

# Many guides on the mountain trails in Nepal are women

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Trainees observe as instructors at the 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking Co. provide lessons on climbing a rock surface in Pokhara, Nepal, on March 2, 2014. When Lucky, Dicky and Nicky Chettri tried to break into Nepal's male-dominated trekking industry 20 years ago, competitors tried to run them out of business. Men threatened them, harassed them - even filed bogus police reports against them. AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha

POKHARA, Nepal — Twenty years ago, the Chettri sisters began a hiking company. Owners of other hiking companies didn't like it. They thought only men should be guides. Women, they said, should stay home and cook.

"The men said this is a business for the men and we should leave it alone," said Lucky Chettri. She is the oldest sister in the 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking Co. Trekking is a long hike. It can last many days.

The owners bullied the sisters. They would even say the sisters were "trying to take away food from their table," Chettri said.

Now the sisters' company is doing very well.

**Women Can Do More**

Men still control many things in Nepal. But more women, like the Chettri sisters, are gaining power.

In 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first to climb Mount Everest. It was another 40 years before the first Nepali woman reached the world's highest peak. Since then, life has become more fair for women. They own more companies. They also help make laws.

Because of the Chettri sisters, women guides are normal, said Shailee Basnet. Basnet led a Nepali women's team up Everest.

At first, few women wanted to become guides. They didn't want to leave their homes for many days. "Some thought it was against our culture," said Nicky, the youngest sister. Dicky is the middle sister. "Women are expected to be at home doing household work."

But soon the word spread. The women liked earning their own money, Nicky said. They didn't like depending on their husbands.

### **Reaching New Goals**

Gam Maya Tilicha once planned to become a teacher. But she is now a guide at 3 Sisters.

"I never imagined that I would be a trekking guide. But the (money) is very good. And I like what I am doing," she said.

The guides make about \$3,000 a year. This is a good salary in this poor Himalayan nation.

The Chettris have 150 women guides. They lead almost 1,000 treks each year.

Trekking is a big business in Nepal. About 340,000 visitors went on treks last year.

Many of the visitors are women. One of them is Sophie Whitwell. She is from London, England.

"I would definitely want a female guide," she said.

## Quiz

- 1 The 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking Co. is NOT owned by:  
  - (A) Dicky
  - (B) Hillary
  - (C) Lucky
  - (D) Nicky
  
- 2 Select the paragraph from "Reaching New Goals" that discusses the amount of money guides earn.
  
- 3 Each year, how many treks on average are led by women guides?  
  - (A) 150
  - (B) 1,000
  - (C) 3,000
  - (D) 340,000
  
- 4 At first, why did few women want to become guides?  
  - (A) They thought only men should be guides.
  - (B) Men still control many things in Nepal.
  - (C) They thought it was against their culture.
  - (D) Most women want to become a teacher.