

Cultural Tourism: An Ethnographic Study of Homestay in Briddim Village, Nepal

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Abstract

The present scenarios of global tourism reflect that growing not only in the number of tourists around the world but also significantly diffusion of global and tourists' culture. While tourism brings different peoples together, question may be asked what happened when different societies, one as a host and the other as tourists, encounter in the social field. This study examines the local perspective of homestay tourism with the objective of how private houses and individuals are connected to global tourism and how host community and tourists influence each other lead for cultural change. By applying an ethnographic research methods and tools in the field and reviewing relevant literatures, I argue that homestay business is not always associated with an economic aspect of profit and loss. Rather it has to be analyzed in the local situational context. Although homestay brought number of positive impacts especially directly employment, women empowerment, increased tourism skills, and community development, this will be incomplete analysis if we look only from the perspective of sustainable business. Engaging with anthropological theories on globalization and theory of cultural change, my study also

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highlights on cultural exchange between host community and tourists through which both local people and visitors feel change in some movement of their life. While few cultural changes were found among the tourists like food culture, i.e Dal-bhat and Masala tea, the host community was largely influenced by the tourists' culture. The trekking guides are the best example of tourist culture as they wear tourists' gears and acculturated with tourists' norms and values. This culture now became a reality in part of their life with the interconnection of village and global tourism.

Introduction

After my morning observation, I reached at Pema Homestay. I saw Neema, the owner of the homestay and Pema, her husband's sister were cooking breakfast for the trekkers. Kaanchhi, the worker, was assisting her owner. Neema was in special attire as she was wearing *syama* (coat), *angdu* (long garb), *pangap* (backside apron), *che* (waist belt), and *budil* (earring) but two young girls were dressed up in t-shirt and trouser. When breakfast was ready, Pema served trekkers. Tourists were staying outside at the garden. They were group of four who were the citizen of Singapore and heading to Syafrubesi, the final tea house destination in the Tamang Heritage Trail and Langtang Trek. At the same ground, six another female trekkers were sitting in the chairs. I noticed that four of them were academia students and two were the teachers. Around 45 minutes later, Neema came outside along with her recently born baby carrying in the bamboo basket and walked around the dining room. Then after she came outside in the garden and arranged a mattress for oil massage to her kid. The Canadian girls were so interested to look at the boy, captured couple of picture, and observed for a while. This live performance represents a little picture of homestay where tourists can interact directly with host families, observe their daily life and socialization process. This study is an ethnographic study of homestay tourism in Nepal with the objectives of how local people interpret culture as resource in order to operate their homestay and to examine the cultural change when interact between two different societies and peoples.

Literature review

Cultural tourism concerns with different type of culture and lifestyle of people. Tourists visit in various cultural sites such as museums, galleries, architecture, historic sites, artistic performances, and heritage sites. They also seek to engage with new cultures and experience the global variety of performing arts, handicrafts, rituals, rite passages (see *Van Gennep, 1908*), cuisines, and interpretations of nature and the universe. International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (1997) highlights that cultural tourism enables people to experience the different ways of life of other people, achieve first hand an understanding of their customs, traditions and places of architectural, historic, archaeological which remain from earlier times (Quoted in

Kunwar, 2017, pp. 125-126). Baud & Ypeij (2009) states cultural tourism which favors intercultural encounters and promises an inside experience of cultural difference (Quoted in Babb, 2012). This gives a meaning of gathering different cultural groups and gaining the different cultural experience. Therefore, we understand that cultural tourism is a meeting with diverse cultures in the world which help to understand the different ways of life style, their customs, traditions, and cultural heritage.

Tourists travel different destinations for various reasons. Generally, they travel for vacation, recreation, business travel, migration and more specially want to experience new life style, different traditions and explore cultural diversities. Mason (2003) states that tourists are not only attracted by natural resource but also different influenced by cultural phenomena such as art, music, dance, and handicrafts (quoted in Soontayatron, 2010, p. 79). A similar thought present by Shrestha (2000) who argues that tourist are come to Nepal mainly to experience of cultural value, cultural difference, and understand Nepali people despite the dream of mountain scenery. Analyzing the tourist's behaviors and interaction between host and tourist are important subject in anthropology to understand impacts of tourism on cross cultural societies.

The anthropological writings in cultural tourism are manifest only since the 1970s. The *Annals of Tourism Research* (ATR) started in 1973 and the first article on tourism and the social sciences was published in this journal was by Smith (1976) about tourism cultural change and the first article with anthropology in 1977 on the subject of *Hosts and Guests* edited by Valene Smith (Burns, 2004, p. 4). The latter writing of Smith (1977a) was a significant which shows the anthropological interest in tourism linking with culture contact and its influences. Nash and Smith (1991) argue that most anthropological work has been involved acculturation involving and concerned with transaction between tourists and hosts particularly the impacts of these transactions on the host peoples. For example, Picard (1997) examines the dynamism of cultural production in touristic contexts, focusing upon Bali, Indonesia. Although Picard provides an excellent example of anthropology of tourism which explores the dynamic interaction between culture and tourism, his study failed to understand cultural production among the tourists when they visited Bali.

Tourism brings both positive and negative impacts mostly for host societies. Erisman (1983, p. 350) argues that because of the massive influx of foreign goods, people and ideas to rural host destination has a negative impact experienced as erodes people's self-esteem. This shows that tourism is bases for loosing host culture as they acculturated with the new life styles learn from outsiders. On a contrary, another study conducted by Picard (1990) shows how tourism economy enhances Balinese ancient cultural practice. According to him, the cultural tourism policy of 1971 contributed for cultural renaissance in Bali through which Balinese cultures were

revived as tourists were expending money on watching tradition. This even developed their sense of cultural identity and proud to be Bali people (Picard, 1990, pp. 42-43). Therefore, cultural tourism plays the vital role for preserving and promoting culture. Although both scholars discuss about societal and cultural impacts of tourism in host community, their study is limited to explore what the impacts for tourists after they visited host society. Stronza (2001) tries to reduce this research gap. By reviewing the anthropological contribution to tourism, she writes, the conceptual work of anthropologists can be divided into halves: One half seeks to understand the origins of tourism primarily highlights on tourists, and the other reveals tourism's impacts which most for locals. Even when taken together, these two approaches are seemed to produce only partial analysis of tourism because they avoided impacts of tourism to tourists who travel different destinations. Although Stronza attempts to fulfill this research gap and ask some research question (p. 227), she failed to address her own research objectives which I will contribute in my paper.

Homestay tourism

Homestay is one of the cultural tourist destinations begins from 1970 with the communal idea influenced from community based tourism and addressing less effect on local environment. As many homestays operated by the family members in the village, tourists have chances to interact with family members, local people and opportunities to explore and understand their tangible and intangible culture. The history of homestay shows that both students and youth came to stay for cultural exchange (Dong, 2017) in the host society and today, homestay become popular choice for tourists not only because of the cheap cost for lodging and food but also experience an authentic culture in new society. Over the years, many researchers have carried out study on various topics on homestay primarily to understand local custom, rituals and everyday life of the host peoples.

Study from Australia shows that homestays are principally based on mutual cultural exchange between homestay students and hosts. The hosts consider their homestay students as a member of their extended family; however they maintain their social relationship based on what popularly known as Pseudo-Parental Role, the role of host family treated students neither as a guest, nor as a child of the host. The host had to teach the international students in their care associated with how to clean, look after them when they are sick, and make sure their clothes are suitable for Melbourne's changeable weather. This reveals that homestay to play a significant role in promoting mutual cultural exchange and opening a world of opportunity to the hosts, their children and the international students in their care (Richardson, 2004). Although Richardson talks about the host student carry their impression of Australia back to their own countries, her findings are silenced to illustrate types of impression of students.

In Malaysia, the most homestays are operated in beachside and the host families are mostly lead women and responsible for hospitality services as well preparing meals for husband. By conducting research in Penang Island, Aziz & Selmat (2016) identified dual performance of women. The authors write, "These women had unconsciously performed a "staged performance" when there are tourists around. Their daily activities are considerably different from what they "show" to their guests". Therefore, the research concludes that "tourist experience" is a production of "staged" performance in order to create an "authentic" experience. I agree on the dual responsibilities and performances of host family member but my question is why authors do not speak about how host families influenced and impacted on tourists while staying at their homestay.

Tourism brings diverse impacts in the host society. Many scholars discuss about women empowerment (Cohen, 1988), new opportunities (Swain, 1989; Lanier & Berman, 1993; Babb, 2012; Acharya & Halpenny, 2013), and community development (Picard, 1990; Macleod, 2004). Lama (2013) has conducted research in four different villages and explored the contribution of homestay programmes for women empowerment and sustainable tourism development in Nepal. She argues that homestay programme as a tool which has been contributing for economic sustainability and natural sustainability of rural community by preserving the local tradition and culture. However, her research seemed to be largely based on secondary literature and lack of participant observation. The research carried out by Thapa (2010) shows that only elderly parents are operating homestay tourism and children seems not be interest to entering at this profession as children are migrating to urban for higher studies and higher paid job. He argues that since only parents are carrying out this entrepreneur and if this trend continues then the village tourism can collapse in next couple of decades. His views seem pessimistic; however, there might be different trend in other rural area which we need to explore it.

Some research discovered that homestay tourism is more profitable compare to traditional occupations. In the study of Ghale Gaun of Lamjung District, (Budhathoki, 2013) identified that homestay income represents about 22% of total income which is relatively higher than agricultural income. This income contributes about a 34% share to total income of such groups. Poor families are seen to benefit more from homestay tourism. However, he has brought a contradictory finding: on the one hand, poor families seem to benefit more from homestay tourism but there are unequal opportunities among the villagers from different backgrounds. Poor families are unable to take advantage of this opportunity due to lack of capital and skills. This research explores how poor and rich people interpret the impacts of homestay tourism.

Nash and Smith (1991) believe that most anthropological work has been linked to acculturation involving. Based on the field observation (Kunwar & Pandey, 2014)

describe that Gatalang homestay offers for both tangible and intangible rich culture which still exist in the community. However, with the initiation of homestay at this village, many things acculturated including food acculturation, dress acculturation and western's values and norms which might destroy the authenticity of host community. Nonetheless, they completely fail to identify acculturation of tourists after they visited this village.

Now, reviewing all those literatures on cultural tourism and homestay, it reveal that large numbers of scholars explored about impacts of tourism on host society and their culture but academics have largely ignored the subject of how tourists were impacted by the host community's culture and traditions or how hosts might be affecting guests while staying at homestays. Therefore, my question is why anthropologists are not devoted to write about tourists who feel different after they visited host societies because we anthropologists agree that tourism is all about cross-cultural meanings (Nash, 1981), the transaction between cultures, consequences for the culture and individual in them (Nash and Smith, 1991), host guest relations (Swain, 1995), cross-cultural interactions, of "live performances" (Stronza, 2001), demonstration effect (Fisher, 2004), and experiences others' culture (Cohen, 1988). This research gap encourages us to study about the impacts of host culture and traditions for tourists and travelers changes associated with their lifestyle, feeling and thoughts which give new anthropological knowledge in tourism. There are few literatures on homestay tourism; however, none of these literatures deal adequately with the everyday lived experience of homestay tourism which remains few accounts in the field of cultural tourism.

Research methods

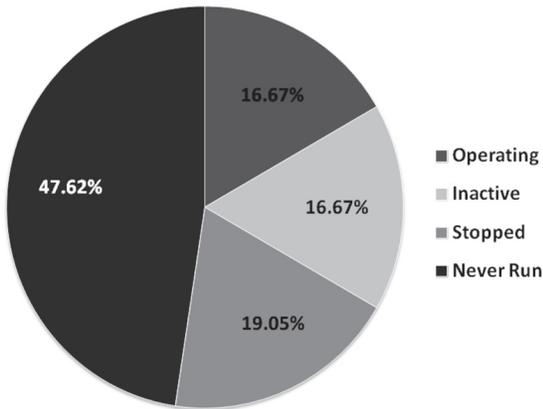
This research was conducted in April-May, 2017 at Briddim village, located nearby Nepal-Tibet boarder, Rasuwa district. I stayed two weeks and it was a short period of fieldwork but as a tourism entrepreneur I had a chance to visit before my research began for more than a month. Therefore, my previous stays and research experiences helped to reduce my length of stay as well as the time for rapport building with local people during my research. During my fieldwork, I conducted 3 life histories, 5 key informant interviews, 32 informal discussions which followed by 25 homestay operators representing poor, middle and rich class in order to collect different understanding of homestay tourism, 3 guides and 4 porters and completed 9 semi-structure interviews with tourists at different homestays. I participated in 9 live interactions between host family and tourists at different homestay. I applied constructivism approach at large and positivism as a partial epistemology while my ontology of the study is a subjective analysis because each and every actor has a different perspective analyzing homestay. This research is about value-laden and local interpretation of cultural tourism.

This research is largely based on primary data and secondary data as endorsement information. The primary data gathered through fieldwork along with various ethnographic methods such as participant observation, key informant interview, life histories, informal discussion, and taking pictures and videos. Accordingly, secondary data collected through existing literatures which further helped to develop research questions, engage with relevant theories, analyze the interpretation, and give guidelines in order to understand national and international practices of homestay tourism. I also gathered old collections photos from albums and downloaded pictures from social media to illustrate cultural practices and a past scenario of the village. Since this study is about the analysis of people's meaning, their feeling, perception, emotions, thoughts ideas, and beliefs (Brewer, 2000, p. 33), I adopted an emic approach to understand their way of social world, how they themselves create and define meaning and cultural differences between Nepali and tourists.

Study setting

Briddim village is situated in the northern-west part of Rasuwa district in Langtang national park at the altitude of 2229m. At the time of my fieldwork, there were 42 households, 175 individuals occupied by 51.86% male and 49.14% female. The people of this village have a close affinity with *Tibetan* Buddhism and told me that they are the direct descendants of ancient *Tibetan* immigrants. According to legend, the village name is derived from disappearance of yak's feet. Local people believe that a long time ago, there was a king's wedding ceremony in Tibet. The king ordered to slaughter yak and bull to feast the invited relatives. Yak (the bull mother) and bull heard king's order and then ran away from the palace. Bull escaped reaching *Langsisha* but yak disappeared at the place people now called *Briddim*. *Briddim* was derived from *Brithim* which is composed of two words: 'Bri' meaning feet and 'thim' denotes disappear. This story shows their ties with *Tibet* and *Tibetan* culture.

At this village, each household has space to worship Buddhist deities. Poor people display posters of deities while wealthy family made deities of copper decorated by holy text books, *Thanka* painting, colorful *khadas*, and prayer flags. Every morning, the male head of the household places fresh water in seven copper or brass bowls. Then after he holds the small worship pot, goes to kitchen to keep charcoal and drops the loose incense. After this, he offers this incense gods and walks around the house corner carrying this smoking incense. It is a way of paying respect to Buddhas. He asks the gods for success, protection from harm, material prosperity, and good health. This daily ritual is performed by any member of their family in the absence of their chief member.

Figure 1: Status of homestay

Homestay is one of the important professions among the other occupations in Briddim village. For many men and women, this occupation become a prestigious and profitable business as they accumulate good amount of money compare to other occupations; however, this business become challenging after massive earthquake of April-May. Today, only 7 households (16.67%) are operating this business, 7

(16.67%) homestays are inactive as their homes were destroyed and severely damaged by earthquake while 8 (19.05%) homestays were completely closed (See Figure 1). Through household survey, I also came to know that 20 households (47.62%) had never run homestay. With the introduction of homestay at this village, local people directly earn money by renting their rooms and selling handicrafts. Those who did not operate homestay, they provided snacks and drinks for tourists' welcome and farewell program and for homestay operators during the training. This way, homestay proprietors and general people were benefitted from this new occupation.

Context background

The concept of homestay tourism emerged with the development of community-based tourism in 1970 as critique of mainstream tourism that put exclusion of vulnerable groups and exacerbate of indigenous culture. Community-based tourism involves collective ownership, management of tourist assets (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008), limits the negative effects of economic behavior on the local environments and cultures to foster the cross cultural relationship (Zurick, 1992). Accordingly, (Chambers, 1983) elaborated that development can be a productive outcome if poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups are kept at the center. World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) and the Rio Earth Summit (1992) further suggested that states recognize and duly support indigenous communities' identity, culture and interest to enable effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development (Carnaffan, n.d.; Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008).

The word 'homestay' first appeared in the American periodical *Vernon Life* in 1956 to refer the program of the 'Experimental for International Living' where foreign students stayed in locally owned Japanese houses (Boenig & Davis, 2000:237).

Homestay became a tourist destination first time in 1970 when Taquile island community provides accommodation for the tourists. They distributed tourists equally on traditional turn system. In Malaysia, homestays were operated nearby popular tourist destination of beachside as large entrepreneurs were unable to handle overflow tourists in 1970. Homestay concept turned into another dimension with the arrival of Japanese youths on exchange program in 1980s. The communal idea of Taquile community, accommodation of Japan, homestay trend of Malaysia give a general idea of what homestay look like in the world.

In Nepal, homestay context emerged in mid 1990s. History shows that tourism in Nepal begins from 1950s mainly as a consequence of the widely publicized Himalayan mountaineering expeditions. The government published a new tourism Master Plan in 1972 which was followed by Policy Document for Tourism Sector in 1995, (MacLennan, Dieke & Thapa, 2000, p. 177; quoted in Lim, 2007, p. 724) and village tourism policy (Pradhanang, 2009). Similarly, tourism policy 2008 highlighted the extension and diversification of tourism activities and creation of self employment opportunity targeting the rural pro-poor people. In order to fulfill the objectives of tourism policy, support for Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and Vision 2020, homestay was introduced along with Homestay Working Procedure 2010 (MTCA, 2010; Sharma, 2012:5; and Acharya & Halpenny (2017). Homestay was established with the support of Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP). The TRPAP was part of the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) for Nepal's foremost policy and planning document designed to use tourism as a poverty alleviation tool and enhancing employment opportunities in rural areas (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2010).

How homestay looks like?

Homestay is a new of form of tourist accommodation arranged in a private house where a host family allows visitors to interact, participate in their public activities, and socio-cultural events to exchange cultural impressions. Homestay operators provide sleeping space, breakfast, and allow participating with family farm operators in order to share their lifestyle (Mapjabil, et al., 2015). The visitors feel local experience while staying in rural area, observe lifestyles, interact and involve in cultural exchange with host family and visitors (Boonratana, 2010, p. 288). Lynch describes that homestay as a type of accommodation where visitors or guests pay directly or indirectly to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place to a greater or lesser degree with a host and with whom public space is shared to a greater or lesser degree. (Lynch 2003; quoted in Lama 2013). Another author highlights culture and states that homestay refers to such visitors who rent accommodation from a local family in order to learn local culture, lifestyle, and language (Rivers, 1998, pp. 492-500; quoted in Lama 2013). Lanier and Berman (1993, p. 15) explain that homestay venues open private homes to supplement income and meet people. These three definitions are more

similar to Nepali context. The government of Nepal defined, “Homestay means a service which operated for the purpose of accommodation, meal and other related service to the tourists in their own community either individually or collectively” (MTCA, 2010). The guideline further emphasizes that host community should conduct cultural programs related with traditional games, cultural performance, and welcome and farewell according to local customs. In order to enjoy local experience, host communities are also advised to allow visitors into all cultural activities and develop itineraries associated with culture, nature and history (Ibid, 2010).

A Nepal based literature highlights not only on interaction with host family member but also make a homely environment that any one visiting to homestay feels like one of their family members. Further, homestay gives reflections of egalitarian social business, active participation of women and shows cultural performance. By highlighting Tamang Heritage Trail as ethno-cultural heritage tourism, Kunwar & Pandey (2014, p. 23) elaborates that homestay in Gatlang village offers close interaction especially with lifestyle, domestic archives, sleeping pattern, cooking systems, dressing pattern and human behavior. In Barpak village of Gorkha district, Acharya and Halpenny (2013) identified that when tourists arrive at the village, tourists are requested to register in the Barapak Homestay Management Committee and offer typical welcome ceremony followed by local alcoholic drink known as “chi” and demonstrate cultural performances. Managed by the seven sisters, they equally and proportionally distribute guests in different homestay. While such cultural performances do no longer exist in my study area (See Dong, 2017) because of the changing nature of homestay and community conflict, many similar features of homestay can be observed. When guest arrives at homestay, they greet by saying ‘Namaste’ and offer for welcome drink called ‘*ara*’. Their smiling hospitality and friendly environment make you like one of their family members allow you to observe and sit down even in many of their private spheres such as kitchen and worship room and also make easy access to participant in social and cultural events in the village. In tourism hospitality, such welcoming behavior often known as ‘A home away from home’ which denotes that tourists can spend a lot of time where they feel comfortable and familiar as their own home. Therefore, the host family members do not mind asking question either related with food culture, social believe and cultural practices or even more private questions related with family structure and marriage practices in their social life. Tourists also can observe existing century long traditional house structure which hardly found in other countries.

Traditionally, the house structure of *Briddim* village is made of stonewalls without clay, consisting of a double-story structure, and decorated with *Tibetan* wooden architecture. The ground floor is mostly used for firewood, food grains, and some houses have a loom to produce traditional handicrafts. The house has an outside

staircase connecting to a courtyard in front of the house into upper living area where people worship, live, cook, and sleep. They have only two sleeping rooms separated through many small piece of plywood and the hearth is located in the middle of the dining room. The right corner is decorated with Buddhist deities while other areas are filled with kitchen utensils and food grain containers. Mostly female family members and neighbors are seated around the hearth while guests, seniors, and villagers are seated on a normal wood bench in a descending order according to their socio-economic rank. Mostly, the poor neighbors sit close to entrance door. This bench is covered with carpet and placed nearby the entrance. Therefore, while anyone sitting for meal, drinking or just for few minute in their dining room, tourists can observe closely with their religious worship, meal preparation, sitting place of different personalities, and their other activities.

While staying at this Briddim village, they offer you to experience eat local meals, organic vegetables, and fruits. The homestay is operated by family members. So there is no trained manager, waiter, and cook at homestay. The interior walls are separated by plywood so when guests are present, there is a loss of privacy in communication and not well insulated from the cold and wind. Although few structures are recently built, tourists might notice that house decoration is minimal. The decoration and structure of Briddim village are now changing with the impacts of globalization and the most recent April-May 2015 earthquake. Many newly constructed houses use glass in windows and dining room. Few homestays also have a facility of none-smoky heated firewood dining and four corner of this heater; long dining tables and benches are connected each other which are relatively higher than traditional as they focus on tourists' need. In order to make comfort, cushions and carpets are placed on the benches. Similarly, toilets and bathrooms are outside of their room; however, few homestays are constructing attached bathrooms but they are very basic. During stay, the host family wants to share Nepali culture and they also want to learn tourists' cultures and occupations. Often the host family members speak limited English but they are very friendly and hope to make tourists happy.

Homestay life: A living museum

The homestay life is mixed with tourists' service and their regular work in agriculture, weaving, livestock caring, farming, harvesting, and other seasonal works. The homestay is run by family members, so there is no manager, receptionist, and other trained worker like in the hotel and lodge. In many of the homestays, I found husbands look to the client's service, communicate with them, and maintain book keeping while his wife acts as cook and often assisted by trekking guide as necessary. Sometimes during the trekking seasons, a husband also goes out with different trekking companies as guide, porter, and may also do other seasonal work as a wage laborer.

When people involve in social events, occasions and ritual ceremonies, they act based on their shared beliefs and cultural values. Greetings such as 'Namaste' in Nepali culture performed by the host by joining two palms few inches below chin facing it upwards together in front of chest. When welcoming the guest, the host member also slightly bend down his head and his/her gesture looks smile and active. This behavior signifies how host community member respect someone heartily when the visitor present at homestay. Upon arrival, the host member also offers for welcome drink for tourists. Then after, owner shows client's rooms and menu when visitors come to dining room. When travelling with a guide, the guide takes food order, mentions dinner time, and gives this food order to host family. Although homestay is run by family members, if there is a large group, the guides and porters also may help to prepare tourist's meals and serve.

After clients departed from homestay, the owners cleaned all the rooms, bathrooms, dining room, and washed kitchen utensils. When they do not have a client, they keep continue their regular occupations. Nonetheless, when clients are trekking on the route or they relax at homestay, they can see the village life and culture. At a home, trekkers can observe cooking preparation, kitchen utensils, and local ingredients as they prepare curry, pickle, and *dal*. Tourists can also observe house structure, decoration, and gods and deities. The socialization process, arrival of friends and relatives, washing clothes and pots, tending livestock, children's games and activities, songs, and occasional rituals and customs are other characteristics of village life. This village is also rich in traditional attire and dress pattern. Women still weave and wear traditional clothing, hats, bags, belts, shocks, and globes. These all characters can be seen in the rural area of Nepal but there are very few chances in the city and popular trekking areas of Nepal. Therefore, a homestay village is a living culture of particular community whose practices are based on their belief system, norms, rules, and values.

Cultural exchange and social and cultural change in Briddim

The historical trend of the homestay reveals that homestay tourism is cultural exchange businesses where host communities and tourists exchange their cultural differences with each other. Bhuiyan (2012) gives a rough idea of cultural exchange between two cultural groups in their home. The guests, who are primarily come from Japan, Australia, Korea, and Malaysian students, lived with the family members of the homestay operators and have opportunities to exchange their culture during the daily ordinary activities of their stay (Bhuiyan, 2012, p. 1086). Similarly, the government bodies of Nepal were involved in exchange programs with different personalities and different countries. The opinion page of 'The Homestay Working Procedure 2010' informs that a visiting committee travelled to Malaysia and South Korea to understand about homestay. They also held several meetings and discussions

among experts, tourism entrepreneurs, and concerned persons to collect views and suggestions. Therefore, cultural exchange is an important learning about each other's experiences which play are crucial to develop new ideas and socio-cultural change.

In the study of tourism, culture is changed when two societies of different cultures come in contact. According to Carter and Beeton (2008), cultural change is because of the adaptation which follows individuals' choice of direction, learning new skills and interacting with outside culture. Although new cultural forms depends on how individual or community accept but tourism traders direct pressure on cultural resource to change. Although there are other factors of cultural change, two theoretical frameworks help to understand cultural change of a particular community. First is an acculturation theory which believes that when there are interactions between a strong culture and a weaker one, it is mostly influenced by former to latter one. In the context of homestay, host community members adopt tourists' culture to satisfy their visitors' needs. The second theory is a cultural drift and as defined by Collins, 'Cultural drift in this sense states that the role of the guest differs from that of the host and that the temporary contact situations results in change of phenotypic behavior in both the host and the guest. The phenotypic change may be permanent in the host society/culture but temporary in the guest society/culture' (Modi, 2001, p. 109). This definition clarifies that culture is changed due to the interaction with host and tourist, it can be seen in someone's behavior but such performance might be permanent for host society or it adjusts to the needs of tourists. But the host society may return to their previous lifestyle when tourists depart. For example, a trekking guide say, "God bless you!" when trekkers sneeze but this action is not repeated among Nepali friends and relatives because it is different place with different personalities.

We understand that tourism industry involves series of social transaction and encounter between hosts and tourists. In this encounter people approach each other as strangers whose orientations are different not only because they come from different cultural backgrounds, but also because one is at work and the other at leisure. As tourists travels to new places, they encounter host society with a different culture and ending as the give-and-take of, this encounter affects the tourists, hosts and various societies (Nash, 1981). This clarify that the impact of tourism is both for host societies and tourists. Below, I have discussed cultural changes of different actors because of their interaction with different cultures and personalities.

Tourists

A tourist is a person who travels away from home for the purpose of observing different cultural experiences. In tourism industry, a tourist is any person who spends a certain amount of time or travels a specified distance away from home. His or her aim is to find out something authentic about the world (Chambers, 2010). In general,

tourists are at holiday and free from obligations while their host have to serve them. This leisure-service distinction is a universal relation which all touristic institutions must respond (Nash, 1981). In the trekking destinations, tourists have social relation with guides and porters who exchange each other's cultural differences. At the end of their trip, tourists learn Nepali culture from guides and porters. During the fieldwork, I myself observed how guides taught their trekkers and some tourists were also showing interest in local foods and drinks. I saw that one tourist was sitting alone with her guide in the kitchen and observing meals preparation and taking notes.

During my study, I asked few questions regarding how tourists were impressed by Nepali culture and what was the best part of Nepali culture. All of them replied, 'Nepalese are always smiling and welcoming wherever they are'. By comparison with Western culture, a French-Canadian girl told me, "*Westerners are busy and stressful life but Nepali life is living with the nature, they are open hearted, time is less important than the Western but friendly people*". My next question was how do they define Nepali culture? Many of the tourists gave similar definition such as smiling, less mean, and welcoming.

A tourist who was traveling from Italy shared his reflection to me, "*Nepali people are always smiling, very much family and community based, less mean, stress free, and smile even in the busy time. For Westerners, staying at mountain is hard and it is like a punishment. Western people are straighter but Nepalese are not like this*". A similar class based definition was given by a British traveler. She believes, "Nepalese are friendly, happy, and always smiling even though they are poor".

Sphere is another feature of culture. A Canadian girl who often stayed in India and does yoga supposes, "*Nepalese people are very soft like 'masala tea' they are very sweet people! The culture here is very open because people bathing, brushing hair, breastfeeding, and caring for children in public areas but Western people they maintain their space*". These narrations of different tourists indicate that how they were influenced from Nepali culture and traditions. Here, I feel that tourists are more interest to see traditional and authentic culture; on the contrary Nepali people adopt for touristic and modern values and norms. It is also true that there are not many changes among the tourists after they interact and observe Nepali society which I discuss below.

One of the very common cultures learned by tourist is 'Namaste!' They say *Namaste* whenever meet someone at restaurant, hotel, homestay or any place they visit. Further, they also learned some ethnic greeting language such as 'Lhasso' and 'Tashi Delek'. The next words learned by tourist are 'Jam Jam' (let's go) and "Dhanyabad" (thank you). Similarly, tourists also learned some popular songs such as 'Resham Firiri' and if guide translate in English, certainly tourist understand about culture associate with hill/mountain people particularly how boy is trying to convince his beloved.

Local foods and drinks are also one of their favorite Nepali menu. I found most of the clients had eaten *dal-bhat*, a traditional Nepali set meal. Many guides say ‘*Dal-bhat* power, twenty four hour’ which denotes the meaning of energy of *dal-bhat*. While they eat, some clients wanted to eat by their hand. During my interview, few clients who visited Nepal before, they told me they sometime cook *dal-bhat* at home. A Canadian girl, who visited Nepal three times, shared, “*I cook Dal-bhat in my country once in a month and offer to my friends but taste is different*”.

‘*Masala tea*’ is the second popular item preferred by the tourists. This beverage is generally prepared in milk or water with tea powder along with cardamom, ginger, clove, and cinnamon boiled in the pot. I saw that after they completed their trek, they wanted to buy several packets of *masala* tea so that they could prepare in their hometown. Clients are also interested to learn about *Mo:Mo* and *Shyakpa* Stew Soup. Therefore, when clients return their country, they understand Nepali lifestyle and learn food culture. Now, we understand that there are cultural exchanges between peoples which lead for social and cultural change. As our subject is tourism, such change is associated with travel, performance, attitudes, behavior, lifestyle, modern values and certainly tourist’s culture.

Host community

We largely discussed that tourism is meeting point of different peoples and cultures and understand that tourism has powerful influence to the host community which contributes for several social and cultural changes. Cultural change is because of the adaptation which follows individuals’ choice of direction, learning new skills and interacting with outside culture. Although new cultural forms depends on how individual or community accept but tourism traders direct pressure on cultural resource to change (Carter & Beeton, 2008). Macleod (2004, pp. 223-226) lists changes in infrastructure and socio-cultural among the Valle Gran Ray community which include: development of shops for the visitors, widened road, an airport, many ex-fishermen and ex-agricultural workers building inexpensive apartments, land for rent, boys married ex-tourists producing new family behaviors, and different parents in the society. Such infrastructural development were found in Briddim village with the support of TRPAP and NTB and now village feel themselves that welcome building, trail map, sign board, clean trail, and few dustbins on the trail which were new tourist needed to operate homestay. But more importantly, research also found that tourism brought new social roles, opportunities and empowerment especially for women in the village.

The discourse about the opportunities for women in both private and public sphere discussed largely beginning from the 18th century. Feminist scholars argue that women have same capability and rationality as men have. If they are given to

chances, they are able to show their personality in the public spheres and if they were given chances to same liberties as men enjoy, women would get develop genuine unselfishness (Tong, 2009c, pp. 16-19) and promote for gender equality which has been found in homestay tourism. For example, in their study of Barpak village in Gorkha district, Acharya and Halpenny (2013) identified that homestays are tools for strengthening social and economic capacities especially for local women opportunity in tourism which support for sustainable community development and secure for income generation. They also describe that with the contribution of seven young women team members in homestay management committee, this new business played vital roles in society to fill the gap between men and women in the village. In Briddim village, both men and women are participating in homestay tourism but the women's numbers were at large. Although there are fewer women participating in trekking tourism, both husband and wife are working at homestay to serve meals and arrange accommodations. In a general, homestay scenario shows that women have more responsibility compared to men because of the involvement in cooking and weaving in addition to their other agricultural and domestic work. The development of such a picture indicates that homestay becomes a "womanstay" despite the fact that women also get opportunities to interact with new peoples, cultures and travel outside of the village during the meetings and training. While for the men, their responsibilities are associated with public works such as trekking, priest, driving, and business.

Study from Himanchal Pradesh of India shows that homestay income was more than doubled in remote poor villages of Sku, Rubak, and Kaya. Most of the women of that village work as local guides who experienced changes in their lives not only from cash payments but also this income empowered them in decision making powers and able to send their children to good schools in the city (Wangchuk, n.d.). In contrast to Briddim village, only few females are working as porters compared to men who also work as guides and porter-guides; however, with the support of tourists many of the children are receiving sponsors for their education while some of them study in Kathmandu for better education (see also Kaelin, 2014). Although educational sponsor is a financial support for the parent, it is not always positive in terms of culture because when young people go out for education, they forget their culture and their language (McDuie-Ra, 2011). One of the respondents told me, "Our local culture will be disappeared if we continue sending our children in school outside of village because of the no interaction with our custom, ritual, and even less awareness of our own primary kinship". This narration tells us that if her child studied at this village, her son could have learned more about their culture and tradition. When they are away from their residence, children do not pay attention on own culture. In Nepali context, children staying at home also denote assist their parents in household

work and can get them to nearby health posts when they are sick. This clearly shows that school education and family socialization are not connected to each other. Nonetheless, these three examples of Himanchal Pradesh, Barpak village and Briddim village notify that homestay did not only generate employment opportunities for women but also experienced empowered who can now serve tourists independently.

In the present globalized era, culture is not only changed by tourism but also shaped by various factors which influence people and society. As described by Appadurai (1996), the five dimensions of cultural flows: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscape, financescaples, and ideascaples play a major role for cultural change. Today, everyone has mobile phones and many use facebook to understand distinct culture in short periods of time. The trend of travel to different villages, cities, and even abroad for the purpose of work and study is more common than in the past. They see and learn new things which impact individuals and society. People engage in new businesses and learn from each other's ideas and experiences. In Briddim, I found a wide range of changes in terms of ceremonies, festivals, rituals, traditional dress and attires, house structures, daily commodities, and education system. Few of them are discussed below.

One morning, when I was walking in the trail, I heard someone was singing at home, so I decided to stop by there. When I reached there, I saw she was sitting next to the loom and was weaving a traditional dress called *pangap*. I observed for a while until she stopped her song. Then latter, I asked the situation of traditional songs. She told me, *"In the past, people used to sing at home and jungle when people cutting grass or taking care of domestic animal but now they rarely sing as cassettes and television take their place. Even in the ceremonies and festivals, mostly older generations sing and dance but many of the young generation arrange an electric loudspeaker"*. This statement makes clear that the tradition of singing (by mouth) is decreasing dramatically and young generations are attracted by cassette and modern songs. She further informed me about the current trend of young generation related with changing behaviors, thinking patterns and attitudes. According to her, the new generation prefers to cook fast food like noodles, tea bag and they feel shy to work in farm cultivation and do not respect what parents order. She gave me a particular example of making a tea, *"In our tradition, we boil water in the pot and drop tea powder and added sugar but young generation do not like this process as it take a little longer time. Indeed, they look for tea bag which takes only few minute to prepare tea"*. According to Mishra (2062 B.S.), the young generations are not socialized from the childhood. They are copying Western dress, music, and values. With the development of individualistic culture, they are away from social control and they make their own decision.

Marriage practice is an aspect of culture which reproduces social relations and maintains kinship system in the society. My respondent shared the changing practice

of cross-cousin marriage. He told me, “*If a daughter does not marry with maternal uncle’s son, maternal uncle and aunt became angry which are not good for us because parents also upset then after. Therefore, the daughter’s marriage was determined by parents but now this has been changed because of Facebook and parents’ role is only to assist to their wedding ceremony.*” He gave an example, “*My wife’s sister and the boy of Helambu, they were connected in Facebook and they married two years ago*”. This example shows the current situation of cross-cousin marriage but also the vital role of social media to match couples in recent days.

Festivals are the ancient local practice primarily organized for merit action. One informant told me that they celebrate an annual festival called ‘*Dawa Dangbo Chhechu*’. In this festival, a group of households bears the expenses, prepare, and organize this occasion by teamwork. In the past, no tourists were participated but nowadays, with homestays, few individuals commercialized this festival and sometimes receive financial support to maintain the monastery. For tourists, this festival is also an important to observe unique lamaic performance, traditional dress and attire and understand century long cultural practice. When cultural assets are refined as consumerables for tourists, culture becomes commodified which now reflects that how local people commoditized their culture by affirming their identity, telling their story and establishing the significance of local experiences (McDonald, 1997; quoted in Cole, 2005, p. 92).

House structures are another symbol of their tradition which reflected *Tibetan* architecture. It was a two-story building made up stone and the roof top was furnished with *Pangyap* (wooden tiles). But now new houses must use stone, sand, and cement. Only few traditional windows can be seen in the new home but rather rooftops are covered by zinc. The smoky stone hearth is replaced by non-smoky iron hearth which is not in the middle of the kitchen but in the middle part of the right corner. In the past there was no dining room and bedroom and people were sitting on the floor. Some people had yak pelts used as sleeping mattress. But now many of the structures have changed specially focused on tourists’ needs and looks modern type of facilities such bed with mattress, bed sheet, blanket, toilet, shower, chair, and table although many look very basic. The number of kitchen utensils also increased and many of them are new utensils such as fry pan, rice cooker, sauce pan, varieties of plates, *Mo:Mo* cooking pot, gas, and refrigerator. Although these changes are flow from homestay tourism, I argue that homestay tourism should be analyzed within the framework of globalization and these two engage with cultural exchange.

Host families

The host families maintain sanitation according to their traditional practices. They sweep the floor, terrace, staircase, and surrounding the house and the dust are

managed somewhere around the house corner. They used to go jungle, nearby bush and even some people use to go in the evening for the toilet purpose; however, with the initiation of homestay tourism at this village, the host community constructed toilet, shower room, and few separate rooms. In addition, they also kept dustbin in each room, in the kitchen, and outside of the house in order to manage the dust properly. In rich houses, we can find the plastic dustbin and bucket but poor houses made dustbin of anything like plastic bag, biscuit carton, beer carton, and sack. After the homestay operation, villagers also learned tourists' ceremonies such as birthday celebration, New Year, Christmas, and anniversary. However, it is worthwhile to note here that these occasions and festivals are celebrated mixing with local traditions. We can take an example of birthday celebration. I downloaded few picture from facebook as we were friends. The picture shows that the child wear clean dress decorated with colorful *khada* in the neck and colorful birthday cap on the head. The neighborhood children were sitting together in the bench, wearing birthday caps and holding balloons on their hand. There were 12 candles and one figure was showing 'three' digit number in the cake's plate. Nearby the cake, there were displayed several cold drinks, beers, and local wine in their traditional wine pot. There was also a brass plate where parent kept a kilo of wheat and few notes of five hundred and one thousand rupees. It seems like that this plate is full of money given by the villagers to the child after they had a birthday cake. This trends shows that when tourism engages with new forms of globalised communities and societies, they are assimilated in each other's cultures but keep traditional practices to sustain their own distinctive locality (Park, 2014, p. 4).

Trekking guides and porters

Guides and porters work with tourists in the trekking destination and complete the trek in the Himalayan region. A professional guide presents ethnographic details of local community including trail condition, villages, population, geography, flora and fauna, historical sites, local culture and traditions, festivals, and occasions. During the journey, a guide also asks about tourists' norms, values, traditions, festivals, and their world view. Interactions between guides and tourists generate the emergence of new ideas, values and motivations for social and economic progress (Brown 1998, pp. 237-238; Bersales 2005, p. 239; Nyaupane et al. 2006, p. 1373; quoted in Paul, 2012) and through the direct interaction; they learn each other which may change their lifestyles either permanent or temporary in their social world.

Permanent culture is produced because of the acculturated with tourists' culture. During the trekking periods, porters and more specially guides, they become familiar with quality gears and acculturated with tourists' values and norms. When feel hungry, they look at a nicer restaurant than the local one. They do not show teeth while eating. If invited out, they arrive at punctual time and always inform if they are

visiting someone. They also ask permission before taking someone belongings and keep distance to maintain space with each other.

Some of the cultures are temporary or cultural drift as described by Wall & Matheison (2006) and Modi (2001) which are mostly acted with the clients and official related activities but not in general places. They always look at dustbin to throw trash. When trekkers sneeze, guide says "God bless you!" and trekkers will reply "Thank you". They use polite words and greeting such as "Good morning, good night!" While I was in the village, I found guides were more assimilated with tourists' life style especially the way of communication and gears. A guide used umbrella or plastic during the rain in his hometown, now he wears raincoat and rain trouser after involvement in the trekking industry.

Looking back to the examples of host society including trekking guides and porters reflect that homestay culture now becoming mixing with foreigner's culture because of the linguistic acculturation, food acculturation, dress acculturation and western's values and norms (Kunwar, 2014), demonstration effect (Fisher, 2004), "xenocentrism" (Kent & Burnight, 1951), acculturation (Nash, 1996) of tourist's norms, values and less about host society and it is true that tourists do not only bring money but along with them a strong and visible life-style including dress, food habits and some newness and uniqueness to the area of their visit (Kunwar, 2017). Today, tourism becomes a field of cultural production on a global scale (MacCannell, 1992, p.1).

The discussion among the host society and tourists makes it clear that a little changed among the tourists while larger changed was found to host society as host society adopted many of the touristic cultures. The touristic culture was proposed by Picard (1990, p. 74) to refer to such cases where tourism has become an integral part of culture and where the interaction with tourists is a central component in the definition of ethnic identity and authenticity. We see that societies borrow cultural traits from one another when they involve in homestay tourism and this reflects that tourism has become a central component of the processes of globalization; however, tourism is not the main culprit for the loss of cultural identity and traditions. "The globalization and homogenization of culture may not be caused only by tourism. The media, by means of modern communication and information technology often play a more important role in shaping the values, opinions, lifestyle and fashion of the world" (Liu, 2003, p. 468). Research shows that globalization is ongoing process and people are interconnected through culture, ideas, trade, and commerce brought about by the sophisticated technology of communications and travel and by the worldwide spread of neoliberal capitalism (Wolf, 1982; Lewellen, 2010). Therefore, globalization is not a recent process at all, indeed it has been underway for a very long time as long as population have been moving from place to place, whether across the river, mountain range, ocean, transporting ideas and ideologies including religion, along

with the material goods they carry with them (Fisher, 2011). Hence, globalization and tourism are interrelated and interconnected each other and tourism has become an integral part of globalization.

Conclusion

Homestay in Nepal offers a pleasant hospitality and authentic local cultural practices of rural areas. It is a small business whereby someone's private house is commercialized for tourists for the purpose of selling rooms on a daily basis. The homestay scenario of Briddim village also offers us to visit and understand tangible and intangible culture. These cultural resources and living museum of this village makes a productive destination for cultural tourism. At homestay, visitors are treated as a temporary family member, provided local meals and allowed to participate in family's activities and occasional rituals at the village. Lanier and Berman (1993) summarize that homestay supports for income generation and meeting peoples but my study identified that homestay is also associated with social prestige in the community and they feel proud being a homestay operator. However, such prestige and feeling of proud often denotes as sites of power and reflect new values of people (Lim, 2007).

Folmar (2009) has pointed decrease the social bond between host and tourist, few chances of interaction, and the loss of the cultural hospitality at lodge because lodges are business oriented. But at homestay, there are many chances of interaction with host families. Generally, homestay represents the smallest form of culture where tourists can see and observe social and cultural life. Therefore, homestay is not completely associated with business but it is a venue where tourists can learn authentic culture. The family member invites any event at home or village and many often they can be a guide for tour and share their knowledge. The longer you stay; the deeper understanding of local culture.

Macleod (2004) mentions that with the global tourism, local people now engage in the global exchange network and are fully active in the process of globalization. The homestay in Briddim is a product of cultural exchange which covers the ideas, experiences, lifestyles, and traditions of different peoples and societies. The ideas are production of group experiences and the lifestyle is mixed with global cultures. With the TRPAP trainings and tour, it empowered local women to operate homestay independently and gave them opportunities to interact with new national and international nationalities. This is a broader social and cultural connection compared to the past days.

Cultural exchange also leads to cultural change. When tourists travel in a homestay zone, they are not just coming for a trekking and tour but also talk with different people and participate in local rituals and ceremonies. The behavior, lifestyle, clothes, attitudes, and thoughts of tourists also may influence Nepali people. Hence, local culture assimilates with tourist culture but their way of celebration is mixed up

with Nepali and tourist culture. However, tourists themselves learn Nepali culture associated with values, belief and food-drinking culture which shows how host communities influenced their culture to tourists. Therefore, meeting two different cultures is a medium of cultural change. However, in these days cultural exchange is not alone for cultural change. We understand that tourism is one of the mediums of cultural exchange but not always. One trekker told me, “*Global cultures are impacted through television and village is part of the world connected through television*”. Her statement clarifies the role of media and cultural interaction through the power of technology (Appadurai, 1996) which is faster than tourism reaches among the world’ village and it’s impact on global culture. This global culture became a reality of everyday life which we hardly deny it. However, it is true that tourism cannot separate from globalization, indeed tourism and globalization are interconnected each other.

Homestay does not always bring a positive contribution but it often produces a painful condition among the poor people. Poor people believe that the benefit of homestay is mostly accumulated by the rich and elites who have social network with different personalities. However, homestay is not only associated with loss and profit aspect, indeed my study suggests that it has to be understood in local context and meaning. Unlike the homestay, other businesses such as hotels and restaurants are shut down and look for new business if they lose their business. But homestay is constantly operated even they lost business. For the rural people it is not just a homestay but it is home where they work, live, and continue their traditions. It should not be compared alone in the economic term of sustainable tourism.

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