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Interrelationship of Tourism and Indigenous Knowledge, Skill, and Technology: A Study of Gurung, Magar, and Tharu (GMT) Homestays in Gandaki Province

*Anchala Chaudhary¹, Shreedhar Pokhrel² and Angana Parajuli³

¹Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

²Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

³Independent Researcher

*Corresponding Author's Email: anchalachaudhary@yahoo.com

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Abstract

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Since this decade, tourism has become the world's biggest industry in terms of people's peaceful movement, income generation, and employment creation. The desires of Nepal are to focus on tourism due to its 'low investment, high return' attribute. Tourism, being a strong agent of change, transformation, promotion, and conservation of nature, culture, and the economy, is the priority sector of the central and provincial governments of Nepal. Tourism seems to be favored both people and state, mostly due to its economic derivatives. Its non-economic progenies are mostly obscure and latent. Therefore, this paper investigates and analyzes the interrelationships between tourism and indigenous knowledge, skills, and technology. Data from both primary sources and secondary literature was used to support the arguments. Qualitative methods were used to gather the information. Sixty-five semi-structured interviews were conducted: 25 with the Gurung community, 15 with the Magar community, and 25 with the Tharu homestay. The finding revealed that these ethnic communities used their peculiar indigenous knowledge, skills, and technology to entertain tourists in a home-friendly environment with their customs and traditions. Additionally, these communities helped revitalize their obsolete traditions while practicing homestay entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *Tourism, homestay, Indigenous, knowledge, skill, and technology.*

Introduction

In the contemporary world, indigenous people, their knowledge, skills, customs, and culture are threatened with extinction. People live in environments that are changing drastically. Nevertheless, they have adapted to competing forces of modern structures and global systems for their sustainability. They are active, working on thriving and ongoing efforts of cultural innovation, preservation, and transformation that incorporate aspects of the ‘modern,’ ‘developed,’ and ‘global’ without jeopardizing indigenous heritage. Tourism has played an important role in the country’s economic prosperity and is the primary source of foreign currency in a developing country. Nepal’s scenic beauty, cultural relevance, and breathtaking archaeological sites attract tourists in droves. Nepal’s tourist potential is high due to its many enticing traits. That potential appears to have been squandered up to this moment. Its expansion has been hindered by problems like poor infrastructure, restricted air access, and a lack of a solid marketing plan. Homestay tourism is getting popular in Nepal. However, it appears that insufficient planning and programming have mismanaged this industry, which is required for the sector’s development. A need for proper management and planning in homestay tourism is crucial for its growth and success. Community participation is not just important; it is critical for the sector’s long-term growth. The stated goals cannot be met unless people in the community are aware of their own skills and actively involved in the process. To mitigate the gaps in our long-term strategy, capacity building, and awareness campaigns on the various aspects of tourism need to be prioritized.

Nepal is a small country with high geo-diversity from 60 m above sea level to the highest peak Mt. Everest (8848 m). The three major corollaries of this geo-diversity are North-South climatic variation in a very short aerial distance, enriched bio-diversity flourished in panoramic natural settings, and unique cultural multiplicity in every village. Nepal has very few options other than these naturally endowed variables for people’s happiness through national success. Tourism, an important global economic industry that thrives with the aforementioned diversities, has emerged as a strong growth engine (UNWTO, 2018) in emerging nations. Culture is an important sub-sector of global tourism and can be a key competency in diverse countries such as Nepal, which has 125 ethnic tribes that speak 123 various languages (CBS, 2011). Gurung, Magar, and Tharu ethnic communities have been at the forefront of embracing tourism through homestay as part of rural tourism initiatives. Because of its proximity to Tibet (China) in the north and India in the south, Gandaki Province almost perfectly mirrors the national ethnic diversity. Gandaki Province has over 68 villages registered for homestay

tourism, with the majority representing Gurung, Magar, and Tharu ethnicities, with a small number of other ethnicities represented in a few villages. Homestay tourism has the potential to be a significant component of rural tourism in Gandaki Province, whether in a community-based or home-based setting. The province promoted village tourism as a cornerstone of economic success, with plans to implement homestay services for tourists in 300 communities. The province has already committed three crores from its current fiscal year (2075 B.S.) budget for study, research, and preliminary activities (PPPC, 2018). Thus, the study aims to amend understanding of the structural mechanisms and actual social relationships to contribute to establishing the interrelation between homestay tourism and indigenous knowledge, skills and technology, to uplift lifestyle but also reduce poor economic of the people.

This section will discuss how indigenous culture assists in the promotion of homestay tourism. Empirical research has shown that homestay tourism in Nepal has profound effects on the environment, local cultural economy, women's development, and community development. Referring to Acharya & Halpenny (2013) assert that homestay tourism has an important role in women's empowerment through their direct involvement. Similarly, Kimaiga (2015) focused on the socioeconomic well-being of the people through the homestay operation. Homestays are sustainable tourism that affects host families and communities (Lama, 2013). Nonetheless, no study has been conducted to demonstrate the relationship between indigenous knowledge, skill, and technology and homestay promotion in Gandaki province. This study is based on local customs and traditions, which are also based on indigenous knowledge, skills, and technology for the promotion of homestay tourism.

According to Cohen (1984), homestay tourism transforms local culture and customs—such as traditional dance ceremonies, music and art forms, rituals, and knowledge and skills—that were previously outside the horizon of capitalism into commodities for tourists. Thus, it is assumed that tourism-induced commercialization affects and destroys the authenticity of cultural goods, symbols, and interpersonal interactions for both locals and visitors. Because of their perceived vulnerability, indigenous people are frequently portrayed as potential victims of tourism-related commercialization. Similarly, Willard (2005) asserts that the commercialization of culture is jeopardizing the very culture sold to tourists because as the economy shifts from a traditional subsistence to a commercial, the pressure to earn income and westernize ways of life means abandoning traditional ceremonies, practices, and arts. Their importance is lost; the tradition is no longer practiced and passed on to younger generations; it is performed as entertainment.

Thus, one should attempt to uncover the meaning hidden in their social connotations to analyze the detrimental relationship between tourism and indigenous culture. Perhaps the most pervasive aspect of tourism is its inherent link to the “modern,” “commercial,” and “global.” Indigenous culture is acknowledged as a traditional system, the modern antithesis both in organizational forms and in mental terms, connoting words like “primitive,” “nature,” and “exotic” (Meethan, 2001). It tends to reduce reality to simple binary oppositions, such as “traditional” and “modern,” “authentic” and “inauthentic,” and “local” and “global,” which are theoretically unable to coexist. This is the problem with using these perceptions to explain empirical circumstances. Thus, the basic, reified cultural markers—“cultural stuff” resistant to change—remain of the cultural reality. For instance, Native American civilizations are thus viewed as closed, passive, unified systems incapable of withstanding the impact of modernity.

In contrast to this binary viewpoint, culture must be studied and approached as an ever-changing, contingent process that is created, modified, and transformed in response to shifting conditions (Jenkins, 1997). This makes it feasible to identify the dynamic cultural contexts that tourism enters as well as the range of proactive reactions to tourism that enable cultural innovation and continuity. Therefore, rather than viewing change in indigenous culture as a simple aberration, it is more productive to view it as merely another, albeit faster, stage in the ongoing process of cultural transition (Cohen 1984). It is not that travel agencies, governments, or indigenous people reify culture for profit or political gain; rather, the commercialization of culture is the fundamental problem with cultural essentialization. However, suppose these reified notions are taken as “reality” and included in everyday interactions. In that case, they may end up serving as yet another instrument to develop and maintain unequal relationships not only between but also within groups.

Salazar’s work (2016) highlights the difficulty of creating tourism that pleases everyone in a community. This tourism also needs to make money and protect the environment. In community-based tourism (CBT), the entire community is involved in total hospitality operations, from receiving guests, food, lodging, and entertaining to the stage of see-off. In doing so, the community people try to apply their indigenous knowledge, skills, and technology to provide possible service to the fullest extent for guest satisfaction. Thus, it is believed that homestay tourism, a segment of rural tourism, might be the best way to promote, enrich, and conserve local knowledge, skills, culture, and technology, though the issue of sustainability still remains a challenge (ibid). On the other hand, the enrichment and conservation of indigenous knowledge, skill, culture, and technology might also be helpful in acting as pulling forces and

factors for the tourism of the village.

However, the impacts and implications of tourism as a factor of modernization are not always as desired. It comes up with both positive and negative effects on society, culture, economy, and environment. The urban, suburban, and rural areas of Nepal have not and will not remain in isolation from the influence of globalization. Tourism is an agent of change and a factor of globalization, and its implications for homestay communities have to be investigated and analyzed. The homestay concept as a segment of rural tourism in Nepal does not have a long history and, therefore, lacks adequate study and research about the implications of tourism on the community. Thus, the potential benefits of tourism for cultural survival should be acknowledged and investigated, regardless of the complexity of the tourism and culture debate. Therefore, this research aims to go above static important-priori ideas and instead look empirically at the social-cultural-economic-political dynamics that play a role in the interaction between tourism and Indigenous people. It attempts to demonstrate how, through processes of cultural preservation, transformation, and innovation—and perhaps even with an eye toward sustainable indigenous development and empowerment—tourism may turn into a vehicle for the coexistence of the “modern” and the “traditional,” the “global” and the “local,” the “authentic” and the “inauthentic.” Nevertheless, the question remains: Does the Government of Nepal (GoN) push for local participation and control over tourism development go far enough to establish “true” sustainable development? Moreover, can travel that offers visitors people (or at least their genuineness) as the main attraction rather than just relaxation or game viewing really be empowered?

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The fieldwork was conducted from March to May 2023 in three districts of the Gandaki Province. Ministry of Industry Commerce Tourism Forest and Environment of Gandaki Province (2075- 76) identified 272 homestays in the Province: Gorkha (22), Manang (2), Lamjung (23), Kaski (36), Mustang (.3), Myagdi (10), Baglung (28), Parbat (47), Syangja (44), Tanahu (47), and Nawalpur (10). This study selected the Gurung community homestay of Sirubari in Syangja and Lamjung, the Magar community homestay of Beshisahar-2, and the Lamjung and Tharu community of Amaltari in Nawalpur District. The researcher used random purposive sampling methods for the sample selection. Semi-structured interviews and case studies were used as tools for information collection. Sixty-five semi-structured interviews were conducted: twenty-five in-depth interviews among the Gurung community, fifteen

among the Magar community, and twenty-five among the Tharu Homestay. Ten case studies were collected: five from the Gurung community, two from the Magar homestay community, and three from the Tharu homestay community were studied and collected. All the qualitative information was analyzed using the manual thematic techniques.

Results and Discussion

Cultural identity as a means of homestay promotion

Presenting one's culture strengthens the idea of living within a community, thus increasing identity and pride (Besculides et. al. 2002). Homestay tourism assists in the preservation of indigenous customs/traditions and increases the alternative income sources of the community. The Gurung, Magar, and Tharu communities are enriched with knowledge and skills on a local tradition, which is also a source for alternative income generation. The Tharu community homestay of Amaltari uses its cultural resources for identity construction and income generation. For instance, a Stick dance performance by Tharu is more than just a captivating display of skill and artistry; it's a vibrant celebration of the Tharu people's culture. It's evidence of their resilience, deep connection to land, and their enduring artistic spirit. According to Boley (2014), tourists visit the community homestay to observe local tradition and culture, and during the process, these locals reconsider long-neglected customs and cultural practices. Thus, the local traditions and cultural practices are crucial for the flourishing of homestay entrepreneurship, and the people of the study area used this as their means for entertaining the visitors. The people of Sirubari and Ghale Gaun acknowledge their traditional way of life and culture as a prominent source of tourist attraction. One of the homestay operators from Sirubari mentioned that both national and foreign tourists come to observe their traditions, culture, and festivals.

A 52-year-old man from Ghale Gaun interestingly said that people come to see how they live, how they dress, what food they eat, and how they celebrate their festivals. Tourists come to learn about their daily life activities, dressing patterns, local dances, festivals, and rituals. Furthermore, he added that Nepalese college students also come to study and prepare reports on their way of life. Similarly, the operators of Amaltari homestay claimed that visitors come to observe their way of life, i.e., to see their festivals, their traditional costumes, and taste traditional food. Tharu cultural dances and folk songs are the major attractions for tourists. Tourists come to watch their *Laathi naach*, *Jhumra naach*, and *Sathiya naach*. How local

people dress attracts visitors and motivates them to dress up in their customs and capture their memories. The way of serving the food with traditional menu items such as *ghongi*, fish, rice, and daal pitthi gives different tastes and tourists' ask for the recipes, a female homestay operator shares. The respondents from Magar community homestay adhere that they welcome tourists with their local food items especially, *batuk* (bara) and *kodo ko raksi* (local alcohol made from millet). A female homestay operator, during a conversation, shared that though *batuk* is occasionally made by their community after the implementation of homestay, other people in the community. Homestay tourism assists in the preservation of local traditions and serves as the easiest means of accumulating capital through cultural performances. For instance, in the Magar homestay, people usually perform cultural dances like Chudka, Kaurah, Sorathi, and Maruni, with traditional folk songs as a major attraction.

A 57-year-old man in Sirubari emotionally added, "Visitors come to our place to see our traditions and culture. If we do not preserve them and don't show them, then why do they come to this remote area, leaving five-star hotels in the city? We cannot run a homestay without showing our culture because people come to this village to see it. So, we ask our children to follow our culture and traditions so they can easily operate the Homestay after our demise."

In the field sites, the Gurung, Magar, and Tharu community people have practiced local culture since historical times, and it has now become a sustainable means of production as tourists come to observe and feel their way of life. The value of local tradition and culture assists in increasing the daily income of the local people and revitalizing their traditions. A 56 years old man from Tharu homestay stated the essence of the stick:

"In order to awaken the goddess Durga's tremendous spirit, laathi naach are performed mainly during Dashain, Nepal's greatest festival. Both males and females are well-trained from childhood to strike small sticks together, creating a rhythmic symphony. This is an ingrained custom rather than just fun. These sticks are made in the community using the timber from the forest. It is not only the tools, but it's our connection to nature. These leather we use for naach are not only tools for dancing purposes, but also help protect our life against wild animals. Besides this, after the implementation of Homestay in the community, stick dance has become a major tourist attraction, and the very young men and women in the group perform the dance, which becomes an unforgettable cultural experience for visitors. This is our real unique identity. As these dances are passed down from generation to generation, they ensure the legacy of the

community continues to captivate tourists to visit us.”

Thus, the people involved in homestay businesses believe that their customs and traditional practices are instrumental to strengthening their identity and preserving cultural assets because the residents feel that a decline of tradition and culture results in a loss of identity. All the respondents in the study area have the same concern for their culture.

Indigenous knowledge and homestay operation

The term “indigenous” relates to the origins of initiatives. Indigenous systems may incorporate elements and procedures from the outside world as long as the initiative is local. Traditional systems are, by definition, old, whereas indigenous knowledge systems are frequently new and evolving. According to Gill (1993), traditional systems may be indigenous and vice versa. Thus, perusing indigenous knowledge systems with homestays requires understanding the concept of homestay. Homestay tourism, as a segment of rural tourism, assists in promoting, enriching, and conserving local knowledge, skills, culture, and technology. Thus, the enrichment and conservation of indigenous knowledge, skill, culture, and technology act as pulling forces and factors for the village’s tourism. For instance, the indigenous Gurung and Ghale songs, music, and dances performed during the welcome ceremony entertain the guests and help preserve their customs and traditions. The young people learn and perform the songs, music, and dances during the welcome of guests. Dances, such as *Ghatu* (traditionally performed during festivals and major life events), *Putpute* (performed when the first son of a family reaches age five or seven), and *Rodhi* (mostly songs and dances performed by boys and girls as musical dialogue) where villagers wear special traditional costumes showed the cultural enrichment of Gurung community. The cultural tradition of *Rodhi* has its history. The study conducted by Gurung (1978) adheres to the idea that *Rodhi* denotes a residence where people sleep because “ro” and “dhi” both imply sleeping. In another sense, “Ro” means wool, and “dhi” means residence. It indicates that *Rodhi* is a place where people whirl. It emphasizes *Rodhi* as a spot where youngsters congregate to sweep, implying growth and the creative singing expression of youth vitality (Gurung, 2013). Since singing and dancing during *Rodhi* are important to the Gurung people on a professional, cultural, and recreational level, they are tightly linked to the traditional Gurung culture. The involvement of individuals of various ages promotes unity and cooperation among *Rodhi* house occupants (ibid). People exchanged their labor, skills, and knowledge, which served as the foundation for cooperative agricultural activity and the weaving process during *Rodhi* (Macfarlane, 1976). A 59 years old man from Sirubari said:

After implementing homestay in our community, we focused on local harvesting systems

and produced crops and vegetables. All the Rodhi members worked in groups in the field and collected firewood from the forest. During this interaction, we shared our knowledge and skills to deal with everyday problems. Nevertheless, the younger children didn't like to work in farmland but participated in singing and dancing during the welcome of tourists.

The homestay operators of Ghalegaun along with other members of the village, produce traditional handicrafts such as *bakkhu*, *radi*, and *paakhi* and sell to tourists. Such handicrafts are made using their knowledge and skills in a beautifully decorated way. A 46 years Gurung woman from Ghalegaun adheres:

"Community homestay activities empower them as they start to earn. We women knit *bakhu* (a woolen coat), *radi* (a woolen carpet), *paakhi* (a woolen blanket), a woolen small bag, in our free time. Whenever visitors come to stay at our homestay, we display them and explain the process of making and using them. After that, some of them bought, whereas others only took pictures and enjoyed seeing our products."

The Magar of Besisahar, Lamjung, whose livelihood depends on natural resources such as forest and water, along with their ritual and ceremonies that they practiced for a long time, have become a major attraction for tourism development. The houses are built in a two-story traditional pattern with thatch or slate roofing. These houses are round or oval and washed with reddish mud. Most of these materials are locally produced, and indigenous technology is used to build them. The homestay operators, including other village members, contribute to saving flora and fauna at their local level forests as these people directly depend on the forest for firewood and timber.

Cultural practices become a driving force for good hospitality. A 57 years man from the village showed the connectivity between traditional customs and homestay operations:

"When tourists come to the village, they are welcomed with traditional Magar songs and dances, female wears *phariya* or *lungi* with a blouse or *cholo*, *patuka*, and different ornaments such as *Madwari* in the ears, *Bulaki* and *Phuli* on the nostrils, silver coin *mala* on the neck, yellow and green *potey*, with gold cylinder, etc. and men wear *kacchad*, *bhoto*, *patuka* with national weapon *khukuri*. People perform their magar folk dances like *Kauraha*, *Maruni*, and *Sorathi* with songs such as *oholi*, *jhora*, *nachang*, *jhabbura*, and *ratawali*. The dance begins with worshiping *Madal*, the dress, and other ornaments of dancers, followed by obeisance to all gods and goddesses like *Saraswati*, *Ram*, and *Sita*. The dance ends with blessings to the family, who has offered alms to the

dancing group and brings the end to the dance ritualistically."

The performance showed the indigenous life history of the Magar community and provided an aesthetic enjoyment that transcends ordinary life. Such types of performances preserve their customs and traditions and also help them earn money. Maruni is a festival observed between mid-October and mid-November in the English calendar. Nowadays, this performance has evolved into a ritualistic performance for visitors to reinforce their distinct cultural identity. The dance's bodily performance conjures up a sacred environment that unites Magar in support of hospitality. For this dance, the ladies sing in a group called Maruni, and the melodies they sing offer a distinctive perspective on women's cultural roles in the home and society. The women perform rituals that support the ideology of the traditional notion of body privilege on the one hand, and they criticize the wider political situation and social relations that have marginalized them on the other hand, by creating a new society through songs, dances, and physical movements that attempt to maintain harmony. The song performed in Maruni offers an additional viewpoint and remarks on the status of women in society but also reveals the struggles, the pain, the allegations against their husbands and daughters, and the subtle or overt protests against the social structure that renders them defenseless and exposed. All the cultural performance shown by Magar helps in discovering, controlling, and projecting the self-identity of being Magar, where these people used their presentation skills using local knowledge.

According to Lama (2013), homestay tourism focuses on traditional lifestyles, local culture, and customs to attract tourists that have economic potential for the operators. Tourists form close bonds with their host families and become familiar with their culture, traditions, food, traditional outfits, and community. Guests are greeted with their local traditions and can follow daily activities that the host family follows (Hamzah, 2008). In the field sites, each of the three communities has developed and practiced their pattern of knowledge to homestay promotion. The way of life practiced by the Tharu community, such as plowing the field, rice plantation, fishing, bull cart riding, and the way of their settlement in the community, are used as tools for tourism development. The houses are built with indigenous materials such as timber, bamboo, and mud and crafted in various pictures outside the wall. The people use local ingredients to prepare food such as: *dhikiri* made from rice flour, *bagiya* made from rice, *chichar* made from steaming *anadi* rice, *ghongi* (water snails), *jhingiya macchhari* freshwater shrimp, and so many other delicious foods for serving the tourists. The Amaltari Buffer Zone User Group in the homestay made a nuanced connection with nature and men as the wildlife in

forest becomes major tourists' attraction. This group has played a key role in the conservation of community forests and the Chitwan National Park. This has led to increased invasion of wildlife in the village area and easy availability of wild animals during jungle safari. In case of animal attacks or sickness during the safari, these people use local herbs available in the forests for treatment as they know about their uses. This all indicates how Tharu people used their indigenous knowledge and skills to balance the ecosystem, protect the natural habitat of the wild lives, and help in the promotion of community homestay.

The *laathi naach* (stick naach) performed by Tharu shows their connection with nature and indigenous skills. It is a traditional dynamic dance, a vibrant manifestation of cultural heritage, and involves skillful manipulation of sticks harmonized with traditional Tharu music, often accompanied by instruments like the madal and murli. These instruments are made from locally available materials using traditional skills and knowledge. Sticks in their dance symbolize their relationship with the environment, acting as an extension of their daily interactions with the natural world. Their reliance on the land for agriculture, sustenance, and other resources roots this connection. It plays an important role in safeguarding and transmitting the Tharu people's distinct cultural identity across generations, making it an integral part of the region's cultural legacy. A 65-year-old man in the community very interestingly adheres to the essence of a stick used for dance purposes.

"The inclusion of sticks in ceremonial dances symbolizes our relationship with the environment. In the past, the stick was generally used to threaten wildlife that attacked our agricultural fields, and we needed to protect the crops from wildlife. We usually perform the *laathi naach* to depict the communal effort to ward off these threats, emphasizing our community's unity and collective strength. Similarly, sticks in traditional dances such as Maghi hold ceremonial and ritualistic significance, linked to specific events, seasons, or rites of passage within our culture. So, we take the dance as a symbol of unity and communal strength, expressing cultural identity and reinforcing bonds within us. Performing this dance in front of guests not only preserves our cultural identity but also helps in maintaining a sense of continuity and shared history in the community."

The homestay operators of Amaltari show their peculiar skills in entertaining tourists and selling them handmade products to earn money. For example, a 38-year-old woman from a homestay showed me practically her skill and knowledge to produce the handicraft, which she learned from her mother during her childhood. The chairperson of Amaltari homestay said how homestay tourism generates income for the community. He said:

"In their free time, the women and men in villages made *bena* (homemade *pankha*) using bamboo and wool, *dhakiya* (basket) made from straw and bamboo, and *muda* (chair) made from bamboo and timber. Whenever tourists come to stay in a homestay, they like it and buy it. The way we produce these things only uses the indigenous skills and knowledge that we learn from our parents. Sometimes, tourists like to make these products, and we teach them practically. It will help to preserve our traditional profession."

This helps ensure local customs and culture continue to exist and are maintained while maintaining the sense of continuity and shared history within the community. The daily survival of the Tharu people is contingent upon their environment. These people entertain tourists by using their expertise and experience in dealing with the forest and its inhabitants while contributing to the preservation of the natural environment and wild creatures. Since the Amaltari community members and the environment are mutually dependent, they use their traditional knowledge systems to use, manage, and safeguard the forest products in their immediate surroundings.

In all three study areas, indigenous technology plays a dominant role in the flourishing of homestay tourism as well as the means of sustainable livelihood sources for people. People in the community transmitted their indigenous knowledge and skills to their children to revitalize their customs and traditions and a means of production. For instance, the traditionally made alcohol, i.e., *jand* or *chyang*, is popular among Gurung and Magar communities, which is made from *kodo* (millet) or *bhaat* (rice) and has both cultural and livelihood importance.

Conclusion

Nepal is blessed with natural beauty, culture, ethnicity, and many other unique features. The country's employment opportunities are restricted to limited fields, which leads a huge mass of youth to migrate in search of better opportunities with high wages. One can easily notice a lesser number of young people in the country, and so in rural areas where it is hard to find working agricultural labor. Rural areas are primarily inhabited by elderly men and women. In such a situation, local people in the villages use their traditional knowledge, skills, and technology to generate income and promote alternative livelihoods.

The study found that homestay tourism assists in thriving the life of Gurung, Magar, and Tharu communities, where their ethnic, cultural, and geographic features prove to be a means for attracting both internal and external tourists. The villager employed their various

indigenous knowledge, skills, and technology to entertain and create a friendly environment for the tourists. The process induces the enrolment of indigenous culture, customs, and traditions. Thus, both host and non-host households have benefited from homestay tourism. Referring to homestay operators, the basic facilities such as food, lodges, entertaining with local folk music and dances, and selling homemade handicrafts are a few activities performed by them. Additionally, non-host households also engaged in agricultural work, producing vegetables, crops, chickens, goats, domesticating buffaloes, and cows for the milk consumed by host families for the tourists. Regular income, more work options, alternative livelihood sources, and occupational mobility were some of the beneficial economic effects at the household level. At the local level, an increase in alternative income generation is carried out, improved living standards of people can be easily observed, and increased engagement of locals to save their traditions and customs. The case of the Amaltari homestay shows the profound effects on natural resources, which become a means of production for survival. These people use these resources to entertain tourists, whereas, on the other hand, the homestay program assists in environmental conservation; there is now more vegetation, the forest cover has thickened, and there are more wild animals. Nature care has elevated the idea of environmental conservation.

The heart of homestay lies in warm, welcoming people; to see and learn about various cultures and ways of life; to see and learn about different places, and cultures; to find a clean, comfortable place to stay, feeling safe and secure, and experiencing a rural setting so the hosts' families, along with other villagers take an active role for the good management of homestay operation. The logic behind such an innovative idea is all about income generation in a local environment without any scuffle and burden. In the field sites, all of these homestay operators used their traditional folk dances and songs as dominant instruments for entertaining the tourists in which they can show their dancing and singing skills and knowledge using different techniques. So, the local people become aware of their customs and traditions, which have been neglected by young people in the name of westernization and modernization, whereas on the other hand, these types of traditions and customs have been revitalized through their homestay operation. Thus, homestay, which is based on sustainable development principles like in Amaltari, emphasizes natural conservation that leads people to find alternative sources of livelihood.

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