

The economic impact of Homestays in Uttarakhand, India: A qualitative study

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Abstract | Homestays have the potential to serve as a novel strategy for promoting growth in tourism industry. Using a descriptive approach, this study concentrates on the value that homestay businesses bring to the economy. Twenty-two homestay establishments across Ranikhet, in Almora district of Uttarakhand India were interviewed extensively to compile this data. Researchers have looked at how homestays affect a variety of variables, including income, employment, entrepreneurship, migration patterns (both in and out), infrastructural growth, and quality of life. Since the beginning of homestay tourism in the area, both revenue and expenditure rates have increased. According to the results of this study, many of the respondents have covered their regular expenses using funds obtained through homestay organizations. Everyone who runs a homestay business has noticed an improvement in their financial situation and living standards.

Keywords | Homestay, homestay owner, economic impact, Homestay entrepreneurship

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1. Introduction

The concept of homestay is most prevalent in more rural locations that are rich in both cultural and natural attractions. These kinds of activities entice visitors and tourists to come to unusual locations in order for them to experience and witness the culture of those locations, as well as to contribute financially directly to the economy of those locations. Homestays are gaining popularity as a form of accommodation in the travel and tourism industry. A homestay typically involves travellers staying in the homes of local residents rather than traditional hotels or resorts.

Homestay have attracted governmental and private partners due to the economic development prospects it brings. It has been recognized that the homestay programs can serve as a useful instrument in the process of fostering the growth of the community (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). Homestays are frequently categorized as either micro or small-scale businesses, depending on the number of guests staying at each location. It is a relatively insignificant source of income, but it does contribute to the general economic well-being and community growth of the region. The homestay program has a multiplicative effect on the local economy. In addition to alleviating poverty and generating work, tourism boosts local economies and improves visitors' experiences by highlighting the area's rich cultural and natural history (Agyeiwaah, 2013). In the 1970s, people all around the world came up with the idea of community-based tourism for the first time (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008). The Sustainable Development Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 produced the result of community-based tourism as a solution to the issue of sustainable development.

The Government of Uttarakhand India first introduced the idea of homestay in 2007, despite the fact that it was an established practice across the world. This practice has played an important part in the improvement of the rural sector economy in

Uttarakhand (Kulshreshtha & Kulshreshtha, 2019). This program was conceived with the goal of offering supplementary lodging options to accommodate the large number of tourists that are expected to visit the country. The government's goal was to popularize traditional aspects of the local culture, such as their food, music, and dance as well as their festivals and fairs. In a similar manner, the primary objective of homestays is to increase the level of involvement of people living in rural areas in the tourism industry. Both "Community homestay" and "Private Homestay" are scheduled to be available as options for participants. It is anticipated that rural communities that host homestay programs will benefit from an increase in their total annual income as a result. As per Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB, 2018) —Homestay is a housing complex where the owner of the residential complex should reside in the same complex and should have a minimum of one room and a maximum of six rooms. The owner is responsible for food to the tourists in the residential complex. The provisions or rules for homestay businesses have been established by the government of Uttarakhand. To begin, property owners who are interested in providing homestay accommodations are required to register their properties with the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB). Second, the proprietor of the home should be able to offer sanitary food that has a regional flavour and rooms that are comfortable and well-equipped.

In comparison to luxurious tourism, rural tourism features more distinction, distinctiveness, specialization, and strangeness. It allows visitors to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy the tranquility of a place surrounded by beautiful nature while yet being able to dine on delicious, authentic food without spending too much. This study's ultimate focus is to supply homestay operators with further support and assistance in efficiently running their businesses. In a similar manner, the purpose of this research is to gain an

understanding of how the local community in Uttarakhand India, feels about the homestay program, as well as to study and assess the economic affects that the homestay program is having on the local community. The article investigated the impact of homestay tourism on the local economy.

2. Literature Review

The homestay refers to a stay in the house of a local family by a tourist, a home that provides rooms to tourists commercially. Homestays can range from a stay in chalets, cottages, chateaux in mountains, farmhouses, beach villas, mansions, castles, ranches, cave homes, historic houses, and tree houses (Basak et al., 2021; Dey et al., 2020; Prayag et al., 2018). Not only do homestays provide authentic encounters to the guest but also provide an opportunity for the host to earn supplementary income and exchange culture with tourists from diverse cultures across the world (Rizal et al., 2018; Inversini et al., 2022).

Homestay is an accommodation arrangement in which tourists stay as if they were family members in the house of homeowners in a destination, eat local delicacies, and enjoy routine life as it is lived by the host in exchange for a payment (Gu & Wong, 2006; Agyeiwaah, 2019; Janjua et al., 2022). Travellers continue to select homestay accommodations over other types of accommodations for a variety of reasons, including the welcoming ambivalence, customized services, home-cook local meals, authentic experiences, and cultural immersion (Wang, 2007; Gunasekaran & Anand, 2012). Zhang et al. (2019) and Zhao et al. (2020) defined homestay as "one pattern of management of ecotourism", thereby highlighting the importance of homestay as an ecotourism accommodation option.

The rural community is encouraged to participate in tourism via homestay businesses. (Samsu-

din & Maliki, 2015). Homestays are an intangible, variable, and inseparable part of the tourist and hospitality sector Sun and Ghiselli (2010). Homestays are characterized by a high level of engagement between guests and hosts, and they aim to safeguard the environment, local culture, and local jobs as components of sustainable community-based tourism (Walter et al., 2018; Reimer & Walter, 2013; Kuhzady et al., 2020).

According to Yasami (2017), scholarly research indicates that the phenomenon of homestay tourism has undergone significant transformations over the course of history, driven by various factors such as religious convictions, economic motivations, a desire for unique cultural encounters, growing environmental consciousness, increased demand for personal seclusion, efforts to alleviate poverty, and the pursuit of sustainable tourism development. Moreover, it is elucidated that contemporary tourists perceive homestay accommodations as a viable alternative to conventional chain hotels, primarily because of their ability to provide a brief and rejuvenating respite within a cosy and homey environment (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012). The economic impact of homestays can be significant and can have both positive and negative effects on the local economy (Walter, Regmi, & Khanal, 2018). Modern tourists prefer homestays to chain hotels because they offer a relaxed stay in a homelike setting. This lets them truly experience host culture and unspoiled nature (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013).

Homestays have demonstrated success in several developing countries, including Malaysia, Costa Rica, Thailand, and Nepal (Kwaramba, Lovett, Louw, & Chipumuro, 2012). Homestay programs help people develop their social and economic abilities. According to several studies (Beeton, 2006; Gangte, 2011; Guo & Wong, 2006; Pizam & Milman, 1986; Sebastian & Rajagopalan, 2009), tourism can have an impact on community development. It can change values, influence traditional lifestyles, and alter consumption patterns. Posi-

tively, tourism can empower local populations to participate in development interventions (Sofield, 2003; Tefler & Sharpley, 2008); homestays also make travel more affordable for the underprivileged (Rea, 2000). The homestay program makes it easier for both guests and hosts to get involved in neighbourhood projects that boost economic and social conditions. The primary goal of these programs is to foster financial and social growth among the host communities (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen, & Duangsaeng, 2015). According to Kreag (2000), the tourism business has seven main effects: on the economy, on the environment, on society and culture, on the quality of services provided, on state and local tax revenue, and on the mindset of the locals. The tourism business is not without its drawbacks. Income, tax revenue, infrastructure investment, GDP, and other economic indicators all rise thanks to the tourism sector (Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1987).

3. Methods

A qualitative research strategy was used to help achieve the objective (Caldas, 2009). To learn more about the economic activities of local residents operating homestay was used. Twenty-two hosts were included in the research. Non-probability snowball sampling was used to pick the sample for the investigation (Caldas, 2009). Snowball sampling is a method of convenience sampling. This methodology is employed in situations where there is a challenge in obtaining access to individuals who possess the desired attributes. This approach involves the utilization of existing study participants to actively engage and enlist prospective participants from their personal networks. The process of sampling is continued until the point of data saturation is reached (Burns & Grove, 1993). The snowball method involves contacting initial participants through convenience sampling to find

those with similar perspectives or circumstances. This time-efficient approach improves communication between researchers and samples by leveraging connections between acquaintances, enabling direct links and identifying unwilling participants (Ahmadzadehasl & Ariasepehr, 2010). There exists a variety of data collection methods that qualitative researchers can employ, such as interviews, observations, focus group discussions (FGDs), textual analysis, and visual analysis (Silverman, 2000; Gill et al., 2008). Nevertheless, interviews and focus groups are the prevailing data collection methods employed in qualitative research pertaining to business, management, marketing, and other social science studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). The objective of qualitative research is to acquire a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, not to generalize its findings. Therefore, selecting study samples carefully can enable to carry out a more thorough examination. The objective of this study was to conduct a comprehensive review that utilized the snowball sampling method hence, in total, 22 hosts of homestays were selected through snowball sampling. To learn more about the homestay's economic and social activities, in-depth interviews were performed. Topics for the interviews focused on the cultural and monetary effects of homestays, the pros and cons of homestays in rural areas, the role homestays play in stimulating economic activity and fostering individual agency, and the prospects for homestay growth in the region.

The information analysed in this study came from both primary and secondary resources. For instance, the information gathered primarily came from the members of the research population and observations. Similarly, wide range of print and digital periodicals, publications, research papers, and theses written about homestay tourism in both India and overseas as secondary sources. The transcripts of the recorded interviews were coded, and several themes were produced in accordance with the goals of the research (Banks, 2009).

3.1. Study Area

The study area was Ranikhet; the north Indian state of Uttarakhand contains Ranikhet, which are both a hill station and a cantonment town located in Almora district. It is used by the Indian Army for the Kumaon Regiment and Naga Regiment. Ranikhet is situated 50 km from Almora and 60 km from Nainital, with an average elevation of 1,869 meters. The western thin strips and the eastern section of Ranikhet are rather high and covered with a dense forest that is primarily comprised of pine trees.

Ranikhet's Cantonment Town is home to 19,049 people. Among Ranikhet's population, 16271 are literate (10206 Male and 6065 Female). Ranikhet town has a far higher literacy rate than the rest of the district. 91.18 percent of females are literate. Kumauni is the native language spoken here. Ranikhet is a cantonment town with an expanding tourism industry. Ranikhet is known for its production of delicious sweets, meats, jam, and hosiery. Ranikhet has large number of registered homestay then the complete district. Almora district has 360 registered homestay including 80 homestays in Ranikhet.

Table 1 | Profiling of Selected Homestays

S.No.	Selected Homestay	Type of Homestay	No. of Beds	Average rate per night	Ownership	Operated by
1.	Homestay1	Rural/Village	1	550Rs./6.40\$	Private	Male
2.	Homestay2	Rural/Village	1	600Rs./7.31\$	Private	Female
3.	Homestay3	Rural/Village	1	700Rs./8.53\$	Private	Male
4.	Homestay4	Rural/Village	1	600Rs./7.31\$	Private	Male
5.	Homestay5	Rural/Village	1	800Rs./9.75\$	Private	Female
6.	Homestay6	Rural/Village	1	650Rs./7.92\$	Private	Female
7.	Homestay7	Rural/Village	1	850Rs./10.36\$	Private	Female
8.	Homestay8	Rural/Village	1	770Rs./9.39\$	Private	Female
9.	Homestay9	Rural/Village	1	1100Rs./13.41\$	Private	Female
10.	Homestay10	Rural/Village	1	1000Rs./12.19\$	Private	Female
11.	Homestay11	Rural/Village	1	900Rs./10.97\$	Private	Female
12.	Homestay12	Rural/Village	2	550Rs./6.40\$	Private	Female
13.	Homestay13	Rural/Village	2	800Rs./9.75\$	Private	Female
14.	Homestay14	Rural/Village	2	1100Rs./13.41\$	Private	Female
15.	Homestay15	Urban	2	900Rs.10.97\$	Private	Female
16.	Homestay16	Urban	2	700Rs./8.53\$	Private	Male
17.	Homestay17	Urban	2	700Rs./8.53\$	Private	Female
18.	Homestay18	Urban	2	1000Rs./12.19\$	Private	Female
19.	Homestay19	Urban	2	800Rs./9.75\$	Private	Female
20.	Homestay20	Urban	2	750Rs./9.14\$	Private	Female
21.	Homestay21	Urban	2	800Rs./9.75\$	Private	Female
22.	Homestay22	Urban	3	1500Rs./18.28\$	Private	Female

4. Results and Discussion

Previous researchers have also identified impact of homestay globally, however literature scarce in term of Uttarakhand India. This research's finding provide insight mention in discussion along with other theme mention in table 2, which can enlighten the policy makers, government, industry and communities in term of creating policies, guidelines, legislations, rules and regulations for homestays. It can help homestays in mitigation of challenges, issues and problems faced by homestay owners in running lodging establishment smoothly.

4.1. Economic Contribution of Homestay

According to the people who took part in the research, the possibility to raise their current level of economic well-being is one of the benefits of hosting tourists in their homes. They explained that homestay tourism had a number of positive effects, including the promotion of local products, the creation of employment possibilities for local people, the development of women entrepreneurs, an improvement in the people's standard of living, support for the reduction of poverty, and the development of a variety of infrastructures in the area.

Homestays have helped increase the value of locally produced goods that had been stagnant before they were introduced. For personal usage, we regularly consumed them. We set up an agricultural system that would allow us to survive. In order to meet the needs of our homestay customers, we have begun to cultivate a wide range of crops, raise a variety of domestic animals, and create organic goods. The local goods are selling well (Owner, Homestay #12).

In other words, these responses show that homestay has opened the door for the promotion of other regional goods. The possibility of working for oneself has been opened up as a result. The income brought in by the tourists staying in the homestay was sufficient to cover the essentials. There's no denying that increasing the service standard can boost business in the rural tourism sector. Therefore, it was important to ensure that the Uttarakhand Government's minimum homestay criteria were being followed. It is found that rural homestays in Uttarakhand have increased prospects for economic empowerment by using native products, giving support to this theory.

In a similar manner, everyone who took part in the study agreed that homestay tourism has boosted the local economy by providing new employment opportunities. The host at Homestay #1, for instance, mentioned

People from the area work as tour guides, waiters, cooks, drivers, and other service and wage jobs. Tourist numbers have dropped this year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. During these times, many people are employed as wage workers for homestay construction as we prepare our infrastructures.

These comments exemplified the way homestays have helped locals find gainful employment and put their skills to good use. People's economic and social status can be enhanced via their participation in a variety of jobs. This research also found out at how homestays aided sustainable development by creating new jobs and boosting demand for domestic and international organic produce. Homestay programmes in Uttarakhand empower local populations economically. Hosting tourists in their homes boost host families' incomes. Homestays generate money, which helps host communities thrive and reduce poverty.

4.2. Women Entrepreneurs

Female members of the local community made up the bulk of the interviewees. It was investigated into how they profited from it to the greatest extent. It was discovered that the homestay program was more inspiring to the women than the men. They did things like preparing food, making plans, managing staff, talking to guests, cleaning, etc. In addition to promoting gender equality, women's self-sufficiency and participation in mainstream development are key benefits of female ownership in a business. The homestay program provided numerous jobs, including the sale of handcrafted souvenirs to tourists.

I am a part of self-help group. I take an active role in making decisions at the local level. Women have done a great job of running homestays and making more money from them. Together with other women, I teach cooking, knitting, tailoring and other skills which result in women empowerment. (owner Homestay # 20)

Women have been empowered to become business owners in community development activities as a result of homestays, where women have become key players in the development of homestays. The livelihoods of people living in the Almora district have seen considerable improvements as a direct result of an initiative called "Sewa Atithi", which is a community homestay program administered by women. The study itself shows that 82% of the homestay owners interviewed were women; hence, it proves that homestays have given strength to the women to be part of the program and to be the bread and butter earner for the family.

4.3. Higher Average Incomes and Improved Living Conditions

According to the results of this research, homestays help spread the word about local resources. Rather of relying solely on salary from an employer, it has opened the door to self-employment as a means of offsetting expenditures.

After opening homestay I help my family in generation more income for the family. The income I get from hosting homestay I utilized it from my children's education. (Owner, Homestay # 06).

My family is happy that I help them by operating homestay in my village. I used this money in reconstructing my house and buying household items (Owner Homestay # 11)

The finding also confirms this that locals' quality of life has improved because to homestay program. The infrastructure, which includes things like clean water, schools, roads, playgrounds, and so on, has flourished as a result. The initiative has been supported by government organizations, non-government organizations, and local governments. According to the research, homestays can generate enough money to raise people's standard of living.

4.4. Infrastructural Development

It is observed that all of the homestays in the research area had access to modern conveniences including running water, electricity, and internet. The municipal authority of Ranikhet and cantonment board has also paid close attention to the infrastructure amenities inside the municipality.

Our village panchayat(council) has helped in developing Panchayat(council) house, Water Reservoir, Toilets, and road to village as, our village has 18 homestay which is highest in the region. (Owner Homestay # 08)

Cantonment board has given permission in creating a common community center, so that meetings, marriage function, family get together can be held at and we don't have to go to main city for that. (Owner Homestay # 22).

The expansion of tourist areas, lodging establishments, and opportunities for exciting new experiences have all contributed to the expansion of the tourism industry. As part of the Accelerated Hill Development Programme, both Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board(UTDB) and other related organizations have launched a number of tourism-oriented development projects to enhance the existing facilities in the area.

4.5. Economic Sustainability

New revenue stream has opened up for small business owners in rural areas due to homestay schemes. Participants elaborated on how members of the family other than the headman have found work in the tourism industry. This was especially important because it provided financial stability for the household. There is concern that an increase in homestay tourism could accelerate the process of transitioning from subsistence to a commercial economy.

My families don't have to take loan from friends and other sources on high percentage of interest.by operating vil-

lage homestay we can have independency in managing our income and finances. (Owner Homestay # 16)

In line it is asserted that rising local prices could spur demand for imported goods and technologies, we find that this prediction holds true. Temporary jobs are available only during the appropriate seasons. Economic sustainability is crucial to the long-term existence of homestay programs in Uttarakhand. The purpose is to reduce leakages and encourage a more equitable sharing of economic benefits across tourism value chain stakeholders. Local inhabitants must be able to engage in and benefit from tourism-related activities like homestays. Facilitating direct booking channels may help hosts keep more of their earnings. Homestay operations should also promote local goods and services to boost the local economy and lessen dependence on outside suppliers.

4.6. Reduced Poverty

The homestay program is an important initiative for eradicating poverty. The findings suggested that the village's poverty rate might decline as a result of income brought in by tourism. Since there are many available jobs and prospects for business owners, young people who had previously left for other places have begun to return. One member of self-help group related how he had given up his overseas job in favour of homestay tourism. As a result of their homestay tourism program, the migration rate has dropped.

My son has to left job due to covid-19.now he is operating homestay in our village now he don't have to depend on others. He is now owner (Owner Homestay # 02)

Our village were turning in to ghost vil-

lage due to people leaving villages as there were no resources for job, however now they are returning to villages and earning money through homestay (Owner Homestay # 04)

Homestays generate funds which helps host communities thrive and reduce poverty. Homestay programmes encourage entrepreneurship and skill development in host communities. They do this through hospitality and culinary arts. The economic prospects improve host families' finances and the region's socioeconomic development.

4.7. Improve rate of Literacy

Participants in the study claimed that homestay tourism had increased the local population's educational awareness. Evidence suggests that residents have access to, and make use of, formal education, the social media and internet. They used the cutting edge tech to advertise their product. But people in the area need to be educated about environmental issues and encouraged to environmental responsibility.

I have now part of Proud shikha abhiyan (Adult education mission, apart from managing my homestay, attend school in weekend. i also send two son to school also. (Owner Homestay # 3).

We use social media to market our homestay and our village. We take booking on whatsapp, Facebook. Our union has taught us how to effectively use the technology to market our homestay to the world. Owner Homestay # 21).

It is also found that the Participants also learn

other languages especially English as many of the homestay receives International tourist also. They learn other languages to interact with the International tourist. The language proficiency can also develop warm and cordial relationships of the homestay host- guest relationship.

4.8. Promote Local Cultures

As a result of the desire of tourists to experience local culture in its authentic form, it is observed that locals had taken great care to preserve their traditions. Participants felt that locals benefited from the interaction with people from other cultural backgrounds. Consequently, this aided in the survival of cultural practices and customs. Cultural dances of the Kumauni people, including the Chholiya, Jhora, Chancheri, Chhapeli etc., were performed for the visitors.

We have formed a group so that our culture can be preserved. all youngsters are running after foreign trends and culture so it becomes obvious to save it. We teach our culture and customs to them and they showcase same to tourist who come to our village and stay in homestay. (Owner Homestay # 11).

My daughter and son doesn't know the traditional dance and cuisine, so we teach them same and tell them to present it to tourist and preserve it. (Owner Homestay # 19)

Uttarakhand homestays help visitors experience true cultural immersion. Homestays allow guests to live with local families and experience their customs. The immersive experience gives travelers firsthand knowledge of local customs, traditions, and rituals, encouraging cultural unders-

tanding. Through host-guest interactions, people learn about Uttarakhand's cuisine, crafts, music, and traditions. This can improve understanding and preservation of the region's cultural heritage.

4.9. Capacity Building Practices

It was reported that activities such as farming, animal husbandry, handloom cottage, bee-keeping etc. were attracting locals in addition to homestay programs. According to research, homestay are experience-driven trend which helps preserve native customs, traditions, culture and heritage because it is intrinsically related to the way of life of

the local people.

Rural communities need partnerships to adapt to changing economic conditions since they lack resources, skills, and experience. Community transformation, not an external entity, should precede cooperation. This displays communal adaptability. When the community is ready, learning and capacity building succeed. Partners must commit to participate and solve community needs. Public and corporate entities increasingly recognize the need for rural community development reform. innovative collaborations can give the local community flexibility despite restrictive legislation and institutions.

Table 2 | Profiling of Selected Homestays

S.No	Theme/finding	Impact of Homestay in Uttarakhand India	Previous literature/ researchers studied similar theme globally.
1.	Economic Contribution of Homestay	Promotion of local products, the creation of employment possibilities for local people, the development of women entrepreneurs, an improvement in the people's standard of living, support for the reduction of poverty, and the development of a variety of infrastructures in the area.	Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Kulshreshtha & Kulshreshtha, 2019, Basak et al., 2021, Dey et al., 2020, Prayag et al., 2018
2.	Women Entrepreneurs	Promoting gender equality, women's self-sufficiency and participation in mainstream development, community development	Rizal et.al. 2018, Inversini et al., 2022, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013
3.	Higher Average Incomes and Improved Living Conditions	More income generation for the family, improved quality of life, raise people's standard of living.	Gu & Wong, 2006, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Agyeiwaah, 2019, Janjua et al., 2022
4.	Infrastructural Development	Basic infrastructure development like clean water, schools, roads, playgrounds etc., expansion of tourist areas, lodging establishments, and opportunities for exciting new experiences, Launch of tourism-oriented development projects.	Wang, 2007, Gunasekaran and Anand, 2012, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Kreag, 2000
5.	Economic Sustainability	Financial stability, sharing of economic benefits, lessens dependence on outside suppliers, transitioning from subsistence to a commercial economy.	Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Sebastian & Rajagopalan, 2009
6.	Reduced Poverty.	Decline poverty rate, encourage entrepreneurship and skill development, improve host families' finances and the region's socioeconomic development.	Zhang et al., 2019, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Zhao et al., 2020, Sofield, 2003, Tefler & Sharpley, 2008
7.	Improve rate of Literacy	Increased local population's educational awareness, using edge tech to advertise their product, language proficiency.	Samsudin & Maliki, 2015, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Sun & Ghiselli, 2010, Walter et al., 2018; Reimer & Walter, 2013;
8.	Promote Local Cultures	Preserving traditions and culture, cultural immersion, host-guest interactions, preservation of the region's cultural heritage.	Kuhzady et al., 2020, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Agyeiwaah, 2013, Gangte, 2011, Guo & Wong, 2006, Pizam & Milman, 1986
9.	Capacity Building Practices	Innovative collaborations, communal adaptability, attracting local and other business opportunities	Yasami, 2017, Acharya & Halpenny, 2013, Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012

5. Conclusion and implications

Infrastructure development in the forms of transportation, communication, water supply, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, etc. is necessary for the successful growth of tourism, which is a comprehensive product. Locals now realize how important it is to protect not only their environment, but also their social practices and traditions. Homestay in Ranikhet has been found to be beneficial. Tourist traffic can be increased by the combined efforts of the local community and tourism promotion efforts. Construction of tourist infrastructure has a negative impact on the surrounding natural ecosystem. Therefore, the government and the community should prioritize environmental protection, quality service, and cultural preservation in order of importance.

The results of this research have significant implications for expanding the homestay program to other regions of Uttarakhand. First and foremost, it adds to the body of theoretical work on homestay tourism from the viewpoint of the locals themselves. The current study adds to the literature by doing the same thing, namely, investigating potential economic advantages across a range of parameters. In addition, the research has real-world applications for practitioners and policymakers, who may use the findings to improve the way they approach tourism destination planning and development. There are some limitations to this study that open the door for additional study. Although the story only focuses on one sector of Almora district, it successfully illustrates the district-wide problems. In the future, researchers can incorporate more communities, regions and conduct a comparison analysis.

Analysis of all interviews showed that homestay tourism is highly valued by locals. For the time being, homestays are exclusively catering to guests from within the country. Though business was better when COVID-19 wasn't a pandemic, visitor numbers are down for the year compared

before pandemic. The observations through research of the homestays led some recommendations on how they might be improved.

In the long run, the environmental and region suffers from the effects of mass tourism. So far, so good, but in order for the tourism industry to be considered wholly sustainable, all parties involved—from tourists to service providers to travel agents and counsellors—need to have a clear understanding on the concept of sustainable tourism and guide expansion efforts accordingly. Also, the hosts can benefit greatly economically from promoting their country as a premier tourist destination, protecting its natural resources, and maintaining and showcasing its unique cultural legacy.

Similarly, the loss of open space and the decline in liveability that have resulted from unplanned urban development have been precipitated by rapid and uncontrolled failures such as the construction of housing that is both inadequate and difficult to access. That's why it's so important for officials to figure out exactly what category of tourism homestays fall under. The growth of museums can be aided by the prominence given to religious and cultural festivals and events, without having a significant negative impact on the customs and practises of the local community. For instance, Uttarakhand is home to many dialect languages, yet many of these languages' vocabulary and even their use in the present day have vanished. That's why it's important for homestay providers to speak native dialect. Since people have initiated the idea of community homestays, it is important for all owners to get along well in order to promote homestays. In addition, when each guest leaves, the lodge should be cleaned thoroughly. In order to boost agro-based food production, it is recommended that homestay operators place an emphasis on organic foods.

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