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**COMMUNITY HOMESTAY PROGRAMMES AS A FORM OF
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL**

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<p>Homestay tourism has been emerging as a form of sustainable tourism in many rural areas as a community development program in Nepal. The entire activities from the particular location have been integrated as a major component of rural tourism in homestay programmes. In general, rural communities or private house owners have been operating homestay programmes where guests are offered only basic facilities i.e. normal bed just as the host sleep in their own bed, local food as host normally eat, and unique traditional hospitality with different cultural and natural beauties of particular area. Local cultural activities, traditional lifestyle of host, local tests can be experienced by guests taking part in a homestay programme.</p> <p>As a major aim, this thesis has analyzed and explored the contribution of homestay programmes for sustainable tourism development in Nepal. This thesis has studied in-depth the implementation and development of homestay programmes in Nepal. Three objectives were considered when studying about homestay programmes in Nepal. First one was how homestay programmes has been implementing in Nepal, second was, to analysis the three dimension of sustainable tourism development such as socio culture practice of the programme implemented in communities, environment effects and the economic situation of the community and third was an examination of the challenges of homestay operations in Nepal. Similarly, qualitative research method with secondary data was adopted to analyze the findings.</p> <p>The thesis concluded that the homestay programme has been contributing with a significant role in similar feature of sustainability. Homestay is a very effective tourism tool for economic sustainability, and natural sustainability of rural community by preserving the local tradition and culture. Additionally, it has suggested measures to overcome some challenges i.e. well-structured government mechanism, basic infrastructure and capacity development of local community.</p>		

Key words
Community homestay, ecological, economic, homestay programme, socio-cultural, sustainable development , sustainable tourism, village tourism

ABBREVIATIONS

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ANMDP	Alumni Network of Mountain Development Programme
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistic
DDC	District Development Committee
HMGN	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
HMC	Home Stay Management Committee
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
ITB	International Tourism Board
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MCTCA	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
MOPE	Ministry of Population and Environment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	Nepal Planning Commission
NTB	Nepal Tourism Board
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
STN	Sustainable Tourism Network, Nepal
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TDMC	Travel Development Management Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

ABSTRACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

'Athiti Deo Vhawa' (Guest is god) is the belief of typical Nepali society which have been carrying out the concept of homestay tourism in Nepal. The people of Nepal welcomes their guests as a god and treat them with warm hospitable manner according to their own life style but the identical manner and belief has turned in to the tourism business when the government of Nepal introduced the homestay program as village tourism in 1997 for the first time. It becomes more popular when the government of Nepal, officially introduce the homestay tourism program with the 'Home-stay Regulation 2067' in 17th August 2010 (Devkota 2008).

The homestay regulation emphasized to encourage the micro-economic sector in the rural areas; preserve the ecological sustainability; generate self-employment and economic growth in the rural communities. Similarly, it addressed to build up the quality life of indigenous people of the village area and make capable to access the benefit through the tourism industry, to increase the use of natural and human resources of the rural areas for rural development; to expose the rural culture and nature to the outside world; to protect environmental degradation; to decentralize the national income and centralize the local resources in the national economy; and to promote and improve local agricultural and other industries (Devkota 2008.)

The aim of this thesis is to explore the contributions of homestay programmes in sustainable tourism development in Nepal. The objectives of this thesis is to discuss the development and implementation of the homestay programme in Nepal, secondly, to analyze the three dimension of sustainable tourism development such as socio culture practice of the programme implemented communities, environment effects and the economic situation of the community and final objective is to examine the challenges of the homestay programme in Nepal.

Homestay is a newly adopted accommodation practice in Nepalese tourism industry which means that the visitor enjoys the local cultural hospitality and a warm welcome from a host family in particular area. It helps the tourist to explore the

local cultural values, traditions on the one hand, languages and landscape settings on the other. Actually, the homestay programme is a new concept in the Nepalese tourism industry for community development. This provides accommodation to visitors by offering local cultural hospitality and receives financial benefit in returns. It is acknowledged as a potential economic activity in tourism industry. Homestay programme has been popular among those tourist who desire to be a part of local traditions by interacting with the community and have experience of local culture, local cuisine and the natural attraction.

The South Asian country, Nepal has been highly praised for its unique and vibrant cultural heritages, beautiful natural resources, world's highest Mountains and a welcoming people. It has more than 125 ethnic groups and 123 spoken languages with varieties of life style and traditions (CBS 2011). Nepal has highly stratified social system but the unique plus point of this is the unity in diversity. These facts have been playing a significant role to promote community based tourism in a low cost which supports socioeconomic growth and development of the nation. Since 1950s, Nepalese's tourism has developed with adventurous tourism like Mountaineering, trekking and gradually it has been diversifying in many tourism activities such as holiday activities, eco-tourism and village tourism, pro-poor tourism. Recently homestay program appears as a major tourism destination of village tourism and pro-poor tourism in Nepal (Devkota 2008).

Although homestay program is newly adopted tourism program in Nepal but it has shown the preliminary positive impact on rural village development, rural women development, local economy, environment, and the entire community. It also helps to conserve the typical daily lifestyle of the villagers', culture and the identity. An increasing number of Nepalese communities homestay program, offers local cultural practices and unique traditions to its guest in a simple village houses. This thesis briefly outline the home-stay program's input on sustainable tourism development in Nepal. This thesis is a theory bases and has carry out on the basis of sustainable development theory with dealing the three dimensions of sustainable development such as economically sustainable, socio-culturally sustainable and environmentally sustainable tourism.

2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable tourism development becomes the most attractive phenomenon and issues amongst tourism theorists and practitioners. Many tourism organizations, tourism industries tries to published sustainable tourism development plans and set principles to address the issue of 'sustainable tourism development'. Though many organizations and planners tries to address the term 'sustainable tourism development' it is still in debate. "It is variously interpreted and its validity as a means and or end of tourism development is questioned in many quarters" (Sharpley 2010, 1) It is not commonly defined and acknowledges in same way everywhere. Hence, the understanding of sustainable tourism development varies from one theorists and policy maker to another. So, this entire chapter addresses the issues of sustainable tourism development in Nepal and the conceptual meaning and definition of the sustainable development.

2.1 Issues of sustainable tourism development in Nepal

The theme of sustainable tourism is not different from the sustainable development's in Nepal. It is hard to find the exact defined policies of sustainable tourism development in Nepal. Even though tourism industry in Nepal is more demand oriented but it has not clear and specific policy on sustainable tourism development. Some institutions such as International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have been working on developing policies and framework for the sustainable tourism development in Mountain areas of Nepal. Ministry of Tourism has been working to establish the policies to regulate tourism in a sustainable manner with capacity development activities by coordinating with the international development organizations, such as, International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Netherlands Development Organization (SNV). The establishment of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) helps tourism industry to develop, promote and market of the tourism product (Sedai 2006, 17).

During the establishment of the NTB in 1999, another branch of NTB named by Sustainable Tourism Network (STN) Nepal has also been established to form a network between the various other national and international institutions that have keen interest in promoting sustainable tourism practice in Nepal (STN, 2009.) Since then, STN have been working on sustainable tourism development but the effort does not seem enough to address the issues of sustainable development tourism in Nepal. Nepalese tourism industry has guided by the national plan and policy where sustainable development is defined as "reducing poverty through various opportunities in the social, economic, political, cultural and ecological aspects of their lives"(HMGN/NPC/MOPE 2003). The government of Nepal tries to support the rural livelihoods by using the country's naturally rich landscape and tremendous cultural for the marketing to promote tourism. (HMGN/NPC/MOPE 2003). Likewise, 'Tourism Policy 2065 BC Nepal' and 'Tourism Vision 2020 Nepal' have also addressed the sustainable tourism development by emphasis on Rural Tourism; Community based Tourism and Homestays (Bhandari 2011, 15, 17).

Homestay is a type of product in accommodation sector which has appeared to address the issue of sustainable tourism development. Likewise it is also considered as a part of eco-tourism and village tourism which aims to build the local communities' capacity by consuming local resource wisely and helps to protect the environment. Thus it is acknowledged by practitioners as a tool of sustainable development in tourism industry. The concept of sustainable tourism development "consist with the tenets of sustainable development" (Stabler & Goodall 1996, 170).

To understand the sustainable tourism development therefore, it has to be reviewed by the concept where it is come from or born. According to Inskip "the principles and objectives of sustainable development can be easily transposed onto most tourism development contexts." (Inskip 1991, xviii quoted in Sharpley 2010, 2) Thus, this study has taken an account of sustainable development theory and sustainable tourism development theory.to analyzes and assesses the impact of home stays in Nepal. The following subchapters deal with the conceptual meaning and definitions of the sustainable development and the sustainable Tourism development to develop a clear theoretical base of the thesis.

2.2 Sustainable development

To understand the concept of sustainable development we could not ignore its early evolution. The concept of Sustainable development has begun from late 70s and early 80s to address the environmental damage of development. Sustainable development means the "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). Tosun 2001 in his literature 'Challenges of sustainable tourism development in the developing world: the case of Turkey' to reflect the above broad concept of sustainable development is as follows:

Sustainable development is a development strategy that manages all assets, natural resources, and human resources, as well as financial and physical assets, for increasing long-term wealth and well-being. Sustainable development, as a goal rejects policies and practices that support current living standards by depleting the productive base, including natural resources, and that leaves future generations with poorer prospects and greater risks than our own (Tosun 2001, 290.)

Every development plan should take an account of future generation rights on resources while doing development at the present. Our future generation has rights to entertain with all the present resources and the present development plan should not neglect such things. A sustainable development is a combined form of "Development + Sustainability" (Sharpley 2010, 3). When the development theory and environmental sustainability theory mix and interpreted in one term then it becomes sustainable development. Development is not only economic development of particular place but the development in capacity, social awareness, equal distribution of resources to every ethnic group and more. This is an ambiguous term that represents whole development process. Strengthen local community capacity in terms of socio, economic and culture is a process of development and during implementing development process if it thinks about the future generation and become environmental friendly then it will be sustainable development.

In the context of Nepal sustainable development process mainly focuses on increasing per capita income through viable and environmentally sound domestic

base resources that can be accessed by all Nepalese equitably. Respective government body will be responsible to ensure the equal representation of women and men of all ethnicities and socio-economic status during use and management of resources and environmental protection. Every development process should consider the future Nepali generation right (HMGN/NPC/MOPE 2003).

2.3 Sustainable tourism development

As we earlier discussed that sustainable tourism development is nothing new then the terms sustainable development in tourism industry. It is also known as 'alternative tourism' (Sharpley 2010 6) in tourism industry to distinguish it from 'mass tourism'. Because of the negative social and environmental impact in destinations from mass tourism industry the term sustainable tourism development was invented.

Sustainable tourism development aims to contribute the objective of its parental theories development and sustainable development (Tosun 2001, 290). So we can say that sustainable tourism development should be understood as every kind of tourism development that provide a significant contribution in development process or, "at least, do not contradict the maintenance of the principles of development in an indefinite time without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs and desires" (Tosun 2001, 290).

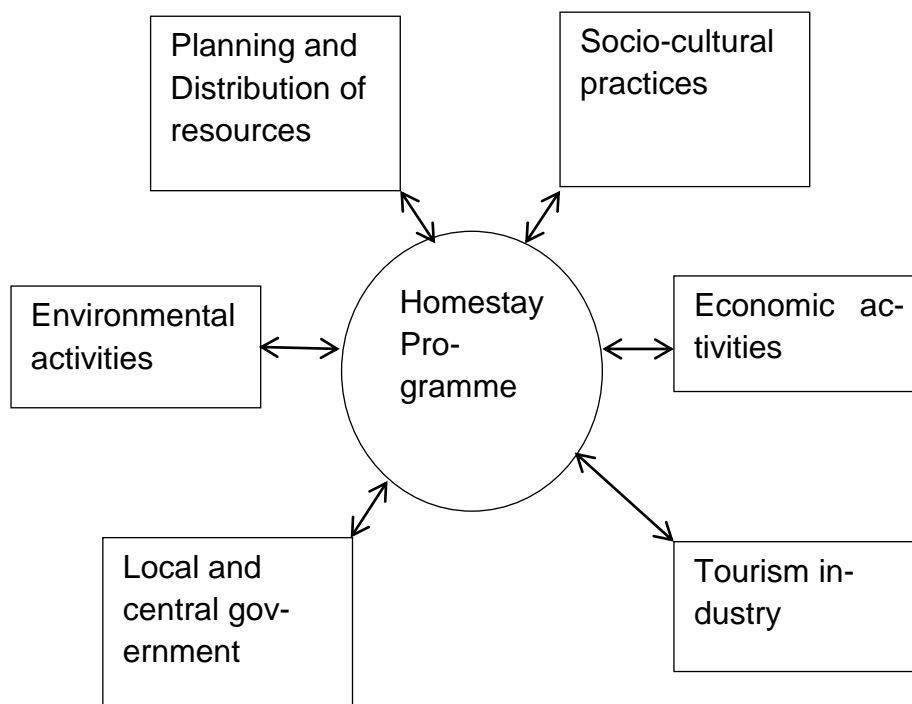
Sustainable tourism is tourism attempting to make as low impact on the environment and local culture as possible, while helping to generate future employment for local people. The aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development brings a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and the tourists themselves. According to the Bruntland definition as its starting points the World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as follows:

Sustainable tourism development meets the need of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes,

and biological diversity, and life support systems. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall & Gilbert 2008, 218)

Sustainable tourism development aims to achieve the balance of impacts (positive and negative) to ensure the quality life style of host community. It should respect the culture and environment of the particular area, its economy and traditions such as indigenous behavior, political and social patterns; involvement of local community during planning, approval and control; and equitable distribution of benefits and cost among the tourism promoters and host community now and the future. Sustainable tourism development should be planned and managed for the protection of the natural environment for future generation; integrating planning with other economic sectors; and ongoing evaluation of impact (Tosun, 2001, 290.)

This research is based on both sustainable development theory and sustainable tourism development theory and it has explored the status of community homestay programme in Nepal. It has analyzed the socio-cultural practice, economic activities, environmental activities, management of resources and the roles of stakeholders. The graph below shows how this research has incorporated the social dimension to describe homestay and its impact on tourism industry and society.



GRAPH 1 Correlation of the Homestay Programme

According to Graph 1, this thesis explores the planning and distribution of local resources. How community people or homestay operator involve during planning i.e. planning for the home stay operation, planning for the local resources and management of resources, planning of marketing and equally distribution of income, resource and more. Similarly, social cultural practices are studied in depth. The interaction between both parties somehow brings something new in community and how such new activities and practices makes a difference in community and how this interaction affects the sustainable development is another part of analysis.

There is no doubt that homestay operators make income by offering their own services to their guest. Income is one part which will make better life standard but sometimes such income brings inflation and other negative impacts together in economy. Here, it may be hard to analyze all the dimensions of economic impacts but major impacts are taken in consideration during analysis. During the implementation of a homestay programme some environmental issues may arise i.e. waste management, deforestation etc. How concerned communities have been addressing such issues is an important part of the thesis. Another important part of the thesis is local government policies, national policies and tourism industries practices for homestay operation and their effort for sustainable tourism development.

3 THE HOMESTAY TOURISM PROGRAMME IN NEPAL

This chapter describes the detail facts of the homestay tourism programme in Nepal. In the following subchapters it will correspondingly be disclosed about the development and history of the homestay programme in Nepal and patterns of homestay. Similarly, the following two subchapters give the detail information of homestay working procedure and its products where it describes about government policy and the management of the homestay tourism programme in Nepal.

3.1 Evolution and development of the homestay programme

As earlier mentioned in the first chapter that the belief of Nepalese society is 'Guest is God,' people used to welcome their guest or travellers for night stay couple of decade before. The host used to serve them as a god with the warm hospitality without any charges in Nepalese rural communities and it still exists in those villages. However after introducing the Mountains of Nepal in 1950s to the outer world, international tourists started to visit in Nepal and tourist are attracted by those beautiful Mountains through the many historic and beautiful untouched villages of Nepal. Gradually the tourism industry took a step forward but the major issue remains dissatisfactory that the tourism income is not distributed equally in all part of the Nepal. Industry centralized within the central region of the Nepal. Therefore to address those issues and for the poverty alleviation from the rural area, government introduced the village tourism for the first time in 1997. Sirubari (Syangja District, west Nepal) and Ghalegaon (Lamjung District, north central Nepal) were the first two villages to implement the concept of community homestay which was a first effort to develop village tourism by the government of Nepal. (Thapa 2010).

During the decade long Maoist insurgency period (1996-2006) tourism industry sharply dropped in Nepal. However after the Comprehensive Peace Accord between the government and the Maoist in 2006, tourism industry of Nepal began to grow again. Government started to formulate the new tourism policy. It implement-

ed the new Tourism Policy in 2008 and has also formulated the 'Tourism vision 2020' Policy to development the sustainable tourism. Toward achieving the goal finally the government has conceptualized the working procedure of homestay programmes in 2010 which addresses the area of sustainable tourism development in Nepal as well as eco- tourism. (HMG/NPC/MOPE 2003)

The government's program 'Nepal Tourism Year 2011' is another major reason to boost up homestay tourism in Nepal. The government's target was to bring One million tourists during the 'Nepal Tourism Year 2011' and according to the official figures, there were 669 hotels including all types of hotels with a total capacity of 26,063 beds in Nepal at that time. If During 'Nepal tourism Year 2011' one million tourist had visited Nepal as expected then it would have meant that there are 822 beds shortage in a daily base. This was the reason why the homestay programme has once again stepped into the spotlight. And even though Nepal Tourism Year was not fully successful it did give motivation to many enterprises, one of them being the development of homestays in various parts of the country including newly developed tourist destinations. The aim was not only to increase the accommodation capacity but the major aim was to make involve the local's participations in tourism activities and improve their income. (Royal Mountain Travel Nepal, December 18, 2011.)

3.2 Patterns of homestay

Merriam Webster Dictionary 2013 defines 'Homestay' as "a stay at a residence by a traveler and especially by a visiting foreign student who is hosted by a local family." The same dictionary also reveals that the term was first used in 1956. Traveller or foreign students during their study period visit another place for specific purpose and they can be hosted in local family where they can get the traditional and cultural hospitality with warm acknowledgement. Normally the students who have limited resources i.e. money can enjoy the home stay at lower prices and can access their need. Rivers define home stay as a term that refers to "visitors renting accommodation from a local family in order to learn local culture, lifestyle, or lan-

guage" (Rivers 1998, 492-500). Here, visitors have specific purpose of learning local cultural believes traditions, research, and community. Lynch points out that:

Homestay is 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/or family who usually live upon the premises and with whom public space is shared to a greater or lesser degree. (Lynch 2003, quoted in Sweeney 2008, 20.)

This is one of the major mechanisms of village tourism which tries to bring all tourism activities together in a particular location. In community based tourism, homestay functions as a part of tourism and it creates an opportunity of interaction and to exchange their cultures between the host family and the tourist. These activities raise awareness based on cultural exchange and respect of the host's culture whereby tourist can get proper hospitality with excellent services (Amran 2003, quoted in Ibrahim, Rasid & Razzaq 2011, 19). Homestay tourism is an evolving branch of the accommodation sector as well as a comprehensive tourism product in tourism industry around the world and especially in developing countries.

The use of the term 'homestay' might be different in different countries. It is connected with the culture of the area. For example, in Australia homestay is particularly related with the farmhouse accommodation whereas in the United Kingdom it is often associated with learning the English language. It has a wide range of accommodations which include host families, private houses, farmhouse stay, small hotels and bed & breakfast, boarding houses, guest houses whose terms are sometimes used similar to the homestay but the only objective description does not carry the significant meaning of the homestay. The associations of the homestay such as private homes, host families who becomes public by sharing their culture to the guest, interaction between the host family and the guest are the significant aspects of the homestay which may be enough to distinguish homestay tourism from other forms of accommodation, such as those hotels resorts etc. where the hosts are the professional staffs (Lynch 2003, 1.)

"Homestay venues as private home in which unused rooms are rented for the purposes of supplementing income and meeting people" (Lanier & Berman 1993,

quoted in Bhuiyan, Siwar, Ismail & Islam 2011, 540-546). Different countries have different patterns of homestay programmes and they describe it with different words, such as second home tourism in Denmark, or paying guest. Similarly, most of the western countries seem practicing homestay studies programmes to foreign students who visit abroad to continue their study in the universities. In a host family students live in their home like a family member and finish their study period. Students experience a family environment even though they are far from their own family (Bhuiyan, Siwar, Ismail & Islam 2011, 540-546.)

Likewise, there are also community homestays where real tourists or guests can stay with the host family for a certain period and explore the knowledge on local values culture and local life style. These kinds of homestay programmes provide pure cultural practice and an opportunity to explore environmental recreation for the visitors of the particular place. Homestay facilities are available in the city areas but most of the community homestays are in the countryside. This thesis focuses on the Community Homestays Tourism Program (rural/countryside homestay) in Nepal which have been appearing as a complete sustainable development tourism product in Nepal. The following subchapter will describe about the homestay programme in Nepal, its working procedure and how it is operating in the particular area.

3.3 Homestay and working procedure in Nepal

According to 'homestay working procedure 2067' Nepal's government has defined homestay as an accommodation where host provides foods, accommodation and other related services to their guest and operates it individually or in community groups. The procedure further classified homestay in two patterns; one urban homestay as a private homestay, and village community homestay programme. Urban homestay programmes are normally operated by individual hosts and they can accommodate only four guests per day so that there will be not much negative business impact on the regular hotel business of the nation. Regarding the village community homestay programme, it can be operated by different individual in the

group where member should be at least 5 host families to operate home stay in particular community. (MCTCA, 2010)

In Nepal, mostly community homestays are operating in attractive small villages where the life is spend still in a traditional and simple way, the place which are still untouched from the everyday hassle of city life. The panoramic landscape, unexplored forests, upland gorges, different indigenous cultures, their unique lifestyle and foods in the villages of Nepal are the greatest interest on the subject and these are the strong foundation of Community Homestay tourism in Nepal. Nepal has great potentiality of Homestay Tourism in most of the villages which are still unexplored. (HTN 2012, 17)

After regulating Homestay Tourism Procedure 2010, the government and the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) have been promoting it to the whole nation. The Homestay Management Committee (HMC) has been established to manage, monitor and guide the Homestay stakeholders. On the community level the Nepal Tourism Board mobilized the village development communities (VDCs), district development committees (DDCs) and local stakeholders such as Women's Group, community level Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Forest Groups to manage homestay facilities and homestay training to ensure the quality of homestay arrangements in rural areas. (MCTCA 2010)

The guidelines of the government direct that the host family should offer the local cultural experience to their guest and serve the local products of foods whatever the host family themselves eat. Homestay operating houses have to ensure a hygienic, clean, safe, peaceful and secure environment with adequate bathroom and toilet facilities. Beside the accommodations facility the community are suggested to welcome the tourist with the full traditional arrangement, entertain the visitors through the local cultural performance, make participation in traditional functions and conserve and develop the other tourism product for the tourist such as community forest for jungle safari, sightseeing, ethnic museum, visit local handicraft center etc. (MCTCA 2010)

In the code of conduct, the guests are also requested to dress in an appropriate environment manner and to participate actively in any community cultural functions or other rituals programs. They are not allowed to give pressure to owner for food, beverage and facilities that are not available. Guests have to eat whatever host Family offered the food in a respectful manner. They are also asked to beware of doing any unusual behavior (such as sexual activities), which is offensive to the local socio-cultural values. Similarly they are asked to enter and leave homes only within the prescribed routine of the host family and any forms of psychotropic drug use is totally forbidden at home or outside home. (MCTCA 2010)

For the registration process, both the community homestay as well as individual homestay can be registered at the department of Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, Government of Nepal or Ministry related to any tourism offices on the local level. Regarding to the community homestay, an agreement paper signed by at least five homestay members, operating on a community basis, National identity cards, the legal paper of property and the recommendations letter from the local authorities should be enclosed with the application. Whereas for the individual homestay property ownership certificate, national identity certificate along with the recommendation letter from the local authorities should be enclosed with the application. If all the requirements are not fulfilled, more time will be given to the related group or person for the improvement and a field visit will be done from the authorized office. (MCTCA 2010)

For the community homestay programme 'homestay committee board' is mandatory for the proper management of the homestay in the community. The role of the homestay committee board is very important. They are assigned to manage the community tourism program and first hospitality activities during guests arrival; equal distribution of homes (host) to the visitors, maintain well a record of the guest and very important is to keep transparent economic account, manage the standard of every homes, conserve the local heritage site and the cultures, organize the cultural program for the tourist, take care about safety and health of the tourist and many more. (MCTCA 2010)

In Nepal commonly accepted homestays are ethically and traditionally made where the host families reside in traditionally built houses and involves in homestay tourism. The Nepalese homestay gives a family atmosphere to the visitors and visitors can get an opportunity to observe or participate in the local social culture environment with having delicious Nepalese cuisine which is totally based on local skill and products. Next chapter describes the core products of the homestay programme.

3.4 The products for homestay programmes

'Homestay' the word is itself a product but in the homestay programme there are more products to be found. Such products are the practices of community and assets of nation. Nepal is a country very rich in nature and the culture which is accepted by whole world. Nepal has a huge potential in wide range of tourism products. Gifted by the beautiful natural and artificial diverse heritages are found across the country. Varieties of cast and ethnic group bring different color in social cultural and traditions. Their festivals feasts and celebrations are unique from each other. Hinduism and Buddhism are followed by the majority where both Mongolian and Aryan cultures are deep-rooted. (Sedai 2006, 116). Even though there are the people with different value and culture but there is a perfect social harmony and tolerance between there cast and ethnic groups. Above mentions facts are the treasures to be enjoyed for tourists taking part in the Homestay Tourism Programme in Nepal.

As like social structure and the culture is the product to be experienced by guests in a community homestay, likewise are all the religious places of Nepal for example the temple of Lord Shiva, Pashupatinath which has great religious impacts on Hindu follower over the south Asian countries, The Birth Place of Lord Buddha, Lumbini which is sacred place for the whole world who believe in Buddhism, many others thousands of holy places, pilgrimage sites temples, old monastery of the mountains are the major attractions which can visited during homestay programme. Biodiversity of Nepal and remoteness, geography or the setting of landscape, fresh, organic and pollutions free village lives can be explore through the

Homestay Tourism Programme. Herbal collection site, hot spring site, spiritual site such as meditation sites, monasteries of the Devin places and many natural sight-seeing sites, short trekking, hiking and camping can be included in homestay programmes on top of other activities.

4 SUSTAINABILITY AND HOMESTAY

The word sustainability in general is entertaining the present needs by securing the rights of future generation at the same time. It simply refers to that every activity and development should consider the rights of future generation. Here, this chapter describes the current demands of sustainable tourism and following sub-chapters describe the interrelation between the aspect of sustainable development and the homestay tourism by pointing out the similar aspects and features of sustainable tourism development.

4.1 Demands of sustainable tourism

In a boarder context the word sustainability comprises the interaction between economy, ecology and social and its sustainable development process. All the three dimensions should be addressed while operating any projects and allocating resources. Without one area i.e. ecology, economy, and society sustainable development is not possible. Thus as other industry the tourism industry could not go further ahead without addressing the issue 'Sustainability'.

The global tourism industry has been gradually heading toward the sustainable tourism development approach but according to the experts at the 19th World travel monitor forum, it still faces many difficulties and obstacles to achieve the proper sustainable development. Experts and the scholar are putting pressure to make tourism industry greener but the customer's demand on sustainable tourism products have not increased significantly yet (ITB World Travel Trend Report 2011/12, 18).

According to the Lipman (former WTTC head/ UNWTO assistant Secretary General/ now Chief Disruption Architect at Greenearth, Travel) the phrase 'travelism' describes the world wide role of travel and tourism industry within the global economy.

'Travelism tomorrow' will have to be based on 'sustainable mobility, sustainable destination and sustainable lifestyle'. All travel products

will be (accommodation, transportations, everything) sustainable and at the end of the day it will be destination controlled because that's where the impacts are left. (ITB World Travel Trend Report 2011/12, 18.)

Global economists forecast continuing international tourism growth, the amount depending on the location. As one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries, this continuous growth will put great pressure on remaining biologically diverse habitats and indigenous cultures, which are often used to support mass tourism. Tourists who promote sustainable tourism are sensitive to these dangers and seek to protect tourist destinations, and to protect tourism as an industry. (ITB World Travel Trend Report 2011/12, 18-19.)

The majority of the people want a sustainable holidays or trip but still many people remain unwilling to pay extra for the sustainable products. However, there are groups of people who are willing to pay for the sustainable products and they are actively interested in booking sustainable trip including the high proportion in the emerging markets. These were the key conclusion of a wide ranging survey presented at the Pisa Forum. (ITB World Travel Trend Report 2011/12, 21.)

It shows that tourists who are fully conscious on sustainability can reduce the impact of tourism in many ways, informing themselves of the culture, politics, and economy of the communities visited, anticipating and respecting local cultures, expectations and assumptions, contributing to intercultural understanding and tolerance, supporting the integrity of local cultures by favoring businesses which conserve cultural heritage and traditional values, supporting local economies by purchasing local goods and participating with small, local businesses, conserving resources by seeking out sustainable business which are environmentally conscious, and by using the least possible amount of non-renewable resources.

Homestay tourism can motivate the micro-economic module in the internal rural area; create employment and economic changes in the rural areas; work for environmental sustainability; it uses natural and human resources of the rural areas for rural development; it exposes the rural culture and nature to the outside world; it helps to protect environmental degradation; and it promotes and improves the lo-

cal agricultural and other industries and can also play an important role in the development of infrastructure in the remote areas (Devkota 2008.)

In general the homestay tourism programme has been seen as the complete sustainable tourism product in the current market. Homestay tourism is the integration of all rural tourism mechanisms for many countries; like trekking, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, health tourism, sports tourism, pro-poor tourism, pleasure and recreational tourism, adventurous tourism, ecotourism, nature-based tourism. Homestay is integration of all the tourism components to develop the tourism industry in a new and the best way for many developing countries (Devkota 2008.)

4.2 Home stay and economic practices

Concept has changed now and home stay programme turns to professional way though it was unprofessional and voluntary in history of Nepal. Community and individual who operate home stay programme start to offer better services to its guest and get some benefit in returns. By offering their own local products and services, operators start to generate income and benefit. According as the widely accepted concept in Nepal homestay operators produce own local foods from their fields and sell it to their guest, offer their own local hospitality and cultures and generate income.

Home stay program is generally practiced in remote and rural areas where the locals promote conservation of areas such as forest, parks, heritage sites, monuments and views. The local community people operates homestay in their own home at low costs and generate profit from visitors by offering local traditional culture and values. "Community involvement in home stay operation provides a job opportunity and improves local quality of life" (Bhuiyan et al. 2011, 541).

According to Dahles the home stay programme become an additional source of income for the owners since they often take on other forms of employment (Ibrahim & Razzaq 2011, 19). After the implementation of home stay programme in Malaysia the handicraft industry of the village has grownup, community started to

use the local hand-made materials such as rattan basket, similarly women and youth generates money by offering local cultures and tradition to their guest. (Ibrahim & Razzaq 2011, 19) In the case of Nepal it has been alternative economic sources for the villagers who run the homestay in their home. "Home stay programme has becomes the noticeable source of income for indigenous women in Lwang" (Thapaliya, Rai, Shrestha, Parajuli & Pandey 2012, 113).

4.3 Home stay and ecological practices

Sustainable tourism not only concerns economic resource conservation and environment protection but also the local community's welfare. Various types of conflicts have been seen while operating hotels and resorts on the local environment and ecosystem. While building huge and stars hotels, usually people cut down the trees and destroy the forest, they removed sand from the beach for construction and produced large amounts of solid and water waste. But, the community people and homestay operators have attracted the tourist by planting trees, protecting the natural resources and traditional culture as well as practice proper waste management (Bhuiyan et al. 2011, 541).

Various ecotourism sites, such as conservation areas and national parks, are situated in rural areas which have huge ecological and biological diversity with fascinating indigenous cultures (Hawkins & Lamoureux, 2001, 63-72). Annapurna conservation area, Langtang conservation area, Chitwan National park are the finest examples of community and ecotourism sites in Nepal. In these places community people are responsible to protect the ecological and biological diversity. The local communities and homestay operator from these places try to attract visitors by promoting natural beauty with its large scale of conservation of forest, heritage site which are situated in the community level. Such activities help to save the ecology for the future generation and it also generates economic activities and increases healthy and wealthy lifestyles.

People from the local community have come to realize how they can attract the tourist in to their village and also believe that the attractions of tourist are the nature and its beauty. In the context of Nepal, community homestay operators and

the regarding villages have learned how to develop such system to protect forest, natural resources and its beauty. They also know the importance of forest which is source of the water, timber, wood & grass for their livelihood “They are grateful for the forest for making their surrounding look clean, green and healthy, as this is what tourists come to see”. (Thapaliya et al. 2012, 107).

4.4 Homestay and cultural practices

Tourists and the host are from different cultures and tradition even though some tourist can visit within their own nation but they have their own cultural practices. While tourists interact with host they exchange their tradition and cultures knowingly and unknowingly. The exchange of cultures brings many changes between both parties and sometimes the strongest cultures influences over the weakest one and may cause negative effects on one cultural practice. The importance of culture and its protection in the correct way is another significant part of every activity. Tourism industry is one of the most interactive industries around the world where most of the time guests and tourists share their practices. The saving of local cultural practices and its sustainability is one of the challenging aspects in the Tourism industry.

Tourism enterprises may be sustainable by dealing with the conservation of local cultures and customs. As most of the homestay programmes are functioning in rural parts they do have unique values, tradition and cultures. The community and village is a social and ethnic group. Community peoples or villagers may not have been tourists and they may not have been exposed to foreign cultures (Bhuiyan et al. 2011, 541). Generally, homestay operators offer local cultural practice while welcoming guests in their place where the guests can get an opportunity to interact with local practices and values.

The homestay programme creates the feelings of unity in the community while doing team work by maintaining the traditional social values within the community. (Ibrahim & Razzaq 2011, 19).The research further revealed that the homestay programme in Malaysia enhance the social cohesion among community people,

strengthen organizational and management capacity of member and increase community recognition from outer world. (Ibrahim & Razzaq 2011, 19)

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives detailed information of the research goals and about the different research methods which are chosen for this thesis. The following subchapters of this chapter discuss the data collection process and the validity and reliability of the outcomes.

5.1 Research goals

This thesis has three major goals which has been mentioned previously briefly in first chapter of the thesis. As mentioned before in the earlier chapter the main aim of this thesis is to outline and explore the contribution of homestay programme for sustainable tourism development in Nepal. To discuss the development and implementation of the homestay programme in Nepal is the first goal of the thesis. It covers the evolution of the homestay in Nepal, its development, government policy on homestay and how it implements in the rural community of Nepal. Secondly, the objective is to analyze three dimensions of sustainable development such as socio-cultural practice, environmental effects and the economic situation of the homestay programme implemented community in Nepal. The final goal is to examine the challenges of the Homestay Programme in Nepal.

5.2 Research methods

This thesis is based on theoretical research. In a general view, research is a process of finding a truth about a subject. It gathers the information or a data of relative subject, it investigates the subject phenomenon, predicts, examines the information and analyzes the findings as well. The research involves developing the new facts or the conclusion of the study subject through the various research methods which leads to gain a wide range of knowledge on a specific subject.

One thing to consider when doing research is that the research is not only a statistics but the view and thoughts behind it, meaning what we want to find out, how we create the ideas and arguments on concepts and how we take the evidence that can support or make more validity for our arguments. In tourism industry research allows to set up a new policy and a strategy on distribution of the products and services by comparing the previous year's distribution status. Similarly, it supports to any other organizations or the governments to track the previous status and to build up a new policy based on previous profit and loss (Veal 2006, 98).

According to Veal, research is the aim in any sciences, as far what we can find which have to be simply and cursorily investigated to know the previously unknown facts to the people. It is to advance human knowledge, to make it more certain or better fitting. "The main aim is to discovery" (Veal 2006, 2.) On the following subchapters it describes the implemented research methods of the thesis to make thesis reliable.

Basically there are two major types of research models which are known as a qualitative and the quantitative modules. The qualitative research model has been used in this thesis through the different qualitative techniques to achieve the overall aim of the thesis. The term of 'qualitative research' it starts with the assumptions and with a general view. So that it begins before the statistical process or other resources of quantification. The qualitative research is about the persons' views and the lives, their experiences, emotions as well as social movements or human problems, cultural phenomena and interactions between them. It may use the quantitative data to identify the background of the study but the major part of the analysis is interpretative. It can gather the data from the means of any qualitative research techniques such as interviews and observations. (Strauss& Corbin 1998, 10, 11)

This thesis has implemented the textual analysis techniques and the case study research techniques to emphasize the arguments of the thesis. While adopting textual analysis method, it has interpreted different reliable documents, journals, press releases, books and some data as well. On the other hand it has interpreted

and analyzed the several related case studies of the Homestay programme in Nepal.

These days textual analysis is the new and popular procedure for many researchers. The way of gathering information about the needed subject, allows us to know how the other people make sense on the subject matter. This methodology gathers the data or information by understanding the other peoples' view, how they make a sense, those who are from the different background and the culture. In order to interpret a depth of reality of the subject matter, textual analysis helps to analysis the way of the thinking of the particular cultures at the particular time by making limitations in our own sense-making practice and the advantages is by seeing the varieties way of sense in which it is possible to find out the truth. (Mckee 2003, 3.)

In qualitative research method case study is one of the research techniques as well as an object of the study or a product of the inquiry. With this approach it explores a case or multiple cases over time through detailed observation. It involves an in depth data collection by adopting multiple sources of information. For example: interviews, observations, audiovisual materials, documents and reports. The case study is distinguished by the size of case or it may involves or the several or a group or an entire community. (Creswell 2007, 74)

5.3 Research reliability and validity

Reliability means to test and evaluate the data in research to see if the data is reliable or not. It provides the quality in any kind of research and a good qualitative research gives clear pictures of subjects matter. Similarly, "Validity is the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied" (Veal 2006, 41). It is hard to find the exact and same data in tourism which is valid as in social science. The figures and numbers always remains same in every case and the fact of science is also same in every case but the feelings, test and choice of people may differ somehow from one to another. Thus, result can differ from one to another. But, if the survey or research meets the de-

sired goal with reliable and valid data then it gives the quality. (Validity and Reliability Educational assessment 2012)

Reliability means that the results normally remains same in some extent even in repeated research with different sample of subjects but the subject matter of research should be the similar. (Veal 2006, 41) Thus, we can conclude that the result of the research has to be the exactly the same always even if the researcher uses the different tool to measure. For example, if the color of a person considers once and gets fact, the color has to be the same each time even in the different environment and location. The statistical research has to be the same every time. (Validity and Reliability Educational assessment, 2012)

Validity is a well and wise practice to get real and true findings with best description in qualitative research by the researcher and the participants. It is a kind of research report which is presented by the author. It is a comprehensive description of the study which closes the researcher to participants in the study and adds all the value or accuracy of the study. (Creswell, 2007, .206, 207)

In this research writer checks and cross checks the source of data and compare with other related fact and describe analytically to make data reliable and valid. As writer early mention this thesis is related to tourism with qualitative information, qualitative data may slightly varied from one to another because the person expression and test may differ in different time and situation. Following subchapters disrobe the data collection of the thesis and analysis of the data.

5.4 Data collection and analysis

In any types of research study data collection is an important aspect of the research process. It is a process to get in depth on the study and by analyzing it; we can reach in our goal of the study. There are two types of data collection process, one is quantitative and another is qualitative data. In this thesis, secondary qualitative data has been adopted as a major data collection process and also a secondary quantitative data to support the thesis arguments.

In qualitative research methods, analyzing the textual data and the other multiple forms of data has always been a challenging task for the researcher (Creswell, 2007, 148). Representing the textual data in a form of tables, matrices and analyze it, is the challenging work in qualitative research method. However, the thesis has analyzed by gathering detailed description of the case, facts and classifying it and finally has generalized the data neutrally.

6 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter discusses the existing homestay programmes of Nepal and provides an in-depth interpretation of the homestay programme. The first three subchapters disclose the existing statistical data of the homestay programme, flow of the tourist in homestay in Nepal and the general sample tariff of the homestay packages respectively. In the same way to meet the goal of the thesis, other following subchapters analyze the contribution of homestay for sustainable tourism development through the comprehensive study of four different case studies of homestay programmes in Nepal.

6.1 Number of homestay programmes in Nepal

It is hard to find an exact number of homestay operators in Nepal. There are both registered and unregistered homestay operators existing in Nepal. The Government of Nepal started to register homestay operators in respective places and started to support them according to capacity development activities. The number may be very low while here we only consider registered homestay operators of the Kathmandu valley and other tourism regions of Nepal. As there is not exact number this thesis only includes the data available from Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). According to the NTB there are more than 1000 homestays that have been running all around the nation but only few are registered. According to Bhattarai 2012 there are 164 homestays registered in NTB. But here we find different statistical data available from NTB where the total number of registered homestay operators is mention in following paragraph.

TABLE 1. Number of registered homestay programmes in Nepal (adopted from Nepal Tourism Board 2013)

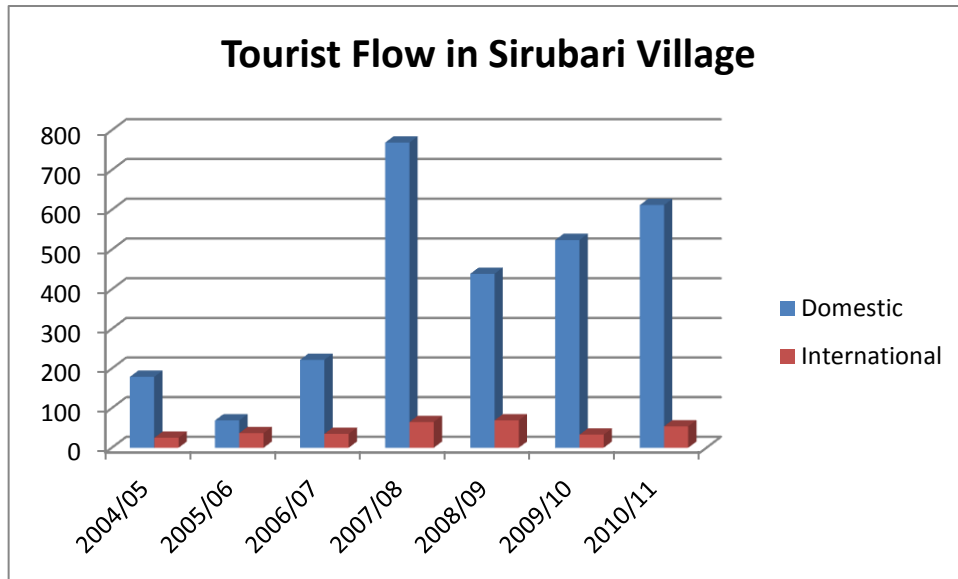
S.N.	District	Number of registered homestays in NTB
1	Kathmandu	43

2	Kaski	33
3	Jhapa (Kakarvitta)	6
4	Rupandehi (Bhairahawa)	8
5	Banke (Nepalgunj)	1

The table 1 shows only registered homestays in Nepal. The number of homestays registered in Kathmandu district is highest with 43 followed by Kaski at 33. There is only one homestay registered in Banke (Nepalgunj). There are some homestays registered in Jhapa (Kakarvitta) and Rupandehi (Bhairahawa). Though there are less than 100 homestays registered in Nepal Tourism Board, we can find more than thousand homestay programmes that are currently smoothly running. Among them one is Bistachap village (Lalitpur district) homestay programme where homestay operators have been providing services to their guests since 1995. There are more than 15 households running homestay programme and provide service for both national and international and the writer of the this thesis was a part of one who got an opportunity to stay in Bistachap in 2007 with national and international guest. Similarly, there are numbers of homestay programme running in many district of Nepal such as Makwanpur, Chitwan, Ilam, Baglung, Lumjung and many more. (Silwal, 2013)

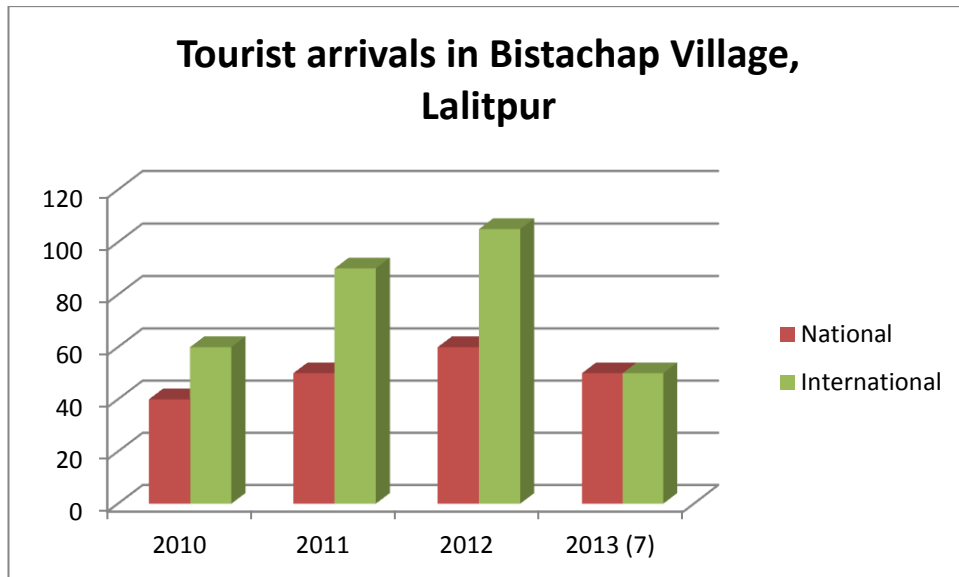
6.2 Tourist flow in homestay programmes in Nepal

Homestay programmes gradually attracts more tourist attention in Nepal. The significant number can be found in homestay programme. Every homestay operators does not have exact recording system and data of visitors but some of them has well managed database system where they updated every visitor's information. In this thesis 2 samples village's data have been taken for the analysis. The following graphs give the general overview of homestay programme visitors in Nepal in different years.



GRAPH 2. Tourist Arrivals in Sirubari Village, (adopted from TDMC Sirubari Village)

The graph 2 shows the number of national and international tourists visit in Sirubari village from 2004 to 2011. Comparatively domestic tourist visit rate is higher than international tourists in each year. Around 150 national and 25 international tourists arrived in 2004 which is drastically increased in 2007/08 with more than 750 national and 70 international. The trend again decreased in 2008/09 and then gradually increased in 2010 and 2011. The rate is very low in between 2004 to 2007 because of Maoist insurgency in Nepal. After the signing the peace agreement with Maoist and Government the rate of incoming tourist in Sirubari has increased again. Similarly the following graph describes the tourist flow in another village called Bistachap. The Bistachap Village is situated in quite near to Kathmandu Nepal.



GRAPH 3. Tourist arrivals in Bistachap Village, (adapted from HMC Bistachap)

According to graph 3 Bistachap village homestay programme received more international tourist than national tourists. In 2010 almost 60 international tourists stayed in Bistachap whereas the national tourist visitor number is only around 45. It because of the location is near from the capital city Kathmandu and many international tourists accss the village easily. The international tourist visit trend slowly increased and reached more than 100 in 2010 and national visitors increased by one quarter in 2010. Only 7 months data is available for the year of 2013 where national and international visitors are equal with 50/50.

6.3 Charges for guests in homestay programmes

There is a not any exact and general overall rate for visitors. The price is varying according to the places and homestay management committee e.g. Sirubari community homestay has their own rate while Ghale Gaun has their own. Similarly, Bistachap community homestay operators' charges 650 NR. (6.5 \$) per person for both national and international visitors and prices may differ with Kavre districts homestay programmes. It seems different because of availability of resources and package. Some of the homestay destinations like Sirubari, Ghalegaun, Kapan offer various packages and other like Bistachap village homestay programme only

offers accommodation and food. The following sample data will give clearer overview of tariff of homestay in different places.

TABLE 2. Sample tariff of homestay programmes in different villages (adapted from official website of Kapan homestay, HMC Bistachap and HMC Argeuli village)

S.N.	Village Homestay	Rate per day	
		Minimum	Maximum
1	Kapan	15 \$	25 \$
2	Bistachap	6.5 \$	7 5 \$
3	Argeuli (Tharu vil- lage)	3.5 \$	4.5 \$

According to table 2 the rate of per day service in different homestay is different. The rate varies with other according to their services and standard of accommodation and food. Another important thing that distinguishes totally is the location and availability. Normally rural and remote village homestay operators charges are very low i.e. Argeuli (Tharu village homestay programme) and urban base homestay programme charges are comparatively high. i.e. Kapan village homestay programme. The flow of tourists in homestay programmes and charges of services help us to analyze their economic impact. The following case studies of specific homestay destinations explore the social, economic, and ecological impact of the homestay and its role in a sustainable development.

6.4 Case studies of homestay programmes in Nepal

6.4.1 Suribari village

Sirubari is the first village of Nepal which has been declared a model village for Homestay tourism since 1997. The village is located in West Nepal in Syangja district with the 1700 meter of high altitude from the sea level. Visitors can enjoy the spectacular view of white snow covered mountains such as Mount Annapurna, Mount Dhaulagiri and Mount fishtail (Machhapuchhre) from the highest point of the village. It can be reached either by jeep or a four-hour trekking route to the village

from the Pokhara Sunaulali highway. The village has successfully preserved the traditional Gurung culture (one of the ethnic groups in Nepal), which can be experienced throughout the village. (Updhyay.2007, 8)



GRAPH 4. Sirubari Village (adapted from Nepal Tourism Directory 2013)

Because of the lack of alternative livelihood options the immigrations trend of youth generations to the urban area and abroad has increased in the village and they have been facing a lack of work force in the village. More than 86% of people in Nepal live in the countryside and seasonal agriculture is the major occupations of the people. So, there is a lack of alternative off season options in the village and because of this people are leaving their villages. Especially the youth forces are migrants from the village for better job and for better education. To tackle with these problems the concept of village tourism was introduced in the first time in Sirubari village where they started to run community homestay programmes for the tourist. The first commercial tourists were 16 Belgian tourists who were taken to Sirubari village in October 1997 (Thapa 2010.)

The village was not much different than other villages of Nepal before the programme was launched in 1997 but its pure unspoiled Gurung culture and traditions, green and clean environment turned into the strong foundations for the village tourism. Sirubari is popular for its attractive landscape, art, culture and tradition. Over the decades, the village has made a significant progress in sustainable tourism by conducting a community homestay programme and also has pro-

gressed in the field of education and health. The most interesting aspect of the Sirubari community homestay programme is the management system. The Tourism Development Management Committee (TDMC) is shared by 9 members including president, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and other 5 members who are representatives from the local mothers group, youth group, father group and other chosen village members. TDMC takes all the responsibility for visitors, from welcoming ceremony for the guests according to their own culture, provide accommodation, and sightseeing and guiding, keep records of the tourist, security of the visitors, to the end farewell ceremony for tourist. It also monitors and manages the quality of food, accommodation, local environment sanitation and hygiene. Guests are not allowed to choose host family themselves instead of this TDMC assigns the visitors to the local host family on a rotational basis (Thapa 2010.)

The houses are mostly built from local materials and are well constructed and comfortable. There are about 60 households offering homestay accommodation as active TDMC members and many other villagers are also directly involved in tourism management such as welcoming visitors, arranging cultural programs etc. It is a very neat and clean village; the accommodation is simple but comfortable with good bedding, as well as clean toilet facilities. Because of the intensive efforts, the entire village looks tremendously clean. Every house member in Sirubari is well trained to welcome the guests with a hearty spirit. The tourist can feel at home by living with these families. Houses are well equipped with all basic facilities expected by the tourists. Separate bathrooms are not available for the tourist but during the winter water is heated by the solar system. This unique experience does not only surprise the foreign guests, but also the domestic visitors. Every evening is special in Sirubari with the amazing hygienic local food and the cultural musical events. The Sirubari welcomed domestic and foreign guests with equal respect. The standard package of 2 nights/3days or 3nights/4days is offered. This is the reason why majority of domestic tourists are attracted to visit the village. Both national and international visitor's opinions are very positive toward the tourism activity in Sirubari village. (Thapa 2010.)

According to the previous study in the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACAP-Ghorpani) shows that in total amount of income of the tourism activities, 76.41%

amount were used to import various goods into the area whereas only 23.59% of amount remained in the destination community. This fact shows that due to the failure of coordination between tourism activities and local production system and the improper management is main cause of the leakage of tourism income. (Banskota & Sharma, 2004 quoted in Thapa 2010). But in Sirubari host family has discourage to use imported package food items and reduced the plastic disposal in the village. The Suribari is an example model village where the people are totally using the local product to serve the guest. More than 95% of the meal that is offered to the guest in Suribari is similar to the taste and variety with the other normal Nepalese people's daily food (Thapa 2010.)

Due to the continuous supply of firewood to meet the growing needs of energy in the mountain tourism destinations they are facing a deforestation problem but the case of Sirubari is different and again the development of tourism has established the alternative energy in the village. According to the survey 93% of the households of Sirubari are using some kinds of alternative energy sources such as solar cooker, biogas and improved cooking stoves in their houses (Thapa 2010.)

The villagers are not only concerned about the local tourism development; because of the strong social bonding among the villagers, they have also given enough attention to conserving the flora and fauna of their area. About 500 hectare lands have been brought under conservation in the village. A forty-five-kilometer long wall has been constructed to protect wildlife, herbs and plants. The award winning dense community forest is one of the tourist attractions where visitors can observations birds and wild animals. A preserved monastery, the Shiva temple, top hill point for the mountain views are the other major attractions of the Sirubari village. (Thapa 2010.)

The benefits from the village tourism in Sirubari have been proved by the different awards gained in various sectors such as tourism, forestry, youth development sectors. In 1993 village was awarded with the 'National Youth Award' because of the active and significant involvement of the youth in development of the village, similarly Sirubari has been awarded with the National Forest Conservation award in 1995 and most important award in Tourism sector the village has won the Pacif-

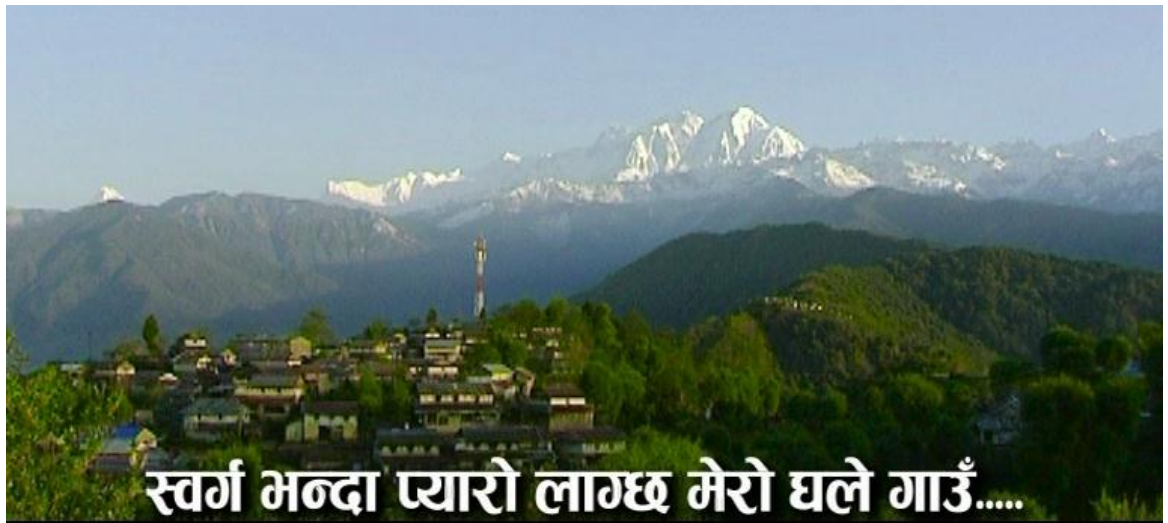
ic Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award in the heritage category in 2001. Likewise the government of Nepal realized the contributions of Sirubari to sustainable mountain development at the local level and the village has been awarded the International Mountain Development Prize on the occasion of International Mountain Day, 2004 (Thapa 2010.)

Sirubari Village is contributing an especial effort for the nation's development as a model village and motivates others to create opportunity in local community instead of going abroad as a low paid worker. Even tourism in Sirubari is in small scale but it can be considered best tourism practice which neither involves central level planning nor an existing tourist destination It is a tourism product developed by the local level through the active participation and coordination between the stakeholders. Sirubari village promotes the village as a tourism destination and makes money in the local community and has also given the lesson learn to the government on how to extend tourism benefit to the rural people of the nation The awards mentioned in the above paragraph proved the success of Sirubari village as a role model for the entire world.

6.4.2 Ghale Gaun village

The touristic District, Lumjung district of Nepal which is located in the area of Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and Ghale gaun is a beautiful village of that area which is also the main entrance point of Annapurna Conservation Area trekking route. This village is situated on 2100 mt. height from the sea level and surrounded by magnificent scenery of Mt. Aunnapurna and Mt. Manaslu, Mt. Fish Tail, Ghanesh Mt. Mt. Lamjung Himalaya ranges. The village is full of natural resources and with the green forest. There are about 115 households where the majority people are Gurung, Ghale and others. The major occupation of the people is agriculture, keep household cattle, and the army job in British army and an Indian army. The village is very rich in natural beauty and the local Gurung culture. The area has been developing as the finest destination for tourism activities for long time where guest and tourist can enjoy with local cultural tradition and local hospitality and the sightseeing. From the district headquarter Besi Sahar, the road lead

to Ghale Gaun but if visitor wants to trek and enjoy the nature they can take the step on foot trail root to the village. (Ghale Gaun Official Documentary 2013)



GRAPH 5. Ghale Gaun, (adapted from GHALE GAUN "THE UNIQUE DESTINATION")

When the tourists reach the village they will find warm traditional welcome from all the homestay operators who are wearing their cultural dress and it helps to makes the tourist feel refreshed then they took the guest in the community office for the refreshment and other arrangement, then after management committee arranges the home for the guest and operators take them to their home. Since before 10 years community has been operating homestay programme and it becomes the one of the model community homestay programme destination in Nepal. In the beginning they were inspired by another Homestay village Sirubari from the Syangja district and lunch community homestay programme for the first time with the 20 households, 2 guests' capacity in each house in total 40 guests' capacity in their village. Now they have well managed community homestay almost in all houses in the village. Similarly the homestay program consumes the local products by offering local organic foods, vegetables, fresh green vegetables, meat to the guest in a reasonable price which are also full of nutrition. The tourist can feel family environment in their home and can experience the traditional lifestyles of Gurung population (Ghale Gaun Official Documentary 2013.)

To attract the national and international tourist the village has been organizing Ghale Gaun Festival program every year and during festival period they introduce their typical cultural things like cultural dances called Sorathi Naach, Krishna Naach, Ghayabru Naach, their local products to the visitors and also preserving their old culture. Another attraction of the village is museum where they have preserved the traditional, household things of Gurung culture, such as traditional dishes, jewelries, cloths, different equipment and things which are used in their daily life. This museum helps to visitor to understand the Gurung culture of the Ghale Gaun more deeply. Similarly, there is a 'Rodi ghar' (The form of entertainment, special house or place where women and men gather in the evening and sing duet songs called Dohori) which is almost diminishing from the Nepali society (Ghale Gaun Official Documentary 2013.)

The Ghale Gaun is a model village of Nepal where the community homestay tourism programme has been implemented by adopting the village tourism concept and it explores community humans' life, their varieties of culture, preserving local traditional life style and environment, maximum utilization of local products and foods. Another characteristic of the Ghale Gaun village is its quickly changeable and cool climate which is interesting for many visitors. The major agriculture product of the village is potato because of its cool climate and rice, millet, maize, beans and seasonal vegetable are the other products which are being consumed through the community homestay programme. It helps to manage the market for their local agriculture products and have created self-employment as well in the village (Ghale Gaun Official Documentary 2013.)

There have been many tourism related training and awareness programs arranged by different organizations such as Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), ACAP, and because of this the people of the village have become professional in homestay implementation. They have realized the necessity of the social unity to develop their own village. There are women's groups and youth's clubs who work together with the homestay management committee for the tourism development in their village as well as to deal with other various social issues and functions. By following in the footsteps of Ghale Gaun Community Homestay Tourism programme, there are many other community homestay programmes that have been established in the

same ACAP area of Lamjung and this facts shows that the program has been increasing nationwide (Ghale Gaun Official Documentary 2013.)

6.4.3 Lwang Ghalel village

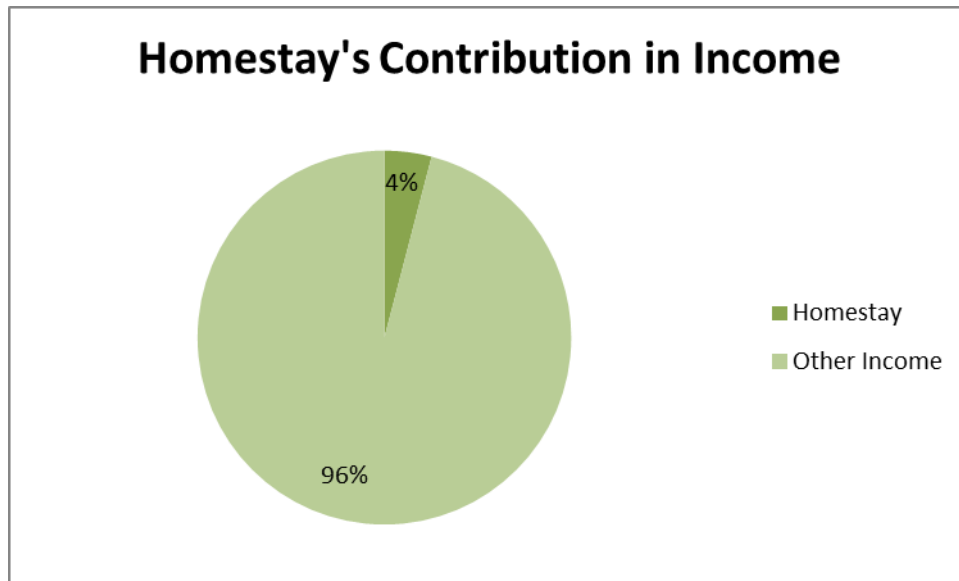
Lwang Ghalel village is one of the best destinations for the homestay tourism programme for many domestic tourists of Nepal as well as for international tourist. This village is about 20-30 km northwest from the Pokhara city, the capital city of tourism in Nepal. The village is directly connected by the road and the Madri River flows from the village which is the major drinking water source for the entire Pokhara city. Most of the people are from the indigenous group with the different culture and practice in this village and the homestay tourism programme has been operating there by some women who are also involved in the Women's Group called 'Aama Samuha'. According to the Homestay Tourism Committee of the Lwang Ghalel, there has been currently running 10 homestays and another 7 are under construction. The Women's group welcomes their guest with the 'Panche Baja' (Five traditional Nepali Musical instruments) and singing a song in to the village. The Women's groups and the Youth group entertain the guest by performing the cultural shows and serve delicious local food with the warm hospitality (Thapaliya et al. 2012,105,120.)

Lwang has a pure pleasing environment. Anyone can go to Lwang and spend some peace and quality time with the homestay families. Visitors can see the view of Pokhara valley from the Lwang village, they can visit Organic Tea garden of Lwang along with the Tea factory, Madri River, can see a panoramic view of many White Mountains including Fishtail Mountain and Annapurna Mountain, Local temples, Buddhist stupa, and the monastery, beautiful green jungle, organic agricultural and wildlife as well. Annapurna conservation Area Project's (ACAP) branch office is also located in the Lwang village. So, guest can enjoy the local Gurung culture and their hospitable environment (Thapaliya et al. 2012, 105-109.)

ACAP has been working this conservation since decade before and it has help to restore a green forest once again in Lwang village and the overall greenery of the

Lwang attracting tourists. The people have learn how much important to save the forest and how can it attract the tourist in to their village. After the homestay programme started in the village and seeing a flow of tourist, they have realized and being more conscious about keeping their environment green, clean and healthy. Homestay operators have learned to keep their households clean to welcome the guest. The Women's groups, who are also homestay operators, are spreading awareness to keep their surrounding clean. They became to know that the tourist love clean environment. Usually the group organize the village cleaning campaign and from every household at least one member should participate in the cleaning campaign. They clean the public area, temples, water resources areas and the surrounding paths to keep their village clean. Lwang village is going to fully Agro forestry settlement. 55% of total household have their own Agro Forestry in the village. They have planted plenty of trees in their lands and even in their croplands which is very positive step to protect the environment. They have been using their own private forest to make furniture for the homestay and fulfilling other demands such as woods, timber for establishment of the homestay in their home. Through this Agro Forestry, they have been cultivating some cash crops like, ginger, tea, coffee, herbs plants and oranges. This helps to improve their economic conditions as well as they are also contributing in carbon reductions by planting trees. (Thapaliya et al. 2012, 106,107,108,109.)

In general, the major occupation of the Lawang village is agriculture and most of the youth has been outside of the country for work. Most of the youth of the Lwang village have been working in British army in United Kingdom or in India and some unskilled youths are in Arabic countries. The major income source of the village is the remittance from the foreign employment. However the homestay programme has become a noticeable source of income for the villagers in Lwang. Homestay operators earn an average of Rs. 27,000 (about 300€) a year depending upon, how many rooms available in their home. Basically this program has helped the women to sustain them economically and socially independent. (Thapaliya et al. 2012, 113-114.)



GRAPH 6. Homestay's contribution in Income (adapted from AMNDP, NEPAL, 2010)

According to the Pie chart (GRAPH 6) 4% of contribution comes from the homestay programme in the total income of homestay operators in Lawang village. Even though, this amount is small but it still plays a significant role for the women's life of the Lwang village. According to the Village Development Committee (VDC) of Lwang, some local people who were migrated from the village to the Pokhara city before have started to come back to the village again to start the homestay in their old houses by renovating their houses, which key information tells that the Homestay program is growing up gradually in the Lwang village (BBC Nepali Se-wa, 2012).

All the homestays are owned and operated by the women of the village in Lwang. The women who have been operating the homestays have become empowered and economically independent at the same time after starting the homestay business. By getting opportunity to communicate and deal with the different tourist their communication skills are improving. They have also got the opportunity to take part in different homestay tourism programme related training programs, organized by the Non-government and Government organizations, which have improved their skills and capabilities. It shows that homestay business has played a vital role to empowering the women of the village. They are making money and it helps to improve their quality of life as well. Those women become inspirations for

the other women in village and now other women are also starting to establish their home for homestay. (Thapaliya et al. 2012, 125,126.)

6.4.4 Argeuli Tharu village

Argeuli VDC is situated near Chitwan National Park, a famous tourist destination for wild life and jungle safari in Nepal. It is also famous for its cultural richness with historic tradition of Tharu, one of the indigenous group or tribe of Terai. The people from this VDC have started to offer homestay facility to the guest who visits to Chitwan National park and Narayani River with their unique cultural practice. Guest not only entertains with wildlife and nature here but also with the cultural and traditional test. One of the projects called Terai Bhuparidhi supported 50 thousand NRS (500€) per household to start a homestay programme and generate income from this programme for local community (Baduwal 2013)

20 households have been operating homestay programme with 80 person capacity in one time. According to the organizer they were able to serve 840 guest including 20 international tourists within a month and generate 0.2 million amount. The president of homestay operation committee Prem Shankar Madania further explained that they offer their local cultural programme (Tharu dance), jungle safari, elephant riding, fishing and Tharu museum to their guest (Baduwal 2013.)

It is a community based homestay programme but they individually served their guest after the decision made by committee to send guest in individual household. They have their own committee to run homestay programme and decide the entire administration activities, booking, placing and distribution of income with mutual agreement. Committee is responsible to collect income and it charges 10 percent administration cost and distribute to all community member. Besides they use their local resources, tradition and hospitality to their guest which promotes local resources and generates incomes. (Baduwal 2013.)

7 CHALLENGES OF HOMESTAY

Regarding the market feasibility of the community homestay programme in Nepal, there is not any problems to develop the tourism it just needs a determined mind, skills, knowledge, and hardworking hands. As we know that Nepal is located between the two giant Asian countries India and China and this geographic situation might be the biggest advantage to development of the tourism in Nepal along with domestic tourist. There is no doubt about natural beauty and the cultural richness of Nepal; it just needs creative skills, experiences and the knowledge to transfer those assets into the tourism products but still there are many challenges to operate community homestays in Nepalese villages.

One of the major challenges of the homestay tourism is its sustainability. In some well-established community homestays such as Sirubari, Lwang Ghale community the homestay programme has been facing the generation gap problem. Most of the homestays are operated by the women's' groups and the old generation whereas young generation are migrating to the city area as well as foreign countries for better education and for higher wage. So it has created a vacuum of the young generation to take up responsibility of the tourism management in their villages. In Sirubari, only the elderly parents have carried out the homestay tourism activities and their children seems not to be interested to entering the tourism sectors. If the current trend continues then the village tourism can collapse within the next two decades. (Thapa 2010).

According to the Prem Sharma, PHD, Central Department of Tribhuvan University, village tourism specialist, Nepal, in the report of "Homestay Tourism in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges", there is lack of skills and knowledge about the tourism management in the village and also the absence of the government mechanism, planning to explore the village tourism and sustainable development of the Homestay Tourism in Nepal. He further added that there has been very poor infrastructure such as roads, health facilities in the rural areas and the lack of feasibility studies and adequate plans. Similarly, community human resources are not enough empowered to carry out the professional tourism activities; there are lack

of promotions and institutional co-ordinations for the development of the Community Homestay. In additions, he explain, from the government side there is no work plan to protection of the indigenious cultures and the heritages which is back bones of the Community Homestay in Nepal, there is not any assessment of the impact on National economy. (HTN 2012, 26)

According to Uday Bhattarai, assistant manager at the NTB in another article, "Homestays Boost Tourism in Rural Nepal" although the government has set up a home-stay regulation, 2067 (2010 A.D), it seems very slow to work out and has not done anything significant to promote the programme. However there is a slow progress to promote homestay tourism programmes but the board has been promoting the homestay programme in various travel fairs and among the tour operators and through the documentaries and websites. (Bhatrai 2012, 3)

Similarly, another nationwide challenge for the homestay tourism is the political situation of the Nepal. With the decade long history of Maoist insurgency, the nation is still facing political instability and there are often strikes by various political parties which directly affects to the tourism industry and it might spread the negative message around the world about the nations as well. There are many challenges to development of the homestay tourism programmes in the Nepalese villages however the various reports shows that it is emerging nationwide and it builds up the optimistic thoughts within the homestay operators and tourism entrepreneurs.

8 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Nepal is one of the culturally diverse and naturally rich country in this universe. It offers different traditional taste on the one hand and panoramic views of wide Himalaya, natural and ecological sites, historical monuments with world heritage sites and religious places on the other hand. Guests from different areas can get very diverse and unique practices with spiritual feeling. Diverse landscape, unity in diverse ethnic group and religious orientation, rare and strange wildlife and birds, the highest and the deepest places, spiritual and religious practices and the way of behaving their guest as god are the strongest aspects of Nepalese tourism. Nepali tourism industry is growing gradually and concepts and practices are also changing respectively.

As other countries we can find various types of tourism practices i.e. mass tourism, cultural tourism, ecological tourism, village tourism, educational tourism and many more. Among them professional village tourism is one of the contemporary concepts of tourism in Nepal. Nepal government also started to promote village tourism and tries to create employment opportunities in rural village and local household. In Nepali context, homestay is one of the concept of village tourism where local or individual offer accommodation facilities along with cultural recreational activities and takes economic benefits in returns. Government of Nepal has started to address the issue of village tourism through different mechanism.

Though there is not separate section to address homestay programme development issues with concern ministry, Nepal Tourism Board has been working on homestay programme promotion and development. There is not any existing specific policies and project with government to operate and develop homestay programme. The homestay working procedure 2067 is the major achievement for village tourism development in Nepal. The working procedures guided and support homestay operators with specific guidance but this is not sufficient to address all the issues of homestay programmes. The government of Nepal has failed to address the challenges of homestay programme development in rural areas. Development of infrastructure, transportation facilities, capacity development activities of

local community and operators are major issues to address to promote homestay programme which is seriously lacking in Nepal.

But now the Government of Nepal and other concern organization has been working together to boost up village tourism activities. They started to train local community people and operators on professional homestay activities. Similarly both parties provide some certain amount of money to initiate the tourism activities in community i.e. "50 thousand support" (Baduwal, 2013) from Terai Bhuparidhi project to Argeuli village (Tharu community) operators. Though these mentioned activities are not sufficient to community people but its helps somehow to promote rural tourism. Rural community members and homestay operators should be equipped on resources management, human resources management, tourism activities, conservation activities, cultural promotion and many more. It is very good that government of Nepal has started to provide grant to local community operators and the plus point is that the homestay business is tax free in Nepal and there is not any charge for the registration also. This fact also encourage to local people to involve in homestay programmes. Government of Nepal has also started to systemize the homestay programme through registration process.

Government tries to systematize homestay programme through registration so it can provide support for the respective community. Currently thousands of homestay have been providing their services in different destinations. According to Civil Aviation Ministry there is a mechanism to register their homestay in local authorities, district level authorities and national level authorities. But the exact number of homestay registration is hard to find. Some publication that acknowledge from NTB gives different data. It shows the lack of updates and collaboration with local authorities. Obviously, it is hard to register every homestay programme in NTB from remote part of Nepal but communication between local authorities and recording system should maintain properly with NTB. Another important part is the record of tourist in homestay. The record of tourist helps government and concern bodies for further planning and supporting in local level.

Because of the trend and tourist interests, homestay programme is one of the emerging products in tourism industry. Gradually it attracts many national and in-

ternational tourists and gets benefit in returns. From the thousands of tourist if only 100 visit in some remotes homestay it would supports the local lives and it can support for better lifestyle. Current recorded data of tourist arrival in local homestay and the emerging trend that attracts more tourists in local level will supports on poverty reduction. Similarly, this small scale activities supports for government's sustainable tourism development policies by building the capacity in rural community.

Homestay programmes create opportunities in local level and raise the income of local community. Local community from Bistachap, Sirubari, Ghale Gaun, Lawan Gahle Gaun use their own resources to operate homestay programme. They produce vegetable in their own farm and sell it to the customers. These activities raise their income level and their lifestyle becomes easier. Though they charge lower to their guest comparatively, they are benefited because they use local resources and make homestay as an alternative source of income. They also sell their traditional practices i.e. Tharu dance (Argeuli VDC), Rodhi (Ghale Gaun). Small level activities that bring various economic activities in rural community provide positive economic impact in community and national level. Similarly, they also save their tradition and cultures in the name of tourism promotion in community will help to save cultures and social practices to our future generation.

In most of the homestay programmes, guests are welcomed in typical traditional ways. Hospitality practice is unique for the guest but very bound. They serve their customers in traditional ways and save their cultures by wearing their own traditional dresses i.e. Gurung dress, Tharu dress, singing traditional songs i.e. Rodhi, Jhaure, traditional dances i.e. Sorathi, tharu. They also practice their traditional rituals practices and thus preserve it. Similarly, it brings social solidarity among the community. They work in group i.e. Sirubari Tourism Development management committee, Tharu village homestay management committee (Argeuli) and decide in group. The mutual decision making system bound them more socially. Another positive impact in society is women empowerment. Some of homestay programme are fully owned by women i.e. Lawang Gahle homestay. The formation of Ama Samuha (Women Group), decision making process, division of task, capacitated women more. Whole society is directly impacted by the programme though some

groups are not directly involved in operation. The group which is not directly involved in operation get opportunities to work for them who get opportunity in various way and benefited.

The perception has changed among the community people to save the environment. Realization of need of forests and greenery in Lawan Ghale can be the example. Similarly, Ghale gaun, Sirubari, Panchase communities has started to save the ecological sites through the conservation of sites. People from such community think that guests like clean, beautiful and greenery environment. Thus they save it which ultimately saves the environment on the one hand and save wild life in another. The clean, greenery and tidy community shows their well manage practice of waste. Plantation activities, waste disposal practices have seen very well manage in community level. Another important thing is the community is also economically benefited through forests. The communities not only protect the greenery but also get benefited through woods, timber, and grass for their cattle, herbs and more. Through such various activities homestay programme become model and emerging destinations for tourists and other stakeholders in Nepal.

Ghale Gaun homestay programme was chosen by ANMDP (Lamichhane, Bhandari & Adhikari 2010) to provide basic knowledge of home stay management, economic management, cultural hospitality and resource management to other 3 village of Nepal. This describes the success of home stay programme and emerging trends. There are other villages also wanted to get benefited through homestay programme which is positive sign for both government and tourism industry. If both of respective authorities can pay their attention soon then it will obviously bring positive changes in the communities.

Though communities and hosts have been contributing their effort on homestay, there are various challenges in front of them. The difficulties of approaching such local community is hard due to lack of transportation facilities, other infrastructure, health facilities and more necessary things for local and tourist. This is crucial part of homestay programme which should be addressed as early as possible. Despite this situation, many rural areas have possibilities for home stay programme which can sustain tourism industry and contributes for sustainable tourism development.

By promoting homestay programme both country and community can address the unemployment and poverty problems and saves traditional practices, cultures, environments. The homestay programme also creates the social solidarity and cohesion in the community and builds leadership skills, management skills and community people capacity on various areas. It can be the one of the important tools for sustainable tourism development in Nepal.

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