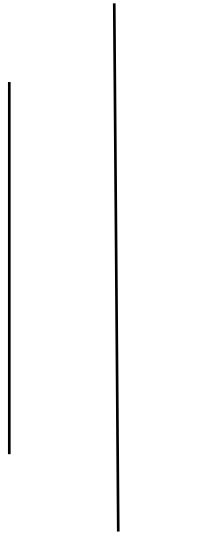


**EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE MAHOTTARI HOTEL
ASSOCIATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND
HOSPITALITY IN BARDIBAS**



BY

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A Project Work Report submitted to Pokhara University in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor in Hotel Management

At the

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Pokhara-14, Chhinedanda

July, 2026

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work report entitled “Exploring the Role of the Mahottari Hotel Association in the Development of Tourism and Hospitality in Bardibas” submitted for the BHM is my original work and the Project Work Report has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or other similar titles.

Subash Mahato

July 2026

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Project Work titled “Exploring the Role of the Mahottari Hotel Association in the Development of Tourism and Hospitality in Bardibas” submitted by Subash Mahato, (23150276) for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of BHM embodies the Bonafide work done by him under my supervision.

.....
Mr. Suresh Raj Adhikari
Supervisor, Project Work
July 2026

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Likewise, I am particularly thankful to all the respondents who took the time to participate in my survey and provided honest feedback which was crucial for the completion of this study. I am very grateful to all those who have assisted me in the completion of this project report entitled “Exploring the Role of the Mahottari Hotel Association in the Development of Tourism and Hospitality in Bardibas”.

Thank You,

Subash Mahato,
BHM VI Semester
NTHMC

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world and has become a major contributor to economic growth, employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and regional development. It promotes cultural exchange, strengthens local economies, and contributes to the sustainable utilization of natural and cultural resources. According to UNWTO (2023), tourism plays a significant role in supporting sustainable development by creating employment opportunities and improving the livelihoods of local communities. As a result, tourism has become an important sector for many developing countries seeking economic growth and social progress.

Nepal is a country rich in natural beauty, cultural diversity, religious heritage, and historical attractions. The tourism industry is considered one of the major pillars of the Nepalese economy and contributes significantly to national income and employment generation. The country attracts domestic and international tourists through its mountains, national parks, religious sites, cultural festivals, and traditional lifestyles. According to MoCTCA (2023), tourism continues to play a vital role in enhancing Nepal's economic development and international recognition.

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the development of tourism in emerging destinations beyond the traditional tourism centers of Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Chitwan. Local governments, tourism entrepreneurs, and community organizations have initiated various programs to promote tourism resources and improve tourism infrastructure. ADB (2022) emphasizes that local tourism development can contribute significantly to regional economic growth by encouraging investment, entrepreneurship, and community participation. Bardibas Municipality, located in Mahottari District of Madhesh Province, has emerged as an important commercial and transportation hub due to its strategic location along major highway networks. Besides its commercial importance, Bardibas possesses considerable tourism potential through its religious sites, cultural diversity, local traditions, hospitality services, and growing tourism-related businesses. These resources provide opportunities for tourism development and local economic

advancement. Effective tourism promotion and stakeholder collaboration are essential for utilizing these tourism resources and enhancing the destination's competitiveness.

Over the past decade, Bardibas has experienced rapid socio-economic transformation due to improvements in transportation infrastructure, urbanization, business expansion, and increased mobility of people. The ongoing development of transportation networks, including road and railway connectivity, has enhanced the accessibility of the municipality and created favorable conditions for tourism and hospitality development. In particular, the Bardibas–Jaynagar railway project is expected to strengthen cross-border tourism and trade activities between Nepal and India, creating new opportunities for local businesses and tourism enterprises. These developments have increased the importance of hospitality services such as hotels, restaurants, guest houses, and tourism-related facilities within the municipality.

Apart from its strategic location, Bardibas possesses significant tourism resources that have the potential to attract visitors from different regions. The municipality is blessed with diverse natural landscapes, including the environmentally significant Chure Hills, which offer opportunities for eco-tourism, hiking, nature observation, and environmental education. The area also contains various cultural, historical, and religious attractions that contribute to its tourism appeal. Religious sites such as Panchadhuramai Temple and Tuteshwornath Temple attract pilgrims and devotees throughout the year. Similarly, local folklore, cultural traditions, and historical landmarks provide opportunities for cultural tourism development. Recent archaeological discoveries in the area have further increased interest in Bardibas as a potential heritage tourism destination. These tourism assets provide a strong foundation for the development of a diversified tourism industry capable of contributing to local economic growth and community development.

The role of tourism organizations and business associations is increasingly important in facilitating tourism development at the local level. Such organizations help coordinate stakeholders, promote destinations, improve service quality, organize tourism-related events, and advocate for tourism-friendly policies. Bennett and Esty (2002) argue that collaboration among tourism stakeholders is a key factor in achieving sustainable tourism development and destination competitiveness. Through coordinated efforts, tourism organizations can enhance visitor experiences and support the long-term growth of the tourism sector. In this context, the Mahottari

Hotel and Tourism Business Association play an important role in promoting tourism development in Bardibas Municipality.

One of the association's most notable contributions has been its involvement in organizing tourism promotion events and awareness programs. The Bardibas Street Food Festival, for example, has emerged as a major tourism event that showcases local cuisine, culture, and hospitality services. Such programs not only attract visitors but also create opportunities for local entrepreneurs, vendors, and cultural performers to participate in tourism-related economic activities. The association has also promoted trekking routes, cultural programs, and tourism campaigns designed to increase awareness of Bardibas's tourism potential. These initiatives contribute to destination branding and help position Bardibas as an attractive tourism destination within Nepal.

In addition to destination promotion, the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association has focused on human resource development and capacity building. Recognizing that service quality is a key determinant of tourism competitiveness, the association has organized training programs, workshops, and seminars for hospitality professionals. Collaborations with institutions such as (NATHM) have enabled local entrepreneurs and employees to acquire knowledge and skills related to hotel management, customer service, tourism marketing, and operational efficiency. Such capacity-building efforts contribute to improving visitor satisfaction and strengthening the overall competitiveness of the hospitality sector.

The association represents hotel operators, tourism entrepreneurs, and hospitality businesses and actively participates in tourism promotion activities, destination marketing, cultural events, and stakeholder coordination. Such initiatives contribute to increasing tourism awareness, strengthening local identity, and encouraging tourist visitation. According to NTB (2023), local tourism institutions are essential for promoting destinations and fostering sustainable tourism growth through community engagement and collaborative marketing strategies. Tourism development also creates opportunities for employment generation, business expansion, and income growth within local communities. The growth of tourism-related activities increases demand for accommodation, food services, transportation, handicrafts, and other supporting industries. According to WTTC (2023) states that tourism contributes significantly to local economic development by supporting

entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and generating income for residents. Therefore, tourism can serve as an effective mechanism for improving living standards and promoting inclusive economic development.

Despite the growing potential of tourism in Bardibas Municipality, several challenges remain, including inadequate infrastructure, limited financial resources, insufficient destination marketing, and a lack of skilled human resources. Addressing these challenges requires active involvement from tourism stakeholders and effective institutional support. Therefore, examining the role of the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in tourism development is important for understanding its contributions, challenges, and overall impact on tourism promotion and local economic development in Bardibas Municipality.

Therefore, this study focuses on examining the role of the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in tourism development in Bardibas. It seeks to explore the association's initiatives, achievements, challenges, and overall contribution to the growth of the tourism and hospitality sector. By analyzing the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders, the study aims to provide valuable insights into how local tourism associations can support sustainable tourism development, economic growth, employment generation, and community empowerment. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to policy formulation, institutional strengthening, and strategic planning for tourism development in Bardibas and similar emerging destinations across Nepal.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the promising growth of the tourism and hospitality sector in Mahottari, particularly in Bardibas, and the active presence of The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association, several challenges persist that hinder the full realization of the region's developmental potential. While The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association undertake initiatives like the Bardibas Street Food Festival to promote local tourism and support its members, there remains a critical need to systematically understand the extent of its influence and the specific obstacles it encounters.

The core problem lies in the limited empirical understanding of how local tourism and hotel associations, such as The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business

Association, effectively translating their stated goals into tangible development outcomes in emerging destinations like Bardibas. Key questions arise regarding the association's capacity to unify diverse stakeholders, its success in advocating for favorable policies, its impact on improving service quality and infrastructure, and its ability to foster sustainable economic benefits for the local community. Without a clear assessment of these aspects, there is a risk of uncoordinated efforts, underutilized resources, and a slower pace of development that may not fully leverage the collective strength an association can provide.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating whether the Mahottari's Hotel and Tourism Business Association's current strategies and activities are adequately addressing the multifaceted developmental needs of Bardibas's tourism and hotel sector. It will examine how the association navigates challenges such as funding, member engagement, and external policy environments to fulfill its mandate. Ultimately, the research aims to determine the specific contributions of The Mahottari's Hotel and Tourism Business Association to the region's development, identify areas for improvement, and provide insights into optimizing the role of local associations in fostering sustainable tourism growth.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are given below which highlight the research topic:

1. What initiative has the Hotel Association undertaken to promote tourism in Bardibas?
2. How does the hospitality sector contribute to local employment and economic activity?
3. What challenges limit the association's effectiveness, and what strategies can enhance its impact on Bardibas' Hotel?

1.4 Research Objectives

- To evaluate the initiative of the Hotel Association undertaken to promote tourism in Bardibas.
- To evaluate the contribution of hospitality sector to local employment and economic activity.
- To identify challenges, limit the association's effectiveness, and what strategies can enhance its impact on Bardibas' Hotel.

1.5 Significance of the study

This research holds relevance as it examines the role of Association in shaping the development of the hospitality and tourism sector in Bardibas, Mahottari. In the context of emerging tourism destinations, understanding how local associations operate is essential for ensuring sustainable growth, optimizing resource utilization. Bardibas, with its strategic location, improving infrastructure, and growing visitor appeal, presents an ideal case for studying the influence and effectiveness of such organizations.

- For the Bardibas Tourism and Hotel Association: The research will serve as a critical evaluation of its activities, effectiveness, and challenges. This will help the association refine its strategic plans, strengthen member engagement, enhance service standards, and improve advocacy efforts aimed at advancing tourism development in Bardibas. For local entrepreneurs and tourism operators: The study will underscore the practical benefits of collective action, demonstrating how the association's initiatives lead to increased tourist traffic, better services, and expanded economic opportunities. By showing clear examples of how collaboration yields results, the research is likely to encourage stronger cooperation and networking among local businesses.
- For local and national policymakers: The study will provide empirical evidence on whether local associations can effectively drive regional development. Such evidence can inform policy design, guide investment allocation, and shape collaborative frameworks between government bodies and private sector associations. The aim is to make tourism policies more responsive to the specific needs of emerging destinations like Bardibas.
- The Bardibas community: By examining the socio-economic impacts of the hospitality sector, the research will reveal how the association contributes to job creation, income generation, and community welfare. This can encourage greater community support for tourism-related initiatives and promote inclusive, locally beneficial development.
- For researchers and academic institutions: the study offers a meaningful addition to the body of knowledge on the role of local associations in regional economic development, particularly within Nepal's tourism and hospitality

sector. It can serve as a valuable reference point for comparative research on similar topics.

1.6 Literature Review

The role of associations in economic development, specifically in specific industrial industries like tourism and hospitality, has been a subject of increasing academic as well as applied interest. These associations, usually referred to as business associations, trade associations, or professional associations, are precious intermediaries who organize the members' interests, provide public goods, and advocate to exert an enhanced operating environment. This paper synthesizes key literature on roles that such associations have played and their contribution to local and regional development, with emphasis on the Nepalese context of tourism and hospitality, to arrive at identification of key research gaps for this study.

1.6.1 Development of Business Association

Business associations are internationally recognized to play various roles towards development. Scholars like Streeck and Schmitter (1985) specify their role of facilitating collective action, counteracting market failures, and offering access to services that one company might not be able to locate individually. In tourism, associations commonly organize destination promotion and marketing, a classical collective good influencing all companies in the immediate locality (Sheldon & Var, 1982). They also play a key role in defining industry standards, promoting quality control, and facilitating skill enhancement and training for the workforce, thereby enhancing the overall competitiveness of the industry (Porter, 1990). Associations are also effective lobbying groups, advocating governments for sound policies, infrastructure development, and regulatory reforms that support industry growth (Bennett & Esty, 2002). In developing nations, the part played by local associations is increased due to usually weaker institutional frameworks and fragmented markets. Associations can function very importantly in capacity development, the flow of information, and the development of a sense of community among firms. They tend to serve as a unified voice for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), which otherwise might lack the wherewithal or influence to reach policymakers (UNCTAD, 2005). Their effectiveness can, nonetheless, be constrained by the likes of poor funding, inactive membership, organizational internal administrative challenges, and few tight working links with governmental authorities (World Bank, 2009).

The Nepalese case, the tourism and hospitality sector in Nepal is a pillar of the national economy. Theoretical studies into Bardibas tourism development have tended to emphasize opportunities for newer destinations other than established circuits (Sharma, 2015). Whereas entities at the national level like the (HAN) assume the responsibility of representing the interests of the broader hotel industry at a macro scale, literature today focuses more on the part played by localized associations in leading bottom-up development. Local associations are better attuned to specific regional issues, mobilized local resources, and aided peculiar challenges faced by business units in their immediate context (Ghimire & Bhattarai, 2017). They may be employed to facilitate community-based tourism initiatives, promote local culture, and ensure that the dividends of tourism are distributed fairly among the community.

However, analytical work for the operational dynamics and developmental impact of local hotel and tourism associations in bardibas semi-urban or rural areas is limited. Although there is some existing research on the industry's overall challenges (Sharma, 2020) and broader economic effects of tourism (Acharya & Gautam, 2021), there is not much extensive research on how local organizations, such as Hotel and Tourism Business Association of Mahottari, operationalize their mandates through viable developmental activities. Literature reveals that while such associations are essential, their real-world effectiveness can be rather variant based on their organizational strength, the participation of their members, and local governance sensitivity (Khanal & Subedi, 2020). It is worthwhile understanding these nuances in order to utilize them to their maximum potential for promoting sustainable regional development.

1.6.2 Importance of Business Associations in Tourism and Hospitality Development

The tourism and hospitality sector is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries, contributing significantly to employment, foreign exchange earnings, and economic development. Because tourism involves multiple stakeholders, including hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, transportation providers, and local communities, business associations play a crucial role in coordinating activities and promoting industry development. Tourism and hospitality associations provide a platform for collaboration, advocacy, destination promotion, and

professional development, making them essential contributors to sustainable tourism growth.

One of the most significant contributions of tourism associations is destination marketing and promotion. Tourism destinations often require collective promotional efforts to attract visitors from domestic and international markets. Sheldon and Var (1982) noted that tourism associations coordinate marketing campaigns, participate in trade fairs, and develop branding strategies that enhance destination visibility. Through collective marketing initiatives, associations help increase tourist arrivals and strengthen the competitiveness of tourism destinations. Tourism associations also contribute to quality improvement and standardization within the hospitality industry. They establish service standards, codes of conduct, and certification programs that encourage businesses to maintain high levels of professionalism. According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2012), quality assurance mechanisms are essential for ensuring customer satisfaction and maintaining a destination's reputation. By promoting quality standards, associations help businesses improve service delivery and enhance visitor experience. Human resource development is another important function of tourism and hospitality associations. The success of the tourism industry depends heavily on the skills and competencies of its workforce. Associations organize training programs, workshops, seminars, and certification courses aimed at improving employee performance and service quality. Baum (2007) emphasized that continuous workforce development is essential for maintaining competitiveness in the tourism and hospitality sector. Through such initiatives, associations contribute to capacity building and professional growth within the industry.

Furthermore, tourism associations play an important advocacy role by representing industry interests before government authorities. They lobby for supportive tourism policies, infrastructure development, investment incentives, and regulatory reforms that facilitate tourism growth. Hall (2008) argued that public-private collaboration is crucial for tourism development, and associations serve as key intermediaries in this process. Their advocacy efforts contribute to creating a favorable environment for tourism businesses and destination development.

Associations also support crisis management and resilience in the tourism industry. During natural disasters, pandemics, political instability, or economic downturns, tourism associations provide guidance, coordinate recovery efforts, and communicate industry concerns to policymakers. Ritchie (2004) highlighted the

importance of collaborative approaches in tourism crisis management. By mobilizing stakeholders and resources, associations help destinations recover more effectively and maintain long-term sustainability.

1.6.3 Contribution of Local Tourism and Hospitality Associations in Bardibas

Tourism is one of the most important sectors of Bardibas economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and regional development. Bardibas's diverse natural landscapes, cultural heritage, religious attractions, and adventure tourism opportunities have positioned the country as a major tourist destination. Within this context, local tourism and hospitality associations play a vital role in promoting tourism development, supporting businesses, and enhancing destination competitiveness. Their contributions are particularly important in facilitating community participation and ensuring sustainable tourism growth.

Local tourism and hospitality associations serve as representatives of businesses operating within specific destinations. Unlike national-level organizations, local associations possess a deeper understanding of regional opportunities and challenges. Sharma (2015) observed that localized tourism organizations are better equipped to address destination-specific issues and support tourism development initiatives tailored to local needs. Their close relationship with local stakeholders enables them to implement more effective tourism strategies. One of the major contributions of local associations is destination promotion and marketing. These organizations organize festivals, tourism campaigns, cultural events, and promotional programs that showcase local attractions to potential visitors. Ghimire and Bhattarai (2017) argued that local associations play a critical role in building destination brands and increasing tourist awareness. Such promotional activities help attract visitors, generate income, and strengthen local economies. Local associations also facilitate community participation in tourism development. Community involvement is widely recognized as a key component of sustainable tourism. According to Murphy (1985), tourism development is more successful when residents actively participate in planning and decision-making processes. Local associations create opportunities for collaboration between businesses, communities, and government agencies, ensuring that tourism benefits are distributed more equitably among stakeholders.

Another important contribution is capacity building and business support. Many tourism enterprises in Bardibas are small and medium-sized businesses that face challenges related to finance, marketing, technology adoption, and workforce development. Associations provide training programs, networking opportunities, and access to information that help businesses improve their operations. UNCTAD (2005) highlighted the importance of associations in strengthening the capabilities of SMEs and enhancing their ability to compete in dynamic markets.

1.6.4 Research Gaps

Whereas more bodies of literature have emerged on the importance of business associations and tourist development, there are several research gaps in the context of local tourism and hotel associations in emerging destinations like Bardibas, Mahottari.

Firstly, while studies acknowledge the general role played by associations in economic growth, very little empirical study is conducted on the operational dynamics and tangible development contributions of local-level tourism and hotel associations in Nepal's rural or semiurban areas. Existing literature is centered on national-level associations or large urban destination tourism without consideration of the unique difficulties and contributions of grassroots organizations that are directly engaged in local-level development.

Second, little is documented about how these local groups effectively translate their advocacy and promotion mandates into concrete socio-economic gains for surrounding enterprises and the local community. Despite how popular festivals like the Bardibas Street Food Festival are promoted, little of the process by which such events work their way into local jobs, increased revenues, or improved infrastructure gets documented in existing academic literature.

Third, the literature generally speaks about the general issues of associations (e.g., funding, member engagement), but few are the studies that examine in detail the very specific institutional, policy, and operational challenges that hinder the performance of a particular local association like The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in its unique surrounding region. In order to create targeted and effective measures, it is essential to understand these localized hurdles.

Finally, while the necessity of coordination between government agencies and associations is recognized, research is required that explores the specific strategies

and collaborative agreements that can be employed to enhance local tourism associations' functions in regional development, as in the case of Nepal's evolving governance structures.

This study aims to bridge these research gaps by an in-depth, detailed case study of The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association with an empirical examination of its initiatives, challenges, and development impacts in Bardibas hotel's.

1.7 Methodology of the Study

This study employs a comprehensive qualitative case study approach to thoroughly investigate the multifaceted role of The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in fostering the development of the tourism and hospitality sector in Bardibas, Mahottari. The qualitative methodology is meticulously chosen for its capacity to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the association's intricate functions, diverse initiatives, inherent challenges, and the nuanced perceived impact within its dynamic, real-life context. Unlike quantitative approaches that primarily focus on numerical quantification, this method delves into understanding how various stakeholders interpret and respond to The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association's activities, and precisely how these activities contribute to the broader local development landscape. This approach is particularly adept at collecting rich, contextual data from multiple sources, which is crucial for uncovering the underlying social, economic, and institutional factors that influence the association's overall effectiveness and its pivotal role in driving tourism growth. By concentrating on The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association as a singular, bounded case within a semi urban area of Nepal, the study offers a concentrated lens through which to examine the realworld dynamics of association led development. This localized focus is instrumental in highlighting region-specific challenges and opportunities, such as the complexities of resource mobilization, the intricacies of stakeholder collaboration, and the effectiveness of policy advocacy, thereby providing both profound depth and relevant context to address the research objectives and generate practical, actionable recommendations pertinent to the hospitality sector.

1.7.1 Research Design

The research design of this study is firmly rooted in a qualitative case study framework, specifically selected to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of

The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association's role in fostering the development of the tourism and hospitality sector within the authentic, real-life context of Bardibas, Mahottari. Qualitative research is inherently suitable for exploring complex social phenomena where human perceptions, interpretations, and behaviors are central, allowing for a profound understanding of how an association operates and influences its environment. A case study design empowers the researcher to focus intensely on a specific organization The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association thereby enabling a deeper examination of its initiatives, the challenges it encounters, and its perceived impact from the diverse perspectives of its officials, member businesses, and other crucial stakeholders. This approach is particularly supportive of exploring intricate contextual factors such as the association's organizational capacity, the level of member engagement, the efficacy of its policy advocacy efforts, and the dynamics of the local market, all of which significantly influence the association's developmental role. Furthermore, it is designed to uncover patterns, contradictions, and meanings that cannot be adequately captured through purely numerical or statistical methods. The study is fundamentally descriptive and exploratory in nature, aiming to reveal how The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association's initiatives are perceived by its constituents, how it strategically addresses identified challenges, and how its efforts concretely contribute to the growth and stability of the local tourism and hospitality sector. This case study design aligns seamlessly with the research objectives by offering a comprehensive and focused investigation into the association's developmental role within a semi-urban hospitality setting. It facilitates robust data collection through a combination of interviews, questionnaires, and document review, enabling the crucial process of triangulation to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Ultimately, this design provides a structured yet flexible approach to understanding the intricate role of a local association in shaping tourism development outcomes within Nepal's dynamic hospitality industry.

1.7.2 Data Collection Methods

To comprehensively explore the role of The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in the development of the tourism and hospitality sector in Bardibas, Mahottari, this study meticulously employs a combination of both primary and secondary data collection methods. This dual pronged approach is strategically

chosen to allow for the gathering of rich, first-hand experiences and perspectives from key stakeholders, while simultaneously leveraging documented facts and existing information to corroborate and strengthen the overall analysis. The integration of both methods is vital for producing a more valid, reliable, and comprehensive understanding of The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association's operations, the challenges it faces, and its tangible impact on local development.

Primary Data: This category encompasses all firsthand information collected directly by the researcher specifically for the purposes of this study. It is designed to capture the real-time perceptions, lived experiences, and invaluable insights of individuals who are directly involved with or significantly affected by The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association's activities. Direct engagement with these participants is crucial as it enables the study to assess their views on the association's various initiatives, its perceived effectiveness, the specific challenges it encounters, and its overall contribution to the local tourism development landscape.

Semi-structured Interviews: In-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a carefully selected group of key informants. These will include:

Bardibas Tourism and Hotel Association Officials: Executive members, committee members, and key administrative staff who possess profound, in-depth knowledge of the association's strategic goals, operational procedures, specific programs undertaken (such as the Bardibas Street Food Festival), implementation challenges, advocacy efforts, and perceived socio-economic impacts.

Representatives from Member Hotels Businesses: Owners, managers, and potentially long serving employees from hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and other tourism related businesses that are active members of The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association. Their perspectives will offer crucial insights into the practical benefits of membership, the perceived effectiveness of Mahottari Tourism and Hotel Association initiatives, and the specific challenges they face within the local tourism landscape.

Relevant Local Government Officials: Representatives from the Bardibas Municipality (e.g., tourism department, economic development unit) and other pertinent local planning bodies who regularly interact with The Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association and are involved in local tourism policy and development.

Other Key Tourism Stakeholders: Individuals or groups within the broader Bardibas community who are significantly impacted by or actively involved in tourism development, even if not direct Bardibas Tourism And Hotel Association members, to provide a holistic community perspective. Each interview, anticipated to last approximately 30-45 minutes, will be audio recorded (only with explicit prior consent from the participant) and subsequently transcribed verbatim for meticulous detailed analysis. This method is invaluable for identifying common themes, uncovering unique perspectives, and revealing the nuanced underlying factors that influence the association's role and impact.

Secondary Data: This category comprises existing information that has been previously published or recorded by external organizations. These sources are essential for providing foundational background information, crucial contextual data, and for validating the findings derived from the primary data.

Government Reports: This includes official data and reports from local municipal offices (specifically Bardibas Municipality), relevant departments within the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, and other pertinent government agencies. These documents will provide official statistics on tourism development trends, local economic indicators, and existing policies directly related to tourism and business associations in the Mahottari district and Bardibas area.

Industry Reports and Organizational Documents: This will involve a thorough review of documents directly from The Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association itself (e.g., annual reports, strategic plans, meeting minutes, promotional materials, event reports, membership directories). Additionally, reports from the national (HAN), (NTB), and other relevant tourism bodies will be consulted to shed light on broader sector-specific trends, challenges, and the activities and achievements of tourism associations at various levels.

Academic Journals and Theses: A review of peer-reviewed articles, scholarly theses, and dissertations will offer established theoretical frameworks and valuable comparative perspectives on the role of associations in economic development, tourism economics, and hospitality management, particularly within the context of Nepal and other developing countries in South Asia.

Legal and Policy Publications: This includes a detailed examination of relevant local and national tourism policies, regulations, and legal frameworks, such as the Labour Act 2017 (if applicable to association operations or member

compliance), that impact the establishment, operations, and effectiveness of tourism associations and businesses in Mahottari/Bardibas. This review will provide a clear understanding of the regulatory environment in which The Mahottari/Bardibas's Hotel and Tourism Business Association operates.

1.7.3 Sampling Strategy

This study employs a purposive sampling strategy to meticulously select participants who possess direct, relevant experience and profound knowledge concerning The Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association and its pivotal role in local tourism development in Bardibas. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique widely utilized in qualitative research, enables the researcher to intentionally choose individuals who are best positioned to provide rich, detailed, and highly meaningful data directly pertinent to the research questions. The overarching focus of this strategy is on the quality and depth of the information obtained, rather than merely on the statistical quantity or representativeness of a larger population.

Participants will be carefully selected from key stakeholder groups to ensure a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the issue from diverse perspectives. These strategically identified groups include:

Bardibas Tourism And Hotel Association Officials: This category comprises executive members, committee members, and key administrative staff who possess an intimate understanding of the association's objectives, strategic plans, operational procedures, and the challenges it faces.

Bardibas Tourism And Hotel Association Member Businesses: This group includes owners or managers of various tourism related businesses such as hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and tour operators that are active members of the association. Their insights will be crucial for understanding the practical benefits of membership, their perceived effectiveness of Bardibas Tourism And Hotel Association initiatives, and the specific challenges they encounter in their operations.

Local Government Officials: This includes representatives from the Bardibas Municipality (e.g., from the tourism department, economic development unit) and other relevant local planning bodies who regularly interact with The Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association and are directly involved in local tourism policy and development initiatives.

Other Key Tourism Stakeholders: This broader category may include representatives from local community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in tourism, or prominent community figures who have a significant stake in or are impacted by tourism development in Bardibas, even if they are not direct Bardibas Tourism And Hotel Association members. Their perspectives will offer a valuable community level viewpoint.

Selection criteria for participants will meticulously consider factors such as their length of involvement with The Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association or the local tourism sector, their specific job role or position, and their expressed willingness to participate in interviews or complete questionnaires. This ensures that the individuals most knowledgeable about and affected by The Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association's activities are included in the study. The sample size will not be rigidly predetermined at the outset but will instead be dynamically guided by the principle of business.

Data Saturation: Data saturation is the critical point at which no new significant information, themes, or insights emerge from conducting additional interviews or analyzing further questionnaire responses. This iterative approach aligns perfectly with qualitative research principles, prioritizing the depth and richness of data over large sample sizes, thereby supporting an in-depth exploration of how The Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association influences local tourism development in Bardibas.

1.7.4 Data Analysis

This study involved in-depth interviews with five key stakeholders closely connected to the Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association, including two executive members of the association, local hotel owners and representatives from a vocational training institution. The objective was to explore their perceptions regarding the association's role, achievements, and challenges in fostering the development of the hospitality and tourism sector in Bardibas.

A thematic analysis of the interview data revealed several important insights. First, all respondents agreed that the association has played a pivotal role in enhancing Bardibas's profile as a tourism destination. Events like the Bardibas Street Food Festival were repeatedly mentioned as highly successful initiatives that attracted thousands of visitors, showed local culinary culture, and helped transform Bardibas

from a transit location into a recognized tourism hub. The involvement of public officials and active participation of students and local vendors further underscored the event's community-wide impact.

Secondly, capacity building emerged as a critical contribution of the association. Training programs and workshops, particularly those conducted in partnership with the National Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management, were credited with significantly improving service standards and operational skills among local hospitality providers. These efforts were seen as essential for enabling businesses to meet the rising expectations of tourists and remain competitive in an evolving market.

Third, respondents emphasized the association's effective collaboration with municipal and provincial government bodies. The formation of the Tourism Promotion Committee was highlighted as a key platform that institutionalizes partnership, enabling coordinated efforts in infrastructure development, event management, and policy advocacy. Stakeholders noted that this formal representation has helped ensure tourism development remains a priority in local government planning. Infrastructure advocacy also featured prominently in the analysis. Interviewees recognized the association's role in lobbying for improvements such as better roads, signage, and visitor facilities. While government agencies primarily execute physical projects, the association's persistent efforts help keep tourism infrastructure high on the agenda and align the needs of both tourists and local businesses. Community engagement was another notable theme. By involving residents, students, and cultural groups in festivals and trekking campaigns, the association fosters local pride and economic participation. Such inclusive approaches contribute to a more sustainable and supportive tourism environment. Despite these positive perceptions, several challenges were identified. Most stakeholders pointed to limited financial resources and reliance on volunteer efforts, which sometimes result in inconsistent execution of activities. The absence of standardized service guidelines among member businesses was also cited as a barrier to improving overall quality and competitiveness. Additionally, external factors such as political instability and fluctuations in tourist arrivals were seen as risks beyond the association's control but impacting its effectiveness.

In conclusion, the analysis indicates that the Bardibas Hotel and Tourism Business Association serves as a vital catalyst for tourism development in Bardibas.

Its contributions to destination promotion, capacity building, government collaboration, infrastructure advocacy, and community engagement are widely acknowledged by stakeholders. However, to further enhance its impact, addressing internal resource constraints, establishing service standards, and managing external uncertainties will be crucial. These findings provide a nuanced understanding of the association's role and form a foundation for recommendations aimed at strengthening local tourism governance and sustainable development.

1.7.5 Ethical Considerations

This research strictly adheres to fundamental ethical principles to ensure the integrity of the study and protect all participants throughout the process. Prior to data collection, participants will be fully informed about the study's purpose, their role, and the voluntary nature of their involvement, with clear explanations of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Written informed consent will be obtained to confirm their understanding and agreement. Confidentiality and anonymity are rigorously maintained by using pseudonyms and securely storing all data on password protected devices accessible only to the researcher. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in reports or publications unless explicit permission is granted. Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants will be assured that their involvement or withdrawal will not affect their employment, business, or relationships with the association. The study also prioritizes minimizing any potential harm, handling sensitive topics with care and respect to avoid causing distress. The researcher will maintain neutrality and avoid coercion or undue influence. Transparency and objectivity guide the research process, with findings reported truthfully and any conflicts of interest fully disclosed. Additionally, all necessary institutional ethical approvals will be obtained before beginning data collection.

By following these ethical protocols, the research safeguards participants' rights and dignity while ensuring credible and trustworthy results.

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study entitled “Role of Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in the Development of Tourism and Hospitality Sector in Bardibas.” The findings are based on interviews conducted with association officials, hotel entrepreneurs, tourism stakeholders, vocational training representatives, and a review of relevant organizational documents. Following thematic analysis, the findings have been organized into three major themes corresponding to the research objectives: Tourism Promotion Initiatives, Contribution of the Hospitality Sector to Employment and Economic Development, and Challenges and Strategies for Strengthening the Association’s Impact. Each theme is further divided into sub-themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the association’s role in tourism development.

2.1 Tourism Promotion Initiatives Undertaken by the Association

The first major theme emerging from the study relates to the initiatives undertaken by the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association to promote tourism in Bardibas. Participants consistently highlighted that the association has played an important role in creating tourism awareness, promoting local attractions, and enhancing the visibility of Bardibas as an emerging tourism destination.

2.1.1 Organization of Bardibas Street Food Festival

One of the most significant tourism promotion activities identified during the study was the organization of the Bardibas Street Food Festival. Respondents explained that the festival has become a major attraction that shows local cuisine, culture, hospitality services, and entrepreneurship opportunities. The event attracts visitors from neighboring districts and contributes to the promotion of Bardibas as a tourism destination.

An association executive member stated, “The Street Food Festival has become one of our most successful tourism events. It not only promotes local food but also introduces visitors to the tourism potential of Bardibas.”

Respondents indicate that the festival contributes to destination branding, increases visitor arrivals, and creates business opportunities for local entrepreneurs, vendors, and hospitality operators.

2.1.2 Promotion of Religious and Cultural Tourism

The study found that the association actively promotes religious and cultural attractions such as Panchadhuramai Temple, Tuteshwornath Temple, and other cultural heritage sites within Bardibas. Participants emphasized that religious tourism has significant potential due to the continuous flow of pilgrims and visitors.

A tourism entrepreneur explained, “Many visitors come for religious purposes. The association helps promote these sites through campaigns and tourism events.”

The respondents reveal that religious and cultural tourism promotion has contributed to increasing visitor awareness and strengthening the cultural identity of Bardibas.

2.1.3 Tourism Awareness Campaigns and Destination Marketing

Respondents reported that the association regularly conducts tourism awareness campaigns, promotional programs, social media marketing, and stakeholder meetings to highlight the tourism potential of Bardibas. These activities aim to attract both domestic and international tourists.

A local hotel owner remarked, “Earlier, people only viewed Bardibas as a transit point. Now tourism campaigns are gradually changing that perception.”

The respondents suggest that destination marketing initiatives have enhanced the visibility of Bardibas and encouraged greater tourism-related investment.

2.1.4 Collaboration with Tourism Stakeholders

The study found that the association collaborates with local government authorities, tourism institutions, educational organizations, and community groups to implement tourism development activities. Such partnerships facilitate resource sharing and improve coordination among stakeholders.

Participants emphasized that collaborative efforts have strengthened tourism planning and increased stakeholder participation in tourism-related programs.

Overall, my observation demonstrates that the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association has made significant contributions to tourism promotion through festivals, cultural events, destination marketing, and stakeholder collaboration. These initiatives have improved Bardibas’s image as an emerging tourism destination and increased public awareness of its tourism potential.

2.2 Contribution of Hospitality Sector to Local Employment and Economic Activity

The second major theme concerns the contribution of the hospitality sector to employment generation and local economic development. Respondents unanimously agreed that tourism and hospitality businesses play a vital role in supporting livelihoods and stimulating economic activities within Bardibas.

2.2.1 Employment Generation

The findings indicate that hotels, restaurants, guest houses, travel services, and tourism-related enterprises provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to local residents. Participants noted that the sector employs both skilled and unskilled workers, particularly youth and women.

A hotel operator stated, “Our hotel provides jobs to receptionists, cooks, cleaners, security staff, and service personnel. Tourism creates opportunities for many families.”

The respondents suggest that the hospitality sector contributes significantly to reducing unemployment and improving local living standards.

2.2.2 Support for Local Entrepreneurship

Respondents emphasized that tourism development has encouraged entrepreneurship in Bardibas. Small businesses such as restaurants, souvenir shops, transportation services, and local vendors benefit from tourism activities.

One stakeholder explained, “When tourism events are organized, local vendors and entrepreneurs receive additional income opportunities.”

The respondents reveal that tourism supports small and medium enterprises and promotes economic diversification within the municipality.

2.2.3 Income Generation and Business Growth

Participants reported that increased tourist arrivals contribute directly to business revenue. Hospitality establishments experience higher occupancy rates, increased sales, and improved profitability during tourism events and festival periods.

A business owner noted, “Whenever tourism activities increase, hotel bookings and restaurant sales also increase.”

The respondents indicate a positive relationship between tourism development and local business growth.

2.2.4 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

The study found that the association actively organizes training programs and workshops in collaboration with institutions such as NATHM. These programs focus on customer service, hospitality management, tourism marketing, and operational efficiency.

A training representative remarked, “Training programs have improved service quality and professional skills among hospitality workers.”

The respondents suggest that capacity-building initiatives contribute to workforce development and enhance the competitiveness of local hospitality businesses.

2.2.5 Community Participation and Economic Inclusion

The findings reveal that tourism activities encourage community participation by involving residents in festivals, cultural programs, and tourism-related enterprises. This participation ensures that tourism benefits are distributed across different segments of society.

Respondents highlighted that community involvement strengthens local ownership of tourism development initiatives and promotes inclusive economic growth.

Most of the respondents demonstrate that the hospitality sector serves as an important engine of local economic development. Through employment creation, entrepreneurship promotion, income generation, capacity building, and community participation, tourism contributes substantially to the socio-economic progress of Bardibas.

2.3 Challenges Limiting the Association’s Effectiveness and Strategies for Improvement

The third major theme focuses on the challenges faced by the association and the strategies needed to enhance its effectiveness in promoting tourism development.

2.3.1 Financial Constraints

The most frequently identified challenge was limited financial resources. Participants explained that insufficient funding restricts the association’s ability to

organize large-scale promotional programs and implement long-term tourism development initiatives.

An executive member stated, “Many of our plans cannot be fully implemented because of budget limitations.” The respondents indicate that financial sustainability remains a major concern for the association.

2.3.2 Inadequate Tourism Infrastructure

Respondents reported that deficiencies in roads, public amenities, tourism signage, accommodation facilities, and recreational infrastructure limit tourism growth.

A tourism stakeholder explained, “Visitors often face difficulties because tourism infrastructure is still developing.” The respondents suggest that infrastructure improvement is essential for enhancing visitor experiences and destination competitiveness.

2.3.3 Limited Marketing and Promotion Resources

Participants emphasized that promotional activities are constrained by limited marketing budgets and insufficient use of modern digital marketing tools. A hotel entrepreneur noted, “We need stronger digital promotion and wider tourism campaigns to attract more visitors.” The respondents reveal the need for enhanced destination marketing strategies.

2.3.4 Service Standardization Issues

The study found variations in service quality among hospitality businesses. Respondents highlighted the absence of standardized service guidelines and certification systems. A hospitality professional stated, “Service quality differs from one establishment to another, which affects the overall tourism image.” The respondents indicate that service standardization is necessary to improve visitor satisfaction and competitiveness.

2.3.5 Stakeholder Participation and Coordination Challenges

Participants reported that inconsistent stakeholder participation sometimes affects project implementation and decision-making processes. An association representative explained, “Tourism development requires active involvement from all stakeholders, but participation is not always consistent.” The respondents suggest the

importance of strengthening collaboration among government agencies, businesses, and community groups.

2.3.6 Strategies to Enhance the Association's Impact

Respondents proposed several strategies to strengthen the association's role:

- Increased financial support from government and development agencies.
- Expansion of tourism marketing and digital promotion activities.
- Regular hospitality training and capacity-building programs.
- Development of tourism infrastructure and public facilities.
- Introduction of service quality standards and certification systems.
- Stronger stakeholder coordination and public-private partnerships.
- Promotion of religious, cultural, eco-tourism, and heritage tourism products.

On the basis of my observation and respondents reveal that while the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association has made significant contributions to tourism development, its effectiveness is constrained by financial, infrastructure, marketing, and organizational challenges. Addressing these issues through strategic collaboration, investment, and capacity building will significantly enhance the association's contribution to sustainable tourism development in Bardibas.

2.4 Summary

The study concludes that the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association has played a significant role in tourism promotion, destination marketing, capacity building, employment generation, and economic development in Bardibas. The hospitality sector has contributed substantially to local livelihoods and entrepreneurship. However, challenges such as limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, weak marketing capacity, and inconsistent stakeholder participation continue to hinder tourism development. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving infrastructure, expanding promotional activities, and enhancing stakeholder collaboration are essential for maximizing the association's impact and ensuring sustainable tourism growth in Bardiba

CHAPTER III

CONCLUTION AND RECOMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association serves as a vital catalyst for tourism and hospitality development in Bardibas. Through destination marketing, cultural events, professional training, government collaboration, and community engagement, the association has significantly contributed to enhancing the tourism profile of the municipality.

The association has successfully created opportunities for local employment, stimulated economic activities, and promoted the cultural identity of Bardibas. Its initiatives have increased awareness of local tourism resources and encouraged greater participation among businesses, government agencies, and community members. The findings further demonstrate that collaborative efforts between public and private stakeholders are essential for sustainable tourism growth in emerging destinations.

However, the study also highlights several challenges that limit the effectiveness of the association. Financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, limited marketing resources, lack of service standardization, and external uncertainties continue to affect tourism development efforts. Addressing these challenges requires stronger institutional support, increased investment, improved tourism infrastructure, and continuous capacity-building programs.

In conclusion, the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association has established a strong foundation for tourism development in Bardibas. With enhanced government support, effective stakeholder coordination, improved service quality standards, and strategic tourism planning, Bardibas has the potential to emerge as a competitive and sustainable tourism destination in Nepal. The association's continued leadership and commitment will remain crucial in achieving long-term tourism growth, economic prosperity, and community development in the region.

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations are offered for the future implementation of tourism development initiatives in Bardibas and for strengthening the role of the association going forward.

3.2.1 Recommendations for the Association

The association should diversify its funding base beyond membership fees and stall charges by introducing sponsorship packages for the Bardibas Street Food Festival and seeking small grants or partnership funding from provincial tourism bodies. It should also formalize a basic certification or grading scheme for member establishments, covering hygiene, pricing transparency and service standards, to address the inconsistency identified in the findings. Reducing dependence on a small volunteer core by establishing a modest paid or stipended secretariat, even part-time, would improve continuity of planning between events.

3.2.2 Recommendations for Local Government and Policymakers

Bardibas Municipality and provincial tourism authorities should formalize their working relationship with the association through a written memorandum of understanding that specifies infrastructure commitments — signage, parking, drainage, and access road maintenance — with agreed timelines, rather than relying on informal advocacy at each event. Provincial tourism budgets should also consider co-funding destination marketing for emerging transit-corridor destinations such as Bardibas, recognizing their potential to capture highway traffic that would otherwise pass through unnoticed.

3.2.3 Recommendations for Member Businesses and Local Entrepreneurs

Member businesses are encouraged to participate more actively in association-organized training, including smaller and newer establishments that have so far been underrepresented in NATHM-partnered workshops. Coordinating pricing and service practices during peak festival periods, rather than competing informally, would help protect the destination's reputation and support the association's broader branding efforts.

3.2.4 Suggestions for Future Research

This study was limited to a small purposive sample and a qualitative case-study design; future research could usefully build on it by surveying a larger cross-

section of member and non-member businesses to quantify employment and revenue impacts of the Bardibas Street Food Festival, by tracking destination-image indicators over successive festival editions, and by conducting a comparative study of the association alongside the Bardibas Chamber of Commerce and Industry to examine how the two organizing bodies might better coordinate the local tourism promotion calendar.

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APPENDICES

Interview Questionnaire

The following interview guide was used to talk to people, including officials of the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association, hotel owners, tourism businesspeople hospitality employees and local tourism stakeholders in Bardibas. These questions were like a guide. We could ask more questions if we needed to.

Before each interview we told the people we were talking to why we were doing this study. We got there okay to proceed.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself, like what you do and how you are involved in the tourism and hospitality sector of Bardibas?
2. How long have you been working in the tourism and hospitality industry in Bardibas?
3. What is your connection with the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association?

Section B: Initiatives Undertaken by the Association

1. What big things have the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association done to promote tourism in Bardibas?
2. Do you think these things have been effective in getting visitors to come to Bardibas?
3. Can you tell us about any tourism promotion programs, festivals or events that the Association has organized?
4. How has the Association helped hotels, restaurants and tourism-related businesses?
5. How does the Association work with government and other stakeholders to develop tourism?

Section C: Contribution to Employment and Economic Activity

1. How has the growth of tourism and hospitality businesses helped create jobs in Bardibas?
2. What kinds of benefits have local communities gotten from tourism-related activities?

3. How has the Association helped businesspeople and businesses?
4. Do you think tourism development has improved the lives of residents? How?
5. What role does the hospitality sector play in the economic development of Bardibas?

Section D: Challenges Affecting the Association's Effectiveness

1. What are the big challenges that the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association faces?
2. Are there any issues with money, infrastructure or people participating that limit what the Association can do?
3. How do government rules and regulations affect what the Association does?
4. What challenges do local tourism and hospitality businesses face in Bardibas?
5. How does the Association deal with these challenges?

Section E: Strategies to Enhance the Association's Impact

1. What can be done to make the Association stronger in developing tourism?
1. 2. How can we get government agencies, businesses and local communities to work together better?
2. What else can be done to promote Bardibas as a tourism destination?
3. How can local businesses improve their service and hospitality?
4. What advice would you give for the development of tourism and hospitality in Bardibas?

Section F: Closing Question

1. Is there anything you want to share about the role of the Mahottari Hotel and Tourism Business Association in developing tourism and hospitality business in Bardibas?