



Community Empowerment in Agritourism and Sustainable Community Development: *A Qualitative Study in Rural Pokhara, Nepal*

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Abstract

This master's dissertation aims to explore and analyse the opportunities and challenges created by agritourism and examine how this agritourism contributes to the overall community empowerment in the Pokhara region of Nepal. This dissertation adopts Social Exchange Theory, which enables directing how community support for tourism depends on its perceived cost and benefit analysis. Furthermore, it is integrated with Scheyvens' Tourism Empowerment Framework to evaluate economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment.

A qualitative research method influenced by interpretivist and inductive theory development helped this dissertation to extract in-depth insights from eight participants from diverse stakeholder backgrounds. Semi-structured interviews, including farmers, entrepreneurs, tourism operators, tourism students, service providers, and community representatives, were selected via purposive sampling. The data were analysed using thematic analysis.

This dissertation found that agritourism creates crucial economic opportunities such as extra income generation, business diversification, and skills enhancement. Additionally, the growing interaction between host and guest has enhanced community pride and cultural appreciation. However, challenges are still persistent, such as unequal distribution of agritourism benefits, seasonal income, environmental stress during peak tourism season, and low community involvement in decision-making. The economic and psychological empowerment were found to be stronger and more empowering, whereas political "precise decision-making empowerment" remained weak.

Lastly, this dissertation is limited by its small size and focused on a single-location study. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to use mixed methods, where larger samples and in-depth insights, along with multiple geographic studies, will help better generalisation and comparability.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent times, agritourism has emerged as one of the growing subsets of rural tourism, which relies on the locally available resources (Lupi et al., 2017). Especially, the government pushes the rural areas development through using agribusiness as a vehicle to uplift the locals' living standards, creating more jobs, and fostering the rural areas socially, economically, and environmentally (Buchari et al., 2024, p. 247). Many researchers, such as (Choo & Park, 2022; Lupi et al., 2017) advocates that agritourism in rural areas performs as a catalyst for its socio-economic development and economic empowerment. Thusly, it is viewed as a viable solution to the rural community's socio-cultural and economic struggles, especially in developing countries (Buchari et al., 2024). However, it is considered an intricate and differentiated phenomenon because the socio-economic and the location affect depending on the characteristics of each actor's territory, particularly with the public-private actors who intermediate tourism-related products and resources (Lupi et al., 2017). When assessing the empirical examination, highlighting through case studies, various aspects of rural tourism development can generate pros and cons on the environment and socio-cultural aspects (Srisomyong & Meyer, 2015; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Nonetheless, it is mostly acknowledged that agritourism is a crucial factor for strengthening rural development (Flanigan et al., 2015).

Agritourism comes with several tourism activities that boost agricultural and farmers' potential to attract more tourists, including the raw or natural agricultural fields, a unique style of cultivation and production, and cultural aspects within agricultural communities (Buchari et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the rural tourism acts as a secondary income-generating activity; agriculture and farmers' activities remain the major source of income and job creation (Choo & Park, 2022). From this perspective, agritourism has become more successful in endorsing rural development and ecological protection because it is executed in a more sustainable manner, which positively impacts biodiversity, scenic landscapes, agricultural activities, and other natural resources (Buchari et al., 2024). According to Meutia et al. (2022), for a successful sustainable agritourism development, community participation and empowerment are inevitable. The local actors, particularly the indigenous communities living

within the tourism destinations acts as a substantial role in agritourism development by bringing the majority of the tourism attractions and regulating the tourism products (Meutia et al., 2022).

According to Rauniyar (2021), agritourism has become a major sector in rural economic settings, providing numerous opportunities for income diversification, cultural heritage preservation, and promoting sustainability. Furthermore, community participation is a crucial component in determining the overall sustainability of agritourism initiatives. In the context of developing countries like Nepal, where the main source of economy lies in agriculture, agritourism holds the possibility to strengthen rural development by offering new job opportunities, infrastructural development, and encouraging socio-cultural exchange (Gurung & Seeland, 2011). Similarly, the Pokhara region, a leading tourist destination in Nepal, provides a unique context for exploring the interaction between agritourism, community empowerment, and sustainable rural development. Despite these challenges persisting, such as the inadequate level of policy backup, low public awareness, and poor infrastructural development, hindering its actual potential (A. Khanal et al., 2024).

1.1 Research Background

Rural region, especially in developing countries like Nepal, comes with several challenges, including agricultural stagnation, outmigration of the youth population, and the growing dilution of socio-cultural and heritage. These issues are frequently aggravated by the traditional tourism style that neglects local actors and indigenous communities, making them more economically vulnerable and disproportional distribution of tourism benefits. To mitigate this, agritourism has emerged as a viable strategy that combines agricultural-related products and services with tourist services, enabling a better route to diversify rural incomes, promoting socio-cultural activities, and encouraging sustainable management of natural resources.

The Pokhara region of Nepal, which is one of the major tourist-hub holds astonishing natural landscapes and rich cultural embroidery. While the major economic dependency of Pokhara is tourism but its benefits are unevenly distributed, which are majorly concentrated in urban areas, and large-scale enterprises hold major stakes. The surrounding areas, especially the rural municipalities and villages, are heavily reliant on farming, have not been fully able to capitalize on their potential. Though the practices of agritourism in Nepal are not new, in the context of Pokhara, this disconnection

provides a critical opportunity to explore agritourism as a means of vehicle for better inclusive and sustainable development, especially in its rural sites. By linking touristic activities with farming communities, agritourism can generate new revenue streams that not just add value to locals' agricultural products and services but also foster pride in their local traditions and practices.

However, the mere presence of agritourism activities will not safeguard the tourism destinations' sustainable rural development. For that, the crucial factor is the empowerment of its local actors and communities. The local empowerment in the sense must address the multi-dimensional process involving the resources access "economic", community participation "political", strengthen social cohesion "social", and the preservation of promotion of local identity "psychological." (Scheyvens, 1999). So, without community ownership and control over its agricultural and tourism activities, agritourism initiatives might fail to achieve their fullest potential. Therefore, a significant gap can be viewed in understanding how agritourism fosters the different dimensions of community empowerment in the Pokhara region of Nepal. And, how this empowerment in return contributes to sustainable rural development is scantily researched. This master's dissertation will attempt to fill this gap by doing qualitative research on the linkages between agritourism initiatives and local empowerment processes.

By exploring different perspectives of local community people, farmers, tourism business operators, tourism entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders, this dissertation aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which agritourism can become a much-needed stimulus for sustainable rural development in Pokhara.

1.2 Research Problem

Although agritourism has gained more attention as a mechanism for sustainable rural development, there is a paucity of studies, especially on how communities in Nepal, specifically in the Pokhara region, engage in this phenomenon. Recent research has often highlighted economic and socio-cultural gains, but has mainly overlooked the opportunities and barriers related to community empowerment (Bhatta et al., 2020; A. Khanal et al., 2024). Therefore, a robust understanding of these dynamics is crucial for policy formulators, tourism boards, and other core stakeholders to articulate adequate strategies for sustainable rural development. Despite several potential benefits of

agritourism to foster sustainable rural development, its implementation in the Pokhara region of Nepal seems uncertain and unfulfilled. The major reason behind this could be a disconnection between the theoretical benefits of agritourism and the practical experiences of rural communities. Though agritourism initiatives exist but they often get slowed down by practical challenges such as financial resources, inadequate level of training, improper market connection, and limited community participation.

However, the extent to which local community members felt in control of agritourism projects seems unclear. Their involvement is affected by the complex relationship with other powerful stakeholders like local authorities, large-scale tourism operators, and investors, who often handle the majority of tourism-related decision-making processes (Sgroi et al., 2018). This can sideline residents and indigenous communities, limiting them to low-level jobs or passive recipients of tourism benefits.

Thusly, another research problem is thorough these community members understand community empowerment is and how they perceive their influence on decision-making within agritourism projects. So, this master's dissertation will seek to examine how the challenges and opportunities, nuanced perceptions of local people, and different arrays of stakeholder relationships shape the community empowerment through agritourism in the Pokhara region of Nepal.

1.3 Research Questions

What major challenges and opportunities that agritourism creates for sustainable rural development in the Pokhara region of Nepal?

How does agritourism contribute to the overall empowerment of local communities in the Pokhara region of Nepal?

1.4 Research Objectives

- To explore opportunities that agritourism offers for sustainable rural development and identify barrier factors faced by local communities in participating in the agritourism business.

- To analyse and understand how agritourism initiatives strengthen the capacity of local communities to participate in and influence sustainable rural development.
- To explore and analyse the role of agritourism in community empowerment.

1.5 Significance of the dissertation

This master's dissertation will provide significant value for both academic and practical implications in the context of tourism development in Nepal. Academically, this paper will provide a nuanced, practical perspective of the social dynamics of agritourism by applying the through the lens of community empowerment in the context of Pokhara, Nepal. It will also address the research gap by explaining how power relations and local perceptions shape the agritourism development, outcomes, and economic distributions. From a practical point of view, it will help policymakers, local authorities, and tourism operators by finding specific barriers and opportunities for the growth of agritourism and the role of community participation. At the same time, this dissertation will provide a framework that helps to support better inclusion, equitable tourism benefit sharing, and equitable decision-making roles. Lastly, this dissertation aims to provide actionable insights that help to determine whether agritourism can fulfil its promise for sustainable rural development, foster resilience, and empower local communities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review:

2.1 Community empowerment

Empowerment means the initial process of “getting stronger and gaining more self-confidence when addressing various life hurdles” (Muryanti, 2023, p. 591). Meanwhile, the idea of empowerment in the context of sociology cannot be detached from its social movements because empowerment means the exchange of real strength among the social actors engaging in the social movements (Muryanti, 2023). Within the scope of social movements, empowerment refers to self-empowerment, as it involves individuals’ initiatives to self-improve from a bottom-up context, aiming to bring social change in the community or organisational perspective (Kleidman et al., 1999). Community empowerment is seen as a multidimensional process through which its community members get control over decision-making, resources, and actions that impact their livelihoods (Röger-Offergeld et al., 2023). Therefore, it comprises strengthening people’s capabilities, boosting their collective agency, and transforming power relations that help to lower inequalities.

The contemporary scholars comprehend empowerment both as a process (activities that help build capacity and participation) and as outcomes (influence over decision-making, better services, and inclusion in the community) (Coy et al., 2021; Kruahong et al., 2023; Röger-Offergeld et al., 2023). For instance, Coy et al. (2021) emphasise community empowerment within wider sustainability and transformation literature, as empowerment is pivotal, which helps to allow community-led transitions by effectively highlighting structural limitations like inequalities and governance arrangements. This shows that empowerment can be limited to only training purposes because the structural access and the overall institutional mechanisms equally matter.

Similarly, community empowerment is seen collectively, describing it as a collective and contextual process that connects social actors’ psychological dimensions (such as self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills) with group-oriented capabilities (such as organisation, social capital, and cohesiveness) and institutional change (access and ability to decision-making) (Zimmerman, 1995). For instance, Krauhong et al. (2023) emphasised that community empowerment enables communities to find priorities, make better choices and implement the strategies that improve community health and lower inequalities. Likewise, Röger-Offergeld et al. (2023) provides empirical evidence of community

empowerment processes through participatory research settings (e.g., women co-researchers), showing that community participation in knowledge production provides numerous empowerment effects, such as better self-efficacy and competencies. Correspondingly, many researchers, as aforementioned, identified similar dimensions that closely map with the DiCE framework, i.e., “confident, inclusive, organised, co-operative, and influential” (CDX and Changes UK, 2008). The CDX and Changes UK (2008) have simplified the dimensions of community empowerment in layman's terms, and it has a clear distinction from community development values.

Table 1: Comparison of community development values and empowerment dimensions

Community Development Values	Dimensions of Community Empowerment
<p>Learning</p> <p>Recognition of social actors’ existing skills and knowledge and developing further on them through shared learning.</p>	<p>Confident</p> <p>Helping community members to gain skills, knowledge, and confidence so that they have a positive belief that they can make a difference.</p>
<p>Equality</p> <p>Challenging the discrimination (of any type); promoting transparency & fairness, and equal opportunity for all community groups.</p>	<p>Inclusive</p> <p>Making sure every community member can take part, particularly those who are often sidelined, and promoting positive relationships between different community groups.</p>
<p>Participation</p> <p>Supporting an active and democratised nature of engagement in issues affecting community members’ lives.</p>	<p>Organised</p> <p>Bring community members together into an open and democratic nature of engagement so that they can collectively address their shared community issues.</p>
<p>Co-operation</p> <p>Encouragement of community members and organizations to work together, developing networking systems, and promoting collective action.</p>	<p>Co-operative</p> <p>Creating positive relationships between different community groups, enabling them with an adequate network, and promoting partnership-style working.</p>
<p>Social justice</p>	<p>Influential</p>

Enabling community members to claim their rights, solving inequalities, and getting better access to decision-making.	Ensuring that the communities have real opportunities and skills so that they can effectively influence decisions, services, and policies.
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Source: adapted from CDX and Changes UK (2008).

When understanding community empowerment, we often try to extract based on decades of theories and conceptualisation in relation to comprehending community development (CDX and Changes UK, 2008). Meanwhile, community development is more about “developing active and sustainable communities by focusing on social justice and mutual respect. It’s because it is about power changing structures to cut off barriers that prevent its community members from engaging in the issues that are affecting their lives” (CDX and Changes UK, 2008). Meanwhile, these five dimensions of community empowerment provide a framework for designing community-focused work, which is regardless of how the community is being described or what sorts of projects are taken into planning (CDX and Changes UK, 2008). They can also be used to create indicators and analyse activities, allowing the practitioners to see and assess whether the processes and outcomes are actually contributing to community empowerment or not (CDX and Changes UK, 2008). Overall, these dimensions provide a broad comprehension of community empowerment that serves as a strong base for developing shared and consistent measures (CDX and Changes UK, 2008). From a critical perspective, values serve as principles that guide community development work, like practitioners needing to work or act; meanwhile, dimensions are the observable processes or outcomes that illustrate whether or not the community has been empowered and to what level.

2.2 Agritourism

The distinctive recreational value of rural areas is fading away mainly due to unregulated and unsystematic human activities, rapid scaling of urbanisation, and vast infrastructural development, leading to the deterioration of both natural and social assets (Mutanga & Chikuta, 2025). In that case, agritourism acts as a catalyst, offering a sustainable substitute that establishes global initiatives to tackle ecological issues and the growing deterioration of natural assets (Mutanga & Chikuta, 2025). Though this segment of tourism is considered new to the tourism market, it has expanded substantially

in industrialised economies, while the agricultural and farming activities continue to gain popularity in the emerging markets (Mutanga & Chikuta, 2025). Agritourism, which is part of the whole rural tourism, is considered an innovative strategy that converts farmlands into a tourist attraction and helps diversify farmers' activities into recreation, entertainment, educational, and on-farm sales activities (Van Zyl & van der Merwe, 2021).

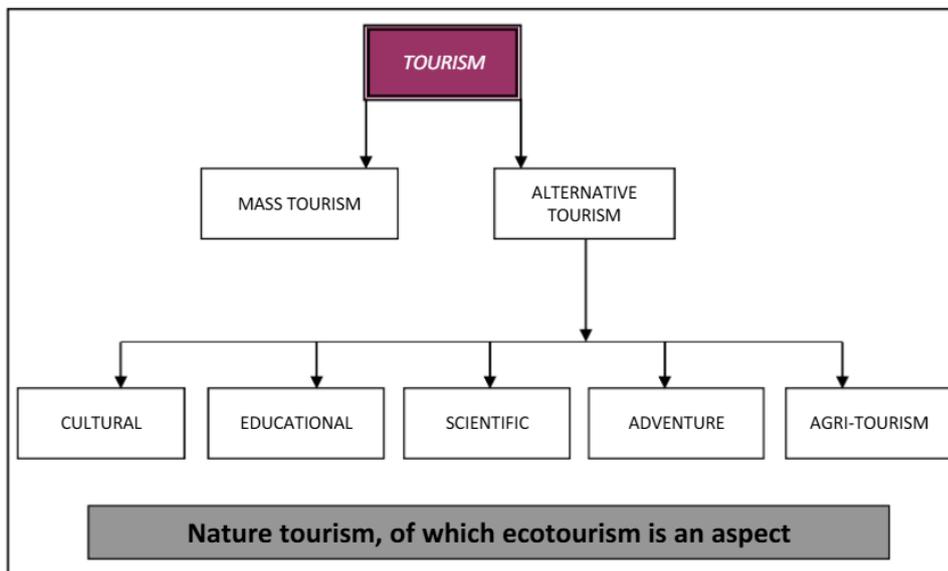
Though the universal definition of agritourism is yet to be established, several researchers have come up with their definitions thereof. When analysing these understandings in a chronological flow, we can understand that agritourism glues agriculture and tourism to produce diversified income sources for farmers, environmental & natural asset protection, and peculiar recreational values.

- Bawana et al. (2015) alludes to agritourism as agricultural tourism or farm-based tourism, in which the key interaction happens between farming products, producers, and visitors.
- Similarly, Petroman et al. (2016) describes agritourism as the activity that binds two crucial aspects, agriculture and tourism, into a new theme.
- Liang (2017) says that agritourism is a peculiar tourism type that joins tourism with agricultural products. Meanwhile, Lupi et al. (2017) says it differently, as it is a subset of rural tourism.
- Tchetchik et al. (2018) say agritourism divides itself into sub-sections: farming-based recreational activities, educational activities with agriculture, and outdoor recreational activities. However, all these happen in a rural-based way.
- Convoi and Lyon (2020) describe it as a farm-related activity which solely relies on farmland for the purpose of recreation, entertainment, and educational values.
- Lamie et al. (2021) define agritourism as including (but not necessarily restricted to) both core and peripheral activities that happen on a farm but within the five categories such as educational, sales, entertainment, recreational, and hospitality aspects.
- Mahmoodi et al. (2022) seeks agritourism as a viable option for diversifying farming activities, job creation and economic growth because it connects with customers, i.e., tourists. So, it is a tourism product that is connected with agrarian land, products or staycations.
- Streifeneder et al. (2023) views agritourism as a form of on-farm diversification, which is a valuable form of sustainable rural tourism that enables the showcasing of real experiences of life on farmlands to its customers (i.e., tourists).

- Starman and Pavic (2024) see agritourism as a bonding point that binds tourists' expectations, rural area needs, and sustainable development.
- Vaughan & Roberts (2025) defines agritourism as a unique form of tourism which turns agricultural productions into tourism purposes and hospitality and attracts visitors to farmlands, ranches, and similar enterprises. However, it needs to follow a certain path, such as the farmland needing to be in working condition, tourist contact with the farmlands, and the experiences needing to be authentic.

To comprehend the actual position of agritourism within the larger frame of the tourism industry, the explanation by Wearing and Neil (2009) might provide an eloquent understanding to the reader, as it has a clear distinction between mass and alternative tourism. Since mass tourism comprises volumes of visitors visiting certain areas such as cities, beaches, and recreation parks. Meanwhile, alternative tourism is more consistent with nature and holds community values and enables both hosts and guests to take positive advantages and share worthwhile interactions. And agritourism falls into this section.

Figure 1: Flowchart of mass tourism and alternative tourism categories



Source: Wearing and Neil (2009)

2.2.1 Economic sustainability and agritourism

Though agritourism holds several advantages for the farmers who offer their agritourism services. For instance, researchers have identified advantages such as the new avenue of generating passive income, diversifying farming operations, and offering educational importance (Bwana et al., 2015; Lupi et al., 2017; Röger-Offergeld et al., 2023).

Agritourism served as a crucial vehicle for promoting economic sustainability and sustainable rural development. It is particularly effective in those regions where agriculture is the only source of income generation (Hosseini et al., 2025). Studies such as (Adamov et al., 2019; Cheteni & Umejese, 2023), have studied the importance of agritourism from an economic perspective and found its positive relevance in economic revitalisation, income portfolio diversification, and promoting sustainable rural subsistence strategies. Thusly, by incorporating agritourism practices, farmers and rural tourism entrepreneurs can provide themselves with economic opportunities while effectively supporting their socio-cultural and environmental assets. Cheteni and Umejese (2023) found that agritourism provides sustainable economic opportunities to the Wild Coast region while adequately preserving the environmental assets. Similarly, Fantini et al. (2019) found agritourism as one of the potent sources of economic diversification in mountainous regions, stressing its role in overcoming its spatial limitations. Adamov et al. (2019) further highlighted agritourism's potential to achieve sustainable economic advantage by noting its ability to boost public health and help in attracting investments to develop rural areas. Deže et al. (2022) found that agritourism provides crucial multifunctional meaning to small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs. However, the innovative agritourism services that are based on the comparative differences needs to be adequately acknowledged, corresponding to its demand level.

2.2.2 Environmental sustainability and agritourism

Agritourism is seen as a potent mechanism to promote environmental sustainability by offering incentives for preservation and conservation, promoting low-input farming practices, and more importantly encouraging pro-environmental behaviors via direct visitor education (Popescu et al., 2023; Yusuf & Wulandari, 2023). By providing the lineage behaviours between farm income and the landscape quality and conventional style of producing technique, agritourism offers rewards in

environmental aspects via organic farming, biodiversity land utilisation, on-farm waste management, and the use of renewable energy (Ammirato et al., 2020). This in return helps in conserving soil quality and boosting the ecosystem services (Ammirato et al., 2020). In addition to this, agritourism helps to improve experiential-based learning (Ingrassia et al., 2023). Visitors who witness sustainable farming in actual might support their local food culture and culinary practices, adopt green eating habits, and might encourage environmentally friendly production (Ingrassia et al., 2023).

Similarly, when agritourism is connected with circular economy, it may help lowering external food supply chain and offer locally owned food chains, which collectively support lowering environmental footprints and foster local economy (Ingrassia et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the empirical evidence by Grillini et al. (2023) shows the relationship not as uniformly positive. The study by Grillini et al. in the Tyrol-Trentino region (Austria) found that agritourism is sometimes accused of lowering production quantity and value, which can strain the socio-environmental resources, producing mixed outcomes of sustainability which might need targeted regulations and further planning.

2.2.3 Socio-cultural sustainability and agritourism

Agritourism has increasingly been seen for its role in promoting socio-cultural sustainability (Hosseini et al., 2025). It is seen as a viable mechanism for preserving local culture, heritage, and identities because when integrating tourism with agricultural practices, it not just contributes economic advantages but also equally provides the authentic experience of local cultural assets, costumes, and living styles happening in the rural settings (Hosseini et al., 2025). Cavalleri et al. (2022) found that via offering farm-based experiences, visitors experience local customs, foodways, and heritage practices, which collectively helps in encouraging the protection of rural culture. Similarly, A recent study by Khamung (2015) found that agritourism supports cultural continuity by providing motivation to farmers to maintain their traditional landscapes, crafts, food production and preparation methods, as these cultural assets become the contributing factors to provide authentic tourism attractions. Che (2015) found that agritourism boosts community cohesion by providing an environment for cultural exchange and storytelling and provides intergenerational learning, which not only reinforces a sense of pride and belonging but also provides economic value to it. At the same time, these interactions between hosts and guests strengthen social capital and encourage community

participation, especially in rural regions' development initiatives (Che, 2015; Hosseini et al., 2025). In contrast, Gocer et al. (2024) found that when tourism activities in rural regions lack adequate levels of community participation, they lead to the commercialisation of local culture, create unnecessary social tensions, and generate inequitable benefits among local communities, particularly where powerful actors hold high levels of decision-making. Such outcomes dilute cultural authenticity and lower community cohesion.

2.2.4 Challenges of Agritourism

Despite agritourism having several benefits, it also holds several barriers which might limit the contribution of overall sustainable development of a community, especially when it comes to emerging countries. For instance, Tang and Xu (2023) found concerning issues regarding the commodification of rural culture, where local traditions, farming and agricultural practices, culinary and social identities commercialised depending on what tourists' majorly prefers and enjoys the most. These commodification may bring economic benefit to the communities; it brings dilution to local cultural authenticity and lower community ownership over cultural resources in the long run. In the long-run, it affect community development negatively, especially after the tourism destination may have to handle visitors more than its capacity (Özgen Çiğdemli, 2021). And, when the local communities adapt themselves to meet the visitors' expectations by altering their actual local culture and traditions, it brings social tensions within the local communities. This tension emerges from unequal participation and tourism benefit distribution among directly and indirectly involved households in agritourism (Özgen Çiğdemli, 2021).

Similarly, unequal benefit distribution of tourism returns is another concerning issue found in the literature, especially where wealthier landowners and better-connected owners in terms of location capture the majority of the economic benefits (Grillini et al., 2023). Due to these factors, marginalised communities, especially those entrepreneurs who have limited land and location accessibility, remain excluded from agritourism benefits (Grillini et al., 2023). According to Kuklina et al. (2022), tourism may reinforce existing social inequalities, especially when access to land, capital accessibility, and markets is uneven in nature. In rural areas, one of the concerning issues with the land unavailability, especially to minor entrepreneurs and marginalised farmers, further constrains the adequate participation, and agritourism, which often happens at the local level, typically requires ownership or control over the farming areas.

Environmental pressure due to unsystematic tourism management often poses a challenge. Ammirato et al. (2020) argue that increased tourist flows bring pressure on natural assets, waste management systems, and agricultural landscapes, thus undermining environmental sustainability. Despite the tourist volume not being categorised as overtourism or mass tourism, these issues can be intensified due to poor governance, weak regulatory mechanisms, and minimal institutional capacity (Bentley, 2024). Especially in the context of emerging countries, inadequate policy coordination, power dynamic issues, and external dominance by tour operators and external investors can halt local decision-making roles (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). The empirical study by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) in Mauritius found that tourism planning and decision-making, when largely governed by governmental authorities and private investors, leads to an imbalanced power structure, leading to low local residents' trust in institutions and weakened community support for tourism development. Due to this, the local communities experienced marginalisation, received unequal benefit from tourism, and had a low level of empowerment.

2.3 Agritourism and Community Empowerment

Agritourism business encompasses multiple incidental services rendered to lure tourists, for instance, recreational, accommodation, and culinary services (Mahbub et al., 2023). These aforementioned several pursuits range from “agricultural production (like harvesting, cultivation, animal husbandry, milking cows) via indirect pleasure of farm activities (such as exploring farmers/local markets, tasting onsite culinaries) to recreational activities where the farm itself provides an apt setting (like a wedding destination at a vineyard, etc.)” (Mahbub et al., 2023, p. 710). Agritourism hosts as an outlet for community empowerment where the tourists interact with hosts and local community markets, facilitating tourism development. The advancement of agritourism in local communities enables greater local community participation in and strengthens decision-making processes. Since this category of tourism happens in rural regions, agritourism provides community involvement in decision-making for the overall design and strategy of their local tourism destination sites (Olya et al., 2014).

Agritourism is increasingly recognised as a potent route for community empowerment in rural settings, facilitating socio-economic agency between farmers and wider communities (Buchari et al.,

2024). Empirical studies such as Buchari et al. (2024), Joo et al. (2013), and Widayati et al. (2024) demonstrate that agritourism fosters community empowerment by enabling alternative livelihood opportunities, diversifying the local community's income streams, and, more importantly, lowering full dependence on conventional agriculture, particularly for small-scale farmers and marginalised households (Joo et al., 2013). For instance, small farmers and local entrepreneurs who are actively engaged in agritourism practices are found better at generating better passive income than those who are not connected actively (Ivanovic, 2023).

Additionally, agritourism helps to encourage community participation and collective action, which can be the crucial components of an empowerment foundation (Mappe et al., 2024). Mappe et al. (2024) found that residents who are actively engaging in planning, executing, and managing agritourism-related ventures are enabled to carry a high sense of ownership and responsibility, which not only strengthens social cohesion but also fosters individual entrepreneurial capacity. Subsequently, agritourism enables marginalised groups, including women, to take meaningful roles in rural economies. For instance, Arroyo et al. (2019) in Andean communities found that agritourism helps to foster women's psychological, socio-political, and economic empowerment and challenge conventional gender roles, and enhance social cohesion.

Furthermore, agritourism enables mobilising social capital by fostering trust, shared norms, and networking, which serves as an effective platform for cooperation, decision-making abilities, and sustainable rural development (Buchari et al., 2024; Widayati et al., 2024). For instance, Nugraha et al. (2022) found that when agritourism is designed participatorily, where local people, including marginalised groups, engage in planning and decision-making and share equitable benefits, it fosters long-term empowerment and supports sustainable rural development.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Research

The presented existing literature in this dissertation provides substantial empirical evidence that agritourism holds potential in generating economic, social, and cultural benefits, especially to rural regions, and supports different dimensions of community empowerment. For instance, research such as (Canovi & Lyon, 2020; Grillini et al., 2023; Knežević et al., 2025) found that agritourism influences such as income diversification, financial confidence, enhanced social cohesion, cultural pride and

revitalisation, and support for local participation. However, despite generating these invaluable findings, the researcher found three key limitations in the current body of literature.

Firstly, the majority of the agritourism-related literature is centred on outcome-oriented, focusing on what benefits and challenges it brings, instead of critically examining how and why empowerment emerges through the agritourism process (Ammirato et al., 2020). Secondly, empirical studies are found frequently treating community empowerment as an assumed outcome without systematically studying its cost and benefit sides (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). It is crucial, as these analyses are central to understanding the necessary support, participation, and its level, and resistance in tourism development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Third, existing literature often lacks a structured way of analytical framework that highlights different dimensions of community empowerment. Due to this, a fragmented or inadequate interpretation of agritourism's social impacts is seen (Boley & McGehee, 2014). From a critical perspective, it is crucial to understand different dimensions of community empowerment rather than putting all in a single basket, as it brings an incomplete sense of agritourism opportunities and challenges. So, to minimise these gaps, such a theoretical lens can explain both opportunities and challenges and empowerment outcomes. Therefore, in this dissertation, Social Exchange Theory will offer the foundation for analysing how residents assess the opportunities and challenges of agritourism using perceived benefits and costs. And secondly, to complement this, Scheyvens' Tourism Empowerment Framework will provide the necessary direction and strength to examine empowerment outcomes across four dimensions, i.e., economic, social, psychological, and political.

2.5 Theoretical Framework:

This master dissertation adopts Social Exchange Theory (SET) as the primary theoretical foundation which will examine how agritourism helps influence community empowerment, especially in the context of emerging countries. According to Thaichon et al. (2018), Social Exchange Theory helps to identify people who evaluate and analyse the costs and benefits of certain activities or transactions before appreciating or participating in the social exchanges. Similarly, Chang (2021) asserts that SET provides the strengths in justifying the situations where the costs and benefits were exchanged; meanwhile, the theory also has a gap in providing the groups' relationship in detail.

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that individuals and communities analyse and evaluate development initiatives linked with subjective comparison of “perceived benefits and costs”. Simplistically, when local community members believe that agritourism generates economic perks, strengthens social cohesion, fosters cultural identity, and enhances community assets, then these communities are likely to appreciate and participate in agritourism development (Choo & Petrick, 2014). This favourable evaluation enables fostering psychological empowerment, boosting communities' confidence, and motivating the overall collective involvement in tourism planning and strategising (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). In contrast, if the costs – for instance, socio-cultural commodification, unequal distribution of benefits among the community groups, natural and environmental pressures, and external dominance – surpass the benefits, the local residents may contradict or resist the developmental planning or might feel disempowered (Revilla et al., 2023). From that perspective, SET thus enables a robust foundation that analyses both opportunities and barriers that agritourism enables for creating sustainable rural development and predicting empowerment outcomes.

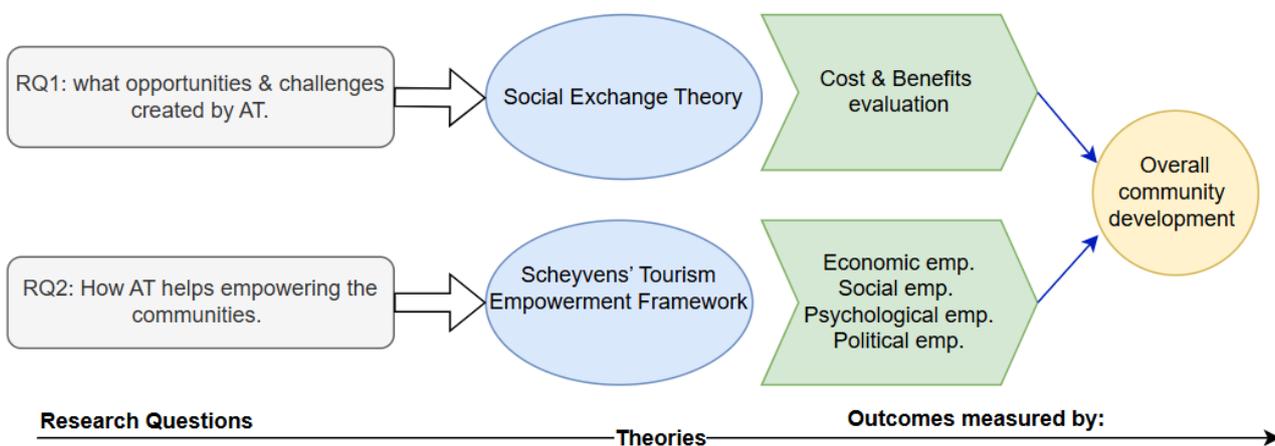
To supplement Social Exchange Theory, this master's dissertation will integrate Scheyvens' (1999) “Tourism Empowerment Framework,”. This framework conceptualises empowerment as multidimensional aspects comprising four empowerment aspects: economic, social, psychological, and political. More importantly, this framework aligns with tourism research because it relates how tourism strengthens household income, social cohesion, networking, boosts cultural pride, and supports community influence over decision-making. For instance, empirical studies such as Ammirato et al. (2020) and LaPan & Barbieri (2022) show that agritourism can support livelihood opportunities, promote entrepreneurial abilities, reinforce traditional cultural practices, and contribute to community empowerment. Subsequently, this Scheyvens' model helps identify challenges that challenge empowerment, for instance, elite level, marginalisation of groups including women, weak institutional backup, low level of community participation, and issues that are prevalent especially in emerging countries (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2015).

At first, economic empowerment originates when agritourism enables the generation of diversified income sources ranging from farm staycations, local cuisine services, and related agricultural experiences. Scheyvens (1999) depicts that tourism-driven income helps to build households' disposable income and boost their community's financial resilience, instead of benefitting only a few groups in the society. Similarly, Karimi (2015) have found that tourism provides significant positive

influence to alleviate rural poverty through local enterprise development and job creation. Secondly, psychological empowerment occurs when the local community senses greater pride and confidence and holds cultural identity as visitors value their socio-cultural and environmental heritage and local knowledge. Scheyvens (1999) highlights that recognition is crucial because it enhances the local residents' self-esteem. Likewise, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) found that tourism appreciation strengthens psychological well-being and helps reinforce the local community's sense of pride and worth. Along with this, tourism helps encourage collective action and support, such as operating cooperatives, engaging in arranging visitor facilities, and planning cultural events and festivals. Scheyvens' (1999) social empowerment dimension: these aforementioned initiatives help foster trust and social cohesion and build a network system within the community. When local people work towards a common goal, agritourism can become a catalyst for strong community bonding and the inclusive nature of participation. Lastly, tourism requires planning, coordination and decision-making at the community level, and when these communities are given an equitable voice in such processes, such as land use, tourism rules and benefit sharing, then they become active recipients instead of passive ones (Tosun, 2000). This corresponds with Scheyvens's (1999) claim that empowerment happens when local people sense real influence and control over the tourism development within their locality.

The overall understanding of the uses of this dual theory can be better understood by the illustrated

Figure 2: Conceptual Understanding



Source: Own Creation.

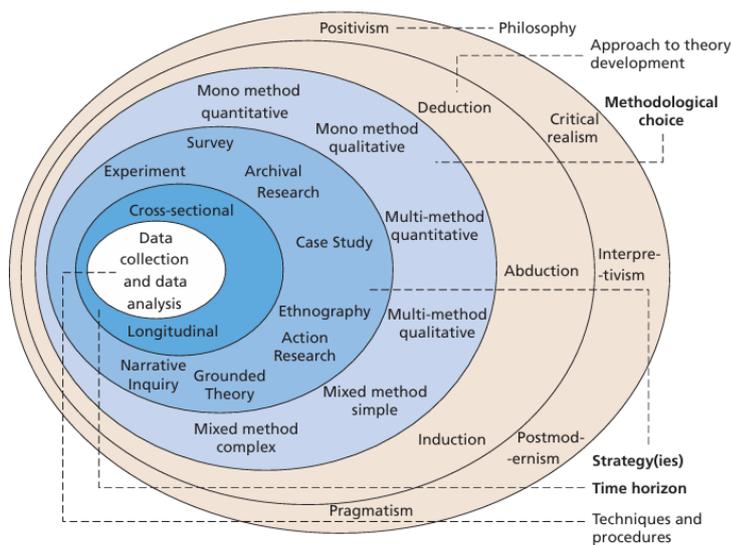
Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This master's dissertation's research methodology chapter will be the systematic blueprint that will explain how this dissertation will be conducted by providing a meaningful selection of methods. Majorly, this chapter will help justify the chosen method for data collection and analysis, philosophical adoption, and theory development approach, which will keep in consideration majorly to answer the mentioned research questions mentioned in Chapter One.

At first, the scientific selection and its criteria and justification are important because they are the gateway to valid and reliable research findings. It directly helps connect the research design with the research objectives and questions, which makes the reader assess the rigour of the work and might replicate it if is necessary. From that perspective, I found the Research Onion framework introduced by Saunders et al. (2019, p. 174). This framework enables a structured and layer-oriented logic which helps to provide a scientific justification for selecting an appropriate method. For instance, it systematically guides from broad philosophical assumptions to concrete techniques and procedures.

Figure 3: Research Onion Framework



Source: Saunders et al. (2019, p. 174).

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research works are effective at solving different problems in our society; however, planning and steering the research is a subject of daunting challenge for both novices and professionals (Mwita, 2025, p. 44). Therefore, a clear understanding of research philosophies and research design is crucial to produce coherent and meaningful research findings (Mwita, 2025). According to Saunders et al. (2019), these two aspects for any researcher are the crucial aspects of the research process, ranging from how the questions are being formulated to interpretation, to research findings, and extracting conclusions. In order to produce reliable and valid findings, a researcher is expected to steer philosophical understanding and connect with valid research approaches and research designs to ensure methodological consistency in their research studies (Proudfoot, 2023).

This dissertation paper will adopt an interpretivism research philosophy. The interpretivist school of thought comes from a subjective-based reality, which originates from different contexts based on values, experiences, and human interpretations (Saunders et al., 2019). Interpretivism is viewed as common in the social science field, where society's understanding depends on individuals' beliefs, values, their inspiration, and their reasoning (Mwita, 2025, p. 45). But this philosophy does not necessarily detach the investigator from knowledge formation, knowing that the investigator can influence the data interpretations (Mwita, 2025). According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 179), interpretivism is more connected with qualitative research because it connects with interviews and focus groups, which enable flexibility in interpreting the collected data and help to find nuance-based findings. For example, the interview with different local stakeholders in the Pokhara region would enable us to get the opportunities and challenges created by agritourism and what sorts of empowerment agritourism has offered in that region.

3.3 Theory development approach

According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 152), one of the crucial aspects to grasp is to understand the extent to which the researcher's work is related to theory development or developing theory. This is frequently illustrated as two contrasting approaches: deductive (theories are used to derive conclusions using certain pre-set premises) and inductive (theories are grounded based on observations made) (Saunders et al., 2019). This master's dissertation will adopt an inductive

approach as a theory development because of its alignment with interpretivism philosophy. Along with this, the inductive approach, often called data-driven research, is rich in exploratory-based and qualitative in nature, which will help to understand the underlying situations, experiences, attitudes, and belief systems of individuals or groups (Owa, 2025). For instance, the understanding of underlying opportunities and challenges created by agritourism initiatives within the Pokhara region best comes up through a qualitative and exploratory-based study, as it enables the derivation of different stakeholders' nuanced observations and experiences. At the same time, the inductive approach helps to locate new and hidden patterns or phenomena that might not be well extracted through any existing theories or knowledge. In such a case, starting with a certain observation and then steering based on that observation to extract conclusions helps to get that new pattern or phenomenon (Owa, 2025).

3.4 Data Collection Method

This master's dissertation finds qualitative research studies more appealing as they enable the exploration of respondents' meanings, observations, experiences, and relationships with the studied agenda. According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 179), “qualitative-based research is often grounded in the interpretivist school of thought with an inductive style of theory development approach.” Since qualitative research findings are generated using words, images, experiences, and perceptions, and these might come with multiple and unclear meanings, the researcher needs to evaluate and clarify efficiently with the respondents to make it bias-free (Saunders et al., 2019). According to Mwita (2025, p. 49), qualitative research design is “compatible with interviews, observational studies, focus group studies, and document analysis, as it is a comparatively flexible and subjective way of producing insights which are textural and visual in nature instead of any numerical version.” The nature of the research question as mentioned in the introduction chapter can be best answered through qualitative research because the underlying opportunities and challenges created by agritourism in the Pokhara region come from the local stakeholders' experiences and observations. Also, the level of community empowerment fostered by the agritourism in the study region is best possible to extract through the locals' observations and experiences.

3.5 Research strategy – Interview

Interview as a research strategy seems more appealing to this dissertation. According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 180), qualitative research design supports interviews, and it also aligns with the interpretivist philosophy and inductive nature of theory development. Also, the nature of this dissertation focuses on understanding peoples' experiences, observations, feelings, and perceptions about agritourism, which may not be fully captured using a quantitative-based study (such as hypothesis testing or other numerical ways). Since we are aiming to understand the opportunities and challenges created by agritourism and how it helps contribute towards community empowerment, it becomes crucial to hear directly from the local community actors in their real voice. In that context, interviewing such stakeholders allows them to explain their thoughts freely, provide examples and underlying situations, and may raise issues that the researcher may not have thought about. This type of flexibility helps to make the overall findings deeper and offer meaningful insights. Though surveys can gather data from large participants, they often hide participants' nuanced understandings about the research questions because the responses come from the pre-set options. Additionally, it completely neglects the follow-up questions and clarifies misunderstandings.

3.5.1 Data analysis

Semi-structured interviews will be adopted, as they seem a suitable research strategy for this master's dissertation because the topic and research questions need deep insights from different stakeholders' views who are involved in agritourism practices directly or indirectly. These stakeholders will range from farmers, souvenir shopkeepers, tourism operators, restaurant owners, local tourism entrepreneurs, and local authority officers. Since these groups experience agritourism from different perspectives, their views on opportunities, challenges, and empowerment help to make answers from a holistic way of thinking. Additionally, this technique allows participants to speak freely and share their personal feelings and experiences.

Using thematic analysis for this dissertation as data analysis will help further strengthening, as it helps to identify common patterns and themes across the aforementioned stakeholders' viewpoints. This analysis technique enables the researcher to explore and understand complex social issues such as local participation, control, socio-cultural pride, and local involvement in decision-making. This would be less possible to capture through quantitative tools. Therefore, semi-structured interviews

combined with thematic analysis will help to produce a rich, flexible, and detailed understanding of the research topic which directly fits with the research questions.

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis Procedure

This dissertation will adopt thematic analysis using the six-phase framework introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006). This framework will help to analyse qualitatively gathered data related to agritourism, community empowerment, opportunities and challenges in a systematic way. This approach was chosen due to its flexibility and convenience for identifying patterned meaning across the participants' observations, perceptions, and experiences.

The first phase in this approach comes with data familiarisation, where the interview transcript will be repeatedly memorised to get an overall understanding of participants' perspectives on agritourism development, empowerment on different dimensions, and other related constraints. After this, the researcher will take initial notes to capture any early impressions. In the second phase, the initial codes will be systematically identified, which hold meaningful data segments related to agritourism opportunities such as "income diversification" and "skills development", challenges such as "unequal benefits distribution" and "weak governance", and empowerment processes.

The third phase will be focused on theme searching, where the researcher will group the codes into broader themes that reflect the research objectives. At the same time, the researcher will be consistent with the literature review, where the themes that were organised around economic opportunities, social and psychological empowerment, political empowerment, institutional and governance challenges, and power-related constraints will be taken into consideration. Then in the fourth phase, the themes will be reviewed carefully so that it maintains coherence within the themes and a clear distinction between them. Along with this, the data extracts will be revisited to ensure that the themes accurately and effectively represent participants' narratives.

The fifth phase will involve defining and naming the themes. The researcher will refine their scope and meaning while also ensuring proper alignment with the adopted theories, "i.e., Social Exchange Theory and Scheyven's Tourism Empowerment Framework". Lastly, the sixth phase will be the report production, in which the gathered themes will be interpreted and related to the existing literature and theoretical framework to explain how and why agritourism helps foster community

empowerment in the Pokhara region and what the opportunities and challenges created by agritourism are.

3.6 Sampling technique

This master's dissertation will use purposive sampling, also called judgemental sampling. Within this sampling technique, the researcher deliberately chooses participants depending on their expertise, relevance, and knowledge of the research context (Hassan, 2024). Purposive sampling is a commonly employed method in qualitative research in which the participants are selected using predefined criteria that fit with the research study (Saunders et al., 2019). This sampling is more adequate for this dissertation since this paper focuses on understanding how the opportunities, challenges, and community empowerment are created by agritourism; therefore, this sampling gives permission to choose participants who have meaningful knowledge and experiences of the sector. The researcher will select the participants from different stakeholder groups, ranging from farmers, tourism operators, local restaurant owners, local entrepreneurs, and local governing officers. These groups are believed to have different interactions with agritourism in different ways and contribute multiple angles of viewpoints about the research objectives and questions. Compared to its close substitute, “i.e., snowball sampling”, this sampling would be comparatively less biased because the researcher can deliberately select its participants based on their knowledge, relevancy, and expertise, instead of relying on personal networking and referrals where researcher control is minimal.

This dissertation aims to conduct around 10-12 semi-structured interviews. This might be an adequate sample size for the in-depth qualitative research, providing rich, contextual, and nuanced insights. This anticipated target range allows for sufficient variation in experiences while also remaining doable for the detailed thematic analysis. The data collection will continue until it reaches its saturation point, meaning that the additional interviewee holds no new code generation or insights related to the agritourism opportunities, challenges, and community empowerment processes. Once the participants' responses start to feel repeated in nature with the existing patterns, the data collection procedure will be concluded. By using this approach, the findings remain comprehensive, credible, and trustworthy and, at the same time, remain grounded in interviewees lived experiences and perceptions.

3.7 Research validity, reliability, and researchers' position

Ensuring validity and reliability is crucial for producing meaningful research findings in this qualitative research. From a qualitative research perspective, validity refers to the accuracy and credibility of the interpretation extracted from the chosen participants' views and experiences. To enhance this dissertation's validity, the researcher has used semi-structured interviews that enable the participants to freely express their views and experiences openly and in their own words. This will help to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. Also, the interview questions will be designed carefully to match the expectations of research objectives and perspectives from diverse stakeholder groups from the studied area, such as farmers, tourism operators, local restaurant owners, local authorities, local tourism entrepreneurs, etc. This will help to bring a balanced understanding of agritourism from diverse angles and professions. More importantly, triangulating different meanings from these multiple stakeholder groups helps to strengthen the findings' credibility.

Similarly, the reliability of this paper means consistency and transparency in the entire process. For that, all participants will follow the common guiding structures, and the notes will be taken carefully to document all the observations. For this dissertation, thematic analysis will be conducted systematically; therefore, using clear coding procedures for all the participants' answers is key to capturing themes consistently and effectively. In addition to this, maintaining an organised record of coding decisions will help ensure that the overall analysis can be easily traced and reviewed whenever needed.

Lastly, the researchers' position is also a crucial factor. Being a researcher, especially in the qualitatively taken research, the researcher's background, interests, cultural aspects, and knowledge of the research topic may shape how he/she will interpret participants' voices. To lower the personal bias factor, the researcher will maintain reflexive notes, remain open to any sorts of differing views, and avoid making any leading questions or assumptions to draw interviewees' concentration. Additionally, the participants, especially in the Nepalese region, may be culturally sensitive; therefore, I will choose a neutral position so that I will not adversely affect both the research and the findings. The role of the researcher will be only limited to listening, noting down, and representing their voices as effectively and accurately as possible.

3.8 Ethical consideration

For research, ethical consideration is the most crucial part because it involves every researcher's attempt from the literature to the participation selection to the interpretation part. For each interview session, the researcher will explain the purpose of the dissertation, the questionnaire's design and approach, and how the information will be used in the overall dissertation to defend the journey. For instance, every participant will be selected based on their willingness to participate and who are relevant to the research; however, they can opt to withdraw from the interview journey if they feel unpleasant or less motivated to be involved.

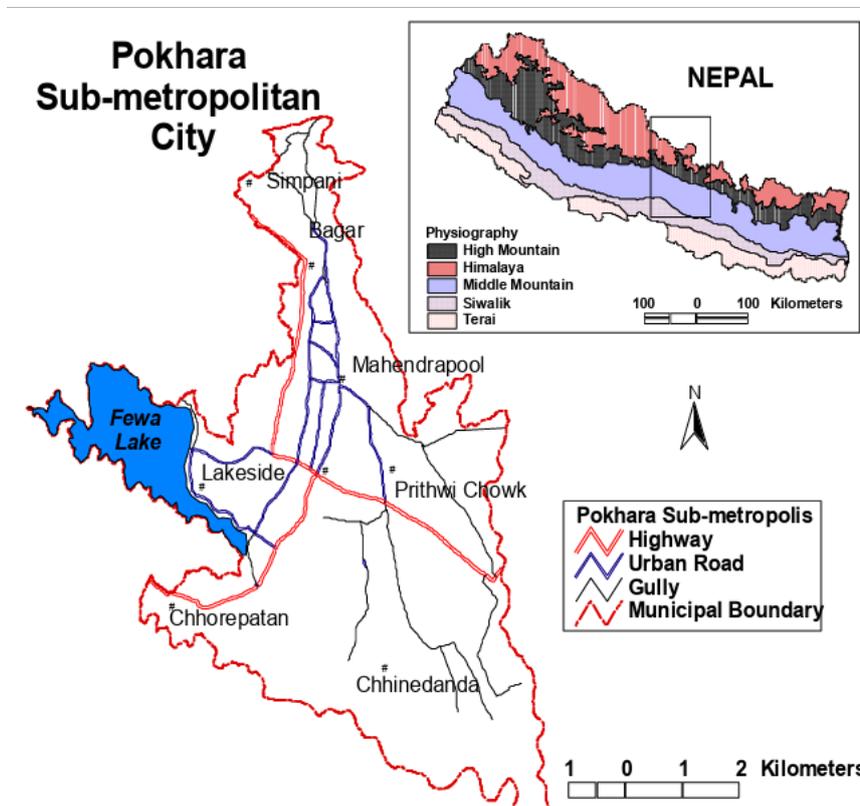
Secondly, to protect the participants' information privacy, the researcher opts to avoid their real names, as it might affect their privacy and dignity. Instead the researcher will use the separate coding for each participant, like "Participant 1 or 2" or "Farmer 1" or "Tourism Operator 2". In addition to this, all recordings, notes, and transcribed documents will be protected using a password-locked system and only used for this dissertation. After the defence, all these documents will be permanently deleted. Lastly, during the interview sessions, the interviewer chose to remain respectful and neutral to make the participants comfortable and motivated. The researcher will be very mindful of the participants' cultural norms and their daily realities of the participants that are being interviewed.

3.9 Study Area

The Pokhara region lies in the broad valley of the Seti River, with an area covered around 5648 hectares located on the southern side of Mount Annapurna and the Himalayan range (Poudel, 2008). The Seti River dissects this Pokhara region into two parts. One of the major attractions of this place is due to its raw natural beauty, landscapes, and its unique socio-cultural heritage. This region being the headquarters of the western region of Nepal and the second busiest tourist centre after the capital city, it has lured both internal and external tourists (Poudel, 2008). This "Pokhara region" is selected for this dissertation as a study area due to its growing popularity as a tourism destination and its potential to adopt agritourism as a new niche segment. According to Khanal and Shrestha (2019, p. 465), Nepal is a developing and agrarian-dependent country with 2/3 of its population actively engaging in agriculture, accounting for around 28% of its total gross domestic product. Nepal is rich with rich Agro-biodiversity, and tourism is the largest industry in Nepal and the largest foreign exchange source (S. Khanal & Shrestha, 2019, p. 465). According to Travel and Tour World (2025),

farm activities are considered as the integral part of Pokhara’s economy along with tourism. This region attracts both domestic and international tourists while still maintaining active farming communities, especially in its rural and semi-urban regions. This region offers a diverse range of agritourism-themed activities, from farm stays and local culinary experiences to handicrafts and nature-based tourism (S. Khanal & Shrestha, 2019). This region is being considered as the growing tourism hub of Nepal, combining with traditional livelihoods, providing a rich context to explore and understand its potential about how agritourism helps contribute to community empowerment in real-world settings.

Figure 4: Study Area Pokhara



Source: (Poudel, 2008)

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This master's dissertation captured eight participants using semi-structured interviews from diverse occupational backgrounds from the Pokhara region who are directly or indirectly involved in agritourism activities. These participants were chosen using purposive sampling, holding different occupational backgrounds, age groups, genders, and social roles within the Pokhara community. Among the participants' the majority of the participants were male (63% out of 8 participants). Similarly, the participants' engagement with the interview process has a generational diversity ranging from some participants being 25 to 52 years old. More importantly, the majority of these participants were living in the studied area (i.e., the Pokhara region), while other participants had resided in this area for more than a decade. These participants' long-term residence in this region reflects not only recent agritourism practices but also shares their experiences about agritourism practice changes over time. The inclusion of these participants holding diverse occupational backgrounds, from farmers to community representatives to tourism students, enabled the researcher to capture insights across economic, sociocultural, and empowerment areas, including the opportunities and challenges created through agritourism.

Table 2: Participant's Profile

Participants	Occupation/Status	Gender and Age	Years of residency in Pokhara	Interview session
Participant 1	Farmer	Male (39 years)	Since birth	33 minutes
Participant 2	Student (Tourism study Bachelor)	Female (25 years)	Since birth	24 minutes
Participant 3	Cafe owner	Male (42 years)	Over 15 years	25 minutes
Participant 4	Souvenir shop owner	Female (44 years)	Since birth	29 minutes
Participant 5	Staycation & restaurant owner	Male 37 years	Over 10 years	31 minutes

Participant 6	Pickle and handcraft shop owner	Female (46 years)	Over 20 years	30 minutes
Participant 7	Community representative	Male (52 years)	Since birth	29 minutes
Participant 8	Paragliding operator	Male (33 years)	Since birth	35 minutes

Overall, this master's dissertation adopted semi-structured interviews using thematic analysis, allowing the recurring patterns, similarities, and contrasts across eight participants' experiences to be identified. From the overall transcribed responses generated from the interview session, four main themes emerged from the interview analysis: i) agritourism as an economic opportunity, ii) social, cultural, and skill-based outcomes, iii) challenges and uneven impacts of agritourism, and lastly iv) community empowerment through agritourism. Thus, this chapter will provide these themes using participants' narratives, supported by their direct quotations, while adequately maintaining an equitable position between the descriptive and analytical focus.

4.2 Theme I: Agritourism as a means of local economic opportunities

Across the interview session, agritourism was consistently found as a valuable economic opportunity, especially in the form of income diversification support and promising backup support for small-scale livelihoods. For instance, the participants who are engaging in farming, the hospitality sector, and small-scale business sector operators emphasised that agritourism offered a much-needed passive income source beyond conventional agricultural practices and seasonal tourism dependency in the Pokhara region. The farmer (Participant 1) sees agritourism as a form of his family's economic security, quoting, *"Before this, we used to rely on crops and market value while selling. Now when tourists come, we earn from farm visits and food offerings. This gives us some safety."* Similarly, the pickle and handcraft entrepreneur (Participant 6, who is female) highlighted that agritourism has enabled women's empowerment through income generation: *"Tourists purchase locally produced products because they want something authentic. This helps me to support my house without leaving my home."* Similarly, from a tourism and hospitality service perspective, participant 5, owner of a staycation and restaurant, emphasised that agritourism boosts longer tourist stays, which supports multiple businesses in the local region: *"When tourists go beyond the lakeside area and visit farms*

and villages, they find new things and stay longer. This directly helps restaurants, staycation providers, and transportation.”

However, the economic opportunities were not seen from a uniform perspective. For instance, the tourism student (participant 2, enrolled in a bachelor’s degree in tourism studies) provided a cautious stance by stressing the Nepalese structural inequalities: *“It is true that agritourism creates money, but mostly for those who have resources in their control like land, location, and connections.”* Aligning with this, participant 3 (café owner) also questioned the consistency of agritourism benefits, such as *“some days it goes well, but it is not fully stable. Especially the small business can’t fully rely on agritourism for their incomes.”*

4.3 Theme II: Socio-cultural and Skill-Based Outcomes of Agritourism

Agritourism was not found to be limited to financial benefits; among the participants, it was widely perceived as strengthening socio-identical valuation, cultural pride, and increased confidence within the community. For instance, many participants narrated about how their interaction with visitors because of agritourism helped to increase local cultural recognition and boost their skill showcase. Participant 4 reflected her perspective on cultural value by stating, *“When tourists ask about our handmade items and traditions, we feel our culture has some value, which is not limited to us but for others as well.”* Similarly, the community representative (Participant 7) highlighted the intergenerational effects by quoting, *“Young people are now more interested in learning our traditional skills again; it’s because tourists want to see such things.”*

Similarly, skill development was found to be a crucial sub-theme, as participants frequently mentioned improvement in overall communication skills, customer handling techniques, and basic entrepreneurship. For instance, participant 6 explained that *“I learnt how to explain and promote my products, communicate politely, and maintain the overall quality. These skills only come because of tourists.”* However, scepticism was there as participant 3 cautiously highlighted the cultural dilution factors as: *“Sometimes culture becomes a part of performance. Because we try to adjust things for tourists, and this can slowly change the real meaning of our culture.”* Similarly, Participant 2 pointed out the inclusivity factor by stressing that *“people who are not directly engaged do not necessarily feel this pride. For them, agritourism feels like distant”.*

These findings indicate that agritourism helps boost social cohesion, cultural visibility, and feelings of pride; however, these benefits are not experienced evenly. Because a growing concern about maintaining the cultural authenticity is clearly seen, as commodification of culture could help deterioration of their local pride and meanings.

4.4 Theme III: Challenges and Uneven Benefits of Agritourism

While it was found that participants acknowledged agritourism benefits in the Pokhara region, the interview session also witnessed significant challenges. The key factor was the unequitable distribution of agritourism benefits among the community members, which several participants felt was concerning and would lead to more social tension if left unresolved. For instance, Participant 2 eloquently highlighted this imbalance situation based on the tourism proximity: *“Those who are living near to tourist routes are benefitting more; meanwhile, others are still waiting.”* The imbalanced infrastructural development was found concerning, as Pokhara still faces inadequate infrastructural development in low-recognised touristic areas. Similarly, Participant 1 highlighted environmental pressure and resource strain as recurring concerns, particularly with water use and waste management, as *“when many tourists come together, then the use of water goes exceedingly high and waste becomes a major problem.”* Furthermore, Participant 8 disclosed improper destination management gaps; he stressed that *“once tourists enter into an agritourism farm without clear instruction and guidance, then the crops get damaged because of no clear instructions.”* In line with this, participant 5 narrates similar concerns regarding infrastructural and co-ordination challenges: *“Everyone works separately. And there is no proper system to manage the visitors.”*

From a sceptical standpoint, participant 3 raised more doubts about the sustainability of the Pokhara region by stating that *“Agritourism sounds good in the theoretical world, but without actual planning it only brings pressure on the host’s daily life.”*

These findings from participants hint that agritourism in the Pokhara region operates within structural constraints despite holding significant agritourism potential. These constraints included weak coordination, environmental pressure, and uneven infrastructural development. These factors were concerning, as they could threaten Pokhara’s long-term sustainability if they go unresolved.

4.5 Theme IV: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism

The interview session found community empowerment within the Pokhara region as a complex and multi-dimensional theme, as the researchers came across economic, social, psychological and political aspects. Though most participants experienced some degree of empowerment, its depth was found to vary across many dimensions.

4.5.1 Economic empowerment

It was found that economic empowerment was the most strongly perceived dimension among the eight participants. These participants acknowledged economic empowerment with the ability to earn income independently, lowering reliance on a single family person for livelihood sources, and getting the confidence financially. Agritourism was seen as a crucial factor behind economic empowerment; for instance, Participant 1 experienced agritourism to reduce financial vulnerability by quoting, *“In earlier days, everything depended on crops and weather, but these days even a small earning from touristic activities gives us some financial security.”* Similarly, Participant 6 stressed how agritourism improved financial independence, especially for women: *“Because of agritourism, I don’t have to ask others for money anymore. My earning comes from my own work, i.e., pickle and handcraft entrepreneur.* From a business perspective, agritourism was found effective to diversify the income generation; for instance, participant 5, who is a staycation & restaurant owner, emphasised that *“agritourism does not replace the main business; in fact, it supports it. When the tourism flow gets slow, local experiences still help bring customers.”*

However, it was found that economic empowerment was not adequately and equally accessible. For instance, the tourism student (i.e., Participant 2) questioned the overall inclusiveness of financial benefits produced through agritourism by quoting that *“only people with resources (land, location, and investment) can earn really well; meanwhile, others remain as outsiders.”*

4.5.2 Social and psychological empowerment

The social and psychological empowerment was found to be another strongly reflected aspect across participants’ responses, especially through their increased pride, confidence, and sense of value.

Many participants found that interaction with tourists helped them understand the value of their own culture, skills recognition, and daily practices. Participant 4 shared that “when *tourists appreciate our handmade products, we feel more proud about who we are.*” Similarly, Participant 8 experienced confidence from a broader community perspective by stating that “*People feel proud when their normal life becomes exciting and something that tourists admire.*” These participants also found themselves with growing motivation, especially with youth and women. For instance, Participant 6 explained that, “*Before, I felt my work was only for survival. Now when tourists buy my products, I feel more confident.*”

However, it was also found that psychological empowerment was not observed universally among all the participants. Participant 2 eloquently highlighted the feeling of exclusion, especially to marginalised groups: “*Those who are not involved in agritourism feel left out, and they do not feel empowered.*” Meanwhile, Participant 3 aligned with Participant 2 but from a neutral perspective: “*Yes, confidence grows, but there is also a growing pressure to satisfy visitors.*”

4.5.3 Political and decision-making empowerment

This political and decision-making empowerment was found as the least developed dimension across all eight interviewees. While it was found that participants acknowledged some level of community discussion and informal participation, the majority of them felt that decision-making power clustered mainly among limited and powerful groups. For instance, the community representative (i.e., participant 7) highlighted that “*local people are invited for meetings and decision-making roles, but not everyone attends, speaks, or feels motivated.*” In contrast to this, Participant 5 highlighted limitations in influence by stating that “*We share ideas and agendas, but the final decision is made somewhere and by a few active people.*” Similarly, participant 1 expressed in a cautious way, “*We are informed about the plans and agendas, but we do not always share them.*”

Despite these concerns, there were some positive sides as well. For instance, Participant 8 experienced some progress and acknowledged it was due to agritourism. Participant 8 observed that, “*Compared to prior days, people now engage and talk more about tourism and community development plans.*” On the contrary, Participant 2 questioned the overall depth and sustainable participation by quoting, “*Being informed is not exactly the same as having the power to change it.*”

4.5 Overall empowerment experience

When assessing all dimensions, participants described agritourism as empowering from a practical perspective but lacking in structure. It was found that economic and psychological empowerment were visible at the individual level, but political empowerment, especially equitable participation in decision-making roles, still lagged behind. For instance, participant 8 clarified this claim by summarising that “*agritourism empowers local people, as it has that potential, but only for those who are involved and prepared.*” Aligning with this, Participant 1 stated that “agritourism is helping us, but not everyone in an equitable manner.” Overall, these findings show that agritourism in the Pokhara region provides meaningfully to community empowerment. But its benefit is still unequally distributed, dependent on selective participants and governance structures.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter 4 provided an expanded thematic analysis of eight interviewees' responses based on semi-structured interviews. Four interconnected themes emerged during the analysis phase, and these themes were illustrating agritourism's role in making economic opportunities, strengthening and supporting social cultural identity, generating challenges and inequalities, and contributing to varying levels of community empowerment in the Pokhara region. While the economic and social empowerment were strongly perceived by the participants, the political and equitable level of participation in decision-making empowerment remained limited. Therefore, these findings will serve as a robust empirical foundation for the next chapter, so they will be critically discussed by comparing findings with prior researchers' findings, claims, and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This discussion chapter will provide the key insights of the study by providing a linkage with prior researchers' findings and theoretical perspectives on agritourism and community empowerment in the Pokhara region of Nepal. Based on the in-depth "semi-structured interview" carried out with eight participants from diverse backgrounds from the Pokhara region, this chapter will provide how agritourism creates opportunities and challenges and how it has supported empowerment development. It will explicitly highlight economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment of local communities within the Pokhara region. The findings presented in this chapter are interpreted based on real-life experiences of eight participants while keeping the overall discussion simple, practical, and grounded in nature.

5.2 Agritourism as a source of local opportunities

The findings demonstrate that agritourism has provided novel streams of livelihood opportunities for local people in the Pokhara region. Participants narrated benefits such as additional income streams, business diversification, skills and motivation development, and increased levels of interaction between hosts and guests. This supports previous studies (Adamov et al., 2019; Cheteni & Umejese, 2023) which argue that agritourism helps provide a supplementary income source instead of replacing it from traditional farming and related businesses. For instance, farmers and small entrepreneurs highlighted how the emergence of agritourism helped reduce their dependency on agricultural practices alone. This supports the view that agritourism strengthens rural resilience by lowering the economic vulnerabilities and seasonal unemployment issues. However, sceptical voices, majorly from tourism students and café owners, highlighted that local opportunities created through agritourism are not actually accessible. This supports the earlier research by Grillini et al. (2023) who found that agritourism benefits highly those stakeholder groups who have land accessibility, capital, and tourist-centric locations. Altogether, while agritourism provides several local opportunities, its reach is still selective in nature; therefore, it shows a need for better inclusive planning.

5.3 Challenges and Unequal Impacts of Agritourism

The participants discussed several challenges related to agritourism development in the Pokhara region. It was found that environmental pressure, seasonal income issues, unequitable distribution of agritourism benefits across community groups, and lack of coordination were frequently mentioned challenges by the participants. More importantly, these challenges are found to be consistent with the existing literature, which suggests that unmanaged or unsystematic tourism management in a destination can bring social tension and environmental pressure.

When assessing viewpoints from sceptical participants, the income generated via agritourism was uncertain and depended solely on tourist flow. This reflects concerns raised, especially in rural tourism studies, that due to seasonal dependency on tourism, demand affects a destination's long-term sustainability. In addition to this, some participants criticised that only a few individuals or businesses benefited most from agritourism in the Pokhara region. And this inequitable distribution of agritourism is creating a feeling of exclusion among others, especially marginalised groups.

The research on agritourism' adverse effects and unequal impacts shows both consistencies and nuances in the literature. For instance, several research support findings that agritourism can help disrupt community dynamics and produce uneven outcomes. The research by Brune et al. (2015) found that agritourism lowers local communities' social interaction and lifestyle change mainly due to farmers hosting visitors reporting low community engagement due to their busy schedules and high service demands. However, some research provides positive findings. Bwana et al. (2015) found that agritourism helps strengthen rural economies and community well-being, especially when governance structures are effectively functional and strong and benefits are more evenly shared. Thusly, the contrasting findings between these findings and this dissertation suggest that adverse impacts are not necessarily inherent with agritourism itself but are majorly shaped by local context, community participation, and institutional backups.

Therefore, these findings suggest that though agritourism has its benefit in local opportunity creation, when it is not managed systematically, it can bring more inequalities instead of reducing them.

5.4 Economic empowerment through agritourism

This dissertation has found economic empowerment was found as the strongest and most visible outcome of agritourism in the Pokhara region. Most participants were found to be associated with economic empowerment in terms of increased income, financial independence, and lowering financial vulnerabilities due to income diversification. This finding supports Scheyven's (1999) concept of economic empowerment, where the local actors gain tangible financial benefits when utilising tourism activities in their localities. This ability to earn even a small fraction of regular income provides financial confidence and economic independence among the local people, especially to low-income families and marginalised groups. On the contrary, sceptical participants highlighted that this empowerment is temporary and seasonally dependent. Which suggests that though economic empowerment is real, it is fragile in nature, highly dependent on tourist demand, infrastructure dependent, and structurally supported.

When comparing this dissertation's findings with Barbieri and Mshenga (2008), who found that agritourism significantly enhances household income diversification and makes it financially stable for rural farmers, it thereby offers economic independence and lowers vulnerabilities, especially related to agricultural and seasonal unemployment risks. This supports the view that agritourism offers an effective tool for empowerment and thus supports this dissertation. However, contrasting views presented by Grillini et al. (2023) found that agritourism does not always provide economic benefits for all participants; especially those who are not directly involved in agritourism are often neglected from these initiatives. Their study shows that tourism-related benefits are unevenly distributed, where minor entrepreneurs and resource-poor farmers are often limited from financial betterment. These contrasting findings clearly suggest that economic empowerment through agritourism depends on how well the land is accessible, capital formation, and institutional support.

5.5 Social and psychological empowerment

In this paper, the social and psychological empowerment was found in the shape of self-confidence, pride in feeling one's culture and tradition, and elevated motivation. Participants expressed a proud

sense of feelings when visitors appreciated their local culture, cuisine, farming practices and techniques, handcrafts, etc. This appreciation from outsiders enabled local communities to understand and value their own living style, culture, and traditions more strongly.

These findings are supported by tourism literature such as (Cavalleri et al., 2022; Hosseini et al., 2025), which emphasised that cultural recognition is a crucial factor that helps enhance community pride and identity development. Women and small-scale entrepreneurs who are often neglected felt psychologically empowered when their work got adequate recognition and support, especially from the outsiders. However, not all participants were found experiencing this empowerment in an equitable way. For instance, those who are not directly involved in agritourism felt less recognised and confident and most often felt excluded from the initiatives. This clearly demonstrates that psychological empowerment depends on the active level of participation; thusly, not just the presence of tourism in the community.

5.6 Political and decision-making empowerment

This dissertation has found that political and decision-making empowerment was the least developed dimension. Though community meetings and discussions related to agritourism and community development existed, most participants felt that the real decision-making power remained limited to fewer hands, and often the final decision took place outside of community meetings.

These findings refer to broader tourism research, which demonstrates that community participation often remains symbolic in nature instead of having any real meaningful presence within the community. While local community groups are informed about the agendas and development plans, they rarely influence the final decisions. Though some participants acknowledged small levels of improvements, for instance, increased discussion and awareness regarding agritourism planning. This suggests that political empowerment supported by agritourism within the Pokhara region is still in an emerging phase. Thusly, without adequate local governance mechanisms and inclusive participation, agritourism might struggle, especially when delivering long-term empowerment in the Pokhara region.

The findings from this dissertation on political and decision-making empowerment correspond with the growing body of tourism literature which highlights the inequitable nature of local communities' participation in agritourism-related governance. For instance, this dissertation is consistent with Nunkoo & Ramkissoon's (2012) findings indicating that rural communities often experience low levels of influence over decision-making, planning, and profit sharing, where the key decisions are frequently controlled by richer and powerful owners, governmental bodies, external investors, or tourism elites. This restricted level of participation often hints toward weak political empowerment and discourages communities' ability to shape agritourism development as per the local needs. Though some research, such as Boley and McGehee (2014), found contrasting evidence from participatory agritourism initiatives in the European region. It suggests that when the local institutions and community members are actively involved in agritourism-related governance structures, then the agritourism helps enhance political voice and collective decision-making abilities. However, it might be a different case in different regions, especially in developing countries where the decision powers are often in richer and more powerful hands instead of community members.

5.7 Overall interpretation of community empowerment

Overall, the findings show that agritourism in the Pokhara region contributes positively to community empowerment, especially at the individual and household level. For instance, the economic and psychological empowerment were evident, but the decision-making empowerment, especially from marginalised groups including women, remains weak and almost symbolic in nature. These mixed outcomes support the argument for us that empowerment is not certain in nature, as it requires several supporting foundations to align with each other. For instance, it depends on building different aspects such as access, participation, awareness and education, and institutional support. So, it is evident that agritourism alone might not be sufficient enough to empower communities unless it is backed up adequately by inclusive policies and capacity-building initiatives.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This overall master dissertation explored the role of agritourism in community development in the Pokhara region with an exclusive focus on opportunities and challenges created by agritourism. And how agritourism contributes to overall community empowerment. Using a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants representing diverse stakeholder groups, including farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, service providers (i.e., café and staycation providers), students, and community representatives. Thematic analysis was used for this dissertation to interpret the qualitative data.

6.2 Answer to the research questions

To answer the first research question of what opportunities and challenges agritourism has created in the Pokhara region of Nepal, the overall findings show that agritourism in the Pokhara region has created several crucial opportunities for its local communities. These opportunities include supplementary income sources, diversification of local businesses, employment creation, skill and confidence development, and increased interaction with visitors. Participants highlighted that agritourism helped reduce dependence on traditional agriculture and farming and helped get rid of single-income dependency and support small businesses' growth. In addition to this, agritourism was found effective at cultural preservation and increased level of appreciation of local culture, traditions, and daily practices. These factors helped local people to feel more proud and sense value in their culture and daily practices. However, this dissertation finds some notable challenges. Firstly, agritourism benefits were not found to be equitably distributed. Some community members felt excluded from the benefits due to insufficient land accessibility, capital formation, and access to tourist-centric locations. Additionally, seasonal income, environmental pressure (especially in peak tourist season), inadequate infrastructural development, and a limited level of coordination among stakeholders were found to be equally challenging aspects. Overall, these findings demonstrate that while agritourism seems potent at bringing opportunities, its full potential is limited because of structural and planning-related challenges.

Similarly, answering the research question of how does agritourism contribute to the overall economic development in the Pokhara region of Nepal? This dissertation found that agritourism helps contribute to community empowerment, but it's uneven yet meaningful in many ways. In the context of economic empowerment, most participants experienced increased income, financial independence, and economic security. More importantly, small-scale entrepreneurs and women in particular felt more empowered because of earning their own income and contributing to their household disposable income and decisions. Similarly, in the context of social and psychological empowerment, this dissertation has found increased community pride, confidence development, and motivation. These empowerments majorly originated due to locals' interactions with visitors, which helped them value their local culture, cuisine, farming practices, and living styles. Meanwhile, those who are not directly involved with agritourism felt less empowered. This clearly suggests that better social and psychological empowerment depends on active local participation.

Lastly, political and decision-making empowerment was found to be the weakest dimension. While discussions and consultations related to agritourism-related planning and development existed, most participants found they had limited influence over the planning and decision-making. This clearly suggests that agritourism in the Pokhara region has not yet fully empowered communities, especially at the governance level. In a sense, agritourism in this study region has empowered individuals and households more than the community level as a whole.

6.3 Managerial implications

The findings from this dissertation provide several practical implications for managers, local entrepreneurs, and policy formulators who are either directly or indirectly engaged in agritourism development in the Pokhara region. First and foremost, agritourism operators and local entrepreneurs and business owners should prioritise inclusive participation. Managers, when effectively incorporating farmers, women, micro-entrepreneurs, youth, and local vendors by creating partnerships, shared activities, and providing a sense of community, help overall community empowerment. This collectively supports overall development of the Pokhara region; thusly, it might get the adequate recognition from other industrial sectors. Additionally, it helps spread agritourism benefits more evenly and lowers the feelings of exclusion at the community level.

Secondly, capacity building is crucial; therefore, managers must invest their time and efforts in training programmes such as customer service, handling, digital marketing, and basic financial management techniques. These skill developments will help local people to improve their service quality and gain more confidence during the host-guest interactions.

Thirdly, the adequate level of coordination among different stakeholders needs to be strengthened. Different actors, for instance, managers, destination management organisations, local governance teams, and local actors, can work together as a team to develop and formulate clear guidelines, seasonal planning, and environmental management practices. This not only helps the local community to make themselves distinct from other competitors but also equally prioritises each stakeholder group as a team during the decision-making process. At the same time, regular meetings, feedback sessions, and transparent communication are important because they help locals to feel more prioritised and gain a sense of value.

6.4 Limitations and future study recommendations

Every bean has its black. Despite several attempts to make it limitation-free, this dissertation still has some crucial limitations. Firstly, this dissertation is based on a small participant sample size of eight. This undoubtedly limits the ability to generalise the findings to the similar region in Nepal. One of the crucial obstacles behind this low sample size was due to the online medium, as it was the only source of access to participants. Though the researcher still tried to select participants from diverse stakeholder groups, a larger participant size would have captured the community's true picture of opportunities, challenges, and overall empowerments. Secondly, the dissertation relied only on qualitative semi-structured interviews, which are more concerned with participants' individual views, experiences, and perceptions. While this approach is richer and supports creating in-depth insights, it sometimes lacks an understanding of the actual economic and social impact of agritourism. At the same time, this research was only focused on a single geographical area, which undoubtedly compromises the possible comparison with other rural and agritourism-intense regions.

Therefore, future studies could limit these limitations by using a mixed-method approach. Because combining both qualitative and quantitative will help to provide both in-depth insights and verification from a larger sample size. Along with this, comparative studies across different regions of Nepal would help to analyse and identify regional differences in agritourism impacts.

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Appendix

Participant 1: *Farmer*

Section A: Introduction / Warm-up

Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?

Hello, I am Ram Maris and I am also a farmer who is living in this region Pokhara region from many years, and I grew many vegetables, fruits and different kind of herbs. You can see I am an active farmer. I have been a part of this community, uh. Since my birth and. Anything I would say, uh, forever he had. As I find this place. Really good to live and because of this agritourism, now I feel even more productive. And yes, uh, farming is my main source of income from over the years and now. Because of these Agri tourism, I am also into these tourism site. I have also opened my firm for our visitors especially, but um, such visitors who want to experience how to run life and see how we are. Uh, produce our crops, grow our busy tables and other Hobbs and I also have one Heisman homestead in my farm where tourists can stay for 2-3 days adults, so they can. Stay for more time and enjoy our local surroundings. Enjoy our forest food. Calls are our heritage site. I feel so much proud to share our traditional of farming techniques, knowledge and living style. The people are from different countries and also from our own country who visit these places and this connection with visitors has motivated always on us to improve our farms and also diversify our activities. So that we can offer better to our visitors

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

I am engaging in this agritourism. See like more than five years and in our initial days are few tourists used to come here, and they come here because of the curiosity to see our farming practices and after overtime more people they start to visit. Maybe because they start to like it and at first it was just a small and kind of informal in nature, but now it has grown into more organized activity with a more structured. Visiting areas, farm tours and also the homestays and I participate in local meetings where we can discuss and put our thoughts about the tourism development. That's why I am also aware of how these Agri tourism. Offerings, uh, other farms and the overall community development over these five years of time I have seen so many challenges and, uh. Many opportunities for our community because. And do the job. And I feel like that I have learned so many from this. Hosting the visitors. It helps managing our incomes and interacting with other people about how we live, how our culture is. And how we can sort them out, uh, living style? But these are the positive side and also, we have some negative also like the seasonal unemployment issue, like what to do because we have this much upset up and especially in the winter and rainy season, many do this, they do not come here. Ohh I'd say it becomes like useless during that time.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

So, in our, uh, Pokhara region, agritourism means we have several activities and the tourist, uh, both are internal and external. They can visit our farms and to see how we grow ours. Lazy day balance different fruits. Uh, different medicinal herbs also, and I mean they also can see, um. And big busy tables by themselves or they can join in cooking season. How we cook our local foods using fresh ingredients from the farm which is also organic. Some visitors stay in home stays and farms which gives them. Jones to experience our do not live more authentically, and also the small demonstration of our traditional farming practices. How our festivals are organized during the tourist season, especially after the Thursday, because this is the season. Weird, it's not too hot and not too cold and these guys are almost clear, and you can see all the mountains clearly through your naked eyes. Or visitors also get to interact with our community, learn about our cultural themes, graphs. Our farming techniques and sometimes it can even. You can also practice in his small workshop for making. Because, um, Jam products, man. And handmade things. These activities also help to make the tourism not only to see the harm but also helps to learn and provide experience about our community's daily life more from there. Punch them. I mean naked eyes.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism

Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?

So, these agritourism definitely has created many opportunities for, uh, my community, uh, in a more economical and social way. When you talk about the economical, it provides us to sell our fresh vegetables, fruits and other. Some products directly to our visitors. This helps to bring extra income, which we did not have before doing this agritourism things and the young

people, now they have the chance to work like as a guide person porters. Cooking and helper also this help to lower the unemployment in this area. To some point, I think small businesses which can be like your own souvenir sobs and handcrafted products on in these also helps grow because of the increasing number of tourists visiting the region. From socially also, this gives us the exposure to people from different cultures and helps us learn new ideas and technique. About the farming and hospitality thing, I feel prouder about this. It also encouraged the collaboration with. Other partners and local entrepreneurs because we share so many experiences with them, uh, the marketing ideas and new visions like growing oxygen vegetables. From culturally also these agritourism motivate us to continue our traditional practices, uh, local festivals and cooking methods, because tourist they like and respect these things. What we do in our daily life, we do same things but because of this agritourism we can get money by doing this and this is so good. I mean, financially this helps to make us independent. I feel it has a make our cultural pride and so our cultural identity and give us our true value. So, I feel angry. Tourism provides financial supports, helps skill development and social learning opportunities as well, which is a good thing, and this makes our community stronger and feel motivated. Practice more actively in tourism and agriculture and related things.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, this agritourism has improved our livelihoods in this Pokhara community. It's because before our income was only dependent with selling the crops like vegetables in our local market and the. No, it was uh, not peaks and especially due to the fluctuating kind of market. Now, um, tourist, they buy fresh produce, vegetables, jams, Pickles and other umm uh, products, dairy products. Also directly from me, this includes sales and radio series, dependence on the middle person and also, uh, you don't need to go anywhere. Also, homie Stay services provides additional income stream for families who are willing to host the communities. Many local people have found temporary or part time work in these UH Pokhara site because of the agritourism and farm activities. It has improved our household incomes and reduce unemployment definitely because it stops young people to migrate to cities because there is no job. But now they stay in villages because of the job in their own community and is small businesses like the show? In their shops, campaigns and handcraft sellers have. Get more benefit because tourists purchase these locally made products. These also increase the local entrepreneurship in our community. And in addition to finance your appropriate agritourism helps these Pokhara community plan better for seasonal income and it's for education or farm investment and improve the overall well-being. I like this agritourism conserved. Because it makes me more independent. Families also feel more confident and secure because they have multiple sources of income linked to tourism like agriculture or handmade items, guides, cooking things, etc. So, these agritourism has brought not only money into the community, because it also provides a. Economic stability and it also empowered our community and also it gives you hope to get, uh, long term development of our society.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

Yes. Uh, I think, uh, this agritourism has been very important for, uh, preserving our local culture and traditional style of farming practice. Uh, it's because. To do this, they are very interested in seeing our how we grow our vegetables, fruits and other herbs in a more traditional way. These inquiries us to continue these methods instead of doing only modern kind of practices with I don't think it is that sustainable and the traditional cooking. Our local festival individuals are now part of the tourist program so. Families, uh, make more, uh, uh, their effort to maintain these. Authentic and uh, try to uh, provide as original as possible and the local crabs are pickle products on and other handmade products are also, uh, suitcase to ours. Easy to understand, this supports many artisans and keeps their skill alive. I feel that these agritourism has made us more. Loud and conscious of how the socio-cultural heritage. It's because we now know that, uh, when outsiders are valuate and we are willing to, and when they are willing to pay to experience it, uh, we feel more precious about. And the young people are more motivated to learn about these traditions, and they see a practical benefit in sharing many cultures with tourist. I feel this has strained our community identity, pride and not just a. They come to see our farming practices, but also, they absorb our traditions and they want to know about our history, our agricultural skills and traditions. In a more effective way, they find. These things are more interesting, and they find this more like new things which are they did not see in their daily lives.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Yes, they agree. Tourism has opened many kinds of opportunities especially for learning and skill development in our community. The farmers and their families have learned many types of hospitality skills like how to communicate. With our visitors politely managing different schedule and also. Providing good UH hospitality experience for tourists. We have also developed many businesses skills such as the product pricing out of finance management and also promoting others for BCS. Some young people have learned English and basic guide. Marketing. And techniques and how to promote and do better communication with the visitors because most of the tourists, they know English and this becomes more important for us to know so that we can easily communicate. With them. To the cooking and our culinary activities, UH demonstrates and craft workshops have taught. Us how to present our products professionally. We also

have learned how to organize these ebans coordinate with. So many other farmers and manage the resources effectively. Uh, these skills also help us not to provide, uh, from tourism perspective, but also in our everyday life because it makes our household more. Independent and more resilient so they agreed to resume has motivated us to improve ourselves more continuously and the training and any kind of information informational learning that come from. Connecting with visitors. It's very beneficial for the entire community.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

When these are agritourism, uh. Not many benefits uh, it also had some challenges and it's like uh, the two side of the coin because uh, it also had some backside and also had some good side and one major challenge. These are managing the large group of visitors, especially in the peak time. Sometimes, uh, when many visitors are, they come at once. It uh, yes, it feels like overwhelming for the farm and the family, but it also. The pigs, the growth of the crops and sometimes, uh. Um, they just go into the farm and then and the crops and they get destroyed. And we also have limited space, and it is very difficult to attain to everyone properly, which also affects the quality of. BBC dot Experience I think another challenging is also maintaining the hygiene and cleanliness because visitors are they. Do not always follow the rules and they may not be aware about our rules and sometimes they leave the waste behind or damaging the plants and some plants are very special and they are very clear also. And this is also the issue of. Balancing the farming work with tourism responsibilities and this Usually during the BG season we spend more time attending the tourist and this also affect our regular. That means that some community members are also hesitant to participate because they worry about their privacy life and it is more effort. Finding things and additionally the cultural differences also sometimes bring some misunderstanding between the visitors and our locals, which may need to handle very carefully despite the challenges we try to manage. By providing many rules for visitors and also for hours and organizing schedules and. Providing education to our tourist, uh, about, uh, responsible behavior, I mean, uh, responsible tourism behavior. And over time, we are learning to adapt and minimize the negative impact while keeping the benefit of. Grow more and more.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, why not? This agritourism transport so many pressure and local resources and the environment like the water usage increases, uh, so much wine to reach. They stay in home. He stays when we have to cook meals for them or participate in any harm related activities. The family farmland tickets damage out when too many visitors walk through the planting areas and then they beat out crops, which management is also another problem because these visitors they often use more plastics. Know how to put the waste and it is more difficult to handle so many wastes in such time, even in small things like increasing fuel use per transport and also the noise from visitors affects the local environment especially. Out. Any months and the boards from the forest side, but from the positive side, we have started to provide uh, simple strategies like using uh design paths, providing waste bins and educating visitors. For days that going to the farms, but uh, these airports require more planning and cooperation, uh, from the whole community and maybe also from the other party like the local government, sometimes the local roads and. Trying to talk to us and they had not so good so that they can handle the tourist traffic. And this also sometimes brings, uh, congestion and also, we see some minor accidents. So, while agritourism is beneficial, it also requires. So many uh careful management things to protect our natural resources and to make sure that we can achieve the long-term sustainability

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Definitely there are some issues with the unequal participation. In our Pokhara community, it's because not everyone has the required resources. I mean the land, which is the main thing to participate in the agritourism activities, because when you have your own land or if you have that, uh. Under lease then it gives you more opportunity to provide your agritourism things to the tourist. But the wealthier farmers or families who have larger farms and they have better infrastructure and like the location is closer to the. Tourist center then they attract more visitors and they own more income. But these smaller households are those with limited resources. They get struggle to set up their home States and organize activities that are suitable for the tourists. Additionally, some people. We had, uh, hesitant to participate in this program because of the new level of confidence or knowledge about how to host the visitors. This also provides a gap where only a portion of the community get benefits directly from these agritourism, however. Some initiatives like uh, uh, collaborative marketing things or community workshops are helping some people to get involved into these. For example, our local groups, sometimes they just, uh, pull resources to organize farm tours together. And allowing small farmers to share the benefits and try to encourage them. But despite of these efforts. To ensure equitable access and fair benefit distribution is a challenging thing. It's because it requires more support from top authorities, also from the government, community sites and other local organizations. We're trying to make this agritourism inclusive for everyone.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

There are several barriers. Which limit the growth of agritourism. Here one of the major behaviors is obviously the infrastructure. Because UH Rd. is the main theme and roads to farms are often narrow. They are like uh. Not only maintained where we don't have clear sign, which makes it hard for tourists to reach us comfortably. And another barrier is also the lack of training for these, uh, visitors on how to, uh, how we can manage these visitors, how to run our home stays. Organize activities more effectively. The marketing is also very limited, and many tourists are not aware of the farms and the experiences that we provide to them. The financial constraints prevent some families from investing in necessary facilities like. How to make the proper kitchens? Bathrooms and guest accommodations as per their requirement and additionally the local government support and regulations are very limited and we often rely on our informal arrangement, which can obviously provide inconsistencies in. Service quality. Environmental and resources management is another challenge for us because the community needs to provide a balance with sustainable farming practices. Finally, the coordination among the community member is also. Sometimes we which can lower the overall, uh, tourist attraction and addressing these barriers needs combined efforts from the community, uh, the local authorities, also the tourism organizes and uh. Tourism Board to ensure the agritourism reaches its full potential.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism**Economic Empowerment****Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?**

Has noticeably increased income and economic security for our houses. But before we started welcoming the visitors, our income come mainly from, uh, selling and producing our crops and providing to the local markets, which was very unpredictable. And often low because of the fluctuating prices and middlemen taking more share. Now the tourists, they purchase our vegetables, fruits and handmade products. From our direct hands, which gives uh, more profit to us. The home he stays also provide additional income for those, especially during the tourist season, where we can save more for emergencies of children's education and for the farm. Improvement. This extra income has allowed my family to invest in better farming tools, improve our housing condition and provide better service for the visitors. And main thing is this supports our children's schooling, and I think even is small and indirect. It appears like when do these buying from local shops or when they hire our guides, these contributes to the overall household income of our community will feel more financially secure and independent. It's because we now no longer rely. Surely and also, we don't need to depend on the market condition, or we don't need to only depend on our traditional farming style. So viral these agritourism has provided more diversified income for us and this has improved both economic stabilities. So

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Why not this agritourism? Provided our community much more control to our local economic activities. It's because, uh, we decide what type of experience do we have to offer to our visitors and uh, with, uh, price is good for the products. In home these days and how to organize out of hand tools so that they can get more authentic experience and this type of independence allows us to respond more quickly to the two experiences and manage our resources better. It's because in the past, the market sales were mainly decided by the buyers and the middlemen, and we have very little room for our point of view. Now we can control how the benefit of these stories is distributed among us. Our family members and we sometimes coordinate with our other closest neighbors for joint activities and marketing. So, we don't see them as competitors, but we just work together. These things have controls over our local economic activity. Has made us more empowered us to, uh, in the long run, invest in better infrastructure and evenly diversified offerings so that it helps to provide our cultural demonstration and workshops. So overall, having this autonomy. That's provided us both financial securities, uh, cultural pride and also it keeps an active participant in the tourism economy.

Social & Psychological Empowerment**Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?**

Is agritourism has greatly increased the local community pride and motivation. It's because before many of us, we feel like that out farming and our traditional practices were kind of undervalued. But now visitors from other countries, they like our work. Of local food and the dress that we wear, which gives us a sense of pride and recognition, especially the young people, they feel motivated to participate in this farm activities, uh, providing, uh, cooking classes and also the cultural and traditional presentation. Because they see that outsiders and they start valuing our traditions. And when wasting tourists also posted our confidence in interacting with people from different backgrounds and we also learn new ideas. They also learn new ideas and improving our communication skills as well. And the feedback from these visitors, they often make us feel like. And our reports are meaningful and it also provides room for improvement. This recognition and encouragement inspired the community to maintain us traditionally in a more organized and more original way and improve our hospitality standards and

also helps to collaborate with other neighbors. So, I think. Ecologically also it keeps more capable, it makes us confident and motivated to continue both farming and tourism activities because uh, we can see so many, uh, visible results and when they appreciate our work, we feel pride and also, we. Like we have to offer more to them.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

Yes, the involvement in agritourism has increased our facility and also our recognition in both the local and in broader community to reach their full complement our farming techniques and our cultural style and hospitality. This makes us feel like. Yeah, respected and valued by the local leaders and community members. Also, they acknowledge our reports sometimes asking us for advice and organizing our farming activities or managing tourism related income. So, this recognition encourages us to continue improving and gives. And since our pride in our work, so the small achievement like visitors sharing photos of our farms online or purchasing our handmade products, this helps our contribution and show us that this is more meaningful overall, the feeling of being appreciated. Would from the socially and economically. This strains our sense of worth and it provides us more motivation to participate actively in our community and other tourism related deployment initiatives.

Political Empowerment

Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?

Still more influence than before in planning and managing agritourism activities. The local meetings often include farmers and business owners to discuss about the farm budgets, festivals and other tourism related programs. Make the decisions such as the pricing, set up, scheduled time management and safety measures are now made collectively, and our opinions are also taken seriously, but previously decisions were not made by us. I'm asking you by the external organization or government officials without talking to us. Now we feel that we have a voice and can contribute ideas based on our experience, based on our effort. This involvement allows us to ensure that tourism activities are. Really beneficial and sustainable for us for correct community. Community and having influence over the planning and management. This gives more confidence and encourage more active participation. It's because we now know that our suggestion and concerns help. To provide better outcomes that affect both our livelihoods and the wider community.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

Is angry tourism has significantly improved our communities? Involvement, especially in decision making the community members are more engaged in discussion about how the tourism development needs to be done, resource allocation and management of environmental things. People who previously were. Hesitant to participate in these things are now attending different meetings because they see that their input can make a big difference. This collective decision-making process has increased more openness in our society and also accountability. It also allows us to address the challenges more collectively. The community feels empowered because everyone has a role and even a small contribution are getting valued, like the farmers transition to organize farm visits or manage the waste. Local authorities often implement these ideas, so it gives them more sense of value and this also increase involvement and the decisions are now more practical, inclusive and it also replaces local needs.

Overall Empowerment

Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?

This agritourism has empowered our community in so many ways in economically, we have more income sources and financially stability yes uh, in the socially our tradition is getting more valued, and we feel more pride and. The competition from. Local visitors and also from foreign visitors, from the political side, we now have a voice in our decision making, things related to tourism activities, infrastructural development and resource management. So, this empowers empowerment has. Hmm. Boost our community participation, increased collaboration among farmers and other entrepreneurs, and motivated young people to actively participate. We also feel more confident in engaging with outsiders, also with the managing business and preserving our cultural. And practicing things overall, agritourism has transferred our community from being like a passive participant in the economy to active decision makers and also, we think as cultural ambassadors and financially empowered household. So, it has improved not only from livelihoods, but also from our self-esteem and also from, uh, what our collective identity is.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

To strengthen our community empowerment further, uh, there are several challenges that are needed, like better infrastructure or Rd. transport. Sewage problem. This would make farm more accessible to the tourist. More training program like hospitality, business management and marketing kind of things will help farmers and small entrepreneurs to run their activities more, uh, nicely, uh, like the local government and NGO support, including financial aid or low interest loan could help these. On the House floor to participate and reduce inequality problem, the improved waste management system and sustainable farming practices would protect our environment while accommodating more tourists into our farms. The coordination among community members could be more. In hands through cooperative programs and joint marketing strategies with our neighbors. Also, these changes would ensure that agritourism benefits are more. She had sustainable and empowering for the whole entire community.

Section E: Future Outlook

Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?

For the future of agritourism in Pokhara is to make it more inclusive and sustainable and recognize as a part. Of our local economy and culture, I hope that more families like these small farmers get involved and benefit from these agritourism activities so that the income and opportunities are shared more equally to them. I would like to see a coordinated network of farms, homesteads and cultural experiences that are well promoted to both domestic and international tourist because this is more important in this digital world. Better in price stocks are like the. Improved roads, reliable transport with traffic lights, also with the worst management, would make it easier for the visitors to explore our farms and villages more comfortably. I also hope for programs that train community members in hospitality. And also, with the environmental management and marketing things so that we can offer high quality of experience while also preserving our culture and natural resources. So, I think I envision a future where agritourism not only improves the life of living style. But also, it helps to provide community pride, encourage young people to stay and contribute, and showcase poker answer destination that value more original cultural and farming experiences.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

I think to gain more benefit our community, it needs to provide a combination of training, financial supports and infrastructural improvement, which is very important. Training programs in hospitality, customer service and business management also provides the families. To offer better experience for the tourist, it also offers marketing support including like how to do online promotion and partnership with the travel agencies. This will attract more visitors. Also, the financial resources or low interest loans will. And these smaller household to set up their homesteads are providing cooking classes also or also offering craft workshop and reducing inequality in participation. So, the improved infrastructure like roads, public transport, clean water and also traffic. And his mind and waste management will enhance visitors' satisfaction and protect our environment. So, the government or NGO's when they support in planning and regulation. This will ensure that tourism helps in a better way that is fear safe and sustainable. So, this support would help the community to manage agritourism more professionally and it will also increase income and empower more people to participate in our community in a more meaningful way.

Section F: Closing

Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?

Yes, I would like to add that agritourism in our community has truly transferred our community. It has not only provided financial support, but also it has provided our recognition, cultural pride and opportunities for collaboration with. All their families and with other UH farmers. While challenges exist, such as the resource pressure in price, structural gaps and also the unequal benefit of this agritourism, but the overall impact has been very positive. I guess by learning to manage our visitors, improving our skills and preserving. The calls are we feel more strong and more connected like as a community. I hope that with this proper support more families can join and this poker I can become. Like model for the sustainable agritourism that benefits everyone. So, it is not just about how to earn money, but it is also about sharing our culture, protecting our tradition and empowering many young people and women to take control of their livelihoods. So, I am very hopeful for the future, and I feel proud to be part of this journey.

Participant 2: Student

Section A: Introduction / Warm-up

Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?

So, my name is Sita Devi and simply you can call me Sita and I'm also a student here in Pokhara. So, I study in a nearby university from my house. I was born and raised in this community, and I study in this local university. So, I have observed these agritourism activities because some of my friends and neighbors are involved in this spam related activities, homestays and selling local products. But I haven't participated directly. But since I am the student of tourism, so I am. Truly aware about this.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

Yes, like say like I already said that I have been aware of this agritourism for about 3 or 4 years, and I see tourists visiting farms or homesteads occasionally and I hear about it from family and friends, but I'm not convinced that it benefits. The one in a more equitable way, which is the main problem.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

I think the main activities are the farm visits are picking vegetables, cooking demonstration and also providing a small homestead. Some local crabs and cultural events are also shown to the visitors who are both local and foreign visitors. But from what I see. It is mostly for tourist entertainment rather than providing a real community development and showcasing what we are.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism

Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?

I think agree Tourism do provide so many opportunities like extra income for families and temporary jobs for the youths. But I also feel it is very limited because not everyone in this society or in the community can start this kind of things, only those who have. You got farms for me stairs or some financial backing. They get more benefit out of it and most students are small farmers or households without resources are almost have nothing in their hand. It may give tourists chance to see farming or culture, but I am also not. You know that it actually translates into a long-term opportunities or skill development for the majority of the locals and. I have to say it honestly, sometimes it feels like a surfer tourist rather than something that empowers our community in a more economically or sociocultural way.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, I have seen so many improvements, but they are very selective in nature. Like a few shop owners or farmers with whom he stays seems to own more. But most people are their life, and their style is still the same, so it doesn't seem sustainable or equitable for all. Some young people get part time job which is also a great but it's temporary and seasonal. So overall while a few people get benefit. We feel that the majority of the community is still lacking and the real improvement in income or business growth is still. There to achieve.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

I'm a bit skeptical About this. Some farms are so cooking or small cultural activities for tourists, but I feel that traditions are sometimes like modified to appeal for these visitors and the real cultural preservation takes more than just showing something to the tourist. It's because we need genuine interest. Preserved our cultural and traditional farming practices in a more meaningful way for everyone, so I still think there is so many rooms for improvement.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Yes, some people might learn basic hospitality or communication kind of high skill things, but this is very limited. Most young people, students or those without direct involvement, they don't get any skills at all. And I don't think the opportunities for skill deployment are. Are managed or widespread enough so that the benefit can go to the broader community. So, it feels like more like informal learning for those who are already involved rather than a real capacity building program.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

I see like several challenges like increasing uh to this. Tropics sometimes disturb the local life and farming activities. Waste management is also a big problem here and palms can get overcrowded easily. There is also a tension between households. That benefit and those who do not get benefits are it brings some kinds of tension between them and people without resources or landfill, like they are left out, which can divide the community easily. So overall, I think these challenges definitely have benefits. Could also have so many challenges.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, the water, land and farm produce space extra pressure when tourist visits especially when they come in a huge volume. The waste disposal and littering are the main issues here like the roots and basic facilities are also not that improved while a few. Seems like manageable, but the community overall bears the environmental burden, and I don't think that there is enough planning or regulation in our community to control these problems effectively.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Yes, absolutely. Only wealthier farmers are those who have larger properties. They get more benefit. But the smaller households, students and local workers, they always feel like they get less advantage from this one. Equal distribution is a major problem here, and it makes the process like feeling more unfair. I think This is why many locals are not motivated to participate. It's because they don't see so many tangible benefits from themselves.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

Yes, several barriers to exist like the infrastructure is poor like narrow roads and limited transport. The training for the hospitality marketing and resource management is almost missing; the financial support is scared so small households they cannot completely participate here. Coordination and planning are also very weak and sometimes tourism activities seem like random or unorganized in nature. So overall I think like these barriers prevent agritourism from really being a meaningful or sustainable opportunities so that the whole community can get the benefit as a whole.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism

Economic Empowerment

Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?

Yes, for some household the income may have increased a little bit, but for most of the people it hasn't. It mostly benefits people with bigger farms or who have homestays, so the majority of students, small farmers and households do not experience. Real economic security and consistent income from these tourism activities. So, I feel the impact is very selective and not enough to be called as a real improvement or let's say you can call it as empowerment in our society.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

I don't think so. Only those who are directly involved in this tourism can make decision about pricing and organizing the activities. So, most residents, they have no influence at all, and economic activities are still dominated by few families. So, while some may feel like they are empowered. But the broader community doesn't really gain control over the economic matters.

Social & Psychological Empowerment

Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?

I'm literally skeptical about this one because some people hosting tourists may feel proud, but I think it's temporary or superficial in nature. Most community members don't feel more confident or motivated because they are not included or they are not well recognized, so the pride seems limited to those who directly. The benefit rather than the whole community.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

No, not really. I don't think so, since I'm not involved directly and I don't feel any recognition or value from this agritourism. Even among these students or smaller households, most people remain like fully unnoticed and the recognition is selective. In nature and it depends on who get the tourism or the tourist attention.

Political Empowerment

Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?

To be feared, very little, in my view, must. Planning is done by those who have bigger firms, who are the business owners or external organization, and who have some kinds of power in our community for the ordinary residence students or small households. And entertainers, it is really like they have no. Influence, so this isn't making, is not inclusive in nature, so this limits the empowerment at the political or collective level.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

To be fair, not significantly, because only a few community members who are already, uh, involving in these tourism activities makes the decision must locals. They have no influence at all. So, they involvement in this agritourism is almost minimal. So, it doesn't. Feel like agritourism? Boil a support and strengthen the collective community power.

Overall Empowerment**Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?**

Honestly, I feel like agritourism empowers only a small portion of the community while their families. Farmers and homies, their owners' benefits, but most residents like these students and his small households and small entrepreneurs, they just see little advantage. So, the social precognition and decision-making influence are also limited here. While it has some positive effects, for a few, it doesn't. Widespread empowerment and I think it can even increase inequality within the community that we are living.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

So, to make this agritourism more empowering, there should be a structured training program, financial support for small households and the practice of Fair benefit sharing mechanism. Dean price stocks on improvement, better marketing style, and community planning. This will help to include more people into these, uh, agritourism practices and without these changes, I think agritourism will continue to benefit. Only to the few families or the few power holders and this will fail to empower the whole community.

Section E: Future Outlook**Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?**

I hope this agritourism becomes more organized and inclusive in nature, but I'm a bit skeptical about this one because it will reach everyone fairly. There is a doubt. Currently it seems like only a few families will get benefit while most of the locals are left out. Better planning, training and supports are needed to make this agritourism genuinely beneficial for the community as a whole. It's because agritourism is for the whole community, not for the only power holders.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

Financial aid for small households, proper training in hospitality and marketing related things like the better. Price structure and more equitable planning will definitely help. Right now, these supports are missing completely. These limits the participation and makes the benefits unequal in nature.

Section F: Closing**Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?**

I think agritourism is promising for only few people, but it is. Still yet inclusive or empowering for the majority of people. So, without changing to make the participation, fear and benefit are widely shared among all the community members, I think it will remain a tool only for the privileged rather than a true community. The plumbing is strategy and provide special care or attention to the marginalized people.

Participant 3: Café owner**Section A: Introduction / Warm-up****Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?**

Yes, my name is Sachin Puri, and I own a small cafe in this Pokhara region, and I have been living here since my birth and this cafe at mostly uh, sobs locals' items but I occasionally get to list. Into this gap, especially during the peak season. And I have been observing agritourism in this region because it is directly related to my occupation. And also, uh, it affects the flow of customers and local businesses like mine, but I'm not fully involved. Myself into this.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

So, I have been aware about this agritourism for about 5 to 6 years, and I see tourist visiting parents, buying local produce things and attending homestays. While some businesses like farm homestays or handmade soaps benefit, I feel like it is still. Uh, really helping small businesses like cafe? Not that much. So, I often question if the impact on the wider community is that meaningful or not?

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

From what I actually observed, the common activities include spam, BJ, visitable peaking, homesteads, local crabs. Showcasing and some cooking experience to the visitors. Most of these activities are centered to few locations and mainly attracts visitors who are who are here for short experiences, which I think limits the real long term community impact.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism

Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?

Angry Tourism does provide opportunities, but I'm a bit skeptical about their scaling and transparency. Few farmers and homesteader's owner can clearly own more benefit from it, but some youths get a part time work like guiding or helping the tourist. However, businesses like My Cafe, they don't see many increases in income because visitors usually spend limiting time. In towns and they focus only on fund-based activities. So, I am almost like on dust for them and I feel. That the opportunities are seasonal and temporary, so they don't provide long term stability for our community. Additionally, the benefit seems concentrated among. Those who already involved in these agritourism. So, I feel that while agritourism is praised for generating more opportunities, the majority of these community especially like small businesses owners and students and entrepreneurs, they get very little from this practice.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

I have absorbed so many improvements but mainly from a selective group only stay on ours and large firms have seen noticeable income increases but smaller businesses like my Gap and ordinary households. They don't get much benefit, adds expected. Jobs for the youth are mostly seasonal, so it doesn't provide steady income. Overall, I think the improvement is uneven in nature and temporary type. So many people in this community, they feel angry. Tourism hasn't really helped. Their life and financial thing in a more sustainable way.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

I'm a bit skeptical about this, uh, preservation aspect because sometimes so cultural events or traditional cooking for the tourists, but often these activities are. More from an entertainment perspective rather than truly providing our traditional things and events. Which we actually provide or actually do for ourselves. So, I don't see a strong long term cultural impact and mainly traditions are. Mostly at the risk it's because of the commodification of our culture. The agritourism seems more focused on providing experiences for tourists rather than genuinely protecting or like passing down our local cultural and farming methods to the next generation and to the visitors.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Yes, some individuals, they gain basic hospitality or communication skills, but this is very limited in nature and most households, students and small business owners and they are not included in these initiatives. And you can see the training is more informal and inconsistent in nature. So, the opportunities were really skilled development and capability development across the community is really small. So, I feel that only those who are already participating in tourism activities, they can get more. Can you repeat living a large portion of this community without meaningful capacity building? This is a real problem in our community.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

I see several challenges like overcrowding on farms that can disturb daily life and local infrastructural struggles with increased visitors. The waste management is too poor, and the natural resources are under pressure. There is also a. Tension among the community members because only a few community members get benefit more from economically. So, for local businesses owners like me, it's like indirect benefit. And these are almost as small and negligible in nature and sometimes we have to. Compete with tourist focused on BCS and these challenges. I believe this will reduce the overall positive impact of tourism in our community.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, it does effect on the local resources and in our natural assets. Like the water uses and land where uh increases with the tourist and waste disposal is often on managed in nature. The roads and public services are starting to get more pressure, especially during the peak season, while some palms manage this very wealthy community. As a whole have to bear the environmental cost and I don't see any sufficient regulation to handle this pressure effectively in our community.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Yes, definitely only wealthier farmers and homestay owners, they get meaningful income from these agritourism. But for the small households, students and local business owners, they often get very little benefit. So, the unequal participation. Creates division and limits the sense of shared empowerment in the community. So, without fear, benefit distribution agritourism will be in risk, creating inequality rather than supporting the collective growth.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

I think infrastructure is really poor. Training for the hospitality is very minimal, and the financial support is almost lacking. So, these small households are business owners they cannot participate in. Effectively and the coordination is so weak, and marketing is almost non so the overall these various makes the agritourism appear like it is unorganized and restricts its potential to truly empower the community so that it can generate sustainable benefits.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism

Economic Empowerment

Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?

Yeah, only for few households, mainly large farm owners and homestay operators in our community must small businesses, owners, students or ordinary. And sees minimal income benefit. So, I feel that calling these economic empowerments is a kind of misleading at all as the impact is selective in nature, very short term and it doesn't provide steady financial and economic security.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Not really, because the economic control is more concentrated among those who are directly involving in this tourism. The majority of the community members including the local business owners like me, they have very limited influence over the pricing planning and managing the tourism related. Activities. I think this limits the empowerment for most residents more from an economical perspective.

Social & Psychological Empowerment

Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?

A few farm owners, they feel very proud, but for the broader community, especially those that are not directly involved, there is little chance. Pride or confidence feeling. So many residents feel excluded or they are undervalued, so the social and psychological empowerment is fairly limited here.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

No since I'm not directly hosting the tourist because i don't have That type of business. And I don't feel any recognition, only those who directly engage with the visitors, they feel more valued and leaving the majority of this community, including the small owners, small entrepreneurs and marginalized people. Almost unnoticed at all.

Political Empowerment

Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?

Influence is limited to those that are directly involved in tourism. Most residents have no say in planning or managing. You know we don't activities, so the decision making is not inclusive at all, which limits the political empowerment for the wider community.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

I think only Participate in decisions. Because it is including the ordinary business owners and students are often excluded, so the involvement is minimal and it. Do not serve provide a collective empowerment at all.

Overall Empowerment**Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?**

I think it has empowered only for a small portion of the community, like large farm owners and homestead operators, but for most residents and small business owners. And his students and cafe owners like me, there is little or almost no benefit at all. So, the empowerment is limited here, and it seems like, uh, to favor a few. There is increasing inequality rather than empowering everyone.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

Obviously, there is structured way of training, fear benefits, fearing type of things and financial support for these small households and better infrastructure. This will definitely help to restrain the overall community through the tourism. If more people can participate in a more meaningful and logical way, than obviously, empowerment could become more widespread.

Section E: Future Outlook**Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?**

So, I hope this agritourism becomes more organized, inclusive and fear in our community. Currently it mainly benefits. Two families and without the improvement in planning in Christchurch and an equitable participation, I don't think it will continue to benefit the wider community. It will benefit only the wealthy, and it will leave most of the community out of it.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

Obviously, the financial aid, training, marketing and better infrastructure, this will help and ensuring these smaller households and businesses, they can participate. This will make an agritourism tourism more empowering for the entire community.

Section F: Closing**Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?**

Yes, thank you for this. Uh, this agritourism shows potential, but in a real practice, uh, it currently empowers only a few. So, to make it a real tool for the overall community development, more inclusive type. Policies, structured training and fear distribution of benefits are highly important here. Otherwise, I think it breaks the inequality rather than providing or fostering the empowerment to the overall community.

Participant 4: Souvenir Shop Owner**Section A: Introduction / Warm-up****Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?**

My name is Gita and I own a shop near shop here in this popularism and I have been living here for more than 20 years. Myself, I usually see, you know, called handcrafts, handmade jewelries and small gifts for the tourists. So, I have always been connected to these community because many of the products that I sell are made by the local artisans and farmers. My business, uh, is directly linked with them. And over the past several years, I have noticed that Agri tourism in this region is getting more popular, upbringing more visitors who are interested not only in seeing farms experiences, but also in buying local products. So, I think this connection allows me to see both from the economic and cultural benefits of tourism and it also helps to motivate me to continue supporting my community-based initiative things.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

I have been aware about this agritourism from. Past seven years I, it began to start receiving more tourist when the local farmers and homesteaders, they started promoting their experiences. So, I have to say thank to them and I often get customers who participate in farm visits or. Also, when activities and they bring more curiosity about our local products. So being involved directly or indirectly through my business, it has helped me to understand the growing role of agritourism in our community and how it can provide more opportunities for the local artisans and also to. These small farmers, business owners and. Also, to the marginalized people.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

Common activities include like the farm uh visits where tourists they can pick fruits, vegetables, participate in cooking activities and experience how local calls are all traditions, customs and. Event organizing. And the homestays are also popular here. This gives visitors a chance to live in their community and engage directly with the local family. Some farmers are they organized

workshops where tourists can learn the traditional crafts like the webbing, pottery or making local delegations. So, these activities attract both domestic and international tourist IDs. Uh, which, uh, directly? Or indirectly help my business because visitors are often interested in purchasing sharpeners and handmade products and because, uh, this also provides the symbol of our culture to them.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism

Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?

Angry tourism has created many opportunities for this community. I think the first is it has increased our income for farmers and local artisans and visitors when they buy fresh produce, handicrafts. And other local products. Then it's benefit for the entire community. I have benefited because tourists who visit farms often stopped to buy some souvenirs. I also encourage his local entrepreneurs. Many people have started small businesses like cafes, homestays and guided tours to accommodate tourists in a better way. And beyond the income, agritourism has provided UH network opportunities as well as local artists. Artisans they can connect with buyers now directly. Youth involvement is also increasing here and there are many young people. They are helping to organize activities and learning business skills from observing. How to manage the tourism and also it has encouraged innovation in traditional crafts and service as more people they are adapting to provide what tourist actually. Expect so. Overall, the opportunities are both economic and cultural allowing the community to showcase its socio-cultural heritage while generating revenue and also it has empowered our residents to participate in a local deployment like as a team.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, I have seen significant improvement. Uh farmer selling, uh. Fresh produce, uh, items directly from, uh, there from their shops to the tourist which one's better income than before and artisans who create handicrafts are see more consistent sales. So, my shop has grown its revenue because tourists who visit charms and homestays are often increase in buying sharpeners, which. There's a stable customer base, so even small businesses like local cafes or transportation service benefit directly or indirectly, adds these tourists. They often use this One South. The income improvement has also allowed households to invest in better facilities, education. For children and saving for the emergency condition. So, I think this economic boost has also increased the community's overall morale, motivating more people to collaborate and in innovating things. So, in my experience, agritourism has not only improved financially, but it also has. Provide local entrepreneurship and community confidence so. It is making a positive cycle of development and opportunities in our community.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

Agritourism I think has had a positive impact on preserving these communities, culture and tradition. Farms and homesteads. They often showcase traditional farming techniques and cultural practices to our tourist. This encourages locals to maintain these traditions. Give me the bright feeling and the cultural activities like cooking demonstration on our folk dances and the handcraft workshops, they are presented to the visitors. It provides both entertainment, education and outliving his style. So, this recognition motivates local families. The boys down there is skills, their daily practices, naming styles to younger generation and also to the wider, uh, tourism society. And I think, uh, the tourists when they appreciate these authentic experiences, uh, these pushes the community to maintain. Quality and authenticity in their offering. So overall, I feel like agritourism, it acts like breeze between tradition and modernity, and it gives local and, uh, kind of incentive to protect the cultural heritage while also making economic benefits.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Yes, most definitely. Many communities' members, they have blown hospitality scale, communication skill and basic marketing by interacting with the tourist and also with the trainings artisans and shop owners including me myself have learned. How to present our products more professionally and managing our sales effectively. So, the youth who help organize farm tours or homestays, they acquired organizational and poor problem-solving skills, which is a great thing. And even farmers learn to manage farm beaches alongside the regular Axia. Agricultural activities, which requires planning and time management, uh, so the oaks up and exposure to tourists from different cultures have also improved the overall language and interpersonal skills. So, I feel overall this agritourism provides informal aid, very valuable capacity. Building opportunities that strengthen our local nowadays and the entrepreneurial skill and also the confidence across multiple stakeholders that is happening in our community.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

While tourism is beneficial, but it does create some challenges like the overall crowding during the peak tourist. Season can definitely strain the family resources and infrastructure. The waste management becomes more critical as more visitors generate more literary and demand, uh, careful disposal of it. And it's because we have a limited space, limited resources when. Touristic comes in the more volume than it becomes more difficult for us. Some community members feel that the workload increases without, uh, proportional benefits, especially during the harvest season and when the tourists visit simultaneously. However, most of these challenges they can be easily mitigated through a proper planning, community coordination and also the education for both locals and visitors.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, uh, there is some pressure on our resources, uh, mostly the water and electricity use, increases in farms and homesteads during their, uh, tourist visits, the land that may face some kind of warranty or if visitors are not guided properly and the traffic. Dixon can arise near the popular farm locations, and this can definitely affect the locals. Environmental pressure is also concerning, but our community has started taking measures like uh visiting schedules, UH designated paths, and promoting sustainable practices. Like responsible tourism behaviors and also the education about responsible tourism has improved the visitor behaviors and also our behaviors to them. So overall while agritourism might create some distress on the resources but the careful planning and community cooperation this will help. To minimize the environmental impact.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Some in inequality are still there as families with large farms and uh with more resources gets more benefit than the small households. Not everyone can afford to host to raised or invest heavily in these facilities so. Local initiatives such as cooperatives and community partnerships are helping to distribute these opportunities more fairly. Uh, if you just go with the example, I'll show you small artisans, any small shop, they collaborate to sell their products to the visitors, even if they don't host the tourist by themselves. But I think they always mission training programs. This will help more people to join tourism related activities. While inequality, yes, it is a challenge, but uh, proactive measures are improving, uh, like the participation and ensuring that benefits reach a wider section of the community. Uh, in the coming days.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

I think the infrastructural limitation like, uh, we have very narrow roads, limited transportation services and, uh, poor waste management and also with the accessibility problem. Not just these, the financial constraints. This prevents small households from participating in this agritourism effectively. The lack of formal training, uh, especially in the hospitality and marketing management. This reduces the overall quality of the. Provided services, the coordination among the stakeholder is sometimes weak, and this leads to uneven tourist experiences, which is also a concerning problem. But despite these barriers, the community is actively finding a solution that helps us in a better way. By providing workshops and joint marketing training and cooperative initiatives. So, if these issues are addressed, then I think this agritourism, it holds the great potential to provide more benefits to the economy and also to preserve our culture and our region.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism

Economic Empowerment

Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?

Yes, obviously the household who are hosting tourists or selling products are the one on more and have more stable income myself it benefits because. Used when they visit palm, they buy the shopping years and local crabs. So, the extra income allows families to invest in education, home improvements and, uh, farm productivity and other setups. So the economic diversification reduces more reliance on fluctuating the market where prices. Which improves the overall financial security, but these small businesses like me, when it gains visibility and opportunities to expand, uh, I definitely need more investment, which I don't have. And obviously they even, uh, seasonal jobs for the youth, it contributes to financial. Capability but this season alone employment problem is there orbital agritourism strengths household income, it provides opportunities for investment and also it enhances the community economic resilience, I think.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Yes, it does. Community members can decide on products, pricing and uh, they're offering tourism packages. The local entrepreneurs when they coordinated among themselves to create tourist experiences, keeping the community care. Greater scenes have influence over economic decision. I think this autonomy will strengthens collaboration and allow locals to respond to

tourist demand effectively. So, we are no longer entirely dependent on external buyers or middleman person, which I think increase financial and managerial. Control for the households and businesses who are directly involved in this agritourism.

Social & Psychological Empowerment

Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?

I think in this context, most definitely because community members feel proud to showcase our culture, farming practices and handcrafts to the tourists. Many people, especially youth, are motivated to learn about these traditionally skills and preserving them. So, I think seeing visitors. They appreciate our heritage. It boosts confidence and gives sense of achievement. So, families when they are hosting, uh, these, uh, tourism experience or selling this product, if you recognize this beer brings more community morale and I think overtime this collective pride. Encourage more collaboration, innovation and interest in managing our local traditions.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

Obviously hosting the tourist and uh, providing authentic experience to them, uh, make us feel recognized both locally and uh, by visitors. Tourist open praise our groups hospitality and cultural knowledge, which is very rewarding. Knows even within the community, families who are involved in agritourism are appreciated for their efforts. So, this recognition motivates us to improve service, innovate more and continue preserving in all traditions, which also foster a sense of belonging and pride.

Political Empowerment

Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?

Community members, I think they have a significant employee, especially those who are directly involved in tourism. The local cooperatives and farmer groups, when they coordinate these activities, manage their schedules and decide over the pricing and products. This collaborative approach I think will allow residents to contribute to the decision making, ensuring that these initiatives will reflect community priorities over any personal needs. People feel ownership over these agritourism deployment. This I think it strengthens the collective participation. Government.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

Yes, uh, the involvement has improved like the local stakeholders, including artisans, farmers and shop owners actively discuss about the planning, promotion and events. So, the decision is often made collectively, allowing members to express their concerns and. Drop was any movement that is seen there, so this inclusion has enhanced transparency and accountability. I think this has empowered the community to manage tourism in a more sustainable and equitable way.

Overall Empowerment

Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?

Overall, yes, the agritourism has strengthened the overall economic, social and political aspect of the community. Families they own more income, youth have gaining skills and cultural heritage is being preserved. People feel more recognized. Involved in planning which enhances their confidence and pride. So, the collective effort improves social cohesion in Korea's innovation and fast fosters these sustainable practices. I think the empowerment is visible across multiple dimensions. I think both from the individual and from the community perspective.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

For me for the training in hospitality and management, uh, improved in price structure and better marketing. This will enhance overall empowerment. So, the program uh, like uh, targeting is smaller household and you this will allow wider participation. And the encouraging environmentally sustainable practices, I think this is the most and also the cooperative initiatives. This will ensure equitable benefits and long-term community development.

Section E: Future Outlook

Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?

I vision broccoli as a model for sustainable agritourism in the upcoming days where local families when they are actively participated, preserve culture and on a stable income so I believe younger when they engage learn traditionally. Skills and business practices. And a whole plan, infrastructure, economic and social friendly initiatives. This can attract more visitors while ensuring benefits are fairly distributed among our community members and groups.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

The training program in hospitality related things, marketing and management related things, I think these are more invaluable. The financial support for small households and cooperative. Marketings, uh, this will increase their participation and obviously the infrastructural improvement like roads. Waste management traffic, this will enhance visitor experience, and I think more from the local governments or even from the NGO's collaboration to coordinate activities. This will promote sustainable practices and then we can maximize our benefit and. Help equitable participation.

Section F: Closing

Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?

So, I would like to, uh, focus that agritourism has transferred our community more positively. But uh, yes, the challenges are there like, uh, like I already shared the infrastructural pressure and occasional. And on equal participation, I think, uh. If we just make these things, uh, and observe more carefully than I think. There are more opportunities than challenges. With proper support and inclusive planning, I think this agritourism can continue empowering residents and ensuring suitable and sustainable growth for the community.

Participant 5: Staycation/Hotel Owner

Section A: Introduction / Warm-up

Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?

So, my name is Suman Kumar Thai and I wanna go here in this Pokhara region and I have been running this hotel from the past 10 years. And my property it benefits more from the tourist visiting nearby farms and cultural attraction and I feel more connected to these community because I employ local people here and I source food from the nearby farms and collaborate with other businesses to provide more authentic. Obedience to our visitors and they agree tourism has gradually affected my business and tourist it increasingly seeks a combination of local culture or farm experience and comfortable accommodation.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

I have been aware of these agritourism from the past eight years. Initially it was just a concept for me, but gradually more farms and homesteads started welcoming visitors and then I noticed an increase in tourist volume. Who planned? Ambitious and cultural experience. I think this has influenced my hotel services and business strategies, so I see it as a growing sector with potential for both economic and sociocultural benefit for our Pokhara community.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

I think the common activities include farm visits are vegetable and fruit pickings like the cooking classes, also homestays and handicraft workshops. The tourists also engage in local cultural activities like seeing folk music, dance and traditional ceremonies. These experience gives visitors a chance to get connect with their rural life and culture. And as a hotel owner, I often partner with these palms to organize packages that also includes accommodation, meals and other guided farm tours. So, I think it has been beneficial for my business and also to these farmers.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism

Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?

I think agritourism has created multiple opportunities for the community. Farmers are they benefit from direct sales and tours, artisans and small shop and they experience higher demand for crabs and local businesses like my hotel. It gains are more customers. The youth have more opportunities to work as a guide, cooks or helpers, which improves their incomes and skill side. The community has also started collaborating farming cooperatives to promote magazines and events. So, they agree tourism has encouraged creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. It

allows locals to showcase the culture and tradition and generating more economic benefits. While this strengthens the pride in the overall, uh, socio cultural and heritage themes. So overall, it diversifies the income sources and encourages, the sustainable development in our community.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, there are uh, noticeable improvement. The farmers on more selling produce and provide farm experience, the artisans see increased demand for their handicrafts and myotome receives more gazed interested in agritourism packages. It does for youth and seasonal workers have increased these improvements have allowed families to invest in homes, education and savings. So, the broader community is getting benefit from the infrastructure upgrades in tourism awareness. Their livelihood diversification reduces dependence on traditional. I mean practices alone. So, I see agritourism as a tool that not only increases the income itself, but it also, I think, motivates more people to remain innovative. Cultural preservation and do collaboration for their long-term growth.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

I think agritourism has played a strong role in preserving our culture. The palms demonstrate traditional farming techniques, homesteads, cultural cookings, classes and workshops, showcase crafts, etc. Show the tourists appreciate this authenticity. This motivates local to maintain the tradition and pass them to the younger generation. And yes, of course, to the visitors as well. The cultural pride and awareness it increases as residency their practices valued by the visitors. So overall, it boosts the community commitment to heritage preservation while also generating income and recognition.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Absolutely, the community members learn hospitality, communication and customer service things. The artisans they improved product quality and marketing youth gain more experience. Ohh, guiding or managing these activities and far more stable planning skills to host tourist in a better way. Training and exposure this enhance entrepreneurial, organizational and language skills at all so the agritourism creates informal learning opportunities that build confidence and professional competence across various other stakeholder groups, not only with the farmers.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

While agritourism brings many benefits, it also creates so many challenges. One major issue is managing tourist employee, especially during the peak seasons, which can put more pressure on local infrastructural development, roads and public services. The waste management becomes an issue with increased visitors requiring more attention and resources, some residents may feel. The workload increases without proportional benefits, particularly during the harvesting or festival season, so there is also occasional tension between locals and tourists, mostly due to the cultural misunderstanding or, uh, different level of. Expectation so the coordination among firms from States and local businesses sometimes lacking their IT makes the overall tourist experience sometimes more inconsistent. Despite these challenges, the community is learning to manage these issues through a better planning training. Collaboration and I think the overall positive impacts will definitely surpass the difficulties.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, it does create some pressure like uh. When is the water and another is the electricity, these are the main problem and of course, the land is also more intensively used when tourists visit the farms or homesteads, the road and transport service can become more consistent, especially during the tourist season and waste disposal it is also. Need a careful management? However, our management has started more sustainable practices. Like, uh. Providing awareness about sustainable and responsible practices using walking paths and encouraging responsible behaviours and like providing eco-friendly waste management style. So, I think these measures are. Just reduce the environmental pressure also, but it also allowed residents and visitors to get more benefit from economic and cultural perspective. So overall, the community recognize the importance of balancing these tourism benefits and growth with the resource preservation to maintain. Its long-term sustainability.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Yes, some inequality exists there because households with larger palms or more resource benefit while the smaller households they may struggle. To participate, however, the cooperatives and community initiatives are helping to share the opportunities in a more equitable way, like the artisans and small business collaborate to share products to visitors in even if they don't host the tourism by themselves. With the awareness programs and capacity building, it helps more community members to join tourism related activities. While inequality is a major concern, the proactive measures are improving their participation and ensuring that these benefits are gradually reaching. It brought out a segment of our community.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

Yes, the barriers are it includes the infrastructure deployment, I think lack of formal training in hospitality and management style and of course the financial constraints for small households and weak coordination among different stakeholders. Some farmers and homesteaders, they struggle to attract tourists, especially due to poor marketing or uh, their, uh, no presence in digital things. So, if these barriers are addressed properly through better training, financial support and improved infrastructure, then I think this agritourism, it can rise to its full potential and provide equitable benefits and also promote the sustainable practices and help. To me, power the community. Welcome.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism**Economic Empowerment****Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?**

Yes, I agree. Tourism has significantly increased the income and financial security for many households in this community, especially the farmers. They have owned additional income from hosting visitors or selling them. Products directly to the tourist. The artisans and shop owners, they see higher demand for products, while my hotel also benefit from tourists seeking accommodation. So, it's like win win situation. This seasonal Employment Opportunity for youth and temporary workers provide extra income and these economic improvements I think allow families. Investing in education, infrastructure and saving in the emergency condition. So even households not directly hosting tourists, they get benefit indirectly through increased local trade and tourism related demand.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Absolutely, why not? The local residents now have more autonomy in their pricing decision and offering of the services and tourism related packages. The community cooperatives coordinate activities are like allowing members to. Ban collectively and influence decision making behavior. I think this uh. Greatly control and reduce reliance on the external or the middleman and it creates opportunities for locals to save the tourism economy like. Based on their needs. The empowerment over economic activities helps the household to make their strategic decision by themselves, collaborate with neighbors and respond effectively to tourist demands and promote sustainable and inclusive growth.

Social & Psychological Empowerment**Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?**

Yes, it has locals feel proud showcasing traditional farming, crops and culture. Positive feedback from the visitor. It boosts confidence, motivate youth to learn traditional skills and encourage families to preserve more cultural heritage. And nature as well. The recognition from tourist and neighboring communities, it helps to reinforce the self-esteem and also provide community bonds. The pride and motivation are especially strong among those who are directly involved and uh, those who are not. Thinking about the entire community may feel a sense of excitement, but not. Exactly. Like the expected.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

Yes, involvement in agritourism, it makes me feel like recognized based on my contribution. The visitors appreciate the comfort, hospitality and local experience provided by my hotel. The positive feedback, uh, repeated visitors and the word-of-mouth promotion, it boosts my professional reputation and also gives me more, uh, personal satisfaction and also customer satisfaction. So, the recognition is strengths, the motivation and encourage me to provide. Outside of these continuously and in a better way, while also inspiring other in this community to participate more actively.

Political Empowerment**Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?**

I think community members have a considerable say in this one, especially those cooperatives and collaborative initiatives. Find local Discuss these scheduling, service offering and pricing collectively. Their input influences the decision making and ensuring activities reflect community priorities and values. I think this shared responsibility; it builds governance is skill and its strengths the sense of ownership and accountability within this Pokhara community.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

Yes, the decision making has become more inclusive in these days. Stakeholders like including artisans, farmers, hotel owners and youths, they are consulted for planning events and tours. This participation ensures transparency, fairness, and sustainable management of resources. Increased involvement also empowers residents to negotiate with better terms, advocate for better community interest, and influence policies related to our tourism and cultural preservation within this community.

Overall Empowerment**Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?**

Overall, yes, agree tourism has strengthened the economic stability, provide social pride, cultural preservation and community collaboration. The residents. Are feeling more confident youth have acquired these skills and household gained more diversified income. The decision-making processes have become more inclusive in nature, promoting collective empowerment. While the challenges exist, the positive impact I think it outweighed them making agritourism as better tool for sustainable deployment of our community and provide better empowerment in these Pokhara community.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

I think the I think the enhanced training program, better infrastructure, financial support for its smaller households and improved coordination among the stakeholders, this will strengthen the empowerment and expanding awareness. And inclusive participation, this will ensure the benefit are widely shared among all the participants, promoting sustainable practices and cultural preservation. I think these will also secure long-term empowerment for these community.

Section E: Future Outlook**Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?**

Obviously, I envision A sustainable and inclusive agritourism systems where all these community members can benefit economically, socially and also from culturally. I think the world's organized tours, eco-friendly practices and inclusive participation. This will allow both locals and visitors to gain more meaningful experience like the host and guest experience. I hope the community collaborates effectively preserving local traditions while generating. Income and also providing equitable opportunities for everyone.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

I think, uh, the support is needed in the form of training program, financial aid, also, uh, cooperating and uh. Like known in an easy way, marketing strategies and infrastructural improvement. I think these will collectively help the community to maximize agritourism benefit. But uh, these. Can't be done by the local people because we need more support from the local authorities. So, the government, NGO's and private sector collaboration also enhance participation and help to ensure the sustainability and provide our social and economic gains.

Section F: Closing**Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?**

Yes, agreed to resume has transported our community in a more positive way, but not as per our expectation because we still have so many things to do. While there are challenges like resource pressure and inequality, but the benefits in income, skills, preserve cultural things and community pride. These are more significant for us, but the proper planning, inclusivity and support. I think this also needs to be there so that we can empower everyone in these Pokhara and provide sustainable deployment opportunities for many years to come.

Participant 6: Household Lady

Section A: Introduction / Warm-up**Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?**

Yes, my name is Apsara and I run a smart home-based business here. Baseball card reason I sell Pickles and homemade crabs in this region. I've been living here for more than 30 years, so. I have quite more experience and have always been involved in local cultural activities. I started my business to support my family while preserving the traditional recipes and craft techniques. So, over the past few years I have noticed more tourists visiting our community for farming States and cultural experience, so this has also allowed me to sell my products. Addicted to these visitors and I think this connection gives me an opportunity to share our culture while also generating income more independently.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

I've been aware of the tourism for about 8 years, uh, since uh, some local farms started welcoming tourist. So, in the initial days I was a bit hesitant because I wasn't sure whether visitors would value homemade Pickles. Very small crabs are not, but over time I noticed that too distant, genuinely interested in local products which has encouraged me to expand my offerings, and I now feel that tourism is gradually creating a supportive environment for home-based businesses like I do.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

The common activities include farm busy periods and vegetable picking, homestays, cooking demonstration and handicraft workshops. I think tourists they often participate in preparing local. CSR learning how to make traditional cramps and these activities have attracted more visitors from Nepal and also from abroad. I've noticed that these vegetables who participate in these experiences are more likely to buy homemade Pickles with spices and crabs as souvenirs for them. I think this directly benefit this man. Also, businesses like mine.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism**Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?**

The agritourism has created significant opportunities for women and household businesses. Many families, including my business, now have a chance to see traditional food products, crabs and other smart home installers to our visitors. It also encourages skill development as we learn. The present products more professionally manage our small transactions and interact with diverse tourist. So, the one opportunity is gaining exposure to the market trends and also understanding what visitors prefer, which helps us to improve the overall quality. However, I am a bit cautious because our reliance on tourism only can be a bit risky because. Visitors number, they often get up and down and especially during the, uh, political instability or like. Pandemic periods. So, while the opportunities are exciting, but they also require some kind of careful planning for this.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, there are many more improvement, many because and craft sales have increased because tourists like to take these authentic products which are locally made. I can save money. On my children's education and also needs. I think other women in this community also report increased income from these small businesses. While the benefit are positives, I have also noticed that not everyone had equally benefited. Families that are better access to the tourist are. By being more benefit and they are getting more financial independent. So, while I agree tourism boost livelihoods, but community efforts are also needed there to ensure more inclusive benefits.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

The agreed to resume encourage the local community to maintain tradition, recipes and crab skins in a more authentic way. Tourists are they enjoy authentic experience which motivates the locals. To preserve traditional practices like example, making Pickles from old fashioned way or away, being crabs by hand has become more valuable because visitors appreciate this authenticity. This recognition, I think imports cultural pride. However, there is a caution type thing. Sometimes to meet tourist expectation, traditionally it may get slightly modified and balancing authenticity with market demand is important to ensure culture is preserved correctly and at the same time we are not losing our true authenticity.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Yes, definitely, I have learned better customer communication in these days and small business management idea and packing techniques from observing tourist preferences. So, the interaction with visitors also improves confidence and language skills. Young women helping with the firms while craft activities gain more entrepreneurial skills. However, I also see that formal training is limited, so training is mostly informal. Structured walks up good partner enhances these kinds of skill and reduces mistakes or misunderstanding while interacting with the tourist.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

Some challenges are still there. Overcrowding can strain the household resources. When is the water and also the food supplies? Waste management becomes more difficult, especially during the tourist peak season and sometimes uh tourists on intentionally damaged the property or expect services that small households cannot provide. Additionally, income. Opportunities are not equally accessible for all and some household benefit more, creating a minor tension between those who receives and those who do not receive. While these issues are manageable, they require cooperation and planning, so overall agritourism is positive, but challenges must be at risk here. We need to ensure overall benefits in the long run.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Uh, yes. Local resources are under some pressure, like more visitors may increase water and electricity uses and the land can be affected if tourists when they want. Of designated areas. We have tried to manage these issues by guiding the visitors properly and maintaining more cleanliness, but it is important to educate tourists about respecting resources and practicing responsible tourism behaviour to minimize the negative things.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Yes, inequality exists because larger households are those closer to tourist spots, open benefits smaller or remote households may not receive as much attention or shares. However, the cooperative and local networks in our community are. Starting to share opportunities and women groups have begun collaborating to include more members, especially from the marginalized 1. The awareness and the training could help improve, uh, fairness in participation and benefit distribution in this region, which is really important.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

The barriers include limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and lack of hormone business training. Some households are not confident interacting with the tourist or managing the sales awareness about online promotion and marketing. Is also very limited so that we see these gaps through uh, better supportive program and cooperative strategies will help enhance the agritourism's full potential while also keeping the community empowered and or culturally authentic.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism

Economic Empowerment

Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?

Yes, for many households, including my business, selling Pickles and crab to visitors brings additional income, which is a true thing. Women and elderly who cannot farm benefits as well. Income is more stable compared to selling only locally or seasonally to our community members. So, it announced families to invest in education on home improvement and savings. But seasonal fluctuation or political issues, it can be reduced to these numbers. And then it starts affecting the income. So, diversification and planning are more important for the long-term security.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Yes, the community now has more control over the pricing, offering and interaction with the visitors. We have gained so many things and. You can decide how to present products, packaging them and promote them in a collaborative way. This autonomy encourages small households like mine to participate more actively and ensure that decisions will reflect local priorities rather than external influence. I think this really strengthens the confidence and ownership of.

Social & Psychological Empowerment

Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?

Yes, yes, uh, when seeing tourist, I appreciate our handmade crabs, and traditional food makes us proud. Women feel more confident in contributing economically and socially and also make your family independent. However, there is also a pressure to meet visitors expectation because we can sometime cause stress. Overall, the recognition motivates people. To continue preserving our tradition and improve the tourism related services.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

Yes, and the involvement in agritourism gives recognition. Tourist complementing my Pickles or crafts makes me feel more appreciated. The neighbors also respect the efforts which boost the overall morale while it is also encouraging. They remain cautious about relying too heavily on the tourist adds. Production in demand can affect recognition and the overall income.

Political Empowerment**Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?**

I think the community members have moderate influence. We participate in cooperatives for local committees that discuss the pricing, promotion and visitor management. This involvement allows us to. About agritourism operation while also ensuring total fairness at all. However, this is an has sometimes dominated by other larger households will have more power or those farms who have more uh location wise. Benefit. So, I think inclusivity is more important and we need to create more inclusivity.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

Yes, to some extent. Community members now attend meetings or informal gatherings to discuss tourism related activities, especially woman's group and youths are gradually participating more which ensures their perspectives are considered. The inclusive decision making strengthens empowerment, but there is also a room for improvement in reaching everyone's equally in terms of, uh, economically and also in terms of participation.

Overall Empowerment**Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?**

Overall, I think yes agreed to region has strengthened the economic, social and cultural aspect. The household businesses have earned more income, or men have gained more skills and local traditions are. Getting more preserved and also the heritage is more preserved. The collective decision making and cooperation will foster confidence and pride among us while challenges and inequalities are there. But I think the benefit are more than the risk side. So, it has empowered many residents. In a more tangible way.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

I think the changes are such as like, well, better training, access to finance from my perspective, easy loans, marketing support and infrastructure improvement. This will help and also encouraging more participation especially from smaller households and women groups and young people. This will ensure wider empowerment and also the sustainable tourism practices. This will secure long term benefits for all.

Section E: Future Outlook**Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?**

I hope agritourism becomes more inclusive and sustainable for everyone in our community and our households, especially women and small businesses. They should get benefit cultural. Preservation and authentic experience should remain more central. With proper support and planning, agritourism can improve the overall livelihoods and it will build the skill and strengthen the community pride while protecting the resources.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

I think the training program in hospitality and businesses, financial support, cooperating and, uh, infrastructure and. Meeting will help the awareness campaign for sustainable practices in inclusive partnerships, and I think these are more important for ensure long term and equitable benefit for all the people.

Section F: Closing**Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?**

I think this, uh, agritourism, it has, um. Provide us many positive transformations to this region and empowering the households more economically, socially and also culturally. They feel more tired now and the bus, but the challenges is more with the unequal access. Appropriate. And there are an environmental pressure and infrastructure limited, they are there. But we can address this through collaborative planning. So, we have to do it in a more strategically way. It's because those who are not gaining any benefits, they have to suffer. The environmental pressure also, which is not that good. Off

Participant 7: local community representatives**Section A: Introduction / Warm-up****Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?**

Hi, I am Mahajan. And I saw it as a community representatives in this popularization. And I have been involving in this local development initiatives, yeah, around like 15 years. And I'm working closely with the farmers, small business owners. Artisans and many of the household ladies and marginalized people in this community, actually, my job is to, uh, make them aware and try to make all the things in a good way. This agritourism has become an important focus our, especially in these recent years, because it helps economic growth and also good. In cultural preservation and also helps community participation. It's like what we need for our community is what we have to do. So, my role involves coordinating with these stakeholders and promoting our sustainable tourism practices. Not just only to resume practices, but other things as well and ensure that the opportunities and benefits are available to all of the people who are living in this region.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

I have been actively monitoring and engaging with Agri tourism for about. Let's say like 5-6 years and in the initial days the idea of these tourist visiting farms or cultural site was like kind of experimental and it gradually become more structured activity now and. This. I have observed its positive impact on income also. Now people have another way of earning some money, skills, stability, development and also local pride. At the same time, there have been lesson about how to manage the environmental pressure and ensuring equitable participation and also maintaining cultural authenticity. The community has learned to balance with the sustainability and from my perspective, my role is one and only to support this kind of process and try to discern what stakeholders says and try to make everything in a good position.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

I think Pokhara offers a variety of agritourism experience tourism. They often visit farms and other agricultural lands for fruit and vegetable picking. They enjoy cooking classes also and participate in. Handicraft workshops the homestays provide a chance to experience local life, while cultural performance showcases all music, dance, tradition and events. Some tourists also combine these experiences with other outdoor adventure like. Kind of creaking also paragliding also and these activities generate income for household and small businesses and also preserve our heritage and there is room for improvement in terms of Golden Nation and also for ensuring consistent quality to ours. Visitors. But yes, overall, these experiences have been instrumental in providing sustainable tourism in this region.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism**Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?**

Yes, uh, disagree. Tourism has opened several, uh path for economic, social and sociocultural development in this region. The local farmers. Again, on extra income and I mean passive income by offering fun tourist or setting freeze produced directly to the tourist and the artisans and small businesses have experienced a bit more demand for their handmade products, local foods. And cultural experiences. And in this community, when we talk about the local foods, it means organic. Youth fine, temporary and part-time job learning, hospitality things, communication skills and business management skills which is a positive side and in the context of socially also the community feels now more reasonable, Rejuvenated. And when these stories, they value our tradition and we feel more Pride. Yes, these opportunities are good, but they also need to be managed carefully, and we have some challenges also. And like not all the households, they get equal benefit and some may face challenges participating due to limited resources. Why they will for them so collaborative planning, training program and I think fewer access to everyone will help better inclusiveness and long-term sustainability.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, there are many notable improvements like the farmers, artisans, small business owners, including homestays and cafes. They report that they have increased their income and now they are financially stable to some extent. And families can invest in education, household infrastructure and saving things. And from a community level, there is a better collaboration among stakeholders are creating lots of cooperative networks that strengthen local enterprises. However, I would think that some challenges are there, like income. Improvements are sometimes

seasonal. And. Households with less access to these tourist routes, they often get less benefit, and I think addressing these disparities throughout outreach, marketing support and also better infrastructure so that we can reach to those rural side and that marginal. People then it will help to bring equitable benefits across all the community members.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

The agritourism has been a. Binding agent for the cultural preservation from my perspective and tourist arts in Wendy. Interested in our traditional farming techniques, how we cook our food and crabs and other handmade things which motivates our locals to maintain and provide. These practices, to them the young generation, are now learning more skills that might otherwise be lost. So, while the overall impact is positive, but it is important to ensure authenticity is not compromised at all because it is what we are. Due to this kind of authenticity and sometimes to appeal to tourists, practices are adapted or simplified, which can die due to our tradition, which I actually don't like. So, with structured training guidelines and community discussion, I think we can easily balance visitor. Expectation with a more cultural integrity. And from my perspective, this agreed to disarm it starts as both of economic tool and cultural safeguard if we manage it more properly and can provide for long term.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

I think yes, this agritourism encourage skill development across multiple labels and community members. They gain hospitality skills, customer servicing his scales, artesian improved their product quality and obviously the. They developed their entrepreneurial skill. So, the exposure to the tourist also helps improve language, communication and the kind of a confidence and professionalism in ourselves. The informal learning is widespread here, but formal training program this will help to build more capacity building, reduce errors as much as possible and improve our orbital sharpish quality. So, I think investing in in structured kind of a skilled. Some men will help that the community can maximize benefit and also helps to maintain a better-quality standard and also focus on sustainable practices.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism

Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?

While this agritourism bagels so many benefits in our society, but also there are so many challenges, which is true, the tourist inflow can. Pressured our local infrastructure, especially the road because the road is not so big, water supply is very limited and waste management system as well. Some residents they feel that benefits are not equally shared and this is leading to occasional tension. And I have been into these kinds of things. So, the environmental pressure like waste management over use of our farmlands, these are the growing emerging concern in this community. And I think these challenges can be avoidable. With better solution like effective management. And also, systematic practice like rules follow and responsible behavior practices. So, from my perspective, recognizing these challenges while also celebrating our success, these are the key things so that we can achieve our sustainable agritourism and this will help community deployment also.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, and the increased tourism activity places pressure on water, electricity, land and the waste management. The roads and public spaces are now happily used; However, the community has started implementing. More sustainable practices like designated walking paths, proper waste disposal and visitor education. And I think diplomatically, when we balance the growth within Environmental Protection, then it becomes more crucial and with proper planning, agritourism. Can become more sustainable and beneficial without causing any kind of a long-term damage to our society.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?

Some inequalities exist there because household with large farmland or. Who have been in this business from years, they are naturally good at attracting more visitors. And this sometimes affects these smaller household also because they can offer so many things in cheap price and they can do this in a better way also, but which is a good thing because these new emerging households, they also have. To come up with the better solution, but how we can do that is the question. However, the local cooperatives and associations are working to include more members, sharing the resources and providing adequate time of training. These are the. Things that we have to follow, and I think ongoing efforts are there to needed to ensure equitable participation. But yes, I don't think it would be too equitable like 100%. So agritourism benefits are widely distributed and while maintaining quality. And sustainability will be there.

Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?

Yes, uh, the barriers include, uh, like I already said, we have limited infrastructure and the lack of formal training and insufficient financial support, especially for. Smaller households and even they are lacking marketing strategies. And the tourism awareness is growing, but the coordination among the stakeholders, it can be improved. And I think we have to address these gaps through partnership, community planning and government support. I think this will. Had the agritourism to Egypt its full potential and at the same time empower the community while it also preserves our traditions and sociocultural heritage when resources.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism**Economic Empowerment****Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?**

Yes, the agreed to resume has improved the income for farmers, artisans and small business owners. Now the families can save and invest in their children's education, they can get education for themselves as well and diversify their living style. But seasonal fluctuation is there. But I think overall economic security is a bit stronger than before. But we still need more diversification we can, which we can do from training, effective marketing. I think this can enhance the stability and it will help maintaining household so that they can benefit in an equitable way.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Yes, uh, the community members have moved. Uh. The concern regarding the pricing, product offerings and tourism planning and development, and the cooperatives and informal groups they helped in decision making ensuring activities. That completely aligned with the local needs what they actually need for their community. However, the ongoing efforts, they are still needed to include all these households and try to maintain as transparency as possible. And I think this balance; this will help make the community ownership stronger and also it will foster the sustainable economic growth.

Social & Psychological Empowerment**Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?**

Yes, definitely. The residents feel prouder about sharing our culture, crabs and tradition with the visitors and youth. They are getting more motivated to learn his skills and adults feel recognized and diplomatically. There is pressure to meet visitor expectation. But I think these structured guidance needs to be there and which we can do from training and this will help to maintain more pride and motivation in a sustainable way.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

Yes, I feel more valued and recognize us due to this agritourism and especially when, uh, our accounts are. When are tourists are there? Appreciate our culture, then we feel like it's overwhelming for us and the tradition that we follow our daily practices. So, when it is getting appreciated by them, then I always feel like this is the best movement. So obviously we now know many tourists. Many new visitors both from our country and from other countries, now they start to feeling that we have this kind of a culture and now it is getting more recognized, which is a great thing.

Political Empowerment**Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?**

Yes, why not uh, the recognition, especially from the outsider uh, when these visitors and local stakeholders, they praise us, then we feel more valued and. The locally stakeholders when they try to improve more morale and inspire continue participation, then this also brings our overall value even more. And I think balance is needed there among all the household so that. Everyone feels same kind of value while maintaining effective quality experiences.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

I think he has the stakeholder consultation and other cooperative discussion. They have increased the overhead involvement and their residence voice opinion plan activities. And they're sharing responsibilities. I think these are more important in decision making and diplomatically. The wider engagement is still possible here, particularly from the marginalized household to ensure empowerment is more equitable.

Overall Empowerment

Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?

Overall, yes. Agritourism. It boosts economic stability, Cultural pride. Social collaboration and also it helps skills and capability development. And now reside in the fields recognized and included in all the planning. And I think addressing inequalities, resource pressure and infrastructural gap, I think these are important. If we solve this one, then it will enhance the empowerment even further and the potential is. Significant if challenges are managed more strategically so that we all can get the benefit.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

I think the training programs are infrastructural upgrades, financial support and more cooperative initiatives. I think I said already and these will help to strengthen the orbital empowerment. Show ensuring inclusivity, environmental sustainability and also protecting our cultural authenticity. I think these are more important that will help to maximize the benefits and also helps to foster long term growth.

Section E: Future Outlook

Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?

I envision myself. Into this and I think, uh, inclusive and sustainable agritourism model where all the household can benefit, traditions are preserved and resources are respected more than before and I think collaborative planning, training and environmental. Wednesdays are important because this will ensure the growth without any kind of a compromise so that our next generation, they can use it freely and also cautiously. So, the agritourism this will enhance income is killed and. Cultural pride across the community, but we need to be aware about how we use our resources, and you know, sometimes it can become more. Dangerous if we try to use our resources in an unsustainable way.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

Hmm, that's a good question. I think uh, the support in training, infrastructural development, marketing and cooperative. Deployment, these are more important and I think in this condition, uh. These are more dependent to the local authorities because we do not have that much power. From a community perspective and we need help from these people and I think partnership with. These local authorities also with the NGO's and if we have any private sectors or investors then we can ensure equitable access, sustainable practices and long-term benefit for all the community members.

Section F: Closing

Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?

Yes, definitely this agreed to resume. It has brought many positive transparency transformations to this. Bokhara Reason. And I think empowering household economically, socially and culturally, this is the more important thing, and I think the challenges like unequal access. Environmental pressure and infrastructure are limited. I think these are still there, but if we can address these through better collaborative planning then I think we can easily solve these things. And with the continued effort and strategic support, I think agritourism can be. A good solution for sustainable community development and this will benefit everyone and we can preserve our heritage; we can protect our environment and at the same time we can on passive income. Which is a great thing, but we have to use it in a more sustainable way.

Participant 8: Paragliding guide

Section A: Introduction / Warm-up

Q1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection to this community?

So, I am a paragliding off guide, and my name is Suresh and I am operating this panel gliding in Pocono region mainly in the Saran code area. I have been part of this adventure tourism sector for more than 10 years and I work closely with the local business, hotels and community to provide a safe and thrilling experience for our visitors. While my main work is a. More towards paragliding, but I also engage in promoting agritourism indirectly because many visitors they combine their paragliding trip with farm beachheads, homestays and cultural experience. So, I

think being a part of this community has taught me the overall importance. How we can balance the excitement, safety and local sustainability so my work brings me close to people from all over the world and giving them a unique perspective on how to resume. This can affect both visitors and also towards. And then you see this agritourism and also the adventure tourism, uh, these are like complementary things that can go hand in hand, and it offers and unique experience while also supporting the local livelihoods and cultural awareness. In fact, I can see. All the farms, all these vegetables and fruits, right from these guys who have better view than most of the people who just walk through a ground perspective.

Q2. How long have you been involved in or aware of agritourism activities here?

So, I have been aware of agritourism maybe for around six years roughly because when local farmers and home stays they started hosting tourists in large numbers and I often interact with the. To the east. Visit these farms and come to try local foods in on uh, cultural practice before or after flying with us. And over the years I have noticed that these tourists are more interested in combining adventure with authentic ruler experience and which I found. Very pleasing. You can just take the example also like some visitors tell me about. After paragliding what they want to see how the rice is harvesting and how they cook their local foods, and I think these awareness helps me to guide my clients to give them local experience indirectly supporting household businesses and small farms. So, I. Don't agree to raise your more fascinating, it's because it bridges or the organ curiosity with the rural low culture.

Q3. What types of agritourism activities are common in this area?

The common agritourism activities in this area includes home estates from BJ's cooking, local foods and handcraft workshops, and also fruit and vegetable pickings and visitors there. Would like to absorb our traditional practices and also, they engage in cultural events, they engage in folk dances, festivals, events and some kinds of drama also. And many of my clients they combine paragliding with these experiences. Also, which is a new thing, and they also visited palms for phrase means or souvenir afterward, so I have been. I've seen these two rays really value these activities because I think they can see the real Nepal, not just the tourist spot. And one incident I recall when I involved in this tourist couple who after flying over the Sharon court, they went to a small farm. They spent the whole afternoon learning about how to make the local Pickles and wave baskets, and they also thanked me in their blog also. So, I was really impressed, and they bought a lot of handmade items and shared the experience in social media as well. So, with this. I think it creates positive impact and I have also noticed all these things. But yes, some homes are struggling with the organization, especially with the hygiene and communication and I think which can sometimes affect the overall experience and this is an area where we can do the improvement and this could make our agritourism. Even more grateful.

Section B: Opportunities Created by Agritourism

Q4. What new opportunities has agritourism brought to your community?

Yes, this agritourism has opened multiple opportunities, especially for local businesses, including farms, homesteaders, restaurants and handcraft shops, I guess. And like, for example. During the peak tourist season, small homestead and farmstead often host these international visitors who are eager to buy fresh produce, handmade crafts or local foods. And I think it indirectly benefit my paragliding business because tourists, they spend more. Is in these areas and obviously this will increase the bookings. So socially the community feels prouder to share all these traditional practices, recipes and lifestyle. I think this boosts morale and motivation, and I have seen more young people, they are gaining more confidence by helping. Uh, from tours guiding visitors or assisting in cultural demonstration and yes, but there is a room to improve for the coordination, and we are not that professional still. So, some household, they still struggle to manage tourist effectively and inconsistent. Standard. I think this can reduce the repeated visitors.

Q5. Have you seen any improvements in livelihoods or businesses because of agritourism?

Yes, the impact is visible and local farmers now they can own extra. Income by hosting the tourist, selling their local products or guiding the visitors and I think the artisans and small businesses they have better sale of handicrafts, local foods and also shopping needs. And my paragliding clients, they often ask for local meals or farm tours because they can see that from the sky also and which boosts the community revenue overall. And I remember a family. Near the Shannon court, whose main income was seasonal rice farming and after opening their farm to the tourist, now they are able to diversify their business into dairy products, become products on any small crabs also, which I really like and they also invest. Home improvement and education for their children, it's all happening because of this agritourism. So economically, agritourism boost by creating multiple income streams. At the same time, I also noticed that benefits are not that uniform because some households are who are more related to these agritourism that gets more benefit and those who are not actually they are not getting any kind of benefits. But addressing these disparities, we need to provide more resources like marketing, training, also effective planning so that we can all include those marginalized people. Then it becomes more inclusive and sustainable.

Q6. How has agritourism helped preserve local culture, farming practices, or traditions?

I think this agreed to resume. It encourages the community to preserve and showcase our culture, what our traditional recipes easy and farming methods that we do from the long time and tourists. They are genuinely curious about the local life. This motivates residents to maintain their authenticity. I have witnessed a family who demonstrate traditional rice planting technique to visitors, and which is not. Only that they are earning their income but also it provides some kind of a pride in their cultural heritage and their style of doing these things. This also makes extra income in which is a new thing for us and additionally we have so many festivals and cultural performances. Now, when we organize these in a better way and provide these to our tourists, then we feel appreciated. However, uh, some practices are seen like overly simplified so that we can meet our tourist expectation. I think this can definitely reduce authenticity.

Q7. Has agritourism provided any skills development or capacity-building opportunities?

Yes, many people in this community, they have learned skills like customer interaction, how to deal with visitors more politely, how to run small businesses, how to manage also financial management also. Digital access as well and the young people, they gain more confidence when guiding the tourist, assisting with the crimes or helping in homestays. So even I have learned how to be better and also communicate in a better way. And manage the client expectation during the paragliding flight because tourists often they combine our activities with the farm BJ's. So, it's a win win situation for both and. The group of teenagers, when they assist the homestay in cooking and guiding visitors, then obviously these young people, they are finding jobs so that they don't need to go to other cities for job. So, I think overall they feel motivated to start. Small initiatives by themselves. Well, uh. We I see like this informal learning, it's effective and its structured support. It's still need so that all residents they can maximize the benefits and they can improve their service quality and reduce mistakes and conflicts with the tourist because in any case. We have to behave. More politely, without tourists, because that is what we have learned from the childhood that the tourists, they are God for us. So, I think all this needs to be done in a more holistic way so that we can attract more marginalized household here because they are also equally important.

Section C: Challenges Related to Agritourism**Q8. What challenges has your community faced due to agritourism development?**

I think the challenges are there. Because. Not just the benefit, there are many challenges and I think overcrowding during the peak season, then this can obviously stress the resources like water and also there is electricity problem and yes, we have. Not big lands from this we have to produce our agricultural thing and also, we have to make our tourists pleasing through this land. So, it's not that big enough. And I remember an incident where a group of tourists. They just want to visit the farm, but there was not any guidance. There was not any, uh, proper system. And then I can clearly see that the crops were getting damaged, and I don't think it was their fault because we didn't have any. Gained for guidelines for the rules. And the second thing is obviously there is an inequality in terms of benefit like households who are closer to this popular destination they get between 5 stocks will benefit better infrastructure benefit means they can. Dear items, they can get there, uh, supply chain in a more convenient way and easier way, and then they can become more competitive as compared to other one. We need to understand this one also. And there is also a pressure to meet the tourist expectation, and I think this can sometimes compromise the authenticity.

Q9. Does agritourism create any pressure on local resources or the environment?

Yes, I think these, uh, increased tourism activity, this will put extra pressure on our water because we have limited water supply here also at the electricity and our farmland. And also, during the peak season, waste disposal is a big concern. And I think if you just go more deeper than I think some trekking routes, they are suffering because of the soil erosion, also due to higher foot traffic and also. Kind of own systematic way of making rules and I think the community they have to address this pressure to designated pathways, proper waste management and educating our tourist and also ourselves. And while some pressure is. Almost inevitable but careful planning and sustainable practice. I think this will help to maximize it for long term positive effect. Play.

Q10. Are there issues of unequal participation or benefit distribution?**Q11. What barriers limit the full potential of agritourism in this region?**

Yes. Barriers, uh, I think it includes the infrastructure gap. I think this is the main thing and the inconsistency with this RBC standard also it's because we do not have that much of A training and uneven marketing strategies, I think. These are the main issues and some households they cannot invest in facilities. It's because of the low level of knowledge regarding how to attract tourists. The incidents like tourists when they get dissatisfied, it's because. We need more training so that we can give them the best experience and addressing these barriers through community planning, skill build up and coordinated type of marketing. I think these are the key so that we can achieve our agritourism's full potential.

Section D: Community Empowerment Through Agritourism

Economic Empowerment

Q12. Has agritourism increased income or economic security for households?

Yes, uh, the household, uh, they can earn extra income by hosting this story is selling their products, offering experiences, uh, giving access to their farmlands, uh, teaching. Local foods are. And how to cope with all those things? Families, they can invest in education also and also save for themselves and they can make their home improved and also, they can make their, uh, businesses even bigger. And I think economic security is stronger because of this. Tourism but only relies on this tourism is also not that good. It's because uh. When the tourist, their numbers get down, especially due to weather, political issues, then obviously, uh, there will be many more problem. And I think we can learn, learn this. We learned this from the pandemic also because. During that time, it was completely locked and we had no other options beside relying only on our agriculture.

Q13. Does agritourism give the community more control over local economic activities?

Yes, uh, the residents, they have to make a decision. Regarding their pricing offering and how to do the promotion and I think the local cooperatives and informal meetings, I think this helps to ensure everyone has a good say over these things. And I think like I said earlier, earlier, that inclusive participation. Especially by integrating with smaller households and marginalized group, I think this will strengthen the community ownership and economic empowerment in for the days.

Social & Psychological Empowerment

Q14. Has agritourism increased community pride, confidence, or motivation?

Yes, the local feel more proud about sharing their culture, their crops and farms to the tourist and I find that this youth, they have gained confidence through guiding visitors and managing their activities. So. But there is also a pressure, like the pressure to meet the tourist expectation and sometimes it can bring some pressure, but I think the structured support and training, I think this will help to mitigate this.

Q15. Do you feel more valued or recognized due to your involvement?

Visitors, they appreciate our service and the locals there. Recognize this contribution and paragliding clients there from UH. Feel mode. Treating experience and then when we just integrate this experience with the agritourism, agritourism is not that thrilling, but it's kind of a soft tourism and it provides cultural exposure out. Started on practices and also it gives them a new sense of enjoying our life. So definitely I feel more valued because of these things. And I think recognition, uh, this could be made more inclusive because the smaller household they do not feel. That most valued because they are not directly related with this tourism.

Political Empowerment

Q16. How much influence do community members have in planning or managing agritourism?

To be honest, I think, uh, moderate to significant because the decision about the pricing, the scheduling and visitor management are shared collaboratively because I have seen through that way, but I don't know. Actually, the core thing behind it, but I think the inclusion of a smaller farms, young entrepreneurs and minority, I think this there also needs to be there. I think it will this will help to enhance the empowerment even more.

Q17. Has agritourism improved people's involvement in decision-making?

Yes. And the cooperative discussion includes various stakeholders, and I think the wider engagement particularly for marginalized household, I think this will ensure more equitable. Involvement.

Overall Empowerment

Q18. Overall, do you feel agritourism has empowered your community? Why or why not?

Yes, I think it improves our income skills, provides and also participation, which is a good thing, and I think addressing these kinds of inequality. Uh, resource pressure and infrastructure gap, I think this will enhance the empowerment further and the potential is significant in challenges are managed more strategically.

Q19. What changes would help strengthen community empowerment through agritourism?

That's. I think the training program, cooperative initiatives, these are more important and obviously the infrastructure upgrade, I think this needs to be there. And one more important is like the environmental awareness, I think which we are not that much informed about this one. I think this will help. If we address this one, then this will address the overall, uh, uh, issues and it will boost our empowerment and yes, the inclusive type of participation and sustainability things. They are key for the long-term benefits of our community.

Section E: Future Outlook**Q20. What is your vision for the future of agritourism in this community?**

To be honest, I envision as inclusive. Safe and sustainable agritourism system for the upcoming days. By this we can do by integrating the adventure and cultural experience. I mean, uh, the adventure is like paragliding type of things and cultural experience, and other things are like more from these agritourism and. All household they can get benefit and we can show our tradition also. Then our tradition and culture also get preserved and our resources also. They get respect but the training, coordination and I think are responsible to theism awareness. I think this needs to be there.

Q21. What support or resources would help your community gain more benefits from agritourism?

I think there are many things, but uh. Training Infrastructural development support, how we do our marketing and obviously the banking access, I mean like the financial things, if we can get the loans in lowest interest without many hassles, I think these are more crucial. And obviously the partnership with the local government. If we have any private investor also then this can help more equitable participation and it can also help to gain benefit more for our society and for the government as well.

Section F: Closing**Q22. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed?**

So, the agritourism, uh, when combined with the adventure tourism, from my perspective, I think that within this has informed. This has transformed ours. And this. Pokhara reason more positively and I think empowering household more from economically and socially while also preserving the calls and I think this is possible because of this agritourism but these challenges like inequality, resource pressure and. Consistent type of a quality is still remaining there, but we can do this through strategic planning, training and collaboration and I think the agritourism can continue to offer sustainable and rewarding experience for both of us, I mean the locals. And also, to the visitors.