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Research title

**Tourism, Authenticity, and Cultural Commodification in Nepal: A
critical Analysis of Community-Based Tourism (Amaltari)**

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Tourism, Authenticity, and Cultural Commodification in Nepal: A critical Analysis of Community-Based Tourism (Amaltari)

Abstract

The current research project investigated the effects of tourism on Amaltari's cultural and economic and social aspects within the Nepalese region. Tourism funding enables practitioners to retain their artistic work through financial support. Tourism economics stimulates the younger generation to join cultural activities even though they no longer practice customs of their past. Local pride and stronger social connections formed through community-based tourism occur because older community members provide essential knowledge to younger members. Tourism economic expansion creates hospitality jobs and event planning positions and local products sales which provide marginal populations such as young people and women chance to establish new businesses. Research shows business development programs should be prioritized because they offer educational training that builds staff abilities in operational management of hospitality services and digital advertisement skills and language competencies. The research explores community demands for participatory decision systems when sustainable tourism development backed by business ventures leads to enduring community growth. A strong sustainable power over communities emerges when environmental responsibility combines with government participation in harmonious ways. The information from community-led tourism provides essential knowledge for rural communities about protecting cultural heritage while their economic growth enhances both social power and financial strength.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Scholars have found tourism to be a significant area of socio-economic development, especially among countries that possess cultural and natural endowments. Nepal is situated in the south of Himalayas and as per the global fame of its natural beauty and culture and tourism is almost predominant in Nepalese economy, (Bhattarai et al., 2005). For many years, the tourism sector has been instrumental in improving liveliest, promoting cultural interaction, and the emergence of facilities (Rai et al., 2023). As a more suitable form of tourism, the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has been introduced in recent years as a way of enhancing the community's participation and cultural value. This model aims at realizing cultural pluralism on one hand, and development on the other hand (Giampiccoli et al., 2024). However, the commoditization process in culture to meet the needs of the tourists is a growing issue that may result in the degradation of the authentic culture and its foundations (Cohen, 1988).

Tourism has had the bittersweet effect in Nepal. On the one hand, it has created immense revenue for companies and has brought the spotlight on neglected groups of people (KC and Thapa Parajuli, 2014). On the other hand, it has elicited concerns about cultural tourism as well as culture, especially concerning commodification and authenticity of cultural products or objects (Birendra, 2021). Cultural commodification is a process through which culture is commercialized where cultural assets turn into consumer items, thereby losing much of their inherent value (Greenwood, 1989). Which is usually why through commercialization that results from tourist attraction, identified cultural practices such as craft, dancing and singing performances, and festivals are deconstructed from their cultural context and meanings. For instance, traditional Nepali festival like that of Dashain might be staged and choreographed to suit tourist's expectations of a cultural show and could very well lack the actual cultural significance (MacCannell, 1973). An

important construct in tourism research is therefore elusive and evolving, being influenced by the bonding indications between tourists and the host population.

Accompanied by rising concerns with the effects of tourism on such an important aspect of cultures as historical landmarks, globalization of experiential tourism has only added to the confusion of the connection between tourism and the preservation of cultural heritage. Therefore, experiential tourists seek actively engaging experiences instead of consuming commodities in the tourism scenario and they often impose tremendous pressure on tourist hosting communities to represent their cultures in a consumable style without necessarily being a parody of the culture they are representing (Richards et al., 2024).

This can be explained by the fact that through government, NGOs and other international organizations, CBT is marketed in Nepal, as an approach that doubles up as a two-pronged strategy of poverty alleviation and cultural conservation (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Moreover, the review of CBT has shown that it is an effective tool of promoting social inclusion and local people's participation in decision-making processes (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007). In this study, the relationship between tourism, authenticity and culture commodification that underpins the CBT program in Nepal is critically examined. Hence, this project aims at endeavoring to offer some insights into the current discourse on sustainable tourism practices by exploring how community stakeholders manage such subtleties.

1.2. BACKGROUND

The tourism industry in Nepal started in the middle of the twentieth century, thanks to the discovery of the Himalayas easily accessible through Nepal along with its ethnicity and culture (Upadhyaya, 2013). Being a country of mountains like Mount Everest, the nation draws millions of travelers and hikers in a year. Apart from geographic diversities Nepal has cultural assets Kathmandu Durbar Square and Pashupatinath temple are some of the UNESCO world Heritage sites and festival like Dashain, Tihar are the few highlights. These combined endowments both

geographic and cultural make Nepal as a preeminent tourist destination for travelers.

Community-Based Tourism developed as a reaction to the problems of conventional mass Tourism for example deterioration of the natural environment, traditional cultural identity loss, unbalanced distribution of income between the host and the guest (Giampiccoli et al., 2024). CBT is a kind of development that involves members of target communities in the planning and implementation process, hence forms part of the participatory development approach that gives power to individuals, groups and organizations for the provision of benefits in a fair manner as noted by Goodwin and Santilli, (2009). CBT has been undertaken in various places in Nepal, including the tourism popular locations such as the Annapurna region and more recently in Kathmandu valley which is the cultural center of Nepal (Birendra, 2021).

Nevertheless, the application of CBT in Nepal is confronted with several difficulties. The implementation of CBT encounters multiple hindering factors in Nepal. Stakeholders in tourism led by local operators and authorities implement standardization that converts cultural assets of social value into market products thus altering local traditions (Greenwood, 1989). For example, local cultures such as dances, ceremonies and artwork are often modified to meet the taste of the tourists contrary to their usual aim. This is made worse by the tourist gaze which focuses on portraying unfamiliarity and fun as the most essential aspects (MacCannell 1973). That, in turn, can lead to the situation whereby host communities are unable to strike a good balance between the conservation of cultural heritage and its commercial exploitation as a tourism asset.

The general tendency towards recreation as a visit and participation rather than a watching has amplified these dynamics, where cultural adventure is a most sought after by the tourists, (Richards et al., 2024). Cohen (1988) demonstrates how the trend imposes heavy pressure on communities by having guests push them to create new cultural representations for tourism requirements. Community-Based Tourism stands as a potentially positive case within research suggesting immersive tourism

experiences create less stress on communities compared to previous models studied by Richard. An investigation into this academic divergence must proceed due to its importance for the study of the analyzed case. Such tensions are most acute where tourism is concentrated, which includes the Kathmandu Valley, and popular rural trekking areas (Bhattarai et al., 2005). However, there is inadequate policy environment and resource to advance sustainable CBT exposing the negative impacts of cultural commodification (Upadhayaya, 2013). Furthermore, due to outside interference like tour operators and NGOs in CBT development, competition and conflict of interest and priorities surface other problems (Scheyvens, 2002). In this regard, it is relevant to consider both the theoretical framework of CBT and its utilization in the Nepalese context to determine appropriate approaches to fruitfully negotiate between culture and sustainable economic growth.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The study analyzes beneficial aspects and unsolved challenges of community-based tourism (CBT) for the Amaltari Madhawarti community located in Nepal. The sustainability elements present within CBT technology led to evaluations about compatible cultural practices and genuine protections of cultural treasures.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Where and how power relations shape the CBT debate in relation to economic benefits and cultural resources?
2. What measures exist to preserve authenticity in Amaltari Madhawarti Community-controlled CBT programs while examining which community members determine this authenticity?
3. Does cultural commodification advance the socio-economic growth of the Amaltari Madhawarti community?

1.5. RESEARCH GAPS

Studies about Community-Based Tourism in Nepal traditionally prioritize investigations of both economic development effects alongside environmental effects. Though personal encounters and cultural consumption are viewed as

interrelated concepts, community-based tourism literature has paid little attention to cultural aspects of authenticity and commodification. Moreover, there is very few research focused on social views, especially of the local people of Amaltari Madhawarti region, regarding these issues. This research will fill these gaps by conducting a critical discourse of the relationship between tourism, authenticity and cultural commodification in the context of Nepali CBT efforts.

1.6. AIMS/OBJECTIVES

In this context, the main objective of the present study is to identify and understand the tourism- authenticity-commodification nexus in the context of Amaltari Madhawarti community's CBT intervention. Specific objectives include:

1. To explore the way through which CBT affects the perceptions of cultural authenticity of the local communities.
2. Through the CBT framework researchers explore how cultural asset development affects income generation and employment and community well-being in the Amaltari Madhawarti community.
3. To come up with measures of how the cultural value was maintained and how development was promoted in cases of CBT initiatives.

Chapter summary

This chapter explained the background, issues and theoretical frameworks of this study. As this research will investigate the connection between tourism, authenticity as well as cultural commodification, in Nepal's CBT plans, in particular by observing case of Amaltari Madhawarti, the research will presume interrelation between sustainable tourism, cultural concern, and socio-economic benefits.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. An overview of Community Based Tourism (CBT)

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has been delivered as a model that entails the citizens of a given community in decisions affecting tourism activities within that community. CBT has emerged as a device for involving nearby communities in tourism administration and enhancing more suitable dispersion of tourism blessings (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Giampiccoli et al., 2024). In Nepal, the CBT strategies have come to the forefront because these strategies can work together for conservation and socio-economic development in question and particularly in the Hill and Terai areas which are vulnerable to ecological challenges (Rai et al., 2023). These interventions seek to incorporate the citizens in policy formulation for programmed ownership and effectiveness with the people (Sharma, 2024). Nonetheless, CBT projects have their share of challenges like poor-governance, resourcing and differences between economic and cultural goals (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007).

2.2. Cultural commodification in Tourism

Culture commercialization entails the process through which a society changes culture related practices, beliefs, and objects in order to fit the exigencies of the marketplace mainly due to demand from tourists. This subject has been covered in detail in tourism research, and Greenwood (1989) notes that commodification is a process during which cultural attributes lose their purpose. Cohen (1988) took the analysis further proposing that commodification may result in the dilution of genuine cultural traits. Some of the current researchers show that in Nepal, while the indigenous dances, crafts, and rituals are commercialized, they meet the tourists' stereotypes and are stereotyped and finally, DE culturalized (Bhattarai et al., 2005; Karki et al., 2024). Such adaptations do not only erode the cultural values of these aspects but also isolate the locals from their cultural endowments (Richards et al., 2021).

2.3. Authenticity in Tourism

The idea of authenticity remains one of the major focuses of interest in tourism studies, especially about cultural and historic tourism. Wang (1999) categorized authenticity into three dimensions: several varieties of authenticity including objective authenticity, constructive authenticity, and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity is concerned with tangible culture, such as turning an artifact into a tourist attraction, whereas constructive authenticity is concerned with the interpretive construction of culture by the tourists and hosts (MacCannell, 1973). While, while existential authenticity may be defined as the individual, emotional and enacted engagements of the tourists, which are beyond the mere commercial authenticity of an artefact, culture, or place (Wang, 1999). In Nepal, the issue of cultural performances has become an even more sensitive issue with the rising popularity of experiential tourism which puts pressure on culture bearers to offer their experience that would be packaged ready for tourists to buy (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). The Amaltari Madhawarti community is a good context through which an understanding of how local stakeholders balance these two contexts in their effort to uphold cultural standards as they seek to satisfy economic needs (Sharma, 2024).

2.4. CBT socio-economic effect

CBT has been applauded for its ability to support socio economic development, especially in the deprived and vulnerable group. Research show that CBT has got economic impacts such as income generation, employment and improved standard of living of the inhabitants in Nepal (Rai et al., 2023; Karki et al., 2024). Besides, through funding CBT projects including non-government organizations, as well as government funds contributes to infrastructural improvement of roads and provision of schools and health facilities that can improve the capacity of the community (Giampiccoli et al., 2024). However, Ocabo (2009) and Novelli and Gebhardt's (2007) elucidated that the effectiveness of CBT is not homogeneous because of power and social disparities regarding the distribution of resources regularized by communities. Other studies have also provided additional evidence

that increases in tourism can lead to cultural commodification, because local communities are forced to commodify their culture in order to stay relevant in the tourist market (Greenwood, 1989; Richards et al., 2021).

2.5. Challenges and limitation of CBT in Nepal

However, CBT is faced with numerous limits that affect its efficiency during its implementation. Of them, one major issue is the unavailability of adequate and coherent policy measures towards sustainable tourism development in Nepal (Sharma, 2024). Also, lack of training and required resources for local stakeholders to control tourism operations hinder their performance in many cases (Rai et al., 2023). Moreover, external forces, particularly tour operators and government, overpower the local communities' self-decision-making (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). According to the Cohen (1988) "Through tourism commoditization cultural possessions along with traditional practices become products which tourists purchase". Research has also shown that there is an increase in strain on natural resources through the provision of Eco-tourism facilities such as deforestation, waste and habitat destruction that remain harmful to the Nepalese environment and cultural heritage (Giampiccoli et al., 2024). In this regard, Cohen (1988) and Greenwood (1989) argued that various cultural features are packaged as products to meet the demands of tourists denying world cultural distributions.

2.6. Theoretical Frameworks of CBT and Culture

The theoretical approaches linked to CBT and culture offer important perspectives into Modern tourism development issues. MacCannell's (1973) framework, the concept of staging, indicates how and why cultural forms are transformed to function as products for tourists and how the inherent culture may provide a staged authenticity far from the real one. The concept of MacCannell explained by his words "Touristic consciousness sends its members on quests for authentic experiences while it interacts primarily with purpose-built areas that mimic authenticity". Greenwood (1989) defines commodification as an economic as well as a socio-cultural phenomenon, which relates to processes of cultural change in which cultural goods and services are conceived more and more as mere objects of

economic exchange. “Cultural elements transform according to Greenwood (1989) into basic economic commodities throughout the process of commodification. Greenwood suggests entertainment develops from culture when cultural products become buyer-ready commodities. During commodification culture undergoes changes through modifications that result in the loss of meaning”. The theoretical perspectives provide beneficial insights to the Amaltari Madhawarti people who belong to Nepal's indigenous communities to study the relationship of tourism and authenticity and commodification in CBT contexts (Sharma, 2024; Richards et al., 2021).

2.7. Policy Frameworks in the Development of Tourism in Communities

The performance of Community Based Tourism (CBT) is pegged on the sound policy environment which fosters sustainable efforts. Amid Nepali Tourism: Policies have previously been inclined towards the economic aspects disregarding the culturally and socially sustainable models for Nepali Tourism (Nepal & Saarinen, 2020). A good policy system is very vital in addressing cultural encashment and fostering accurate culture representations by defining rights and wrongs regarding culture protection and fair profit sharing (Bhattarai et al., 2023).

National Tourism policy like The National Tourism Strategy encourages involvement of the community but they do not provide measures to check and balance the commodification and commercialization of cultural practices. CBT implemented for education should involve capacity building of local people in sustainable tourism practices, financial incentives for cultural sustainability and instrumental control for measuring cultural impacts of tourism (Giampiccoli et al., 2024). In addition, inclusion of cultural heritage into the tourism policy plan is crucial in closing the divide between development and sustainability agenda (Rai et al., 2023).

The Amaltari Madhawarti community faces difficulties in creating steady policy structures for CBT projects because of which implementation struggles to achieve effectiveness (Rai et al., 2023). Local government agencies are weak in their ability

to manage tourists and their interactions with communities, and this has led to commercialization of art and culture, fairs and festivals (Sharma, 2024). Research from International findings illustrate that active participation from the community in the formulation of its policy will greatly improve the successes of the CBT endeavours as it will capture the interests of the community (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Consequently, there is a need to change the pattern of Nepalese tourism policies that employ cultural and economic values respectively.

2.8. Experiential Tourism and Its Relevance to CBT

This accelerated pace of experiential tourism in the context of globalization has huge ramifications for suggesting and planning a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) for Nepal. Experiential tourists are in particular interested in meaningful ways of experiencing tourist attractions and hosting communities may be pressured into presenting their culture openly and in ways that are complying with experientialist tourism expectations (Richards et al., 2021). This trend seems to subvert the normative idea of authenticity as the remaining as pure as the locals are to adapt to the flow of competitive tourism (Cohen, 2022).

Experiential tourism has evolved throughout the years thus positively encouraging travelers to engage in home- stays, cultural dances and drama, and guided trekking in Amaltari Madhawarti community in Nepal, regarding CBT innovation (Baniya & Paudel, 2020). However, such experiences call for changes to the central practices resulting in what MacCannell referred to as the “Staged Authenticity” where there is editing or change of culture forms to fit the preferences of the tourist. To tackle this, tourism operators and policymakers need to promote virtual travel through engendering real contact instead of heuristic shows (Wang, 1999).

These technologies can therefore be used to allow a community to display its customs to the rest of the world as the qualities are preserved. Further development of sustainable and regenerative tourism proclaims responsibility for the environment, which, in turn, aims for CBT to preserve both nature and cultural properties (Nepal et al., 2021). For the case of the Amaltari Madhawarti community these trends call for capacity enhancement, investment in information

communication technology, capital goods and understanding that the soul of the tradition that the change espouses is sacrosanct. Through the carving and managing of the intricate features of the experiential tourism, CBT interventions can go on to develop further while at the same time protecting the cultural heritage in Nepal.

2.9. THEORATICAL FOUNDATION

As this study has previously illustrated, it is anchored on significant theories of tour and cultural analysis. The theory of staged authenticity developed by MacCannell (1973) can also be used to examine how cultural artefacts are packaged for tourists and in the process loses the very essence of the culture that the tourists are interested in. Another related theoretical framework that supports the economic and social process of transformation of culture as a product is outlined by Greenwood (1989) on commodification. Besides, Wang's (1999) construct of existential authenticity helps to understand the self-centered perceptions and engagement of tourists and hosts. As I discuss the findings related to tourism, authenticity, and cultural commodification in the Nepali CBT projects and the Amaltari Madhawarti people below, these theoretical viewpoints are useful.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Community-based tourism (CBT) in Nepal provides an interesting perspective on the tension between the real and the artificial, relatively far-reaching consequences for the communities involved (Richards & Hall, 2000) and tourism in its sustainable form. Such tension is not unique to this site but is typical for tourism development when cultural values are in conflict with economic markets for cultural production. Nepal is culturally and ethnically diverse and has a relatively distinct set of historical antecedents making it an ideal locus for these dynamics. It therefore becomes important in coming up with the balance of use and nonuse values especially in those areas where tourism is a vital resource for the communities living therein.

The study examines authenticity principles within cultural performance of Nepal CBT through qualitative research methods using the Amaltari Madhawarti Community Homestay in Nawalparasi District as its focus. This methodological design is based on understanding that, on the one hand, tourism affects cultural practices, and, on the other hand, it has an impact on the socio-economic conditions of communities. This research incorporates a qualitative approach to provide the richness of stakeholder insight and the rigor of analysis of patterns. This approach reduces bias since numerous aspects of CBT are studied allowing for a detailed analysis of relations between authentic identities and commodification.

3.2. Research Layout

This research uses qualitative research paradigms in order to access the research problem from all dimensions. The use of qualitative data brings the richness of contextualized human stories providing a richer understanding of CBT in Nepal. The first aspect of data collection includes the use of interviews and focus group discussions as such, they are flexible and capture the actual experience of

stakeholders in their daily lives based on the social context within which they operate.

3.3. Collection of data

The research implements qualitative methodology by conducting interviews with essential stakeholders who are members of the Amaltari Madhawarti community based in Nepal's Nawalparasi District. The chosen community engages actively in community-based tourism (CBT) work and maintains cultural heritage values near the tourist hub of Chitwan National Park. Tourist visitors from domestic and international origins have been increasingly drawn to the area to experience its cultural heritage and natural environment tourism opportunities. The development of jobs and basic infrastructure faces various obstacles in CBT because stakeholders need both policy backing and experience, and habitat environments suffer environmental degradation.

3.3.1. Qualitative method

In order to obtain qualitative data, interviews are carried out with local population, tourists and homestay service providers. These interviews focus on issues like culture, touristic activities' realism, and economic returns. Conducting focus group sessions allows them to express groups' viewpoints and experience regarding some of the CBT practices. These enable the determination of key issues of concern and prospective changes to CBT models.

3.4. Sampling strategies

The research conducts purposive sampling to choose its participants who consist of key stakeholders who actively take part in the Amaltari Madhawarti community's community-based tourism (CBT) efforts. The selected participants match the criteria of possessing knowledge and experience alongside involvement in tourism activities. The researcher included local community leaders together with CBT project coordinators and representatives from tourism service providers and local government bodies among the stakeholder groups. The research method included an approach to source participants that aimed to gather multiple viewpoints about the effects of CBT and its preservation of culture as well as sustainable tourism

obstacles. The research directs its participation at CBT professionals to collect valuable information that supports a complete assessment.

3.5. Targeted Population

The following population was targeted for the collection of data to fulfil the fundamental queries regarding the “research questions”.

- Amaltari based policy makers and government officials in the tourism industry.
- Tourism operators and NGOs involved in CBT.
- Tourism and culture, and experts

3.6. Inclusion Criteria

The following groups of people were included for data collection:

- People involved in Community Based Tourism activities.
- Those people who have travelled to CBT destinations in Almaltari region.
- Stakeholders who annually spend money on tourism or who control policies and practices that shape tourism.
- Some of the local community people are directly affected by cultural commodification.

3.7. Exclusion Criteria

The following people were excluded from the investigation survey:

- People who have nothing to do with community-based tourism
- Participants who refused to give their informed consent
- All these factors mean that tourists who have never visited CBT destinations in Nepal before

3.8. Analysis of the data

3.8.1. Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis is used to be helpful in the management of qualitative data, hence turning the transcript and focuses into comprehensible themes and patterns. Such an approach enables the researcher to gain extensive best insights into CBT behavior among the stakeholders.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

This research also has ethical implications. Every participant's consent is sought and received as well as maintaining the confidentiality of all participants up to the conclusion of the study. The study is conducted according to principles provided by the institutional review boards and professional organizations.

3.10. Limitations

Although the mixed-methods approach gives an all-round perspective, the study's limitation is its dependency on the respondents' reports that, probably, contain bias. Also, the study is carried out on selected CBT sites in Nepal which may restrict the generality of the results.

Conclusion

This chapter on methodology has laid down a clear approach to addressing the research questions relating to tourism and its impacts in the context of CBTT in Nepal. The use of qualitative research data collection techniques guarantees the exploration of the research questions to their depth since both research approaches have their own strength. To accommodate multiple voices, the study employed interview method, thematic analysis that gives a broader perspective of the findings on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat in CBTA. Some of these methodological decisions do not only increase the credibility of the findings but also provide practical implications for the sustainable development of tourism.

CHAPTER 4

Results

4.1. Results analysis

The results of this study offer critical insights into the dynamic interplay between tourism, cultural authenticity, and commodification in community-based tourism (CBT) settings in Nepal. The study examines stakeholder perspectives specifically interviewing a homestay owner to show how tourism simultaneously generates economic development and cultural conservation while it disrupts traditional customs and intensifies the commercialization of tourist experiences. The analysis puts forward research findings generated from semi-structured interviews which focus on community involvement in tourism development together with benefit and disadvantage assessments of tourism activities and practical recommendations for sustainable tourism practices. Creative methodologies employed in the analysis reveal detailed insights about how CBT influences Nepal's social structure together with economic dynamics. The following interviews were conducted to clarify the rationale of our project.

4.2. Interview 1 (Homestay Owner) and Interview 2 (Local inhabitant)

Interview 1:

“Our traditions now hold changed meanings because tourism delivered enhanced income along with better infrastructure. Our traditional ceremonies previously reserved only for the community now serve guest audiences throughout the year. This dilutes their original authenticity. Achieving success requires equal preservation of culture along with tourist benefits while maintaining fair and equitable support for the community.”

Interview 2:

“Economic development from tourism allows our village to improve both its infrastructure and healthcare services although these developments fail to achieve uniform distribution across the entire community. Tourism leads some family businesses to progress but small local vendors alongside craft artisans continuously battle to stay viable. Cultural activities which represent our identity appear episodically in global exhibitions, yet their revelation sometimes stresses synthetic display over genuine cultural expression. Every day our increasing waste shows us we lack sufficient protection systems to safeguard our beloved picture-perfect land. Tourism activities must uphold both cultural legacies and environmental priorities as sustainable practices develop through educational expansion with equitable opening opportunities”.

4.2.1. Theme 1: Cultural transformation and commodification

The tourism industry primarily affecting traditional cultural customs of Amaltari Community has led to transformational changes in traditional communal rituals and performances designed specifically for tourists. The Tharu dances (Lathi naach and Jharra naach) both generated from cultural roots deep within the community because they traditionally performed at festivals alongside special community events. Tourism development caused these cultural practices to convert from festival-specific occasions into visitor-friendly shows. Social traditions have survived thanks to tourism, yet their original contexts underwent a reduction from their authentic nature. Today weddings and harvest festivals originally performed according to community calendars now occur at times convenient for tourists rather than community needs. Local residents work to align their ancestral customs with tourism economics in order to protect their cultural heritage from commercialization. Residents observe a positive impact from cultural modifications which display communal identity to external audiences yet observe elements of cultural heritage transforming from personal community experiences into visitor attractions.

Securing sustainable tourism and cultural authenticity remains a constant unresolved issue. The homestay owner stressed that tourists along with locals must receive training about proper sustainable and respectful tourism behavior. The local population needs instruction to properly regulate tourism activities in a fashion which respects cultural heritage by implementing green practices and safeguarding traditional roots. For sustainable tourism operators must develop stronger community bonds by highlighting and promoting local crafted goods with visitor appeal. Tourism activities that support the local economy create powerful cultural exchanges between visitors and the local way of life they have come to experience. According to the interviewee, the tourism industry should maintain equilibrium by making economic gains accessible to the community through responsible methods that protect cultural inheritance. The management of tourism in Amaltari Community requires an integration of education with equitable economic practices and cultural sensitivity in order to support long-term sustainability and protect its distinctive cultural heritage.

Through Ishor we witness a dual appreciation and concern regarding how the Tharu people's cultural heritage remains unaffected by tourism developments. He welcomes the chance to display their traditional events along with handmade products to worldwide observers. The cultural experience exposes their traditions to the world which drives both the preservation of original practices and recognition for Amaltari Community as a distinct heritage site. His dissatisfaction arises from the way cultural traditions give in to commercial activities. Modern cultural events which traditionally preserved sacred traditions have shifted their main purpose to producing entertainment for tourists. Equilibrium plays a vital role for Ishor because cultural heritage needs to progress with tourism without giving in to tourist expectations.

Environmental troubles persist throughout the story of Ishor. The development of driving tourism in Amaltari Community brings two main environmental impacts including tripping disturbances to natural resources and waste accumulation from travelers. High population numbers in tourist destinations have created excessive

plastic waste and inadequate waste management services have made the situation worse. Visits to pristine trekking areas have increased so much that environmental damage continues to grow worse. The environmental tourism protection of Amaltari Community depends on better management of its waste disposal according to Ishor's evaluation. Ishor supports delivering tourism education about behavior standards and ecosystem defense to become more prominent under state supervision through educational approaches. Protective measures receive support from Ishor because he believes these measures will prevent permanent damage from neglecting tourism destinations.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Economic equity and community participation

Community tourism in Amaltari Community involves local people in making decisions but the benefits affect different households unevenly. The village's tourism committee demonstrates the community's commitment toward establishing fair representation and decision-making processes. The practice of moving cultural presentations between family homes ensures tourism profit distribution equality among generations in the community. External tourism organizations who operate independently from local stakeholders create major issues by conducting trekking events that exclude community input. Progressive tourism management needs to pay greater attention to the involvement of local communities so both their economic potential and the tourism opportunities for local guides and porters can flourish. The regular income earned by homestay owners and local guides contrasts with the difficult competition smaller local artisans face versus larger shops operating in urban areas. The tourist preference for buying items from Amaltari Community results in missed opportunities to support local businesses, forcing a disharmonic distribution of tourism advantages. According to the interview the local economy depends on more direct sales channels for residents and activities must focus on benefiting community members and their welfare.

The local Amaltari Community resident Ishor explains the total transformation tourism has brought to the economic base together with social dynamics of Amaltari Community. He explains that tourism activities have become the main economic

base which replaced traditional farming practices. The regional transformation has produced better facilities like roads alongside schools and medical centers that now enhance resident family living conditions. Different social changes accompany the socioeconomic advancement pattern. Families performing tourism activities earn substantially more money than other locals who provide artisan goods or prepare small food products. This unbalanced allocation of rewards creates a key problem. This disparity fosters inequality within the community. The tourism industry subjects communities to financial instability because tourism operates seasonally and remains susceptible to external disruptions including global health crises and natural disasters.

4.3. Interview 3 (Local Tourist) and Interview 4

Interview 3:

“Through local food preparations storytelling performances and traditional dances, we experienced the vibrant Tharu culture at Amaltari. Every facility alongside the program maintained its real authenticity but they modified some elements to appeal to international tourists. Understanding that the money I donated helped fund human programs across the community empowered my overall experience tremendously. I found deep inspiration in observing tourism powers local populations, but my observations created concern about potential excess commercialization. Community development and heritage preservation together show the model's success at Amaltari but cultural authenticity proves necessary for enduring success.”

Interview 4:

“Our community received development through tourism, yet it created unequal benefits and lowered traditional practices while altering local lifestyles. The spiritual practices we once held dear transform into visitor performances and this trend makes me deeply concerned. Tourism-generated waste continues to devastate our environment while we struggle to build efficient waste management solutions. To defend Amaltari for successive generations we must maintain harmony between

tourism growth and cultural preservation while implementing sustainably conscious practices”.

4.3.1. Cultural authenticity

The local tourist strongly embraces the authentic cultural value alongside rich heritage found at Amaltari Community Homestay. The homestay connected Tharu cultural aspects thorough their traditional welcoming ceremonies and dances alongside their culinary traditions. Guests discovered educational value alongside deep immersion which demonstrated how seriously the Tharu community takes their identity preservation activities. The tourists detected minimal cultural adaptations through activities which appeared modified to satisfy tourist preferences. The informative details about dances and staged presentations satisfied tourists' learning needs but created a commercial flavor in their view. The core authenticity remained strong because orthodox traditional methods served as the foundation for all performances despite added interaction with tourists.

The tourist found value in both paying for cultural explorations because it supported the local community and because he endorsed their ethical practices of enacting cultural exhibitions. The home stay team showed respect for both cultural exhibition and culture preservation. Despite recognition of its potential dangers from commercialized amplification many people fear its lasting impact on Tharu regional traditions.

Manoj illustrates through his narrative that tourism functions as a fundamental economic diversity promotion mechanism throughout Amaltari. Tourism growth in this community enabled the residents to develop alternate income opportunities via hospitality activities together with cultural sharing practices alongside their existing farming identity. Local community living accommodations form basic economic growth landmarks since they give neighborhood residents the opportunity to showcase their cultural heritage and food items along with handmade crafts for foreign visitors. Family economic security has been improved for certain families through their dual economic model that bonds tourism operations to agricultural activities and turns those earnings into educational and infrastructure funding.

During the development of tourism many challenges emerged which created obstacles to its growth. Manoj outlines that economic wealth generated from tourism distributes irregularly between members of the community. When families actively participate in touristic activities, they manage to earn better profits than irregular income derived from selling handmade items or through agricultural sales. Wealthy households maintain a notable economic gap with unstable financial families because of the present situation. Farms in Amaltari no longer substitute tourism as a profitable business because the community now prefers tourism therefore fewer residents perform farm work. The agricultural system transformation threatens the independent food production system while eroding ancestral knowledge about farming which parents transmit to their children. The seasonality of tourism exacerbates economic instability. Tourism-based families face financial uncertainties because the tourist traffic fluctuates throughout the yearly cycle. Tourism risks in the community intensify through economic downturns that get worsened by pandemics and political unrest coupled with other external elements causing significant damage to the tourism sector. Economic diversification serving tourism through sustainable farming and alternative local industries will provide a resilient approach to community stability during uncertain times.

According to Manoj's assessments the tourism sector requires an inclusive economic approach which ensures equal access for all locals to take part in tourism activities. The local economy would gain economic benefit through widespread distribution by implementing training programs which develop local skills for hospitality including market support and eco-tourism management operations. Creating platforms for local handcrafts combined with agricultural products through fairs and cooperative channels alongside internet platforms has the potential to boost income streams of people who remain unaffected by tourism growth. The community would benefit from implementing tourism-based economic development while following a more inclusive strategy which leads to equilibrium between sustainability and economic benefits for everyone.

4.4. Community empowerment

As shown by tour participants, the Amaltari Community Homestay stands out as an essential initiative that uplifts the local Tharu community through economic development while boosting their lifestyle conditions. Through this initiative local inhabitants generate employment for women and residents have developed pride in showcasing their cultural heritage. Community empowerment represented a central element that made the tourists stay positive. Tourists stressed the necessity of maintaining tourist activities which produce meaningful advantages for local communities. The tourists observed difficulties between tourism development and traditional lifestyles, but they were especially concerned about the sale of cultural traditions and the risk of losing authenticity. The tourists structured their journey around obligations to bring good influence on the community just as much as they needed firsthand experience. Through its homestay operations the community maintained its cultural roots while achieving typical economic development across the entire area. Authentic cultural representation and community development serve as main research findings based on interviewed data analysis. By using community-managed homestay operations the Amaltari Community proves how tourism can establish mutual progress between economic development and cultural protection when sustainability practices are consistently enforced throughout the entire operation.

Manoj believes Amaltari tourism enables him to show off Tharu cultural heritage and defend authentic community values at the same time. The homestay receives its visitors because they want to connect with Tharu traditions during cultural activities that include local dancing, singing along with cooking and crafting traditions. The local community gains cultural pride, and younger residents gain preservation knowledge of traditional practices through these cultural connections. By allowing users to experience and endorse Tharu heritage the community builds worldwide recognition for Amaltari people and develops a top cultural attraction for travelers. Manoj expresses significant distress about the commercialization of his cultural customs. Original spiritual functions from specific ceremonies have been replaced by new entertainment activities for guests attending the events. Due

to tourism, we see a casual tone adopted toward genuine cultural practices that causes original cultural values to fade from their community base. The cultural transformations triggered by tourism create dual effects by creating a distance between native members of the original culture and subsequent cultural performers. Youth gain access to tourism advantages yet lose their connection to their original cultural heritage roots. The community elder Manoj joins other older members in fearing that the cultural practices which identity them are swiftly nosing towards disappearance. When commercial interests control cultural event organization without proper community direction the traditional values of the community get cut off from their roots.

Through its describing format Manoj portrays the environmental damage caused by Amaltari tourism along with the urgent need for sustainable waste reduction measures. Increased visitor numbers result in greater waste output where the main waste products consist of hard-to-dissolve plastic materials. Due to this situation the rural community encounters severe challenges to manage their waste infrastructure efficiently. Tourist waste destruction endangers the beautiful natural features of Amaltari and harms natural biodiversity which attracts tourists to visit.

Industrial operations that utilize tourism inflict severe harm to forests making it an environmental detriment of industry operations. Community growth together with facility development for visitors has generated rising wood demands that serve construction needs and fuel consumption requirements. The habitat destruction and ecological imbalance damage wildlife populations including biodiversity in this region. Excessive trekker activities on hiking trails create both erosion of soil and destruction of original natural path features thereby intensifying environmental damage. According to Manoj, sustainable tourism demands a strong focus on environmental protection measures. To properly manage tourism waste governments should support waste management techniques that handle higher amounts of trash resulting from tourist activity. Environmental sustainability receives its primary advancement through education systems. Amaltari residents, together with visiting tourists, must understand how essential it is to protect the

region's natural resources. Local people could learn about sustainable farming at educational workshops together with instruction on renewable energy systems and eco-tourism management skills that would enable them to protect environmental resources effectively.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

5.1. Introduction

The tourism sector influences three key areas of local communities through cultural development together with economic systems and environmental conditions. Bioeconomic benefits often originate from tourism, however unintended consequences such as cultural erosion and environmental damage frequently occur (Richards, 2023). The Nepal-based research analyzed tourism growth in Amaltari through analyses of home-stay economic distributions and visitor impacts while studying cultural integrity and resident participation. More evidence exists which aligns with this conclusion because Lee et al. (2022) found that community-based tourism promotes cultural sustainability among participants. Local stakeholders voiced concerns about cultural commodification during the research phase at a level similar to Sharpley's (2022) assessment of how tourism commercializes native traditions for profit gains which diminishes their genuine nature.

The research established tourism as a significant provider of income for local communities yet found that economic rewards were disproportionately distributed among residents. The study matches proof presented in Hall and Page's (2014) report about rural tourism destinations achieving growth but holding ongoing problems with uneven wealth distribution. The level of community engagement in tourism planning was assessed moderately low because residents had restricted ability to share decisions according to studies by Al Amin (2024). The situational placement of these results within scholarly publications serves to connect the findings and delivers guidelines to support sustainable tourism development within the Amaltari Community. Results from this analysis generate recommendations for protecting cultural heritage and achieving equitable economic benefits as well as community involvement which advance discussions about sustainable tourism development.

5.2. Revitalizing traditions through tourism

Through tourism activity cultural landscapes have gained tremendous power to maintain traditions and heritage that would have disappeared if tourists did not come. Research confirmed cultural tourism effectively safeguards along with advances traditional arts, crafts and ceremonies through its fundamental financial benefits that induce consistent practice. Tourism functions as a fundamental tool to maintain cultural heritage when it generates economic benefits according to Richards et al. (2024). The tourist flow seeking genuine cultural interactions has established a required space for local communities to present their traditions in various regions. According to interview responses younger generations who showed no interest previously are now participating because tourism opens economic opportunities for cultural preservation. Long-term cultural knowledge preservation rests on the success of new generations taking active roles in heritage practices according to Timothy et al. (2024).

The advantages of cultural globalization coexist with the crucial concern about cultural items being commodified. Interview participants highlighted their worries about traditional local elements which are getting modified to fulfill tourists' needs. Tourism research focuses on 'staged authenticity' because Chhabra (2021) demonstrate how this method pulls in tourist traffic but harms proper cultural expression of authentic practices. The interview participants acknowledged cultural programs have undergone minor modifications to accommodate tourists, but the basic traditional concepts remain protected.

Some tourist communities now offer educational workshops intended to connect people with authentic cultural practices so visitors can explore instead of viewing cultural elements passively. According to Chhabra (2021), 'immersive tourism' represents an advised method to preserve cultural integrity through participatory visitor experiences. The social and economic advantages of cultural tourism emerged as major points during our interview session. The interview participants demonstrated that the rising employment picture triggered by tourism allows women and youthful artisans to practice their artistic crafts or professional skills

directly with tourists seeking cultural items. Research by George and James (2023) confirmed cultural tourism develops inclusive economic expansion by integrating underrepresented social groups through tourism sector value chain structures. Richards and Munsters (2023) demonstrate that these community-driven tourism initiatives resolve the problems caused by big-tourism operations through respect for conventional customs in face-to-face tourist encounters.

Research participants pointed to how heritage education participants experienced upgraded tour experiences and better social connections between people and their traditional heritage. The engagement activities foster mutual respect between different cultural groups through their ability to establish connections between both parties. Timothy et al. (2024) demonstrate that education represents the fundamental base for developing responsible sustainable tourism practices through their definition of proper education as a tool to protect cultural values between hosts and visitors. Smith and Richards (2023) present educational tourism models that develop genuine cultural engagement settings to safeguard entire cultural heritage.

5.3. Social cohesion and strengthening community recognition

The tourism industry functions as a powerful force which generates community identity centralization and social unity among native residents. Through cultural activities driven by tourism local communities have found their cultural heritage so they can work together to protect and strengthen their traditional elements. Balanced community cooperation throughout managing events alongside creating traditional items and presenting historical materials to tourists has strengthened interpersonal bonds between neighbors. Sharpley and Telfer (2022) show that community collaborations foster a restored community pride together with local sense of belonging which enhances their social bonds. People who took part in the study found that community-based tourism activates cooperation by bringing together various groups such as women and young adults along with those who have been excluded from participation. Research by Su et al. (2023) shows how inclusive tourism creates stronger community ties through equal access for

participation together with member respect enhancement. Joint activities have enabled communities to establish extensive networks that extend past tourism while fostering sustainable economic growth together with increased local community strength.

Interview participants showed that storytelling serves as a strong force which strengthens community identity expressions. According to multiple respondents sharing local myths together with tourist visitors caused younger generations to develop a new enthusiasm towards exploring their cultural past. According to Bandyopadhyay et al. (2008) storytelling works as a cultural transmission method which simultaneously enriches tourism experiences. When individuals perform cultural narratives, they help safeguard intangible elements that face potential loss through time.

The cultural heritage of the Amaltari assists the transfer of traditional knowledge between different generations while building regional pride. The interviewees showed how elderly serving as traditional knowledge keepers use tourism activities to animate younger members of their community. Tourism activities have built intergenerational harmony by providing valuable opportunities for tactical social interaction between elderly and younger members of society. According to Smith and Richards (2023) elders play a decisive role in tourism projects by maintaining traditional knowledge along with cultural authenticity.

Community-driven tourism events such as cultural fairs and festivals have deepened the collective identity of this community. Tourism events function as essential unifying elements which allow both visitors and residents to celebrate together. Cultural festivals create social connections and build positive community images that reach inner and outer perspectives according to George and Reid (2022). Community-based events from residents' viewpoint succeed in uniting community members while providing stages for regional talent to exhibit their artistic abilities.

Resource distribution problems were rare at first but cropped up among analysts when they finished selecting their tourism project choices. The study participants

discovered several tourism benefits which surpassed their problems as they unified the community during tough times. The formation of social cohesion requires participatory community programs where members negotiate and distribute equal benefits through feedback from the community members. Frank Su along with co-authors demonstrated that efficient tourism governance enables stakeholders to work together to make decisions that both dissolve conflicts and preserve social cohesion. The fundamental process of community identification together with local social unity emerges through tourism development. Social progression relies on tourism since it develops inclusive systems which allow multiple age groups to exchange life experiences and educational information. County initiatives managed in this manner result in lasting social relations that manifest as cultural expressions held in common by local community members.

5.4. Sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment

Through its transformative influence tourism drives both economic empowerment and sustainable local livelihood development. The research found that tourism activities in Amaltari created various job options which include providing hospitality services plus cultural event planning together with local product sales. The study parallels Tisdell and Wilson (2005) which demonstrates tourism functions as the main engine behind rural economies through its potential creation of new economic streams along with cutting traditional agricultural reliance. Tourism promotes entrepreneurial activities because local residents including women and youth began starting businesses including guesthouses alongside local food stalls and handicraft shops. The study from Morrison and Buhalis (2024) shows that community-based tourism provides marginalized people access to entrepreneurial ventures that create financial resources. By empowering local residents this initiative boosts individual economic empowerment which in turn builds the community's economic stability. Long-term livelihood security depends on sustainable tourism practices according to the interview participants. Spenceley (2022) promote environmental sustainability integration in tourism to produce enduring development advantages and these proposals match with field observations. The interviewee respondents described how these measures

contribute to sustainability through their implementation of biodegradable packing for local items and community garden operation for organic food distribution to tourist-connected restaurants.

The interview data revealed how skill development programs help increase the employability of residents in tourism areas. Destination development initiatives have established training curriculum that emphasizes both hospitality management techniques along with digital marketing practices and language acquisition. The human capital investment studied by Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018) demonstrates the critical importance of skill development because it strengthens local communities' global tourism market capabilities. Tourism businesses obtain most of their profits despite financial instability which occurs when market demand drops because of international crises. The research by Zhang (2023) shows how survey respondents started adopting tourism practices because they found these to be effective for stabilizing their income.

Tourism sectors struggle against increasing worries regarding powerful external stakeholder control because this power loss diminishes local stakeholders' influence over their business operations. Tourism benefits successfully reach local communities when members of the community actively join proper management processes of governance. Participatory decision-making enables local stakeholders to gain management of tourism resources thereby allowing them to develop sustainable economic development for their community based on Dangi and Jamal (2016). Through entrepreneurship support and sustainability practice promotion and workforce skill development investments tourism functions as a main driver of social and economic development. Strategies need development to manage both seasonal fluctuations and unequal fair distribution because these obstacles impede sustainable and equitable growth.

Conclusion

The tourism industry has significant positive influence on Amaltari community culture preservation alongside community social unity with economic autonomy. The creation of new businesses by the tourism sector has brought cultural practices and new employment opportunities to life. The sustainable development of communities depends on both tourism principles of sustainability and local authority-driven decision protocols to achieve inclusive development and enduring community prosperity.

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APPENDIX

Interview 1 (Homestay Owner)

Initial Remakes: Thank you for your previous time. As I told you about my study:

Question: What do you like to tell me about yourself?

Answer: Namaste! My name is Prem Sankhar, and I am the homestay owner of Amaltari Community. I have spent my life in this village, which has amounted to more than 50 years and now I run my family homestay business. My job includes providing accommodation with meals to guests as well as facilitating both traditional cultural events and hiking tours in the neighborhood.

Question: How long have you been living in this place? What is your source of income?

Answer: My residence here spans through my entire fifty years of existence. The majority of my earnings today stem from the tourism sector because of my work in the homestay operation. The establishment serves visitors from Nepali and international backgrounds. Tourism did not start to dominate our local economy until my family stopped depending on farming and livestock to support themselves. Our livelihood depends mostly on tourism since we continue farming alongside it.

Question: What are the positive and negative aspects of tourism in this community?

Answer: Tourism has brought many positives. Tourism has enhanced our financial situation, which enables us to provide superior educational opportunities for our children. Infrastructure has improved, too. Roads together with communication facilities have improved because of tourism development. Through tourism we have achieved the opportunity to introduce the world to our Amaltari heritage including dancing customs along with our cultural foods and ways of life. But there are negatives, too. Visitors occasionally display unacceptable conduct by dressing inappropriately in holy areas as well as by making loud disturbances during

religious ceremonies. The steadily increasing prices in the community represent an additional concern. Market prices continue ascending while certain cultural customs have become less meaningful since ceremonies now serve as mostly tourist entertainment rather than traditional Amaltari practices.

Question: What are your recommendations? Can you exemplify something beneficial or ineffective for tourism in this community?

Answer: The changes in our traditions emerged because of tourism development. Lathi and Jhumra dance varieties originated from the Amaltari ethnicity and historically performed only in religious festivals together with cultural events. Homestay musicians perform Amaltari dances continuously for visiting guests at regular entertainment events. Tourism supports traditional dance preservation yet the inherent significance together with authenticity potentially diminishes because debased dances become meant for both home and tourist spectators.

Question: Can you establish a relationship between tourism and preservation of your cultural heritage?

Answer: Travel generates various positive impacts because it simultaneously produces diverse obstacles within worldwide communities. Tourism preserves cultural heritage through minor adaptive changes observed inside selected areas in our community. The key is balance. To achieve sustainable tourism management success the delivery of community benefits must not interfere with conventional cultural practices. The planned initiative needs to advance comprehension of tourism-related cultural elements.

End Remarks: Thank you so much for your time and active participation in this project interview.

Interview 2 (Local Inhabitant)

Initial Remakes: Thank you for your previous time. As I told you about my study:

Question: Can you please introduce yourself first by sharing your daily routine of living in Amaltari Community?

Answer: Namaste! My name is Ishor Bhattarai, and I have been living in Amaltari Community since my childhood. I maintain our household, but I engage in farming activities while my family produces homemade products for tourism visitors. The three core activities of my daily routine include farm duties and home management alongside touristic interactions.

Question: How do you perceive that tourism is affecting the life of people in this region?

Answer: New changes emerged from tourism development within our village. The tourism industry has raised the general quality of living for people. Tourism money leads to enhanced standards of roads as well as schools and health facilities. Regular attendance at school along with improved medical services is now achievable for my children because of tourism. But there are also challenges. The rising prices in our area caused households to abandon agriculture as their main focus. Tourism is their primary source of income, yet it remains unpredictable since our region does not welcome visitors throughout the entire year. The transformation of our cultural customs to comply with foreign visitor desires scaffold anxiety within me.

Question: Do you think that tourism benefits are distributed equally among the people of this region?

Answer: Not really. Homestay businesses together with local tour guide services bring in substantially higher earnings compared to other local occupations. Our local craftspeople along with food vendors earn minimal income because foreign visitors prefer buying things from larger urban markets rather than our local markets. Most visitors choose contemporary hotel accommodation together with

their purchase decisions directed toward urban businesses instead of local artists' products. The income gap within our village widens because some residents obtain significant earnings which contrast with others who barely survive financially.

Question: Do you think tourism has impacted your Amaltari Community?

Answer: Yes, it has. Higher visitor numbers bring additional trash to the destination ;with plastic waste as a major component. Numerous visitors create waste management problems because they discard trash improperly even though our area lacks adequate waste disposal practices. Some routes where trekkers walk frequently have become heavily visited which results in the degradation of natural forest landscapes.

Question: What steps should be taken to improve the beneficial aspects of tourism in this community?

Answer: Tourists together with locals require improved educational training programs. Both tourists need education to understand local customs and environmental protection principles as well as local residents need training to run tourism operations efficiently. The promotion of local products must get increased attention as a second priority. When tourists make their purchases directly from our services it benefits all stakeholders, starting from homeowners through to broader community members. Organizing local markets and fairs represents a suitable approach for this purpose. Waste management investments together with cultural and environmental protection rules are needed by both the government and the tourism committee. Tourism will potentially harm our village if appropriate management steps are not implemented.

Interview 3 (Local tourist)

Initial Remarks: Thank you for your time. So, let's start with some basic questions:

Question: Would you like to tell me about your visit to Amaltari Community? Why did you select this destination for traveling?

Answer: Namaste, I am Ashis Regmi. When I stayed at Amaltari Community Homestay with my family a few months passed. Local residents had spread numerous stories explaining the relationship between Amaltari Community Homestay and the Tharu cultural heritage along with its distinctive tourism approach. I needed a relaxing vacation near nature with exposure to genuine Nepali customs in addition to finding a homestay operated by locals. The actual operating system of local people combined with community support made the place highly attractive to me.

Question: What was your mindset about this community and how you find it?

Answer: The experience I looked forward to being had, including straightforward local encounters and learning about their customs. The place surpassed all of my expectations upon my arrival. I had a genuine connection with both the inhabitants and the environment of the place. The community shared their traditions by performing dances and singing in an outstanding fashion. The traditional construction techniques using mud structures and thatch gave them a significant lasting impression. Handicrafts and traditional clothing patterns demonstrate their deep connection to traditions which run throughout their way of life.

Question: What aspects of Tharu culture do you observe during your travel in this community?

Answer: Tharu traditions appeared throughout each feature of the homestay experience. The local ingredients became the base for food preparation which stayed true to Tharu cooking traditions. The evening performances featured cultural presentations during which the explanations explained the significance of each

dance. The local residents showed appreciation for their customs by performing a traditional welcome ritual.

Question: Have you participated in any cultural or traditional activities?

Answer: The group cookery session allowed me to participate in making traditional dishes of the Tharu people. I found their method of working with local ingredients truly interesting. Participating in one of their dances provided both entertainment value and new knowledge for me. Through these activities I developed a stronger understanding of the ways the local people express their culture and heritage.

Question: Do you experience this place as authentic, or did you find it tailored?

Answer: The experiences felt mostly authentic. Some dance performances included extensive explanations for audience members who were not locals because management wanted to attract foreign visitors. While the attempts seemed aimed at reaching out to visitors, they did not diminish the genuine nature of the activities, instead they sought to present information in more understandable ways.

Question: Do you think the culture presented in this community is respectfully or accurately portrayed?

Answer: I happily paid for these tourist experiences since I understood that the revenue directly helped develop the community. The cultural presentation received tremendous attention to preservation and admiration. The guides and performers spoke about everything with pride as a sign of their dedication to protecting their traditional practices.

Question: How does Amaltari homestay provide advantage to local tharu community?

Answer: Local employment benefits from these activities particularly affects women who participate in meals and hospitality services. The platform allows youth members to stay connected with their culture and generate financial earnings through tourism activities.

Interview 4 (Local inhabitant)

Question: The interview concludes with your appreciation for allowing the conversation. I would appreciate it if you started the interview by familiarizing with your name as well as your position in the local community.

Answer: Namaste. Since birth I have spent all my years living in Amaltari under the name Manoj Chaudhary. I earn my living from farming while bearing responsibility for some aspects of the community homestay operation. Each day of my schedule consists of field labor and livestock supervision followed by hosting visitors who join us for Tharu cultural experiences.

Question: How visits from tourists affected personal and community life throughout Amaltari?

Answer: Tourism introduced innovative opportunities into our community. Through the homestay enterprise we have the opportunity to communicate our cultural heritage together with monetary benefits. Through the money received we improved our village by constructing better schools and repairing roads. However, it's not all good. Tourism has made some members of our population so dependent that they are neglecting agriculture even though farming remains central to how we have always lived.

Question: Does the community homestay perform an essential duty as the main guardian of Tharu cultural heritage according to your perspective?

Answer: The residential tourism program enables the preservation of local cultural practices through multiple approaches. Demonstrating our cultural dances along with cooking techniques and handiworks to visitors inspires younger Tharus to preserve our traditional art forms. The culture risks transformation into a staged spectacle according to my observation. We must respect our cultural heritage both for ourselves and our community members and not only for the benefit of outsiders.

Question: Do the community members all receive equivalent benefits from tourism activities?

Answer: Not really. The households managing homestays and those performing tourist-related work gain substantially more income than alternative community members without any tourist connections. The lack of available opportunities makes some individuals feel excluded from tourist benefits. The tourism industry should launch initiatives that bring all community members into participation since workshops combined with community events will promote involvement.

Question: What actions could be taken to transform tourism into a sustainable practice that benefits all stakeholders?

Answer: Our cultural environment needs to be taught to visitors and people who live in the area, so they understand its value. Local communities need to learn how to blend traditional customs with hotel industry developments alongside proper respect for local customs from visiting guests. Investing in effective waste management, reforestation programs form the core elements to protect our environment. The promotion of local crafts needs attention because everyone should have similar benefits from tourism activities instead of just the homestay owners benefiting.