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Lubhu: Cultural Heritage Tourism Exploration

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Abstract

Lubhu, a culturally rich Newa town located in Lalitpur Mahalaxmi Municipality of Nepal, holds significant potential for tourism development rooted in heritage and tradition. Despite its historical importance and living cultural practices-such as temple rituals, handloom weaving, and community-led festivals-Lubhu remains largely under-evaluated in Nepal's mainstream tourism discourse. This study aims to explore how Lubhu's cultural identity can be integrated into sustainable tourism development without compromising its original traditional values. Field observations, interviews with local residents, artisans, and ward officials were conducted to understand community perspectives on tourism and heritage conservation. It reveals strong community interest in safeguarding traditions while welcoming responsible visitors. By evaluating the relationship between culture and tourism, the study contributes to figure out how underrepresented heritage towns like Lubhu can benefit from tourism that respects local identity. The findings suggest that any tourism initiative must be community-centered and culturally sensitive to ensure the preservation of Lubhu's unique heritage while creating sustainable economic opportunities for local people.

Keywords

Culture, Heritage, Lubhu, Tourism.

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1. Introduction

Lubhu, a historic town in the Lalitpur district of Nepal, is renowned for its rich tradition of hand-woven textiles (cloths), reflecting the cultural and economic fabric of the region. Situated in the Mahalaxmi Municipality, Lubhu has been a center for textile production, particularly known for its traditional weaving practices that have been passed down through generations (Dulal & Singh, 2024). It was the center of Dhaka cloths, a trainer went to Palpa and trained the people. Palpali Dhaka - a smooth linen for Nepali hat- is famous all over Nepal. The weaving industry in Lubhu is predominantly a home-based enterprise, with many families engaged in the craft, producing textiles that are integral to various cultural and religious ceremonies. These hand-woven fabrics are not only a source of livelihood but also a means of preserving and expressing the community's cultural identity (Dulal & Singh, 2024). The significance of hand-woven textiles in Nepal extends beyond Lubhu, as they play a crucial role in the country's cultural heritage and are emblematic of the diverse traditions found across different regions (Romanto Nepali, n.d.). Lubhu, a historic Newa settlement in the Kathmandu Valley, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, including traditional architecture, festivals, and artisanal crafts (Shrestha, 2016). Despite its cultural significance, Lubhu remains underrepresented in Nepal's tourism sector. This study explores Lubhu's cultural heritage through the lens of tourism development, aiming to understand how heritage tourism can contribute to the preservation of local traditions and support sustainable economic growth. By examining community perspectives and heritage assets, the research seeks to highlight opportunities in promoting Lubhu as a cultural tourism destination. It is a field visit observation and interviews of local community about the art, culture, history, civilization, traditional rituals, and monuments of the town.

2. Problem Statement

Lubhu, a historic town in the southeastern region of the Kathmandu Valley, is known for its rich cultural heritage, indigenous textiles, festivals, traditional architecture, and deep-rooted Newa customs. However, in recent decades, rapid urbanization, modern construction practices, and shifting socio-economic values have posed significant threats to the preservation of Lubhu's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The traditional Guthi system, which has long sustained community-led heritage conservation and ritual practices, is weakening due to demographic shifts and the decline in youth participation (Shrestha, 2015). Moreover, many of Lubhu's ancient temples, courtyards, and residential buildings are being replaced with concrete structures, leading to a loss of architectural identity and historical continuity (Mishra & Shrestha, 2020). The lack of proper documentation, insufficient policy implementation, and minimal awareness at the local level have further exacerbated the problem. While there is increasing recognition of the need to preserve cultural heritage for sustainable development, concrete strategies and localized interventions in Lubhu remain limited. This research seeks to document the basic cultural heritage, identify the underlying causes of heritage degradation in Lubhu and explore community-centered approaches that can support sustainable preservation practices rooted in cultural identity and historical continuity from tourism development perspective.

3. Objective

This study aims to explore and document the cultural heritage sites of Lubhu from the perspective of heritage tourism development. It seeks to evaluate how these sites can be leveraged to promote sustainable heritage tourism that supports the preservation of cultural traditions, strengthens community identity, and fosters economic benefits for local residents, while ensuring the safeguarding of Lubhu's unique historical and cultural legacy.

4. Research Question

How can the cultural heritage sites of Lubhu be effectively developed and managed through heritage tourism to promote sustainable preservation, strengthen local identity, and support the economic well-being of the community?

5. Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach to investigate the role of heritage tourism in the preservation and development of cultural heritage sites in Lubhu. A qualitative methodology is most appropriate for this study as it allows an in-depth understanding of local perspectives, social dynamics, and the cultural significance embedded within heritage sites (Creswell, 2014). The research focuses on capturing the experiences and insights of community members, cultural practitioners, and stakeholders involved in tourism and heritage management.

Data collection involved multiple methods. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including local artisans, community leaders, municipal officials, and representatives from cultural organizations. This approach enabled the gathering of detailed, nuanced information about Lubhu's cultural heritage and its relationship with tourism (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Second, participant observation was employed during significant cultural events and festivals to observe firsthand the interaction between heritage practices and visitors. This method provided contextual understanding of the living heritage and its role in community life (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Third, secondary data such as government reports, tourism plans, and previous academic studies were reviewed to frame the local findings within broader heritage tourism development trends. Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), allowing the identification of key themes related to heritage conservation, tourism, community engagement, and development. Transcripts and field notes were analyzed to reveal patterns and relationships to underpin the opportunities of heritage tourism in Lubhu.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed. Informed consent was obtained from all interviewees, and anonymity was maintained to protect participants' privacy. The research also respected local customs and cultural sensitivities throughout fieldwork, ensuring a collaborative and respectful approach.

6. Thematic Analysis from Theoretical Perspective

Thematic analysis of Lubhu's tourism attraction reveals five interlinked motifs. *First*, sacred topography frames the town as a 'ritual landscape', where the Mahalaxmi-Mahabhirav Jatra and allied processions reaffirm cosmological order and attract spectators

seeking liminality (Turner, 1969). *Second*, performative authenticity is constructed through embodied rituals, enabling tourists to 'gaze' upon living heritage rather than static monuments (Urry & Larsen, 2011) Newari rituals and festivals. *Third*, textile craftsmanship-particularly hand loomed brocade-operates as creative capital, allowing hosts to diversify income while sustaining intangible skills (Richards, 1996) anyone can view the handlooms of 19th century. *Fourth*, community stewardship mediates tensions between conservation and commodification; locally governed Guthis regulate festival expenditures and monument upkeep, reflecting Murphy's (1985) community based tourism model. *Finally*, place attachment underpins destination loyalty: residents' affective bonds foster high conservation sensitivity yet generate ambivalence toward visitor growth, echoing the heritage dissonance outlined by Timothy and Boyd (2003) however people and community is highly positive in tourism and hospitality.

Collectively, these themes situate Lubhu within broader cultural heritage tourism theory, illustrating how ritual performance, craft economy, and grassroots governance coalesce or merge to form an experiential attraction whose sustainability depends on balancing vernacular values with market visibility (Dulal & Singh, 2024; MacCannell, 1976). Moreover, the town's proximity to Kathmandu positions it within Butler's (1980) tourism area life cycle at an early involvement stage, presenting opportunities for managed growth. From the Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism development perspective, the study has specifically revealed Architecture, Culture, Demography, Economy, History, Livelihood, Location, Philosophy, main tourist Attractions and Special Information to the tourists and visitors are the pre-determined basic indicators of cultural heritage tourism destination development.

7. Theoretical Framework

Cultural heritage tourism is grounded in theoretical perspectives that highlight the importance of authenticity, local participation, and cultural significance. Butler (1980) outlined destination evolution through his Tourism Area Life Cycle model. Cooper *et al.* (2008) proposed the components of tourism development, 4 As Framework—Attraction, Accessibility, Accommodation, and Amenities. MacCannell (1976) introduced the idea of staged authenticity, where tourists seek what they perceive as real cultural experiences. Murphy (1985) promoted a community-based tourism

model prioritizing resident involvement. Pine and Gilmore (1999) propose the experience economy, where value lies in emotionally engaging, co-created experiences between hosts and tourists. Richards (1996) emphasizes cultural capital in tourism, arguing that traditions, arts, and crafts serve not only as heritage assets but also as creative economic resources that differentiate destinations. Smith (2006) introduces the constructivist theory of heritage, viewing heritage as a dynamic cultural and political process shaped by memory, identity, and power rather than as static objects or sites. Timothy and Boyd (2003) examined the conflict between heritage conservation and commercialization. Turner's (1969) concept of liminality explains how ritual practices offer tourists meaningful, transitional experiences. Urry and Larsen (2011) developed the notion of the tourist gaze, focusing on how visitors visually engage with cultural settings.

Together, these theories highlight the shift from passive heritage consumption to participatory, identity-driven, and economically productive cultural heritage tourism. It helps assess a destination's readiness and sustainability by analyzing what draws tourists, how they arrive, where they stay, and supporting services provided.

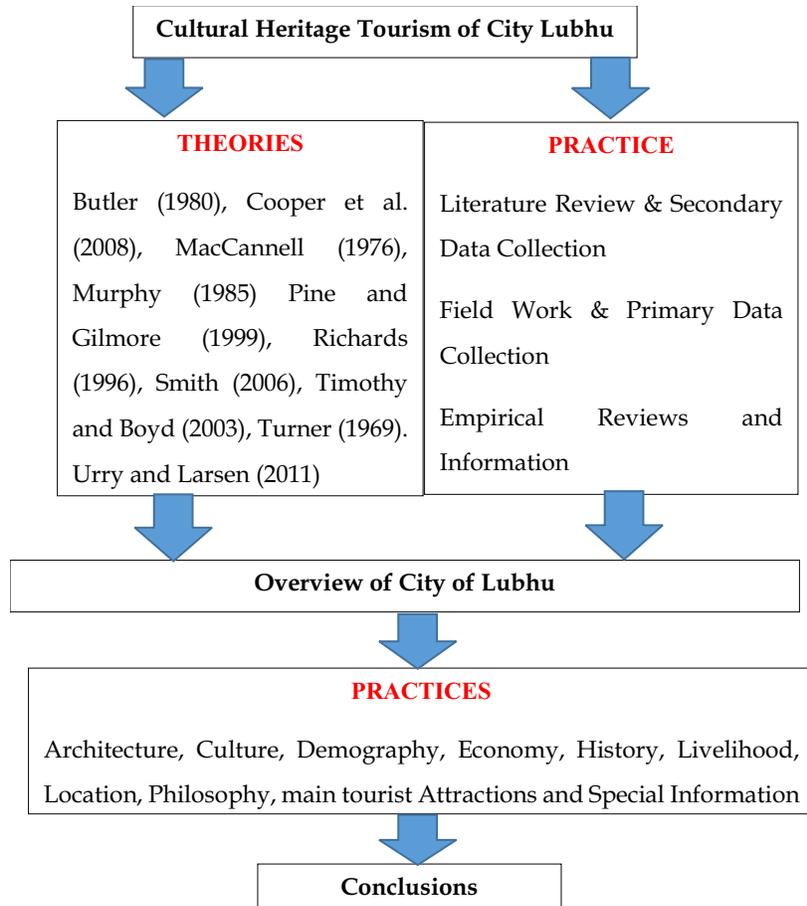
Theory and related Application Keywords of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Theories	Keywords	Applications
Butler (1980)	Tourism Area Life Cycle model	Environment, Migration
Cooper <i>et al.</i> (2008)	4 A's Framework - Attraction, Accessibility, Accommodation, and Amenities	Development
MacCannell (1976)	Staged authenticity, The real cultural experiences	Culture and Food
Murphy (1985)	Community-based tourism model prioritizing resident involvement	Livelihood, Philosophy
Pine & Gilmore (1999)	The economy, where value lies in engaging and co-created experiences between hosts and tourists	Economy and Accommodation
Richards (1996)	Cultural capital in tourism, traditions, arts, and crafts serve as heritage assets on creative economic resources that differentiate the destinations.	Main Attractions

Smith (2006)	The constructivist theory of heritage as a dynamic cultural and political process shaped by memory, identity, and power	Newar Identity
Timothy & Boyd (2003)	The conflict between heritage conservation and commercialization	History and Architecture
Turner (1969)	Rituals and festivals create liminal (transitional) spaces that foster a sense of communitas (shared social bonding), attracting tourists seeking transformation.	Jatras and Festivals Culture and Festival
Urry & Larsen (2011)	Tourism is shaped by visual consumption-tourists seek sights and experiences curated by cultural and media influences.	Attractions, Activities, Access.

Developed in 2025.

7.1 Analytical Framework



This multi-method qualitative design provides a comprehensive understanding of how heritage tourism can be harnessed in Lubhu to foster cultural preservation and economic development, while maintaining community identity and sustainability. The identified results as the indicators of heritage tourism are Architecture, Culture, Demography, Economy, History, Livelihood, Location, Philosophy, main tourist Attractions and Special Information, are analyzed below.

7.2 Indicators

Cultural heritage tourism indicators help assess a town's ability to attract and sustain tourism based on its historical, architectural, and cultural assets. Key indicators include the presence of preserved heritage sites, cultural festivals, traditional crafts, local museums, and community participation in conservation. Accessibility, interpretive signage, and infrastructure such as accommodation and guided tours also play critical roles. These indicators support sustainable tourism planning and enhance visitor experience while preserving local identity (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Monitoring these elements is essential for balancing development and conservation, ensuring long-term economic and cultural benefits for the host community.

Cultural heritage tourism in towns can be assessed through a multidimensional framework encompassing cultural, economic, social, environmental, resilience, and governance indicators. A recent evidence based study across 21 European destinations validated 51 indicators-such as heritage preservation, economic benefits to local suppliers, social inclusion of residents, environmental conservation efforts, and crisis resilience capacity-that together provide a comprehensive tool for monitoring sustainable cultural tourism development (Tudorache *et al.*, 2024). Incorporating these metrics enables planners to align visitor experiences with local identity, adaptive governance, and long term preservation aims, ensuring responsible tourism growth in small towns (Tudorache, *et al.*, 2024).

From the analysis the following indicators are determined Accommodation, Amenity, Architecture, Attractions, Culture, Demography, Economy, Gastronomy, History, Livelihood, Location, Philosophy and Transportation. These indicators are analyzed and summarized below from the primary and secondary information.

8. History & Architecture

Lubhu, a historic town in Nepal's Lalitpur district, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and traditional architecture. The town's name, Lubhu, meaning "golden plate" in Newa, is rooted in local folklore. Lubhu: a city like a golden plate, or a settlement with lots of golden paddy production, or a city settled by queen Ganga Maharani by selling her golden plate, or the city with golden roof (Subarnachhatrapur) whatsoever called it is a beautiful golden city popular in folklores. Neolithic stone tools have been discovered from Lubhu (Sharma, 1983: 1). Therefore, the history of human settlement in Lubhu can be traced till to the prehistoric period. Gobhrateshwar temple was established in 5100 BEC. Kirats used to trade on the route.

During the Lichchhavi period Lubhu was developed as a human settlement knowing with a part of Hansagrihadranga - a town. Likewise, there find another inscription of Abhaya Malla of early medieval (medieval Malla period is 12th-18th century) period from Motitar (Vajracharya & Malla, 1985: 25 &35). It is nearest village of Lubhu. This historical record also helps to trace out the historicity of Lubhu back to early medieval period.

Historical points of Lubhu

Dateline	Age	Description
6000 to 2000 BCE	Prehistoric Neolithic age	Weapons were found
5100 BEC	Trtayug Lord Ram	Shringi Rishi has established
800 BEC - 111 BC	Kirat period	Eastern Trading Route
400-750 CE	Lichchhavi Period	Hansagriha Dranga
1216-1255 CE	Abhaya Malla	Inscription in Imadol Mattar
1547 - 1613 CE	Vishwa, Tribhuvan, Trailokya	Ganga Maharani
1726 CE	Inscription	Mahalaxmi Temple

Source: Collected by the Researcher in 2025.

One legend tells of Queen Ganga Maharani, who sold her golden plate to aid her people during a devastating epidemic, leading to the town's name (Subedi, 2020). Another tale speaks of a devotee (Ganga Maharani) offering a golden plate to deities Mahalaxmi and Gobhateshwor Mahadev, further cementing the town's association

with this precious metal (Subedi, 2020). During the period of epidemic sorrow God Bhairav himself laid under golden umbrella to protect the people from disease. Then after, gradually the place was called 'Subarna Chhatrapur' but was called 'Lubhu', which means the same in Newari. In medieval period, while the king of Lalitpur was came into here, he saw beautiful scene of mustered flowers that made him quite happiness and immediately expressed 'Lumbhukhani' means golden plant. Then, local people started to address the site as the name Lubhu (Dhaubanjari, 2019: 205)

Queen Ganga Maharani, also known as Ganga Devi or Ganga Rani, emerged as a significant political figure in 16th-century Nepalese history during the Malla dynasty. She was the queen consort of King Vishva Malla of Bhaktapur, who ruled from 1547 to 1560 CE. Following her husband's death, she assumed the role of regent and later co-ruler with her sons, Trailokya Malla (r. 1560-1613 CE) and Tribhuvana Malla, adopting the royal title Sri Sri Jaya Gangarani Devi Thakurini (Pokharel, 2023). Her leadership contributed to Bhaktapur's political consolidation and expansion, including the annexation of surrounding areas. Her last recorded inscription dates to 1601 CE, after which Trailokya Malla appears as the sole ruler. Although archaeological evidence suggests Lubhu's earlier habitation, local oral tradition associates the town's formal historical recognition with the reign of Queen Ganga Maharani in the 16th century (Pokharel, 2023).

Architecturally, Lubhu showcases traditional Newar design, characterized by intricately carved wooden windows, brick facades, and tiered pagoda-style temples. The Mahalakshmi-Mahabhairav Temple stands as a testament to this style, featuring a three-tiered pagoda structure adorned with detailed woodwork and guarded by stone lions (Subedi, 2020). Such structures not only serve religious purposes but also reflect the community's artistic prowess, ability and dedication to preserving their ancestral legacy. There was a palace of 365 windows of Ganga Maharani but it's not in existence at present. It needs an intensive research.

The town's layout and buildings exemplify the Newar community's emphasis on harmonious living, with communal courtyards and narrow alleys fostering close-knit relationships among residents. Despite modernization pressures, Lubhu has retained much of its traditional charm, offering a glimpse into Nepal's architectural and cultural past.

9. Culture and Philosophy

Lubhu, a historic town in Nepal's Lalitpur district, embodies a rich tapestry of cultural traditions and philosophical beliefs, deeply rooted in its Newar heritage. Central to Lubhu's cultural identity is the annual Mahalaxmi Jatra, a vibrant festival that showcases the community's devotion through elaborate processions, rituals, and traditional performances. This festival not only reinforces communal bonds but also serves as a living testament to the town's enduring spiritual and cultural values (Dulal & Singh, 2024). Mahalaxmi Jatra is the main festival of the region falls on March or April every year.

The philosophical underpinnings of Lubhu's culture are intricately linked to the Guthi system, an indigenous socio-religious institution prevalent among the Newar community. Guthis function as custodians of cultural heritage, overseeing the maintenance of temples, organization of festivals, and preservation of traditional arts. This communal approach to heritage conservation reflects a philosophy that emphasizes collective responsibility and inter-generational continuity (Pant & Pant, 2020). Guthi is the heart - central driver of Newar Community. Guthi leads entire social rituals and functions.

Moreover, Lubhu's renowned hand-woven textiles are not merely economic commodities but are imbued with cultural significance. The intricate patterns and motifs woven into these fabrics often symbolize religious narratives and local myths, serving as a medium through which cultural knowledge and philosophical beliefs are transmitted across generations. The act of weaving itself is considered a sacred practice, intertwining the spiritual and the material realms (Sharma & Karolia, 2023). In essence, Lubhu's culture and philosophy are characterized by a harmonious blend of communal practices, spiritual devotion, and artistic expression. This synergy not only sustains the town's rich heritage but also offers insights into the broader dynamics of cultural resilience and continuity in the face of modern challenges and attracts the visitors from all over the world.

10. Economy & Livelihood

Lubhu, situated in the Lalitpur district of Nepal, has long been recognized for its vibrant textile industry, which plays a pivotal role in the local economy and the livelihoods of its residents.

Traditionally, the town's economy was anchored in agriculture; however, over time, handloom weaving emerged as a significant economic activity, with many households engaging in the production of hand-woven textiles. This craft not only provided employment opportunities but also became an integral part of Lubhu's cultural identity (Dulal & Singh, 2024). Textile and paddy production were /are the historical identity of Lubhu.

The weaving industry in Lubhu is characterized by both traditional handlooms and modern electric looms, reflecting a blend of heritage and adaptation to contemporary demands. These textiles are not only consumed locally but also supplied to various parts of Nepal, including tourist hubs like Thamel, indicating their economic significance beyond the local context (Wikipedia, 2024). The prominence of textile production has led to the establishment of numerous small to large-scale factories within the town, with many families operating their own weaving units

However, the community faces challenges such as competition from mass-produced fabrics and a decline in traditional weaving practices. Despite these obstacles, the resilience of Lubhu's weaving community is evident in their continued commitment to preserving this craft. Efforts to sustain and promote hand woven textiles are crucial for maintaining the town's economic vitality and cultural heritage- a foundation of cultural tourism.

11. Gastronomy and Amenity

Lubhu, a historic Newar settlement southeast of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, is renowned as a center for traditional handloom weaving. Its gastronomy is deeply rooted in Newari culinary traditions. Key features include the prominence of fermented foods like *bodi* (black gram beans), *masyaura* (sun-dried lentil or vegetable balls), and *kinema* (fermented soybean), essential for protein and preservation (Joshi & Singh, 2020). *Wo* (lentil pancakes), *bara* (savory lentil patties), *chhoyala* (spiced grilled meat, often buffalo), and *yomari* (steamed rice-flour dumplings with sweet fillings) represent core celebratory and daily fare, reflecting the agrarian and communal Newari lifestyle (Shakya, 2022). Meals often center on beaten rice (*chiura*) accompanied by diverse accompaniments (*achar*). Local alcoholic beverages like *thwon* (home-brewed rice beer) and *aaila* (a potent spirit) hold significant cultural and ritualistic importance (Tamang, 2021).

Regarding amenity, Lubhu offers fundamental services characteristic of a semi-urban Newar town. Accommodation options are primarily limited to basic homestays or local guesthouses, catering mainly to domestic visitors or researchers interested in the weaving heritage (Thapa, 2019). Formal dining establishments serving authentic Newari cuisine specifically within Lubhu are scarce; local eateries (bhojanalaya) provide everyday Nepali staples, while traditional Newari feasts (bhoj) are typically experienced during festivals or through community/home-based arrangements (Shakya, 2022). The primary amenity focus remains on its cultural heritage infrastructure: numerous traditional weaving workshops open for observation, local cooperatives promoting handloom products, and historic Newari architecture like temples (dyochen) and communal courtyards (bahal or chowk) that define its urban fabric (Tamang, 2021). Access is via local roads, with basic local shops providing daily necessities. The amenity value lies predominantly in its authentic cultural immersion rather than developed tourism facilities.

12. Transportation and Accommodation

Lubhu is located approximately 8 km southeast of Kathmandu city center in Lalitpur District (Thapa, 2019). Access is primarily via road networks connected to the Ring Road and Koteshwor-Bhaktapur Highway. Public transportation consists of frequent local minibuses (“tempos”) and buses operating from Kathmandu’s Old Bus Park (Ratna Park) and Lagankhel Bus Park in Patan, terminating at Lubhu Chowk (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017; Nepal Tourism Board, n.d.). Route numbers vary, but services are regular during daylight hours. Private vehicles (taxis, ride-sharing) offer direct but more expensive access. Within Lubhu, navigation is predominantly on foot due to narrow, traditional lanes. Cycle rickshaws may be available for shorter distances between major points and weaving cooperatives (Tamang, 2021). Road conditions are very good.

Formal tourist accommodation (hotels, resorts) within Lubhu itself is extremely limited due to its primary identity as a residential and craft-production hub rather than a developed tourist destination (Shakya, 2022). Visitors typically stay in nearby Patan (Lalitpur) or Kathmandu, which offer diverse lodging options, and travel to Lubhu for day visits (Thapa, 2019). It is close to Patan durbar square around 5 Km.

However, community-based homestays are emerging as the primary accommodation option within Lubhu, facilitated by local weaving cooperatives and heritage initiatives. These homestays provide basic facilities (shared bathroom, simple meals) within traditional Newari homes, offering immersive cultural experiences and direct interaction with weaving families (Tamang, 2021). Amenities are modest; reliable hot water and Wi-Fi cannot be universally expected. Advance booking through cooperatives or community tourism networks is essential. The focus is on cultural exchange and observing the weaving heritage intimately, rather than luxury lodging (Shakya, 2022; Thapa, 2019). Thus Lubhu can be an authentic traditional cultural amenity.

13. Location and Demography

Lubhu is a traditional Newar settlement classified as a semi-urban area within the Mahalaxmi Municipality, Lalitpur District, in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal (CBS, 2017). Its geographic coordinates are approximately 27°37'60" N latitude and 85°22'0" E longitude. Situated about 8 kilometers southeast of Kathmandu city center and 5 kilometers east of Patan Durbar Square, it lies on the valley floor near the foothills, historically positioned along ancient trade routes connecting the Kathmandu-Patan core with the eastern valley and beyond (Tamang, 2021; Thapa, 2019). It falls within the Bagmati River basin, contributing to its historical agricultural productivity. Lubhu's proximity to the Kathmandu-Bhaktapur road corridor places it within the expanding urban fringe of the Kathmandu Metropolitan Region, subject to increasing development pressures while retaining distinct Newar cultural and architectural features (Shakya, 2022).

As per the 2011 National Population and Housing Census (the latest official data at this level), Lubhu (then a Village Development Committee) had a population of 9,100 individuals residing in 2,115 households (CBS, 2017). However, local estimates and subsequent municipal incorporation (Mahalaxmi Municipality formed 2014) suggest the current population likely exceeds 12,000 (Nepal Tourism Board, n.d.). The population is predominantly Newar, the indigenous inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, known for their distinct language (Nepal Bhasa), culture, and social organization based on caste and kinship (guthi) systems (Tamang, 2021). There is also a significant and growing population of Tamang ethnic group

migrants, primarily from surrounding hill districts, who have settled in Lubhu, often engaging in weaving and other labour (Shakya, 2022; Tamang, 2021). Smaller communities of other ethnic groups (e.g., Chhetri, Brahmin) are also present. The literacy rate was recorded at approximately 75% in 2011, higher than the national average but with variations by age and gender (CBS, 2017). Traditionally agrarian, Lubhu's occupational structure has shifted significantly towards handloom weaving and related commerce, alongside service sector jobs linked to Kathmandu, though agriculture remains important for some households (Thapa, 2019). Population density is high, characteristic of Kathmandu Valley settlements, with traditional compact Newar housing.

14. Main Attractions

Lubhu, a historic Newar settlement in the Mahalaxmi Municipality, Lalitpur District, epitomizes living cultural heritage through its vibrant festivals, temples, traditional weaving, and scenic surroundings (Subedi, 2020; Dulal & Singh, 2024) one of the best potential tourist destination.

- ▶ **Mahalaxmi Temple & Jatra:** At its core lies the three tiered Mahalaxmi Temple, a major religious site built in Newari pagoda style. Inscribed in Nepal Sambat 847, + 879 = 1726 CE, the temple has been central to community life since the Malla era (Mahalaxmi Municipality, 2025). The annual Mahalaxmi-Mahabhairav Jatra, held in Baishakh (April-May), lasts over a week and showcases sacred chariot processions, ritual dances, and traditional rites-emblematic of indigenous identity (Dulal & Singh, 2024; Subedi, 2020). Despite its tourist potential, the festival remains relatively under promoted beyond the local context (Dulal & Singh, 2024).
- ▶ **Govrateswor Mahadev Temple and Devasthan:** Situated nearby, the Govrateswor Mahadev Temple, mentioned in the Skanda Purana (written in 12th to 16th Century BCE), holds ritual importance, especially during Shiva festivals (Subedi, 2020). Based on planetary positions described in Valmiki Ramayana - Research by Pushkar Bhatnagar, "Dating the Era of Lord Ram" that King Ram was born in January 10, 5114 BCE, in Ayodhya. The Mahadev temple was established by Shringi Rishi (Sage) in around 5100 BEC who was the main priest of King Dasharath for the ritual ceremony of Child bearing in

palace called Putresthi Yagya. The adjacent Devasthan enshrines Goddess Ma finer to Mahalaxmi, and during the Jatra, a symbolic mother daughter reunion occurs here as the chariot makes its climactic stop for divine blessings (Subedi, 2020).

- ▶ **Traditional Weaving Mills:** Lubhu's small scale weaving industry is a cultural treasure; many households still use handlooms to produce textiles for Nepal's broader garment industry. These weaving mills offer immersive experiences into centuries old skills-observers can see the entire process, from spinning to dyeing and weaving (Wikipedia, n.d.; Subedi, 2020).
- ▶ **Rural Heritage Tour & Cycling Routes:** Exploring narrow lanes dotted with wood and brick Newari homes, grain laid out in the sun, brick kilns, and vivid village life, Lubhu provides an authentic rural cultural tour. This heritage walk is often combined with cycling routes through villages and farmlands, offering a lens into quotidian Newari living (Subedi, 2020; Eco Treks, 2022).
- ▶ **Lankuri Bhanjyang and Hillside Views:** On Lubhu's periphery lies Lankuri Bhanjyang, a hilltop vantage offering sweeping views of Kathmandu Valley and the Himalayas. The area is developing as a recreational spot with trekking trails, picnic sites, cave shrines, view towers, and homestays, adding ecological and leisure dimensions to Lubhu's cultural tourism (Badal, 2018).

These attractions collectively contribute to Lubhu's reputation as the "Golden Plate" of Newar culture-where faith, craft, architecture, and landscape merge into a rich tourist tapestry.

15. Summarized Information

- 1. Location & Accessibility:** Lubhu is a Newar town ~7 km east of Kathmandu in Lalitpur District, Bagmati Province. It's accessible via New Baneshwor-Thimi-Lubhu routes, offering an easy day trip from the valley's core as well.
- 2. Textile Industry & Weaving Culture:** The town is renowned for its hand-woven and electric-loom textiles. Many households maintain looms in brick mills, producing traditional and industrial garments (Subedi, 2020).

3. **Mahalaxmi-Mahabhairav Temple:** This pagoda-style temple is central to Lubhu's identity. It hosts vibrant festivals including the Mahalaxmi-Mahabhairav Jatra, drawing community and faith-based experiences.
4. **Mahalaxmi-Mahabhairav Jatra:** Held in April-May, this week-long festival features chariot processions, sacred dances, and local rituals. Observing the Jatra comers tourists into authentic Newar seasonal celebrations. (Subedi, 2020; Dulal & Singh, 2024)
5. **Govrateswor Mahadev Temple & Devasthan:** The temples dedicated to Shiva and Goddess Mata form part of Lubhu's divine map-offer devotees and tourists a peek into Newar Hindu traditions and temple architecture.
6. **Village Heritage Walk:** Winding villages lanes reveal traditional Newar brick-and-wood homes, sun-drying grains, and everyday local life. It's an immersive cultural stroll off the typical tourist path.
7. **Weaving Mill Visits:** Visitors can tour weaving factories to observe yarn spinning, dyeing, and loom operation. Booking ahead may allow hands-on weaving sessions with local artisans.
8. **Cycling & Countryside Route:** Scenic cycling routes run through Lubhu's fields and kilns toward Chapakharka and Godavari, passing through Lakuribhanjyang hills-ideal for active tourists.
9. **Lakuribhanjyang Hill & Nature Spots:** A hill vantage offers valley glimpses and Himalayan panoramas. Nearby trails and small waterfalls (e.g., hidden cascades) enrich Lubhu's eco-tourism appeal (Eco Treks, 2022; Badal, 2018).
10. **Homestays & Local Cuisine:** Homestays near weaving mills extend hospitality, offering Newari cuisine (e.g., bara, yomari, chhoila) and genuine cultural immersion. Ideal for overnight stays combining crafts and community engagement.

16. Conclusion

Lubhu attracts through its vibrant textile heritage, religious rituals, and serene rural landscape. Whether following the loom patterns, cycling village trails, attending the Jatra, or savoring home-cooked Newari meals, tourists benefit from immersive, authentic experiences. For visits to weaving mills or homestays, pre-booking is recommended. Lubhu serves as a living testament to

the enduring craftsmanship and rich cultural fabric of the Newar community, weaving together religious devotion, artisanal practice, and rural authenticity. The town's hand loomed textiles not only reflect traditional techniques passed through generations but also support a vibrant local economy rooted in family based weaving enterprises. Temples such as Mahalaxmi, Govrateswor Mahadev, and Devasthan stand as spiritual centers anchoring festivals like the Mahalaxmi-Mahabhairav Jatra, which offer immersive windows into Newar ritual and communal identity.

Simultaneously, winding village pathways, homestays, and nearby natural vistas such as Lakuribhanjyang hill create a multi sensory rural tourism experience. These elements collectively make Lubhu a compelling destination for travelers seeking depth, authenticity, and privacy beyond Kathmandu's urban attractions. Lubhu has to rebuild Palace of Ganga Maharani with 365 windows and Golden Roof Bhairav temple as Suwarnachhatrapur. Local government must maintain the inscription of every monuments. Ultimately, Lubhu's fusion of heritage, craftsmanship, faith, and natural beauty underscores its potential as a sustainable tourism destination. By preserving its weaving traditions, celebrating its festival culture, and managing growth mindfully, Lubhu can continue to thrive as both a living museum and a model for integrated cultural heritage tourism.

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