Research Setting

3.1 Study sites

Located in the southern part of the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP), the study area, “Nabji trail”, traverses through six villages inhabited by two different ethnic groups: Monpa and Khengpa. The Monpa villages include Jangbi, Wangling and Phrumzur, and the Khengpa villages include Nimshong, Nabji and Korphu. Khengpa and Monpa villages are distinct but are nonetheless highly connected by culture and are often referred to below as comprising two major “communities” (i.e., as communities of identity if not precisely communities of shared geography or place). Both Monpa and Khengpa communities are located in the west bank of the Mangdi chhu (River) that forms the physical boundary of the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP). The six villages along the Nabji trail are located at 1100 to 1500 meters above sea level. Subtropical broadleaf forests are the dominate vegetation type with some Chir pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) forest scattered in the Monpa area. Some of the common wildlife species include Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*), Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), Himalayan black bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) Sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*), Rufous-necked hornbills (*Aceros nipalensis*) and several reptile species.

The Monpa and Khengpa areas share the same climatic conditions. The maximum temperature is recorded at 30.7⁰ C in September, with lows of 7.3⁰ C in November. Summer trekking in these areas is unpleasant due to heavy monsoon rains and leech

infestations (TCB, 2006). Dry and pleasant weather in winter is very amicable for trekking.

The Monpa are often referred to the earliest inhabitants of Bhutan. According to Denup and Chhoedup (2002), the Monpas are a close-knit community who work in groups and share a joint family system. The Monpa speak Mon kha, but their unique local dialect may be declining given the growing preference in Bhutan for the national dialect called 'Dzongkha' over the last decade and broader modernization trends (personal correspondence, 2005, Kuensel online, 2008). In the past they used to wear traditional clothing called Pagay (woven with fibers of nettle plants), but they discontinued wearing this about two decades ago. The Monpa are also among the least educated and poorest of Bhutan's population as their formal education only began in 1996 (Gibilisco, *et al.*, 2003). The Monpa are said to have successfully maintained much of their unique socio-cultural traditions and ethnicity, in large part because of their remote location and strong connection to the forest (Denup and Chhoedup (2002). These factors as well as fame as the earliest inhabitants of Bhutan make them an attractive place and people to tourists.

The Khengpa in contrast speak Kheng kha, a similar dialect to the Kheng region of Zhemgang district. The Kheng villages are more populated and less traditional than the Monpa in terms of their ways of making a living, culture and interaction with the rest of the country.

All three villages of the Khengpa community have one to two Tshopgpa depending on the size of the village.

A group of villages is headed by the Mangi Ap (Village headman) who is under the direct administrative authority of the Gup (Local Governor) in the Geog. Since all three villages of the Monpa community are very small (ranging from 9-15 households) they do not have an elected Mangi Ap at present. In the Khengpa community, each village is headed by the Mangi Ap. The Mangi Ap regularly attends and assists the Gup in carrying out administration work. The Gup is the overall head of several groups of villages that represent in the district governing body called Dzongkhag (district). The Monpa community is under the Geog administration of Langthil Geog office located at just outside the park while the Korphu Geog Office that administers three Khengpa villages is located at Nabji inside the park. Both Geogs are under the administrative authority of the Trongsa district. The Khengpa community consists of 210 households with 1091 people, while the Monpa community consists of 43 households with 261 people (RGoB, 2005). Korphu, Nabji and Kuda villages are located roughly two-days walking distance from the nearest road. These villages are connected by trail and suspension bridges over rivers. See the map (Fig 1) for the location of the villages along the Nabji trail.

3.3 Livelihood and farming practices

The Monpas were historically hunters and fruit gatherers who relied heavily on forest resources including selling handicrafts made from forest products (Giri, 2004). They own little arable land compared to the Khengpa who are more able to practice

irrigated farming of paddy and maize. The Khengpa also rear a significant number of cattle for dairy products while the Monpa earn income from selling handicrafts made from cane and bamboo. Both communities engage in off-farm wage labor when opportunities are available (Giri, 2004; Spirienburg *et al.*, 2002; TCB, 2006; Department of Tourism, Ministry of Trade and Industry 2007).

A dieback of cardamom production in 1999 compelled Khengpa villagers to return to collection and sale of non-Timber Forests Products (NTFPs) for revenue generation (Spirienburg *et al.*, 2002). While the Monpa still depend on forest for cane and bamboo for income, the practice of hunting has been severely restricted in recent decades by the Forest and Nature Conservation Act (1995) of Royal Government of Bhutan. Resin tapping of Chir pines which was a major revenue source until 2000 (Sperienburg, *et al.*, 2002) and remains a supplementary source for many Monpa people. The Department of Forests and Park Services (DFPS) banned resin tapping in 2000 due to the adverse impacts on the Chir pine forest. Since then cane and bamboo management projects have been initiated in Monpa communities in an effort to increase household incomes.

3.4 Research preparation

Before beginning the study, I discussed my research proposal with the Chief Forestry Officer of the Wildlife Conservation Division (WCD). I extended informal discussions with other officials of the Nature Recreational and Ecotourism Division (NRED), Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) and Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO). After discussing the research with these agencies, I reviewed it with

the Director of Forests and Park Services (DFPS). Approval for conducting the study was provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest Services (MoAFS). Subsequently, I sought the consent of village Tshogpas from all six villages of the Monpa and Khengpa communities. I modified the study and survey work plan based on suggestions provided by the Tshogpas.

3.5 Research and sampling design

The research design involved mixed methods including both primary and secondary data, and analysis at multiple scales involved in governing the Nabji Trail effort. The primary data collection involved face-to-face interviews at two levels - household and Community Tourism Management Committee (CTMC) members in all six participating villages. I developed two separate questionnaires: one targeted for households and one for members of the CTMC (See appendix 2 & 3). Both questionnaires involved open and close-ended questions. I applied a simple random sampling technique (Nyaupane and Thapa, 2004) to select households to interview from a list of all households in each village. I obtained the list of households from the census registry at the relevant Geog. I sampled approximately every third household to form 25% samples from each village. This random sampling method was used in the villages had more than 15 households. In the case of villages with less than 15 households, all households were interviewed (Jangbi and Phrumzur villages). In cases where the selected sample household member was not present, I adjusted by selecting the next household on the census list. Thus, 25% households were sampled in each village. I interviewed either the elder male or female household head depending upon who was present and available to participate at the time I visited

Before beginning the actual interviews and surveys, I pre-tested the questionnaires at Jangbi village of the Monpa community and got feedback from my advisors regarding interviewing techniques. I revised the questionnaire as needed before beginning the actual data collection in October 2010.

3.5.1 Household interviews

As noted previously, I used two questionnaires. One targeted households and the other Community Tourism Management Committee (CTMC) members. A total of 68 households (N=68) were sampled representing 33% of the total households (N=206) from the entire study area (i.e., households residing along the Nabji trail). Table 1 summarizes the number of households interviewed in each village.

Table 1: Total number of household samples

Geog	Village	Total households	Household sampled	Male	Female
<i>Monpa</i>					
Langthil	Jangbi	9	9 (100%)	0	7
	Wangling	16	4 (25%)	4	0
	Phrumzur	14	14 (100%)	14	0
<i>Khengpa</i>					
Korphu	Nimshong	56	14 (25%)	10	4
	Nabji	54	13 (25%)	6	7
	Korphu	57	14 (25%)	11	3

In Korphu village there were 71 households, but 12 houses were abandoned and the inhabitants were reported to have resettled in different districts. Those households had

not participated in any tourism activities (Korphu CTMC Secretary, pers. comm). Therefore, these households were not included in the study.

In Korphu more male respondents were interviewed because women were engaged in rice thrashing in paddy fields at the time. It is also possible that males wanted to make a point about the dearth of tourists in Korphu village, which I realized in the course of interviews. The reason for dominant male's participation from Phrumzur village of the Monpa community may be because men understand and speak better Dzongkha than women which is the national language and the language in which all interviews were conducted. I recognize a potential bias in talking mostly with men.

3.5.2 Community Tourism Management Committee (CTMC) interviews

From the beginning, every Community Tourism Management Committee (CTMC) was to consist of a minimum of five members. All CTMC members were targeted for interviews but in a few cases it was not possible to arrange interviews with all members. In Wangling this was because one CTMC member was bed ridden during the survey and one member from Nabji was in a herdsman camp, located about three days walk from the village during the entire study period. Other than these two cases, all CTMC members were interviewed. The profile of the CTMC sample is provided below in table 2.

Table 2. Total number of CTMC members interviewed across five CTMCs

CTMC	Village	Current CTMC Members	#s interviewed
<i>Monpa</i>			
Jangbi	Jangbi	3	3
	Wangling	2	1
Phrumzur	Phrumzur	3	3
<i>Khengpa</i>			
Nimshong	Nimshong	2	2
Nabji	Nabji	3	2
Korphu	Korphu	1	1

All of the CTMCs were operating with less than the desired number of five or more members. This was because some members had stepped down for various reasons which I discuss below in the results section.

3.6 Data analysis

The questionnaire data were analyzed by coding and entering answers into a spreadsheet and using Microsoft Excel 2008 for descriptive statistics, charts and tables. I report the results below.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the main results of the research. The findings of the study are provided in three sections following my main questions. The first section pertains to tourism governance, with a special focus on how income from the Community Development Fund (CDF) is accounted for and distributed in each village. The second section pertains to household involvement in tourism and economic impacts of tourism from the services provided. The third section is concerned with household profiles, livelihood strategies regarding food sources and food security, and household income. The results are reported both in terms of villages but also across the two main ethnic groups or communities: Monpa and Khenpa. Again, Monpa refers to those in Jangbi, Wangling and Phrumzur villages and Khenpa refers to households in the villages of Nimshong, Nabji and Korphu. This distinction enables attention to household and village-level differences but also to those related to tourism activities which cut across household and village based on ethnicity.

This first section reports results on governance of ecotourism activities along the Nabji trail on procedures for setting prices/wages, collecting surcharge from ecotourism service providers, bookkeeping and operation by the two major governance committees: 'Community Tourism Management Committee' (CTMC). It pays attention to the influence of extra-community agencies involved in setting up the trail including JSWNP, sub-district and district agencies, TCB, ABTO and other NGOs. I then discuss the major

issues I found pertaining to the governance especially involving accounting and allocation of community development funds (CDF) across the six villages.

4.2 Governance of Tourism Services along the Nabji Trail: Community Tourism

Management Committee (CTMC)

As noted above, governance of community tourism activities was to be multi-scaled and multi-sectoral including representatives on committees from the local to national levels. At the community level is the local governing body called the 'Community Tourism Management Committee' (CTMC). It is supposed to be comprised of 5-6 representatives (either men and women) elected from each village. In some CTMCs (i.e., Phrumzur village of the Monpa community and Nimshong, Nabji and Korphu of Khengpa community), local authorities are also elected to the CTMC. These include the Tshogpa and Mangi Ap who are under the administrative authority of the local Geog.

The prime reason for setting up a CTMC is to develop local capacity to govern tourism activities in their respective village. The responsibilities of CTMC include managing campsites and trails, administering rotational porter services, governing the community development fund (CDF) and providing communication between communities and other stakeholders related to tourism issues and management intervention. The tenure of CTMC members is 1-2 years as specified in the bylaws that were crafted in consultation with the local communities (Namgyel, 2005). The CTMC hire members from each village to provide tourism services including employment as porters, guides, cooks, selling handicrafts and providing cultural entertainment. They

don't have to do it the same way in each village. For example the CTMCs have different ways of arranging porters for tourists. The Nabji CTMC has entrusted the village Chepons (village messenger) appointed by Geog administration. In Nimshong, the CTMC Accountant is responsible for porter arrangement. While in Korphu the CTMC Secretary does it because a general member who has been entrusted for has resigned two years ago.

The study found key differences across the villages and Monpa-Khenga communities regarding the performance of CTMCs. Respondents from the Monpa villages with one exception reported the CTMCs were largely carrying out their responsibilities. They said they were playing a vital role in carrying out the trail and campsite maintenance as well as making porter arrangements. The CTMC members reportedly met at the end of every tourist season with local people to inform them about the status of the CDF. However, in Wangling village it seems there never was a meeting convened over the last four years. In Phrumzur, the three CTMC members were particularly active with dual responsibilities. The Accountant is an acting Secretary, while two other members serve as a guide and cook, respectively. There appears to be good cooperation amongst the CTMC members in these communities based on the interviews. No one from Phrumzur or Kuda villages raised any issues of concern against CTMC members.

In the Khengpa community, with the exception of Jangbi, CTMC membership is in flux in all communities with negative implications for its ability to carry out its duties. The Secretary of Phrumzur CTMC stepped down due to health reasons while members

from Nimshong and Korphu resigned because they said there was lack of cooperation, lack of respect among members and no incentives for membership.

In Korphu, CTMC members resigned membership due to a lack tourism. All CTMC members interviewed spoke of a growing lack of confidence in CTMC fund management, concern over the misuse of CDF monies, and low motivation to convene meetings with local people to provide updates on CDF needs or to address tourism associated concerns that local residents may have in general.

4.3 The Pilot Community Tourism Steering Committee (PCTSC)

The Pilot Community Tourism Steering Committee or PCTSC was intended to play a vital administrative role in the governance of the Nabji trail. The TCB was to help facilitate visa processing for tourists while ABTO would help obtain route permits for park entry and permits from the Nature Recreation and Ecotourism Division (NRED) (formerly the responsibility of NCD). The NRED was to inform JSWNP about tourist visits in advance and make arrangements for porters. The JSWNP head office was to then inform the concerned Park Ranger office to ensure that tour groups possess the necessary permits and other documents. The TCB in collaboration with WCD and JSWNP were supposed to help with “monitoring.” They were also supposed to monitor and insure local level governance and especially that CDF money were not misused.

A key finding of this study is that such monitoring is sorely lacking and there is concern in both the Monpa and Khengpa communities involving all six villages about misuse of community development funds (CDF). The most egregious and disturbing examples of the lack of monitoring noted by survey respondents was that all five CTMCs

have not had any monitoring by park management, TCB or the ABTO officials, and in all communities there were reports that there are outstanding debts owed by tour operators for porter and pony services provided; and that nothing is being with regard to payment of those services.

4.4 Governance of Community Development Fund (CDF)

The Community Development Fund or CDF was initially developed as a major institution for communities to collectively benefit from tourism and thus support it. The study found problems across all of the six villages of the Monpa and the Khengpa communities with regard to the governance of the CDF.

4.4.1. CDF Governance in the Monpa Community

The Monpa have two separate CDF accounts: the Jangbi Community Development Fund (CDF), a joint venture for both Jangbi and Wangling villages, and Phrumzur Community Development Fund (CDF). The most important source of CDF contribution by the Monpa is the campsite fee collection from the tourists. The campsite fee (Nu.300 or US\$ 7 per night for each tourist) has become as significant a revenue source for CDF contributions since its revision in 2007 as the surcharge contribution from tourism service providers. The Phrumzur CDF had accumulated Nu. 67000.00 (US\$ 1523) as of 2010, while the Jangbi CDF had a total of Nu. 65000 (US\$ 1480). Both CDFs have been mobilized to address community expenses and to cover tourist kitchen expenses (i.e., liquid petroleum gas to cook meals for tourists). Nu. 3500.00 (US\$ 80) was invested in construction of a prayer wheel (lhakhang) in Jangbi community. In Phrumzur approximately Nu. 2300.00 (US\$52.40) was invested to cover the cost of

liquid petroleum gas and purchase a set of plates for the campsite. They also spent CDF monies to purchase a pot and a pair of cymbals for the Phrumzur Community lhakhang (temple). Apart from this, CDF monies have been used for communication expenses (e.g., prepaid voucher for cell phone) to help schedule porter and pack pony services within and outside the village (from the record of CTMC Accountant).

In Jangbi, Nu. 30000.00 (US\$ 682) was disbursed from the CDF as an interest-free loans to several individuals. In addition, some households from Jangbi and Wangling were lent some undetermined amount of money for funeral costs, to purchase pack horses, for new house construction, and to run a rice mill according to CTMC members from Jangbi.

Knowledge about how CDF funds are allocated as well as direct benefit in the Monpa villages are very mixed. Over 75% of the respondents from the Monpa communities were aware of their respective CDF, but only about 25% of them knew how the funds had been allocated; the remainder said they were uncertain whether CDF monies had been spent or not.. The study reveals that approximately 20% of the household respondents from Jangbi and Wangling benefited through getting access to an individual CDF loan. In contrast, few in Phrumzur and Kuda said that they know about how the CDF was being spent or who in the community benefits.

Opinions varied regarding how decisions were made to use CDF monies in the different Monpa villages as well. More than half of the respondents from the Monpa community state that the CTMC accountant alone decided and approved the allocation of CDF funds in their village. In contrast, about 11% of respondents from Jangbi and half

on those from Wangling reported that the CDF fund is managed and operated jointly by the CTMC Secretary and Accountant. This has been due to logistical problems such as finding a common time to hold a meeting. Occasionally, the Jangbi CTMC accountant reportedly decided and approved CDF loans, and then later informed CTMC members and local people in meetings. In the case of Phrumzur and Kuda, 25% of survey respondents stated that the Secretary and Accountant approved and allocated CDF monies, while 22% said that they were not aware of how funding/loan decisions were made.

Approximately 75% of the Jangbi CTMC members stated that it was necessary to involve all CTMC members in decision making and approving the CDF while 25% stated that they thought it inconvenient for all CTMC members to become involved in decision-making when someone urgently needs a loan. In the case of the Phrumzur CDF, 75% of CTMC members were comfortable with the present practice of CDF decision-making where all CTMC members are involved in the process and they then inform Kuda and Phrumzur village residents in subsequent meetings. However, 25% of respondents from Kuda and Phrumzur stated that they wanted to know about and consent to CDF decisions prior to the granting of CDF loans or other decisions by the CTMC.

One CTMC member strongly stated the need to involve a village Tshogpa (village head man) from Phrumzur although he is a Geog representative. He reasons that village Tshogpa is elected by Kuda and Phrumzur people and will thus strengthen CDF transparency as the village Tshogpa could update people in any gathering as he is always involved. Two CTMC members stated that they think a JSWNP Ranger should be an observer because as an outside member of the government body a ranger could help

insure the repayment of loans. However, not all respondents shared this view; one CTMC member did not feel outsiders should be involved with CTMC management decisions because the CDF is not related to outside agencies. It is also noteworthy that the Monpa community, in general, does not welcome Geog administration involvement because they distrust Geog administration as a powerful local political body.

4.4. 2 CDF Governance in the Khengpa Community

Each of the three Kheng villages, Nimshong, Nabji and Korphu, keep separate CDF accounts. The most important source for CDF contributions here too is campsite fees as reported by the respondents. But Korphu CDF has received the least contribution from the campsite since tourists make only a day visit from Nabji and do not stay overnight. More than 90% of the respondents from all Kheng villages were aware of CDF account and its governance procedures.

The Nabji CDF account had Nu.130000.00 (US\$ 2955) as of November 2010 which was far greater than either Nimshong and Korphu. The reason for the large amount in the Nabji CDF is that most of the tourist groups camp for two night at the Nabji site, whereas tourist typically stay only a single night in other sites. The Koprhu CDF has accumulated Nu.17000 (US\$ 386). A few groups of tourist make a day visit but rarely camp at Korphu. The reason for just a day visit by tourists could be the short distance which would otherwise require paying full days wages for the porter and pack pony services. In Nimshong, the CDF account total accumulated was Nu. 89780 (US\$ 2040) as of July 2010. This village is never bypassed by tourist groups and therefore earns revenue from campsite fees which account for the majority of their CDF contributions.

All three Khengpa villages have used the CDF to meet the ongoing cost for their kitchens including purchasing gas for use in cooking meals for tourists and for minor maintenance of structures at the campsites. However, there were reports of CDF misuse by CTMC members. In Nabji a former CTMC member never repaid a loan. Similarly, in Nimshong CTMC members were viewed as not depositing surcharges into the CDF account on time. When questioned about his belated payments and cause of concern among residents, he said,

“I, apart from being a CTMC accountant, am also employed as Nismhong School cook and have been always engaged. It’s very difficult for me to find a time to deposit the collected surcharges into the CDF account at Trongsa Bank. So, I deposit it at the end of the tourist season”.

In this case the CDF money is retained at least six months with the accountant and there is a chance of misuse or misplacement. Importantly there is large suspicion by Nimshong residents.

As in the Monpa community, knowledge about the CDF and its benefit to the Kheng villages is also mixed. In Nimshong and Nabji villages, only 23% of the respondents were aware about CDF expenses in their respective villages. In all three Khengpa villages, about 60% of respondents stated that CDF monies had not been used for any communal or community activity while the remainder said that they really do not know about the CDF use. Approximately 85% of respondents from the Khengpa communities stated that the CDF has not benefited them through any communal activity or individual loans. In contrast, only 7% of respondents shared the views on CDF

benefits for campsite maintenance, which otherwise community members would be required to contribute through labor for fencing and roofing needs. In Nabji, less than one-fourth of the respondents were aware or of approved CDF monies used for purchasing private land for a campsite

Local residents' opinions regarding how decisions are made to use the CDF varied among the three Kheng villages. In Korphu and Nimshong, 53% of the household respondents stated that the CTMC Secretary maximizes his authority to decide and approve the CDF use. This perception is supported by the fact that the CTMC accountant from Nimshong accused the Nimshong CTMC Secretary of unilaterally deciding and approving how and whom to disburse loans in the village. However, the accountant said he always asks for written approval to avoid possible conflicts when making payments.

About one-third of the respondents from Nabji and Nimshong were of the opinion that the CTMC Secretary and Accountant make decision on CDF use without involving other CTMC members. Interestingly, more than one-third of the respondents from Nabji perceived that all Nabji CTMC members and the Nabji community are equally involved in decision-making and approval of CDF use. This perception was supported by a Nabji CTMC member who insisted that two village Tshogpas of Nabji have been involved in the process of CDF decision-making and approval in the presence of all household representatives from Nabji village.

As noted above, the decision over CDF use varies due to the lack of clear processes for CDF approval. As a result, it is not surprising that residents from Kheng villages suspect misuse of the CDF monies. The CTMC invited an investigation team

comprising a representatives from Korphu Geog administration, the Nabji Park Range office at Nabji, and Renewal Natural Resources Research Center (RNRRC) at Nimshong village to cross check the CDF accounts in all three Kheng villages. This suggests that there is a need to establish clear rules and procedures and transparent processes for CDF fund management and dispersal by CTMC members and villages in both Khengpa and Monpa communities.

4.5 Local residents' suggestions and recommendations for CDF governance

Greater CDF benefit sharing is a concern in all six villages, but few people have spoken publically about their concerns and no public meetings have been held to discuss the financial decision making processes, problems or concerns. All five CTMCs have adopted different processes for deciding and approving CDF allocations. This has resulted in lapses in allocating, deciding and disbursing CDF monies. In view of this, household respondents and CTMC members in the six villages offered a number of specific recommendations to deal with the problems. Household respondent and CTMC member recommendations include:

- Jangbi and Wangling CTMC members suggested drawing an agreement for loan repayment between the CTMC and borrowers in order to insure timely repayments.
- Jangbi and Wangling CTMC members recommended that all households (representatives) approve any and all CDF expenditures, loans, etc. prior to disbursing funds..

- Jangbi and Wangling CTMC members also recommended involving a park official in CDF decision-making process and approval to improve CDF fund governance and transparency.
- A CTMC member from Wangling suggested rotating CTMC members once every year as a way to reduce the potential misuse of funds.
- Establish separate CDF accounts for Wangling dividing equally current balance between Jangbi and Wangling.
- Phrumzur CTMC honors involving all CTMC members, village Tshogpa and household representatives from Phrumzutr and Kuda villages to draw consensus over the use of the CDF and then have it approved accordingly by the CTMC.
- Provide timely reporting of CDF account status to all residents at the end of tourist season.
- Make CDF monies available as loans for education, accidents (e.g., house fires), new home construction, and funerals.
- Nimshong CTMC respondents suggested mobilizing the CDF for communal activities as required by the community and for campsite and trail maintenance.
- Nabji CTMC respondents suggested providing CDF monies for Nabji Tshechu to relieve people from mandatory contributions every year.
- A Korphu CTMC member suggested using CDF monies for communal activities, including irrigation channel construction and temple maintenance.

4.6 Household tourism revenue (2009) and its comparison with previous years

Tourism income varies among participating households and from village to village due to unequal levels of involvement in tourism and associated activities. For example, additional income is earned in the traditional Monpa villages of Jangbi and Phrumzur where residents visit the campsite at night and make customary offerings (such as eggs, Ara, oranges, cucumbers) in honor of their guests. While they do not ask for payment in return, tour guides recommend tourists offer money in return. These earnings and occasional tips for porters, guides and cook services are an important component in tourism revenue for participating households and explain why tourism provides more income to Monpa households. Per household income is also likely to be greater in Monpa communities because the villages are also relatively small. Thus, employment opportunities can be more widely distributed, while the income earned from campsite fees are shared among fewer households.

In 2009, Phrumzur, a Monpa community, earned the most income from tourism; porter and pack pony services totaled Nu. 2831 (US\$ 62.90). Jangbi village was next with Nu.2028 (US\$ 45.10) and Wangling with Nu.1475 (US\$ 32.70). The average annual income earned among Monpa communities was US\$ 46.90. About 45% of household respondents in the Monpa communities thought that the amount of tourism income generated in 2009 was less than other years because the number of tourist arrivals was lower. 24% of Monpa respondents reported that they earned slightly more income in 2009 than in previous years. These respondents reported that they bought pack ponies to provide porter service and took other villager's shifts opportunistically. This suggests that households who own a pack pony benefit more from tourism. In general,

approximately half of Monpa survey respondents stated that their level of satisfaction with was “more than they expected” while about 50% stated they were satisfied with their income and that is was the right amount or what they expected.

Among Khengpa villages, Nimshong earned the most income from tourism - Nu.1575 (US\$ 35.00) in 2009. About 14% of the respondents perceive that tourism income was less in 2009 than other years because there were fewer tourists than in 2008. Tourism income in Nabji totaled Nu. 1075 (US\$ 23.90); while Korphu earned only Nu. 69 (US\$ 1.50). About 23% of the household respondents in Nabji thought tourism income had declined in 2009. The reasons cited included: fewer tourist arrivals, reduced opportunities for porter and pack pony services, and in some cases wages for porter and pack pony services were not paid. In Korphu, about 29% of the respondents perceived a decline in tourism earnings in 2009 (Table 3).

Table 3. Perception of household tourism revenue changes (%)				
	<i>More than other years</i>	<i>About the same</i>	<i>Less than other years</i>	<i>No income</i>
Monpa Villages				
Jangbi	11	44	45	0
Wangling	25	25	50	0
Phrumzur	36	14	43	7
Khengpa villages				
Nimshong	36	21	14	29
Nabji	15	54	23	8
Korphu	0	7	29	64

4.7 Economic changes associated with tourism

This section describes how tourism has led to changes in the six villages and how households perceive these changes as depicted in figure 2 below. All six villages noted tourism-associated improvements in general cleanliness (food, clothing, village surroundings and campsite), improved sanitation (e.g., construction of pit toilets) and housekeeping, and increased attention to agriculture activities.

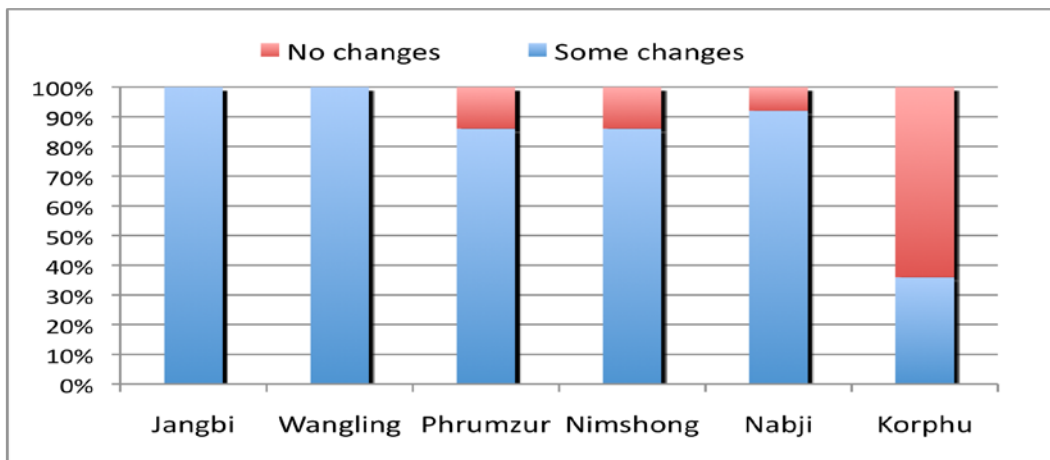


Figure 2. Perceived changes induced by tourism

All households in Jangbi and Wangling villages perceived changes associated with tourism over the last five years. Positive changes that respondents mentioned in Jangbi include: improved cleanliness (clothing, body, campsite, village, camping ground, and village surroundings), construction of pit latrines, improved housekeeping and increased income. Some respondents in Jangbi, mentioned that they felt more comfortable receiving tourists than they did in earlier years. Most respondents from Monpa communities reported that the increase in household revenue earned through tourism has enabled them to cover education expenses for their children, payment of land taxes, and to purchase kitchen utensils, food and clothing for their families. Some

households reported expanding kitchen gardens and poultry rearing in anticipation of future tourist markets. A respondent from Wangling noted that he no longer travels to Bumthang and Langthil for wage work and instead remains in the village and farms in addition to serving tourists. One respondent from Phrumzur said, “tourism revenue has saved me seeking loan from others to pay land tax and education fee for my children”. The survey data and individual anecdotes suggest that tourism has had substantial positive economic impact among households in Monpa villages.

Survey respondents in the three Khengpa villages perceived much less impact from tourism than did Monpa households which is consistent with the finding that Khengpa villagers have been less involved in tourism. The most critical comments regarding tourism were from respondents in Korphu where tourist visitation is lowest and almost no income earned from tourism. A few people in Korphu even commented that tourism has resulted in a financial loss because every household had to contribute Nu.1000 (US\$ 22.00) to purchase land for a tourist campsite. They also felt that given the low tourist numbers and lack of revenue investment in tourism infrastructure was a waste of government resources.

4.8 Household income generation across the six villages

Difference in household income from tourism is influenced by the following: 1. household labor; 2. Household food security; 3. Household revenue sources, and 4. Tourism activity and its acceptance by the local community

Household size was determined based on the number of family members living in the village for most of the year, excluding those who are away from the village when the survey was conducted. In the Monpa villages, the average household is composed of seven people; this is high compared to Khengpa villages where there is an average number of four people per household. This difference can be explained by the fact that, in general, Monpa do not have family members employed outside the village. This could also reflect the fact that most Monpa cannot also afford to send their children to school outside the village, especially prior to the Jangbi Community School established in 1996 (Sperienburg and Namgyel, 2002).

The Monpa, in general are more enthusiastic about and involved in tourism activities, especially in providing porter services. This is because they readily provide porter services during the tourist season which coincides with the off-farm season when they do not have much agricultural work. However at the household level, those with inadequate household labor or no access to pack ponies are less likely to be involved in and benefit from tourism in both Kheng and Monpa communities.

4.9 Food sources and food security

Household food security was assessed by asking households what portion of the previous year their household had sufficient food to feed all household members. Those households with sufficient food for the entire year or more were classified as “high”, those with just enough to meet household consumption demand are classified as “middle” and those whose food was inadequate was classified as “low.” Household food security was lowest in Monpa villages in contrast to Khengpa villages where household food

security status was more varied; only in the village of Nabji did respondents report food surplus (Fig 3).

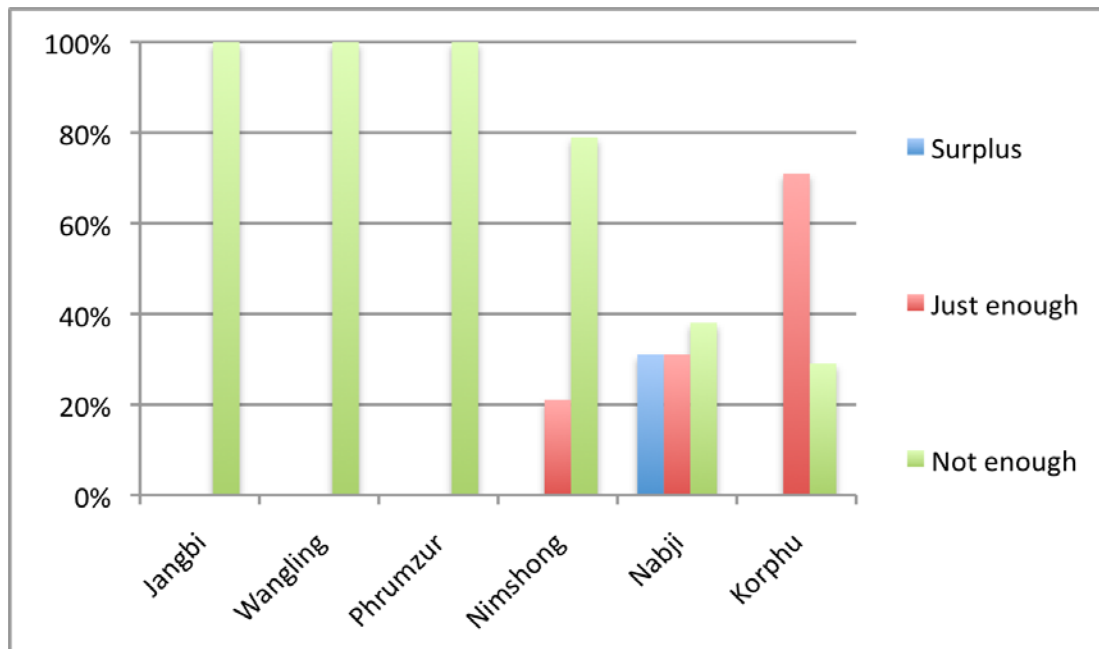


Figure 3. Food source and security

Low household food security was the major status in all three Monpa villages: Jangbi, Wangling, Phrumzur, meaning they did not have enough staple grains to last the previous year. Approximately 72% of households in the three Monpa villages obtained their food through growing it themselves, including a mixture of rice and corn. They supplement their agricultural production by purchasing grains from the nearest shop located at Langthil which is a many hour walk from their villages. The maximum quantity of rice purchased the previous year (2009) was 500 kilograms for one six family household and the minimum was 250 kilograms for one 8 family member household in Jangbi. Some households from Phrumzur bartered chili for rice with Nabji people. One

household from Jangbi reported share cropping with landowners from Wangling and Jangbi because they did not own sufficient registered land. Two households from Phrumzur purchased all of their rice because they now live in Jangbi and earn income as cooks in the local school.

Approximately 52% of respondents from Nabji and Korphu villages reported producing just enough food grains, while 30% reported that they had a shortage of food last year (2009). All respondents from Nimshong reported that they were food insufficient in 2009. Households in Khengpa villages supplement farming by purchasing rice from shops in Riotala and Zhemgang located three to five hours walk from their respective village. The reason for insufficient production of grain is because people do not own adequate land. In the Khengpa communities, rice is the preferred staple food while corn is mostly used for brewing Ara (the local beer). In Korphu and Nabji there are large paddy fields. Very few households in Nimshong have sufficient land, due to a shortage of registered land, and they are compelled to share crop within the village.

4.10 Household income sources

Khengpa and Monpa households earn income through wage labor, selling farm products, handicrafts (cane and bamboo and hand looming), business, remittance and since the beginning of the Nabji Trail, tourism activities. A few Monpa households earn income from the sale of oranges and guava at Langthil and vegetables, Ara (local beverage brewed of corn) and poultry products to local consumers, particularly in Jangbi village (e.g., government officials of the Basic Health Unit (BHU) and school teachers). They also occasionally sell farm products to tourists and earn income through selling

cane and bamboo products and through wage work outside the village. The Monpa community does not earn income from the sale of any grains (which they save for their own consumption).

In Khengpa communities, household income sources tend to be a mixture of wage work, business, and the sale of small amounts of surplus farm products (e.g., Ara and dairy products). Only a few households produce surplus grains (rice) which they sell to local consumers, particularly government officials in their villages and occasionally to feed tourists.

Revenue from the Nabji trail has been perceived very differently across the six participating villages. Tourism income is perceived to be more important in Monpa than in Khengpa villages in large part because of more limited income earning opportunities. Approximately 50% of Monpa respondents (n=27) rank tourism as their primary revenue source. This reflects the fact that Monpa tend to consume all their farm production and do not have a surplus to sell. Another 37% consider tourism a secondary revenue source next to the sale of small amounts of oranges and cane and bamboo products outside the village (in Langthil and Trongsa markets) and the sale of vegetable and poultry products to local government officials in Jangbi. About 87% of households in Monpa villages ranked tourism income as either their first or second most important source of income.

Across the three Khengpa villages, the perception of tourism income varies. It is reported as the most important source of income in Nimshong, followed by Nabji and then Korphu. Approximately, 21% of the respondents (n=14) from Nimshong said tourism is their highest household income source which they earn largely through porter

services for both tourists and local government officials. Tourism income provides a secondary revenue source for 65% households in Nimshong village. Importantly, 14% of households from Nimshong have not benefited from tourism income at all which they report is due to the fact that they do not have sufficient household labor to allocate to tourism, even when there is possible work; it is also because they prefer to allocate available labor to alternate and better paying work. For example, one household in Nimshong village intentionally stopped providing porter services for tourists to offer pack pony and porter services for local institutions such as schools, and government officials. Serving government officials was preferable because it did not require forfeiting 10% to the Community Development Fund (CDF). The CDF fund as shown above has not provided considerable benefits to either households or to broader communities, and hence there is not a strong motivation to contribute to it.

In Nabji village, only 15% of respondents (n=13) stated tourism was their most important household revenue source. Tourism income for these households was through providing porter services. The percentage of households involved in tourism is low because most households do not own a pack pony and family members do not participate in cultural programs for tourists. These households also earn very little from sale of agriculture products. Approximately 60% of households from Nabji village perceived tourism as a secondary revenue source because earnings from contract work within the village surpass tourism revenues. A few households sell agricultural products such as rice, Ara and livestock products to the local staffs of school, health and park. The other 8% of Nabji household survey respondents never received income from tourism services because they lacked the labor to even participate. These households were totally

dependent on remittances from family members working in local institutions such as schools and health centers.

In Korphu village, only 29% of respondents (n=14) cited tourism as the most important household revenue source, again through providing porter and pack pony services. The other 71% of respondents depended on wage work, the sale of agricultural farm products and work related to a portable power chainsaw (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of Most Important Household Income Source

Village	Income sources								
	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	
<i>Monpa</i>									
Jangbi	89	44	22	0	11	100	11	0	0
Wangling	50	100	25	0	0	100	0	0	0
Phrumzur	50	50	29	0	7	93	0	0	0
<i>Khengpa</i>									
Nimshong	64	0	29	0	29	79	0	0	0
Nabji	54	0	62	0	8	92	0	0	0
Korphu	7	0	43	21	21	29	0	14	14

<p>a. Agriculture crops, poultry and Ara (local beverage made from grains); b. handicrafts like cane and bamboo products and hand loom products; c. wage work; d. business; e. remittance from government employee; f. tourism; g. cultural performances for tourist and local guests from Trongsa and Thimphu; h. power chainsaw and j. porter and pack pony services for government officials and others</p>
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Tourism has become a more important revenue source for Monpa households compared Khengpa villagers because there are fewer alternative income generating opportunities in Monpa village, unlike in Khengpa villages. The Kheng villages have more infrastructure development activities occurring which provide opportunity for wage labor, as well as pony transport. The availability of these income generating activities, which also do not necessitate payment into the CDF, led them to not accept tourism activity. This finding suggests the importance of tourism especially for communities such as the Monpa who have farming opportunities to produce food, but lack income generating activities as compared to the three Khengpa villages.

4.11 Tourism services and acceptance

The community-based approach was selected for the Nabji Trail because of the assumption that it offers local residents a better chance than top-down or state-led projects to identify ecotourism activities to benefit them. But as reported elsewhere (Blackstock, 2005; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005; Li, 2006), community acceptance and involvement in tourism is often insufficient to ensure the delivery of benefits to all groups within a community. This is the case here. As shown above, the presence or not of alternate income generating activities is an important mediating factor and helps us understand differences between the Monpa and Khengpa villages.

When asked about the frequency in which they accept tourism work when it is available, residents of Monpa villages were more likely to “always” accept tourism work

in comparison to residents of Khengpa villages; with an exception of Nabji village. (Figure 4). The Khengpa village of Korphu reports the highest level of households “never” accepting tourism work.

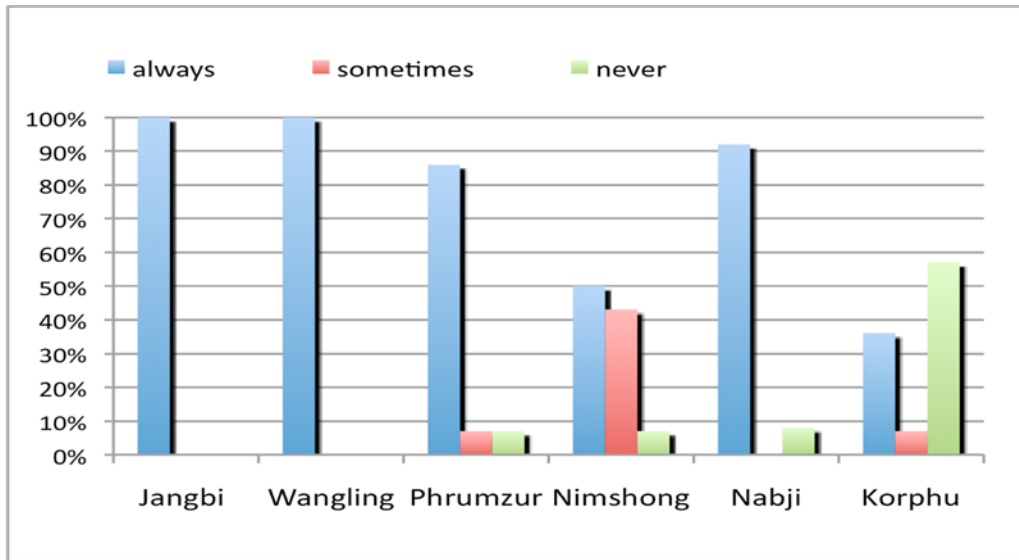


Figure 4. Frequency accepting tourism work

Consistent with the above findings, across the three Monpa villages more than 95% of respondents reported a high willingness to accept tourism work when it is offered and to rarely pass up the chance for tourism work when it is available. In general, only in the case of an extreme illness or death did someone express that they would pass along the work to someone else. For example, one Monpa man stated, “my household has never refused tourism work even when it is a busy farming season because we take it as opportunity to earn revenue”. Another Monpa said, “I have always taken the work because firstly I am paid the wages and secondly it is very indispensable to build up the reputation with tour agents and tourists”. Approximately 7% of household respondents

from one of the Monpa villages reported never accepting tourism work since the beginning of tourism because of a lack of available labor and, is one of the rare households among the Monpa who have a family member employed in Jangbi Community School.

With regard to acceptance of tourism work amongst the Khengpa villages, there is also some similarity with the Monpa villages. About 92% of Nabji's household respondents always accept tourism work. This is because they consider it a significant revenue source. Most of the household respondents in Jangbi willingly provide porter and pack pony services during the tourist season as it does not conflict with agricultural activities. One respondent stated, "I am interested to offer service. I never think porter service is a burden. Rather it is an opportunity to generate revenue because it rightly occurs during agriculture off season". Only one respondent had never accepted tourism work and that was because the household lacked available labor and had a family member engaged as a cook in Nabji Primary School.

In Nimshong, people's participation in tourism is gradually decreasing. In 2006, 93% of the household respondents were involved in tourism but this decreased to 79% in 2009. As discussed above, this is because people prefer to take porter services for local institutes and government officials over the Nabji trail services. These clients not only pay a higher wage but porters are not required to contribute in the Community Development Fund (CDF), while revenue earned from tourist services have 10% surcharge to the Community Development Fund (CDF). One interviewee stated that her household was actively involved in tourism activity in providing porter service in the first two years when she had a pack pony, but that after the horse died, she provided porter

services only for government officials (i.e., carrying goods on her back) because she need not contribute into the CDF account.

In the Kheng village of Korphu, 50% of the household survey respondents were involved at least once in tourism activity since 2006. The other half were not involved because of limited household labor and alternative income generation opportunities (teacher and cook in the school, and village head lama (priest). Compared to the other villages, Korphu households have a low rate of involvement which they explain is related to the limited number of tourists visiting their community. Respondents expressed frustration with the low tourism visitation rates and that tourists tend to stay for only a short time in their village campsite compared to Monpa and other two Kheng villages. They did not know the reasons for it and even asked me: “What’s the problem Mr.? Are you guys asking tourist not to visit Korphu village in particular?” In 2009, only 21% of the household respondents in Korphu provided porter services because most tourists came for only a day visit from Nabji and a day visit does not require porters from Korphu because it is all arranged from Nabji village.

Interviews with tour operators (n=3) suggest that tourists are avoiding Korphu because the path is very difficult and rugged. In addition, there are not comparable natural or cultural tourist attractions to motivate longer stays. Lastly, the distance between Nabji and Korphu is too short to require an overnight stay. In addition, there have been problems with communication and payment confirming Murphy (2003), that people’s involvement in tourism is also influenced by relations and communication with the private sector, including investors, developers, planners and tourist managers from outside the community.

4.12 Summary

In summing up the above, this study indentified four major factors that account for differences in household revenue from tourism across the three Monpa and three Khengpa villages: 1) available household labor, 2), availability of and preference for alternative sources of household revenue, 3) household food sources and security, and 4) based on above, willingness to accept tourism work.. The Monpa villages, have, in general, more household labor available compared with Khengpa communities and earn income mainly through porter services. Unlike the Monpa communities, residents of the three Khengpa villages use mostly pack ponies for portering rather than carrying goods on their backs. The households lacking available labor or pack ponies are not able to participate and benefit from tourism in both Monpa and Khengpa communities. A few respondents from Korphu and Nabji (Khengpa communities) noted that the majority of tourism transportation services go to households with pack ponies.

Low household food security due to inadequate landholdings is a problem in all three Monpa villages; Jangbi, Wangling, Phrumzur. Even with additional purchased grains most households lack sufficient food to meet their annual household needs on an annual basis. Household food insecurity is one of the driving factors influencing participation in tourism activities among Monpa households.

Infrastructure development activities in the Khengpa villages of Nimshong, Nabji and Korphu have attracted local people to engage in contract work and resulted in less interest in tourism. Thus, alternative income sources within participating villages is factor that influences participation in tourism and differences in income earned by households.

Chapter 5

Recommendations and Conclusions: Improving Governance along the Nabji Trail

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study found that Monpa villages have been more actively involved than Khengpa villages in providing tourism services, notably porter and pack pony services. Only a few Monpa households with limited labor were unable to take advantage of opportunities to provide porter services. The Monpa villages were also able to raise additional income through payments for various gifts or offerings to tourists.

In contrast, Khengpa village household involvement in tourism services, especially providing porter and pack pony services, has decreased over the years. In these communities, households with ponies and interested in providing porter services prefer to pack government officials because they earn more income by not having to pay 10% of their gross earnings into the village CDF account. Cultural attractions are also more limited than in the Monpa villages. In the Khengpa village of Korphu, involvement in tourism is particularly low due to the rugged path and relative lack of cultural attractions and, as a consequence, absence of tourists.

There were also important differences in household income generation in the two main socio-cultural groups. Among the Monpa villages, more than 50% of respondents rank tourism as their primary revenue source. In these villages, there has been a shift in primary income generation from cane and bamboo products to tourism (providing porter and cultural services) and selling agriculture products. Income from providing porter services is now more than from selling cane, bamboo and even farm products. In

contrast, in Khengpa villages, where there are alternate income generating activities available, tourism is the primary household income source for only 14% of the households.

The study found that both Monpa and Khengpa households used tourism revenues to meet the expenses for school going children (clothing and fees) and to purchase food. The economic impact of tourism is lower in Khengpa communities compared with Monpa villages because they have additional income generating opportunities and, in large part, Monpa villages are quite small and the benefits do not have to be widely shared while Khengpa villages are much larger resulting in very infrequent opportunities in rotating porter services.

Community development funds (CDF) were envisioned by the Nabji Trail founders to be an important means for community-benefit sharing from income earned from tourism. The amount of funds in CDF accounts increased in 2008 following the increase in campsite fees from Nu.100 to 300 (US\$ 7) per tourist per night. The increase was justified on the grounds that basic amenities, including cooking gas and solar lighting, were improved at the campsites. The village of Nabji has the highest CDF savings at Nu.130, 000.00 (US\$ 2955), in large part because tourists typically stop in the village for two nights since it is located at the center point of the trek. Korphu has accumulated the least CDF monies, Nu.17000.00 (US\$ 386), because tourists rarely spend a night in Korphu village. In view of these differences, Korphu villagers have proposed merging the CDF accounts of the three Kheng villages. However, representative from Nimshong and Nabji villages were opposed to this proposal. As a result, people from Korphu are very dissatisfied with the tourism project and one resident

suggested imposing a Korphu geog entry fee for tourists instead of collecting a campsite fee. That way, he thought any money generated from tourists would be governed by the Korphu Geog administration and distributed equally amongst all three Khengpa villages. A decision in favor of Korphu is impossible without consulting people from Nabji and Nimshong who are unlikely to merging of CDF monies which would reduce their earnings. In addition, introducing an entry fee in place of a campsite fee would likely result in reduced campsite maintenance by Community Tourism Management Committee (CTMC) members.

There are major consequences concerning the growth of distrust over the CDF misuse by CTMC Secretary and Accountant. One is that some local residents from Nimshong stated that they are unwilling to pay the surcharge that goes into CDF account. Another consequence of the distrust of CTMC members is that all the CTMCs have stepped down, except in Jangbi. The study found a major lack of incentive for a resident to be a CTMC member, both because of growing mistrust over governance of the CDF as well as lack of payment or financial incentive to serve as a member of the CTMC.

Some respondents from Wangling of Monpa community and Nimshong village of Khengpa community suggested that CTMC members serve on a rotational basis every two years. Rotating CTMC members could help build skills and knowledge about tourism governance among a greater number of residents. This could be facilitated by involving former members to help monitor the CDF and governance of tourism activities in general.

In order to further strengthen the efficiency of CTMC, there is a need for regular monitoring of tourism governance by outside third parties, such as JSWNP, TCB and ABTO. This study revealed that most of the problems, such as unpaid debts to service providers, have remain unsolved for a long time. Regular monitoring and oversight by external actors could identify problems in a timely manner and perhaps contribute to addressing them.

In sum, tourism was found to be a significant income source for all Monpa households and some Kheng households, but governance is full of problems across all six villages along the Nabji trail. Perhaps most critically, the study found broad mistrust of the CDF, a mechanism that was supposed to share benefits and increase financial incentive for participating in tourism services including community-based governance.

5.2 Recommendations for resolving governance challenges in the six villages

This study found many problems and challenges that affect tourism governance along the Nabji trail. Major problems and future challenges include: 1) lack of stable member participation in Community Tourism Management Committees (CTMC); 2) widespread residents' distrust of CTMC members over actual or received misuse of Community Development Funds (CDF); 3) unequal wages for porter and pack pony between villages; and 4) slow or no payment by tour operators for porter and pack pony services provided. While the CTMCs of the respective villages have attempted to address these problems, most of them remain unsolved. As a result, local residents view CTMCs as a poor tourism governing body. These findings suggest that local or community-based capacity for Nabji tourism governance is in need of great attention and remedial action.

Below are the main governance challenges with recommendations for moving towards resolving them:

i) Lack of stable participation of Community Tourism Management Committee (CTMC)

The difficulty in electing new members to replace those who have resigned has weakened Nimshong, Korphu and Phrumzur CTMCs. The CTMC members resigned because of lack of incentive to continue on the committee. Concerned CTMCs have convened meetings in their respective villages to elect new members. However it has been difficult to elect new representatives because no one is willing to do it because of limited incentives and other household (especially agriculture) work demands.

The study recommends that the governing board, including JSWNP, initiate discussions with local residents in all six villages and amend CTMC bylaws to incorporate the incentives for CTMC members. These could include modest payment for CTMC members and possibly other things that the villagers might suggest with the payments funded through CDF. Attention needs to be paid to identifying and establishing incentives that are approved by village residents, that generate participation on the CTMCs, and that might enhance tourism governance in the future.

ii) Residents' distrust of CTMC Community Development Fund (CDF) management

Another important governance issue is the growing distrust by local people of CTMC management and misuse of CDF monies in all six villages. In addition, unpaid wages for service providers has led residents to express votes of no confidence towards

their respective CTMCs. Despite annual reporting of CDF accounts to village residents at the end of the tourist season by CTMCs, many people remain suspicious of CDF expenditures.

In Monpa communities, CTMCs regularly updated the status of their CDF accounts, but people remained suspicious. In response to a written complaint in Khengpa communities, a CDF investigation team comprised of representatives from Korphu Geog administration, Nabji Park Range Office and RNRRC, initiated an investigation of CDF accounts in Nimshong, Nabji and Korphu. In order to secure and maintain the trust of local people regarding CDF management and expenditures, the CDF investigation team should continue to evaluate the management and expenditures of CDF accounts at the end of every tourist season in the Khengpa villages.

A similar CDF investigation team comprised of representatives from the Langthil Geog Administration, Langthil Range Office, Jangbi Community School and Jangbi Basic Health Unit (BHU), should be established to provide impartial, external oversight of Monpa CDFs as well. This could build trust of CTMCs in the Monpa community and perhaps lead to improved tourism fund management in the future. The investigation team should share its findings with all villagers to insure that process is open and transparent. This kind of oversight could insure that CTMCs are accountable for all CDF decisions and enhance the governance of tourism in the future.

iii) Unequal wages for porter and pack pony between villages

In Monpa villages, one of the critical issues noted by survey respondents was the low wages paid by tourism activities in comparison to other employment, especially

portering government officials as reported in Kuda and Jangbi. The existing government rate for service between Jangbi and Kuda is two days pay, even though porters complete the trip in one day. If tour operators offer only one day's pay, service providers tend to be unwilling to accept the work. The porters suggested standardizing the payment for two days for all. In the case of the Kheng villages, Nabji and Korphu, residents stated that they want to revise the wage rate between Nimshong and Nabji and Kuda because it takes entire day to reach the campsite along with tourists.

The CTMC Secretary and Accountant discussed the minimum wage for portering between Jangbi and Kuda, with Park Rangers at Langthil, ABTO and TCB officials from Thimphu. However, no decision has been made and they parties have not event responded to this issue. Similarly, CTMC representatives discussed revising portering wages between Nimshong and Nabji/Korphu with Park officials, but nothing has happened in this case either.

The study recommends that JSWNP officials become actively involved in resolving these issues with TCB and ABTO representatives. Solving the problem will require all parties to agree to a standard rate for porter services that all consider fair. If this issue is not resolved, increasing numbers of local residents may be unwilling to provide porter and pack pony services.

In order to increase portering wages between Nimshong and Nabji, and Korphu, Korphu geog officials should consult with local people and collectively recommend a rate that can then be approved by Trongsa Dhag officials. Dzongkhag officials should participate in discussions concerning possible changes in CTMC bylaws and procedures.

In addition, these discussions should also include representatives from JSWNP, TCB and ABTO. Revising porter and pony wages without consent of ABTO and TCB could jeopardize the number of future tourists ABTO and TCB have direct access to tour agents and could inform them of any changes and explain the rationale for increased wages.

iv) Unsettled payment for porter and pack pony service

In 2008, one tour agent ran short of money and failed to pay porters for services provided. This problem, as well as delayed payments, has created distrust between the service providers and CTMCs in all six Nabji Trail villages.

Concerned CTMCs have attempted to address this issue with the JSWNP branch office (Park Ranger Office) and with ABTO over the phone, but no resolution has occurred thus far. A representative from ABTO stated that he informed the concerned tour guide of the need to pay for the services, but he has not yet done so.

This issue needs to be addressed more forcefully by JSWNP officials so as to maintain porter services and to reestablish resident trust of CTMCs as tourism management entities. Failure to address payment problems has led some residents to suspect that CTMC members are misusing CDF monies and that CTMC managers are incompetent

5.3 Additional governance challenges

There are a number of additional challenges in managing the Nabji Trail that pertain to the particular communities. This includes trail deterioration by migratory cattle herds owned by outsiders and poor communication in porter arrangements in Monpa

villages. In addition, residents of Khengpa villages are unwilling to pay the 10% surcharge to CDF and Korphu villagers are upset about the lack of tourists in their community.

Trail deterioration is a critical issue in Monpa communities. Every year at least five migratory cattle herds from Bumthang use the trail (from Tongtophy, the entry point of the Nabji trail, through Nabji village) at least twice a year causing great degradation. They use the trail both coming from and returning to Bumthang during October and April. Maintaining the trail requires a great deal of labor for Monpa residents.

The CTMCs of Jangbi and Phrumzur attempted to address this problem by coordinating trail maintenance, specifically by requesting labor contributions from each household. These villages make trail maintenance a mandatory communal activity which is a traditional custom in their communities, but the amount of labor required concerns many villagers.

This study suggests that TCB, ABTO and JSWNP officials and the owners of the seasonal cattle should recognize and acknowledge the trail maintenance demands as well as the communal labor provided by the three Monpa villages and explore possible ways to reimburse them for their work on the Nabji trails. They could do this by contributing money into the CDF. These monies could be used to pay for labor to improve trail maintenance assisting both the cattle herders and the tourism project, the latter both through saving household labor and enhancing migratory cattle herding which could also serve as an important tourist attraction.

ii) Communication gap for porter arrangement

A specific issue of concern in Jangbi was poor communication between tour agents, JSW National Park officials and CTMC members regarding porter arrangements. Sometimes tour agents cancel itineraries, but fail to inform the CTMC. Porters and pack ponies may travel all or half a day to meet tourists who never arrive and for which they receive no payment. This occurred twice in Jangbi in 2008. Approximately 10 and 12 porters, respectively, wasted an entire day at Tongtophy waiting for tourists that never arrived. Furthermore, their request for the one day's payment was denied by the tour operator.

The unpaid porters wrote a written complaint to the Park Ranger at Tongtophy but no action or compensation has resulted. This particular dispute needs to be resolved and standard process for porter reservation and cancellation established. This requires agreement among all parties, perhaps managed by JSWNP officials to insure impartiality and enforcement. If not addressed, communication lapses will further jeopardize trust between service providers and CTMC, and reduce the availability of porter service in the future.

5.3.1 Specific issues in the Khengpa villages

i) Low rate for porter and pack pony

There were particular issues that affected the Khengpa villages that warrant attention. In Nimshong and Nabji, respondents raised the issue about low rates for porter and pack ponies compared to existing labor wages paid for construction and other manual work. They seek to increase the porter rate to Nu. 200 per day (US\$4.60) and

Nu. 400 (US\$9.20) per day for a pack pony. Due to existing porter rates, some also stated that they were unwilling to pay the 10% surcharge into the CDF. Existing low wages discourage residents from providing porter services to tourists. The Nabji CTMC discussed these concerns with the Park Ranger at Nabji but nothing has yet to be done to resolve the issue.

In other parts of the country, tour agents and all government agencies are bound to abide by the existing rate approved by the government. In some areas, such as Jigme Dorji National Park (JDNP) which is one of the popular tourist destinations, tour agents pay less than the government rate (e.g., Nu.100/porter and Nu.200/pack pony) according to the ABTO. One reason for this is that tourists are major porter and pack pony consumers and every year people readily offer the services. If rates for porters and pack ponies are increased on the Nabji trail, tour agent who arrange logistical and transportation for tourists might be inclined to direct tourists to other areas. Therefore, the study recommends that porter and pony rates not be increased until Nabji trail has become a popular destination or the government increases porter and pony wages everywhere in the country. However, the study also recommends that JSWNP and ABTO officials jointly explain the existing government policy to local residents so that they understand the situation.

ii) Campsite maintenance

One critical issue that has adversely affected the management of Nimshong CTMC is the deteriorated condition of the pavilion and camping ground. This situation warrants immediate attention. The Nimshong CTMC has discussed campsite fencing and

pavilion renovation needs with local people and asked them to contribute labor. But local residents have not wanted to contribute labor and instead suggested that CDF monies be used for the renovation. However, the CTMC Secretary refused to utilize funds before the maturity period (three years) as initially agreed to by Nimshong residents.

In view of residents opposition to contributing labor for campsite maintenance, the study recommends the CTMC utilize the CDF for campsite maintenance and at the same time encourage residents to contribute labor. Furthermore, the study suggests that JSWNP officials serve as a monitoring body to help resolve this impasse. The pavilion is important for tourist dining and a clear, smooth camping ground is needed for pitching tents.

iii) Unwillingness to contribute to CDF accounts

Some respondents from Nimshong suggested CDF contributions be discontinued. They do not want to pay the 10% surcharge on porter and pack pony services due to loss of confidence in CTMC members to govern the CDF and what they view as insufficient porter wages. This issue has not been addressed at any meetings, according to the Nimshong CTMC members and there is growing frustration and distrust of CDF governance by CTMC members. In response, the Nimshong CTMC Secretary and Accountant attempted to increase the transparency of CDF governance and regain the trust and confidence from residents by keeping them well-informed of CDF expenditures and ending balance at the end of every tourist season. The Nimshong CTMC should incorporate the suggestions of local people in fund allocation, decision-making and approval of CDF in accordance with CDF bylaws. The study also recommends that a

CDF investigation team composed of representatives from Korphu Geog administration, the Nabji Park Range Office and RNRRC approve of and participate in presenting the annual report to village residents at the end of every tourist season.

iv) Increase in local commodity prices

Some survey respondents in Nabji and Nimshong expressed concern about rising prices for local commodities, especially cheese and eggs. The price of an egg has increased to Nu.10 from Nu.5 over the last three years which has adversely impacted Nabji residents. In Nimshong, the higher prices are only applied to tourists and other outsiders. Thus far, the CTMCs have not taken any steps to address this issue. However, CTMC members shared concerns about price increase impacts for the local consumers and noted that some tour agents have refused to purchase the more expensive eggs and cheese.

The study suggests reviewing local farm product prices in the Trongsa market and submitting possible price increases to Geog administrators for endorsement. In this way, local market prices will likely not differ and tourists will likely continue to consume local products.

v) Difficulty in loan recovery

One of the specific tourism governance issues noted in Nabji and Jangbi is difficulty in securing repayment of CDF loans within the specified time period. This problem persists despite written agreements between CTMC and loan beneficiaries. To date, no actions have been undertaken by CTMC members to address problem.

To address the problem, the study suggests deducting a portion of wages from porters who have been loaned money if they are not adhering to repayment schedules. Another possible way to recover CDF loans would be to ask beneficiaries to contribute labor in tourism related activities, such as transportation of cooking gas from the road head to the campsite (to and fro) and campsite maintenance, in lieu of loan payments. However, any changes in loan repayment arrangements should be openly discussed and approved by all village residents and CTMC members.

vi) Village Headman (Tshogpa) interference in CDF allocation

Interference by village Tshogpa in the allocation of CDF is another important issue raised by the Nabji CTMC. Nabji CTMC members did not want to invest CDF monies in non-tourism related activities, such as construction of staff quarters for the Out Reach Clinic (ORC). The Nabji CTMC prefers that CDF monies be used only for activities that enhance tourism. But this was done when the the Korphu Geog persuaded the village headman to invest CDF monies into these non-tourism activities. The CTMC members identified and prioritized investing in the renovation of the campsite pavilion and kitchen instead, and this was endorsed unanimously by Nabji residents.

This study finds the village Tshogpa's involvement and allocation decision to be very unfortunate and against the expressed interests of other CTMC members and the people of Nabji. It also highlights that environment and development efforts such as tourism are overlaid on local community structures and dynamics which have to be understood and worked through as well as the newer tourism ventures. While this study suggests that CTMC members restate their funding priorities, specifically that only

activities that benefit the community should be supported by the CDF and that the existing CDF bylaws are enforced, it also realizes that local politics are hard to resolve this easily. Again, the involvement of extra-community actors involved in the formation and management of the Nabji Trail (i.e., and are supposed to provide oversight) need to be more actively involved in working through this conflict.

vii) Controversy of Nabji campsite land

After the initiation of the Nabji Trail, a local landowner in Nabji demanded money to compensate for the use of his land as a tourist campsite. This was a breach in the initial sale agreement drawn between this individual and the CTMC. In response to this problem, the Nabji CTMC convened a meeting to sort it out with a representative from every household in the village. However, the landowner refuses to transfer the ownership of the land unless he is paid additional money despite the existence of a previously agreed upon sale agreement and deed; and Nabji residents are unwilling to pay additional money.

To address this problem, the study recommends that JSWNP officials intervene, as they are the primary Nabji trail project implementing body. Together JSWNP officials and Nabji CTMC members need to collectively try and resolve the issue with the landowner. If they cannot themselves resolve the problem, the matter could be referred to highly government authorities. It is an important situation to resolve, including establishing guidelines for how such conflicts are dealt with as it is likely to be precedent setting for future rural tourism projects in the country.

viii) Lack of tourists in Korphu

Respondents from Korphu are very concerned about the lack of tourists who visit their area, especially compared to visitation rates in the other villages. The Korphu CTMC has discussed this issue with Park, ABTO and TCB officials; however, there has been no increase in tourist numbers. The Korphu CTMC also brought the issue to the Geog Yargay Tshogchung (Sub-district Development meeting) and requested that they encourage tourists to visit Korphu. But the Geog administration was not able to do anything either.

The study recommends that the DTMC explore the development of an attractive and fairly unique tourism product to attract tourists to Korphu. For example, a home stay associated with a bird watching may have potential because Korphu village has attractive homes and there are diverse forests and microhabitats nearby that are vestiges of old swidden fields. These diverse secondary forests are inhabited by diverse bird species that may attract tourists interested in bird watching. In addition, the existing forest trail used by residents of Korphu people could also be improved for birding. Assisting local residents to be able to communicate their knowledge of local ecology and wildlife to foreign visitors could provide additional tourism services and income, as well as improve the natural history component of the trail package.

5.4 Conclusion

The Nabji community-based ecotourism project had been operating for four years when I conducted this research (2006-2010). Previous studies had been conducted on the project and identified both positive and negative trends in socioeconomic impacts and

governance, and suggesting the need for further and more in-depth, community level analysis (Dept of Tourism et al, 2007; Gurung and Seeland 2008). As studies have shown elsewhere (Belsky 1999), governance issues including limited local management capacity and especially intra-local political conflict and rivalry, often surface after many years after a project begins especially if significant income is being generated.

The results of this study reveal that many problems and challenges have arisen in in the last few years that the Nabji trail has operated. Some are generic across the six participating village, such as lack of incentive and capacity for local involvement in the community-based governance committees and limited tourism income. But others are site specific. In this study, the particular features of the two major socio-cultural groups, Monpa and Khengp were key as well as associated characteristics of their geo-location along the trail and distance from roads and towards the forest; this affected both food and income generating activities as well as trail conditions and natural and cultural attractions to tourists. Some issues were also related to household characteristics especially available labor and tourism resources such as access to a pony, as well as availability of more remunerative activities than tourism.

But tourism has become a very important income source in Monpa villages because most Monpa households are unable to produce enough grain to meet household needs; as such they need to earn income to purchase food staples as well as meet childrens' educational fees. This finding supports earlier studies and the government policy of seeking to increase and diversify income among Monpa households. Tourism seems to be a good choice because Monpa residents and villages have many characteristics that make them attractive to tourists, and high tourism times coordinate

well with their agricultural work calendars. Not creating conflict between livelihood activities, especially farming which contributes to household food security and cultural traditions is very important. In addition to porter and cooking services provided to tourists, Monpa residents earn additional money by visiting tourist campsites at night to make customary offerings (such as eggs, Ara, oranges, cucumbers) in honor of their guests. While they do not ask for payment in return, it is a cultural expectation that tourists give monies and tour guides are there to educate tourists about local customs. These earnings, along with occasional tips for porter, guide and cook services, are an important source of revenue for participating Monpa households.

In Khengpa villages, most households (particularly those in Nabji and Korphu) produce adequate grains and sometimes surplus grains to be food self-sufficient. Nevertheless, they also desire additional opportunities to earn income such as from tourism. However, they are not always willing to provide services to tourists because of conflicts with agricultural activities that are so important to household food security, or to work in other jobs that bring in more money (e.g., portering for government officials or working in construction).

Governance is definitely a problem across all of the Nabji Trail villages. The most significant problem is growing distrust of CTMC members over management and allocation of CDF monies. The management of CDF funds is difficult, in part, because the membership of CTMC committees is unstable and guiding principles are not established and closely monitored. Some CTMC members have quit because they lack incentives (e.g., salary plus community support) to continue to serve. There are also problems in setting wages for porters and pack ponies and in receiving payments in a

timely manner. As a consequence, village residents are increasingly questioning or even beginning to resist having to pay 10% of their wages to CDF accounts.

Given these concerns and the inability of CTMC members and village residents to adequately address them, there is strong need for oversight by the non-local based groups to review the administration and management of project budgets and decision-making and help resolve governance problems and conflicts. The study recommends that the oversight committee include representatives from Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park (JSWNP), Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) and Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB), all of whom were involved in the inception and development of the Nabji Ecotourism Trail project. Their assistance is warranted to build local capacity before local tensions, politics and rivalries become so severe as to disrupt the project. It may be also necessary to revisit and revise CDF and CTMC bylaws, and to provide regular multi-party monitoring to address these governance issues. The multi-party advisory and monitoring committee needs to play an active role in building local tourism governance institutions if the Nabji trail is to meet household interests, and community development needs. The lessons learned from this analysis of the Nabji trail have import not only to improve the success of the Nabji trail, but to inform future efforts to create ecotourism activities which meaningfully involve and benefit rural people and communities elsewhere in Bhutan.

Chapter 6

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Available services and prevailing rates for Nabji Trek in JSWNP

Campsite

Amenities

1. Jangbi *Compulsory amenities and services*

- Toilet, kitchen furnished with gas stove and cylinder; solar lightings at the campsite; camping ground, Mini-theatre/serving shed and water facilities;

- Cook and local guide;

- Porter and pack pony/riding pony.

Optional service

- Cultural program

2. Kuda

Compulsory amenities and services

- Toilet, kitchen furnished with gas stove and cylinder; solar lightings at the campsite; camping ground, Mini-theatre/serving shed and water facilities;

- Cook and local guide;

- Porter and pack pony/riding pony.

3. Nabji

Compulsory amenities and services

- Toilet, kitchen furnished with gas stove and cylinder; solar lightings at the campsite; camping ground, Mini-theatre/serving shed and water facilities;
- Cook and local guide;
- Porter and pack pony/riding pony.

Optional services

- Cultural program
- Hot stone bath

4. Korphu

Compulsory amenities and services

- Toilet, kitchen furnished with gas stove and cylinder; solar lightings at the campsite; camping ground, Mini-theatre/serving shed and water facilities,
- Cook and local guide;
- Porter and pack pony/riding pony.

Optional service

- Cultural program

5. Nimshong

Compulsory amenities and services

- Toilet, kitchen furnished with gas stove and cylinder; solar lightings at the campsite; camping ground, Mini-theatre/serving shed and water facilities;
- Cook and local guide;
- Porter and pack pony/riding pony.

Optional service

- Cultural program

Rates for the compulsory services

Campsite fee per tourist/night	Nu.300.00
Porter charge (load 25-30kgs)/day	Nu.150.00
Pack pony (load 50-60kgs)/day	Nu.300.00
Village guide (per day)	Nu.150.00
Cook (per day)	Nu.150.00
Waiter (per day)	Nu.100.00

Optional service

Cultural performances (Lump sum per group)	Nu.1000.00
Riding pony/day	Nu. 450.00
Stone bath - 5 people and above (lumpsum)	Nu. 1000.00
Less than 5 people	Nu. 200/head
Fuel wood per bundle (girth 5 ft)	Nu. 60.00

Appendix 2: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOUSEHOLD

Interview code: _____ Researcher's name: _____ Date: _____

Village: _____ Geog: _____ District: _____

Kuzu Zangpo. I am Ugyen Namgyel, presently a graduate student. I would like to take about one hour to inquire about your opinion of the Nabji tourism trail and how it's being managed. There are no wrong answers. I am interested in your view only. Your personal (name and age) will not be disclosed when I report the results of my research. So your cooperation will be highly appreciated and I in advance want to extend my sincere gratitude to you for sparing your precious time to interact with me.

Interviewee's name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: ___ male ___ female

I would like to begin with some information about your household and how your household makes its living.

1. How many people total live in your household?

Marital status ___ single ___ married ___ widowed ___ separated ___ other,
specify _____

Number of people **above** 14 years _____ Number of people **below** 14 years _____

2. What is your staple food? ___ rice ___ maize ___ buckwheat _____ mixture ___
other? _____

What is the most important ways you and household get this **staple food**? Please explain

From what he or she says, put a 1 next to the most important, 2 to the second, 3 to the third.

-eat what they grow themselves
-buy food (sell something and buy food)
-trade/barter
- given to them by others
-others please specify

3. What is the most important ways you and your household get cash income? please explain:

From what he or she says, put a 1 next to the most important, 2 to the second, 3 to the third.

- Sell farm crop. Please specify.....
- Sell handicraft. Please specify.....
-Wage work. Please specify.....,,.....
- Own business . Please specify
- Family members working elsewhere (remittances)
- Tourism. Please specify.....
- Pension
-Other. Please specify

4. Which best describes you and your household through last year? Check only one.

.....Surplus food (more than enough to feed the household)

.....Just enough to eat (nothing left over)

.....Not enough to eat

Now I would like to inquire about you and your household's involvement in the Nabji tourism trail.

5. Have you or anyone from your household earned income from a tourism activity since it began in 2006 (over the last four years)? Yes No

6. Did you or anyone from your household get income from a tourism activity in the last year? Yes No

7. How often do you accept the tourism work when it is offered to you?

Always take the work

Sometimes

Never

Please explain your answer: (under what conditions do s/he take the work or refuse it)

If no income from tourism, skip to question #16

8. Who in your household did what tourist activity and what did you earn? (fill in table)

Activities	#s of...		# of times over the last tourist season (2009)	Income (Nu)
	Males	Females		
Cooking Food				
Selling Agricultural Product Specify				
Selling Handicrafts Specify				
Portering				
Ponies				
Guiding				
Cultural Performances specify				
Other				

9. Was last year's income from tourism

___ less than other years

___ about the same as other years

___ more than other years

In your opinion, why?

10. How do you grade the tourism income to your household?

More than you expected

Just the right amount

Less than you expected

No opinion

Please explain

11. Would you like to have had more tourism work?

___ Yes ___ No. Specify which activity _____

12. How if at all has being involved in tourism changed how you live (such as in farming, raising livestock, using wood, or your environmental awareness (water/hhd cleanliness etc):

___ no changes

___ some changes. Please explain very carefully:

Now I would like to hear your opinion about how tourism has been managed in your place

13. In your opinion, what do you think about the process for how people/households get asked to do a particular tourist activity – is it fair or not?

14. In your opinion, do you have issues with how prices were determined for tourism activities? Yes/No

If yes,(eg. please explain what were the issues such as regarding porters, ponies and local products such as agriculture, livestock and forest products)?

15. Has the problem been solved? If yes, how? If not, why not; what is your suggestion to fixing it?

Now I would like to ask your opinion about the Community Development Fund

16. Are you aware of CDF account in your village? Yes/No. If no, skip to #24 (last question)

17. Did you contribute money to the CDF __ yes __ no, if not why not?

18. Do you know who maintains the CDF account in your village? Chairman
Accountant Jointly (accountant and chairman) Don't know

19. In your opinion, have CDF monies been distributed in your village? Yes No
Don't know.

If yes, how have the CDF monies been used/for what?

20. Do you think that the CDF has benefited the whole community? Yes No Don't
know.

If yes, please explain.

21. Who decides how the CDF monies should be spent?

Chairman Accountant Others. Please specify

22. Have you or anyone from your household asked for a CDF loan as of now? Yes
No. If no, skip the next question.

23. How much amount have you or your household member got and what did you spend it on?

24. Lastly, in your view is there anything else that you think is important for me to know regarding tourism in your place, and how it has changed your livelihood, or how it can be better managed?

Appendix 3: RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CTMC MEMBERS

Interview code: _____ Researcher's name: _____ Date: _____

Village: _____ Geog: _____ District: _____

Kuzu Zangpo. I am Ugyen Namgyel, presently a graduate student. I would like to take about one hour to inquire about your opinion of the Nabji tourism trail and how it's being managed. There are no wrong answers. I am interested in your view only. Your personal (name and age) will not be disclosed when I report the results of my research. So your cooperation will be highly appreciated and I in advance want to extend my sincere gratitude to you for sparing your precious time to interact with me.

Interviewee's name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: ___ male ___ female

1. Let's begin with you telling me about what the CTMC does in your village?

2. What is your position in CTMC? ___ Secretary ___ Accountant ___ General member
___ other? _____
What do you do in this position?

3. How long have you been in your position?

4. How did you get into your position? Please explain.

5. Over the last year, how often did the CTMC meet?

Regarding the last year's meetings, how often did you attend the CTMC meetings:

Always attended

Sometimes

Never

Please explain your answer.

6. Do you think these meetings were important to the management of tourism in your place?

___ yes ___ no, please explain your answer

7. What have been management issues the CTMC has faced in your village since tourism began?

8. In your opinion, which of these were the most critical/concerning to you?

9. How did the CTMC go about solving them?

10. I am particularly interested in issues regarding how prices were determined for porters, ponies and/or local products such as agriculture, livestock and forest products? Were there problems with how these prices were determined? Yes/ No. For which activity __ porters __ ponies __ selling local products __ other ____

If yes, how did CTMC try to solve these problems?

Now I am going to ask about the community development fund (CDF).

11. Who maintains the CDF account in your village? CTMC Secretary CTMC Accountant Jointly (sec and account) Other, please specify:

12. How does money from the local tourism service provider (porters, pony, cooks, dancers, guides etc.) get collected and deposited into the CDF? (e.g. percentages)

13. What are the issues with getting the above monies?

14. How does money from the tour operators get collected and deposited into the CDF (eg campsite fees, cooking)?

15. What are the issues with getting the above monies?

16. What do you think provides the most income that has gone into the CDF since the tourism in your place began? (write everything that s/he say):

From what s/he say put a rank next to each in terms of their importance (1 most imp, 2...)

---- campsite fee

- cooking
- portering
- ponies
- guide
- culture program
- sale of local agricultural products,
specify _____
- sale of local handicrafts,
specify _____
- other, specify:

17. What is the TOTAL amount of income that has gone into the CDF since the tourism project began in your place? Approximately Nu.....

In your opinion, is this amount in the CDF:

- More than you expected by now
- Right amount that you expected by now
- Less than you expected by now
- No opinion

Please explain

18. On what specific activities or things were CDF fund spent in your place thus far? List them.

19. Of the above activities or things purchased, which in your opinion were the most important?

1st _____

2nd _____

3rd _____

20. Do you think that the way the CDF has been used has benefitted your community?

Yes No. Please explain

21. Who decided how to spend the CDF (over the last 4 years)?

22. In your opinion, has the above process been okay or not with you?

___ yes ___ no, please explain:

23. I am particularly interested in knowing if you think everyone on the CTMC knew about the process and got to be a part of this decision (transparency)?

24. Outside of the CTMC, who else do you think should be part of the decision-making how to distribute the CDF monies? Explain

25. What has been the involvement of the geog administration in distributing/using the CDF? In your opinion, was their involvement helpful or not?

26. If there are differences in how the CTMC members think the CDF income should be spent or on how different tourism activities should be managed, how are these differences resolved? Is this a good process in your opinion?

27. In your opinion, what would you recommend to improve the way the CDF fund has been distributed/used?

28. In your opinion, how does the CTMC hear and respond to someone from the community if he or she has a concern with the tourism project? Please explain

29. Lastly, in your view is there anything else that you think is important for me to know to understand how the tourism project has been managed, or can be improved in the future?