



Rural Tourism Development

A study of Homestay of Ghandruk Village and Tharu Community

Submitted by- PIPUL KHATRI

Student number- 20220540

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Supervisor- Karina Madsen Smed

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the Ghandruk region and Tharu Community in Nepal, this study explores rural tourism's role in promoting rural development. The researchers gathered information through in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including homestay operators, hotel owners, foreign visitors, local leaders, NGOs, government representatives, and farmers, using a case study methodology. This study demonstrates the beneficial effects of rural tourism on the social, and economic facets and livelihoods of regional development. The study highlights how rural tourism can raise the standard of life for those living in rural areas while also protecting the area's natural resources and culture. The results add to the body of knowledge already available on rural tourism and provide policymakers and other stakeholders with useful information for utilizing this industry as a driver for rural development. In a country like Nepal, where there are many different villages with distinct castes, ethnic groups, climates, religions, and linguistic diversity dispersed from the Terai to the Himalayan regions, village tourism has a lot of potential. The purpose of this study paper was to examine the socioeconomic impacts of village tourist operations as well as the main obstacles to the industry's growth. According to the research findings, village tourism activities have a positive impact on social endeavors, youth in the villages, education, lodging and food culture, government revenue, and the ability of the villagers to earn a living. However, they have no negative impact on religion and culture. In addition, the main obstacles to the growth of village tourism have been highlighted as the absence of competent labor, inadequate transportation, and tourism education. In Nepal, rural tourism is also gradually establishing itself. Despite Nepal's very recent rural tourism history, there are encouraging success stories. On the other hand, rural tourism has been steadily increasing in recent years, which is encouraging. It might be stated that despite numerous challenges, it still has the potential. The study explains how rural tourism may raise rural populations' standards of life while protecting regional resources and culture. The results add to the body of knowledge already available on rural tourism and provide stakeholders and policymakers with information on how to use rural tourism as a driver of rural economic growth.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is the active movement of people from one location to another to learn about the customs, culture, and way of life of certain destinations. It is a smokeless sector that has a big impact on changing cultures and ways of living (Bishwakarma, 2018). A tourist is a person who travels for leisure and who carries multiple results with them. Visitors engage in a variety of activities, and locals in certain places watch and pick up fresh perspectives and behaviors inside the community. A circle symbolizes an initial point that eventually returns to the original point. Therefore, a tour denotes a type of round-trip voyage, just like a circle. It involves departing and eventually returning to the same starting point, so someone who undertakes such a journey can be referred to as a tourist (Theobald, 1997). According to (Bishwakarma, 2018), tourism encompasses more than just visiting popular destinations it fosters closeness, uncovers hidden cultures, and improves cross-cultural communication and understanding. The actions of people who are classified as visitors are what the World Tourism Organization designated as tourism. Any person who travels for any reason- holidays, leisure and pleasure, business, health, education, or other reasons for less than a year is considered a tourist. (UNWTO, 2010)

Nepal is a landlocked nation that is situated between India and China. Nepal has a tonne of potential for rural travel. One of the main industries with the fastest global growth is tourism (WTO, 2003). Nepal is among the world's smallest yet most diversified nations due to its varied topography and range of elevation. It is one of the world's top travel destinations because of its abundance of natural, religious, and cultural resources. Together with being a popular destination for adventure travel, Nepal also has a promising future for tourism due to its pleasant climate and the welcoming nature of Nepalese people. Nepalese culture, which combines art and history with the beauty of nature and various kinds of attractions, is one reason for tourist attractions. Nepal depends mostly on tourism for its income. In Nepal, tourism is a significant source of foreign exchange and creates a large number of jobs. It is anticipated that the tourism industry will continue to be vital to Nepal's development despite certain unfavorable effects, given the country's limited resources (Pandey, 1995). The philosophy known as "Atithi Devo Bhava," which roughly translates to the

guest, is equivalent to God (Kapur, 2016), is widely held among Nepalese and has influenced the growth of homestay tourism in that country. Nepalese welcome guests with warmth and hospitality that is in line with their way of life since they regard them as gods (Lama M. , 2019).

Nepal Tourism Statistics 2018 reports that there are now 324 homestays in the nation, a 14.48 percent growth over the previous year. The growing trend of rural tourism in emerging nations is attributed to its unique and exotic social, cultural, and service offers that are both natural and man-made. Although rural tourism is a relatively new idea in some parts of Nepal, it has gained enormous popularity in the past ten years, especially in areas with scenic beauty. To operate small-scale tourism such as a homestay, minimal knowledge, skills, and material resources are enough. People from all cultures, religions, languages, and lifestyles will become closer through rural tourism, which will also offer a wider perspective on life. It can increase the development of social, cultural, and educational values in addition to providing jobs for the people. Many attractions and activities that happen in rural or agricultural areas are categorized as rural tourism. Large open landscapes, minimal tourism development, and chances for guests to engage with agricultural and natural settings firsthand are some of its key attributes.

As per the Central Bureau of Statistics (2012), Nepal has around 125 ethnic groups, 123 languages that are spoken there, and an extensive range of cultures, customs, values, and lifestyles. Nepal is distinguished by a highly stratified social structure, leading to the existence of numerous castes, even though the law and constitution have guaranteed equal rights to all ethnic and religious groups. In Nepal, a village functions as a distinct economic and political entity where most individuals' social connections are concentrated. People maintain deep emotional and structural bonds with their village (Kunwar, 2012). None of these communities attract tourists or are popular tourist sites. There are many different kinds of villages, including caste-based villages, homogeneous and heterogeneous villages, single-ethnic villages, multiethnic villages, and villages with many ancestry.

Exploring Nepal's breathtaking scenery and rich cultural heritage through rural tourism has become a highly sought-after and sustainable strategy. This provides a unique chance to interact with locals, participate in their traditions, and aid in the economic

growth of rural areas. The urbanization of the world increases the desire for people to travel for unique experiences that allow them to engage with the local people and nature. This is evident in Nepal with the provision of homestays, trekking to remote communities, and participating in subsistence farming.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study investigates how Nepali rural tourism development could support local populations' lives while offering visitors genuine experiences. The goal of the research is to identify obstacles and best practices in rural tourism and to provide methods for sustainable development by looking at present activities. It is anticipated that the results will aid in the development of community-based tourism activities and policies that improve tourist happiness and support local economic growth (Ayob, 2016). The primary aim of this study is,

- to evaluate Nepal's rural tourist industry as it stands today.
- to make recommendations for the development of rural tourism.

1.2 Research Questions

- How can rural tourism development enhance the sustainable livelihoods of local communities while providing authentic experiences for visitors?

2 Literature review

This section focuses mainly on reviewing the literature on the growth of homestay tourism, private homestay, and communal homestay in Nepal. Every study depends largely on existing knowledge, which forms the basis of the current investigation. The literature review covers the conceptual review, the empirical review, and other areas.

2.1 Concept and relevance of rural tourism

Rural residents can make money from rural tourism (Thakuri, 2016) , but it's a dynamic, ever-evolving industry that demands vision and foresight. Nepal has successfully integrated ecotourism using rural tourism. It gives visitors the chance to see every bit of rural communities home to a variety of animals and cultures. Travelers may experience authentic Nepali villages, sample delicious local food, sip locally produced drinks, and rest in cozy lodgings given by host families, all of which provide

an intimate look into the customs of the locals (Gurung, 2012). The term “rural tourism” refers to the acts of people visiting and remaining in rural areas for leisure, business, or other reasons for less than a year in a row without engaging in mass tourism (Lebe, 2006). It aims to support rural living’s long-term sustainability. It ought to drive rural sustainability as opposed to urbanization ((OECD)). Rural tourism depends on a wide range of naturally occurring and cultural resources owned by both the public and the private sector, as well as supporting infrastructure, interpretive services, and the supply of housing, food, drink, and other necessities. It is seen as a dynamic, multifaceted industry (Cawley, 2008).

Rural tourism is seen as a dynamic, multifaceted industry. It includes a variety of farm-based travel experiences and farm-based tourism to maximize human welfare and happiness through sustainable rural socioeconomic development, lessen regional and economic inequality, and aid in alleviating poverty (Upadhyay) . The socio-economic landscape is being utilized more and more to diversify and renew (Hall D. , 2000). It also includes ecotourism and nature travel tailored to specific interests, adventure travel, educational travel, walking, climbing, horseback riding, history and arts tourism, and, in certain cases, ethnic tourism (Lane, 1994). Additionally, rural tourism may make it easier for countries to share fundamental sociocultural values. Rural tourism can cross international boundaries by utilizing a range of notions, perspectives, and ideas (Samantaray, 2016). Rural areas have flourished in recent years, offering new prospects. A rich and varied industry, rural tourism has grown to encompass far more than the typical farm agricultural-based experiences. Rural tourism offers something special for everyone, whether it's strolling through scenic landscapes, going on exhilarating climbing and riding adventures, sports, putting health and wellness first, enjoying hunting and fishing activities, taking part in educational travel, getting lost in arts and heritage experiences, or discovering the diverse cultural and ethnic landscapes of particular regions (Paudyal, 2017). The allure of agrotourism, village tourism, and rural tourism typically overlap since experts and developers commonly use these phrases interchangeably. The abundance of activity in these locations can be linked to this phenomenon. The countryside's warm hospitality is closely linked to the agricultural industry. It offers a delightful range of accommodations, tasty dining options, and various recreational activities (Kovács, 2002). Tourism provides authentic and unique experiences for visitors. For residents, it serves as an alternative source

of income and contributes to preserving the area's natural resources and cultural heritage. A popular type of rural tourism is homestay, which allows guests from a local family to rent a room in a household environment. It can sometimes improve language skills and help you understand the local way of life.

The promotion of tourism as a growth engine for regeneration after the collapse of the agro-industrial sector or the diversification of remote marginal agricultural tourism is one of the main goals. Furthermore, it maintains some depth in a world that is becoming more and more flattened due to the effects of globalization (Tanahashi, 2010). In light of this, homestay influences people's social, cultural, and economic lives in addition to raising their standard of living (Subedi, 2016). It is a great method to earn foreign currency as well. It reduces the imbalance in the balance of payments, raises more tax revenue, promotes economic growth in the country, and increases job opportunities. It might even create new markets where native people can sell their goods, such as agricultural products and canned goods (Budhathoki, 2013). In developing countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Nepal, home-staying plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable community development in rural communities (Acharya, 2013). As a result, it has been a mechanism for improving living conditions in rural areas and decreasing poverty and other related issues by creating jobs.

Empirical review

Homestay tourism is a great approach for tourists to experience rural life and heritage since it allows them to spend time with a local family and learn about their customs, values, and culture. The tourism sector's culture and environment are closely related (Dhakal, 2022). The homestay sector's market value has grown with the rise in visitor demand. This business offers the indigenous people of the area financial support in return for protecting, preserving, and repairing the environment and their traditional way of life. Tourist demand generates market value in a commoditized environment and culture (Laurie, 2012).

Regarding homestay practices, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) defines "homestay" as "a visit to a home by a visitor, particularly a foreign student who is hosted by a local family." (Rasid& Razzaq 2011). In Nepal, community homestays are primarily found in charming little villages where people live simply and traditionally, away from the daily bustle of the city. The most fascinating aspects of the topic are the

expansive scenery, uncharted woods, upland gorges, many indigenous cultures, their distinctive way of life, and the cuisine found in Nepali communities. These elements provide a solid basis for community homestay tourism in the country. Nepal has a lot of untapped potential for homestay tourism in the majority of its villages (HTN, 2017).

A useful strategy for reducing rural poverty and reversing migration is homestay tourism. Trekking, ecotourism, agrotourism, cultural tourism, and health tourism are only a few of the various kinds of activities it incorporates. Homestay contributes to a nation's increased tax income. The local community may be encouraged to sell and offer their crafts, agricultural products, and other goods in new markets. Through this program, the literacy rate in the neighborhood has steadily grown. Homestays have also been explored in many other situations, which is why they are also known as heritage homestays, cultural homestays, educational homestays, volunteer stays, leisure stays, and urban stays (Pasa, 2020).

In 1995, Nepal incorporated a local tourism initiative into its national tourist policy. In 1997 AD, Nepal Village Resorts, a travel business based in Kathmandu, began as a marketing agency for village tourism products. The first village tourism in Nepal was introduced in Sirubari Village. When Sirubari Village Tourism was being planned, the locals were actively involved (Thakur, 2013). To ensure the successful growth and development of rural tourism in Nepal, each village has its own Tourism Development Management Committee, which is made up of community representatives (Shrestha, 2020). The sharing economy and collaborative consumerism are exemplified by homestays. The homestay program's development and evolution are closely tied to Nepalese culture. They used to be treated like gods by their hosts in rural Nepal, who offered them warm hospitality for free. People who travel to Nepal to view the Himalayas are known as tourists. To address these issues and reduce poverty in rural regions, the government launched village tourism in 1997. The first two villages to adopt the idea of community homestay, the first attempt by the Nepali government to promote village tourism, were Sirubari in Syangja District in west Nepal and Ghalegaon in Lamjung District in north-central Nepal (Panta, 2018). The new tourism policy was being formulated by the government. To promote sustainable tourism, it has developed the "Tourism Vision 2020" policy and implemented the 2008 Tourism Policy. To reach the ultimate goal, the government developed the homestay program's operational framework in 2010, addressing ecotourism and Nepal's sustainable tourist

growth. The government's "Nepal Tourism Year 2011" initiative is yet another compelling argument for increasing homestay travel to Nepal. A communal homestay is managed by at least five people. Although community homestays have been around for a while, staying there is growing in popularity as a more environmentally friendly vacation option and a better method for visitors to have a genuine understanding of the locals. By staying in the homes of local families, visitors can get a deeper understanding of the culture and daily life of their host community. They can participate in things like cooking regional cuisine, teaching at a school, or working alongside their host families in the fields. A private homestay is managed by a single person. When tourists stay in a home with a native of the city they are visiting, it's a common way to provide hospitality and lodging. The sharing economy and cooperative consumption are exemplified by the homestay design of the study.

Historical review

In Sirubari, Syanga, the first community-based homestay was established in April 1997. Later, in 2067 BS, the Nepali government implemented The Homestay Guideline to make homestay registration easier. Currently, there are a considerable number of unofficial homestays in Nepal that are trying to obtain official registration. There are currently more than 165 communal and private homestays in Nepal, with more than 40 districts having successfully registered homestays (Sharma, 2017). By the guidelines outlined in the Homestay Regulation of 2067, homestay operations are currently supervised by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) (MoCTCA., 2019) which is in charge of policing and marketing different tourism establishments (Sedi, 2018). The process of bringing local laws into line with directives established by the national and provincial governments is still being finalized, nevertheless, as a result of Nepal's transition to a federal democracy.

As of the end of 2018, 324 homestay establishments were officially registered with Kathmandu's Department of Tourism (DoT). There were 79 privately run homestays and 245 community homestays among them. Thirteen districts, including Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Rasuwa, Kaski, Kavre, Lalitpur, Makawanpur, Ramechhap, Chitwan, Nuwakot, Dhading, Pyuthan, and Mugu, accounted for the distribution of these registered homestays, 597 rooms, and 1006 beds were made available to visitors by these homestays combined (MoCTCA, NEPAL TOURISM STATISTICS 2018, 2019).

It is important to highlight that the number of homestays operating in the country exceeds what the Department of Tourism officially records. Consequently, the report does not account for these unregistered homestays. Homestay tourism has seen considerable growth and is increasingly popular in various regions of Nepal. Dalla, Khata Jaibik Marga Homestay, Amaltari Homestay, Lwang Ghalel Homestay, and Ghale Gaon Homestay are a few noteworthy success stories (Sedi, 2018).

Theoretical review

By encouraging visitors to stay with local families, homestays help to promote responsible tourism by reducing the environmental effects of large, resource-intensive hotels and resorts. This promotes a closer bond between visitors and locals, leading to a more authentic cultural interaction and a deeper understanding of regional traditions and customs. Additionally, homestays often direct funds straight to locals, thereby strengthening communities' economic resilience. The general development and well-being of the community can then be enhanced by reinvesting this income in healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

One excellent illustration of community-based tourism that is founded on the ideas of community-led development is homestays. By giving locals the chance to play a significant part in the tourism sector, these lodgings strengthen communities by turning locals into engaged hosts who directly interact with and profit from receiving visitors, so promoting economic empowerment. Additionally, community members actively participate in homestay operations decision-making processes, including setting rules and deciding on price structures. This guarantees that the community's opinions will influence the tourism experience, strengthening people's sense of accountability and ownership. The community's commitment to the prosperity of their hospitality enterprises is further strengthened by this ownership, which also extends to the running of homestay facilities. The community's commitment to the prosperity of their hospitality enterprises is further strengthened by this ownership, which also extends to the running of homestay facilities.

Homestays not only promote economic empowerment but also showcase regional customs, culture, and diverse lifestyles, offering visitors authentic local experiences. Additionally, they foster social interaction by providing income and economic opportunities to specific groups within the community. This helps foster more inclusive

tourism practices and expands the involvement of a wider range of community members in hosting tourists. The overall sustainability and success of these community-led projects are also enhanced by cooperation with local governments and tourism agencies, which guarantees that homestay programs follow the rules, maintain required infrastructure, and maintain safety standards. In summary, homestays are a prime example of community-led development since they allow local communities to directly benefit from tourism while also encouraging cross-cultural interaction and the empowerment and self-determination of these people.

2.2 Homestay and socio-cultural practices on social sustainability.

A vital part of rural development and cultural preservation in Nepal is homestay. Immigrants from Nepal believe that poverty is the primary source of many social ills, such as drug misuse, crime, and illiteracy. It has been determined that homestay tourism is an essential approach to regional development accompanying the decrease in poverty (Saxena, 2007). Aside from being a means of fostering economic growth, homestays can also be used to produce foreign exchange, create jobs, lessen income and employment gaps, fortify links between various industries, stop youth migration, combat poverty, make ethnic identity strong, safeguard property rights, and decrease in deforestation (Devkota, 2008). Homestays hurt local areas' identities because they introduce culture in an unneeded way, which causes cultural pollution in the community. Locals with a deeper understanding and a broader perspective have embraced homestay tourism to advance rural tourism and indigenous traditions, strengthening the rural community. Rural tourism is a means for stakeholders, both local and national, to come up with fresh ideas for developing prospects locally. Therefore, it is believed that tourism can be a special and forceful driver for the development of rural tourist communities (Kunwar, 2012). The main goal of this study is to examine its connections to the surrounding community.

A homestay that is managed by five or more persons is called a communal homestay. While community homestays have been around for a while, staying at them is growing in popularity as a more environmentally friendly form of travel and a better way for visitors to get to know the locals. Homestays in Nepal are usually found in small, rural communities away from the bustle of the big cities. To supervise homestay facilities and provide training for upholding high-quality homestay arrangements in rural areas,

the Nepal Tourism Board also formed district development committees (DDCs), Village development committees, and local cooperatives (Upreti, 2013). The Gandaki Province annual performance report from the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forestry, and Environment states that 298,975 foreign visitors came to the province during the fiscal year of 2019 and 2020. This indicates a more than two-thirds rise in foreign arrivals compared to the previous year. Travelers and visitors routinely share their practices, making tourism one of the most interesting industries in the world (Lama M. , 2013). Similarly, Indigenous cultures and practices can be effectively managed to support tourism businesses. Homestay programs have distinct cultures and values because they are primarily found in rural areas (Bhuiyan, 2011). In general, homestay hosts encourage the use of Indigenous cultural customs while entertaining visitors in their houses and giving them a chance to engage with Indigenous customs and values. The homestay program encourages community cohesion through cooperation and upholding customary social norms in the neighborhood (Ibrahim, 2011).

Sustainable rural development requires a holistic approach to promoting regional economies and urban-rural links. This approach involves meeting rural people's everyday fundamental requirements through dependable public utilities and technological, economic, and environmental circumstances (Iatu, 2020).

Sustainable development is essential for a country to remain viable on all fronts-economic, social, and environmental. Since the majority of poverty worldwide is found in rural areas, it is crucial for its eradication. Poverty manifests not only in the divide between urban and rural areas but also across sub-regional and regional contexts. Coordinating rural development initiatives that foster sustainable livelihoods on global, regional, national, and local scales is essential. Successful strategies in rural development utilize customized, focused methods, recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities of remote areas. (UN, 2022).

Sustainable rural development covers multiple sectors, such as agriculture, product processing and marketing, trade, industry, construction, crafts, infrastructure, and services. Additionally, it considers factors like population demographics, employment, culture, local history, and leisure tourism. Additionally, it covers water management, forestry, soil degradation, agroecology, conservation efforts, landscape maintenance,

settlement patterns, and the use of natural resources and environmental conditions (Merzolov, 2012).

Rural tourism is essential for the development of rural areas, as it offers both immediate and long-term benefits. This form of tourism can transform underdeveloped regions into sought-after destinations. It generates jobs, creates economic opportunities, promotes community involvement, and aids in environmental conservation. To achieve sustainable and lasting growth, it is crucial to implement well-designed policies that bolster the local economy, strengthen social structures, and protect the environment. These policies should address the specific challenges faced by rural areas while aligning with sustainable development goals, ensuring a balance between economic advancement and environmental preservation. A recent study examined how rural tourism contributes to sustainable rural development by creating job opportunities and preserving local culture and products. The key factors that significantly impact sustainable rural development through rural tourism include local products, tourist behavior, motivation, destination image, and the satisfaction experienced by tourists. Activities in rural areas, the rural environment, the beauty of rural areas, the sustainability of rural development, lodging in rural areas, the additional money that rural families can earn, active leisure activities in rural areas, rural culture, and the use of local resources are all included in rural tourism (Könyves, 2001).

According to (Polo, 2010), the growth of rural tourism is a great way to help rural areas develop. Similarly, (Marzo-Navarro) argued that rural tourism fosters destination areas' development and economic growth, making it essential to achieve environmental, sociocultural, and economic sustainability goals. One on-eleven jobs are today created by tourism, which is one of the factors driving worldwide economic growth, according to the (UNTWO, 2021). The country's rural areas face several challenges when it comes to the development of tourism. Despite numerous studies on rural tourism, neither the environmental nor the socioeconomic aspects of the industry have been fully explored. Therefore, the main concern for rural tourism is sustainability.

2.3 Tourism and residents

There has been significant dissatisfaction regarding tourism's inability to fulfill its promises of providing local benefits and improving local livelihoods. Research on 23

integrated conversation development projects, many of which included ecotourism elements, showed that only a small portion of the benefits reached local communities (Wells, 1992). Typically, the majority of active local participation is limited to low-skilled paying jobs that are frequently seasonal. Additionally, there is a good chance that the divide between community members who are actively participating in tourism and those who are not will grow. For instance, (Entus 2002) explains how existent power divisions may be created or intensified, resulting in the emergence of new corporate elites that only make up a small portion of the local populace. According to Nepal et al. 2002, the annual salary for a major lodge operator in the Annapurna region of Nepal will be more than 40 times that of an agricultural laborer and more than 10 times that of a trekking porter (Higham, 2007). Additionally, the perception that outsiders have of traditional ways of life can sometimes be seen as condescending. Just as anti-developmentalism idealizes the lives of Indigenous communities (Corbridge, 1995). It is improbable and unreasonable for the local population to embrace tourism as their only development plan, as suggested by Brandon and Margoluis (1996). The income requirements of low-income households are flexible, and they usually have higher aspirations than simply making ends meet. As a result, they might substitute for or divert from other, less sustainable activities. This is especially true when the element of the sustainability of tourism visits is taken into consideration. Moreover, romanticizing ancient ways of living in an attempt to find "otherness" by Western tourists usually fails to connect with local perspectives. An educational component is one of the guiding principles of tourism (Page, 2002). It is indisputable that, once again, western perspectives predominate and presume that First World notions of management are superior, even if there is a growing understanding that Indigenous knowledge is a crucial component of interpretation (Mowforth, 2003). Realizing that education is a two-way street and that the local indigenous cultures have a rich history of environmental management may teach us a lot is crucial. It's critical to acknowledge how inextricably linked nature and culture are in tourist areas (Hall C. , 1998).

In the field of sustainable rural development, this work is highly valuable from an academic standpoint. Its goal is to provide new perspectives by outlining the different ways in which rural tourism contributes to sustainable rural development. Critical research has to be done on the understudied topic of how rural tourism contributes to sustainable development in Nepal, especially when considering the country's social,

economic, and environmental aspects. This study sets the stage and provides important context for our topic, shining a light on the lack of previous academic research in Nepal concerning this specific aspect. As a result, there is a pressing need for current research to bridge this gap and perform a thorough investigation in this area field.

2.4 Literature review summary

A successful strategy in tourism must take into consideration the demographics of the community and their attitudes toward travel. The above section discusses several tourism strategies and participative methods. There has been a brief discussion of participatory typologies and empowerment, which is placed highest on the involvement ladder, as the goal of this study is to investigate how the development of rural tourism enhance community livelihoods. According to the literature, the widespread praise of community-based tourism, which is believed to be associated with social justice and environmental awareness, cannot be seen as harmless in real-world situations as its supporters suggested, unless a fair level of stakeholder participation referred to as empowerment level is mirrored in the actual situation. Significant negative effects of tourism on communities, like increased costs compared to benefits, are reflected in situations in which the stakeholders are marginalized by either external or local elites who actually control tourism in terms of money, human resources, and management choices. When locals have complete influence over tourism in their communities and better access to resources, as well as when stakeholders are more involved in the decision-making process, the community's perspective of higher benefits to costs is reflected. Although empowerment is shown as a deciding level in the involvement typology, it has numerous forms. In the real world, where the definition of "participation" is disputed, a significant question still stands: does the highest level of participation, or the citizen control level, naturally result in citizen empowerment? This is a compelling research gap in an already understudied real participation level. By determining the degree of local community members' involvement in tourism in their local settings and empowering them. This study will endeavor to add to the body of existing knowledge through a case study of Ghandruk village and Tharu Community. Nepal, where rural tourism (homestay) is booming, particularly in and around mountainside locations. The methodology chapter that follows provides an explanation of the research procedure, which is mainly inductive in nature.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A thesis or research paper's research methodology chapter gives a detailed description of the techniques and steps taken to carry out the investigation. It typically consists of the following essential elements: case study, interview techniques utilized in this study, data analysis, and data gathering (Kalso, 1985). This chapter covers the research design, data collection tools, data collection procedure, and data collection analysis based on qualitative research methodologies. Through qualitative research, individuals can learn more about the value that organizations and people place on a certain social or human situation. It also examines the possibilities for rural tourism in Nepal, concentrating on the area, and emphasizes the role that homestays might play in promoting tourism growth. The study's target population includes both residents and visitors. In addition to helping to extract rich data and offer an improved understanding of social phenomena, the case study method of research offers a deeper comprehension of how society operates in an area of interest (David M. Cascantea, 2010). As a result, the usage of case study-based approaches in tourism research has been growing.

3.2 Study Area

Case-study research is appropriate for a thorough, all-encompassing, and in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2013) that can offer a more clear view of local tourist growth (Kneafsey, 2000). This approach was taken in order to assess the research and obtain trustworthy information regarding homestay tourism's role in rural development. The everyday economic activity of the people has been impacted by the expansion of rural tourism. To illustrate the green characteristics of the community, the following case studies areas are presented:

3.2.1 Study Area 1 (Tharu Community Homestays)

The Terai region of Nepal is home to the indigenous Tharu people (Nepal Central Bureau, 2011). They make up 1.7 million, or 6.6%, of the country's overall population. The Tharu have been marginalized for generations despite being Nepal's second-

largest Indigenous group (Nepal Central Bureau, 2011). There is no conclusive study regarding the Tharu's origins, despite many academics thinking they are the region's indigenous people (Singh, 2006).

Surkhet boasts a variety of tourist attractions, including religious and historical sites such as Kankrebihar, Deutibajai, Bulbule Park, Ghantaghar, Bheri River, Mangalgadhi, Ranimatta, Ratanangla, Gothi Kanda, Ramrikanda, Phinikanda, and more. Kankrebihar stands out as a historically and archaeologically significant site, known for its religious harmony. The Bheri River is a popular destination for rafting and paragliding, while Gothi Kanda is celebrated as the gateway to Karnali, offering stunning views for visitors. Surkhet, with its fertile land, is an ideal destination for tourism year-round. The availability of regular road and air transportation makes it convenient for tourists to explore the district's many attractions.

The Patalganga Community Homestay is easily accessible via surface transport and foot trails, offering visitors a chance to immerse themselves in the local culture of the surrounding settlement. Surkhet District, often referred to as the capital of Karnali Province in Nepal, is one of the ten districts in the region, situated approximately 600 kilometers west of Kathmandu, the nation's capital. Covering an area of 2,488.64 square kilometers, Surkhet Valley is one of Nepal's Inner Terai Valleys. It is bordered by Jajarkot, Dailekh, and Achham to the north, Bardiya and Kailali to the south, Salyan to the east, and Doti to the west.

In recent years, travelers have been increasingly drawn to experiences that highlight heritage, natural environments, art, crafts, history, culture, rituals, language, and customs. The opportunity to observe and engage with how others live, think, and interact within their surroundings creates a compelling and enriching attraction. Tourists often seek to experience the essence of a locale through its arts, architecture, cuisine, traditional attire, music, painting, sculpture, festivals, and rituals. Authentic cultural attractions, such as local food, drinks, entertainment, and hospitality, also play a significant role in drawing visitors. Key destinations near the Patalganga Homestay in Surkhet Valley include Kankrebihar, Mangalgadhi, Bulbule Park, Nikas, Deutibajai Temple, Shiva Mandir, lush farmland, dense green forests, Gothikanda, Ramrikanda, and Ghantaghar.

The Patalganga Homestay, located in Birendranagar Municipality Ward No. 9, is a Tharu community village near the Kankrebihar protected area in Surkhet District, Nepal. Situated approximately 4 kilometers from the municipality and district headquarters, it is a 30-minute walk from Airport Chok along Ghushra Road. The homestays are managed by the Tharu community, one of Nepal's prominent ethnic groups. Established in 2076 BS, the Tharu Homestay was created to showcase the village's natural beauty, the unique Tharu culture of Karnali Province, organic food, and the warm hospitality of the locals. A 15-member homestay management committee oversees operations, with six homestays currently functioning. The initiative aims to empower Tharu women, develop their skills, boost economic growth, and preserve their language and culture. The homestay tourism concept has successfully promoted the village and Tharu culture, leaving a positive impact on both visitors and the local community.



Figure 1 – Tharu Community Homestay Reference

3.2.2 Study Area 2 (Ghandruk, The Annapurna Region)

The village of Ghandruk is located in the Kaski district in the Gandaki zone, which is in western Nepal, and is a popular tourist destination near the famous Annapurna Circuit and conservation area. The elevation of this village is more than 2050 meters above sea level. With the approval of Nepal's new constitution in 2015, the country's centralised system has been replaced by a federal framework with three levels of government: the federal, provincial, and municipal. As part of this reform, local

governments were restructured into *Gaunpalikas* (municipalities) through the merger of multiple former Village Development Committees (VDCs), granting them decentralized authority, powers, and jurisdiction. Under this reorganization, Ghandruk became part of Annapurna Gaunpalika, where it is designated as one of the municipality's nine administrative wards.

This town is known for having hosted trekkers throughout their lengthy journey to Annapurna Base Camp (ABC), or more recently, the Annapurna Circuit tour. Prior to the availability of lodging facilities along the trekking trails, including this village, trekkers would arrive with their hired porters and set up camp in tents for an overnight stay. If they wanted to, they may linger for days and take in the town's natural beauty. At first, some residents hosted and amused their foreign visitors in their homes, which they subsequently dubbed homestays, and charged them for the accommodations, meals, and services they offered.

The majority of the people living in Ghandruk village are Gurung. There is even a common belief that the village's name originated from Gundruk, a well-known Nepalese cuisine produced from green leafy vegetables that are fermented and then dried for later use. Over time, this dish changed its name to Ghandruk. Situated on the front of stunning white mountains, this community is surrounded by breathtaking greenery. On winter mornings, when chilly breezes overlap, the spectator can see the rising sun just next to them. The prevailing mountain tranquility, the unspoiled landscape, and most importantly, its proximity to the world-famous mountain ranges, including the Annapurnas, which are over 8000 meters tall and draw an increasing number of tourists from both domestic and foreign countries for the adventure trek.

The research area is the Rural Municipality (ARM), which has 23,417 residents and covers 417.74 square kilometres. It is located in the Kaski district of Nepal and is well known for focusing on energy, infrastructure, tourism, and agriculture. Eleven wards comprise the rural municipality, including Dhikurpokhri, Bhadauremagi, Salyan, Lumle, Dangsing, and Ghandruk. The boundaries of Annapurna Rural Municipality are shared by the following areas: Manang and Myagdi districts to the west, Parvat and Pokhara-Lekhnath Metropolitan Municipality to the south, and Machhapuchhre Rural Municipality to the east. Tourism, agriculture, and animal husbandry are the main economic sectors in the area. The main market areas are Nyanpul, Naudanda,

Birethanti, Kande, and Syauli. The area is well-known for its tourism destinations, which include Ghandruk, Ghodepani, Panchase, Ishru, Hidne Tal, and Annapurna Base Camp (ARM, Profile, 2017).

The French mountaineer Maurice Harjan's successful ascent of the Annapurna Himal in 1950 brought notoriety to the settlement of Ghandruk, which is part of the Annapurna Rural Municipality. Since then, travelers have found it to be a popular site, particularly for those who hike in the Ghandruk region. Ghandruk provides breathtaking views of the mountains, historical and religious attractions. Ghandruk has grown to be a popular tourist site in the area, drawing both domestic and foreign visitors (ARM, Record, 2021).

The three main pillars of Annapurna Rural Municipality development are infrastructure, tourism, and agriculture. Its Five-Year Plan has a strong emphasis on governance, human resources, industry, and energy. The plan aims to promote economic growth, improve water supply, sanitation, health care, and education, and ensure social security and sound governance. The goal is to raise the pace of economic growth from 5.2% to 8.5% in the coming years.



Figure 2 – Reference for Ghandruk Homestay

4. Data Collection Method

4.1 Introduction

Unstructured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were the main techniques used to collect data. Unstructured interviews increase understanding of the respondents' viewpoints and experiences while allowing for greater flexibility and in-depth response (Michael., 2020).

In terms of inquiry and investigation, this study is primarily qualitative. In contrast to quantitative research, which uses pre-made questionnaires that do not accurately reflect the contending and evolving social processes, qualitative research is strict and emergent for revealing deeper insights, particularly from dynamic social processes (Pritchard, 2011). Therefore, in a way, this type of inquiry is more suitable for this topic than a strictly quantitative research method. The study population for the specified research aims was the rural community of two villages Ghandruk village, which is located in mid-western Nepal on the way to the well-known Annapurna Circuit and a Tharu Village lies in Terai region. Since adventure trekking tourism first emerged in Nepal, Ghandruk Village has a reputation for welcoming trekkers, and community participation in tourism is growing daily in tandem with the region's tourism boom. The majority of the population in both the villages are entirely reliant on tourism, providing food and lodging for the tourists in their homes.

The first respondents are homestay operators or those who offer visitors homestay experiences. They were questioned informally about their goals, challenges, and thoughts on homestays' impact on the neighbourhood and the growth of the tourism industry. The questions go further into topics like why you want to launch a homestay business, what benefits and drawbacks you observe, and how tourism helps local communities. Likewise, the second type of responses consists of local handcrafters. The purpose of the data collection is to learn more about how traditional crafts support the local economy and draw in tourists. Open-ended inquiries are used to get insight into the value of handicrafts, the difficulties faced by labourers, and how their efforts align with broader tourism development goals. The third category of respondents comprises tour guides, who play a crucial role in the tourism industry in the area. Tour guides' perspectives, difficulties during homestays, and interactions with residents and visitors are all supposed to be explored through unstructured interviews. The

questions centre on how homestay tourism is changing, what guides think are sustainable practices, and how much of an impact it has on the community as a whole. Data is collected via online interviews with the chosen persons. Through Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, separate interviews were held. Interviews are conducted with respondents via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. To protect ethical concerns, each interviewee must give their prior informed consent. After the interview has been recorded, the information is theoretically analysed to find recurrent themes, construct narratives, and give background. The qualitative information gathered through unstructured interviews advances our understanding of homestay tourism potential, particularly concerning community-based components and their significance for tourism growth. The study's conclusions should provide governments, communities, and stakeholders with important new information about how to predict tourism patterns.

4.2 Unstructured Interviews

The study used unstructured interview questions to get firsthand information. Numerous Facebook pages running under the Kaski region's name have been searched. Initially, people loved and followed those pages. There are between 3,000 and 6,000 members on the Facebook pages that are available. Facebook groups were later joined on every page that was accessible. The Facebook pages explained the rationale for the thesis's conduct and highlighted how the research's conclusions provide important context for the local economy and community of the Kaski region. Simply stating that one would be interested in an interview was the requested response to the post. Individual messages have been sent by the respondents who are interested in taking part in the interviews. Through Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, several interviews were held. The majority of participants expressed a desire to join for the interviews over WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. In a similar way, three distinct participant groups, the homestay owners, the local handicraft business owners, and the guides, are also approached. With the assistance of the homestay owner and tour guide, a selection of travelers was made for an interview. Respondents for the interview are chosen from among the homestay owner's guests and tour guides. We conducted the interview with them over social media. An interview was held with homestay owners, local handicraft entrepreneurs, internal visitors, and

local tour guides in the Kaski region to learn more about the tourism industry and its challenges.

A wide range of questions, including company concerns, the visitor experience, and suggestions for improvement, were asked in the interviews. The participants were chosen from a varied population to gain a wide range of viewpoints on local tourism. Participants' availability was taken into consideration when scheduling the interview. Certainly, "When necessary, follow-up questions were asked to ensure the responders' perspectives were fully understood. Responses from the interviews were carefully documented. The researcher thoroughly reviewed and reduced the material to ensure its dependability and credibility. "The answers are grouped according to the common themes or problems of the subject. The distinctive concepts, patterns, and repeating themes were examined using thematic analysis. The primary patterns and topics that surface from the interview are arranged in various ways based on the overarching subject. In line with the research objectives, the outcome was interpreted. A comprehensive report was created from the research's findings. Within the research are the following sections: introduction, methodology, theme analysis, results, conclusion, and recommendation. This organizational style allows for the acquisition of significant insights through conversations with internal visitors, Kaski region tour guides, local homestay operators, and handicraft business owners. Finding enough foreign tourists to interview was challenging, but locating local tourists was simpler. The data was gathered from homestay operators, tour guides, local handicraft vendors, and visitors using the qualitative research approach. The longest interview lasted 35 minutes, while the shortest only lasted 9 minutes. The information was collected in Nepal in the morning and at night. Both interviewers and interviewees verified the time and date of the interview. Strategic consideration was given to the interview time in order to minimize any negative effects on the local beneficiary's business. There was an analysis. The most prevalent themes and patterns in the interview exchanges can be discovered through the use of a thematic content analysis approach.

Following the acquisition of all interview transcripts, the researcher gathered pertinent codes and became acquainted with the information. The researcher presents the number of codes obtained from a thorough analysis based on 15 respondents in an interview. To make sure that, every pertinent and fascinating trend is noted and

documented, the transcripts are carefully read more than once throughout the first step of the qualitative data analysis process. The research in Kaski districts revealed several noteworthy patterns, including the presence of internal tourists, local handicraft merchants, homestay owners, and tour guides in the interviews. We couldn't gather the expected amount of data due to the unavailability of the responders. From the collection of codes, the writers categorized similar and dissimilar codes. The researcher divides related and dissimilar categories to prevent duplication in the coding scheme. The researcher also offers precise and understandable categories that facilitate the creation of themes. The researcher reviews the codes, classifies them, develops topics, and assigns them the proper titles. At this point, the researcher intercepts the interview transcript and interpretation.

4.3 In-depth Interview

The research uses qualitative interviews to different degrees. There are many different ways to interview respondents, and it has also been established in the research culture. A list of communication specialists, regulatory organisations, social activists, and community development specialists was created in order to choose the sample and carry out the interviews. From both villages, a total of 16 specialists in the field were shortlisted. A set of criteria was used to shortlist the experts. This was primarily accomplished through web searches on the Internet and through the local residents. We looked at the expert backgrounds. The chosen responders were probably knowledgeable and experienced. Shortlisted participants were provided a brief overview of the study and an offer to participate prior to the interview. Out of 16, seven responded from both Villages. Prior to confirming their involvement in this study, they requested to view the questions in their responses. Later on, the seven responders that responded were provided the interview questionnaire, which had already been created for participation. The remaining essential participants were messaged and given an explanation of the study's objectives. After this procedure, 10 responders agreed to take part, and times for online interviews were scheduled with them specifically for that reason.

Participants from Tharu Community

A total of seven experts on the shortlist were contacted. Two experts wanted to participate but were unable to make the time for the interview, one confirmed but later

did not, and therefore three declined to participate. At the end, four participants were interviewed from Tharu Community.

Participants from Ghandruk Village

A total of nine experts were contacted from the shortlisted names. Three experts were unable to make the interview, and one declined to participate. Therefore, a total of four participants could not make to the interview. Finally, five participants were interviewed from Ghandruk Village.

In order to familiarise themselves with the research theme, participants were first briefed about the study before beginning the in-depth interviews. Each participant then filled out and signed a consent form in accordance with ethical considerations. After that, they were requested to provide a quick overview of themselves, covering their educational background, current position, and level of expertise in the communication and community development fields. It was simpler to completely comprehend the interviewee's personal and professional backgrounds because to this information. The respondents were then given the prepared questions to complete. The goal was to gather data on the many channels of communication that development organisations employed to mobilise and provide community development services, as well as how they approached communities and the degree of trust that is existed between them. Every response was properly noticed, recorded, and summarised.

4.4 Focus Group Discussion

The ability of focus group discussions to collect rich, dynamic data makes them an invaluable tool in qualitative research. The focus group approach is popular in qualitative research because it can generate rich data from several intra-stimulations in a reasonably efficient way. Because group settings promote spontaneity and a diversity of perspectives, this interaction frequently discloses insights that could remain concealed in solo interviews. Group settings encourage spontaneity and a range of viewpoints, thus this interaction often reveals information that could be hidden in one-on-one interviews (R., 2018). It is crucial to include stakeholders that either directly or indirectly affect or experience homestay tourism when choosing focus group members for research on homestay tourism in a village. The objective is to collect a range of representative viewpoints in order to fully understand local dynamics, possibilities, obstacles, and cultural effects. For this study, a number of community

groups were identified as focus groups of interest, including women's organisations, young people, seniors, business associations, and leaders. By considering these groups viewpoints, it develops a comprehensive picture of the village's effects from homestay tourism and provide practical suggestions that strike a balance between community well-being, cultural integrity, and economic progress. However, some members were able to attend more than one meeting because they were cross-members of the several groups. The group sessions took place at different locations and on different days, and the researcher would choose a topic such as what homestay tourism in their area meant to them, how they participated in it, and how it affected them. Throughout the process, each member of the group had the opportunity to voice their opinions and opinions on their own, and their body language was recorded at every turn. On most times, however, the researcher would bring up the subject and lead the sessions in which each person would present their opinions in turn, asking each other follow-up questions and encouraging mutual agreement or disagreement.

Focus Group Structure

Group	Participants	Topics
Group 1	Homestay owners and operators	Operations, challenges, guest expectation
Group 2	Elders and non-host residents	Benefits and risk of tourism, cultural preservation
Group 3	Women groups	Gender roles
Group 4	Youth and local guides	Future of tourism, digital tools and sustainability

4.5 Data Analysis

The information collected from various sources was first collected and coded before being subjected to analysis. The wide range of sources used in data collection methods might enhance the data's richness, which was essential for data triangulation. Since the collection of the data was qualitative, more perceptive observation analysis were needed. The audios received during the interview were converted into text and were organised for easy access. The data collected were read again and again for deeper understanding. The words and phrases captured were broke down into parts to

understand and analyze them. The repetitive ideas and concept was combined to understand its meaningful impact.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

The study design, technique, and tools utilised to address the stated research questions inside the research frame have all been covered in this chapter. The research, which was mostly qualitative in character and used a case study methodology, was carried out in Ghandruk village, a rural community in Nepal that is well-known for its community tourism. During qualitative approaches, the informants perceptive opinions were recorded. This part also included a detailed description of the study area and the methods used to collect the data, including focus groups, indepth interviews, and unstructured interviews. The next chapter provides more information on the data analyses and findings.

5. Result and Analysis

Homestay plays a vital role in Ghandruk's tourism industry. The 50-year-old leader feels that the interaction between the local population and the tourism industry has helped the industry flourish. He states, "Everyone feels that visitors to Ghandruk are their guests because of the positive relationship that exists between the tourism industry and the local community." All of the homestays here have set their service facilities at the same fee. Any visitor to Ghandruk can access the services and amenities of their choosing. He also said, the service facilities menu has remained the same, but we collectively update it each year. After getting off the automobile at Nayapul in Kaski, you have to walk for around five hours to reach Ghandruk, which is located at an altitude of 6,700 feet. A lot of tourists are excited to take this route to Ghandruk. Visitors to Ghandruk can also experience the allure of nightingales in the woods. He said, that following the growth of homestay tourism, people's standards of living have changed, and their income has increased. We were unaware that rural (homestays) tourism would result in such important improvements to the environment, economy, culture, and society. We're happy and have made room for the next generation.

Another respondent, a 34-year-old who runs a homestay in Ghandruk, asserts that Nepalis are also doing business here in order to assist foreign tourists. Since 2020, he

claims that there has been a rise in the number of domestic visitors visiting this location. There are dazzling rays that scatter when the sun rises. Visualizing the magnificent snow chain wave, which appears to be gold reflected from the earth, is possible. According to him, the region's draw is seeing more than 20 snow-capped peaks that are part of the more than 8,000-meter-high Manaslu, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri Mountain ranges. In his opinion, rural tourism is responsible for all the advancements in education, hiking routes, revenue, awareness, and cultural preservation and homestays.

According to a 48-year-old proprietor of a Hotel in Ghandruk stated that the cost is nearly the same because the local community frequently monitors the hotels and lodges in this area. Ghandruk, a model for rural tourism, also hosts cultural programs for visitors. This walkway is lined with crimson gourds that bloom throughout the months of Falgun and Chaitra. Even if the business is not well, he said that there is a daily revenue of 50,000. That's excellent. According to him, there are at least 200 tourists that visit Ghandruk every day, but on Friday and Saturday, there are up to 1000. Even the non-earners now make up to three lakhs a year, while the earners used to make fifteen lakhs. Social development has benefited health, sanitation, COVID-19 immunization, environmental awareness and action, deforestation prevention programs, and disaster preparedness because of rural tourism. He stated that wards 10 and 11 are also engaged in homestay tourism.

Similarly, participants from Tharu community have also responded about the same improvements from home stay tourism. Homestay tourism has been their one of the main attractions to their village. A respondent 1, who had a clear vision and organized programs and was instrumental in leading homestay tourism, said,

“Homestay tourism depends on the Tharu people's existence and the preservation of their culture. In addition to raising living standards, it has become a source of income.” Additionally, it has helped local communities sustain rural development and their livelihoods. It has halted the migration process and brought positive changes to society. As a result, it has proven to be a local business that supports livelihoods and promotes our culture.

He emphasized that homestay tourism was essential to sustaining local customs and means of subsistence. Additionally, it has acted as a catalyst for sociocultural transformation in society.

However, another respondent 2 highlights a different viewpoint on rural tourism.

According to her, "Homestay tourism is recognized as a local business that supports and promotes local cultures. The empowerment of women has been made possible through fundamental rights and freedoms provided by this business model, which is homestays. The economic status of women has greatly improved since homestays were implemented. Because this effort has used most local resources, it has also increased employment in the area. Women are now more empowered and conscious of their rights and how to run the home as a result. Social organizations such as Mahila Samuh (Women's Groups) have been formed to help women exercise their influence for social advancement. The closing remarks emphasized the advantages of homestays, which enhanced women's social and economic power."

The substantial efforts undertaken to maintain the indigenous language and culture were also discussed by respondent 3. Labour migration is one factor that adversely affects the day-to-day lives of the Tharu people. He responded, "Tharus' everyday routines and behaviors are evolving in order to adapt to these new, contemporary communities. They are also making a lot of effort to shed their previous culture and traditions and create a new identity. The Tharu language is currently confused with several other national and international tongues. Despite this, it has completely changed the way they live. They have also welcomed homestays as a way to promote and preserve their indigenous cultures."

The case studies show how the homestay tourism industry supports the sociocultural advancement of the neighborhood. Because of the majority of homestay tourism sites and Naya Gao's unique culture, out-migration was declining, and in-migration was rising. One way to illustrate the sustainability of a rural community is through the maintenance of its customs and cultures. It promoted stronger government agencies as well as leadership development and capacity building in the local community. It has provided help for the inhabitants' livelihoods. Moreover, homestays are being promoted, and both government and non-government organizations are receiving more local and foreign travelers.

5.1 Rural tourism development

The homestay operators have set up a community tourist fund to support the village's overall growth and promote Tharu culture and customs. According to a recipient,

Homestay operators provide 10% of their profits to the Community Tourism Fund in order to further homestay tourism, while they keep 90% of the total gain. Advertising, brochures, media, and other means are used to promote homestay tourism and strengthen regional and national networks through cultural programs and events. We also contact legislators, government officials, field officers from the Community Forest Coordination Committee (CFCC), the District Federation, and other local authorities to discuss plans and policies to develop and promote rural tourism. As a result, in an effort to reduce labor migration and promote self-reliance, we are all placing increasing focus on youth self-employment.

Aside from marketing their goods in labor markets, locals promote homestay tourism. They are actively involved in various training programs to improve their agricultural skills. The role of local media in promoting local products and cultures cannot be overstated, as it is a crucial element in ensuring the long-term sustainability of homestay tourism (Silva, 2021). I watched the media team during data collecting, and they were taking an active part in the cultural program planned for the tourists' amusement. They promoted the advantages and possibilities of homestay tourism. The locals placed a strong emphasis on sustainable tourism and community development. Additionally, they were using organic farming to advance regional goods and customs.

Additionally, they prioritized community-based tourism since it helped them sustain their economic activities and gave them the means to give financial assistance to those in need. The Tharus made their living by running homestays. However, they placed a strong priority on using regional agricultural products to further their customs and culture. To give guests a true sense of the local way of life, they concentrated on marketing alternative and local cuisine products such fish, pig, mouse, and dove meat, as well as Gundruk (dry radish and cabbage leaves), Dhikri (made of paddy flour), and Ghongi (snail). The purpose of the community tourist fund is to give citizens financial assistance in managing their economic activities and regulating local enterprises.

5.2 Cultural Exchange

Numerous variables have a major role in shaping the growth of rural tourism in the Kaski district. Local community characteristics, such as local culture, local products, or other native qualities of the community, are among the significant factors this research revealed that impacted rural tourist development. For example, one study revealed that local tourism has aided in the promotion of handcraft businesses. The tourist was drawn to the handcrafted goods made locally to take home as mementos. Homestay hosts stress the importance of cross-cultural learning. They remark on how much fun it is to teach visitors to the customs, celebrations, language, and culture of the area. It is about giving visitors an immersive experience that allows them to become a part of the community, not just about offering lodging and food. They contend that cross-cultural communication fosters mutual respect and understanding. A 43-year-old man who owns a handcraft business in Ghandruk believes souvenirs are crucial to maintaining and protecting authentic experiences.

For my handcraft company, tourists and tourism represent a significant market. The majority of tourists usually look for genuine, regionally produced mementos.

In a similar vein, a male homestay host, 50, gave information regarding cultural exchange and provided details about the various cultures and tales that visitors carry with them. In order to find out more about the authenticity, the guesthouse owners are urged to interact with the local artisans. Similar to a cross-cultural exchange. In the social performance of tourism, homestay operators become storytellers during interviews. In Kaski, tourists arrive representing a multitude of languages, cultures, and lifestyles. For the guesthouse owners, it feels like flipping through the pages of a vibrant book. Furthermore, the impact on society goes beyond the boundaries of the homestay. This cultural exchange engages the entire community. Festivals gain greater significance when locals and visitors from other countries participate. Goodwill is built via these interactions and is retained by the community even after the tourists depart. Visitors engage in local customs and activities as well as cultural interactions. This has led to a better understanding between visitors and residents of our community, creating enduring relationships that go beyond the typical tourist experience.

Tour guides emphasize the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage. A 24-year-old boy has enlightened guests about the significance of preserving unique cultural traits. The guides highlight the necessity of practicing responsible tourism. Furthermore, he encourages visitors to respect local traditions, customs, and natural resources. "Additionally, there is a positive cultural exchange when locals interact with visitors. Things are getting better. Whoa! I've seen an increase in interest in regionally produced mementos."

5.3 Economic benefits for the community

The study finds that visitors who stay in neighborhood residences directly support the community's economic advantages. Both the host families and the greater community gain from the exchange of cash for food and housing during homestays. Since it allows the community to actively engage in tourism and benefit from it, this economic contribution is especially significant during the engagement stage. A 45-year-old male homestay host discovered that many people now turn to tourism as a substitute source of income.

Residents now have additional sources of income, and the total amount received has been used to fund communal initiatives like healthcare and education. For my family, it has become a dependable source of money.

In a similar way, the demand for tour guides rises in tandem with the number of visitors. More money is available to pay for children's education when tour guides earn more money. 44-year-old tour guides believe that tourism improves recreational and educational facilities and provides funding for high-quality education. He said "I've witnessed families in the Kaski region entrusting their kids to local cultural schools that receive funding from tourism,". This positive trend is empowering the younger generation to continue their cultural heritage traditions." The 55-year-old guesthouse owner claims that receiving money from visitors is one of the key benefits of running a homestay. A genuine and immersive experience is what drives travelers to stay at homestays. The revenue generated by visitors directly contributes to the economic development of the host community. The community gains from more tourism because it stimulates the local economy.

To understand how local communities shape and control tourism in their area and how this relates to their sense of empowerment. I spoke directly with various members of

a village called Ghandruk. Through these conversations, along with my own observations, it became clear that tourism here isn't steered by outside forces or government plans. Instead, it's the community itself that drives growth, responding organically to rising visitor numbers and local priorities. Policies and plans are crafted by villagers to support this grassroots momentum.

But while everyone I spoke to agreed that the community plays a central role, there was confusion about what "the community" actually means. Is it every villager? Elected leaders? Or just a handful of knowledgeable individuals? When I asked about who controls tourism planning, a local tourism board official explained: "Tourism here is community-driven. Our role is to support them when needed, like marketing the village. They handle planning and development themselves though they do align with conservation guidelines to protect the environment. That said, in reality, only a small group tends to lead these efforts."

This suggests that while everyone's voices matter, decision-making often falls to skilled leaders who have the experience and knowledge to manage tourism strategically a bit like democratic governance. However, what was remarkable was how inclusive the process appeared to be. Villagers frequently invite one other to public gatherings, exchange updates, and seek feedback on important matters. A sense of shared ownership is promoted by this lively, transparent conversation.

In the end, Ghandruk's approach to tourism shows how local empowerment can thrive when communities lead the way. While leadership may lean on a few capable individuals, the commitment to involving everyone—listening, discussing, and collaborating creates meaningful participation. It's a balance of grassroots initiative and collective responsibility, proving that sustainable tourism can flourish when it's truly *by* and *for* the people.

The community was divided into two distinct areas when it came to tourism and how involved people were in it. This meant that the level of economic empowerment varied depending on where people lived. Those in the core zone were deeply connected to tourism, with most working in it full-time. The number of tourists that visited the village directly affected their revenue, and frequently several family members or even whole families had tourism-related businesses. This was a clear example of how tourism had

empowered these individuals economically, giving them opportunities to thrive through the industry.

On the other hand, for those living outside the core zone, in the more peripheral areas, the situation was different. People in these outer zones were only partially involved in tourism. Some earned income by working seasonal or occasional jobs in the sector or by selling food and goods to the tourism businesses in the core zone. These were their main ways of benefiting economically from tourism. Others in the peripheral zone had no connection to tourism at all and missed out on its economic opportunities. As a result, those in the core zone were far more economically empowered than those in the outer areas.

This difference was highlighted when a researcher asked an elderly villager why they had chosen to prioritize building a motorable road over preserving an ancient trekking route, despite its historical significance. The villager responded, "We need development in our village. Why do we need a road? Why do we not require tourists? We don't care as much about these questions. We can travel more easily when there is a road. Although others claim it destroyed the trekking path, the road is more significant to us. This response demonstrated the community's pragmatic values, even if it meant giving up some of their historical heritage.

In conclusion, as their business operations expanded in parallel with the growing number of tourists, residents in the main tourism zone felt a great sense of economic empowerment. They had a strong stake in tourism, frequently taking advantage of the opportunities it provided for whole families. However, those living in the more distant peripheral areas remained largely untouched by tourism. Any economic benefits they gained from the industry were minimal and indirect, such as occasional work or selling goods to core zone businesses. As a result, their level of economic empowerment through tourism was far less noticeable and impactful compared to those in the core zone.

5.4 Change in the socioeconomic status of the community

The researcher interviewed Ward representatives from both homestay places. These delegates expressed their support for the growth and advancement of Ghandruk and Tharu homestays. They have upgraded roads to paved surfaces and built gravel roads as part of their infrastructure improvement efforts. To improve accessibility, new

bridges have also been built across Urma's Kandra River. The researcher found that every household member in both villages where the homestays are situated works in labor, homestay administration, and agriculture. The researcher observed that there were notable shifts in workplace culture over the study period and that economic trends improved over time. The homestays served as one of the main sources of money. In order to promote and draw internal tourism to both homestays, the researcher has seen a high level of cooperation between the houses operating the homestays and the community members, especially when it comes to planning cultural events, traditional dances, and other cultural activities.

In addition to actively supporting one another in a variety of community development projects, community members are essential in spreading the word about homestays. To keep their neighborhoods tidy and clean, they assume responsibility for duties like garbage management and sanitation. It was notable how welcoming both homestay villages were to the researcher during their visit. People running homestays in both areas shared their hopes for support from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local governments. They're looking for help to preserve and promote their cultural traditions while also strengthening the homestay experience for visitors. In addition, they underlined the necessity of improved basic infrastructure, including clean drinking water, trustworthy roads, electricity, the internet, and media access. In order to better sell their homestays, they also showed interest in technology assistance, such as building websites and using media. They are also looking forward to training programs that will help them develop their ability to create captivating trip packages, which might help them grow their businesses even more. All things considered, they consider these changes to be important turning points in expanding their homestays and introducing more people to their culture.

All the women in the community are actively engaged in both homestay management and agriculture. During an interview, the women shared that they have a culture of shared decision making between men and women, and all the women are deeply involved in economic activities. Before the homestays were established, women were primarily limited to agricultural work, and their decision-making power, as well as their income-generating opportunities, were quite restricted. However, with the introduction of homestays, women have been able to contribute more significantly to their family's income. This has not only boosted their economic role but also strengthened their

decision-making power within their households. The homestays have become a vital source of empowerment, allowing women to play a more active and influential role in both their families and the community.

5.5 Tourist interview

Tourists may choose to visit the Kaski neighborhood for a variety of reasons. According to the results, seeking a respite from stress or every day routines is a significant factor influencing tourism in the Kaski district. According to a 29-year-old male visitor, he picks the Kaski areas in order to escape his daily routine. Travelers have stated that their desire to travel outside of their own region is fuelled by their boredom with their everyday routines. Refreshment of the body and mind is associated with the physical motivators. The male visitor, who is 26 years old, acknowledges that he came to the Kaski neighborhood in order to escape the metropolis. The primary motivation for visiting the Kaski region is to get away from the hectic life of the metropolis. Travelers seek a respite from daily responsibilities or tension. People who travel to meet new people and escape their native surroundings and daily routines are examples of interpersonal motivators.

Following an analysis of the tourist's interview data and the research hypothesis, it was determined that the reason for traveling to the Kaski district was to have a refreshment. The hypothesis describes how a person decides where to go on vacation the driving cause behind a person's departure from their everyday routine.

The desire to learn and experience new things is another significant reason why visitors come to the Kaski area. According to a 26-year-old male traveler, he decided to visit the Kaski District because he was internally motivated to gain knowledge, development, and experience. The main goals of travel are experience and education. The motivation element is also categorized by the tourist motivational theory. Travelers have stated that they are visiting the Kaski district in order to gain new experiences and information. A prestige-driven individual aspires to travel for his personal growth—this type of motivator journeys to acquire expertise and information. According to a 32-year-old male traveler, traveling broadens one's knowledge and enables one to discover new locations. It gives me the opportunity to grow, learn, and see new places. A 27-year-old female traveler has shown a strong interest in community-based tourism, seeking opportunities to engage with local communities and enjoy authentic

cultural experiences. Staying at a homestay enables her to connect directly with locals, improving a deeper understanding of their daily lives and cultural practices. She gains insight into the community's lifestyle and traditions by getting herself included in their routines. She said, "I recently traveled to the Kaski region to engage in community-based tourism, choosing for a homestay to fully immerse myself in the local lifestyle and establish genuine connections with the community members."

When visiting the Kaski neighbourhood, tourists can understand and interact with the data from the analysis of tourist interviews, as well as the study hypothesis and its consequences. Their interest in study and activities is linked to this personal development. The district's cultural richness and natural beauty are important draws for travellers visiting the Kaski region. A 32-year-old male tourist says that the natural beauty and cultural diversity of the Kaski district was what drew him in. "I was attracted to these locations by their peaceful landscapes, traditions, and friendly locals," he said. People are encouraged to explore and recognise the allure of rural places by their alluring features and attractions. Tourists select destinations for various reasons, such as gaining insight into the lifestyles of people in that region. They are drawn to places for their traditional cuisine, opportunities to explore outdoor activities, and the chance to experience unique and exotic environments. A 29-year-old male tourist admits to traveling to Kaski to witness the breathtaking views of the mountains. The surrounding landscape and geography of the Kaski district attract visitors, with the serene Phewa Lake and the stunning Annapurna range standing out as remarkable highlights.

The information gathered from the tourist analysis, the study theory, and the result is that tourists should explore the natural beauty of the Kaski district. They come to the neighborhood because of its natural beauty.

5.6 Challenges

The Constitution of 2072 AD states that Nepal's government is split into three levels: local, state, and union. According to the Constitution's Schedule 5, the union government is responsible for collecting tourism fees. Schedule 6 assigns the collection of tourism service fees to the provincial government, while Schedule 8 permits local authorities to collect tourism fees as well (Government of Nepal, 2072). The previously mentioned constitution is unclear on the rights and amenities that the government offers to visitors, as well as its duties to them (Chitrakar, 2022). Creating

defined laws for tourism, homestays, and rural tourism in Nepal is difficult due to the lack of specific norms. The lack of infrastructure development in Nepal's rural areas has made homestay tourism unappealing to international travelers thus far. Issues such as inadequate roads, transportation, energy, communication facilities, clean drinking water, cozy accommodations, nutritious local cuisine, entertainment, and security discourage visitors. Governments at all levels should give the tourism industry top priority and efficient management in order to address this (Aryal, 2016). Although homestays and rural tourism present exciting opportunities for cultural and ecological encounters, their management and protection are lacking. It is insufficient to merely rely on natural beauty and cultural events to draw tourists; additional facilities, services, and catering alternatives should be created to increase Nepal's appeal to tourists.

The primary obstacle in Nepali homestay business is the restricted utilization of Indigenous goods. Although the goal of homestays is to use more locally produced food, many of them wind up utilizing rice, pulses, veggies, and other commodities from abroad. Another flaw is that homestay hosts frequently lack the necessary training. These flaws cause the cultural sector to be distorted and preferred things to become unavailable (Upadhaya, 2011). It is crucial to carefully solve these shortcomings to guarantee homestay tourism's continued prosperity in Nepal. The chances for homestay tourism will increase with the identification and gradual resolution of each issue, which will result in a higher return on investment (Devkota, et al., 2023). In addition to helping local communities, promoting the usage of locally produced goods and giving homestay hosts the right training can greatly improve visitors' overall experiences.

Some guests staying at homestays encounter challenging circumstances. Unexpectedly, some travelers show up at homestays and express a want to stay. However, the homes must provide them with delectable meals on schedule. The host family feels embarrassed about pleasing them because they are ill-prepared for such things. In a similar vein, some visitors to the homes have also had sexual intents, which has made the women feel uneasy.

On the other hand, homestay households also deal with internal issues. They think that not all visitors will find their homes, which reflect the normal local way of life, to be

convenient. The dwellings consist of earth, bamboo, and cow dung for polishing. These homes have tiny windows that resemble ventilators. In the winter, the grassroots may begin to leak water. The restrooms are open and do not have adjoining toilets. The accommodations do not include luxurious beds, televisions, filters, or solar lighting. Furthermore, not all households have received the necessary training to enhance their service capabilities.

Naya Gaon Homestay (NGH) members lack digital cameras, preventing them from producing films that showcase their activities and traditions to promote their homestays. Additionally, they lack a dedicated museum to display their decorations and uncommon cultural instruments. As requested by the visitors, NGH organizes dances and cultural performances. However, they organize performances at various exhibitions, and very few women dress in traditional garb and jewelry for their roles. As a result, it detracts from and makes the entire presentation less engaging. Off-seasons are when visitors are least able to enjoy local cuisines, such as Dhikri (rice flour), Ghonghi (snail), local chicken, pigeon flesh, swine meat, local prawn, and Tharu delicacies (snails and crab). Families have seen that the majority of visitors ask the host family for local chicken, which may require them to go a considerable distance if it is unavailable nearby. Similarly, when speaking with foreign visitors, the homes are unable to communicate in English. They are unable to share necessities with them because of language barriers. As a result, the visitors become irate, are unwilling to stay, and look for somewhere else to stay.

6. Findings

The research findings highlight that as tourism grows in a local community where residents have full control over the industry, local participation also increases. Over time, distinct zones of tourism activity emerge: the core service zones and the peripheral service zones. The core zone is typically the more densely populated area of the community where the main tourism activities, such as accommodation and catering services for visitors, take place. The service providers in this zone are well-resourced, with access to capital, experience, skills, and knowledge, and they are usually fully engaged in tourism businesses. In contrast, the peripheral zones are the

outlying areas where residents participate in tourism indirectly or partially. They might provide labor or sell farm produce to tourism businesses in the core zone but often lack the resources, skills, and experience needed to run their own full-time tourism operations. However, the extent to which these participants can benefit from tourism is limited by factors like fluctuations in visitor numbers and the area's carrying capacity.

In the previous chapter, it was observed that in rural communities like Ghandruk, where local residents have a dominant stake in tourism and outsiders are discouraged from entering the industry, local participation grows alongside the increasing number of visitors and the overall development of tourism. Initially, while many community members were eager to engage in tourism for its economic opportunities, some faced challenges such as limited resources, skills, or personal constraints, which prevented them from fully benefiting from the industry. However eventually, some people gathered up knowledge from others, developed new abilities, and saved up enough money to make tourism investments. Before becoming core entrepreneurs themselves, they began in the outside world by supplying goods and services to companies in the core zone. This shift was largely driven by the growing number of visitors, which created more opportunities for those who could overcome their initial limitations.

As tourism continued to grow, those with enhanced skills and fewer constraints were able to fully engage in tourism businesses, reaping greater benefits. Meanwhile, those with fewer skills or lingering constraints took on supporting roles, indirectly or partially participating in tourism by assisting full-time business owners. This dynamic led to the creation of two distinct zones: the core service providers zone, where influential business owners operated full-time, and the peripheral service providers *zone*, where residents had partial or indirect involvement in tourism. These zones were defined by the level of engagement—whether individuals were fully or partially involved in tourism.

One important finding is that, although not at the same rate, involvement improved in both zones as tourism grew. For example, some people from the outside world migrated to the core zone to launch their own tourism businesses after gaining confidence and saving money. In the exact same way, locals who had not previously been involved in tourism started learning how to host, cater, and start their own

business before moving into the outer regions. Some of these people eventually made the shift from part-time to full-time involvement, which helped to bring the limits closer to the center. As a result, the outside service area progressively moved closer to joining the core service area, mirroring the changing dynamics of community economic empowerment and tourism engagement.

7. Conclusion

This comprehensive study provides a detailed analysis of how rural tourism is expanding and significantly improving the standard of living for the community. Homestays are now a fundamental component for locals to enhance their standard of living. Furthermore, these homestays play a crucial role in creating self-employment opportunities and promoting stability within the local labor markets in the village. This study thoroughly examines the growth of rural tourism and its significant impact on improving the quality of life in the community. Local homestays are essential for residents to enhance their living standards and generate job opportunities in the village. Since adopting homestay as a household strategy and the most advantageous local business, Tharus has seen a considerable improvement in its standard of living. Every household has expressed a strong desire to maintain economic growth by changing established processes.

Nevertheless, they face significant obstacles in running a homestay. They are not fully supporting rural tourism; instead, they are running homestays using local knowledge and skills. Because we live in a competitive world, it's imperative that we make the best use of contemporary technologies to transform the development of rural tourism. The article notes that Tharus depended on their homestay as their primary source of income. Due to their involvement in homestay operations, labor migration rates are steadily declining, they are gaining economic empowerment, and they are evicting Sukumbasi (slums) and Kamaiyas (bonded laborers). As a result, homestay tourism has given them the best means of achieving both economic expansion and the sociocultural development of the hamlet. In some situations, the idea of rural tourism can act as the cornerstone of sustainable development. It can be independently managed and runs on a demand-driven model that promotes local stakeholders while helping urban dwellers and domestic entrepreneurs. In Nepal, it has been demonstrated that rural tourism significantly improves the well-being of rural residents

by lowering out-migration and promoting the growth of rural areas. It can work in concert with other local economic sectors, even though it cannot be the only one. Ghandruk is an example of a place where rural tourism is successful and beneficial for the environment, the economy, and society. The development of rural tourism within this area has enhanced the community's standard of living, created new employment opportunities, fostered new businesses, and enhanced the local culture. This demonstrates how rural tourism has a significant impact on rural development that is sustainable. There are no adverse effects on youth in the villages, social endeavors, religion, or culture. The main obstacles to the sustainable growth of village tourism have been identified as a lack of tourism education, connectedness or transportation infrastructure, and trained labor. However, The general consensus about shifts in customary work, way of life, and eating and sleeping arrangements cannot, for instance, be seen as positive developments emerging from village tourism. Such an approach could put indigenous identity in danger, which is important for the sustainable development of village tourism.

Additionally, visitors demonstrate their environmental responsibility by making a commitment to support the preservation of local cultural landmarks and places of worship. Additionally, visitors claim that they come to the Kaski neighborhood in order to escape city life for a few days. Visitors seek out the Kaski area in order to rejuvenate both physically and mentally. Some people go to the Kaski region to explore and take in the new culture. Some tourists travel to self-develop by learning about the local people and their way of life. Others want to refresh themselves physically and psychologically and thus look for the Kaski region. Many people also visit Kaski Region for the purpose of exploring and experiencing a new culture. Some tourists travel to self-develop by learning about the local people and their way of life.

To sum up, within the framework of the Kaski district there is a study on tourism in rural areas focusing on the impact of tourism for the local people and vice versa. Local participation of tourists in some customs and programs promotes appreciation and friendship which is very important. The study aims to provide and justify a need to achieve a balance in the economic interest and the social well being of the people.

People travel to Kaski to unwind, learn, and enjoy the area's natural and cultural splendor. The study's overall findings emphasize the dynamic nature of tourism and its wide range of effects on the local economy and environment.

8. Recommendation

The study findings provide several recommendations for policymakers, stakeholders, and individuals involved in tourism and tourism marketing in the area. First, in order to improve the lot of rural people, there is an urgent need for efficient resource mobilisation. Initiatives like the "One Family, One Product" program, which encourages each household to produce and promote a unique local product, can engage the youth and improve economic growth. Furthermore, local financial institutions need to provide substantial assistance to homestay owners, enabling them to maintain and grow their businesses.

Effective waste management and improved road infrastructure are also essential, as these factors significantly influence the ability to attract and retain tourists. Government bodies such as the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, the Nepal Tourism Board, and other tourism-related organizations should actively support tourism development. Promoting agro-based rural markets can greatly contribute to rural development by creating opportunities for local farmers and producers. Additionally, introducing tourism education at the local level can help build a skilled workforce and foster a stronger connection between the community and the tourism industry. Finally, it is important for homestay owners, stakeholders, and tourists to responsibly adhere to the Homestay Rules of 2067 (according to the Nepali calendar). These rules offer a framework for sustainable and ethical tourism practices. By following these guidelines, all parties can contribute to the long-term success of rural areas tourism. Overall, these recommendations aim to promote sustainable rural development, empower local communities, and maximize the benefits of rural tourism in the study area. The area can establish an effective tourism environment that benefits both locals and tourists by putting these strategies into practice.

9. References

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Appendix A

Interview Questions Outline

1. Family Status
 - Name
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Marital Status
 - Occupation
2. Education status
 - Level
 - Source of education
 - Training or courses
3. Employment status
 - Agriculture
 - Homestay
 - Service
 - Business
 - Labor
 - Others
4. Employment type
 - Part-time
 - Full time
5. Questions related to self- reliance:
 - How do people behave around them?
 - To what extent do you ask your neighbours for help?
 - Do you expect aid from other people or organisation?
 - Are you confident in what you are doing?
6. Questions related to Income?
 - Number of visitors per month
 - Average expenses of tourists
 - Average income from homestay
 - Monthly income before and after the homestay business
 - Savings
 - Major expenses area in homestay
 - Debt and loans
 - Rules and regulation from government
 - Lifestyle before and after homestay.

Outline for In-depth Interview

- What challenges do you face in managing homestay?
- Who are homestay's potential customers?
- How do people feel about preserving traditional technologies?
- How do you make sure that visitors receive quality service?
- How do you promote homestay?
- Do you contribute towards development?
- Do you see growth or improvement in future?
- Has homestay created job opportunities to the people living in that community?
- How are they exchanging interaction, with the visitors?
- Do community and homestay work together or will they in the future?

Outline for focused group interviews

- What are this area's offerings and points of interest? Does that attraction have a history?
- Do you believe that visitors who visit your location are happy?
- How are you going to encourage visitors to stay longer than they usually do?
- Has the livelihood of those managing the homestay changed in any way, in your opinion?

Appendix B

Declaration on Using AI

This study employs a qualitative approach to evaluate Nepal's rural tourism industry as it stands today and how its development enhances the livelihoods of the community.

The author writes the majority of the content; however, I have used Generative AI (Grammarly) to make the sentence grammatically correct and rephrase part of the text to make it more in an academic way, whenever I felt my writing has clarity issues. Moreover, I have used AI to help myself to interpret the respondent's intentions during an interview, as most of the interview was not taken in English language.

Lastly, for grammatical accuracy, I depend on Grammarly web app to check and correct the errors before submitting the paper.