

## **Exploring the Socio-cultural and economic impacts of Dallagau Homestay on rural tourism in Nepal**

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### **Abstract**

*The study titled 'Exploring the Socio-cultural impacts of Dallagau Homestay on rural tourism in Nepal' utilized a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the socio-cultural and economic benefits of rural tourism in Nepal. The research was specifically focused on Madhuban-1, Dallagau Homestay in the Bardiya District. It employed a descriptive-analytic approach within an exploratory research design, focusing on a purposively selected subset of 22 households out of 120 in Dallagau. Additionally, 22 non-homestay households and 22 recent visitors were also included in the study. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources, including interviews with tourists, hoteliers, locals, tour guides, local politicians, and NGO representatives during a field survey in May 2024. Globally, the concept of "homestay" is interpreted differently, with each region having its unique version. In Nepal, homestay programs are community-driven initiatives that play a crucial role in the local economy and tourism sector. Despite the potential for substantial economic and socio-cultural benefits, the homestay industry in Nepal is hindered by inadequate infrastructure and planning. This research, focusing on the "Khata Biological Corridor Homestay" in Dalla village, emphasizes the socio-cultural and economic impacts of these programs. The findings underscore the importance of proper management and community involvement in maximizing the benefits of homestay tourism for sustainable rural development.*

**Keywords:** Socio- cultural, Homestay, Rural tourism, Community

### **Introduction**

The meaning of 'homestay' may differ from country to country. For instance, the phrase is particularly connected to farmhouse lodging in Australia, although it is frequently connected to English language instruction in the UK. It is described as "a period during which a visitor in a foreign country lives with local family" (Merriam Webster dictionary, 2007). It is also defined

as a private homes in which unused rooms are rented for the purpose of supplementing income and meeting people (Lanier and Berman, 1993). Farm-themed holidays originated from the British custom of providing accommodation and food for temporary agricultural laborers.

Homestay programs are community-driven initiatives that allow visitors to interact with locals and experience their daily lives firsthand. Tourism plays a crucial role in Nepal's economy. The expansion of the tourism sector has boosted the country's culture and traditions while also increasing employment and revenue. This sector is important not only for generating foreign exchange but also for creating opportunities in various industries, such as hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, gift shops, and businesses related to fruit cultivation and processing. Given Nepal's limited capacity to export manufactured goods, the tourism industry's diverse benefits—including improving the balance of payments, diversifying the economy, increasing revenue, and creating direct and indirect employment—cannot be underestimated (Banjade, 2018).

Though, due to a lack of institutional framework and ineffective tourism management, Nepal's tourism industry has not flourished as anticipated. While tourism is a more expansive and beneficial sector for economic growth, there are also more obstacles and issues facing this industry. Our nation hasn't gone far enough in building the essential infrastructure in prospective rural areas. Nepal has a lot of promise for tourism, but it hasn't yet taken off and reached the impoverished in the countryside (Dahal et al., 2020).

The 'Khata Biological Corridor Homestay' initiative, locally known as Dallagaun homestay, was launched by the Shiva Community Forest Consumers' Committee in March 2011 in several homes of the Tharu community in Dalla village, Madhuban Municipality's ward no. 1, Bardiya district. Shiva Community Forest (SCF), one of the community forests within the Khata Corridor, is situated near the homestay. Out of the 125 households benefiting from SCF in Dalla village, 11 initially joined the program. TAL-Nepal provided initial conceptual and technical support for the homestay program. By December 2013, the number of participating households grew to 22 after 11 more joined. An Eco-Tourism Development Sub-Committee has been established by SCFCC3 to manage the homestay program, overseeing all aspects of its operation.

In Madhuban Municipality-1, Bardiya district, homestay services have been introduced to boost tourism and the local economy. Over 20 homestay houses have been set up by the locals, with 20 currently in operation. Following the government's promotion of homestay development as vital to the success of Nepal Tourism Year, Madhuban Municipality-1 has prioritized this tourism aspect. Through homestays, visitors have the chance to experience the customs, culture, and natural beauty of Madhuban Municipality-1 (Municipality Profile, 2074).

Given our conducive environment for the growth of this industry, Nepal appears to have a lot of potential for developing its village tourist business. Such an area is manageable with little financial outlay, and the government's function in it ought to be that of a watchdog. In this

context, the study's findings about the socioeconomic impact of homestay and its effects on village tourism are presented. I hope these findings will be helpful to planners and other relevant parties.

Homestays play a crucial role in revitalizing rural economies and offering numerous benefits, especially in Nepal where tourism benefits are unevenly distributed. Much of the tourist spending remains in Kathmandu, leading to core-periphery reliance. Pre-paid travel packages and centralized provisions limit the benefits reaching rural areas. Dalla homestay faces similar challenges due to underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of scientific planning. Issues include environmental fragility, disparities, and poor local-central coordination. The study aims to explore these challenges and opportunities, emphasizing homestay tourism's potential to alleviate poverty and promote socioeconomic development. However, homestays also face cultural westernization and youth migration, threatening their sustainability. Proper management is essential to prevent environmental degradation and ensure long-term benefits. Homestay tourism can preserve regional culture and contribute significantly to the local economy, despite setbacks like the COVID-19 pandemic. The following research question will be related to socio- culture impacts of household of survey area. It also focusses on the tourist attractant places in vicinity of Dallagaun.

## **Literature Review**

Global tourism today not only sees more tourists but also a spread of global and tourist cultures. This study explores homestay tourism, highlighting the interaction between hosts and tourists and its cultural impacts. Ethnographic methods show homestays' roles extend beyond economics, driving cultural exchange and influencing local and tourist lifestyles, especially through guides adopting tourist norms (Dong, 2020; Regmi et al., 2023).

Tourism is both an economic and socio-cultural phenomenon, influencing local culture and behavior. This study uses a comparative method to explore tourism's impact on community life in tourist villages. Positive social impacts include community spirit, organizational strengthening, and leadership emergence. Negative social impacts involve community division, social problems, and conflicts over new tourist villages. Culturally, tourism promotes local culture preservation and information exchange, but also leads to culture commercialization and imitation.

The article measures COVID-19's impact on Nepal's tourism industry, noting halted mobility, closed borders, and government stay-at-home orders. These factors have adversely affected airlines, accommodations, transport operators, and other sub-sectors. The pandemic's effects extend to socio-cultural, psychological, and global economic systems. The study highlights stakeholder preparedness and response strategies, using qualitative research with primary data from stakeholder interviews and reviews of secondary sources (Ulak, 2020).

Despite challenges, homestay tourism is seen as a potential driver for sustainable rural development and poverty alleviation in Nepal (Regmi et al., 2023). To maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts, careful management and community involvement are essential.

Further research is needed to fully understand the long-term socio-cultural effects of homestay tourism and develop strategies for sustainable growth in the post-pandemic era. Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment sustains the wellbeing of local people and involves interpretation and education is the definition of eco-tourism (Acharya & Elizabeth, 2013). In Nepal's economy, homestays play a crucial role in the process of regional development. The region is economically underdeveloped, with little resources for the growth of the agricultural and industrial sectors. With so many locations that draw visitors from all over the world due to their natural beauty and rich cultural legacy—including Mount Everest, the Snow Peak Mountains, several lakes, and rivers—Nepal has enormous potential for the growth of its tourism industry. Nepal offers many of activities for those who enjoy the outdoors. Trekking, boating, hunting, mountain flying, paragliding, rafting, and the welcoming and diverse populace are among the main draws of the nation (Magar, 2018).

Although homestays were being used in Sirubari Syangja as early as 2054 B.S., the notion was first fully developed in Nepal in 2067 B.S. Nepal's first homestay village is thought to be Sirubari Village. As a result, home stay programs can be thought of as rural, cultural, and community-based travel offerings.

Gautam (2012) explored the economic impact of homestay tourism in Sirubari and Ghalegaun, Nepal. Despite being an old practice, homestays are relatively new in Nepal, embodying "Atithi Devo Bhava." Introduced in Sirubari, these award-winning village homestays aid rural development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation, enhancing infrastructure in remote areas.

Elizabeth (2013) found that there has been limited research on the relationship between visitor sociodemographic factors and the use of homestays. The findings from this study will aid travel planners in developing their market segmentation and targeting strategies. The main objective of the study was to explore how socio-demographics influence travelers' choices for selecting homestays in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. Data were collected from 151 international visitors who stayed in homestays within the Kumasi Metropolis. The results from the one-way analysis of variance and t-test show that sociodemographic characteristics affect the reasons given by foreign visitors for choosing a homestay. It was concluded that visitor motivations for selecting a homestay are impacted by sociodemographic factors.

Bhattarai and Pokharel (2021) investigated the impact of the Corona Virus on the Annapurna Circuit Trek in Nepal. Their study revealed significant effects on Nepal's tourism industry, focusing on the trek's social sustainability. Tourism, especially community-based tourism (CBT), is crucial for local communities. The global lockdown disrupted travel, affecting businesses, jobs, and daily life. The research used qualitative interviews with local stakeholders, trekking agencies, and TAAN to explore these impacts. Bhatta, Tanaka, and Gautam (2021) explored travel motivation during COVID-19 in Nepal, highlighting the severe impact on the tourism sector. Their quantitative study used a web survey with 181 Nepali participants to understand travel motivations and factors. Results showed differing preferences: younger travelers favored biking and short trips, while families preferred remote locations and coach

travel. Recommendations include creating targeted travel packages and ensuring a low-risk environment to attract tourists post-pandemic.

Gautam and Khatri (2021) examined the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on tourism in Nepal in 2020. Their study found that, despite the pandemic disrupting the Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign, the impact on Nepal’s tourism sector—vital for the nation's economy—was not as severe as expected. They explored the lockdown's effects on travel, tourism, and the Visit Nepal campaign using sources like Google Scholar and recent newspapers. The findings reveal that the lockdown led to reduced economic activity in tourism-related areas, including hotels and travel, affected remittances, and caused small business closures. The paper also aims to highlight the relationship between the lockdown and tourism from various stakeholders to improve safety standards and protocols for the industry’s recovery and future resilience.

### Research Methodology

A researcher chose Dalla homestay for promoting tourism in Bardiya. The research design seeks to meet study goals using structured surveys and observations. Results depend on responses about tourism earnings and socio-cultural aspects. Out of 120 households in Dallagaun Home Stay, 22 were selected for the study via purposive sampling, with similar sampling applied to 22 non-homestay households and 22 recent visitors. Data collection involved primary and secondary sources, including interviews with tourists, hoteliers, locals, tour guides, local politicians, and NGO representatives in field survey May, 2024.

### Results

#### Age and Sex of Respondents

In demographic analysis, age and sex composition are crucial, influencing socio-economic and development plans. Table 1 shows this data.

**Table 1**  
*Distribution Respondents by Age and Sex*

Age	Male		Female		Total
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	
Up to 20	0	0	0	0	0
21 -30	2	9.1	4	18.18	6
31 – 40	3	13.64	6	27.27	9
Above 40	2	9.09	5	22.72	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31.83</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>68.17</b>	<b>22</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age and sex. According to the table, the highest proportion of both male and female engaged in homestay tourism in the above 31-41 group (13.64%) and (27.27%) respectively. We can see in the total figure up to 20 age groups were the lower proportion and the highest proportion were for the 31 to 40 age group

respectively. The data shows most women participated in homestays due to female leadership, while men handled logistics.

**Religious Composition**

Religion is vital in Nepalese society, where Hinduism was once dominant. Now, as a federal democracy, it embraces diverse religions.

**Table 2**  
*Distribution of Respondents by Religion*

Caste/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Hindu	22	100
Buddhist	0	0
Christian	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.00</b>

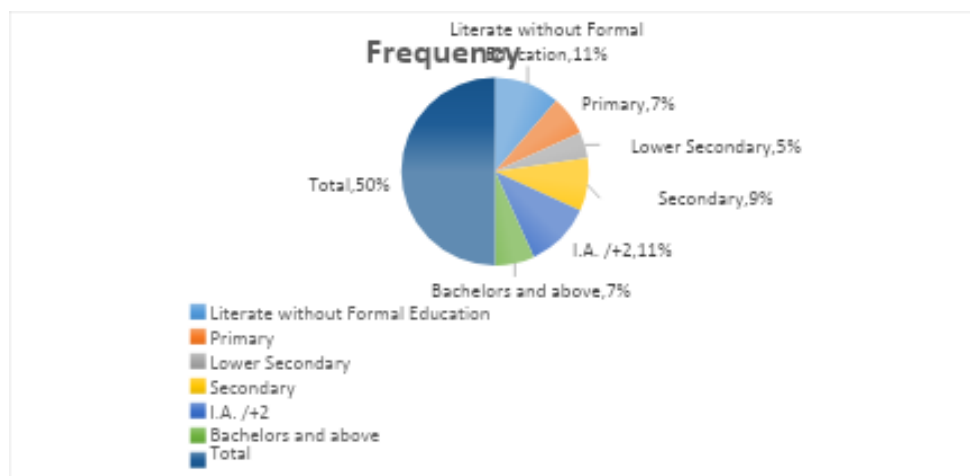
*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 2 shows only religious group residing in the area is Hindu. The majority of responders (100%) were Hindus, yet there were no Buddhists or Christians among them.

**Educational Status of Respondents**

Education illuminates life, enhancing skills and capacity. It refines knowledge, shaping ability and job performance.

**Figure 1**  
*Distribution of Educational Level of Respondents*



Source: Field Survey, 2024

Figure 1, reveals the educational attainment of the respondents who were asked about the benefit of Dalla community homestay. Out of total respondents, 22.72 percent were literate without Formal education and I.A. /+2 level. Out of the respondents, majority of the respondents i.e. 18.2 percent were attained secondary level of education followed by bachelor and above, primary and lower secondary level by 13.63 percent and 9.1 percent respectively.

### Land Holding Pattern of Household

Property ownership significantly impacts socio-economic status. In Nepal, where agriculture was once predominant, recent changes prompt questions about land ownership among households primarily engaged in farming. The table below shows their land ownership.

**Table 3**

*Distribution of Respondents HHs by Size of Land Holding and Types of Land*

Land	No.	Percent
Less than 10 Kattha	2	9.1
11 to 15 Katha	8	36.36
16- 20 Kattha	4	18.18
1 -1.5 Bigha	6	27.27
More than 1.5 Bigha	2	9.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 36.36 percent were owned 11 to 15 katha of land with their name followed by 27.27 percent, 18.18 percent, 9.10 percent and 9.09 percent by 1-1.5 *Bigha*, 16-20 *Kattha*, less than 10 *Kattha* and more than 1.5 *Bigha* respectively. Analysis shows a decline in landownership. Previously, Tharu people ruled the Terai before others moved in. Now, they've shifted from agriculture to foreign work and community homestays, embracing greenery and capitalizing on their culture.

### **Socio-cultural Benefits of Homestay**

In Nepal, homestays, a recent industry, aid rural development and encourage socio-cultural activities, as detailed in the following table.

**Table 4**

*Socio-culture Attraction and their functions*

Component	Functions
Social Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social bonding and affinity to kinship</li><li>• Societal preservation</li><li>• Social activities in terms of development of society</li><li>• Identity seeking</li><li>• Cultivation and harvesting local goods and things</li></ul>
Cultural Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preservation of Tharu dress</li><li>• Learning Tharu language</li><li>• Training to mice, Ghongi, snail and so on.</li><li>• Training on cultural programme</li><li>• Wearing of local ornaments</li></ul>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

### **Ownership of Homestay**

The homestay program is a business model that allows investors to avoid making large financial investments. In this setup, hosts offer guests a spare room and provide meals made from their own kitchen. Consequently, each homestay in the area is individually owned. This type of work is especially popular among women in the Tharu community, while the men support them by helping with shopping in local markets.



## Preservation of Tharu Culture

Madhuban Municipality is the ancestral home of the Tharu people, the indigenous tribe of this area. They possess their own language, culture, and traditional beliefs. Until the late 1950s, they were the sole residents of Bardiya. Following the eradication of malaria, some individuals from the highlands began to migrate there.

Tharu cultural excursions provide insight into the everyday lives of the Tharu people. Many Tharu individuals believed they should adopt Western ways, leading to a decline in their own cultural practices. However, this trend of Western influence has significantly diminished. With the establishment of homestays, the Tharu people have begun to reconnect with their roots. They have also united politically and formed various social groups to help preserve their culture.

**Table 5**

*Way of Preservation Tharu Culture on Homestay*

<b>Preserve Tharu culture</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Wearing Tharu Ornaments	3	13.63
Speaking Tharu language	6	27.27
Wearing Tharu Dress	7	31.82
Serving Tharu food/beverage	4	18.18
Celebrating rituals (Maghi, Jhumra Nach, Lathinach)	2	9.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 5 deals with the opinion of the respondents that way of preservation of Tharu culture. According to them, 31.82 percent were said that tharu culture preserves if they wear Tharu dress followed by 27.27 percent speaking tharu language, 18.18 percent serving Tharu food and beverage or eating stuffs, 13.63 percent wearing Tharu ornaments and 9.10 percent by celebrating rituals such as Maghi, Jhumra nach and Lathi nach. The data shows respondents favor preserving cultural traditions. Homestays aim to promote these traditions and earn income, featuring costumes, traditional foods, and drinks. Without cultural activities, homestays wouldn't exist.

## Cultural Groups

A cultural group consists of individuals with shared beliefs, behaviors, and values, identified by their thinking and actions. Tharu cultural groups, for instance, entertain guests at their homestay with various cultural programs, reflecting intragroup diversity.

**Table 6***Cultural Groups*

Age group	Male	Female
15-20	2	5
20-25	1	8
25-30	1	2
30-35	2	4
35-40	1	7
40 above	5	2
<b>Total</b>	12	28

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The table indicates that six cultural groups provide entertainment for guests, predominantly involving women, with men assisting. These groups perform dances like Jhumra Nach and Lathi Nach in the evenings. During peak season, the Dalla Homestay community hosts cultural programs, while in the off-season, selected members perform at their homes.

### **Charges for Cultural Programs**

The presence of two professional cultural groups incurs fees for conducting cultural programs. These programs, deeply linked to the Tharu people's heritage, were fading but have been revived by the Dalla Community Homestay. The table below outlines the cultural programs and their respective costs.

**Table 7***Charges of Cultural Programme*

Cultural Programme	Young Group	Aamasamuha
Two hour	Rs. 5000/-	Rs. 7000/-
Three hours	Rs. 7000/-	Rs. 10,000/-
More than three hours	Rs. 10000/-	Rs. 15,000/-

*Source: Dalla Community Homestay Calender, 2024*

Table 7 reveals varying charges for cultural programs. The Aama Samuha group, composed of women who mentor younger members in Tharu cultural practices, is more expensive than the youth group. The Dalla Community Homestay organization has set fees for these cultural groups and detailed committee responsibilities, including organizing

accommodations, tracking visitors and payments, overseeing households, planning events, creating informational materials, and liaising with government organizations.

**Utilization of Fees of Cultural Programme**

The Dalla Community Homestay aims to boost tourism and preserve Tharu culture. They’ve created a financial protocol for managing revenue from cultural programs, allocating 90 percent to members and 10 percent to Tharu welfare initiatives, such as cultural training, tourism promotion, site development, biodiversity projects, and local hygiene improvements.

**Table 8**  
*Utilization of Fees by cultural Programme*

Cultural Programme	Amount in Rs.
Member of the cultural group	90%
Dalla Community Homestay	10%

*Source: Dalla Community Homestay Calendar, 2024*

Table 8 shows that 90 percent of the total income was shared among cultural group members, while 10 percent was allocated for welfare, social, and training activities. The chart indicates that Dalla Community Homestay has brought financial benefits locally and personally, with 90 percent of the funds supporting cultural participants and 10 percent aiding various humanitarian efforts and awareness campaigns.

**Monthly Income from Cultural Programme**

The question targeted respondents directly involved with cultural groups. Monthly income varied by cultural groups and seasons, as shown below.

**Table 9**  
*Utilization of Fees by cultural Programme*

Seasons	Monthly income by cultural programmes	
	Younger cultural group (Rs.)	Aama Samuha (Rs.)
Peak (five months)	12,000/-	15,000/-

Moderate (4 months)	6,000/-	7,000/-
Lean (3 months)	1,500/-	2,000/-

*Source: Dalla Community Homestay Calendar, 2024*

Table 9 shows that cultural groups have high monthly income during peak seasons, moderate income during the four-month moderate season, and low income in the three-month lean season. Aama cultural groups earn more than younger groups. The data highlights that the Dalla community homestay provides clear economic benefits to those involved in tourism, either directly or indirectly.

### **Employment Status**

Homestay tourism in Tharu Homestay Village and nearby areas has improved economic conditions and living standards, offering local jobs in various roles.

**Table 10**

*Employees in Homestay*

<b>Employees</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Family member including owners for homestay management	109	58.6
Tourist Guide	9	4.84
Driver and jungle safari	10	5.38
Cultural Programmer	40	21.5
Others	18	9.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 10 shows that 58.60 percent of respondents are family members or owners managing homestays, 21.50 percent work in cultural programs, and 4.84 percent and 5.38 percent are tourist guides and drivers, respectively. This indicates that homestays significantly boost employment and income.

### **Other Professions of Respondents except Homestay**

Respondents were asked if they have side jobs. Tourist guides and safari drivers do not, while others engage in additional income activities. Household members of guest houses and beauty parlors assist in their spare time. Responses are shown in the table below.

**Table 11**

*Subsidiary Occupation*

<b>Employees</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agriculture and livestock	8	36.36
Livestock (Poultry farming, fish farming, goat farming and so on)	4	18.20
Wage labour	2	9.09
Private Service	3	13.63
Private Business	5	22.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Among households operating homestays, 36.36 percent engage in agriculture and livestock as secondary occupations, 22.72 percent are involved in private business, and 18.20 percent practice various types of livestock farming. Additionally, 13.63 percent work in private services and 9.09 percent in wage labor during off-seasons. Homestay programs, usually in remote areas, promote local heritage and offer affordable lodging while showcasing local culture and traditions.

### **Income of Homestay Tourism of Study Area**

In Tharu Homestay Village, tourism-related jobs boost financial security for young men, showing significant income compared to other sources.

**Table 12**

*Total Income of Homestay Tourism of Study Area*

<b>Income Per Month (Rs.)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
8000-10000	2	9.09
10000-15000	4	18.19
15000-20000	6	27.27
20000-30000	4	18.19
30,000-50,000	2	9.09
50,000-1,00,000	3	13.63

1,00,000-3,00,000	1	4.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 12 reveals that up to 27.27 percent of respondents earn between 15,000 and 20,000, while 4.54 percent earn between 1 lakh and 3 lakhs. Individuals working in various roles within homestay tourism, such as guides, cooks, and drivers, tend to have lower incomes, whereas owners of tea stalls, medical shops, guest houses, and homestays generally earn more.

### **Cost for Tourist**

Local residents run homestays in their homes at low rates, profiting from offering local culture. High tourist seasons lead to increased staff and expenses, while off-seasons cause financial strain and hinder expansion. Table shows per-head nightly charges in bellows.

**Table 13**

*Cost per Night at Homestay*

<b>Cost per Night</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
800	6	27.27
1500	5	22.72
2000	7	31.81
Others	4	18.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 13 indicates that 31.81 percent of homestay owners charged Rs. 2,000 per night per room, while 27.27 percent charged Rs. 800 and 22.72 percent charged Rs. 1,500, with 18.20 percent pricing based on services.

## **Discussions**

The research indicates that the Dalla Community Homestay has been highly beneficial for those involved directly and indirectly, as analyzed from the data. The homestay has significantly promoted ecotourism and spurred rural development. Many Tharu people who had previously worked abroad have returned and engaged in homestay-related businesses. Thus, homestays serve as both a rural development strategy and a rural tourism program. For the

homestay to thrive, villagers need to be committed and informed. Effective coordination and participation are crucial for creating a successful homestay environment. Homestays contribute to social, economic, environmental, and community development, preserving rural areas. Dalla's homestay holds promise for attracting both domestic and international tourists, highlighting the need for collaboration among public, commercial, and local sectors. Homestays are a key driver of social and economic change in Nepal, generating more jobs and income. However, tourism in Nepal is largely urban-centered, so expanding into rural areas like Dalla is essential. While tourism infrastructure is a major challenge, the Tharu community's "Khata Biological Corridor Homestay," established in March 2011, provides valuable insights into its sustainability and impact on the local community.

In this study, 7 males and 15 females participated, all of whom were Hindu. Of these respondents, 22.72 percent had literacy without formal education, while 13.63 percent had attained a bachelor's degree or higher. The literate participants were Tharu elders managing Tharu homestays and preserving their culture. Most respondents owned 11 to 15 kattha of land. They unanimously agreed that homestays were established for self-employment and cultural preservation. Each homestay was individually financed, though supported by various organizations. Tharu culture was maintained through traditional practices and performances. Cultural groups received training and were paid based on their performances, with ten percent of earnings supporting community welfare. Income fluctuated with seasons, and all respondents noted economic benefits. Directly, 186 people were employed, showing a significant employment boost. Apart from homestays, many engaged in agriculture or livestock, with 27.27 percent earning 15,000 to 25,000 monthly and 4.54 percent earning 100,000 to 300,000 monthly from homestays.

## **Conclusion**

Homestays present a promising economic opportunity for locals, fostering job creation and socio-cultural upliftment. This initiative benefits the community's economy, culture, and environment. Dalla Gaun Homestay, started in March 2011 with tourism and conservation support, focuses on conserving Shiva Community Forest and Deukhuri Tharu culture, providing socio-cultural, economic, and environmental advantages.

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