

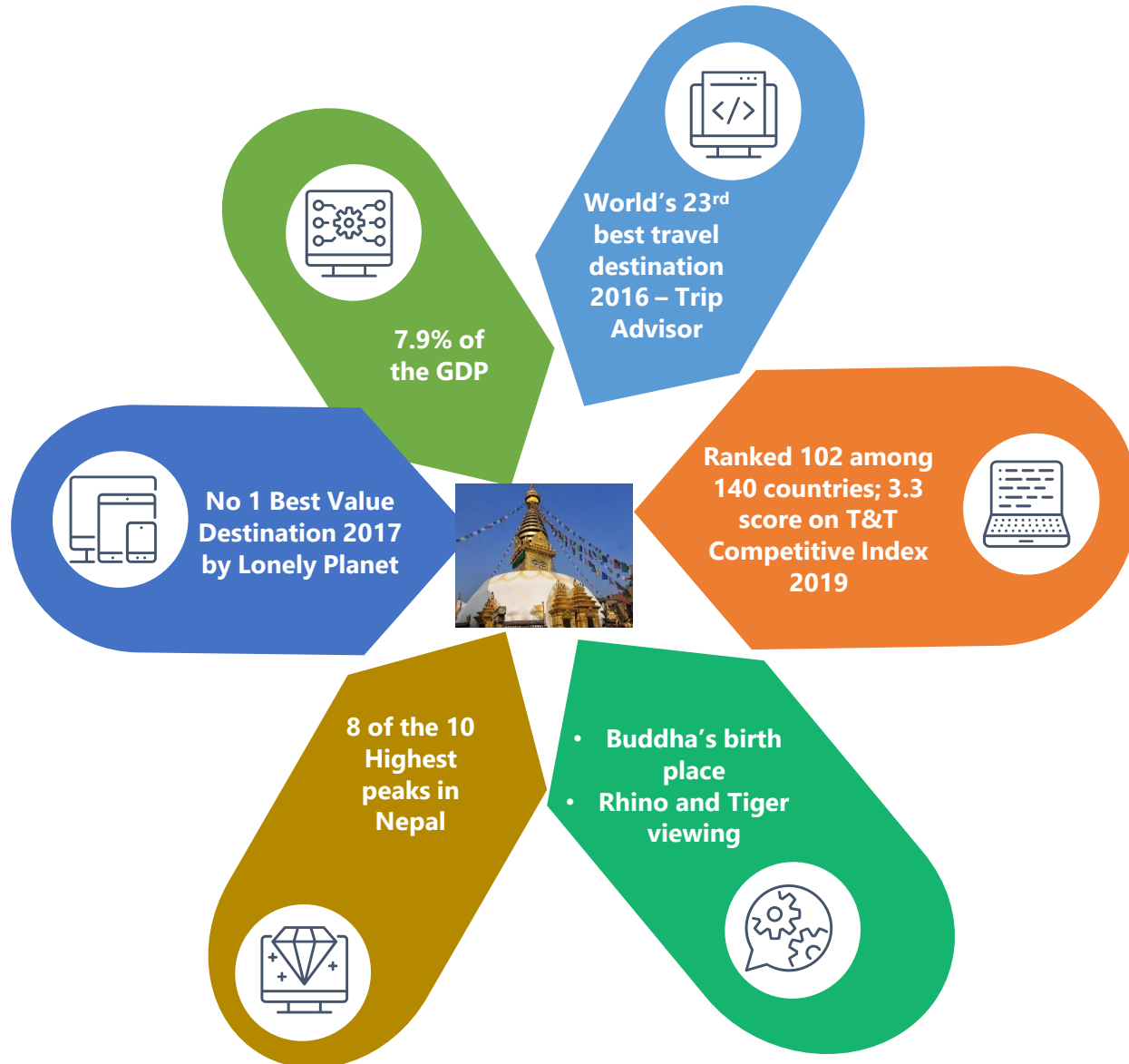


# Responding to COVID -19 Challenges- How Nepal's Tourism Sector in finding its way out

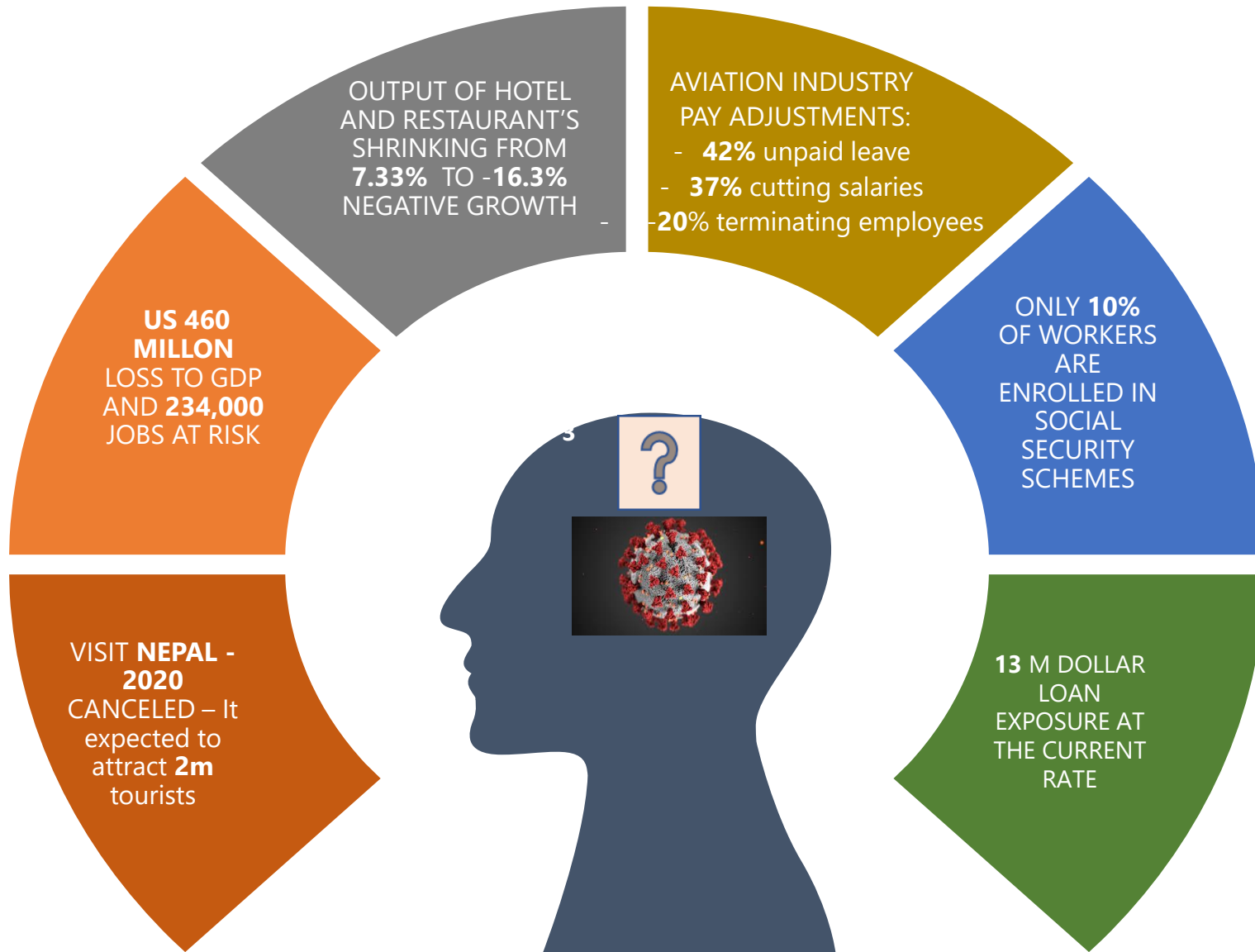
– **Deepak Adhikary**  
November 2020



# TOURISM SNAPSHOT OF NEPAL



# COVID -19 EFFECT ON NEPAL'S TOURISM



# MAIN CHALLENGES IMPEDING EFFECTIVE MEASURES



More Reports, Rhetoric than Actions

Access to Resources, Aid Dumping, No  
Clear Outline of Expected Outcomes



Health Issues/Medical Response more  
Important than Business Survival – Lockdown  
Vs Opening – no clear Strategy

Relationship between the Private Sector  
vs Municipalities/Local Government



Voice of the SMEs lost as Larger  
Establishment have better Access to Resources

# SILVER LINING



## Domestic Tourism

Nepalese tourists spent \$ 383 in external tourism-  
Has potential in the country but requires strong promotional strategy- many anecdotal evidences



## Regional and Spiritual Tourism (avg 14% growth)

- Destination wedding
- Pilgrimage
- Tiger viewing
- Trekking
- Adventure sports
- Yoga and meditation retreats



## Focus on Indian-Chinese – South Asian Tourists

- Indian spiritual and religious market is worth around \$30 billion. Same in China

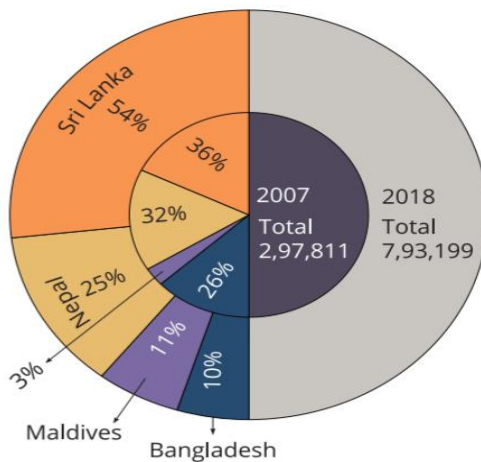


## Re-Tooling and Skilling

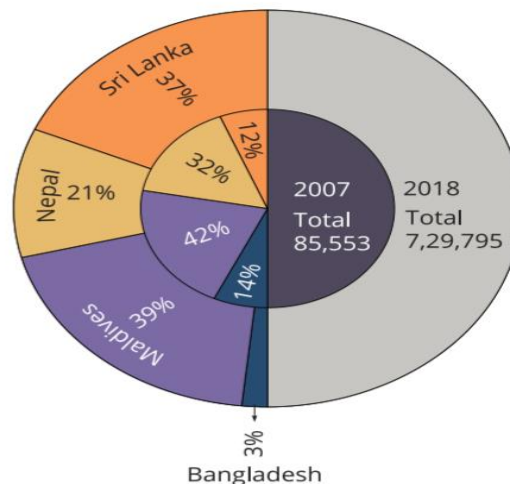
- Leveraging unemployed porters, guides in Cleaning Campaign for a fee.
- Involving on Organic Farming Value Chains

Estimated 5 million Nepali sightseers take domestic trips annually.

Indian Tourists in South Asia (N4)

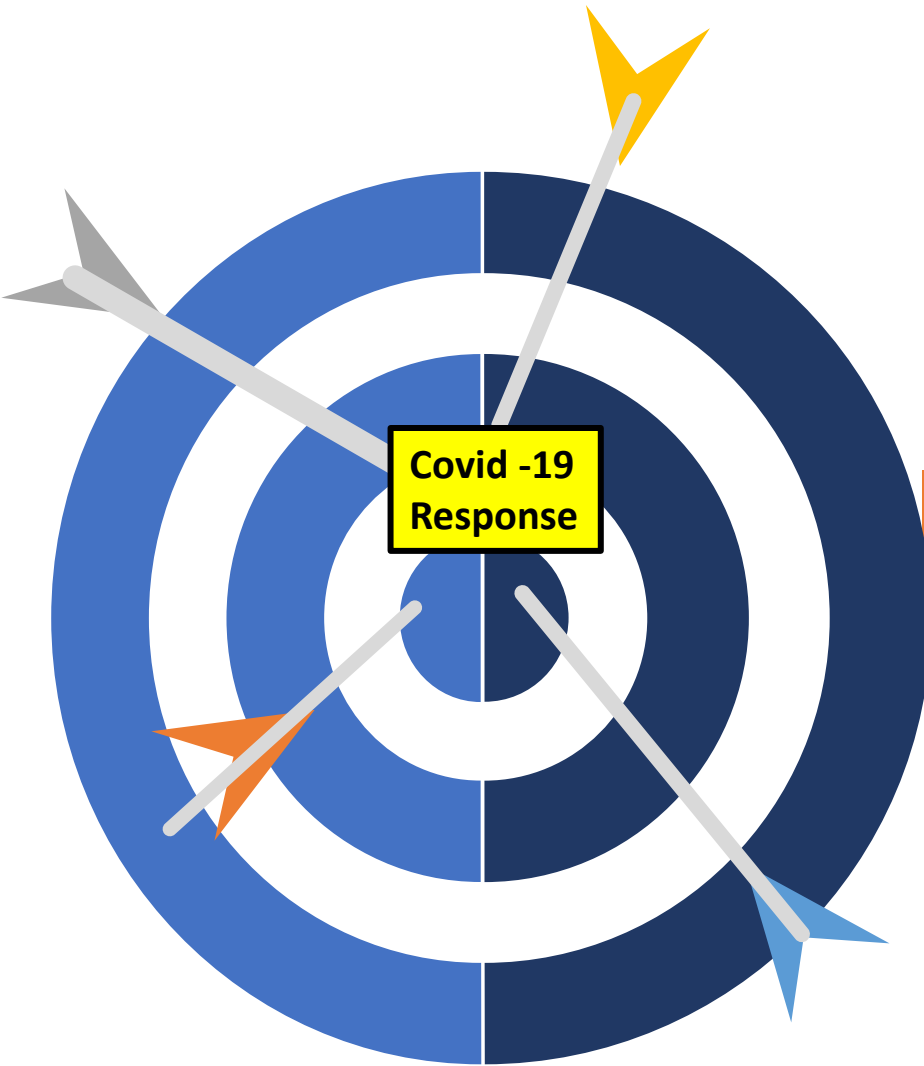


Chinese Tourists in South Asia (N4)



# COVID -19 RESPONSE (Strategic Level)

Trekking opened up from Oct 15



- 1 **DIGITAL Market Communication:** a) Reaching out to source market operators with incentives b) Weekly newsletter describing all COVID -19 precautions for the tourist
- 2 **Clean Destination Campaign/SOP:** a) Focus on Mountain resorts and trekking and carry out cleaning campaign, b) leverage porters/guides and tea house owners on the campaign
- 3 **Certification:** a) Obtain WTT Council "Safe Travel" Stamp b) Establish rescue teams
- 4 **Branding** a) Actively soliciting JV, None Equity Mode Investment, Franchising with the Asset Base (historical Village, properties etc.) – helpful in crisis
- 5 **Market Adjustment:** a) Focus on young travelers b) Smaller family/friends groups c) shorter stay d) Activities based on perception of safety and Hygiene e) Booking flexibility

# COVID -19 RESPONSE (Tactical Level)

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Visa must be obtained through the Trekking Company/Tour Operators



Must submit Negative Results from a PCR Test (72 hours), hotel booking for 7 day quarantine .



On the 5<sup>th</sup> day, another test needed to proceed to the destination



Limited commercial flights already resumed, domestic flights fully resumed with strict COVID 19 mitigation protocol



Masks are required all the time



20 Million \$ Job Retention Funds for Tourism Workforce



Possibility of Introducing Tourism Leave Travel , Interest rate reduction by 1% for Tourism Industry .

# MUNICIPALITIES AND THE GAME PARKS –COVID -19 Challenge

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## NEW CHALLENGES

1. Hundredfold increase of illegal extraction of forest resources
2. Poaching of animals
3. Threats and challenges to biodiversity to 1.3 million hectares of critical forest – threat to Tiger population
4. Illegal encroachment – small huts with no building codes



## CAUSES

1. Growing financial uncertainty among people living in close proximity to protected areas
2. Many migrant workers returned after losing jobs from India through Tarai where most of the game parks are located,
3. Restrictions by the Municipalities on movement – so literally no options to look for a job

## CHALLENGES

1. Municipalities lack of budget and resources
2. They can not enforce wildlife friendly building codes due to encroachment
3. No ability to monitor the game-park and buffer zone



## OPPORTUNITIES

1. The Crisis has brought the game parks and the community – more close due to survival issue
2. The Rangers of the Parks are offering training and voluntary work opportunities (payment according to quality/safety) to the local youths, especially the migrant workers