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Kali Gandaki: The Road from Lower Mustang to a Global Food Market

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Kali Gandaki: The Road from Lower Mustang to a Global Food Market

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Abstract

Development in Nepal continues to be a major issue in both metropolitan and rural areas of the country. Of the many obstacles standing in the way of this objective, one of the most challenging is the mountainous geography that shapes the country's lands, culture, and people. To overcome this obstacle, Nepal has followed many other developing countries by making rural road development a main priority in hopes of increasing connectivity, travel, trade, education, and accessibility to other benefits. One such example of this is the Kali Gandaki road in Lower Mustang.

The purpose of this research paper is to identify how the creation of the Kali Gandaki road has changed consumption habits and trade habits of villages in Lower Mustang. Although it is recognized importation of global food products has increased, it has yet to be determined if this is due to a change in local diet or demand from foreign tourism.

Keywords:

Agriculture, anthropology, development studies, economics, transportation, and urban & regional planning

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I would like to acknowledge a large number of people who continuously helped me and made this project possible, however to do that properly would be far too long, at times boring, and perhaps too person. Therefore, I'll keep it short and sweet. First off I would like to thank my family for all of the support they have given me throughout my life. It has always been cherished and received graciously. Next I would like to thank the incredible staff of SIT. Not only have they been a close second for support over the last few months, but they taught me the tools I needed to adapt, survive, and thrive. Finally, I would like to sincerely thank the fellow bidyartiharu who accompanied me through Mustang. Not only did sharing rooms with you keep me under budget, but your presence kept me sane and happy. DhanyabAd.

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Introduction

Over the last few decades Nepal, like many other developing countries around the globe, has been home to markets, media, and people that are rapidly globalizing (Liechty 1994). As Nepal and its people continue down this path, the effects of modernity have been observed to extend past just the metropolitan streets of Kathmandu and into rural ones that stretch as far as the Himalayas (Brinkman 2012). One such example of this change in Nepal, and developing countries as a whole, is the push to connect rural communities with roads in order to increase trade, communication, and other services (Hettige 2006). One common result of increasing connection between rural and metropolitan communities is a generally drift away from local, staple food items in exchange for globally produced, packaged items (Pingali 2006). Although a similar shift has been observed in the villages of Lower Mustang, following the construction of the Kali Gandaki road, the presence of a strong, foreign tourism industry makes it hard to determine if an increase in the importation of global food products is the result of villagers changing their consumption habits, or simply supply meeting foreign demand. With that in mind, this research project looks to identify in what ways the construction of the Kali Gandaki road has changed food consumption habits of the villages in Lower Mustang, and how/if foreign tourism perpetuates this change.

Literature Review

Since the “opening” of Nepal to the world in 1951, the country has experienced a steady flood of Western and global ideals entering its borders that

have spurred an abrupt acceleration in the rate of the country's development (Liechty 2003). Although the majority of this development has been centralized around Nepal's metropolitan areas, Kathmandu and Pokhara, tendrils of modernity are found throughout the country, in a plethora of diverse categories (Liechty 2003). One such example of development occurring in Nepal's less inhabited areas is the relatively recent construction of the Kali Gandaki road in Lower Mustang (Frank 2013).

Starting in the low, warm edges of Pokhara and ending in the high, snowy Himalayas surrounding Muktinath, the Kali Gandaki road stretches over 108 miles and climbs to an altitude of over 12,170 ft. in the Annapurna massif (Frank 2013). The terrain through this area of Nepal is beautiful, mountainous, and rugged. For these reasons, Annapurna is a major destination for athletes around the world who enjoy trekking, mountain biking, and mountaineering (Frank 2013). That said, it also gives Annapurna the infamous reputation for being nearly inaccessible by ground vehicles. Due to the area's geographic isolation, the creation of the road was originally meant to open Annapurna's population up to the rest of Nepal, but later evolved into a tool for politicians to gain popularity (Frank 2013). Although construction of the road began in the early 1990's, the road was not completed until 2008 due to constant delays created by the 1996-2006 Maoist insurgency (Frank 2013).

As expected, the road has created systemic change in the villages and lives of the people in Lower Mustang that has affected their economies, culture, and habits (Frank 2013). In the town of Kagbeni, for example, the trip to Pokhara has

not only decreased from one week to one or two days, but has also become significantly cheaper (Brinkman 2012). This pattern has facilitated villagers to be able to make more trip to Pokhara annually, along with other villages within Mustang (Brinkman 2012). Economically, the driving down of transportation costs has intern opened up commercial pathways to both domestic and global markets (Brinkman 2012). As a result, villagers have benefited two fold from the price of imported food goods decreasing, as the price of local crops increase (Brinkman 2012). This has driven the amount of food products villages in Lower Mustang import up, while also maintaining the local agriculture industry. Although the effects of the “new road” are largely positive and are observed throughout Lower Mustang’s villages, it should be noted that the rate of tourism, an industry that brings a sizable amount of money to the area, has increased in some areas and decrease in others (Frank 2013). Largely, this has been explained by tourists avoiding trekking in areas of the road with heavy vehicle traffic (Frank 2013). In the case of Tukuche, the number of visitors has dropped from 400 a day to less than 40 a day (Frank 2013).

Accessibility of rural roads to rural communities is globally viewed as critical to furthering those communities’ development (Hettige 2006). Echoing the results of Kagbeni, road construction has been shown to not only increases the frequency and rate of travel, but also drive the costs of imported food goods down and local crops up (Hettige 2006). On a macro scale, this shift is illustrated in the form of the resent rapid diversification and Westernization of diets in developing countries around the world and across Asia (Pingali 2006).

While Lower Mustang's changing food markets mirrors those of other developing countries typically, there has been no research conducted to identify whether the increase of imported food goods and other changes in the area are due to organic social change created by the Kali Gandaki road or by demands created by foreign tourists. Both possibilities are highly probable, due to tourism often having a globalizing effect on an area's food consumption habits (Mak 2012).

Methodology

The majority of my research was conducted in the Lower Mustang area of Nepal, in three villages that are located along the Kali Gandaki road, as well as on the Annapurna circuit trekking trail. In each village, I lived in a guest house for one full week. Over the duration of my stay I familiarizing myself with the life style of the town and people, appraising the towns' stores and guest houses, observing trekkers' consumption patterns, and interviewing both trekkers and shop/guesthouse owners. This was done in hopes of understanding the importance and effects of both the Kali Gandaki road and the trekking industry in the Lower Mustang area. I traveled first to the town of Larjung, then Tukuiche, and finally Marpha. These villages were selected due to their variance in size, location, and because each village is periodically the location of a village study excursion for our program (giving them the benefit of their population possibly being familiar with students conducting research). To get to this region of Nepal, I left Kathmandu by bus, traveled to Pokhara, and then took a local bus to Larjung. After Larjung, I traveled by foot along the Kali Gandaki road to reach Tukuiche

and Marpha. After three weeks, I traveled back to Pokara from Marpha, and then from Pokhara back to Kathmandu by bus.

Upon arrival I first familiarized myself with each village by recording the number of guest houses, restaurants, and food stores. Guest houses were defined by any establishment that advertised room and board. Restaurants were defined as any establishment that offered meals. Food stores were defined as any stand-alone establishment that sold raw produce, packaged food, or any other food product. This record offered a preliminary representation of the town's size, presence/importance of the trekking industry, and size/character of this food market. For each business, the food and products sold were then investigated and recorded so as to understand local demands, and to obtain a rough understanding of the quantity of products that are imported from outside of the region.

Due to a large number of trekkers not speaking English and/or not wanting to be interviewed, trekkers were observed in guest houses to get an understanding of foreign tourists' consumption habits. When making these observations, I was careful to record the quantity of food (how many dishes) order, if they were consuming food native to the area or that was Western, and if they consumed any packaged additional food items. In this context, "native food" was defined as dal bhat. "Western food" was defined by any dish that wasn't traditional to the area, made with imported ingredients, but made locally (example: homemade pasta). "Packaged food items" were defined as food or drink items that are not traditional to the area, and made and packaged elsewhere (example: candy bar or beer). These observations were made to get an understanding of if the demand created

by foreign trekkers favors traditional, native food, or imported, Western food. This information is important because it acts as a powerful indicator of if foreign demand has contributed to the increase of imported food in Lower Mustang area, following the creation of the Kali Gandaki road (Brinkman 2012).

Interviews were conducted with both trekkers and shop/guesthouse owners in a semi-structured manner with prepared questions that were specific to the person interviewed. In all interviews, the topic and nature of my research was described in detail beforehand. Participants were told they had the right to stop the interview at any time, have their name be omitted, and have their account not be used after the interview started or ended. In cases where the interview was conducted in Nepali, and the participant spoke little or no English, I used an “Informed Consent” form to make certain these points were understood.

Interviews with foreign participants focused on questions that were aimed to define what type of demand they create in the local food system. Broadly, these questions surrounded topics such their intentions of coming to Nepal, how many meals they have a day, what dishes they typically eat while trekking, what sources they have been using to get their meals, and their reaction to the food they have been exposed to. Interviews with citizens of the villages focused on the details of the supply side of the village’s local food system, local demand, and how the Kali Gandaki road has change these those topics. In these questions I asked about what food is locally produced, what types of food is imported, the origin of most imported food, consumers of local and imported food, and how the Kali Gandaki road has changed these topics.

Approaching this research topic with this three-tiered approach had the advantage of getting a general, macro perspective, a mid-level perspective, and finally a specific, micro perspective. Focusing on researching multiple players in both the supply and demand side of a village's food system also offered a more holistic perspective. Ultimately, gathering data from these different sources acted as a way to better "triangulate" the direction and results of my research. With that being so, the most valuable source of information were the interviews conducted with the local shop/guesthouse owners. In each interview, the owner had worked both before and after the construction of the road, and had valuable knowledge not just on how the road has changed the local food system.

It should be noted that although these methods worked well to gather information, they also did have severe limitations. Largest among these limitations was the language barrier between myself and the villages' population *and* many trekkers. Although I was able to conduct interviews with both groups, not being able to easily communicate with the majority of both groups greatly limited the number of interviews I was able to obtain. In the case of the villagers, not having the skill to talk in fluent Nepali made it not only difficult to interview, but also was a reason many people did not want to give me their time. Even in the cases where I was able to get interviews, it is very realistic to expect that I lost some information in translation. This limitation was surprisingly even more pronounced with many of the trekkers, for not only were trekkers most often not speaking fluently in their first language (there were surprisingly very few American trekkers), but whereas I had been learning how to speak local villagers,

I had not been learning how to speak with Israeli, French, German, or other foreign trekkers. Another limitation to my methodology was not having hard records of what food products were popular before the road was constructed. While I was able to confirm from my interviews what food is currently popular firsthand, by reviewing menus, contents of stores, and observing what food most trekkers eat, I had no way of confirming if the same was true for consumption patterns before the construction of the Kali Gandaki road.

Although my methodology had several limitations, I also was fortunate to have a number of resources at my disposal while working in the field. The greatest of these was that, while most researchers in the field need to travel to a location where their topic holds special importance, by staying in guesthouses in each village my topic of research was in the same place as I would eat, sleep, and break between appraisals or scheduled interviews. This gave me the benefit of constantly being in a position to record observations if something of interest spontaneously occurred, and/or conduct interviews if a good candidate was present. Another resource was, as mentioned before, the towns of Larjung, Tukuche, and Marpha are all locations where the SIT Nepal: Development and Social Change program periodically spends extensive time during excursions. Over the years, this has led to the development of deep bonds and strong connections with some members of the villagers' population with our program, its staff, and its students. On a number of occasions, these connections not only led to in-depth interviews, but to other benefits such as discounted room and board and names of other people to interview.

Research Findings

The primary effects of the Kali Gandaki road can be easily seen without the need of interviews, or even copious observations. Without much difficulty one can see that a large range of Western food dishes and packaged food items are available for easy purchase in not just one or two locations, but throughout the village. This is clear because they are not only displayed on counters and through dust covered window, but are prominently advertised on store fronts with both locally made posters, but also officially branded posters. The most popular of the branded posters are for Snickers, Tuborg beer, and Ruslan Vodka (a Nepali brand of vodka based in Kathmandu). These are important markers because they not only represent the dependable presence of food products that are foreign to the area, but they themselves are symbols of a global food market. In the other category, locally made posters advertising Western food dishes, commonly advertised dishes are pizza, macaroni, and apple crumble.

From the appraisal of each village, it was clear that the stores, restaurants, and guest houses that are home to these food products and advertisements are a sizable proportion of community. In Larjung, the smallest town, there were three guesthouses and one food store. In Tukuche, there were ten guesthouses, eight food stores, and three restaurants. Finally, in Marpha, the largest village, there were 12 guesthouses, ten food stores, and one restaurant. The nature of stores, restaurants, and guesthouse had little variation between their groups. In general, food stores were small store fronts that sold packaged food along with a wide assortment of various cosmetic/house hold items (soap, shampoo, playing cards,

etc.). Guesthouses were made up of a kitchen, small eating areas, a reduced version of a stand-alone store, and ~15 rooms. Restaurants were often composed of only a kitchen and a handful of tables.

When considering the variety of food sold in stores, there was generally very little difference between stores and villages of what packaged food products were available. In both food stores and guesthouse stores, Western packaged food dominated the market. These products ranged from everything from candy bars, to digestive crackers. Amongst these items, the most common were Snickers, Kit Kat, Country, Mars, and 5 Star candy bars, along with Oreos, Pringles potato chips, canned tuna fish, Fanta orange soda, Sprite soda, Coke Coca Cola, Red Bull energy drink, Nutri Choice digestive biscuits, Khukri rum, Ruslan vodka, Old Dubar whiskey, Tuborg beer, Everest beer, Gorkha beer. In addition to these imported products, there was a small number of local products that were commonly found in stores and guest houses that were special to the area. These items were almost all products of Lower Mustang's famous apple and apricot industry: dried apple rings and apricots, apple and apricot juice, and apple and apricot brandy. Although there was generally very little variation, in the town of Tukuche one important outlier was found. In the center of the village, along the Kali Gandaki road, a small stand-alone store called the "Sabina Grocery Store" sold no packaged food, but instead a combination of cosmetic/household items, and fresh, raw vegetables (cauliflower, green beans, okra, grapes, watermelon, pomegranate, banana, and potato). This store stands out from the others because

not only was it the only store to sell produce, but all of the produce had clearly been imported from outside of the Mustang district.

Mirroring the continuity of items for sale in stores, there was little difference between the menu of guesthouses and restaurants. Again, much like in stores, the majority of the what was offered was not traditional to the Mustang area. While it was found dal bhaat, local alcohol (raksi), and tea was offered everywhere, the majority of every observed menu was a large collection of foreign food. Among this collection toast, porridge, cooked eggs, pizza, curry, momos, fried rice, Chow Chow, macaroni, lasagna, spaghetti, French fries, and apple crumble were always included. Other common items were enchiladas, spring rolls, and burgers.

Observed consumption patterns in guesthouses, yet again, followed the trend of not varying greatly between towns or guest houses, and were also largely Westerner in nature. Nearly all of the common menu items listed above were observed to be eaten regularly. Trekkers of different nationalities, Israeli, French, and German being the three most common, did not seem to order differently from one another. In mornings nearly all trekkers were observed to eat some type of breakfast. This included some variety of cooked egg or porridge, occasionally toast, and commonly black, lemon, or ginger tea. At lunch, trekkers' diets were interestingly observed to be more diverse than at either breakfast or dinner. While the majority of trekkers continued to be observed to order Western food items, it was during the middle of the day that the largest portion of trekkers (~20%) were observed eating dal bhaat. Trekkers who did not order dal bhaat at this time

appeared to favor pizza or pasta dishes during lunch. Finally, during dinner it was observed that ~10% of trekkers chose to eat dal bhaat, and no Western dishes were noticeable favored over others. It should be noted when guides or porters were accompanying trekkers, they were never observed to eat anything other than dal bhaat. One final important observational note concerning trekkers is that, although a day without seeing a trekker or two in town or in a guesthouse never occurred, there was a substantially larger number of trekkers in Marpha than there was in Tukuche and Larjung. Although this does not have a direct effect on the observations I conducted in Tukuche and Larjung, it is important to note my observed sample size in the first two villages I studied in where substantially smaller than the last.

Finally, moving onto the results of my final method of research, semi-structured interviews, a number of important points can be distilled and summarized that focus on Kali Gandaki's effect on the villages' food systems. Interestingly, although these points can be organized into multiple, diverse categories, they all seem to mirror changes observed and studied in other developing Asian countries, especially following construction of a metropolitan to rural road.

The first and most important change the construction of the Kali Gandaki road has brought to Lower Mustang is quicker, easier, cheaper, more reliable travel (Thakali Purna Prabha). While this change is obvious, and not surprising, the effect of this change cannot be underestimate, because it is the reason for all of the other changes in transportation habits, methods, and consumption.

The first of these other changes is an increased frequency and ease at which villagers can travel out of their village to visit larger cities (ie Pokhara and Kathmandu) and other villages (Thakali Purna Prabha). The majority of this travel is done by local busses, which have daily schedules and are fairly inexpensive (Thakali Purna Prabha). Other, more expensive, forms of travel are by private or public jeep, and motorcycle. In the case of public jeeps, individuals buy a seat for a higher price than a bus seat would cost. Not only do these travel options offer faster, easier travel, but they also offer sufficient luggage space to transport goods. The ease and accessibility of these travel options are so significant that some members of the villages believe the road made the villagers become lazy, due to many people now choosing to wait for busses for longer periods of time than would be necessary if they chose to walk instead (Thakali Purna Prabha).

As a result of this change in travel, there has been an incredible growth and development of trade between villages and larger cities (Thakali Purna Prabha). While international food products are obviously imported along the road (ie Snickers and other products listed in the village appraisals), several food items which are native to Nepal are also imported regularly (Tring Dharma). These items are products that cannot be grown or manufactured in the local area, or are items where local supply cannot meet demand (Tring Dharma). Examples of these products are staples such as rice, sugar, meat, and flour, fresh produce such as grapes, okra, and bananas, and manufactured items made in Nepal such as Gorkha beer. Mostly, these products all come to Lower Mustang from Pokhara, however a notable fraction also come from the Chitwan area and Kathmandu (Anonymous

Guesthouse Employee). These products continue to become more abundant in the Lower Mustang area- the most impressive category of these items are the fresh fruits and vegetables, due to their perishable nature (Anonymous Trekkers). Commonly these products are imported by bus, however using either a motorcycle or jeep is not unusual (Anonymous Guesthouse Employee).

Interestingly, this growth in trade is not restricted to be only between cities and villages, nor are villages always a consumer. Since the road's construction, trade of food products between villages has also grown significantly, as well as trade and from village to cities (Thakali Purna Prabha). This trade is fueled by villages' production of agriculture such as beans, apples, apricots, potatoes, cabbage, sag vegetables (any green, leafy vegetable) and buckwheat (Thakali Purna Prabha).

Interestingly, although the markets for imported food products and exported, locally produced food have both grown, the prices for items in both categories have inversely changed. In the case of imported food, the prices have dropped across the board (Dikari Kamala Lachan). The reasons for this price change are the same as for why the price of traveling from village to village, and village to cities has decreased: the road has brought quicker, easier, cheaper, more reliable transportation. In other words, the road has driven overhead costs down dramatically. Taking the price of flour for example, whereas before the road it was ~25 rupees/kg in Marpha, today it is ~7.12 rupees/kg (Dikari Kamala Lachan). A price reduction of over 70% (Dikari Kamala Lachan). In the case of locally exported food however, prices continue to rise (Thakali Purna Prabha).

As if the incentives of packaged food continuously becoming easier to access, more diverse, and more affordable, where not enough for villagers to break from their traditional diets, the simultaneous rising price for local products have compelled many local people in the villages to integrate imported food into their diet (Thakali Purna Prabha). In many cases this switch is not made due to villagers not being able to afford the local food, but because they want to maximize the amount of profit they can make from the crops they grow (Thakali Purna Prabha).

Although the trend of Western food being popular in Lower Mustang began roughly ten years ago, the completion of the Kali Gandaki road accelerated the rate of its popularity in the area greatly (Dikari Kamala Lalchan). Easily prepared packaged food such as Chow Chow and biscuits are supremely popular, as well as snack foods such as soda and chips (Thakali Purna Prabha). Similar to packaged food, Western style dishes are also gaining popularity (Dikari Kamala Lalchan). While they are not eaten as often as Chow Chow, dishes like pizza, pasta, and grilled chicken are used to mark special occasions (Dikari Kamala Lalchan). Although these dishes are made in house, each one requires ingredients that are not traditional to the area and must be imported from the road (Dikari Kamala Lalchan). With the villagers, packaged food and Western dishes are most popular amongst the younger generation (Tring Dharma). The older generations prefer too sick to a diet based mainly on local food products, however this decision seems to be based mainly of off the premise that local food is healthier and not because they don't enjoy packaged or Western food options (Thakali

Purna Prabha). Overall, while there has been an increase in popularity of imported food products, traditional food is still eaten most often by all citizens of the villages, regardless of age (Thakali Purna Prabha).

Finally, the undisputed biggest consumer group of imported packaged and Western food are foreign trekkers (Tring Dharma). This is true in both the contexts of stores and guest houses (Tring Dharma). While the number of trekkers staying in guest houses in Marpha, Tukushe, and Larjung has been heavily reduced since the road was built (many trekkers choose to jeep or bus past these towns to Tatopani from Jomsom) the money trekkers spend on room and board is still a major source of income in Marpha, Tukuche, and Larjung (Thakali Purna Prabha). In fact, it was from this demand that many guesthouse owners first began to integrate Western food dishes into their menus ten years ago (Dikari Kamala Lalchan). Originally this was done as an effort to attract more trekkers to their guest houses (Dikari Kamala Lalchan). The importance of this grew to be so great that guesthouse owners went as far as to travel from Mustang to Pokhara or Kathmandu to attend Western cooking lessons (Dikari Kamala Lalchan).

When interviewed, many trekkers confirmed the perception that Western food was preferred and that the menu of a guesthouse played an important role in deciding a guesthouse. Not only is Western food preferred, but trekkers usually seek out guesthouses where the guesthouse has a large variety of dishes, and where the food is known to be good (Anonymous Trekkers, Lazer Ido). The biggest reported reasons trekkers choose to not eat local food, like dal bhaat, is because they do not want to aggravate their stomachs and because they believe it is not as

nutritious (Anonymous Trekkers, David Elad). That being so, trekkers also see eating local food as part of the experience of trekking in Nepal and try to occasionally eat dal bhaat, meaning somewhere between 10-20% of their meals (David Elad, Lazer Ido). In addition to formal meals, trekkers also regularly buy packaged snacks from stores and guesthouses; these are mostly candy bars (Lazer Ido).

Discussion & Analysis

From the results a number of thoughts can be made on how the road has changed consumption habits in the Lower Mustang area. First off, it is clear that the road has flooded Low Mustang with hallmark products of a global food market. This increase of packaged food products has been precipitated not only due to an increased access to markets where they are sold, but also because the prices of the products have gone down. Largely, these products have gone towards supplying the demand created by the large, international trekking population, however a small, yet significant portion has also been adopted into the local diet. In addition to packaged products, a new market has emerged for fresh fruits and vegetables that were previous impossible to import due to their perishability and distance from the Lower Mustang area. Looking at these two observations together, one sees a strong diversification of diet. Lastly, the road's construction created a trade channel from village communities to cities that has caused the village's local produce's value to increase, leading to villagers to eat less of their crops and more imported packaged food so they could sell more crops and make more money. While these changes are still new to the area of Lower

Mustang, they are shifts that have been observed in multiple countries, in areas under similar circumstances.

Looking first to the drop in prices of imported food products, this trend perfectly mirrors those seen in other developing areas in which roads leading from rural areas to urban environments are recently built (Hettige 2006). Whereas the Lower Mustang area differs slightly by being a location where tourism is a main industry, no evidence indicates that the demands created by the trekking industry is creating this change. Therefore, it can be deduced that the growing affordability of packaged food items is a change that is genuine and organic.

The quantity of the packaged food items imported however is quite different. While it is true that villagers have slowly been integrating Western and packaged food items into their diets, it is fair to hypothesize this change has been catalyzed by the high level of exposure villagers have had with the products brought into the area to meet trekkers' demand. In this respect, the amount of Western and packaged food being imported into the area is without question not representational of the villagers' level of consumption.

Even though the current level of Western and packaged food does not represent the extent to which villagers in the Lower Mustang region have diversified their diets, it is known that some diversification has taken place. Predictably, this includes packaged food items and Western food staples that are associated with the demand trekkers have brought into the area. Not only because such products are already in the area, but also because they are typically food items with long self-life's. Separate from this demand though is the increased

popularity of fresh fruit and vegetables. At no point were those products advertised on menus, nor where they sold in stores associated with trekkers. Looking at the two combined, a clear diversification in diet is observed. In this case, this change is most likely genuine and falls into another trend seen developing countries across Asia and other parts of the world (Pingali 2006).

Finally, the last major point of change the road has created has been an increase in trade between villages. This another common result seen following road construction in rural areas (Hettige 2006). In this point, no evidence can be found that points towards this change being the result of the trekking industry. Trade between villages is centered mainly around local products that hold importance to people in the area, and not foreign trekkers.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that while there has been a significant increase of Western and packaged food imported into Lower Mustang since the construction of the Kali Gandaki road, there has not been a correspondingly large change in the diet of the villager's in the region. The increase is instead most likely the result of supplying a demand created by the foreign trekkers who commonly travel through the Lower Mustang area, layered with a smaller, yet steady and growing demand by villagers.

While the increase of imported food into Lower Mustang is not representative of a proportionally large shift in the diets of the villagers in the area, a number of changes were observed that appeared to be directly caused by the construction of the Kali Gandaki road. The first of these changes is a small

level of integration of packaged and Western food in to villager's diets. Second, villager's diets appear to have also diversified further due to an increase in importation of fruits and vegetables from other regions of Nepal. Third, trade between villages and other villages, as well as villages and larger cities is much more common. These observed trends all appear to be organically created following the completion of the Kali Gandaki road, and what is more is that they all appear in other developing countries across Asia and in other parts of the world. This indicates that while the effects of tourism may often times cloud or distort the actual change occurring in Lower Mustang and possibly in other parts of Nepal, the development in Nepal can be tracked and compared to that in other countries.

There are a number of ways the methods behind this study could be expanded. For future research in this subject, tracking the numerical values of what and how often certain products are imported into villages would add a lot of value. Not only would this act as an excellent method to track popularity of items, but it would also make it easier to compare consumption patterns of villagers and those of trekkers. In addition to tracking orders of imported food products, the same could be done for exported products. Finally, the number of villages researched could be expanded. While Larjung, Tukuche, and Marpha were diverse in size, I believe a more complete picture of this topic would be obtained if villages on the road past Jomsom were researched.

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Access, Use, and Publication of ISP/FSP

Student Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Title of ISP/FSP: _____

Program and Term: _____

Student research (Independent Study Project, Field Study Project) is a product of field work and as such students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. Ethical field work, as stipulated in the SIT Policy on Ethics, results in products that are shared with local and academic communities; therefore copies of ISP/FSPs are returned to the sponsoring institutions and the host communities, at the discretion of the institution(s) and/or community involved.

By signing this form, I certify my understanding that:

1. I retain ALL ownership rights of my ISP/FSP project and that I retain the right to use all, or part, of my project in future works.
2. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may publish the ISP/FSP in the SIT Digital Collections, housed on World Learning's public website.
3. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may archive, copy, or convert the ISP/FSP for non-commercial use, for preservation purposes, and to ensure future accessibility.
 - World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archives my ISP/FSP in the permanent collection at the SIT Study Abroad local country program office and/or at any World Learning office.
 - In some cases, partner institutions, organizations, or libraries in the host country house a copy of the ISP/FSP in their own national, regional, or local collections for enrichment and use of host country nationals.
4. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad has a non-exclusive, perpetual right to store and make available, including electronic online open access, to the ISP/FSP.
5. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad websites and SIT Digital Collections are publicly available via the Internet.
6. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad is not responsible for any unauthorized use of the ISP/FSP by any third party who might access it on the Internet or otherwise.
7. I have sought copyright permission for previously copyrighted content that is included in this ISP/FSP allowing distribution as specified above.

Student Signature

Date

Withdrawal of Access, Use, and Publication of ISP/FSP

Given your agreement to abide by the SIT Policy on Ethics, withdrawing permission for publication may constitute an infringement; the Academic Director will review to ensure ethical compliance.

I hereby withdraw permission for World Learning/SIT Study Abroad to include my ISP/FSP in the Program's office permanent collection. Reason:

I hereby withdraw permission for World Learning/SIT Study Abroad to release my ISP/FSP in any format to individuals, organizations, or libraries in the host country for educational purposes as determined by World Learning/SIT Study Abroad. (e.g. Tribhuvan University, an organization you worked with, etc.) Reason:

I hereby withdraw permission for World Learning/SIT Study Abroad to publish my ISP/FSP on its websites and in any of its digital/electronic collections, or to reproduce and transmit my ISP/FSP electronically. Reason:

Student Signature

Date

Academic Director has reviewed student reason(s) for withdrawing permission to use and agrees it does not violate the SIT Study Abroad Policy on Ethics.

Academic Director Signature

Date

Note: This form is to be included with the electronic version of the paper and in the file of any World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archive.



Statement of Ethics

In the course of field study, complex relationships, misunderstandings, conflicts, and the need to make choices among apparently incompatible values are constantly generated. The fundamental responsibility of students is to anticipate such difficulties to the best of their ability and to resolve them in ways that are compatible with the principles stated here. If a student feels such resolution is impossible, or is unsure how to proceed, s/he should consult as immediately as possible with the Academic Director (AD) and/or Independent Study Project (ISP) Advisor and discontinue the field study until some resolution has been achieved. Failure to consult in cases which, in the opinion of the AD and ISP Advisor, could clearly have been anticipated, can result in disciplinary action as delineated in the “failure to comply” section of this document.

Students must respect, protect, and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work. The following general principles and guidelines are fundamental to ethical field study:

I. Responsibility to people whose lives and cultures are studied

Students' first responsibility is to those whose lives and cultures they study. Should conflicts of interest arise, the interests of these people take precedence over other considerations, including the success of the Independent Study Project (ISP) itself. Students must do everything in their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they conduct field study.

The rights, interests, safety, and sensitivities of those who entrust information to students must be safeguarded. The right of those providing information to students either to remain anonymous or to receive recognition is to be respected and defended. It is the responsibility of students to make every effort to determine the preferences of those providing information and to comply with their wishes. It should be made clear to anyone providing information that despite the students' best intentions and efforts, anonymity may be compromised or recognition fail to materialize. Students should not reveal the identity of groups or persons whose anonymity is protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Students must be candid from the outset in the communities where they work that they are students. The aims of their Independent Study Projects should be clearly communicated to those among whom they work.

Students must acknowledge the help and services they receive. They must recognize their obligation to reciprocate in appropriate ways.

To the best of their ability, students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. They should inform individuals and groups likely to be affected of any possible consequences relevant to them that they anticipate.

Students must take into account and, where relevant and to the best of their ability, make explicit the extent to which their own personal and cultural values affect their field study.

Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work.

II. Responsibilities to Hosts

Students should be honest and candid in all dealings with their own institutions and with host institutions. They should ascertain that they will not be required to compromise either their responsibilities or ethics as a condition of permission to engage in field study. They will return a copy of their study to the institution sponsoring them and to the community that hosted them at the discretion of the institution(s) and/or community involved.

III. Failure to comply

When SIT Study Abroad determines that a student has violated SIT's statement of ethics, the student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

I, _____, have read the above Statement of Ethics
(Printed Name)
and agree to make every effort to comply with its provisions.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____