

**ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN NEPAL: DECONSTRUCTING SPACE AND THE
MEANING OF RISK**

EMILY MCINTYRE

Supervisor: Dr. Marcia Rioux

Advisor: Prof. Jutta Treviranus

Supervisor's Signature:  _____

Date Approved: 30/01/2018

Advisor's Signature:  _____

Date Approved: 30/01/2018

**A Research Paper Proposal submitted to the Graduate Program in Critical
Disability Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies

York University

Toronto, Ontario

M3J 1P3

December 2017

Table of Contents

1. Introduction:	4
2. Purpose and Research Questions	6
2.1 Key Issues	6
2.2 Research Questions	6
2.3 Key Tourism Issues.....	6
2.4 Inclusive Design.....	9
2.5 Accessible Tourism.....	12
2.6 Critical Disability Theory	14
2.7 The Duty to Accommodate	15
3. Nepal Context	19
3.1 Tourism in the Nepal Economy	20
3.2 Recent Nepali Disasters and Environment	21
3.2 Disability Legislation in Nepal	23
4. Methodology.....	25
4.1 Importance of Qualitative Field Research	25
4.2 Data Collection	26
4.3 Data Analysis:.....	29
5. Findings	30
5.1 Cultural Context.....	30
5.2 Potential and Desire for accessible tourism	34
5.3 Barriers to Inclusion.....	38
5.4 Adjusting and Experimenting	45
5.5 Co-communication.....	50
6. Significance:	54
7. Limitations and Future Research:.....	55
8. Recommendations:	56
8.1 A comprehensive tourism specific sensitivity training package that could be packaged and provided to the tourism industry	56
8.2 Marketing that honestly reflects accessibility and service provision.....	58
8.3 Capitalizing on networks and information sharing	60
8.4 Expand employment opportunities beyond the abled body	62
8.5 Advocacy of accessible tourism.....	63
9. Conclusion.....	64

Abstract:

The following research paper explores the intersections among inclusive design, critical disability theory, constructions of risk, and accessible tourism in Nepal. The research applies disability theories and rights to tourism to highlight how spaces are disabling and contextualizes attitudinal barriers to accessible tourism. It also aims to better understand how risk is perceived for people with disabilities in Nepal. The literature review provides a context specific to Nepal and its tourism industry and environment. A qualitative analysis was undertaken through fieldwork and observation in Nepal, including interviews of 10 service providers in the tourism industry, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and disabled people's organizations (DPO). The findings suggest that spaces were either inaccessible or inequitably available to not only people with disabilities, but also other minority groups such as women or individuals from a certain caste. Service providers in this study not only had a willingness but also a passion to become more inclusive. However, they felt that structural barriers and a general lack of awareness about disability rights hindered accessible services. The findings show the ways in which creative workarounds and experimentation can be used to navigate understanding inclusive tourism and how co-communication can be a tool for inclusivity in both sensitivity training and cross-cultural training. This study suggests future areas of research including better understanding tourists with disabilities experiences in Nepal, researching employment numbers of individuals from different minority groups, and reporting on the technical nuances of space. It also aims to present recommendations that could be implemented to help mitigate barriers to service provision. It presents ways to re-think space, inclusivity in that space, and deconstructs social perceptions on risk, tourism participation and employment for people with disabilities.

Key words: Nepal; tourism; disability; risk; accessibility; inclusive design

1. Introduction:

This is an initial exploratory study that raises questions related to inclusive tourism for people with disabilities in Nepal. Tourism has been characterized in many ways in the literature (Smith, 1988). McIntosh (1977) defined tourism as a science, art and business, that attracts and transports visitors, accommodating them and graciously catering to their needs and wants. By that definition, tourism should then technically be an inclusive space for people with disabilities. Leiper (1979) reviewed many definitions and identified it as manifesting itself in three main ways, “economic”, “technical” and “holistic”. There may also be an element of pleasure, new spaces, new experiences, new cultures and/or escapism. Packaged travel may be designed to be organized, but travel is also messy, edgy and not meant to go as perfectly planned.

This study will aim to better understand how tourism service providers perceive inclusivity and if measures are being taken within companies to be more inclusive. It will also aim to understand the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and disabled people’s organizations (DPOs) in Nepal to determine if their work intersects with employment and/or accessibility in the tourism industry. Rather than focusing on disability on the individual level, the study will look at how spaces are disabling. It will also explore how gaps to providing accessible tourism services are presented within context specific situations in Nepal. This study additionally aims to better understand conversations surrounding risk and disability and who has the right to make the decisions about risk. Hammel, Magasi, Heinemann, Whiteneck, Bogner, & Rodriguez (2008) identify autonomy as being essential for attaining quality in living, and thus the right for people with disabilities to make their own choices will also be explored. This study is the beginning of a broader quest for knowledge and stories surrounding inclusivity and enjoyment and access to tourism spaces particularly in the global south (United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). As stated in Article 30 in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport is one of the key human rights principles (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

The Major Research Paper (MRP) is organized as follows: Introduction, Purpose and Research Questions, Nepal Context, Methodology, Findings, Significance, Limitations, Recommendations, Conclusion References and Appendices. Combining tourism and disability studies will contribute to research in both fields, through its examination of cutting-edge issues surrounding accessible tourism, which have been largely ignored in the global south. This study raises questions surrounding barriers, accommodation, disability, inclusive design, service provision, risk and choice in Nepal's tourism industry.

It is important to state my location and to acknowledge my position as a white researcher from the global north doing research in Nepal, and to understand the assumptions and ethnic differences from the texts that I draw on (Brook, 2014). I do identify as a disabled person and I am queer, though in both cases, they are invisible.

2. Purpose and Research Questions

2.1 Key Issues

Can principles of inclusive design be used to develop training resources for managers to promote accessible tourism experiences recognizing that avoiding risk is a key factor in tourism initiatives and, at the same time, autonomy (choice of taking risks) is imperative for those with disabilities to exercise their rights? An investigation of the feasibility of inclusive design was developed by interviewing tourism stakeholders, gaining a wider understanding of accessibility in Nepal. Further, risk and choice were conceptualized through the diverse perspectives that are accounted for in inclusive design. These design models will be evaluated from a socio-cultural perspective.

2.2 Research Questions

The research questions that informed this project were:

- 1) How can principles of inclusive design be adapted for tourism businesses?
- 2) How can critical disability theory intersect with tourism principles? In what way do autonomy and risk play a role in the tourism industry?

These questions were used to explore the ways in which the literature and knowledge of inclusive design could potentially be adapted in a tourism space. Further, these questions guided the analysis of intersecting disability theory and tourism practices.

2.3 Key Tourism Issues

This section will discuss barriers faced by tourists with disabilities and then barriers to providing accessible tourism for service providers. Economic issues and the ability to travel are central to the whole notion of travel, but they are more frequently cited as a constraint for people with physical disabilities. Darcy & Daruwalla (1999) note that, beyond economic issues,

physical barriers and attitudinal barriers also create barriers for provision of tourist experiences to those with disabilities.

In general, tourists with disabilities have been widely ignored, socially excluded and their interests have not been met (Daniels, Drogin Rodgers, & Wiggins, 2005; Luther, 2010; Kim & Lehto, 2012), yet many share the same interests and travel motivations as others without disabilities (Yau, McKercher, & Packer, 2004). Individuals who have more complex disabilities tend to travel less often, as they experience more constraints and less satisfying tourism experiences than most other tourists (Stumbo, & Pegg, 2005). There also may be additional considerations for people with disabilities when traveling such as insurance, or availability of a nearby hospital among other important considerations (Luther, 2010). Individuals who require care, also need to find an attendant willing to take on the extra risk outside of their regular working environment (Luther, 2010). Tourism activities, particularly if they are one of a kind, usually will have a 'tourist tax', so to speak, and therefore, may only be affordable to people with sufficient disposable income. Additionally, for some people with disabilities the level of independence may be compromised (Luther, 2010), and it may not always be affordable or available to have personal support whilst traveling. While tourism operations may be accessible to some, the onus should not be on how the tourist who has a disability navigates the tourism landscape, but how service providers can provide an inclusive experience. A better understanding of barriers for disabled travelers around the world and a deeper account of why disabled people do or don't travel to certain places is required.

Tourism that is marketed as solely based on "disabled tourism" and not the specific target market such as cultural tourists, adventure tourists, bird-watchers, among others, is limited. Identifiable markets need to be created and consumer interests made known to illustrate the

breadth and scope of this market (Gammon & Robinson, 2003), and for the tourism businesses to expand to reap the social and economic benefits of inclusive tourism. A tourism experience cannot be inclusive if people with disabilities are separated from their non-disabled counterparts (Gammon & Robinson, 2003), without explicitly asking to be. Participation together needs to start from the entrance, and a person should not, for instance, be required to enter through a separate back door, as all stages in tourism from the pre- and post-journey are important to consider.

Tourism providers face barriers to provision of accessible tourism, and there also may be barriers within their company that prevent them from being truly accessible. Oftentimes, travel providers are ill prepared to assist travelers with disabilities (Daniels, Drogin, & Wiggins, 2005; Kim & Lehto, 2012), and, when information about accessibility is provided, accurate information and details are not made available (Eichhorn, Miller, Michopoulou, & Buhalis, 2008). It is critical to understand the barriers faced by companies to shift towards inclusive design. An obvious and important barrier to accessible tourism is economic overhead costs. There may be both visible and invisible economic overhead costs for tourism providers when adopting inclusive design. Many businesses believe that retrospective work to make facilities and services accessible will be an expensive imposition on the business with little hope of positive return (Rice, 2014) and thus an undue burden for the business (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states:

“Reasonable accommodation” means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

If such costs are a barrier in the global north, it may be even more challenging in the global south to see the benefits of investing in accessible infrastructure. Employers may also be intimidated by increased liability as well as costs of implementing emergency evacuation plans. However, there may also be costs in terms of their discrimination, with legalities varying in different countries related to accessibility requirements.

While the risk in investment may be prevalent, Ostroff (2011) states that it is good business strategy with the potential for competitive advantage. As people with disabilities make up about 15% of the world's population (World Health Organization, 2017), it is risky not to include being inclusive in a business strategy. If a business is not inclusive and part of the tour/tourist attraction cannot be fully experienced by a disabled person, a discount should be offered. Otherwise negative word of mouth promotion and bad reviews on TripAdvisor result and impact other people with disabilities considering the tour. It is important for tourism service providers to understand the experiences and barriers that people with disabilities face as tourists and employees, to make their business more accessible. An important socio-cultural experience for tourists with disabilities is how they are or are not understood by other tourists or the local culture (Luther, 2010). Luther notes that, at times, a tourist with a disability can attract negative attention. This speaks to the larger societal problem requiring additional inquiry at the level of disability research and advocacy. However, by further involving more tourism stakeholders and asking important questions, people will better understand inclusivity, and, hopefully, decrease gaps in and barriers to tourism services.

2.4 Inclusive Design

The Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) (2017) at OCAD University defines *Inclusive Design* as “design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to

ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference”, thus allows for an adaptable and flexible design. This design approach is international, interdisciplinary, inclusive and interactive (Pullin, Treviranus, Patel, & Higginbotham, 2017). Inclusive design can be divided into three dimensions as shown in Figure 1 below:

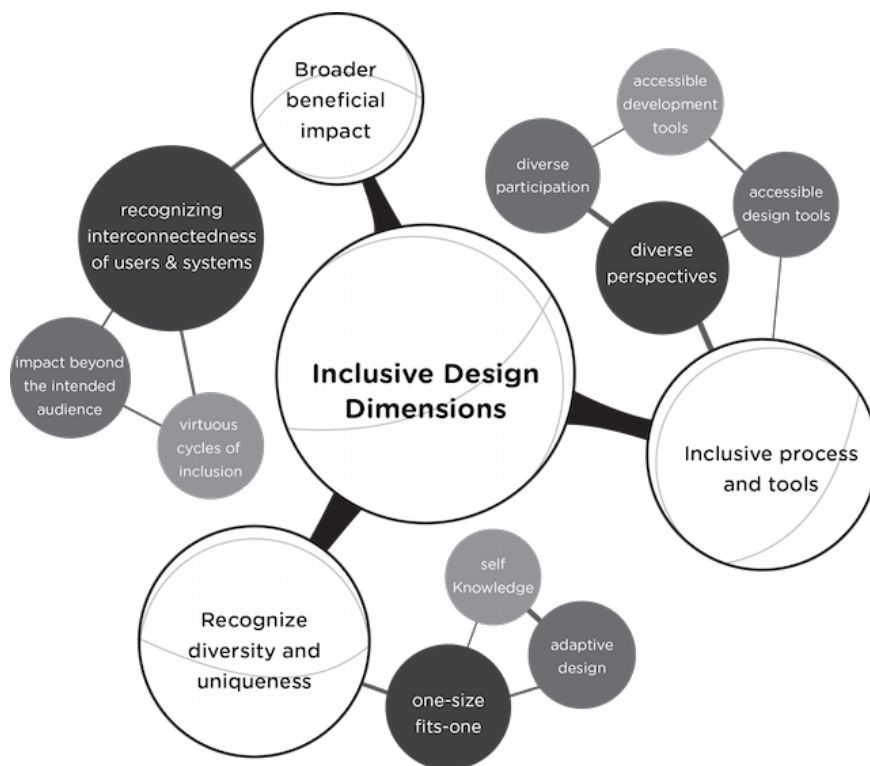


Figure 1. (IDRC, 2016)¹

Inclusive Design adopts “nothing about us without us” in all stages of their design processes and encompasses the largest range of diverse needs, rather than solely designing for the average person or mass population (Pullin et al., 2017). Further, Inclusive Design aims to deconstruct traditional design principles that do not consider smaller minorities, and to orchestrate an inclusive experience with as many diverse perspectives as possible (Pullin et al.,

¹ This image has been explicitly used as not only transferable but applicable to the tourism industry as it considers a diverse range of tourists and not just the average tourist.

2017). Inclusive Design is not synonymous with Universal Design as it focuses on the one-size-fits-one personalized approach, which differs from the common design that works for everyone (IDRC, 2017). Further, Inclusive Design recognizes the diversity of people with disabilities and does not assume uniformity and homogeneity (Treviranus, 2016). Inclusive Design also considers the nuances of interpersonal interaction and social inclusion (Pullin et al., 2017), both of which can intersect with cross cultural communication, how employees interact together and employee-to-tourist interactions. Employee and stakeholder interactions could be improved through co-creation in all communication which highlights shared construction in ideas (Pullin et al., 2017), and may work to lessen the divide in Nepal's caste system. Further Inclusive Design uses technology to accomplish socially engaged interaction through personalized solutions (Pullin et al., 2017), which could enhance the tourist experience. Treviranus (2016) suggests a bottom up approach that parallels the service TripAdvisor could be adopted as a platform to review [tourism] businesses based on their ability to meet the customer's personal accessibility requirements. This ensures that the business is reviewed by a customer with a disability, rather than someone in a higher position in the company who may not have a disability (Treviranus, 2016).

Identifying gaps in or barriers to design also requires recognition of the larger context and systemic impacts or system woes (Pullin et al., 2017; Treviranus, 2014a). Most experiences are designed for mass populations, and thus Inclusive Design works to innovate to meet the needs of individuals at the edge or at the margins of any population (Pullin et al., 2017). Examples of questions that are asked in Inclusive Design are: "Who will be indirectly excluded by this design?" or "who is not participating in making design decisions?" (Pullin et al., 2017, p. 144). This design approach is applicable as edgy experiences cannot ignore the edges of society and

should be used to provoke insights in the tourism industry. It also aims to go beyond surface adjustments and transient instances of inaccessibility and re-examines attitudes, structures, systems, assumptions, and gaps to inclusivity (Treviranus, 2016). Further, through deconstructing entrenched systems (Treviranus, 2016), this design method aims to get at the root of systemic issues. Inclusive Design is evolving, requires trial and error, requires patience in the experience and requires individuals with disabilities in the experience (Treviranus, 2016).

2.5 Accessible Tourism

Accessible tourism has not been defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2016) as it is an evolving definition. Two factors make it difficult for a single definition to be adopted: 1) different synonyms for accessible tourism are used in different countries, such as inclusive tourism, tourism for all, universal tourism, etc., and; 2) there has been no international consensus on a single definition (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016).

Darcy & Dickson, (2009, p. 34) define accessible tourism as follows:

“Accessible tourism enables people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments. This definition is inclusive of all people including those travelling with children in prams, people with disabilities and seniors”.

This definition excludes mental and psycho-social dimensions of access and thus, is limited.

Buhalis & Darcy (2011) argue that an inclusive approach to tourism provision is one that treats tourists with disabilities in the same way that they would consider other consumer groups but with respect to understanding an individual’s unique needs. Accessible tourism is an emerging subject with few scholars working specifically in this area, and while research has been done on

the identification of constraints to travel there is very little research being done on the importance of accessible tourism accommodation (Darcy, 2010).

Rains (2014) argues that many factors color the experiences and concerns of a traveler with a disability particularly the interactions with interlocking systems such as transportation to and from airports, airport security, plane changes and layovers and comfort while in the air. Rains (2014) offers suggestions for technical assistance in Nepal to improve its inclusivity within tourism for people with mobility issues and gives ideas about ramps, vehicle transfers, hotel information and care giver advice. While it is necessary to research beyond accessible hotels and to investigate other tourism activities, Burnett & Baker (2001) found that 66.3% of participants with mobility impairments would travel more if they felt more comfortable and welcome in lodging and 71.8% of people would travel more if they were able to find a room to accommodate their needs. Unique considerations for different sub-groups are significant. For example, older women with disabilities perceived safety and security as the most important criteria outside of accessibility criteria (Darcy, 2010). Darcy also stresses the importance of high quality tourism provision, particularly surrounding information provision, and if the customer's expectations are not met, that their dissatisfaction would be shared through negative word-of-mouth. Darcy (2010) recommends that, to mitigate negative experiences, tourism managers need to consider individual's needs on a unique basis. Darcy (2010) argues that, if inaccessibility is not communicated to the public, it is not only economically inefficient for the business but also socially inefficient as it is not properly communicating with a relevant market. Better understanding the discourse surrounding accessible tourism offers the potential for tourism managers to ethically and economically profit from it (Darcy, 2010).

Rains (2007), who has done prior research on the feasibility of inclusive tourism in Nepal, believes that universal design in tourism is a vehicle for the disability rights movement and will have an impact on every country in Asia in the future. This may initially be geared towards people with mobility issues, but hopefully this can be a platform to become more encompassing of all disabilities. Dimensions of access need to be integrated in the tourism design for disabilities that may be invisible and do not have any external signifiers (Darcy, Cameron, & Pegg, 2010). Overall, key sequential steps to inclusivity cannot be skipped, as it can have an impact on operations, and hard-won gains can be negated (Darcy et al, 2010).

2.6 Critical Disability Theory

Critical disability theory (CDT) is an emerging theoretical framework for the study and analysis of disability issues. Hosking (2008) states that CDT incorporates the social model of disability, multidimensionality, valuing diversity, human rights, voices of people with disabilities, language and transformative politics. CDT works to break down abled bodied norms (Hosking, 2008), pervasive in Nepal's tourism industry. Further, CDT theory intersects with inclusive design which considers processes of design and decision making in processes as well. While a lot of emphasis may be made on how a person experiences disability, it is also a social construct and social impairment (Hosking, 2008) and this has been an inevitable consequence when tourists and those wanting to be employed in tourism are presented with attitudinal barriers. Pothier argues that she is "not satisfied when she needs to accommodate herself into a physical and human environment and rather, expects the human and physical environment to be welcoming to the presence of disability" (Pothier & Devlin, 2006, p. 16). CDT needs to be applied to the Nepali tourism industry to effectively promote the rights of people with disabilities

to participate and be employed in tourism and in society (Hosking, 2008). The discourse of how disability can be seen as personal tragedy (Hosking, 2008; Pothier & Devlin, 2006) or as heroic or extraordinary also needs to be examined.

Further, with the large presence of international organizations in Nepal, it is critical that the focus in tourism is on income and not on aid, as it will provide employment opportunities and tools that support long-term goals of individuals and society. “Unpacking and dismantling social constructions of gender” is also a key goal of CDT theory (Pothier & Devlin, 2006, p. 10), and so it is important to understand the representation of women in the workforce in Nepal’s tourism industry. Further, better understanding the discourse around disabled bodies and intersectionality with other identities is an important issue to CDT (McRuer, 2003). CDT provides a conceptual framework that will be applied to the tourism arena to understand disability issues (Hosking, 2008), and may be helpful to apply “critically disabled perspectives” that may or may not exist in Nepal (McRuer, 2003, p. 97).

2.7 The Duty to Accommodate

The duty to accommodate is a construct in critical disabilities studies to fight for equality for people with disabilities (Lepofsky, 1992), and to remove the systemic discrimination that may exist in employment related decisions (Agocs, 2002).

Article 27 on Work and Employment in the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* states:

“State Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. State Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to, inter alia (United Nations, 2017a)”.

Lepofsky (1992) argued that accommodation is the tailoring of the work practice or requirement to the specific need of the individual or group. For example, the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University in Toronto provides services such as but not limited to: consultation, work site assessment, equipment set up, staff training and website accessibility reviews and website training (Inclusive Design Research Centre, n.d.). Section 17 (2) Accommodation of the Ontario Human Rights Code states:

“No tribunal or court shall find a person incapable unless it is satisfied that the needs of the person cannot be accommodated without undue hardship on the person responsible for accommodating those needs, considering the cost, outside sources of funding, if any, and health and safety requirements, if any” (Ontario, 2012).

Molloy (1992) makes recommendations to value diversity, for people with disabilities in the workplace based on employment equity that considers accommodations on an individual basis. Recommendations of Agocs (2002) could be adapted to tourism to remove discriminatory barriers, through setting a timetable to improve representation of people with disabilities, monitoring the equity process, sensitivity training for employees and measures to make the work culture more supportive.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (n.d.) asserts that a better understanding and more research on the impacts of discrimination on the lives of persons with disabilities is needed. Questions could be asked such as, “Does discrimination have an impact on the underemployment of persons with disabilities? What are some of the factors that may prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities?” (Canadian Human Rights Commission, n.d., p. 28). Consideration of human rights principles that are legally and ethically justified need to be in place (McSherry & Freckelton, 2013).

Anti-discrimination and inclusivity also need to exist in the arena of participation in risky and edgy activities. How Section 17 is used to protect people with disabilities in the workplace and to allow people to have the same dignity and equality as everyone else (Ontario, 2012), also needs to be mirrored in the right to play and to participate in risk-taking. Frey (1991) argues that risk is a social construction that assigns uncertainty to an event or outcome. Risk discourses inhabit many areas whether they are about “management, avoidance, aversion, facilitation or its embrace” (Burns, Watson, & Paterson, 2013, p. 1059). Risk is also used in some businesses to deny access to people with disabilities. In the tourism industry, this often occurs in what are designated high risk activities such as sky diving, scuba diving and rock climbing which have the potential for personal injury or death (Lyng, 1990). Further, Frey (1991) states that personal action, technicalities, and natural hazards are a part of understanding risk. Burns, Watson, & Paterson (2013) also recognize that risk is inherent in outdoor experiences. Risk is recognized to participants as a form of celebration but for outdoor adventure providers, however, there exists a desire to open access to risky pursuits but also a fear of accountability and liability for mishaps (Burns, Watson, & Paterson, 2013).

Considerations of risk need to be spelled out in terms of understanding who is and who is not participating. The power structures that may determine what is considered risk and who has the power to decide on taking the risk also need to be understood. Cultural contexts of risk can vary by social class or distribution of power which can determine first, what is risky and second, whether the risk is worth taking (Frey, 1991). Frey’s understanding of risk is embodied in the tourism arena where uncertain outcomes are inevitable and the choice of who can take risks can be socially determined. Lyng (1990) claims that risk assessment divides the human experience into bodies that are spontaneous and bodies that are constrained by society. When understanding

risks in sports settings for the abled or disabled body, assumption of risk has always been prevalent in these uncertain circumstances (Frey, 1991) and the same doctrine needs to be applicable in tourism activities. The decision to take a risk should be that of the individual and risk distribution needs to be allocated in a way that is reflective of the individual's desires (Frey, 1991). An assumption that people with disabilities need to be protected or overprotected has led to unwanted consequences and overt acts of pity (Sanders, 2006), which is problematic. To change this, the social constructions of assessing risk need to be unlearned (Frey, 1991). Capability should be assumed, and acts of progressive inclusion that exist within the sports/recreation space (DePauw, & Doll-Tepper, 2000) need to be mirrored in all risky activities. Principles of the one-size-fits one construction in inclusive design need to be applied in risk and tourism (Inclusive Design Research Centre, 2017) to ensure that the tourist is receiving accommodations that are specific to their needs and that allow them to take risks. To achieve social justice in society, there needs to be inclusivity in fringe and extreme activities. However, when considering private tourism businesses safety management is their top priority, as an accident could have a devastating and adverse impact on the activity and destination (Bentley, & Page, 2001). Bentley and Page (2001) state that the challenge posed by risk behaviours needs to be balanced with appropriate safety measures and management systems. The failure for tourism businesses to maintain a safe environment for activities may pose hazards for their customers (Bentley & Page, 2001), as clients oftentimes, rely on the staff to predict inherent risks (Morgan, & Fluker, 2003) and to make them feel safe in an activity. This in turn, creates client obligations that are unique to the adventure tourism industry and a firm understanding of relative risk is required (Morgan & Fluker, 2003). Tourism businesses and clients will have insurance policies, however, tourism businesses have a responsibility of

managing risk, and containing a crisis that could lead to death or injury (Morgan & Fluker, 2003).

Both in the employment sphere and in the tourism participation sphere, reasonable accommodation needs to be made to prohibit discriminating against “qualified” individuals (Stine, 1991, p. 99). Determining what is reasonable needs to be addressed through reasonable accommodation and undue hardship. Reasonable accommodation may include making facilities readily accessible to disabled individuals, job restructuring, modified work schedules, reassignment, additional equipment or devices or having break rooms (Stine, 1991). Lepofsky (1992) states that the duty to accommodate in and of itself will not remove all barriers to full participation in the community and thus other measures need to be taken in service provision. Lynk (2008)’s argument of accommodation in the workplace to the point of undue hardship can be echoed in the right to participate and make autonomous decisions in risky tourism activities. Undue hardship is evidenced in the workplace if employee assistance is required in the case of emergencies and an increase of risk is proven (Lynk, 2008), if it compromises health and safety standards, and if the cost substantially affects viability (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2014). It should be the duty of tourism providers to accommodate their guests and employees and the conversation needs to be adapted to what the company is doing that is not inclusive. Lynk (2008) suggests the appropriate question to ask is whether it can be shown that it would be impossible to accommodate the employee or tourist without causing undue hardship. Lynk (2008) further argues that it is the responsibility of the person with the disability to assume their own safety, and if there are no safety risks to others then arguably undue hardship would be remote.

3. Nepal Context

The literature, the laws in Nepal, as well as advocacy and policy documents created by National Federation of Disabled-Nepal (2016), suggest that there are barriers for people with disabilities in Nepal, including physical infrastructure, transportation, communication, exclusion from the workforce and inadequate legal provision.

3.1 Tourism in the Nepal Economy

According to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) (2014), Nepal's tourism industry is a significant contributor to employment generation. In the MoCTCA (2014) study, 80% of the employees in the tourism industry were male, which suggests that hiring women in the tourism industry needs to be raised. 24% of the employees were also hired seasonally (MoCTCA, 2014). In 2016, 940 000 jobs were supported by the tourism industry and this number is expected to grow (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in 2016 was USD 1.6 bn, which is evidence of the important role it plays in Nepal's economy. In 2013, the total tourist arrivals by land and air was 797 616, dropping slightly to 790 118 in 2014 (Nepal Economic Forum, 2017). However, these numbers dropped to 538 970 in 2015 (Nepal Economic Forum, 2017), which is likely a direct result of the Gorkha earthquake. The numbers are on the rise again at 729 550 in 2016. The biggest tourism markets by nationality in 2014 were the U.S.A, the U.K. and Thailand (Durbar, 2014), and in 2017 have been identified as India, China, U.S.A, Sri Lanka and the U.K. (Nepal Economic Forum, 2017). The number of trekkers on average by month, drop significantly from December to February and in June to August, with September being the busiest month for trekkers (Durbar, 2014), due to the ideal weather conditions. Understanding micro and macro trends in Nepal's tourism industry can help businesses improve marketing strategies.

3.2 Recent Nepali Disasters and Environment

In April 2015, nearly two and a half years ago, there was the Gorka earthquake in Nepal, which resulted in 9000 deaths, more than 23 000 injured and about two million displaced people (Basnyat, Tabin, Nutt, & Farmer, 2015). It has had a continuing impact on citizens, businesses and infrastructure. There is an elevated risk of epidemics of infectious diseases, including cholera, typhoid, and typhus, requiring consistent disease surveillance. (Basnyat et al, 2015). Basnyat et al. urge investments in water and sanitation systems and emphasize water treatment. As tourism is a critical part of Nepal's economy, clean and safe water sources are important when promoting tourism.

The heavy monsoon season in Nepal also may be a disabling environment for tourists and locals alike. The very recent floods in August 2017 devastated communities, crops and increased the risk of disease (Ratcliffe, 2017). Ratcliffe stated that 141 people in Nepal were pronounced dead and 38 000 homes were affected by the severe flooding. NGOs are stepping in with 'dignity kits' which include sanity materials, food and water purifiers (Ratcliffe, 2017 p. 1). 27, 861 families have been affected and 47 350 people have been displaced (Reliefweb, 2017). This will likely also impact tourism numbers in the upcoming months. After an environmental catastrophe, creative problem solving should be undertaken by not only government but also tourism service providers and the local culture to re-market and re-identify themselves to both make the tourists feel safe as well as motivated to pick the destination. Fortunately, the sample areas selected for my study were not directly impacted by the floods, but they may impact the entire country. Mr. Pradhananga, a local advocate and Director of Four Seasons Travel and Tours, wants Nepal to capitalize on the re-branding opportunity through using inclusive tourism strategies:

“As Nepal is working hard to reposition its destination image after the 2015 earthquake, it is the right time to focus on inclusive tourism as well in the process of rebuilding the monuments and tourist facilities making it more accessible” (Pradhananga, & Timsina, 2017)

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) (2014) survey respondents perceived Nepal to have inadequate infrastructure such as roads and electricity. ADRAD (2015) stated the collapse of buildings from the earthquake impacted access for people with disabilities, while, concurrently, the earthquake caused an increase in people with spinal cord injuries and amputations. ADRAD states that reconstruction of the 14 districts most affected by the earthquake will implement accessibility guidelines into the construction of buildings.

However, Nepal Economic Forum (2017) recognizes that implementation of infrastructure projects has been a major issue due to continuous political interference and unstable governments. The Nepal Economic Forum recognizes that there are no substitutes for infrastructure which in turn will benefit their economy. The Nepal Economic Forum also identifies the lack of health infrastructure particularly in rural areas as problematic, and this may affect tourism numbers to a destination, if potential tourists cannot obtain convenient and reliable care. Gaps in accessing health care also exist for locals, as the government has failed to implement the health insurance program by not issuing the ID cards that identify people as “too poor”, “poor” and “marginalized” so that fees can be waived (Nepal Economic Forum, 2017, p.33). A free medical service program for people with disabilities, elderly people and single women who cannot afford medical treatment has been introduced to allow access to basic care (Nepal Economic Forum, 2017).

Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTA) is currently in the initial stage of a project that will not only help to promote tourism to Everest Base Camp and the Annapurna Base Camp, but will use technology to increase safety for trekkers by allowing an easy flow of information

about disasters, avalanches and trapped climbers (Nepal Economic Forum, 2017). This echoes, the conversation above about water sanitation, and these technological advances could aim to benefit the locals as well as tourists. The role of technology in Nepal is important to better understand how it can be used to better provide tourism services for example with individuals who are nonverbal. Technology in certain circumstances can aid in the safety and communication of individuals on a tour.

It is important to look beyond the physical environment to understand the impact of attitudes. Dhungana (2006, p. 133) claims that people with disabilities in Nepal “face additional barriers in accessing services due to restrictions of their own disabilities, poverty, the mountainous terrain and social stigma”. Dhungana (2006, p. 134) argues that women are treated as inferior, and “are never expected to receive equal opportunities that are available to men”. MoCTCA (2014) survey respondents perceived attitudinal barriers to exist in the tourism industry in Nepal, for reasons such as political unrest, lack of skilled human resources and unhealthy competition among tourism establishments. Employment and societal responsibility are an important construct of this research, to better understand how people with disabilities can meaningfully engage in society and the workplace (Hammel et al., 2008).

3.2 Disability Legislation in Nepal

A new disability rights bill, The Act regarding rights of persons with disability 2074², was enacted in Nepal very recently – passed by the legislature on August 6, 2017) and enacted by the President on October 18th, 2017 (National Federation of Disabled-Nepal, 2017a), which highlights the relevance of a study on accessibility.

² The years in Nepal are not that same as in a Canadian Calendar and the year 2074 is 2017.

The new act replaced the Protection and Welfare of the Disabled Persons Act, 2039, enacted in 1982.

In the previous Act (1982), a disabled person was defined as:

“a Nepali citizen who is physically or mentally handicapped or incapable to maintain normal daily life. The term also denotes one eyed, blind, deaf, dumb, half-dumb, feeble, crippled, lame, limping, handless or mentally handicapped person also”.

Under the new Act, the definition of disability is:

“A) "Disabled persons with disability" means a person with disabilities who cannot afford life without having a property or a family member or guardian, or living independently.

B) "Persons with disability" means a person who is impartial to the physical and mental or long-term disability, due to physical restrictions or existing obstacles, to be intermediate and effectively interrupted in social life.” (National Federation of Disabled-Nepal, 2017b)³

With this recognition of physical restrictions and obstacles, this may serve to play a role in improving infrastructure to provide accessible tourism.

The Act regarding rights of persons with disability 2074⁴ has defined accessible as:

“"Accessible" means for manually disadvantaged people to live independently and to enable them to be fully involved in every aspect of life and the use of man-made physical infrastructure, the means of transportation, information and communication equipment and the technology to be used without the service and convenience of the public service.” (National Federation of Disabled-Nepal, 2017b)

If this Act carries as much weight and significance as it is intended to then, it ultimately would positively affect linkages in the tourism industry as well. Because my fieldwork was during the transition period between passage by the legislature and enactment, I also asked individuals about their level of awareness of the new Act.

³ This is the definition as per the Act, however the document was downloaded from the NFDN's website

⁴ The years in Nepal are not that same as in a Canadian Calendar and the year 2074 is 2017.

The new Disability Rights Act, has been shaped by the leadership of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, DPOs including NFD-N, disability related service providers and government agencies, and by the constitutional provisions of the UNCRPD, to assist people with disabilities to have an improved quality of life (National Federation of Disabled-Nepal, 2017a). The NFD-N (2017) states the key areas in the Disability Rights Act are: access to basic services, human rights, health, education and employment. The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation are governed as well by Tourism Acts that address tourism policies more generally as well as niches of tourism such as trekking, rafting, hotels, tour guides, the right to information, environmental protection, etc. (Department of Tourism, n.d.). However, there are no laws that explicitly cover accessible tourism infrastructure, which leads to barriers to access for tourists and employees.

On the one hand, it's clear that Nepal needs to shift to be more inclusive to people with disabilities, however, ADRAP (2015) in their annual report state that the production of accessible products/services may be subordinate to the re-integration and re-construction from the earthquake, and now the floods. Due to the precarious environment and heavy monsoon season, the government may be reluctant to invest a lot of money on accessible tourism infrastructure, when the risk of damage and cost on maintenance may be quite high.

4. Methodology

4.1 Importance of Qualitative Field Research

A qualitative research project of the experiences of 10 service providers: tourism service providers, DPOs and NGOs in Nepal and an in-depth case study of a travel company was undertaken by the researcher. The research involved volunteering with the travel company

assessing tourism spaces (temples and hotels) in Kathmandu and Patan. I was connected to the tourism company, through an introduction by my supervisor Dr. Marcia Rioux, who met a contact there during her work in Nepal with Disability Rights Promotion International. Tourism activities such as boating and the Peace Pagoda in Pokhara were also observed. Field notes and an observational journal were kept.

Through understanding the experiences related to accessibility, barriers and opportunities to accessible tourism and regional specificities emerged. A qualitative approach in disability research allows for the richness and depth that can be captured through experience, situational analysis, observable behaviour and informant's perspectives (Jick, 1979; Kazdin, 2000). Further, participant's voices were heard, and concerns were not dismissed and deemed insignificant, but rather recognized for their complexity (Treviranus, 2014b; Treviranus 2015). In disability research, solely relying on statistics is not reliable as there is no homogenous sample group that is large enough to reach statistical significance given the diversity, variability and unpredictability of people with disabilities (Treviranus, 2014b). It is a form of relational research that provides the tools to question inclusion and barriers to inclusion in tourism with which providers in Nepal are faced. Qualitative research provides, 'theoretical imperatives', which aim to offer new perspectives, contribute to the identification of what is going on and how it may be modified to desired ends. First-hand narratives can attend to the subjective aspects of lived experience, which can reveal nuance that is not captured in closed-ended surveys and questionnaires (Van Manen, 1991).

4.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through a combination of interviews, site visits and observational note taking. One travel company was analyzed in more detail, as more time was spent understanding the inner workings of accessible tourism and barriers to it from a business perspective. I also did a presentation to their staff members on the research and some disability sensitivity training.

I made site visits to 5 hotels and tourism sites to assist in an audit of their accessibility features and general activities that aid in accessible tourism planning. In keeping with a person-centered inquiry approach (Berger, & Lorenz, 2015), I navigated inaccessible hotel spaces with an individual who is a wheelchair user.

A journal of my observational notes and experience pertaining to traveling with a disability or disabling circumstances, opinions on tourism activities, and how my understanding of how accessibility could fit into the tourism model in Nepal was kept (See Appendix B). Observation protocol was established for my journal through a standard set of questions that I answered: What is happening? What am I seeing? What am I not seeing? What occurred throughout the day? How does being a tourist shape or bias my perspective? What biases can I identify? How do I address my biases?⁵ Observation research has been fundamental to qualitative studies, and its history is in studying non-Western societies by anthropologists (Silverman, 2006, p.19).

Interviews were undertaken with ten service providers that provide tourism or provide a service to people with disabilities. The scope of this study was tourism providers, disabled

⁵ The observational journal was used both practically and creatively and to colour the experience, giving a sense of place and feeling. This is not where the main findings of my research emerged.

people's organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations⁶. This scope of the study was limited to providers due to time restrictions and restrictions on how much data could be presented in an MRP paper.

Service Providers		
Number	X (10)	Type
Service Sector		
Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPO's)	40% (n=4)	Umbrella organization, Independent Living, Disabled sport, Employment for the visually impaired
NGOs	10% (n=1) ⁷	Development
Tourism Service Providers	50% (n=5)	Climbing, Hotel, Responsible Tourism Operators x 2, Rafting
Location of Service Provision		
Kathmandu	30% (n=3)	
Pokhara	10% (n=1)	
All destinations in Nepal	60% (n=6) ⁸	

Figure 2. Participant Demographics

A small sample size allowed for thick descriptions (Van Manen, M., 1991) and more room to share the stories that are reflective of the people in Nepal. A range of tourist service providers were interviewed to understand access to tourism for people with disabilities from different points in the journey, from the accommodation, to transportation details, to the activity. NGO's and DPOs were also interviewed that work with and/or advocate for people with disabilities,

⁶Tourists with disabilities as well as their family are not part of the scope of this study. As the study is aiming to get at the source, the provider, and the space of the provision.

⁷ One of the NGOs is a massage clinic and the clients are primarily tourists, therefore, it intersects with tourism.

⁸ Service Provision that is all over Nepal, is also in Kathmandu and Pokhara

women, or are involved in development work in inaccessible or remote communities. The service providers reside in Kathmandu which is the hub of tourism activity and Pokhara which is where tourists stay prior to trekking in the Himalayas but they may also serve other regions. A variety of tourism services and NGOs/DPOs is important, as it allowed for varied knowledge and experiences. Additionally, complementary services will create the potential for partnerships which is addressed in Section 8.0 Recommendations. Service providers were identified through an Internet search, snowball sampling and time spent in the field approaching businesses.

One on one interviews were conducted for 30 minutes to 60 minutes with the 10 providers. Please see Appendix C for the Interview guide that was used to structure the interviews and Appendix D for the Consent Form. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a flexible and dynamic approach (Kazdin, 2000), thus when critical issues arise further depth may be added to better understand concerns if there is a freer exchange of communication (Esterberg, 2002). The questions were pre-tested in Nepal to ensure that appropriate cross-cultural communication was practiced.

Following the visit, recommendations to the manager regarding accessible tourism were provided (See Appendix A for an example of the suggestions).

4.3 Data Analysis:

To analyze the interviews, a thematic narrative analysis was used to report patterns (themes) within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A lot of varied data was collected during my research; thus, codes and patterns were used to synthesize the data. The analysis was driven by an interest in understanding the stories of the service providers and their experiences with providing accessibility in Nepal or gaps in provision, with the analysis in relation to accessible

tourism, the understanding of space and risk. All the transcripts were read and re-read with notes taken to generate open codes. Codes were also created using NVivo as a tool for analysis.

Examples of open codes include: hope, potentiality, transportation, advocacy, working together, attitudes, flexibility, ethnicity, politically incorrect, government barriers, wheelchair, staff, help, hotel, experience, cultural and training. The codes were placed into related clusters in the form of a mind map and then made into themes that were refined. Following this process 5 themes emerged: a) cultural context; b) potential and hope for accessible tourism; c) barriers to inclusion; d) adjusting and experimenting; e) co-communication. Insights of other researchers on accessible tourism, risk, body and space were also considered in this research. This study deals with human subjects, and was approved from York University's Research Ethics Board.

5. Findings

5.1 Cultural Context

Nepal has an inescapably complex and rich culture, but also has cultural practices, customs and norms that may lead to discrimination. Thus, a theme emerged related to the cultural context of the destination, and how the intersections of caste, gender and disability play a role in Nepal. However, a tourist visiting Nepal, solely for the purpose of seeing and enjoying the destination would likely only witness the richness of their culture, religions and festivals. Through a deeper investigation, the complexity of cultural beliefs emerged particularly how women and disabled people fit into space and how that may be influenced by the caste system.

There were intersections between constructs of cultural identity related to the caste system, gender and disability which manifested themselves in diverse ways. Tourism can at

times deceive, as it can be staged and is catered to showing the most perfect view. In saying that, the everyday nuance and/or complexity of culture also needs to be unpacked and understood in tourism spaces. The caste system in Nepal was eliminated by the Country Code of 1963 (Thapa, 2010, p.925) but is still pervasive in society. Consideration of the caste system was not something that had been researched in the literature review, but emerged both implicitly and explicitly in and outside of the tourism arena. The caste system appeared to have several variations and was not just based solely on the family you were born into, but also your gender, your position, if you were abled bodied, among other variables. According to Gellner (2007), everyone in Nepal has a caste or ethnic identity, and they themselves know their ascribed identity but usually others know too based on their surname. Gellner also notes that some people may attempt to pass as a higher caste. Further, some individuals who were in high positions in companies that I met, identified themselves to me as being part of the Brahmin caste, and continued to explain to me that it is a higher caste, that was traditionally associated with educators. Individuals who were in lower positions and may have been a part of a 'lower caste' did not self-identify their caste to me. This may be an indicator of the importance of stratification in society to other Nepalese, however, this identity would likely be arbitrary or could come off as supercilious to a tourist. One individual also did not want to be interviewed as he felt that his lower position in the company was subordinate and that it would be better to interview someone in a higher position. When asking one individual a question, he responded that he could not answer from his position, "If you ask me my experience as a lower level, people with disabilities experience, I would be rather able to tell you nicely" and continued to politely suggest that I speak with someone higher up in the company. This statement suggests that he felt subordinate being lower in the company and not being abled-bodied. Yasir who has a

visual impairment was candidly speaking about his frustration of being an underpaid employee after working for the organization for nine years as a massage therapist, “Our basic salary in the Nepal government, they giving to other for every non-government involvement sector they can give around 8000 Nepali rupees that is the minimum, but we get here, 5000 Nepali rupees is our basic”. When asking a hotel manager about hiring people with disabilities in the future, she stated “we don’t have power”, which shows the importance of position in the workplace.

Companies also took pride in hiring a diverse range of ethnic groups and people from different castes, “We have good ethnic representation as well across the spectrum” stated Dave. Ayush echoes this:

“I would say we are one of the most diverse ethnic groups here, we have more ethnic Newars here, Brahmin, Chhetri,...it’s not one ethnicity dominant, and even we had Muslim in terms of religion. We have Buddhist, we have Hindu, so it’s pretty much inclusive.”

Gellner (2007) explains the Kathmandu valley, where Pokhara one of the sample sites is located, has a more complicated caste system with about 20 castes, as a hill caste hierarchy exists with the Newars, the Indigenous inhabitants who live there. Ben notes that “Nepal’s politics are always dominated by the mid hill Hindu groups and they see that populations along the Indian border as second class citizens”. Thus, this flags a shortcoming to this research as the Madheshi population, that reside in the southern part of the countries voices, were not heard. Ben stated that the Madheshi population is “very much neglected structurally, which is echoed by Gellner (2007) who states that the Madheshis are bitter about the way they have been treated and ill-equipped to deal with it. No individuals or companies identified hiring individuals from the Madheshi population to me, however, this was also not directly asked. To conclude, the caste

system permeated throughout discussions with participants, particularly amongst those in higher castes or with foreigners working in Nepal.

In considering inclusive spaces, other groups that are fighting for their rights, such as women were not to be excluded from the conversation. Women appeared to have a strong presence working in the tourism industry in Nepal, but I did not see any at the highest level of management. There were comparatively fewer females working in the organizations and companies that were interviewed. Aarus, a rock climbing instructor stated that there were comparatively fewer female students as participants in rock climbing, which suggests this may also be common in some sporting spaces.

A rafting guide, Amrit, stated that he has not seen Nepalese women as rafting guides, and that he is unsure if that would be socially acceptable. Women are becoming more and more prominent in the workplace, but are yet to be commonly found in some positions. Questions need to be considered such as could a woman from a certain caste, be a manager of a man from one of the higher castes? Outside of the DPOs there was nobody with a disability employed in the workplaces that were researched, and so when Dhungana (2006) asserts that women with disabilities face double discrimination in Nepal, the findings from this study suggest that women with disabilities may face additional barriers in the workplace. Triple discrimination may also occur if you are a woman with a disability from a certain caste. Systemic disabling situations for women must also be taken into consideration, which Dave explains that the new constitution and the transfer of citizenship cannot be separated from gender issues in Nepal. Thebe (2015) in a newspaper article explores how the constitution puts children of trafficked women, migrant women workers, transient women and single mothers in an unfair and unequal position. Thebe

(2015) argues that the constitution represents “misogynistic and patriarchal psyches” and that statelessness is not just a women’s issue but also a human rights issue. Further, how women, people with disabilities, and people from certain castes fit into society, the workplace, the sports and adventure tourism space emerged as a theme in this study.

5.2 Potential and Desire for accessible tourism

Is desire and good intention from individuals in the community enough to encourage accessible tourism in spite of barriers to the physical environment? Hope and the potential for accessible tourism manifested itself in three different ways: a recognition of barriers/inaccessibility and a hope to provide tourism addressing these barriers; the nuance of a disabled body and understanding risk and safety in a tourism space; and the warmth of the Nepalese but the on-going limited understanding and education in disability rights.

The participants in this study responded with varying levels of awareness surrounding accessibility, with much of their awareness being from international work, conferences and study experiences. Through living and traveling abroad they gained much more exposure about accessible infrastructure and environments. 30% of the respondents in this study identified with having a disability, two of them were wheelchair users and one individual had a visual impairment, and thus, they have lived experience of understanding accessibility and the potential of accessible tourism in Nepal. There was a desire expressed by the respondents that accessible tourism could develop for locals who want to travel in Nepal. “I want to give this kind of knowledge to people who don’t have access to so many things” stated Aarus, when speaking to the outdoor education that could be provided during his activity. Ayush, viewed inaccessibility

from a layered standpoint, both physically and financially when he shared this example of a conversation between a hotel manager and guest:

“ ‘Did you have some food, do you want me to help to get the food?’ and he said, ‘no, no sir, I’m alright if I eat something or drink something I’ll have to go to the toilet, but the toilet in your hotel is not accessible, so I would prefer not to eat’ ...And so he redesigned them and its very accessible now and it’s a mid-hotel, cheap hotel I would say and its now they have a separate disabled friendly toilet and all the walls have ramps and it’s a pretty nice hotel.”

In his work, it is also a part of his mission to make the “middle level industry also accessible to everybody including people with disabilities”. Benny felt for a space to be accessible that you need to “bridge the gap between disabled and non-disabled.” Creative workarounds and hoping to gain access to inaccessible spaces also manifested itself in hope to reshape or navigate the physical environment. Limbu, a manager in the tourism industry reflects on an experience when one of his clients in a wheelchair had to go through the baggage room of the hotel, as the ramp being used was for luggage,

“I had no clue, I only saw the ramp, but I never thought to inquire or check where the ramp would end. And after that, we tried to pursue it and convince the hotel and say look this is not good. And secondly we will have more people and fortunately, we had some bookings”.

Thus, through Limbu’s polite suggestions, there was the mutual benefit of increased business to that hotel from a new market, that otherwise, would not have been available to them. Dipesh also spoke with candor about his experience with temporary ramps at hotels,

“...they said ‘we have the temporary ramp’ and when we ask them to put the temporary ramp and they were searching all the time and they finally understand that it is not going to work if some of the people with disabilities come in this hotel as regular customers. So, today’s experience is not so very good”.

Accessibility of a space was also seen from an attitudinal standpoint, “We still need to change their attitudes to show them the potentiality of the accessible tourism”, reflected Ayush, who has had personal experience not being accepted in a tourism space because he was a local and had a disability and was assumed to be begging for money. Although this was an unpleasant experience for him, it has only further shown him, how he wants to advocate and educate people on awareness of disability rights.

Some individuals in the study stated that the Nepalese had the attitude of a caring role for people with disabilities but also people in general, and so I thought there could be the potential for an over-protectionist attitude related to participating in certain activities. However, risk was met with an open mind by most of the respondents (See Section 6.4 for one respondent’s differing opinion on risk), when speaking to participation from individuals who have a disability. “If you think it’s a risk, it’s a risk” stated Aarus, a rock climbing instructor. This suggests that when participating in adventure activities whether you are in an abled body, a disabled body or an injured body, that it is more about the mindset and anxiety levels than the body that you are in. Further, this denotes that safety is also a feeling, that requires a clear understanding of how you are feeling and your confidence levels. Aarus, also stated, “I think risk measurement, while climbing we think safety first”, and thus he would proactively take measures to ensure that the experience was safe and that accommodations were made. Without prior experience in instructing people with certain disabilities, he doesn’t know what that would look like, and stated that it would be a learning by doing experience. Further, it would be great if adventure tourism and sporting communities, such as in rock climbing shared certain tips and tricks, to enhance experiences, with the understanding that everyone will interpret and play the sport or activity differently. This could also extend beyond the rock climbing community and to share

information with other adventure tourism service providers. Benny also responded in a similar manner, “I don’t think it’s taking risk, it’s fun for everybody...there is the perception that people think that you know that people with disabilities taking sport is a risk, I don’t think it’s a risk.” Limbu viewed risk, more from than standpoint that tourism in general has risk, and that should be distinct from that of a disabled person participating in that activity,

“There is, not only for people with disabilities it is for everyone, we offer soft adventure activities, rafting, ultra-light, paragliding, bungee, the whole lot of activities and it involves risk, even riding an elephant is risky, it’s a wild animal it can go crazy anytime, I would not say there is no risk involved but we definitely strive to minimize the risk, we only work with the companies, suppliers, be it trekking or other adventure activities that are fully trained, in good standing in terms of safety and other records so that way we strive to minimize the risks.”

The Nepalese like to take care of not only each other but also their guests, and thus, a warmth exists but in certain cases may be misunderstood as being overly concerned or protective. Some respondents stated that the Nepalese aren’t necessarily politically aware about disability issues, terminology, access barriers, etc. but that there is not stigma related to disability, and that accessible tourism is something that they would not only welcome, but want as a growing industry in Nepal. Participants in this study, felt that the there is a lack of awareness in society about disability issues and individuals may at times be overly concerned for a disabled person.

“...we are, authentic, warm hearted people who are willing to contribute when required. I mean, the only changes we probably need is not to be overly enthusiastically polite when people come especially with disabilities and stuff like that if they don’t like it. If they don’t like very special treatment, and we like to give special treatment, so that is the only balance that we need”

Aarus stated that, "...people I see are nicer to people who are disabled." And when I asked why he stated, "Because even though there is no law, people help them by heart. People are nice.

They help." And continued to talk about Nepal as a community:

"In Nepal, people are not so busy, people don't hard core work only to make money, they have sense of their own people, community, other people in society, it's getting worse, year by year but you can still find that people love to care each other apart from family also."

To conclude, I don't know how pervasive the attitudes and desire for accessible tourism are across Nepal outside of this study and thus it is a limited phenomenon. However, it is hoped that the participant's desires for accessible tourism and open mindedness about risk taking could have a contagious effect on the tourist industry.

5.3 Barriers to Inclusion

Several barriers to inclusion were identified that lead providers (tourism, DPOs and NGOs) in this study to have little hope and at times, a sense of resignation. Barriers that were mentioned most often were related to government and law, infrastructure and transportation, lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities outside of DPOs and the attitudes and political incorrectness of society. These barriers impede accessible tourism efforts through the unavailability of certain services such as transportation which can lead to service delivery system failures (Kim & Lehto, 2012).

With the new Act 2074, the rights of persons with disability in place, this would be a groundbreaking time for disability rights in Nepal but the respondents seemed skeptical about how effective the new act will be. "Nepal is good about passing the law and signing the treaties, but very bad about implementing and enforcing and monitoring them so unless there is a

monitoring mechanism, then it would not be as effective as it should be” stated Ayush. Dave echoes this, through providing examples and attributing it to poor management by the government, for example, “when we built school buildings it was a government requirement of having handicapped ramps at the schools and have the doorways be handicapped accessible”. Ben believed this was great in terms of taking steps towards broader accessibility goals, but on the other hand was not necessarily very practical when there were no wheelchair users in the very remote communities in which he was building schools. However, disabilities are not necessarily predictable and thus, it is better to build proactively rather than in reaction to a student requiring an accommodation with retrofits being costlier. Dave also attributes barriers in government to ‘structural issues, that’s why Nepal’s poor, it’s not resources, its bad management sadly.’ And it’s these barriers that make Ben unable to hold his breath, surrounding a ‘political revolution around stimulating the rights of the disabled’ and he further thinks that it will be a very difficult country in which to be disabled. Dipesh appreciated that the new act is mostly “based on the rights based approach rather than the pity based approach” however remains a skeptic. Dipesh’s skepticism is rooted in the belief that the “government makes so many nice laws in so many issues but until and unless the people with disabilities and DPOs take a leading role I think it is very hard to implement in reality. This is much more stronger than the government itself”. As an individual who has had to access the system and advocates at the DPO level, he sees how the model in Nepal, is piecemeal and how the DPOs are responsible for what is not being done. Cam believes that the new act will make people start understanding disability rights more, but that it depends on how it is applied, “I mean if they just apply it and don’t educate people, studies are in that doesn’t work, kind of like how prohibition doesn’t work, it’s not just implemented and then expect people to understand it, they will just go against it”.

Further my findings in this study suggest that a better understanding of how the government plans to educate the public, take action and monitor and regulate the Act is necessary for real change to take effect.

Lack of infrastructure was one of the main barriers to accessible tourism identified in this study. Not only this, but additionally there is no accessible transportation available in Nepal, and so when deconstructing accessible tourism, you immediately face a barrier. The lack of infrastructure was repeatedly stated to be a problem by respondents in this study. Sraddha who provides guests with 5 star experiences which extend outside of the hotel, as they also offer travel services, notes the limitations in providing accessible customer experiences “the main thing is the roads, it’s not properly managed” and states that infrastructure needs to be provided in the first place. Ayush reflects on his personal lived experience with barriers to transportation, “I cannot use a bus even today, transportation is also very expensive because we have to get a taxi.” Ayush stated that when a bus is “accessible” what that translates to is a bus driver getting off the bus to get a

“long wooden plank...but then there’s a lot of traffic jams so pulling that out and pushing someone in a wheelchair will take a long time so what they do is normally they would just carry the wheelchair, the bus helper and driver will come down and some other passengers will come down and just pick up the wheelchair, so it is not accessible”.

The key takeaway from here, is that for a service to be accessible it cannot also be time bound, as both space and time are key factors in creating an accessible experience. The individual’s right to independence and mobility and accessing the bus without being pressured by the bus driver’s schedule and outside traffic, is their right.

Further, this not only highlights some of the implications of getting from point a to point by means of transportation as a person with a disability, but also creates barriers to

employment. If an individual had to take a taxi to work every day both there and back, this would be quite costly, and potentially would create a financial burden on them. And if they are taking public transportation, they should not have to be put in less dignifying situations, that compromise their independence repeatedly and continually. This also applies outside of work, both Ayush and Dipesh, are world travelers who require accommodations to travel, and state this has been a barrier for them traveling within their own country. Ayush celebrated that his travel experience abroad reshaped his identity and created a larger interest in accessible tourism spaces:

“it was quite a nice place and it made me feel really independent...there are very few places here where I can go independently, but in [names place] I could do a lot of things, like watch movies by myself, cook, laundry and small things which were very accessible and I found that accessibility it will make people independent and will have a larger impact on their competence, so after that...I have done some sports called Ultralight, in a small aircraft and it takes you right near the mountains also, it's a bit expensive but I did that also. And then I thought you know, if I did that and felt good every person with disability would feel the same if tourism sector was accessible. And not only Pokhara and Kathmandu, small places here like cafes and hotels because a lot of it in Nepal when you talk about accessible, not only 5 stars like big hotels have accessible facilities and not everybody can afford it...we have also recognized private life, right to recreation, becoming independent, also as main rights. Then because of that we have been interested recently in working in this area.”

Ayush's reflection, speaks to numerous issues, but one of the most important aspects is how tourism spaces and spaces more generally need to be designed to allow for independence and competence, to enjoy rapture in experience but also just to enjoy a simple everyday activity such as doing laundry. Dipesh found traveling within Nepal to be problematic and that his independence was compromised as well,

“I have traveled abroad many times rather than in Nepal because transportation is one of the biggest problems because I cannot travel a long distance with my bike and I must have to use the assistance when I go outside Kathmandu, because most of the places are not accessible”.

Dipesh spoke passionately about wanting to visit his own country and about his willingness to “accommodate as badly as [he] can in every places and [that he] loves the adventurous”. He uses humour to epitomize structural barriers in society. “I have also experienced traveling using the public bus as well in the night bus as well which is totally inaccessible for me. I can crawl a little bit.” Further, this suggests that his passion for traveling trumps being in situations that may under other circumstances, not be ideal or lack dignity for a person. As an individual that works to design inclusive spaces he has reframed his mindset from how he could fit into the environment, to how the environment could fit him, but when faced with environmental and transportation barriers, he has come to an acknowledgement of this, and is still willing to travel even in less ideal circumstances. However, this would not be the case in many circumstances.

And so, with this recognition, if these barriers would completely disable someone from enjoying their tourism experience, Nepal at present may not be the best destination for them. An individual with a disability that wanted to travel here would have to be fully aware that if they were traveling around Nepal, that the experience may be messy, and at times lack comfort and the quality of service that they may be used to. Limbu narrows in on infrastructure specifically geared towards the tourism industry, as a tour company he needs to scout hotels and transportation companies that can offer his guests the most inclusive experiences. And when dealing with hotels, he has run into circumstances where there may accessible hotel rooms, but the public area or the restroom is not accessible. He also notes,

“they claim to have as a ramp, actually in most the places are built for the luggage, so that is 45 degree or 60 degree sometimes which is not for independent movement of the traveler who is on an electric or manual wheelchair. So, there has been gaps...they don't realize what kind of effect or impact it does to the traveler, and that is can ruin the whole experience of the trip because of wrong kind of hotel or the physical facilities. They never expected, in other words, that makes a big dent to the destination which a guy goes back and says, ‘it's terrible, I didn't enjoy’”.

Limbu responds to these gaps by informing tourists prior to the experience as best that he can so that the “delivery and expectation gap would be minimized”. He extended the conversation beyond infrastructure and into availability of equipment, and used the airport as an example. He stated that there is currently a social problem in Nepal, with the use of wheelchairs at the airport and that they are being “misused because [people] are first time travelers, they are naive, so they simply ask for wheelchair assistance, so that has in a way created a big challenge to the airline”. With the airport being the first and last impression on the traveler, this is an issue that needs to be addressed and prioritized. Lack of accessible infrastructure was apparent in some of the very remote communities that Dave works in, as the community decides on the projects, and he stated “it’s not something that we have had a mechanism or even an impetus from the communities or anyone to focus on so it’s not something that we specifically address.” However, there may not be an impetus from the community as they may not have been exposed to accessible infrastructure and thus, may not have that knowledge of its existence to provide these ideas in the first place. Further, if this infrastructure did exist within communities, it could lower the number of people who would have to relocate to Kathmandu, if they are disabled.

In this study, there was a lack of individuals with disabilities employed in the workforce outside of DPOs and a lack of accessible employment opportunities. All 5 of the tourism operators in this study have not employed individuals with disabilities. When asked if Limbu would be interested in hiring people with disabilities to be on his team in the future he stated he had an interest in doing so,

“Yes...that is very much on the cards. But what we don’t want let me tell you is not out of sympathy, because we know that will not sustain, even the person who comes in or works for us should have sense of achievement, sense of being, sense of importance right. So, the right job fit match is something we are striving for. We thought okay the mobility impaired staff, but I think we can start with vision or low vision and then hard of hearing and eventually as you’ve seen this building is an old one and the other one has elevator

but this we don't. One point in time we thought of opening this entrance right from the street, but due to some reason we didn't go for that, so still we don't have the access, for wheelchair being on the first floor. So, once we address to that perhaps we can have but before waiting, turning it into wheelchair accessible office, we are in I think by next year we should have some staff who have some sort of disabilities."

Limbu has made some compelling points about shattering models that still exist about hiring people with disabilities in the workplace out of sympathy or merely to meet a disabled quota in the workplace. He understands the importance of the right job fit for both parties, and is looking for a certain set of skills in the workplace, which is very important. However, on the other hand, a disability should not be handpicked in advance, such as in this example where mobility impaired staff seem to be of more interest than someone who may have an invisible disability. Further, it leads to another dilemma of the office being inaccessible to people with mobility issues and an elevator would need to be put in, to access the office on the second floor. In recognizing that retrofits need to be happen in their office, this would need to be done well in advance of hiring an individual, as putting in an elevator would take time. There was also one DPO who has a staff member with a disability but they operate out of an inaccessible building, Benny stated,

"...our office is actually not accessible. It's a big problem, it's not accessible... our colleague (names name), I mean he's polio, so he has some difficulties to climb up, so something that we know and we are trying to find the right place but it's also about funding...we will love to have an accessible office, we are looking for it but we don't have the money."

In terms of hiring other of groups such as women, there was a strong representation in the workforce, other than for the two extreme adventure activities that were used in this study. Cam speculates that women are not hired at his company,

"from what I've gathered from information from other guides I've haven't seen any female Nepali raft guides and I think that's a cultural thing considering women's rights is slowly coming along here...".

For guiding positions, there was a bit of an assumption that it would be better suited to a male body, which needs to be broken down,

“With the international guides, there’s quite a strong amount of female international guides, but mostly male guides. It is quite a physically enduring sport so you do need the strength, it would be a bit tough. But the girls that get out there are quite fit”.

And thus, the embodiment, of not only the female body, but the female Nepalese body, should also be employed in sports and physically demanding jobs in the tourism industry. When looking at making spaces more accommodating that is not mutually exclusive to disabilities, but also how can male sporting spaces consider the female body (Young, 1990), the gay body or other non-traditional bodies in a traditionally abled bodied male space. This could also be compounded by an unspoken caste system in the workplace, and thus, a person who perceives themselves as “lower” in the company may feel hesitant to speak up about creating equality in the workplace. If that person additionally is a woman or disabled or both, they may not feel that it is their place to speak up. Thus, further investigation as to how much power and authority women, people with disabilities and people of certain castes hold in the workplace is also worth investigating. Responsible tourism is a platform, and should be used to reconsider how bodies are embodied and to bring forth equal rights of access to space, and employment cannot be separated from that.

To conclude, segregation may not be a result of maliciousness but more so the unknowingness to make spaces available to all people whether that’s on a governmental level, in physical spaces, tourism spaces or in employment spaces.

5.4 Adjusting and Experimenting

The study showed that the way to tackle and implement accessible tourism spaces was through a ‘learning by doing’ experimental process. Trial and error is also used in inclusive

design to improve processes (Treviranus, 2016). If barriers prohibited that experimental process then it was a matter of adapting into a space, which in both cases have the potential for a positive, clean experience and/or a negative, messy experience or a fluctuation of the two. Further, tourism is unpredictable, and accessible tourism in its inception and experimental stage may be even more unpredictable, which suggests the risk for the messy would be more prominent.

An eagerness to experiment or learn by doing was expressed by some of the interviewees. When asking Aarus, the rock climbing instructor, would the process for rock climbing require any different steps for a person with a disability, he responded, "I will have to experience and experiment first." Two of the participants in this study (one from the private sector and one from a non-profit) are currently working together on a project to audit hiking trails, and to make a small trail open to someone in a wheelchair. Hopefully, down the road consideration of making that trail accessible to range of disabilities could also be considered. Limbu has been aiming to provide accessible tourism as one of his tourism products and he has been experimenting with how to deliver different services, "...we've been focusing more on responsible tourism practices and...inclusive tourism has been one of our signature products or areas. So, we have been striving to work towards that goal as well, without derailing from our core business." Limbu states through offering accessible tourism it not only provides him with the feeling that he is making a difference but also, that it creates opportunities for individuals to try tourism activities in other areas of the world, 'we are helping people to explore, helping them to achieve what they thought was not achievable'. Further, he recognized that creating these opportunities would undeniably be a learning by doing process:

“Nepal, it is not accessible, the roads are terrible, the terrain is challenging, so it’s not for everyone, how do you think it is marketable for people on wheelchairs or blind, so that is challenge that we took, and I am glad that we took that challenge. (Limbu)”

Individuals with disabilities who were interviewed in this study as well as individuals who work in the NGO/DPO sector, stated that individuals in Nepal, tend to adapt to their environment and “find their own way to make it work within that community” (Dave, NGO). An adaptation to the environment would also occur when there were precarious weather conditions that could lead to unsafe conditions for certain tours. Cam explains this, “...because it is the end of the monsoon we can’t access a lot of our tours so we’re refined to some lower level extremes.”

Accessible tourism in Nepal is a very new construct, and thus, this learning by doing, and experimental process, may be messy or clean. Further any tourism activity in nature, is never predictable:

“It’s a very unpredictable sport, every single path we take down the river is different... You can’t evaluate a rapid, there is a grading system but it’s pretty conceded like you can’t grade something that is natural and forms different every single time, there is no two of the same” (Cam, guide).

Morgan & Fluker (2003) state that a rafting guide can ideally guide the raft down the river with minimal support from the crew, however, precise and coordinated paddling may be required by all crew members to avoid hazardous circumstances such as a rapid. And so, when safety could be compromised, it is not an appropriate time to be learning by doing. If this precaution is not taken seriously then it could pose a risk to the clients particularly if accurate information has not been given (Eichhorn et al., 2008). This is not to be mistaken with general risk, which is standard for many recreational and tourism activities, but failure to properly train staff on certain protocol and safety measures and/or not using the required modified equipment is significant. Cam who

was a guide in an extreme sport, and has experienced people getting injured in his activities and heard of other individuals dying in the same sport, stated,

“I have an obligation to make that sure everyone is safe on the tours, and if I think if someone isn’t capable I am not going to take them, and that doesn’t just apply for disabilities, if someone’s intoxicated, if someone is on drugs, if someone is just not responding to the commands, I will kick them off the tour”.

He understands that his position and opinion is not politically correct, and justifies his opinion by stating:

“You definitely want to take care, I mean it is a dangerous sport, people die doing this sport, its’ not a joke, so you’re not going to put someone out of their comfort zone. You might place them in the tour differently where they are safer and you can be within arm’s reach of them so if something goes down you can especially grab them and get them in. Whereas you would put someone more capable at the front of the group sure. But that is truly not a bias thing, it is truly just a safety issue”.

Morgan & Fluker (2003) also note that hazardous situations like a rapid may cause psychological distress in individuals which is inextricably linked with the client’s experience. Later in the interview, he expressed that another reason for his discomfort in taking people on tours, were that the levels of safety may not match what he is used to in other countries, “you also don’t have the communication tools like satellite phones or walky-talkies, that we have in our privileged societies, you know they can’t afford these things”, and so without the proper emergency procedures, he is unwilling to take certain risks. His position on risk, may also be due to his past lived experience of watching two people get hurt on his tours,

“I’ve hurt people, when I was training, I’ve hurt people. I’ve smoked this rapid, absolutely cooked it and hit a rock, a paddle went into someone’s tooth, he lost his two front teeth, it was my fault...of course I felt some guilt, but I also had to disconnect that because I couldn’t let it get to me...Also, another guy came out once, smacked his face on a rock...people smashed their knees up, shit happens. You have to take yourself away from that”.

These statements are important as they show the layers to who decides who can take the risk. An individual may be part way through a tour, but if the guide feels uncomfortable for any reason, they may have the authority to say the person cannot participate. In an activity grounded in unpredictability, predictions should only be made about the reliability of the equipment and protocol, and not the people on the tour.

Respondents who have experimented with responsible and/accessible tourism experiences for the first time, also had positive experiences, however, these have not been collected from the firsthand experiences of the guests or volunteers,

“We had a deaf volunteer who came and worked here for a month...first we were communicating with her by email so that’s not an issue. When she arrived here we started doing it on Facebook messenger, problem solved...she really wants to come back now again” (Rai, tourism sector)

Rai also stated that he took a group of Germans with autism to hike in the Annapurna Circuit, and his most humbling experience from that was when he received a letter two years later that said,

““Rai can you please lead us into a trip into Ghana’ because I used to live in Ghana. So, he said, “I know you lived in Ghana, so we want to go to Ghana, can you please design the trip and meet us there?” (Rai, tourism sector).

Limbu, echoes Rai’s experiences of successful accessible tourism experiences, and used the example of providing his first tour to an individual with a vision impairment, “...he was totally satisfied despite it being his first trip to Asia or Nepal and that was right after the earthquake”. Limbu also ran a successful trip on World Disability Day, and stated it was an, “excursion for people with disabilities, just to take them out and give them a day excursion as a relief we named it Tourism as a Healer you know people who were traumatized, mentally down”.

To conclude, a lot can be said about learning by doing, and innovating through the process of experimentation. However, not unlike any other tourism experience, this may not always be perfect and seamless, and thus, there needs to be an understanding and space for the 'messy'. The premise of inclusive design needs to be considered that involves a refinement of awareness, and invites an iterative process that grows from successes and breeds creativity from the complex (Treviranus, 2015).

5.5 Co-communication

Cross-cultural communication is an integral piece of tourism, as is sensitivity training to employees in the workplace. Thus, an exploration of how communication plays a key role in tourism or how it could be improved was examined in this study. Intersections between cross-cultural communication and sensitivity training existed but at other times were seen as distinct.

Cross cultural communication is integral to good business strategy as well as to positive and seamless tourist experiences. Gardner (1962, p. 241) brings up the timeless question, whilst an outdated article, this is still very relevant, "To what degree is it possible for an expert from one culture to communicate with persons of another culture?" However, I would like to remove the word expert, and simply have the question posed as two individuals communicating. Gardner (1962)'s follow up question asks if an authoritarian approach leads to a failure of communication, as it does not recognize difference of opinion. And this angle needs to be considered in cross-cultural communication between different castes and cultures. Cross cultural communication should also not only be considered among the outbound tourists and the Nepalese but also between different cultural groups in Nepal. Ayush asserts:

“Cross cultural communication is very important I think. Because I would not say cross cultural as in cultures of two nations but in our country...is a multicultural nation, we have different kinds of castes and communities in Nepal, so it's very important to combine the cross cultural and respect the diversity because here when we think in Nepal, we cannot think that everybody speaks Nepali...so in relation to that it's very important for us as a national organization to provide our training respecting the culture for other communities and we do that often you know like we use pictures, pictorial forms so that it doesn't depend on language and its easy for people from all communities to understand.”

One layer to the communication is understanding the castes, the communication between castes, the different languages in Nepal, but then the other layer is to also understand the outbound tourists that travel to Nepal. Cross-cultural communication can be a way to take proactive measures to avoid miscommunication between cultures such as in this example:

“One lady is coming from the German maybe and she having massage for 1 hour, and because we not allowed to working for the, breast area, they asking for that question, they request for that area, I said sorry for that. Then after a little bit angry with me, but why I don't know for that, this is not my way” (Yasir).

Clear signage of what is and is not acceptable, could be provided to the tourist, so that they are aware of what is and is not appropriate in Nepal.

Tourism operators have found, that one market that is critical to understand is the Chinese market. The Chinese market is one of the biggest tourist markets that comes to Nepal, but this is also important because of their unique ways of communication, and language barriers if English is not spoken. “They have Chinese classes for our staff here, and in the front office, who come in the direct contact with the guests, so we have a training for a month or so” Sraddha, Manager at a 5-star hotel. In Sraddha's experience she has found that her Chinese clients don't prefer speaking in English and through this language courses it will enable a better customer satisfaction experience. Cam also found cross-cultural communication to be paramount to safely doing his tours:

“...my employment requires me to have commands okay, so we would have a lot of Japanese, Chinese and Korean which wouldn't really speak English that well but these commands are quite important for the safety of the whole team so I learnt to do my test to become a qualified guide, I had to be able to do all the commands in Chinese and Korean and English”

In addition, to taking basic training in Mandarin, and understanding cross cultural communication styles for the Chinese, it would also be integral to have a unique lens in the sensitivity training for the Chinese market (this would apply to other current and future primary markets in Nepal).

Sensitivity training also emerged as important in this study, as there are ways of communicating to people with disabilities that have nuances in different countries but also between individuals. The findings from this study show, that it is not only important to train staff on both cross-cultural communication and provide sensitivity training, but it is also important for the tourist to do some research before traveling to Nepal, or for the tour operator to provide them with some information, and that it is a two-way street. The reason is that every step of the journey is what can make or break an accessible tourism experience, and attitudes of people and cultural differences that may lead to misunderstandings could be interpreted incorrectly and make the experience uncomfortable or not satisfactory for the tourist (Luther, 2010). For example,

“recently someone from Canada was here, he was using a wheelchair and he came to Nepal and he was in touch with me, just to talk and he also uses a wheelchair, so he wanted to know how life in a wheelchair is here, and we had lunch together and he told me that in India he was very offended when children looked at him and smiled at him or laughed at him, but I thought that that is very general, children do that to me a lot and I don't get offended because they are not teasing you because they are seeing a strange

thing, like I drive a scooter that has 4 wheels, if you see outside it's in the parking, the same scooter the same Vespa, but it has 2 extra wheels so children will look at that, "oh look mother there are 4 wheels' and they will laugh, they are not teasing you, you know. It's the difference in culture that is very important, maybe when you bought this, that I know think that it's very important to have a guidebook, for tourists you know for tourists with disability about this is very common in Nepal so don't get offended or you know it's not about you, they are not doing this to intimidate you, it's the culture and be prepared, then they might prepare themselves" Ayush.

In this scenario, for Ayush as a Nepali man who uses a wheelchair, states his experience of children laughing and staring at him in the streets has been normalized as part of the culture in Nepal, whereas for a Westerner with little to no preparation of this, it could easily be misinterpreted as offensive. However, Ayush and Rai, both stated that in Nepal in the context of disabilities that society can at times be "politically incorrect", but that this is not to be confused with ill nature, but more so lack of awareness and education. One company in the study, had weekly meetings with their staff, and during that time provided soft skills training and communication for the staff to have a better understanding of different cultures and backgrounds and to learn to be "more empathetic rather than sympathizing people". This kind of sensitivity training is a good start; however, it may be rooted in assumptions, and the conversation should be initiated and carried forward by individuals who have had lived experience with a disability, to be better able to answer questions. One of the staff members, did not know to talk to the individual in the wheelchair, but rather to talk to the support worker. When doing hotel visits with an individual in a wheelchair, I also saw firsthand how some staff members did not talk to him. At Sraddha's five-star hotel she states, "they don't provide special training, but since we have little bit of idea, fire exit and safety they give training", which clear shows how training and awareness needs to go beyond basic emergency procedures. Further, this explains why having a variety of people with disabilities involved in the conversation, could led to a much more profound understanding and reduce the possibility of communication barriers in services.

To conclude, co-communication emerged as a theme in this study, as it is integral to tourism and good business strategy to have conversations that unpack diverse and inclusive ways of communicating with different cultures and/or people with disabilities.

6. Significance:

This is an exploratory study that provides evidence that there are still a number of physical, attitudinal and political gaps that exist to creating a fully inclusive tourism industry in Nepal. Through drawing on the lived experiences of service providers, the findings suggest that these gaps impact customer service, visitors with a disability, service delivery and service linkages such as transportation. Ultimately, once these gaps have been minimized and tourism spaces become more accessible it could hopefully allow for increased participation in society for the Nepalese with disabilities both in the workplace and in other activities. The narrative experiences in this study suggest a willingness to provide risky activities and adventure for individuals with disabilities in Nepal, but in a safe manner. These activities should be made accessible to both domestic and international tourists.

This is a new area of study, and there is limited research on accessible tourism in the 'global south', and it is hoped that this study will encourage more studies in this area. A lot of knowledge can be derived in intersections, both practically and academically, and thus the intersections between tourism and disability need to be further unpacked. This study also reveals the thirst for knowledge amongst participants and the unique position that Nepal is in, in creating non-traditional partnerships among the private sector and DPOs, and the willingness to share knowledge and resources. Additionally, this study may be able to offer ideas surrounding creating an accessible tourism space in a country in which there is limited government support. This study provides narratives and observations about the current contextual situation in Nepal,

and recommendations that will offer new angles, and thus potentially have positive outcomes in other areas such as hiring people with disabilities in the tourism workplace.

Further, rather than just training individuals with disabilities, such as in Benny's case, though with the right intention, it has not led to results, 'Our philosophy is to make youth with disability stronger academically, professionally, we don't want them to be hired because of disability, we want them to be hired because they are a strong candidate.' Though when asked after his one year of training on coaching and having individuals as volunteers, if it led to employment, he answered, 'That's a very good question, we are not there yet'. Further, adoption of the DRPI's model on employment in the workplace could be more prevalent in the tourism industry, which aims to provide meaningful employment for people with disabilities in the workplace (Disability Rights Promotion International, 2017).

7. Limitations and Future Research:

This research has many caveats as it is a very short-term project and thus, did not allow for the time and space to interview a wide range of providers. Further, I think a mixed methods or quantitative study would be beneficial for a holistic view of accessible tourism and what barriers exist along the entire tourism chain of experience. Interviews were conducted with most of the participants in English which is their second language which can introduce biases into my research. Further depth and nuance may have been provided if they were speaking to me in their first language, however, the level of English was quite proficient. Additionally, and unsurprisingly, the study participants were 90% male, and thus, a study understanding how gender and women's rights would also be critical. No participants identified as being from the LGBTQ+ community and this would also be an area of further exploration, as providing tourism

for gay travelers was also mentioned by one participant. As information was not collected about what caste individuals are in, a quantitative study could be done to determine employment for ethnic minorities. Future research, that I deem as critical would be to complete a study of domestic and international tourists that come to Nepal and identify with having a disability. Further, a disability may require some level of support from family members or friends, and so understanding the interconnected and interdependent travel experience could also be an area of study. A business case for inclusive tourism is also grounded in the aging population, recognizing a financial benefit, and how this population could be tapped into in Nepal, which could also be a direction of study. Future studies that collaborate researchers with engineers and architects that specialize in accessibility could be undertaken, to ensure that accessibility is continually tested and improved, as well as reported on.

To conclude, there are many different areas both involving minority groups, disabling situations, having lived experience with disability and better understanding the design and attitudes of people in Nepal, that need to be researched from a right based lens.

8. Recommendations:

Based on a collation of my observations, the findings, extant literature and identified gaps in service, five recommendations have been proposed below:

8.1 A comprehensive tourism specific sensitivity training package that could be packaged and provided to the tourism industry.

I have concluded that sensitivity training specific to the tourism industry is necessary because of the cross-cultural communication involved and high level of customer service that is required. The purpose of this training would be to ensure that all staff (not just the frontline staff) are

aware of disabilities as well as how to best communicate and accommodate people with disabilities. Further, this makes space available for the hiring of people with disabilities as well, and how to have a better understanding of accommodation in the workplace. This understanding will be met with a genuine willingness to understand disability rights and disabling situations for people with disabilities, practical tools that are aimed towards accessibility, cross cultural communication and narrowing the gaps of attitudinal barriers amongst staff. This would help address questions that were raised in this study surrounding incorporating principles of inclusive spaces and how risk may be socially constructed for people with disabilities. Further, as Rai an owner of an adventure tourism company suggests, individuals come to Nepal “with very clear insurance and your biggest safety coverage is your insurance and beyond that, it’s about us giving very accurate information and then the rest is up to the people”. And in giving that accurate information, it is not only being transparent about the unpredictable nature of sport, adventure activities and the weather, but it is also being transparent if part of your tour is disabling such as not having safety equipment, emergency evacuation plans, trained staff, etc. Through this transparency, it would take the onus off why a certain body should or should not participate, and address the real problem, that being the space is disabling. As participants in this study stated that the Nepalese may overprotect individuals with disabilities, training individuals on how to unlearn certain perceptions and biases about who can take risks would also be necessary and who should be able to make their own decisions about risk.

Communication on diversity was an integral finding in this study and needs to be a main component of the sensitivity training package. Language was discussed repeatedly, whether it was related to the English or Chinese language or how language can be used or misused, for example, “don’t use differently abled, [its] people with disabilities”, proclaimed Ayush. My

research has led me to believe that there layers of cross-cultural communication to consider as there are unique nuances in terms of communication and body language in different countries and cultures.

In line, with inclusive design, and ‘nothing for us, without us’ the training session should be spearheaded by individuals with a range of different disabilities. Further, it would cover terminologies, greetings and ways of speaking respectfully the appropriate language to use. The training cannot just be a one-off training session, but needs to be an on-going conversation and fostering a long-term relationship with the trainees. Further, if an unforeseen circumstance arises there will be a pool of resources, that may help address, prevent or rectify the situation.

To conclude, a tourism specific sensitivity training package may help to improve the customer experience, expand a tourism business to a new market of people and could create positive word of mouth promotion. I want to iterate the need for the training package, but cannot speak to the content, as that would need to be specific to the provision being offered, however some general standards could be industry wide. Further, existing reports should also be used such as DRPI’s, A Guide to Disability Rights Monitoring: Participant version which entangles the root of discrimination, attitudinal gaps, language surrounding disabilities, environmental barriers, ways to rethink disability, etc. all of which are pertinent issues in this study and in tourism (Disability Rights Promotion International, 2014).

8.2 Marketing that honestly reflects accessibility and service provision

Accurate marketing is needed, as in the words of Cam, when speaking to customer service barriers,

“people that might be offended easily or a bit precious, might get a bit upset, because they have to sit on the bus for six hours and they didn’t get told that, they got told it was going to be 4 hours”.

The idea of overselling and under delivering does not sit well with some individuals particularly on vacation. The example used here speaks to a minor issue, which can lead to a major impression. However, when it comes to traveling with a disability, it is more than just a preference, and at times surrounds the health, safety, and well-being of an individual and thus, exact details and transparency is necessary. The attitude of hoping for the best and being spontaneous may at times be compromised in examples like these:

“there was a hotel, that is famous in Thamel, where they have on the website, they have an accessible room and then the guy booked the hotel came and realized that he can’t move beyond the reception, because there were many steps”

To echo Limbu’s narrative, by stating what is honestly available, it will decrease the expectation to delivery gap, which he aims to do with his clients. This conclusion stems from my observations and findings that suggest that there is a tendency to oversell a tourism product to get the initial business. Another purpose of stating what is available in the marketing, would mean, if companies that market themselves as accessible, encounter wider systemic and infrastructure barriers outside of their provision, this is made clear to the client. Additionally, the website should be made accessible or that may be another missed opportunity of potential clients. An individual may assume that if one part of the tourism experience is not accessible, then that may transpire to other areas of experience. Ayush indicated that he works with two web designers on website accessibility, and is a firm believer in bringing accessibility into technological spaces such as websites. People with disabilities may be included if, when navigating the Internet from their home country, there is nothing that suggests inclusivity. On the other hand, if a “person who might have a disability, might be visually impaired or hearing impaired, uses the website

and he finds it accessible then it will have a very much bigger impact on them”, Ayush argues. Further, to contextualize how design principles from Inclusive Design can be used in a tourism space is central to understanding and mitigating adverse effects of exclusion of people in space. Marketing should also aim to represent diversity of athletic and cultural experiences, and not unintentionally exclude, which may happen if only presenting the most athletic and extreme disabled athletes and tourists. To conclude, honest marketing and an accessible website will allow for a more seamless navigation experience for the end user, that is searching for inclusive destinations and experiences in Nepal. Additionally, it will allow for a more tailored online experience for the users and will decrease loss in business through misunderstandings that the activity/lodge etc. is not accessible. Honestly and transparency are the best policies in tourism and adventure activities.

8.3 Capitalizing on networks and information sharing

Nepal has a different system of operating from traditional Western models, as rather than keeping information close to the organization/company, there is a willingness to work together with other organizations and the private sector. “As citizens, as professionals, as activists, we all have a different role and together we can make it accessible” stated Dipesh. Dipesh thinks everyone needs to collectively do their part and work together to create a more holistic and accessible experience for everyone. Working together to achieve goals is important in the tourism industry as the sectors are not mutually exclusive providers, but rather a chain of experiences, that are interdependent at times, on how the other one is experienced. Further, making resources available such as assisting with making websites accessible or for the businesses, or customer service tips will lead to a firmer understanding of barriers to inclusivity.

Two of the four DPO's that were interviewed, were interested in advocating and raising awareness about accessible tourism, and hopefully this can be made known to tourism businesses, so that they can gain access to information needed to become accessible. One individual, Dipesh was so passionate that he did most of his architecture work for free, "I provide my time and the professional skills free of charge because I consider this is the part of my mission" and would only charge if the company had the money to do so. However, I do believe his time, skills and energy are worthy of financial compensation, but this example goes to show how individuals are willing to commit to providing and working together in the community.

Another purposeful resource would be to have a collaborative website created in which individuals could share ideas, connect and work together on projects. One opportunity to network, and build on conversations surrounding accessibility in the tourism industry would be at the Toastmaster's Club which is solely for tourism stakeholders. This conversation should be led by providers, DPO's and have representation of people with disabilities in the conversation, to adhere to the principles of 'nothing about us without us'. If a collaborative website were to be created it could be shared with the public sector to offer ideas on how to improve their tourism infrastructure. This document could also share some of the best practises in accessibility internationally, to better understand how to make improvements within Nepal's tourism industry. For example, Dipesh reflects on the staff attitudes during his international travel in America, which to him is the most integral part of the tourism package,

"They invited, they are not pretending us, they give us a total freedom but still they are protective, that makes you happy (laughing). If you pretend this is dangerous it is not for you, if you say like this that hurts you a little bit".

Another opportunity to work with networks would be sharing beyond information resources. For example, sharing of certain resources such as staff or certain accessible equipment or supplies that may only be used on an ad hoc basis. As accessible transportation is lacking in Nepal, rather

than each company having their own accessible vehicle this could be shared. In terms of staff, to hire CART services, signers, sound interpreters, personal support workers or other support staff, they could also work on a contract basis for several companies. Information sharing can help to address issues surrounding design, technical aspects of tourism as well as support people with disabilities and provide outstanding customer service.

Working together has positive advantages. This become clear when I was informed about the networks of support that exist in Nepal. The private and non-profit sector appear to have the willingness to cooperate and work together to make accessible tourism happen. To conclude, the sharing of information can help to save time, money and energy, and pool together resources to create events, workshops, training and tourism experiences. This will particularly help to reduce staff time in navigating, if there is accessible information available and in turn will help benefit service provision and the customer experience for the tourism industry in Nepal. It is also a way to share what doesn't work with others, to prevent it from happening again. Sharing other resources will save money, and lead to people working together on innovations and improvements.

8.4 Expand employment opportunities beyond the abled body

To move in the direction of being an inclusive tourism company, it is not sufficient to only consider the perspective and experience of the international client. The local community of people with disabilities needs to be employed in meaningful work (Disability Rights Promotion International, 2017), and to participate in tourism spaces. Further, through hiring people with disabilities not only will this strengthen the image of being a responsible tourism company but it will also work towards social justice in the workforce (Disability Rights Promotion International,

2017). Further, the DRPI (2017) website [<http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/?s=employers>] provides tools and resources for employers in Nepal, including videos and print resources.

Lastly, when hiring individuals with disabilities, the proper accommodations need to be in place, so that the individual can access the workplace and do their job successfully. As presented in this study, jobs for people with disabilities are mainly in the non-profit sector and thus, this would create employment opportunities within the private sector. To conclude, through employing people with disabilities allows for diversity, inclusion and is important to a company's success (Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, 2003). A more holistic inclusive tourism experience will be created and will be an example for other service providers. Additionally, having staff members on hand who may be able to answer questions related to accessibility may also help to improve customer experience.

8.5 Advocacy of accessible tourism

Since there is impetus and international pressure on the government, and they have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2017b), I think this is a time to monitor, measure and advocate for accessible tourism particularly in light of the new Disability Law.

Strategies to suggest ideas to the government could be a way to extend and broaden the network and make a bigger impact on the Nepal's tourism industry. Advocacy could also be done in the private sector, such as with 5 star hotels that are starting to make an effort and move towards becoming accessible. Efforts should also be made with lower to mid-range accommodations and experiences to become more accessible, as not all travelers want nor can afford to stay in 5 star hotels. Further advocating for internal access for more economically disadvantaged people within Nepal could allow for opportunity to travel and to see their own

country. Currently the key goals of advocacy are better access, improving infrastructure and changing attitudes. That could be a platform to raise awareness of ways to accommodate all disabilities within tourism experiences. Until the infrastructure is in place, calling a destination accessible will be limited. For accessible tourism to thrive and grow in Nepal, it needs to have an all sector-approach, and as the law and attitudes start to change so should consideration of designing and developing spaces to be accessible.

9. Conclusion

International disability rights will be achieved progressively and not necessarily immediately (Hill & Blanck, 2009), and inclusion requires a commitment (Treviranus, 2015). Moving beyond basic rights to enjoyment and access to recreation and tourism will take time to be fully inclusive. This research offers strategies and proactive ideas on a range of accessible considerations for tourism providers so that on the ground changes can be made. This study raises important questions surrounding risk and disability and who has the right to make the decisions about those risks. Further, rather than offering a definitive answer, it urges tourism stakeholders to challenge the disabled/nondisabled binary when considering risk. It also challenges, who assumes the power to decide who can take a risk, and encourages that decision to be that of the individual, and not made by an abled bodied individual from a certain position in a company. “We tell not allowed to having massage, because you can look in the contraindications is there, and which kind of the conditions you don’t get to massage” stated Yasir, about instructions that have been given to him by his boss. Thus, if a certain body wants and desires a massage, he is unable to take the risk of giving one. Tourism needs to be progressive, and in saying that, perceptions about treating individuals with paternalistic and

protectionist attitudes needs to be addressed, as people with disabilities want to have fun and participate like everyone else, “treat us as a normal human being that would be more than enough. Normal, not so much special and protective”, stated Dipesh. Dipesh went on: “People know which will hurt them and which will not”, which speaks volumes about the significant of trusting individual’s awareness of their own body and their own abilities. This study also allows for insight into the paradoxes of tourism, the unpredictable and messy experiences, and offering tourism to an unpredictable and non-homogenized market of individuals. Accessible tourism in the literature, is largely focused on the global north, and this study discusses navigating accessible tourism in a country with limited resources, a lack of accessible infrastructure and a lack of government support. This research considers principles from inclusive design, relating to design communication, process and policy to operationalize critical disability theories. Inclusive tourism in Nepal has been problematized and initially deconstructed using Pokhara and Kathmandu in Nepal as a case study. In endeavouring to deconstruct and redefine tourism spaces, challenges of inclusivity and risk are presented.

References:

- Agocs, C. (2002). Canada's employment equity legislation and policy, 1987-2000. *International Journal of Manpower*, 23(3), 256–276.
- Basnyat, B., Tabin, C., Nutt, C., & Farmer, P. (2015). Post-earthquake Nepal: the way forward. *The Lancet Global Health*, 3(12), e731–e732. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00211-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00211-9)
- Bentley, Tim, A., & Page, Stephen, J. (2001). Scoping the extent of adventure tourism accidents. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(3), 705–726.
- Berger, Ronald, J. & Lorenz, Laura, S. (2015). *Disability and Qualitative Inquiry*. London and New York: Routledge. Retrieved from https://books-google-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books/about/Disability_and_Qualitative_Inquiry.html?id=ZbW1CwAAQBAJ
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brook, Barbara. (2014). *Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. Routledge. Retrieved from https://books-google-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books/about/Feminist_Perspectives_on_the_Body.html?id=cF_JAwAAQBAJ
- Buhalis, D., & Darcy, S. (2011). *Accessible Tourism: Concepts and Issues*. Channel View Publications.
- Burnett, J., & Baker, B. (2001). Assessing the Travel-Related Behaviors of the Mobility-Disabled Consumer. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(1), 4–11.
- Daniels, M. J., Drogin Rodgers, E. B., & Wiggins, B. P. (2005). “Travel Tales”: an interpretive analysis of constraints and negotiations to pleasure travel as experienced by persons with

- physical disabilities. *Tourism Management*, 26(6), 919–930.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.06.010>
- Darcy, S. (2010). Inherent complexity: Disability, accessible tourism and accommodation information preferences. *Tourism Management*, 31(6), 816–826.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.010>
- Darcy, S., Cameron, B., & Pegg, S. (2010). Accessible tourism and sustainability: a discussion and case study. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18(4), 515–537.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669581003690668>
- Darcy, S., & Daruwalla, P. S. (1999). The Trouble with Travel: People with Disabilities and Tourism. *Social Alternatives*, 18(1), 41–46.
- Darcy, S., & Dickson, T. J. (2009). A Whole-of-Life Approach to Tourism: The Case for Accessible Tourism Experiences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 16(1), 32–44. <https://doi.org/10.1375/jhtm.16.1.32>
- Department of Tourism. (n.d.). Acts and Regulations. Retrieved from <http://tourismdepartment.gov.np/acts-regulations>
- DePauw, Karen, P., & Doll-Tepper, Gudrun. (2000). Towards Progressive Inclusion and Acceptance: Myth or Reality? The Inclusion Debate and Bandwagon discourse. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 17, 135–143.
- Dhungana, Bishnu Maya. (2006). The lives of disabled women in Nepal: vulnerability without support. *Disability & Society*, 21(2), 133–146.
- Disability Rights Promotion International. (2014). *A Guide to Disability Rights Monitoring: Participant Version* (pp. 1–168). Toronto, CA: York University.

- Disability Rights Promotion International. (2017). AWARE for Employers-Videos. Retrieved from <http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/?s=employers>
- Eichhorn, V., Miller, G., Michopoulou, E., & Buhalis, D. (2008). Enabling access to tourism through information schemes? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(1), 189–210.
- Esterberg K.G. (2002). *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. USA: The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc.
- Gammon, S., & Robinson, T. (2003). Sport and Tourism: A Conceptual Framework, 8(1), 21–26.
- Gardner, G. H. (1962). Cross Cultural Communication, 58(2), 241–256.
- Gellner, D. N. (2007). Caste, Ethnicity and Inequality in Nepal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(20), 1823–1828.
- Gilbride, Dennis, Stensrud, Robert, Vandergoot, David, & Golden, Kristie. (2003). Identification of the Characteristics of Work Environments and Employers Open to Hiring and Accommodating People with Disabilities. *Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin*, 46(3), 130–137.
- Hammel, J., Magasi, S., Heinemann, A., Whiteneck, G., Bogner, J., & Rodriguez, E. (2008). What does participation mean? An insider perspective from people with disabilities. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 30(19), 1445–1460.
- Hill, E., & Blanck, P. (2009). Future of Disability Rights Advocacy and “The Right to Live in the World.” *Texas Journal on Civil Liberties & Civil Rights*, 15(1), 1–31.
- Inclusive Design Research Centre. (n.d.). Employment Accommodation Services. Retrieved from <https://idrc.ocadu.ca/services/34-services/consultation/58-employment-accommodation-services>

- Inclusive Design Research Centre. (2017). *What do we mean by Inclusive Design?* Toronto: OCAD University. Retrieved from <http://idrc.ocadu.ca/index.php/resources/idrc-online/library-of-papers/443-whatisinclusivedesign>
- Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action. *Qualitative Methodology*, 24(4), 602–611.
- Kazdin, A. E. (2000). *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (6th ed.). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association and Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Kim, S. E., & Lehto, Xinran, Y. (2012). The voice of tourists with mobility disabilities: insights from online customer complaint websites. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(3), 451–476.
- Leiper, N. (1979). The framework of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4), 390–407.
- Lepofsky, M. D. (1992). The Duty to Accommodate: A Purposive Approach. *Canadian Labour Law Journal*, 1, 1–22.
- Luther, A. P. (2010). *Silent voices of tourism: a narrative exploration of cervical spinal cord injury and leisure travel* (Thesis). Cardiff Metropolitan University. Retrieved from <https://repository.cardiffmet.ac.uk/handle/10369/6436>
- Lyng, Stephen. (1990). Edgework: A social psychological analysis of Voluntary Risk Taking. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(4), 851–886.
- Lynk, Michael. (2008). *The Duty to Accommodate in the Canadian Workplace: Leading Principles and Recent Cases* (Caselaw). Ontario: The University of Western. Retrieved from <http://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008.06.21-Report-DutytoAccommodate.pdf>
- McIntosh, R. W. (1977). *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies* (Second ed.). Indiana: Columbus: Grid.

McSherry Bernadette, & Freckelton, Ian. (2013). *Coercive Care*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Retrieved from [https://books-google-](https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books/about/Coercive_Care.html?id=9WMZLRDg-zAC)

[ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books/about/Coercive_Care.html?id=9WMZLRDg-zAC](https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books/about/Coercive_Care.html?id=9WMZLRDg-zAC)

Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation. (2014). *Tourism Employment Survey 2014* (p.

37). Kathmandu. Retrieved from

[file:///Users/emilymcintyre/Downloads/Tourism%20Employment%20Study%20Draft%20](file:///Users/emilymcintyre/Downloads/Tourism%20Employment%20Study%20Draft%20Report_integrated(1).pdf)

[Report_integrated\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/emilymcintyre/Downloads/Tourism%20Employment%20Study%20Draft%20Report_integrated(1).pdf)

Molloy, Anne, M. (1992). The Duty to Accommodate: A Purposive Approach. *Canadian Labour*

Law Journal, 1, 23–45.

Morgan, Damian, & Fluker, Martin. (2003). Risk Management for Australian Commerical

Adventure Tour Operators. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 10(1), 46–

59.

National Federation of Disabled-Nepal. (2016). *Hiring Persons with Disabilities: a resource*

book for employers (p. 40). Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu, Nepal. Retrieved from

https://ia601206.us.archive.org/10/items/Hiring_PWDs/Hiring_PWDs_small.pdf

National Federation of Disabled-Nepal. (2017a). *Press Release: The legislative parliament*

passes the Disability Rights Act (Press Release) (p. 1). Nepal. Retrieved from

<https://www.nfdn.org.np/press/parliament-passes-disability-rights-act.html>

National Federation of Disabled-Nepal. (2017b, October 18). Act regarding the rights of persons

with disability, 2074. Retrieved from [http://nfdn.org.np/national-policies/disability-](http://nfdn.org.np/national-policies/disability-rights-act-2017.html)

[rights-act-2017.html](http://nfdn.org.np/national-policies/disability-rights-act-2017.html)

Ontario. Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, R.S.O. 1990 § (2012). Retrieved from

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

- Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2014). 14. Undue Hardship. Retrieved from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-mental-health-disabilities-and-addictions/14-undue-hardship>
- Ostroff, E. (2011). *Universal design: an evolving paradigm*. McGraw-Hill.
- Pothier, Dianne & Devlin, Richard. (2006). *Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy and Law*. Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press.
- Pradhananga, P. & Timsina S.R. (2017, March 24). Accessible Tourism: A Novel Idea for Promoting Tourism in Nepal. Retrieved from <http://www.nfdn.org.np/papers/accessible-tourism.html>
- Pullin, G., Treviranus, J., Patel, R., & Higginbotham, J. (2017). Designing interaction, voice, and inclusion in AAC research. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 33(3), 139–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2017.1342690>
- Rains, Scott. (2007). *Inclusive tourism: A new strategic alliance for the disability rights movement* (p. 10). Bangkok.
- Rains, Scott. (2014, April 5). Disability-Part 1. Retrieved from <http://www.rollinggrains.com/mt4/mt-search.cgi?search=Nepal&IncludeBlogs=1&limit=20>
- Ratcliffe, Rebecca. (2017, August 22). Floods claim more than 800 lives across India, Nepal and Bangladesh. *The Guardian*.
- Reliefweb. (2017). Nepal: Floods and Landslides - Jun 2017. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2017-000107-npl>
- Sanders KY. (2006). Overprotection and lowered expectations of persons with disabilities: the unforeseen consequences. *Work*, 27(2), 181–188.

- Silverman, David. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction* (3rd edition). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Retrieved from https://books-google-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books/about/Interpreting_Qualitative_Data.html?id=uooz4p82sDgC
- Smith, S. L. J. (n.d.). Defining tourism a supply-side view. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(2), 179–190.
- Stine, M. E. (1991). Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 Comment. *South Dakota Law Review*, 37, 97–120.
- Stumbo, N.J., & Pegg, S. (2005). Travelers and tourists with disabilities: A matter of priorities and loyalties. *Tourism Review International*, 8(3), 195–209.
- Thapa, K. B. (2010). Religion and law in Nepal. *BYU Law Review*, 2010(3), 921–930.
- Treviranus, J. (2014). Leveraging the Web as a Platform for Economic Inclusion. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 32(1), 94–103. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2105>
- Treviranus, Jutta. (2014). The value of the statistically insignificant. *Educause Review*. Retrieved from <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2014/1/the-value-of-the-statistically-insignificant>
- Treviranus, Jutta. (2015). The future challenge of the ADA: Shaping humanity's transformation. Retrieved from <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/369/>
- Treviranus, Jutta. (2016). *Life-long Learning on the Inclusive Web. W4A'16*. Montreal, Canada.
- United Nations. (2017a). Article 27 Work and Employment. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-27-work-and-employment.html>

United Nations. (2017b). Chapter IV Human Rights. Retrieved from

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-15-a&chapter=4&clang=_en

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (2016). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol. Retrieved from

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2016). *Manual on Accessible Tourism for all:*

Principles, tools and best practices (p. 72). Madrid. Retrieved from

<http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/moduleieng13022017.pdf>

Van Manen, M. (1991). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Routledge.

World Health Organization. (2017). World Report on Disability. Retrieved from

http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/

World Travel and Tourism Council. (2017). *Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017 Nepal*.

Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2017/nepal2017.pdf>

Yau, M. K., McKercher, B., & Packer, T. L. (2004). Traveling with a disability: More than an Access Issue. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(4), 946–960.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.03.007>

Young, I. M. (1990). Philosophical Perspectives on Gender in Sport and Physical Activity.

Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, 37(2), 318–324.

Appendix A- Recommendations for Tour Company

Recommendations for the Guide: ⁹

1. Wheelchair etiquette

- Never push a wheelchair unless the individual has asked
- Posture when greeting and conversing with an individual in a wheelchair may vary from country to country (if you don't know ask)
- If a cross cultural communication barrier arises related to disability with another individual, explain to the guest that if it is something that is culturally acceptable in Nepal, and that no harm was meant by it (E.g. asking what happened? Kids laughing, etc.)

2. Ramps/Pathways

- Do all routes and places being visited have ramps?
- Are there handrails on the ramps?
- Are the pathways wide enough for a wheelchair?

Recommendations for Management and Tour Planners:

1. Consider location of the hotel which is near the selected activities

- In addition to being accessible, ensure that the hotel is a reasonable distance to planned activities, if the tourist wants to walk from to sites
- Ensure the roads and sidewalks are in good condition around the hotel
- Ensure both the client and the guide are aware of accessible restaurants which have accessible washrooms that are nearby the hotel and the chosen activities
- If accessibility details are unknown call and ask, so that the experience is seamless for the client

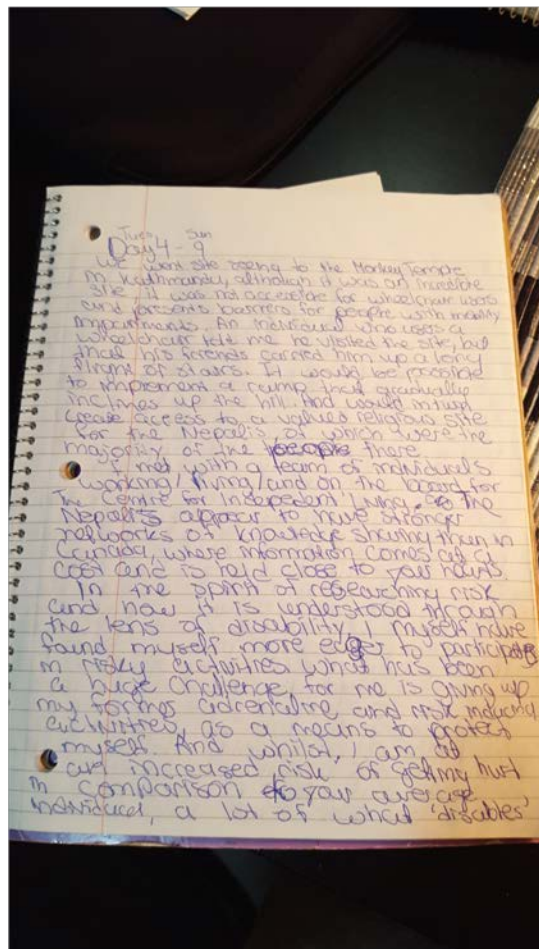
Recommendations for Management and Tour Planners:

2. Consider location of the hotel which is near the selected activities

- In addition to being accessible, ensure that the hotel is in walking distance to planned activities, if the tourist wants to walk from to sites
- Ensure the roads and sidewalks are in good condition around the hotel
- Ensure both the client and the guide are aware of accessible restaurants which have accessible washrooms that are nearby the hotel and the chosen activities
- If accessibility details are unknown call and ask, so that the experience is seamless for the client

⁹ Information related to wheelchair accessibility was requested

Appendix B- Observational Journal Example



Appendix C- Questionnaire

Introduction:

Hello, my name is Emily McIntyre. I am currently undertaking my Master's Research Paper in partial fulfillment of the Master's program for a Master's degree in Critical Disabilities Studies at York University. Dr. Marcia Rioux, a Professor in the Department of Critical Disabilities Studies, is my supervisor. I greatly appreciate that you have agreed to be interviewed regarding accessible tourism with (insert name of tourism business).

Context Questions:

I would like to begin by asking a few general questions to assist with understanding (insert name of organization).

- 1) Could you please explain the vision or mandate of (insert name of tourism business)?
 - P. What are the goals of (insert name of tourism business)?
 - P. What are the objectives of (insert name of tourism business)?

- 2) Can you tell me about the actions (insert name of tourism business) is taking to achieve these objectives?
 - P. How does sustainability play a role with your company?
 - P. Is there currently accessible tourism?
 - P. Why do you think accessible tourism is or is not important?

Tourism Management:

I would now like to ask you some questions about management strategies at (insert name of organization). I specifically want to look at training and marketing aspects.

- 3) How many staff does (insert name of tourism business) have?
 - P. Do you currently have anyone with a disability employed with you?

4) How do you train your staff on cross-cultural communication at (insert name of tourism business)?

P. Is sensitivity training about accessibility currently being undertaken at (insert name of tourism business)?

P. Does your staff come across any issues related to cross-cultural forms of communication?

P. What types of resources are dedicated to training your staff?

5) How has marketing played a role at [insert tourism businesses name] to help achieve your organization's goals and objectives?

P. Have your marketing efforts attracted more inbound tourists or outbound tourists?

P. Do you work with online travel agents or wholesalers? If so, do they bring in a lot of your clients?

6) Do you currently or have future plans to incorporate accessibility into your marketing scheme?

P. What do you think would be the best way to show or tell a client that your business is accessible?

7) How does (insert name of tourism business) utilize word of mouth promotion?

P. Does (insert name of tourism business) have any practices in place to increase word of mouth promotion over the internet and social media outlets?

P. If a negative review is made on a travel forum such as Trip Advisor, how do you rectify the situation?

8) What age range are the tourists that come on your tours?

P. What countries do they come from?

P. How long do they stay for?

9) Do you have people with disabilities come on your tours?

P. If so, what kind of accommodations are offered?

P. What would you like to have in the future to improve accessibility?

10) Do you have staff that require accommodations in the workplace?

P. Is there any barriers that they are faced with in the workplace?

11) Do you have partnerships in place with other local tourism providers?

P. Are your partnerships with accessible companies?

P. If so, how do you plan to work together to create accessible experiences?

P. If not, would you be interested in advocating to them on the potential opening up accessible tourism?

12) Do you work with travel agents/retailers/businesses in other countries?

P. If so, do they promote and bring in customers with disabilities?

P. Are they trained to answer accessibility questions related to your company?

P. If not, would you like to build relationships on an international level regarding accessible tourism?

Additional Comments and Future Direction:

13) Do you have any additional comments about the future directions of accessible tourism?

P. Is there any knowledge voids that [insert company name] may want to explore to better understand accessible tourism?

Appendix D- Consent Form

Written Consent Form

Date:

Study Name: Inclusive Sustainable Tourism Design: A Management Toolkit and Guide Training Resources.

<p>Researcher:</p> <p>Emily McIntyre, Masters Student</p> <p>Department of Critical Disabilities Studies</p> <p>York University</p> <p>emmc1@yorku.ca</p>	<p>Supervisor:</p> <p>Marcia Rioux</p> <p>Department of Critical Disabilities Studies</p> <p>York University</p> <p>mrioux@yorku.ca</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ph 416-736-2100 ext. 22112</p> <p>Advisor:</p> <p>Jutta Trevinarus</p> <p>Department on Inclusive Design</p> <p>OCAD University</p> <p>jtreviranus@ocadu.ca</p> <p>Ph (416) 977-6000 ext. 3950</p>
---	--

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research on accessibility. The purpose of this study is to investigate how an inclusive sustainable tourism design toolkit can be made for guides and managers. To better understand the role of partnerships and how they can help in the

accessibility movement in Nepal. More specifically it aims to design a Management and Marketing Toolkit surrounding accessibility that the businesses involved can implement, to develop a Guide manual addressing sensitivity training resources and to explore best practices, benefits and barriers to inclusive tourism and make recommendations for the future. To do this, interviews will be conducted with staff members and guide in tourism companies in Nepal.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO IN THE RESEARCH:

As a participant, you will be asked to **complete one interview of thirteen (13) questions related to accessibility and your business**. Participation will take approximately **one (1) hour** of your time. All interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy during transcription of the data. Transcriptions will be stored under password security on Ms. McIntyre's computer. Your audio files will be identified by a number and not disclose your name, and this number will only be available to Ms. McIntyre.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is the possibility that anonymity may be compromised due to limited tourism operators of in Nepal. To manage this risk, this is stated in the consent form that the person is aware that someone may be able to determine who they are, as the context of the company will be identified.

Another potential risk may be if the individual is unauthorized to speak on behalf of the company, specifically, around a sensitive issue such as accessibility. To manage this risk, an explicit statement has been added to the consent form (See consent form) that the individual is aware that the company will be identified with this information.

Beyond this, we do not foresee risks or discomforts from your participation in the research.

BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH AND BENEFITS TO YOU

Potential benefits of participation include the sharing of information to find out what other companies are doing and the literature is saying regarding accessible tourism. This research will also explore effective inclusive tourism strategies, an area where little work has been explored especially in context-specific situations. Recommendations for the future to help overcome barriers will also be highlighted in the toolkit. I will provide you with a copy of my Master's Research Paper, which documents this research as well as findings relevant to your company.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you wish, you are entitled to decline answering any questions or participate in any component of the study or stop participating at any time. If you are not in the position to answer a particular question, the researcher would appreciate you referring the researcher to an appropriate person.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY

You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision to stop participating, or refuse to answer certain questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher or York University. In the event that you withdraw from the study, your data will be immediately destroyed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not appear in any report resulting from this study unless you specifically indicate your consent; however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Identification of the company being studied will not be used in the final report, while descriptors will be used for individuals and the company. Participants should be aware that identifying information will be used. It is the participant's responsibility to be aware of their authority to speak on behalf of their company.

Data will be collected through audio files and some handwritten notes. All audio files will be held in confidence and stored on principal investigator's personal computer and secured under password protection. They will be stored until November 2017 so they can be used for studying processes and explanatory purposes. All audio files will be erased and paper files will be shredded after my defense. Access to this data will be only permitted to the researcher, Emily McIntyre, and her supervisor Dr. Marcia Rioux.

To ensure accuracy, a copy of the transcript will be sent to you to grant you the opportunity to confirm the correctness of our conversation and to add or clarify, to the transcript if you wish to do so.

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study will be published as a Masters Research Paper at York University. Results may also be published through a publication and/or presentation. Anonymity will be maintained.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH

For further information and/or questions about the research of your role in the study, please contact the Researcher or the Supervisor using the contact information that is provided above. This study has received ethics clearance through the Ethics Review Committee of Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. You may also wish to contact the Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program Office (Tel: 416-736-2100 extensions 44494; Email: gradcds@yorku.ca).

Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated. Please keep a personal copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I () (name) agree to participate in this study described above conducted by Emily McIntyre. I have made this decision and wish to participate based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. I understand that unless I provide a “fake name” as below, I am waiving the right to be anonymous in any report or publication of the research. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time. My signature below indicates my consent.

To be filled out by the Participant:

To be filled out by the Principal Investigator:

Name of Participant

Name of Principal Investigator

Signature of Participant

Signature of Principal Investigator

Participant's "fake name" (please print)

Date