

Tourism and Political Change

13

Edited by Richard Butler and Wantanee Suntikul

Tourism and Political Change in Nepal

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Part IV

Political Unrest

13 Tourism and Political Change in Nepal

Sanjay Nepal

This chapter examines tourism development in the context of political changes in Nepal distinguished by four different political eras: Era I – dawn of democracy (1951–61); Era II – authoritarian democracy (1962–88); 3) Era III – People’s Movement (1989–95); and Era IV – People’s War (1996–2009). The nature and level of tourism development in the country is discussed in the context of key political events during the four eras, with the focus on the last era during which political upheaval has had unprecedented impacts on tourism development.

Introduction

The development of tourism in Nepal has been rapid, considering that Nepal opened its borders to the outside world only in 1949. Visitor statistics show a steady growth through the 1970s followed by a levelling-off period until 1985, followed by periods of growth and decline, with a fifth phase of dramatic decline in visitor numbers after 1999; and the current phase of slow recovery since 2006 (Figure 13.1).

Tourism has been an important source of revenues for the government, in 2008 total earnings from tourism were US\$351 million, which is 7.2% of total foreign exchange of the country. Thousands of businesses providing services to the tourism industry create

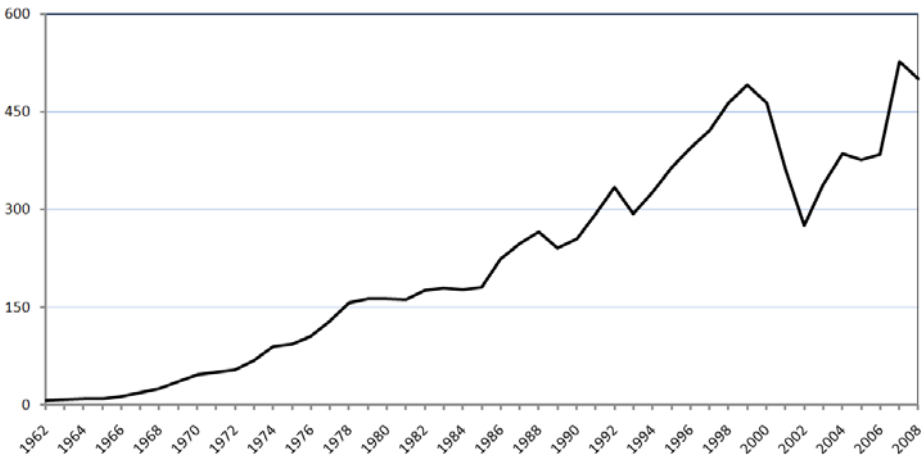


Figure 13.1: Tourist arrivals to Nepal between 1962 and 2008 (thousands). Source: NTB 2008

Chapter extract

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