

**Community-based Homestay Tourism as a Tool for Community
Empowerment: A Case Study of two Community-managed
Homestay Destinations in Nepal.**

Rabindra Sapkota

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ABSTRACT

Community based tourism (CBT) initiatives, for example, community-based homestay tourism, have been widely appreciated by its supporters for their potential to empower destination communities. Although these kinds of tourism practices are widespread and promoted as a means to empower local people in the destination area, the influence of CBT on local community empowerment remains an underexplored theme. There are some exceptions. For example, Ramos and Prideaux (2014) studied various aspects of empowerment in the context of a Mayan community in Guatemala. Similarly, Dolezal (2015) investigated psychological and social empowerment in rural villages of Indonesia. Nevertheless, empowerment in tourism studies is still an emerging area of inquiry. This is particularly so for Nepal, where there is a lack of critical empirical research investigating whether these initiatives are delivering the expected outcomes. This is despite the fact that the Nepalese government promotes community-based tourism initiatives, for example homestay tourism aggressively as an empowerment tool for the overall development of rural communities. Thus, in order to address this knowledge deficit, this research examines two community-based homestay projects in Nepal. It explores the extent to which community members' feel empowered or disempowered as a result of homestay practices. This study furthers debates about the implementation of CBT initiatives as a tool to empower the host destination community residents by developing an understanding from not only the perspectives of the people directly involved in community-based homestay tourism, but also from the viewpoints of the people not directly involved in CBT projects.

The research was conducted in two community-managed homestay destinations in Nepal, namely Ghale Gaun Community Homestay and Dalla Gaun Community Homestay, which are run by two different indigenous communities in two different geographical locations. The levels of empowerment were assessed by adopting Scheyvens' (1999) empowerment framework, which offers equal emphasis to multiple dimensions of empowerment - economic, social, psychological and political. A qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and participant observation was employed to examine the local peoples' attitudes, feelings and perspectives about how homestay tourism is economically, socially, psychologically and politically empowering or disempowering them.

The evidence suggests some similarities and differences between the two sites. For instance, the residents of both communities identified positive contributions of homestay practice to economic empowerment. However, Ghale Gaun residents demonstrated a higher level of economic empowerment compared to the inhabitants of Dalla Gaun. Socially, Ghale Gaun residents confirmed the social empowerment enhancement in the form of increased cohesiveness, whereas Dalla Gaun residents advised social disempowerment in the form of deteriorating cooperation between each other. In relation to psychological empowerment, both communities acknowledged the support of homestay to promoting their self-esteem and pride in natural, traditional and cultural heritage. Similarly, psychological empowerment was also reflected in the reported increased levels of confidence to engage with people outside of the immediate respective communities. However, these two villages demonstrated remarkable differences in terms of political empowerment as the respondents of Dalla Gaun revealed lower levels of political empowerment in comparison to Ghale Gaun residents. Overall, based on these findings, this thesis concludes that various levels of empowerment can be achieved through community engagement in tourism activities and decision-making processes.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
APEC	The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CBT	Community-based Tourism
GTDMC	Ghale Gaun Tourism Development and Management Committee
IOUTO	International Union of Official Travel Organisation
LDC	Less Developed Country
MCTCA	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PPT	Pro-poor Tourism
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TDMC	Tourism Development and Management Committee
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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1.1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The development of the tourism industry and its impacts on destination communities are perceived both positively and negatively. A number of researchers (e.g. Andereck et al., 2005; Malatji and Mtpauri, 2012; Kim et al., 2013) argue that tourism expansion comes with both opportunities and challenges. Those who acknowledge the positive consequences of tourism development consider that such initiatives can have positive influences on economic, sociocultural, psychological, environmental and political aspects of the inhabitants of destination communities. From an economic point of view, tourism development is recognised for its support of the local economy by generating employment (Dyer et al., 2007; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010a), affording market opportunities for local products (Muganda et al., 2010; Wuleka et al., 2013) and enabling the residents of host communities to identify and benefit from new business opportunities (Ambroz, 2008; Muganda et al., 2010).

Socially, the tourism industry is lauded for its potential to enhance the quality of life in destination communities (Chen, 2000; Gu and Wong, 2006; Byrd et al., 2009) by providing additional or the main means of income (Liu and Var, 1986; Gu and Wong, 2006; Das and Sharma, 2009), improving and introducing new infrastructures and public facilities (Kuvan and Akan, 2005; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010a) and enabling the destination population to live in cleaner surroundings (Yang, 2016). Furthermore, tourism development is also recognised for enhancing the quality of life by expanding recreational resources in host areas (Andereck et al., 2005; Byrd et al., 2009; McDowall and Choi, 2010). From a cultural point of view, the industry is known for being a catalyst towards the preservation, as well as revitalisation, of cultural traditions of a host community (Liu and Var, 1986; Besculides et al., 2002; McDowall and Choi, 2010). This is achieved by creating a market or an audience for them. Psychologically, the development of tourism can help to generate an increase in the community residents' self-esteem and pride in their natural and cultural resources (Scheyvens, 1999; Besculides et al., 2002).

Despite the industry's potential to positively influence various aspects of human life, the development of tourism is equally criticised for being responsible in instigating some adverse consequences for host regions and individuals living in the tourist destinations. From an economic point of view, for instance, the tourism industry can be criticised for economic leakage. The term economic leakage refers to a situation in which income gained by the industry is received mainly outside the destination communities (Wiranatha et al., 2017). Jimura (2018) notes that economic leakage in tourist destination mainly occurs if the local businesses are owned and managed by outsiders. It is argued that a major share of revenue generated by the tourism industry is often taken away by absent businessmen who have invested money in tourist destinations (West and Carrier, 2004; Leslie, 2012; Herawati et al., 2014). In addition, the tourism industry is also condemned for its role in creating an increase in living costs in tourist destinations (Gu and Wong, 2006; McDowall and Choi, 2010; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010a, Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Jimura, 2018). This is because the price of goods and services are likely to increase due to additional demands posed by the growing number of visitors.

From a social point of view, tourism development is blamed for upsetting the social integration of destination communities. Additionally, an influx of people to a place is also thought to introduce various kinds of social ills. For example, a rise in the number of crimes and changes in behaviour by members of the community which are deemed to be socially unacceptable are amongst the most widely cited negative social consequences resulting from tourism development (Liu and Var, 1986; Tosun, 2002; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010b). From a cultural point of view, tourism development is claimed to be grounds for cultural damage (Ko and Stewart, 2002). This is because when local people are exposed to new cultures, there is a possibility that they are more attracted towards them and tend to believe that the cultural practices followed in their communities are of lower standards.

Therefore, in response to the need to address the adverse impacts of the industry, several alternative forms of tourism, such as, for example community-based tourism (CBT), ecotourism, pro-poor tourism (PPT), responsible tourism and many other alternative approaches have been introduced (Christou, 2012). Regmi and Walter (2016) state that the

emergence of alternative forms of tourism is the outcome of efforts to mitigate the negative effects of large-scale tourism practices, which are often referred to as mass tourism. The emphasis on relatively new forms of tourism is to recognise residents of destination communities as the actual beneficiaries of the economic benefits of the industry, which simultaneously addresses the need to preserve community resources. In Christou's (2012) view, alternative approaches like CBT are distinct forms of tourism because unlike mass tourism practices, which usually target quick economic profits with little priority given to environmental and sociocultural impacts, these approaches to tourism interventions concentrate on the long-term economic, socio-cultural and environmental interests of the local communities. Hence, in addition to the economic gains the alternative modalities of tourism give equal importance to the preservation of social, natural and historical properties of tourist destinations (Christou, 2012).

Additionally, CBT as an alternative tourism initiative is also expected to address the expectations of residents of destination communities by involving them directly in the tourism industry. This is because "CBT centres on the involvement of the host community in the planning, construction, maintenance and management aspects of tourism development" (Harwood, 2010: 1910). In the view of Goh (2015), CBT projects are greatly shaped by the host community's needs. Thus, the objectives of alternative tourism approaches including CBT are to empower the members of destination communities so that they have a genuine and meaningful involvement in the project and have control over or ownership of the planning outcomes (Harwood, 2010; Leslie, 2012). This signifies that CBT has been introduced with ambitious goals (Ruiz-Ballesteros and Hernandez-Ramirez, 2010). This is because a community's empowerment and ownership, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and its social and economic development are at the heart of CBT projects (Hiwasaki, 2006; Herath and Munasinghe, 2016).

Concerning CBT and its objective of community empowerment, Abdullah and Said (2014) argue that CBT initiatives are based on the principle of community participation in tourism development programmes, which is expected to facilitate greater community empowerment. This view is supported by Stone (2015: 81) who notes that, "CBT is promoted

for community empowerment by tourism planners, researchers and practitioners.” According to Saayman and Giampiccoli (2016: 154), the goal of empowerment in tourism is to enable “the local community not merely to participate, but also to own and control (and be able to manage) tourism facilities and the development process.” The above discussion illuminates that empowerment in the tourism industry is recognised as a means that allows the residents of destination communities to exercise control over tourism development from its ownership to the execution level. This is in agreement with the view of Colton and Harris (2007: 229) who opine that community empowerment is about “governance, the level of control the community has over projects and community-based sovereignty.” Therefore, empowerment in this sense rejects the notion of pseudo-participation, where community residents are given false impressions of engagement in management level activities but in reality, decision-making power is retained by outsiders. Thus, empowerment within a context of tourism is about genuine involvement of the local community in the industry where the community holds decisive role in how tourism is planned, managed and performed (Murphy, 1985).

Furthermore, empowerment within a context of tourism is also linked with the sustainability of the overall industry. For instance, according to Sofield (2003), community empowerment is vital for tourism development because the sustainability of the industry is difficult to achieve in its absence. This is echoed by Stone (2015: 83) who points out that “community empowerment through community participation is considered an essential step to ensure that CBT development is sustainable at host destinations.” Thus, based on the foregoing discussion it can be argued that community empowerment in the tourism sector is critical both to maximise the local benefits, as well as to realise the industry’s sustainability.

With regards to the impacts of CBT on destination communities, several efforts (e.g. Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Ellis and Sheridan, 2015; Dodds et al., 2018) have been made to gauge how such interventions are contributing towards their goals. This can be recognised in Dangi and Jamal’s (2016) view who note that a growing literature on CBT has emerged over the past three decades. Unfortunately, however, there are limited studies that are focused on exploring the extent of community residents’ empowerment or disempowerment that stems from such initiatives. This is despite the notion of empowerment being much emphasised as

an important means for the sustainability of the industry. Thus, it is fair to say that there is no consistency in the tourism literature. This is because the tourism literature on the one hand suggests that empowerment is a key issue to be focused on to maximise the local benefits and to enhance the industry's viability. On the other hand, there are insufficient studies that are attentive to understanding its outcomes. Boley et al. (2014) point out that despite empowerment and community-based initiatives both being popular terms in the 21st century research on these aspects, particularly in tourism-based empowerment, is in its infancy. This view is supported by Stone (2015) who postulates that although CBT activities are promoted by tourism planners, researchers and practitioners alike, the meaning and reception of community empowerment from the community perspective is little understood. The preceding discussion demonstrates that there is a general lack of research about empowerment in tourism studies to date; thus, it still remains an emerging area of enquiry. This is particularly so for Nepal, where there is a lack of critical evidence-based studies investigating whether these initiatives are delivering the expected goals, despite the Nepalese government promoting CBT aggressively as an empowerment tool for the overall development of rural communities.

Thus, in order to contribute to knowledge about tourism-led empowerment, research for this thesis sets out to investigate how the local community members of two community-owned and community-managed homestay destinations of Nepal have perceived CBT's impacts on their economic, social, psychological and political empowerment. The decision was made based on the researcher's judgement that empowerment within a context of tourism is not only related to community inclusion and economic benefits but also equally associated with social and psychological aspects of a local community. This is consistent with Dighe's (1995) notion of empowerment. Dighe (1995: 41) considers that "empowerment is an all-encompassing term in which a whole range of economic, social and political activities" are integrated. Similarly, Stormquist (1995) states that empowerment as a socio-political concept goes beyond formal political participation and thus, has many facets. Therefore, it is important to consider other manifestations of empowerment besides political involvement.

As far as the tourism industry is concerned, Robinson and Wiltshier (2011: 96) argue that “tourism is by its very nature multi-layered, complex and multidisciplinary.” In a similar vein, Diniz et al. (2014) also believe that tourism being a multi-dimensional activity, affects all aspects of a host community. In the view of Simpson (2008), the changes caused by tourism are manifold. This is because the impacts of tourism by members of destination communities can be felt in different aspects of their life including economic, social, cultural, physical and psychological areas (Jimura, 2011). Therefore, empowerment studies within the context of tourism need to consider the multiple facets of empowerment equitably. Stone (2015: 85) notes that “a community empowerment framework needs to recognise the significance of social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of empowerment equally, rather than focusing on one or some of the dimensions in isolation.” In Ferguson’s (2011: 246) opinion “economic empowerment through tourism work does not automatically translate into a meaningful redress of power relations beyond a relative improvement in economic conditions.” To this end, in order to expand the understandings of empowerment resulting from tourism development beyond the economic angle, this research adopts the empowerment framework developed by Scheyvens (1999) which offers emphasis to both the economic and non-economic expressions of empowerment. Thus, this study contributes further to the debates surrounding the implementation of CBT initiatives as a tool to empower the host destination community residents by developing an understanding from multiple aspects of empowerment.

Given the growing emphasis on issues of sustainability for tourism practices the next section makes the link between some of the key areas highlighted by Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the contribution that empowerment can make through CBT.

1.2. TOURISM AND THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The development of tourism is admired for its role to contribute, directly or indirectly, to achieving all of the SDGs endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015 (United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2017; Siakwah, 2019). The SDGs, which incorporate 17 goals, are known

as the post-2015 development agenda devised by the United Nations for global development up until 2030 (Scheyvens, 2018; Shereni, 2019). The agenda is aimed at addressing “a wide range of environmental, social, economic issues, problems and challenges across most areas of human activity” (Jones et al., 2019: 8).

The tourism industry is considered to be one of the major contributors in the global economy because it is an important means of income, employment and wealth in many countries (Scott et al., 2012; Yazdi et al., 2017). Furthermore, tourism development is also appreciated for its role in sustainable socio-economic development (Siakwah et al., 2019) as it “allows the creation of new jobs and enterprises, supporting infrastructure development, the protection of heritage and cultural values” (Alhowaish, 2016: 1). From an environmental perspective, “tourism can help make residents more aware of the quality of their environment and support its maintenance and, where necessary, improvement” (Yazdi, 2012: 51). This has led a number of tourism researchers to believe that the tourism industry can become an effective vehicle for the realisation of the SDGs due to its potential to generate an extensive variety of positive impacts in different areas beyond the economy, e.g. the environmental as well as social aspects of human life (Jones et al., 2019; Siakwah et al., 2019; Spenceley and Rylance, 2019; Dube, 2020). Francis and Nair (2020: 3) support this view and note that “tourism has great potential to accelerate progress across the SDGs by harnessing the industry’s positive contribution to sustainable development.” The acknowledgement that tourism can become an effective means in attaining the SDGs has led many governments to take steps to promote the development of the tourism industry (Kimbu and Tichaawa, 2018). Consequently, it is argued that the tourism sector can be better placed as a strong partner with essential tools that can perform as a catalyst to contribute to the SDGs than any other industries (UNWTO and UNDP, 2017; Dube, 2020). The UNWTO outlined a roadmap of how tourism can be used to support the attainment of each of the 17 SDGs at the Official Closing Ceremony of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development that took place in 2017 (see Appendix 1 for the tourism industry’s links with the 17 SDGs). Table 1.1 provides an outline of how the tourism industry, particularly CBT, can help to achieve some of the SDGs through having empowered communities.

WTO SDGs	The Tourism Industry's Links to the SDGs	Contribution by Empowerment through CBT
1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism provides income through job creation at local and community levels. It can be linked with national poverty reduction strategies and entrepreneurship. Low skills requirement and local recruitment can empower less favoured groups, particularly youth and women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic empowerment through the creation of employment opportunities and entrepreneurial activities for the local population having low or few skills and marginalised groups within a community e.g. women, girls and elderly people
2: End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism can spur sustainable agriculture by promoting the production and supplies to hotels, and sales of local products to tourists. Agro-tourism can generate additional income while enhancing the value of the tourism experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic empowerment through fostering the tourism industry's linkages with the local agricultural sector
3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax income generated from tourism can be reinvested in health care and services, improving maternal health, reduce child mortality and preventing diseases. Visitors fees collected in protected areas can as well contribute to health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social empowerment by improving the quality of life in destination communities by reinvesting tourism revenue for community development projects
4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness. A skilful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The tourism sector provides opportunities for direct and indirect jobs for youth, women, and those with special needs, who should benefit through educational means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic empowerment through the provision of income generation opportunities for all segments of a community • Psychological empowerment through developing confidence by providing opportunities for education
5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism can empower women, particularly through the provision of direct jobs and income-generation from MMEs in tourism and hospitality related enterprises. Tourism can be a tool for women to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic empowerment by offering both direct and indirect employment opportunities to the marginalised of a community

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological empowerment through developing confidence of the locals to take leading roles in various aspects of society that have potential to influence community life
8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism positive socio-economic impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic empowerment through increased employment opportunities and prospects for economic diversification
10: Reduce inequality within and among countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism can be a powerful tool for reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development by giving people the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Tourism is an effective means for economic integration and diversification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social empowerment by more equal treatment of marginalised segments of a community e. g. women, elderly people and lower castes
16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build inclusive institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As tourism revolves around billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, the sector can foster multicultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. Tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also consolidate peace in post-conflict societies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political empowerment by involving local communities through the establishment of inclusive local organisations to manage tourism activities • Social empowerment through the creation of cohesive societies

Table 1.1. CBT's support to achieve the aim of SDGs by empowerment. (Adapted from UNWTO and UNDP, 2017).

With regards to this thesis, its aim is to explore the extent to which tourism can respond to economic, social, psychological and political aspects of empowerment or cause disempowerment of the people living in destination communities (see section 1.3). Exploring the extent of empowerment within the context of tourism remains an important area of

enquiry because one of the best ways to help achieve the aim of the SDGs is through having empowered communities (see Table 1.1 for how CBT can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by empowerment). Therefore, this thesis focuses on identifying the tourism industry's effectiveness to empower various aspects of the inhabitants of destination communities. To this end, the research for this thesis mainly responds to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16 as these SDGs are closely associated with economic, social, psychological and political aspects of human life. The SDGs are examined through the lens of empowerment because the central aim of this thesis is to assess the different dimensions of empowerment in two different tourism villages in Nepal. The findings are discussed from Chapter 5 to 8.

1.3. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to explore the outcomes of CBT projects with regards to community residents' empowerment in two community-owned and community-managed homestay destinations of Nepal, namely Ghale Gaun Community Homestay (Case Study 1) and Dalla Gaun Community Homestay (Case Study 2). In order to achieve the research aim, the following objectives are identified.

- 1) To investigate, from the perspectives of the local people, how community-based homestay programme influences the empowerment or disempowerment of the residents of Ghale Gaun (Case Study 1).
- 2) To investigate, from the perspectives of the local people, how community-based homestay programme influences the empowerment or disempowerment of the residents of Dalla Gaun (Case Study 2).
- 3) To compare and contrast the consequences of homestay practices of Ghale Gaun (Case Study 1) and Dalla Gaun (Case Study 2) in terms of their effectiveness in empowering or disempowering the members of the respective communities.

1.4. RESEARCH SETTING

1.4.1. The country profile of Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked less developed country (LDC) situated in South Asia. The country sits between two much larger countries in terms of land mass, China and India, which are 64 and 22 times bigger than Nepal respectively. Nepal shares its North border with China, whereas to the East, South and West it is surrounded by India. Figure 1.1 and 1.2 show map of Nepal and its borders.



Figure 1.1. Nepal and its neighbouring countries. (Source: Free world maps, 2019)



Figure 1.2. A country map of Nepal. (Source: Chance for Nepal, 2019)

Topographically, the country is divided into three regions, which include the Himalayan in the north, the Hilly region in the middle and the plain land in the south. All areas are endowed with their own unique landscapes, flora and fauna (Regmi and Walter, 2016). The elevation of the country ranges from 60 metres above sea level to the highest peak in the world, Mount Everest, at 8848 metres. In addition, Nepal is home to some of the world's highest mountains (Regmi and Walter, 2016). Eight out of 14 of the world's highest summits are located in Nepal. Figure 1.3 shows the topographic division of Nepal.

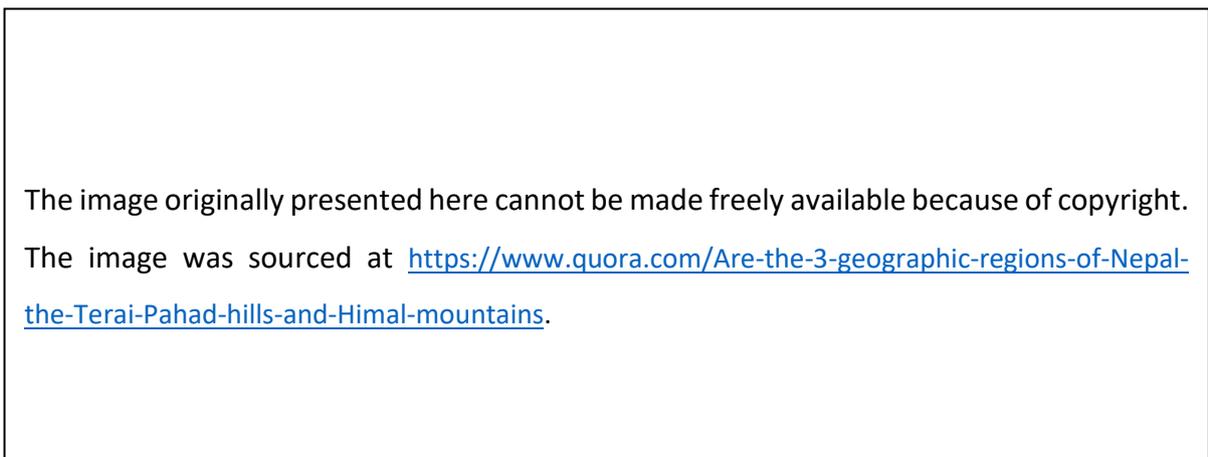


Figure 1.3. Topographic division of Nepal. (Source: Sharma, 2019)

Administratively, the recent constitution of Nepal promulgated in 2015 makes provision for a three-tier governing structure, which incorporates Federal, Provincial and Local governments (Acharya, 2018; Daly et al., 2019). The country is divided into seven provinces. Each province consists of districts which are further sub-divided into a metropolitan city, sub-metropolitan city, urban municipalities and rural municipalities. The metropolitan city, sub-metropolitan city, urban and rural municipalities comprise of wards. The wards are the closest government structure that citizens can access for civil services e. g. birth registration (Acharya, 2018). Figure 1.4 is used to show the administrative structure of Nepal.

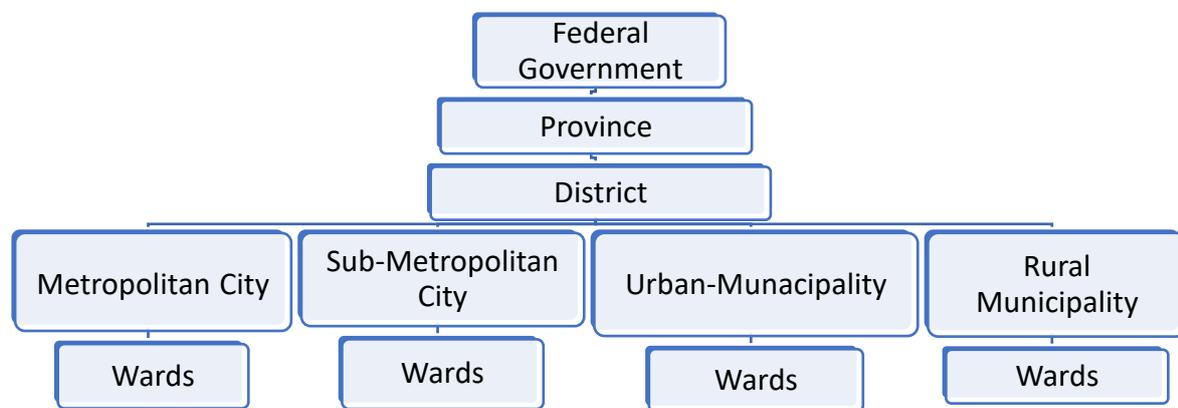


Figure 1.4. Administrative structure of Nepal. (Source: Author)

Similar to its natural diversity, as noted in the preceding discussion, the demography of Nepal also comprises of different groups of ethnic people having their own languages and cultural traditions, thus, making the nation demographically diverse. As such, Nepal is home to 40 ethnic groups with their distinct cultures, languages, and mystical traditions (Regmi and Walter, 2016). In terms of linguistic diversity, Daly et al. (2019) note that there are 124 languages spoken in Nepal. This makes the country rich from a physical, cultural and linguistic point of view. According to both K. C. et al. (2015) and Regmi and Walter (2016) despite the country being economically poor, Nepal is immensely rich in terms of topographic features

and natural and cultural heritage. Thus, due to the nation's natural and socio-cultural riches, Nepal is often referred to as heaven on earth by people in general (Parker, 2005).

An important feature about how Nepalese society is organised is the caste system. A caste in a Nepalese society is defined as a "system of birth-ascribed stratification, of socio-cultural pluralism, and hierarchical interaction" (Berremann, 1967: 70). In a similar vein, Subedi (2014: 2) notes that "caste status is determined, and therefore the systems are perpetuated, by birth. Membership in them is ascribed and unalterable. Individuals in low castes are considered inherently inferior and are related to a disadvantaged position, regardless of their behaviour."

The caste system of Nepal divides Nepalese people into four groups. According to Bhattachan et al. (2009: 2)

(1) *Tagadhari* (sacred thread wearing), including Brahmin-chhetris; (2) *Matawali* (Liquor drinking, i. e. indigenous peoples); (3) *Pani nachalne choi chhito halnu napanne* (Castes from whom water is not acceptable and contact does not require purification by sprinkling of water); and (4) *pani nachalne choi chhito halnu parne* (Castes from whom water is not acceptable and contact with whom requires purification by sprinkling of water), including Sarki, Damai, Kami, Gaine, Sunar, and Pode.

The implications of caste division in real life situations are further explored in more depth in Chapter 8 in relation to the findings for this research. The discussion in the proceeding section provides an overview of tourism development in Nepal.

1.4.2. An overview of tourism development in Nepal

Although tourism is one of the highly regarded business sectors in Nepal (Biswakarma, 2015), the country has a relatively short history of tourism development, making it a recent phenomenon (Thapa, 2003; Bhndari, 2010; Kharel, 2019; Thapa and Panta, 2019). The history of modern tourism in Nepal begins from 1951 when the country was officially opened for international tourism (Brown et al., 1997; Batala et al., 2019). Prior to this, and throughout

much of its history, Nepal had been a country mainly isolated from the rest of the world with access only being granted to the official guests of the ruling classes, a few British recruiting officers for the Gurkha regiments, foreign development officials and scientists (Stevens, 1988; Richer, 2019). However, on opening its borders at the start of the 1950s the Nepalese government started expanding the country's diplomatic ties with the rest of the world, which in turn opened the country for international visitors. Since then, the country has actively sought to develop tourism and has extended a warm welcome to overseas visitors to further this aim. Shrestha and Shrestha (2012: 59) note that since 1950 "the door of Nepal has remained open to foreigners with the desire to visit Nepal in order to develop the tourist industry in the country." According to Sedai (2011), the beginning of the 1950s can be marked as the starting point of tourism development in Nepal when Maurice Herzog and his team scaled Mt. Annapurna on 3 June 1950 and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary first ascended Mt Everest on 29 May 1953. The successful climbing of these two summits gave Nepal unprecedented media attention and played a crucial role in publicising the country as a tourist destination (Shrestha and Shrestha, 2012; Bhandari, 2019).

After introducing the tourism industry into the country, Nepal has undertaken several initiatives from supporting its growth to recognising tourism as a tool for development. For instance, in 1957, The Tourism Development Board, which is now known as the Nepal Tourism Board, was established to execute tourism-related activities, such as promotion, marketing and the branding of the Nepalese tourism destination in both the domestic and international arenas (Batala et al., 2019). In 1959, Nepal obtained membership of the International Union of Official Travel Organisations (IUOTO), which became the UNWTO in 1974. Nepal also became a member country of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in 1963. Nepal's connection with these organisations not only gave the country an exposure to international communities but also aided to develop and improve tourism opportunities, which became significant steps to furthering the country as a tourist destination throughout the world. The open border policy coupled with the country becoming a member of IOUTO and PATA helped to contribute to a steady growth in international tourist arrivals to Nepal (Upadahyaya et al., 2011; Shrestha and Shrestha, 2012).

As there was not an established tourism sector in Nepal prior to the 1950s, there were no policies and plans in place for its development (Stevens, 1988; Shrestha and Shrestha, 2012). However, since approving tourism as an industry, Nepal started formulating its tourism plans and policies. This began in earnest in 1956 following the development of the National Periodic Plan, which reflects the Nepalese government's national vision, plans and policies for development. As Upadhyaya and Sharma (2010: 99) note, "the process of tourism development through the economic planning was initiated from the very first five-year plan (1956-1961)." Sedai (2011: 103) agrees with this view and argues that "the planned development of tourism in Nepal started after 1956 with the starting of the first five-year plan." Following its initial instigation, successive Nepalese governments have taken some remarkable initiatives to support tourism development in the country. For instance, the First Plan (1956-1961) prioritised the creation of tourism specific institutions by founding the Nepal Tourism Development Board, a government Tourism Department at the national level, Tourist Information Centre, and a Hotel and Tourism Training Centre (Sedai, 2011; Regmi and Walter, 2016). During this period, the first tourism development plan of Nepal known as the 'General Plan for the Organisation of Tourism of Nepal' was prepared in 1959 by George Lebec, a French national, with the help of the French Government (Shrestha and Shrestha, 2012). Subsequently, in the second plan (1962-1965) there was an attempt to decentralise tourism beyond Kathmandu by recognising other cities, e. g. Pokhara and Lumbini as tourist destinations because most tourism prior to this period was concentrated in Kathmandu. The Third Plan (1965-1970) focused on easing the complex legal and administrative measures to make the country more welcoming to visitors (Regmi and Walter, 2016). This included loosening of once strict visa policies and the development of infrastructure for customs and immigration formalities (Stevens, 1998; Bhattarai, 2015). During the Fourth Plan (1970-1975), a ten-year Tourism Master Plan 1972 was created, and the Ministry of Tourism was established (Regmi and Walter, 2016). This Tourism Master Plan offered the Nepalese government comprehensive guidelines and direction for developing the tourism sector in the country (Lama, 2016; Subedi, 2018). Dhital (2009: 67) observes that the Tourism Master Plan of Nepal "defined the tourism development programmes and projects for ten years and encouraged private sector to invest in tourism." The Tourism Master plan also

“recommended the development of physical infrastructure such as roads, airports, hotels and resorts in various places of the country and emphasised the public investment in the basic infrastructure like transport and communication, resort development and preservation of cultural and natural resources” (ibid: 67).

The agenda of tourism decentralisation initiated during the Second Plan was further stressed in the Fifth Plan, which ran from 1975 to 1980 (Regmi and Walter, 2016). The Fifth Plan also focused on discouraging the use of imported goods and encouraging indigenous skills in the tourism industry to create jobs for people living in rural areas (Regmi and Walter, 2016). The thrust of the Sixth Plan (1980-1985) was to increase foreign exchange earnings by attracting tourists with high spending power and increasing the length of their stay (Thapa, 2003; Subedi, 2018). The Seventh Plan (1985-1990) puts emphasis on the creation of more employment opportunities “through stimulation of the tourism industry” (Thapa, 2003: 122). Another goal of the Seventh Plan “was to disperse tourists to different regions” (Thapa, 2003: 122), and the expansion of tourism activities from the urban to the rural areas along with giving priority to foreign exchange earnings (Subedi, 2018). Subedi (2018) further remarks that the focus of the Eighth Plan (1992-1997) was to promote the environmental, historical and cultural assets of tourist destinations and to develop links between tourism and other sectors of the economy. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) concentrated on developing “tourism in an integrated and coordinated manner along with other sectors of the economy, identifying it as a new potential economic sector requiring long-term vision” (Subedi, 2018: 378). The Periodic Plans formulated after 2002 have sustained the major initiatives taken in the previous plans (Regmi and Walter, 2016). Despite changes in governments and the deposing of the king in 2008, tourism in Nepal has remained at the forefront of development initiatives.

The development of the tourism sector in Nepal is not only envisioned as a development tool but also promoted as a strategy for reducing poverty pervasive in rural and marginalised areas (Pandey, 2011). This has resulted in the Nepalese government giving utmost priority to CBT programmes with a hope that this form of tourism can become an effective vehicle to develop rural areas of the country, as well as reducing poverty that is widespread in rural communities (Pandey, 2011). As a result, the government of Nepal started

developing CBT with ambitious goals. This can be seen in the introduction of Nepal's Seventh Plan (1985-1990) which was the government's first ever attempt to articulate this form of tourism for equitable socio-economic distribution of the industry's benefits (Pandey, 2011). Afterwards, CBT became one of the major objectives of the Eighth (1992-1977) and Ninth (1997-2002) plans making this form of tourism the new model for the Nepalese tourism industry (Pandey, 2011).

Although the Nepalese government aimed to provide basic social services to address different facets of poverty through policies and strategies set out in its Ninth Plan, it could not yield positive outcomes to large segments of the rural population (Pandey, 2011). Therefore, according to Pandey (2011: 84), "the government tried to tackle poverty through simultaneous strategies: broad-based economic growth; social development; and set of targeted programmes with the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) and Interim Plan (2008-2010)." Additionally, the Nepalese government also developed different approaches and growth targets for the next 20 years to try to solve the problems related to poverty, unemployment, regional imbalances and economic and social deprivation through the publication of a document entitled the 'Tourism Vision 2020' (Pandey, 2011).

The Tourism Vision 2020, acknowledges the tourism industry "as the major contributor to a sustainable Nepal economy, having developed as an attractive, safe, exciting and unique destination through conservation and promotion, leading to equitable distribution of tourism benefits and greater harmony in society" (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MCTCA), 2009: 5). One of the objectives of Vision 2020 is "to expand and extend tourism products and services in new and potential areas of Nepal by enhancing community capacity to participate in tourism activities" (ibid: 9). More importantly, "Vision 2020 formally recognises that priority should be given to community involvement in tourism" (Regmi and Walter, 2016: 4) As such, The Tourism Vision 2020 "aims to diversify tourism products especially by promoting new tourism destinations and activities through community participation, encouraging private sector involvement and developing an integrated tourism infrastructure. Rural tourism, community-based tourism and homestays are particularly given priority in the plan" (Thapa and Panta, 2019: 52).

Despite the efforts of successive Nepalese governments to utilise the tourism industry to serve as a tool to develop rural areas and reduce the widespread poverty found there, the tourism development in Nepal remains mainly concentrated in a few cities and dominated by traditional feudal and powerful elites of ruling classes, such as the 'Ranas' and the 'Shahs' (Upadhyaya et al., 2011). Many researchers (e. g. Upadhyaya et al., 2011; Lama, 2016) argue that tourism in Nepal is one of the sectors of the economy monopolised by the upper-class elites because it is this group in society who reap the major share of the industry's benefits. One of the reasons behind this might be attributed to the legacy of a unitary political structure which remains deeply rooted in the country. Prior to 1992, Nepal's political system was autocratic in the form of an absolute monarchy with a feudal socio-economic system, which was characterised by huge gaps in income between the most wealthy and poorest members of society and lack of good governance (Upadhyaya and Sharma, 2010). The advent of a multi-party democratic parliamentary political system in 1992, which promised a liberal approach to the political system and the creation of regional governments with devolved power (Acharya, 2018), could not bring the desired positive transformations to the existing socio-economic structures, nor could the Nepalese people experience the changes on political behaviour different from the previous performance of centralisation, malpractice, nepotism, favouritism and discrimination (Upadhyaya and Sharma, 2010).

The tourism sector of Nepal like others did not remain untouched from the political structural shortcomings that occurred as the country transitioned from one political system to another (Upadhyaya and Sharma, 2010). Upadhyaya and Upreti (2011: 6) support this view and argue that "as Nepal passed through decades of unitary cum autocratic rules in a feudal socio-economic setup, the notion about tourism as like of other sectors till recently prevailed that tourism business is for maximising profits for investors specially urban based resourceful elite classes and not for resource constrained general rural communities." However, the present government of Nepal seems to be making a constant effort to address issues of inequality. Indeed, The National Tourism Strategic Plan (2016-2025), which is focused on reducing rural poverty by encouraging the rural and marginalised population to

actively participate in community tourism programmes such as homestay, is its recent example (MCTCA, 2016).

Although the Nepalese government has prioritised the community tourism programmes, the outcomes of these approaches are little understood due to the lack of an understanding developed from local perspectives about how such initiatives are perceived at the community level. Therefore, this research is focused on exploring this unexplored in relation to Nepal and underexplored area of research in general. The findings are presented from Chapter 5 to 8.

Having discussed the development of the tourism industry in the context of Nepal, the discussion now turns to the rationale for the case studies used in this research and provides detailed description of case study communities.

1.4.3. Rationalisation of the case studies selection

Two community-managed homestay destinations of Nepal were chosen for analysis with a view that it would allow for a good comparative study. Newing (2011) suggests three different approaches that a researcher can use while selecting cases for comparison. For example, one can choose similar cases or cases with similar characteristics. By contrast, two dissimilar cases having different characteristics can also be compared. The third approach is to choose cases with some similarities and differences of interest to the researcher (ibid). The study site selection for this thesis was influenced by Newing's third method i.e. Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun Community Homestays were chosen on the basis of their similarities and differences, which are outlined below.

Firstly, Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun homestays are similar in the sense that both homestays are run in the communities where most of their population consists of indigenous people. For example, the homestay facilities in Ghale Gaun are run in the village where many of its inhabitants are from Gurung families, who are one of the indigenous people of the Himalayas (Walter et al., 2018). In terms of Dalla Gaun, the village is predominantly inhabited by a Tharu population, another group of indigenous people in Nepal found mainly in the plain

region of the country. Likewise, the similarities between Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun can also be realised in the name of the tourism programmes they are running as both destinations are homestay destinations, thus, offering similar tourism products and services.

Furthermore, Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are similar in terms of their popularity and achievements. For example, Ghale Gaun Homestay is widely known as a model tourism village of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region (Himalayan News Service, 2019). This indicates that the reputation of Ghale Gaun as a successful homestay destination is not limited to within the national boundary, but, rather, acknowledged in at least seven SAARC member countries, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Moreover, Ghale Gaun homestay remains an award-winning role model homestay destination of Nepal (Walter et al., 2018). With regards to Dalla Gaun homestay, the villagers have been able to win the national level award as Dalla Gaun homestay was awarded the title of the best homestay practice of Nepal in 2015. Moreover, the popularity of Dalla Gaun homestay can also be realised as the village was visited by the UK's Prince, Harry in 2016. As a result of the recognition of both villages as renowned homestay destinations, these villages are popular amongst both international and domestic tourists.

In spite of some similarities, Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are different in many ways. For example, the villages are different in terms of their geographical location. Ghale Gaun is situated in the Hilly region and it lies on the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), which is one of the most famous trekking trails of the world (Kanel, 2011). By contrast, Dalla Gaun is located in the plain terrain of the country (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2015). The geographical features of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are presented in more detail in sections 1.4.4 and 1.4.5 respectively.

Another key difference between Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is that these homestays are operated by two different kinds of indigenous people. As mentioned above, Ghale Gaun homestay is run in the village, which is dominated by Gurung people, where many of the homestay operators are Gurung. In terms of Dalla Gaun, the village is mostly inhabited by

Tharu people. As a result, there is a dominance of Tharu families in the homestay operation of Dalla Gaun.

Thirdly, the two villages are different in terms of the time of their establishment for homestay. Ghale Gaun homestay is one of the oldest community-run homestay projects in Nepal with more than 17 years of history. However, Dalla Gaun homestay was initiated in 2011, thus, having shorter history compared to Ghale Gaun.

From a development point of view, Ghale Gaun is comparatively more developed than Dalla Gaun despite its remote geographical location. There is a good provision of basic public facilities, such as electricity, tap water, communication and internet services in Ghale Gaun. In comparison, although the villagers of Dalla Gaun have electricity, there is an absence of other public utilities, for example clean drinking water, telecommunications and internet connectivity.

Having rationalised the selection of study sites, the following sections (1.4.4 and 1.4.5) provide the detailed descriptions of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

1.4.4. Ghale Gaun (Case Study 1)

Ghale Gaun is one of the famous tourism villages of Nepal. It is located in the western part of the country. Geographically, this rural village is situated in the hilly region and lies in the Gandaki province, which was known as Province Number Four before it was given a name. It consists of 11 districts, including Lamjung in which Ghale Gaun lies. Ghale Gaun is about 128 miles (205 kilometres) northwest from the country's capital city Kathmandu and about 78 miles (125 kilometres) northeast of Pokhara, the tourism capital of Nepal. Figure 1.5 shows the administrative division of Gandaki Province.



Figure 1.5. Administrative division of Gandaki Province. (Source: Sharma, 2018).

Ghale Gaun is situated at a height of approximately 2100 metres above sea level. The village is known for views of the Himalayas as it offers spectacular sights of some of the world famous snow-capped Himalayan ranges, for example Machhapuchre, Manaslu, Annapurna, and Lamjung Himal (Kanel, 2011). From Ghale Gaun, one can enjoy the sights of Lamjung Himal (6983m) and Annapurna II (7939m) in the north. In the east, there are Boudha Himal (6974m), Ganesh Himal (7422m) and Manaslu ranges (8163m). Machhapuchhere Himal (6693m) can be seen from the west. The villagers of Ghale Gaun have built a viewing tower from which one can see Himalayas from a close distance. In addition, Ghale Gaun also offers great views of the Sunrise. Figures 1.6 and 1.7 offer views of Himalayas and Sunrise from Ghale Gaun.



Figure 1.6. Himalayan ranges seen from Ghale Gaun. (Source: Author).



Figure 1.7. A view of Sunrise from Ghale Gaun. (Source: Author).

Another important feature of Ghale Gaun is its climate. Due to its location in the hilly region of the country, the temperature of the village is moderate. However, the weather of Ghale Gaun changes quickly. People can enjoy bright sunshine and foggy weather all in one day during their stay in the village.

In terms of the accessibility of the village, a one-day road journey from Kathmandu can take one to Ghale Gaun. There are regular bus services from Kathmandu to Besisahar, the district headquarters of Lamjung. When the tourists reach Besisahar, they need to travel to Ghale Gaun by using small vehicles because the only road that connects Ghale Gaun with Besisahar is narrow and rough and becomes muddy, particularly in the rainy season, thus making the road trip more difficult. Ghale Gaun is only about 19 miles away from Besisahar, however, it usually takes more than three hours by road to reach the village due to the poor quality of the road. Alternatively, there is a trekking route from Besisahar. A trek of about five hours takes one to Ghale Gaun. Trekkers have to pass through hills and mountains with dense forests along the route.

The villagers have constructed a welcome gate at the entrance of the village. Once tourists enter the village, they can see the Ghale Gaun Tourism Development and Management Committee (GTDMC) office in the front, which is the very first contact point between the tourist and the locals. The tourists are first registered in the office by the secretary and allocated homestays. The secretary then informs the homestay operators about the tourist allocation and the respective homestay owners come to the GTDMC office to take tourists to their house. On their way to the homestays, the tourists travel through stone paved narrow village trails. The tourists can see Gurung traditional houses standing on both sides of the trails. Figures 1.8 and 1.9 show the entrance of Ghale Gaun and Gurung traditional houses.



Figure 1.8. The entrance point of Ghale Gaun. (Source: Author)



Figure 1.9. Ghale Gaun village. (Source: Author).

The demography of Ghale Gaun consists of the people of Ghale, Gurung and Biswakarma castes. The people belonging to the Biswakarma caste are also known as Dalit or Kami. The explanation of the caste division described in section 1.4.1 shows that Ghale and Gurung are from the same caste group, Matawali. This is because both occupy the second position in the caste system as they belong to the group of indigenous alcohol-taking castes

(Subedi, 2014). However, Biswakarma, who fall in the Dalit caste group, are positioned at the lowest tier making them as impure and untouchable (Bennett, 2008). Bhattachan et al. (2009: 1) confirm the appalling situation of Dalits in Nepalese societies as they state that “Dalits form the groups which received most inhuman treatment from the high castes through caste-based discrimination, including untouchability.” With regards to this, Subedi (2014) points out that the orthodox high caste Nepalese attitude is that untouchables are regarded as just a service caste. For example, the Kami (blacksmith) exists to work metal, the Damai (tailors) live to sew clothes, the Sarki’s (leather worker) sole purpose on earth is to make shoes. In the view of Pariyar and Lovett (2016: 135), “Dalits in Nepal and elsewhere have endured social segregation, discrimination and oppression, including untouchability, at the hands of non-Dalits particularly the higher castes”. As a result, “Dalits are economically marginalised, politically excluded, and socio-culturally oppressed by upper castes including other indigenous people including Gurungs” (Walter et al., 2018: 52).

The major occupation of the villagers in the pre-homestay period was subsistence farming and livestock rearing (Kanel, 2011). The agriculture-based economy of the village was not adequate to sustain the livelihood of many of the villagers. This made the locals look for alternative sources of income and they were attracted by the homestay practices of Sirubari, which at that time was gaining popularity as the first village to run homestays in Nepal (Kanel, 2011, Walter et al., 2018). Ghale Gaun representatives -led by Village Leader Mr Prem Ghale- visited Sirubari to observe and understand the homestay practices to see if they could start a similar project in their own village. The tour to Sirubari offered the villagers of Ghale Gaun opportunities to learn that such a kind of tourism programme would be suitable for them because they were not required to invest large amounts of money to start homestay facilities. This is because, according to the homestay concept, they could use their own houses to provide accommodation services to the tourists visiting their area. In this case, the villagers only needed to increase some facilities in their houses for their guests. For example, they had to build toilets and buy some extra beds to be used by the tourists.

From the development perspectives, although the village is situated in a remote location, there is the provision of basic public facilities. For example, despite the poor

condition of the road connecting the village with other places, the villagers have regular transportation services from the village to their district headquarters. Similarly, the villagers have easy access to communication and internet facilities. Both mobile service providers of Nepal, Nepal Telecom and Ncell have made mobile telephone facilities available in Ghale Gaun. In addition, the villagers have tap water, public toilet facilities and garbage collection baskets in public areas, which are uncommon in Nepalese rural villages.

However, the village lacks education and health related infrastructure facilities. In terms of education facilities, the villagers have only a primary school in Ghale Gaun. Therefore, for further education beyond primary level the villagers need to go to cities. As a result, many of the parents send their children to the nearest cities such as Besisahar, Kathmandu and Pokhara for education.

With regards to health facilities, there is an absence of hospitals and health centres in Ghale Gaun. The nearest primary medical centre is available in a neighbouring village which is an hour and half walk away. However, the villagers of Ghale Gaun have a scheduled mobile health service. A health worker pays a monthly visit to the village.

Concerning tourism management of Ghale Gaun, all tourism activities are organised and managed from the village level. The villagers have formed a local institution named GTDMC. All tourism undertakings are managed through the GTDMC. The GTDMC comprises of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and representatives from the local Youth Club, Mothers' groups, Fathers' groups and other members who are selected by the villagers on a consensus basis. The consensus is not only sought from the homestay owners but also from the villagers having no direct participation in the homestay tourism programme. The GTDMC sits for a regular meeting at least once a month and when required more often. The central government of Nepal did not have any formal directives, rules and regulations to facilitate and regulate homestay development at the time when the residents of Ghale Gaun introduced a homestay project in their village. The central government of Nepal articulated the homestay directives only in 2010, ten years after the project was implemented in Ghale Gaun. Thus, the villagers were responsible for developing their own local mechanisms to manage homestay development in their village. To this end, all the individual households of

the village who intended running homestay programmes required it to be registered in GTDMC and abide by its guidelines. For example, the registered houses must take it in turns to accommodate tourists because the GTDMC allocates tourists to houses on a rotation basis. Similarly, the tourists visiting Ghale Gaun do not have a choice other than to stay in the houses recommended by the GTDMC. In some circumstances, if tourists have special requirements or if they do not like the facilities of the homestay they have been allotted, they can ask the GTDMC to change house. However, this would not make a substantial difference to the tourists' experiences because all the homestays are of a similar standard with similar facilities in line with the established criteria.

1.4.5. Dalla Gaun (Case Study 2)

Dalla Gaun is a small village consisting of 120 households. It lies in the mid-western part of Nepal. The village is topographically situated in the plain terrain of the country making the village a hot place. The temperature of the village reaches up to 45 degrees centigrade in the summer season, whereas it can drop to nine degrees in the winter.

Administratively, according to the new federal structure of Nepal, Dalla Gaun is in Bardia district of Province Number Five, which is yet to be named. The village lies in the Madhuwan Urban Municipality of the Bardia district. Figure 1.10 shows the administrative division of Province Number Five.

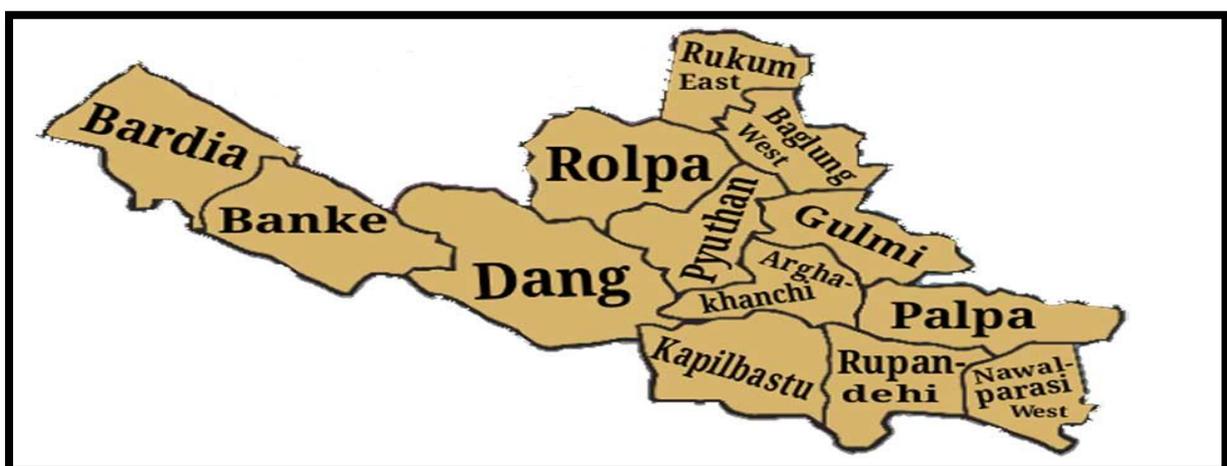


Figure 1.10. Administrative division of Province Number Five. (Source: Bhusal, 2019).

As far as the accessibility of Dalla Gaun is concerned, there are two alternative routes available to travel to Dalla Gaun from the nearest highways. The first route is about 16 miles (26 kilometres) from the East-West highway of Nepal. While following this route, one has to travel both tarred roads and gravel streets. Alternatively, one can travel from Gulariya Bazaar, the district headquarters of the Bardia district. A bus journey of three hours from Gulariya Bazaar takes one to Dalla Gaun.

Although Dalla Gaun is situated in the plain land, there is no easy access to transportation facilities compared to Ghale Gaun. Despite the fact that the village is linked by gravelled roads to the district headquarters and Thakurdwara (The nearest market from Dalla Gaun), there are no regular vehicles available to travel from and to the village. The villagers of Dalla Gaun have only a single outgoing bus from the village in the morning and one incoming in the evening. The nearest place from Dalla Gaun where regular bus services are available is Thakurdwara, which is about three miles (Five kilometres) away from the village. Hence, travel to Dalla Gaun from Thakurdwara is mostly dependent on either using private vehicles or by walking. Around two hour's walks from Thakurdwara takes one to Dalla Gaun.

Demographically, Dalla Gaun is home to different caste groups as the population of the village consists of some people of Chhetri families, so-called Dalit people and the members of the Tharu indigenous group. However, most of the Dalla Gaun population consists of Tharu, who are in the second tier of the caste division practised in the country, which is Matawali (Subedi, 2014). The striking aspect of Dalla Gaun is that despite being a home of the people of three distinct caste backgrounds, there is domination by the Tharu caste in the homestay operation. All homestay facilities, except one, are run by the Tharu families. The Dalit families are not directly involved in any tourism related activities such as hosting guests and participating in cultural performances.

Dalla Gaun is situated near a Community Forest. The increasing numbers of people visiting the community forest to observe the wildlife contributed to the establishment of the homestay business in the village. The sightings of the rare one-horned rhino, wild elephants and Bengal tigers are common in the forest. In order to facilitate the viewings of wildlife, the villagers have built a tree house in the forest, where tourists can spend nights should they

wish. There is a river flowing on one side of the village, where the visitors can also see rhinos playing in the water if they are lucky enough.

There is a welcome gate at the entrance of Dalla Gaun. Once tourists enter into the village, they can see traditional Tharu houses on both sides of the streets. The Tharu houses are mainly made out of mud and cow dung and have either tiled or thatched roofs. The village streets are upgraded to the gravel standard. At the arrival of Dalla Gaun, the villagers can be seen working in their houses or fields. The homestay operators of Dalla Gaun do not have a designated place as a tourism office or a contact point between homestay owners and the tourists. Therefore, most tourists visiting Dalla Gaun come by prior arrangements and homestay owners will be available to receive tourists at an agreed time. If tourists come without prior booking, they can enquire in the homestays on an individual basis following the signposts at the village entrance. The houses offering homestay facilities can be easily recognised as every individual homestay has a signpost placed at its entrance. Image 1.11 shows the welcome gate and images 1.12 and 1.13 illustrate Dalla Gaun homestays.



Figure 1.11. The welcome gate of Dalla Gaun. (Source, Author).



Figure 1.12. A homestay of Dalla Gaun. (Source: Author).



Figure 1.13. A flyer displayed on the wall of a homestay. (Source: Author).

Even though Dalla Gaun is recognised as one of the most famous homestay destinations in Nepal, it is still an underdeveloped village in the sense that the village lacks some basic infrastructure and public facilities. For example, as discussed above, there is no

good transportation system. Similarly, there is no provision of tap water. As a result, the villagers have to rely on a tube well, where drinking water is extracted by pump from an aquifer via an iron pipe. In terms of telecommunication facilities, the village lacked both the landline and mobile services. Some villagers could be seen using mobile phones at the time of data collection for this research, but they complained about the quality of the services. The villagers reported that in most of the places there was no coverage and even if they could get connected the line was unclear due to poor signals.

In terms of education facilities, the villagers have a primary school in the village. The secondary school is located 15 minutes' walk away. However, for higher education the villagers have to travel to the nearest cities.

The homestay practice in Dalla Gaun was initiated in 2011 with the help of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The conceptual, technical and partial financial support in the initial period was provided by the WWF. According to the information from the local people of Dalla Gaun, there were around 120 households in the village when the WWF approached the villagers to initiate homestay tourism; but, only 11 households showed an interest in running homestay facilities. However, the number of households willing to participate in homestay tourism increased gradually as the local villagers could see the positive outcomes associated with the industry. As a result, after two years of its establishment, the number of homestay participants in Dalla Gaun reached 22.

The tourism activities in Dalla Gaun are owned and managed by the villagers themselves. As a result, to organise tourism and decide tourism related issues, the villagers have formed a local organisation named the Tourism Development and Management Committee (TDMC). The TDMC consists of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, vice-secretary and executive members. All representatives are selected by the consensus of the villagers. An election is held if a consensus cannot be reached. The representatives in the committee are not paid any incentives for their tenure. They are also not paid any allowance while attending meetings. The TDMC is also responsible for coordinating with the local and central level government organisations for the promotion of tourism activities in the village. Likewise, the TDMC also works to represent the village, to consult and pressurise the local

and central governments in relation to development required to upgrade the facilities in the tourism village.

As mentioned earlier, the TDMC has the sole responsibility of managing tourism activities in the village, all households running homestay are registered with it. Therefore, the homestay operators cannot accommodate tourists coming to the village without being organised by the TDMC. Once tourists reach Dalla Gaun, they are allotted homestays by the secretary of the TDMC. In order to avoid possible conflicts among homestay operators, the villagers have adopted a rotation system to distribute guests to the homestays. Once, tourists are welcomed into a homestay, they are served with traditional Tharu cuisine in the kitchen as Tharu people do not have the culture of serving food in a separate dining room. Hence, tourists dine in the Tharu traditional kitchen with the members of the host family. The TDMC has developed a standard menu and the food is served accordingly. The pricing of the menu is fixed by the TDMC and homestay owners are not allowed to charge any extra.

1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis takes the form of nine Chapters. The purpose of the first Chapter was to disseminate the relevant information about this study. It explained the research background, rationale for the selection of the topic and study aim and objectives.

Chapters 2 and 3 will serve the purpose of reviewing literature relevant to the research topic. To this end, Chapter 2 begins by offering a discussion of alternative tourism approaches with specific focus on CBT. Following this, a discussion of homestay programme as a form of CBT is presented. Additionally, the Chapter also sheds light on criticisms associated with alternative tourism practices.

Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of empowerment which is followed by the further exploration of how empowerment is perceived as a multi-dimensional construct. This Chapter also contextualises empowerment within the tourism industry.

Chapter 4 is focused on the methodology and methods. The Chapter opens with a discussion of the philosophical underpinnings in which positivist and interpretivist

standpoints are compared. Following this, a thorough discussion of data collection and analysis procedures employed in this thesis is presented. Furthermore, potential ethical issues related to this thesis and the researcher's strategies to avert them are also addressed.

Chapters 5 to 8 discuss the research findings beginning with economic empowerment in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 follows with a discussion of social empowerment and Chapters 7 and 8 discuss psychological and political empowerment respectively.

Chapter 9 is the concluding chapter of the thesis. Thus, this Chapter provides a synopsis of the findings of this research and offers recommendations in relation to the study communities. The Chapter also discusses this thesis's contribution to the existing body of literature. The chapter is brought to a close by suggesting a direction for further research.

Having discussed the way in which this thesis progresses the next Chapter is the first related to the literature review.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This Chapter opens with a discussion of alternative tourism. It explores how this form of tourism is different from the mass tourism model. This is particularly undertaken by laying emphasis on the tourism industry's potential impacts on the economic, social, cultural, environmental and political aspects of the communities where tourism activities take place. The Chapter then proceeds with a consideration of some forms of alternative tourism approaches, such as ecotourism, pro-poor tourism (PPT), volunteer tourism and community-based tourism (CBT), however, with special emphasis on CBT, which is the focus of this thesis. Furthermore, this Chapter also offers a discussion of homestay tourism and its implementation in the Nepalese tourism industry. Additionally, criticisms associated with alternative tourism are also discussed. The Chapter is brought to a close with a summary of its main points.

2.2. EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

Despite tourism development being recognised for bringing a variety of benefits to a destination area, it is widely acknowledged that tourism also comes with a wide range of problems, as a result, the tourism industry is always a phenomenon worthy of criticism (Butler, 1992; Lyons and Wearing, 2008). According to Butler (1992), the tourism industry is promoted as a panacea with a slogan that tourists take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but footprints; however, it is undeniable that tourism may also cause various kinds of negative changes in a destination with different levels of seriousness. Thus, the relevance of the tourism industry particularly mass tourism model, "has been under scrutiny and has often been criticised" (Giampiccoli and Saayman, 2016: 1667). In Scheyvens's (2002: 11) view, the criticisms of mass tourism are predominantly "evident from those who have a strong commitment to the interests of local communities."

Mass tourism is a form of tourism development, where short-term, free market values dominate, and the maximisation of income is paramount (Kiper, 2013), is often portrayed as a model for bad tourism (Weaver and Lawton, 2002). As a result, there are several negative connotations attached to it. For instance, according to Weaver (1995: 595),

Mass tourism... is associated with opposite traits such as accommodations which are large scale and high density, contrived attractions catering almost exclusively to foreign tourists, a seasonal market with hedonistic motivations, high important content and low multipliers, free market forces concerned with short-term profits, minimal consideration of carrying capacities, and lack of local involvement at any substantive level (e. g. ownership of facilities, managers, investment, etc).

Similarly, Shah and Gupta (2000) and Egresi (2016) note that that mass tourism, which is based on standardised products offered to a large number of tourists, does not always bring the best returns to a destination area, but, rather, has significant negative consequences on economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political aspects of destination communities (Scheyvens, 2002; Weaver and Lawton 2002; Devrath and Ranjan, 2016). However, this is not always the case. There are counter arguments that mass tourism does not always necessarily produce negative results in tourist destinations. Also, there are evidences that this form of tourism can become a positive force to deliver desirable effects to tourist destinations and the people living in them (Mason, 2003; Leslie, 2012). Several researchers (e. g. Butler, 1992; Scheyvens, 2002; Weaver and Lawton, 2002; Zapata et al., 2011) argue that in some circumstances mass tourism can become more appropriate than the alternative tourism approaches. The arguments in this regard are explored in section 2.5.

From an economic perspective, mass tourism is held responsible for alienating the residents of destination communities from the opportunities to obtain economic benefits gained by the industry. This is because a major share of tourism income in such kinds of tourism practices is often controlled by multinational companies (West and Carrier, 2004) whose headquarters are mainly located in another, usually developed, country. De Kadt (1992:51) notes that mass tourism “demands large-scale organisation and resources not usually available locally or even in the country; as a result, its rewards flow away to distant

townsfolk or abroad.” Khan (1997) agrees with this view and maintains that mass tourism usually involves people from outside communities in the process of planning, managing and benefitting from the industry. In recognition of this, Herawati et al. (2014:94), argue that due to “travellers staying in hotels, eating and drinking in restaurants, buying souvenirs in the gift shops, and guided by the tour guide from a travel agency” the industry’s economic benefits are primarily reaped by owners of big capital investors. Thus, it is unfortunate that a significant amount of monetary benefits from tourism activities are secured by the people away from the tourist destination, and only a fraction trickles down to a local community (Devrath and Ranjan, 2016).

Furthermore, it has been argued that due to its very nature of being highly commercial and profit-driven, the goal of mass tourism is to maximise the investors’ return without considering the negative consequences that destination communities may come across (Gursoy, et al., 2010; Timothy, 2012). It has been argued that mass tourism “typically resulted in people in positions of power at national or regional levels, as well as foreign conglomerates and financiers, becoming wealthier through economic leakage and corruption, while destination residents often became poorer and were left to bear the burden of social, cultural, economic and environmental costs of tourism” (Timothy, 2012: 73). Consequently, this form of tourism is likely to be condemned for being too absorbed on quick economic returns overlooking the possible costs inflicted on destination communities (Christou, 2012). The economic costs and benefits of tourism are further explored in relation to the findings of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun in Chapter 5.

Mass tourism is also criticised in terms of community members’ involvement in tourism planning and decision-making processes. Mass tourism generally tends to employ a top-down planning approach (Othman et al., 2013), thus, restricting the residents of a destination community from their participation in the industry’s planning and management activities. This is because the top-down planning method usually involves professionals from outside communities who evaluate the situation and decide a suitable course of action to be implemented at the local level (Koster, 2007). With regards to the tourism industry, when the members of destination communities are not empowered to manage the tourism industry in

their locality, the external parties can have a dominating role in tourism development and associated decision-making processes. As a result, the host societies, who should be the actual beneficiaries of the consequences of the industry, have little or no power to influence its construction and direction (Lyons and Wearing, 2008). In such situations, tourism activities are less likely to be organised consistent with the expectations of the locals but more likely to be steered to satisfy the aspirations of people living outside of the community. The issues of community inclusion in tourism development are discussed in more depth in Chapter 8 with examples from the studied communities.

In addition to economic and political reasons, mass tourism is also criticised for its negative impacts on the socio-cultural aspects of a tourist destination. The negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism are about variations in local value systems, moral conducts, behaviour patterns, lifestyles and the overall quality of life for host communities (Pizam and Milman 1986; Hall and Page, 2006). With regards to the socio-cultural impacts of mass tourism, Gursoy et al. (2010) note that this form of tourism has greater potential to cause negative impacts on traditional ways of life of the people of destination communities compared to alternative tourism practices. Christou (2012) agrees with this view and states that one of the main reasons for which mass tourism is criticised is its disregard for the social and cultural costs that a host community needs to bear. The main reason behind such a criticism about mass tourism is its focus on economic achievements ignoring other aspects of destination communities (Giampicoli and Saayman, 2016).

Another element for which mass tourism is criticised is it is likely to give priority to tourists over the residents of destination communities. Khan (1997) considers that mass tourism often puts tourists at the centre of tourism development because such kinds of tourism products are primarily developed to meet the demands of tourists. On the contrary, alternative tourism does not consider tourists being superior to the members of destination communities because this approach to tourism positions both tourists and the host community as equals. This can be evidenced in the view of Dodds et al. (2018) who argue that in alternative tourism products for example CBT, tourists are not prioritised before local people, rather they are perceived as a part of the tourism system. Thus, alternative tourism products need to be planned and implemented based on the principle that tourism planning

should be as much about planning for residents as for visitors (Liu and Wall 2006). This is because “tourism development is a local issue because that is the local level where the action takes place” (Murphy, 1985: 172). In recognition of this, Othman et al. (2013) state that in alternative tourism products destination community is at the heart of the tourism development process. Therefore, due to its equal prominence to both tourists and the people of host communities in alternative tourism approaches, community empowerment, community ownership, conservation of natural and cultural resources and socio-economic development of a destination community are equally important as attending to tourists’ needs and the quality of their experience (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011).

Thus, the growing concerns over costs associated with the mass tourism industry outlined in the preceding discussion are believed to have urged the researchers and tourism developers to look for alternative models of tourism development (Scheyvens, 2002; Lyons and Wearing, 2008; Devrath and Ranjan, 2016). The term alternative tourism is used to refer to several types of tourism development programmes that are alternative to mass tourism. According to Butler (1992), this form of tourism is not alternative to all types of tourism but alternative to the mass tourism. This is echoed by Pigram (1992) who notes that alternative tourism is used to refer to alternatives considered preferable to mass tourism, which are introduced as a “possible vehicle to avert the industry’s negative impacts” (Lenao, 2015: 580). For Graci (2012), alternative tourism emerged as an outcome of an attempt to address the costs resulting from mass tourism. Thus, it is fair to say that alternative forms of tourism came into existence to respond to the need to combat negative concerns accompanying with the mass tourism industry coupled with the hope of delivering more positive results to the residents of destination communities (Scheyvens, 2002; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Honey and Gilpin, 2009; Khot et al., 2015; Dodds et al., 2018). Thus, alternative forms of tourism can be understood as distinctive approaches to tourism because unlike mass tourism these types of tourism products are considered more sensitive to the local surroundings and expected to deliver tangible benefits to local people (Honey and Gilpin, 2009).

Additionally, alternative tourism is acknowledged for being ethical in their relationship with local communities due to it upholding respect for local cultures, livelihoods, and customs as well as laying emphasis on local involvement in tourism development and management

processes (Egresi, 2016). For Queiros (2003: 79), alternative tourism is practiced “by local communities, based on nature and culture, and they attempt to keep tourist numbers to levels that the environment can sustain.” This shows that alternative forms of tourism are “consistent with natural, social, and community values” of a tourist destination (Eadington and Smith, 1992: 3). Thus, due to its focus on community resources, such as their cultural traditions and the natural surroundings alternative tourism approaches can become more committed to the sustainability of the industry. Additionally, because of community engagement being at its centre, alternative tourism allows the locals of a tourist destination to benefit more from its development compared to mass tourism. Thus, it is fair to say that alternative tourism products are preferable to mass tourism because of their nature of prioritising community needs, community involvement and community interests, rather than being based mainly on an agenda of economic growth (Scheyvens, 2002).

The demands for alternative tourism have consistently increased since its inception (Lyons and Wearing, 2008). According to Devrath and Ranjan (2016) the alternative tourism projects have gained momentum worldwide in the recent years due to their emphasis on issues, such as, for example poverty eradication and the preservation of the natural environment and cultural traditions. This has further led to the development of various types of alternative tourism schemes (Scheyvens, 2002; Lyons and Wearing, 2008). The alternative forms of tourism, which can be classified in terms of the services they offer and their objectives, go by a range of names, including ecotourism, PPT, rural tourism, responsible tourism, volunteer tourism, CBT and many more (Scheyvens, 2002; Triarchi and Karamanis, 2017). The following section outlines some of the alternative tourism approaches but with specific concentration on CBT.

2.2.1. Ecotourism

Ecotourism is one of the most widely known alternative tourism approaches. It came into prominence in the mid-1980s (Weaver, 2005). According to Fennell (2008), the idea of ecotourism developed as a result of dissatisfaction with mass tourism which disregarded social and ecological components of a host region. Ceballos-Lascurain (1993: 14), who is acknowledged to have coined the term ecotourism (Wearing and Neil, 2009), defines it as

“travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with specific objectives of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations found in these areas.” By the same token, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2015) describes ecotourism as a type of “responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.” Ecotourism is a particular area of tourism where its centrality rests in “experiencing and learning about nature, its landscape, flora and fauna and the habitats, as well as cultural artefacts from the local community” (Kiper, 2013: 743). These understandings about ecotourism indicate that this approach to tourism incorporates various undertakings, such as travelling to natural areas in order to learn, study or conduct activities that are environmentally friendly as well as understanding the cultural aspects of the population living in and around those areas, which are further expected to produce positive influence on the economic and social development of destination communities (Kiper, 2013). For Isaac (2010), ecotourism is perceived as a means to achieve economic development as well as environmental sustainability of a tourist destination. Consequently, it can be argued that ecotourism by its nature departs from the mass tourism and inclines towards the sustainable development of the industry by laying emphasis on the responsible use of natural and cultural resources of a tourist destination as well as the well-being of its inhabitants.

2.2.2. Pro-poor tourism (PPT)

As discussed in Chapter 1, the development of tourism industry from an economic perspective is both commended and criticised for its impacts on a tourist destination. From positive point of view, according to Ashley et al. (2000), tourism as an economic activity can generate several benefits to the local people. For example, it can provide opportunities for the locals to selling goods and services by bringing consumer to their doorsteps (Ashley et al., 2000; Muganda et al., 2010). Similarly, as a labour-intensive industry, tourism has potential to provide employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled people (Torres and Momsen, 2004), which can play an important role to improve the economic condition of the locals. Thus, if managed properly, tourism can become a powerful agent for bringing positive economic transformation in the lives of the inhabitants of a tourist area (Beeton, 2006).

However, Ashley et al. (2000) and Torres and Momsen (2004) note that although tourism has tremendous potential for economic benefits, the poorest of the destination communities, who bear many of the costs associated with the industry, receive least benefits. This is because tourism industry is often run by foreign investors or local private sectors focused on individual financial interests (Roe and Khanya, 2002; Torres and Momsen, 2004). In the case of the former profits are repatriated overseas, whereas in the case of the latter profits go to urban centres in the country (Ashley et al., 2000). Thus, in order to mitigate this situation and contribute to solving the problems of widespread poverty in developing nations through tourism, an initiative was taken by the UK based organisation Overseas Development Institute (ODI), which coined the term PPT, to refer to the forms of tourism projects that are intended to alleviate the poverty prevailing in tourist destinations (Beeton, 2006). PPT was developed to increase the tourism industry's contribution to poverty reduction by facilitating the linkages between the poor people and tourism businesses so that the impoverished can participate in tourism effectively (Isaac, 2010). This signifies that PPT came in the existence with aspirations to produce net benefits for the least wealthy members of society in terms of economic gain, quality of life and their ability to engage in decision-making processes rather than focusing on the expansion of the sector for the benefits of the affluent (Ashley et al., 2000). Similarly, Triarchi and Karamanis (2017), state that PPT as a tourism approach strives to support for the elimination of poverty by strengthening the connections between the poor people of a tourist destination and tourism businesses. Thus, the goal of PPT is to support the poor people of a destination community by taking their needs and concern into account and placing the poverty reduction strategies at its centre (Scheyvens, 2000; Roe and khanya, 2002).

2.2.3. Volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism emerged as a British and European phenomenon and later was spread around the globe (Wearing and McGehee, 2013). It is one of the fastest developing models of alternative travel experiences respecting dimensions of sustainable tourism (Pompurova et al., 2018). In this form of tourism, tourists visit to a particular place for volunteering in an "organised way to undertake holidays that may involve aiding or alleviating the material

poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society and environment” (Wearing, 2001: 1). According to Pompurova et al. (2018: 2), volunteer tourism is considered as an “integrated organised combination of volunteer service at tourist destination and specific activities ... in home country or abroad and that is beneficial not only for voluntourists, but also for local communities and the environment.” Volunteer tourists generally share meals, sleeping areas, training time, and even travel to and from sites over the excursion, thus, providing many opportunities to exchange information and ties that might not have been possible in mass tourism model (Wearing, 2001; McGhee and Santos, 2005). Furthermore, this form of tourism includes the projects which are intended to serve the societies in need (Triarchi and Karamanis, 2017). Thus, volunteer tourism moves away from mass tourism in the sense that such types of tourism programmes involve actively examining environmental, cultural and social problems of a destination and also bringing solutions to them (McGehee and Santos, 2005).

2. 3. COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM (CBT)

2.3.1. The notion of community within CBT

Developing an operational definition of community is essential for this study because the notion of community is crucial in cultivating the understanding of CBT (Rodrigues and Prideaux, 2018). Further, community is of paramount importance to the tourism industry because it often uses communities as a resource, selling them as products and in this process affecting the lives of everyone living in them (Murphy, 1985).

According to Beeton (2006) and Salazar (2012), the term community is very illusive, vague and difficult to define because community is viewed in different ways by different people, making it a subject to ongoing debate (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). This leads to complexities when trying to define exactly what a particular community is. Mcgettigan et al. (2005: 153) argue that “the term community has been used in such a wide range of contexts that it is almost impossible to offer a workable definition.”

Some researchers (Mann, 2000; Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006) define the term community based on place and argue that a community consists of a group of people within a defined geographical area marked out by a boundary. However, community is not just about the people who share the geographical location but also refers to a group of like-minded people who perceive themselves as having common interests (Urry, 2000; Chapman and Kirk, 2001; Harvorson and Spierling, 2008; Stone and Nyaupane, 2014). According to both Beeton (2006) and Aref (2010), there is the idea of community based on common interests or employment, for example professional communities of doctors and lawyers and so on. Furthermore, with the advent of the internet being part of a community does not require one to live in close proximity or within the same geographical entity as previously. For instance, there are the examples of online communities (Salazar, 2012). These varied understandings about community indicate that the literature has yet to agree on a single encompassing definition for what community means (Rodrigues and Prideaux, 2018).

The preceding discussion about the notion of community implies that community can be defined from at least three different perspectives, 1. As a geographical unit 2. A group of people brought together based on common interests or employment and 3. Social networking of people through online. For this study, community is seen through the lens of the geographical dimension, which according to Mason (2003) is a sensible way of defining community within the context of tourism. Thus, Community for this study means a group of people living in a specific geographical location, which in tourism terms is known as a destination (Beeton, 2006).

2. 3.2. Defining CBT

Section 2.2 explored that CBT as an alternative tourism development was advocated as a way of keeping the local people of destination communities and their economic, cultural, social, environmental and political aspects at the centre of tourism development. However, there is still a lack of a universally agreed definition of CBT because the term CBT is used flexibly by different people and organisations (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Lucchetti and Font, 2013). This results in the emergence of “several definitions and variations of the definitions for CBT”

(Boonratana, 2010: 281). For instance, WWF (2001) defines CBT as a form of tourism development where the local community of a tourist destination has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management and a major proportion of the benefits remains within the community. Herawati et al. (2014) use the term CBT to describe tourism activities that are managed by the members of destination communities. Similarly, Lucchetti and Font (2013) consider CBT as tourism initiatives that emphasise community involvement in the tourism programme and aim to generate benefits for local communities in the developing world by allowing tourists to visit these communities and learn about their culture and environment. Even though there are various definitions of CBT, the essence of this form of tourism approach, according to Hussin and Kunjurman (2014: 45) is, “involving the local community directly in all tourism development projects in an area.”

Table 2.1 demonstrates the complexities of defining CBT and summarises the ideas associated with it.

No.	Definitions of CBT	Sources
1.	CBT refers to “the tourism activities developed and operated, for the most part, by local community members, and certainly with their consent and support.”	Hatton, 1999: 3
2.	“CBT is tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by community, for community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life.”	Suansri, 2003: 14
3.	“CBT normally refers to particular type of small tourism enterprise ... owned and run collectively by a group of residents ... aims to make profit but also has social development objectives.”	Ashley, 2006: 23
4.	“CBT aims to create a more sustainable tourism industry, focusing on the host community in terms of planning and maintaining tourism development.”	Beeton, 2006: 50
5.	Community-based enterprises (CBEs) can be defined as a “sustainable, community-owned and community-based tourism initiative that enhances conservation and in which the local community is fully involved throughout its development and management and they are the main beneficiaries through community development.”	Manyara and Jones, 2007: 737

6.	“A community-based tourism initiative is a project or programme or collective action of a group of people that belong to a community that decided to participate or develop together a small to medium scale local tourism industry”	Spenceley, 2008: 288
7.	“Tourism owned and managed by communities and intended to deliver wider community benefits.”	Goodwin and Santilli, 2009: 12
8.	“CBT is generally small scale and involves interactions between visitor and host community, particularly suited to rural and regional areas. CBT is commonly understood to be managed and owned by the community, for the community.”	The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC, 2010: 2
9.	“CBT development is characterised as a form of locally situated development that uses tourism to generate economic, social and cultural benefits within a community.”	Johnson, 2010: 150
10.	“CBT is different from traditional top-down tourism planning approaches in that it emphasises local input and control over the type, scale and intensity of tourism development.”	Othman et al., 2013: 66

Table 2.1 Definitions of CBT

Despite the variances, the definitions of CBT in the Table 2.1 by different people and organisations share common features. For instance, there is agreement that CBT should prioritise the economic, social, cultural and political welfare of the members of communities residing in and around tourist destinations. Looking from an economic point of view, a local community should be the main beneficiaries of revenues generated through tourism activities. In terms of the socio-cultural aspects, CBT needs to be managed in such a way that tourism activities are welcoming to local social and cultural norms and values so that the traditional and cultural aspects are respected, thus, local people can be motivated to preserve them. From the political perspective, each definition in the Table 2.1 has put emphasis on the significance of local community involvement in tourism planning and management so that tourism development is under the control of the residents of a local community rather than those from outside having a dominate role.

2.4. HOMESTAY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TOURISM APPROACH

Homestay, as a tourism product, refers to a type of accommodation system in a tourist destination where tourists stay in private homes as paying guests and the homeowners provide related services e.g. accommodation and food. Kayat (2010) defines homestay as an act of staying in someone's home together with the family unit that occupies it. For Ranasinghe (2015: 443), homestay is "a living arrangement offered by a host family that involves staying in their furnished house or suite."

The idea of homestay differs from other types of accommodation systems, such as hotels, motels and resorts (Bhuiyan et al., 2013). This is because tourists in homestay accommodation schemes stay in the private homes of the members of destination communities with the host families in a home-like environment, with shared living spaces, facilities, and amenities (Lynch, 2005; Ranasinghe, 2015). However, this is not the case in other forms of accommodation. This is because unlike in homestays, the hosts, such as, for example hotel owners, managers and other employees do not generally have their private homes in the same premises where tourists are accommodated. Also, private spaces including office areas and kitchens are not usually open to the visitors (Ranasinghe, 2015).

By contrast, the distance between tourists and the host families is significantly reduced in homestay programme because both sides can be involved in formal as well as informal interactions. This is because tourists in homestays are not considered to be outsiders, but, rather, they are perceived as members of the host family, as a result, they eat with the host family members and share whatever homestay operators cook for themselves (Gu and Wong, 2006; Jamal et al., 2011). Also, tourists can participate in the daily activities of the hosts making their experiences more interactive than in other forms of tourist accommodation schemes (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015). This is echoed by Karki et al. (2019) who note that the distinctiveness of homestay lies in its fundamental characteristics of offering the tourists a unique local experience and opportunities for direct interaction with the host family. This signifies that homestays allow the tourists to observe and understand various aspects of destination communities from the perspective of an 'insider'. As a result, it

is fair to say that homestay detaches itself from the traditional forms of accommodation practices found in tourist destinations due to its very nature of welcoming the strangers into the private homes as family members.

The emergence of homestay tourism can be understood as a consequence of the growing interests of tourists to learn the cultural traditions and the ways of life of people living in communities different from their own. For Biswakarma (2015), homestay is a form of tourism that is concentrated on closely viewing the culture and lifestyles of host destinations. Gu and Wong (2006: 256) note that the popularity of homestay is increasing among the tourists who are willing to “experience the local culture first-hand, rather than check into more expensive hotels.” The tourists visiting homestays have some specific purposes, such as learning about the local tradition, culture and environment, therefore, the focus of this form of tourism business is to offer the tourists opportunities to interact with local communities, cultural heritage and the natural environment (Bhuiyan et al., 2013). This is echoed by Ismail et al. (2016: 399) who consider that in this form of tourism programme the “visitors stay with foster families and get involved with the normal daily activities in order to experience the lifestyles and the local culture.” Thus, it is fair to say that homestay tourism is suitable for those tourists who are keen to expand their understandings about a destination community’s regular livelihood patterns and their tradition and culture.

Furthermore, the increased opportunities for interaction between hosts and the tourists offered by homestay tourism not only allows the visitors to learn about the local culture but also provides the locals with opportunities to expand their understanding about various places and the features associated with them. For Walter et al. (2018), homestay as an intense contact zone between the visitors and hosts provides a rich learning environment for both. From the tourists’ perspectives, the advantages of staying in homestays exceed the general experience of staying in hotels and resorts to the first-hand experiences of the people of a tourist destination and intimate relationships with the hosts (Kayat, 2010; Agyeiwaah, 2013; Amin and Ibrahim, 2015). This signifies that the direct interactions between tourists and the host families enable both parties to increase their knowledge about each other, which

is less likely to happen in other popular accommodation modalities. Thus, in terms of learning opportunities, this form of tourism can create a win-win situation for both parties involved.

Moreover, from the hosts' point of view, in addition to networking opportunities with the people living outside of their immediate community, homestay development also provides "a source of livelihood, providing income and employments" (Agyeiwaah, 2013: 405). Homestay accommodation ensures the employment opportunities for the locals in their own house, enabling them to earn money besides their usual profession (Ali et al., 2014). Thus, due to its nature of involving the local people directly in tourism businesses homestay facilities have potential to contribute to the financial improvement of the local people (Bhuiyan et al., 2013; Ransinghe, 2015).

Culturally, homestay destinations can become beneficial for the locals because the increased interest of the outsiders to know about local cultural traditions can inspire them to preserve their cultural resources. Thus, homestay can also be supportive to protect and sustain local cultural activities (Ali et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be argued that due to its emphasis on the local traditional and cultural practices and the direct involvement of the people of local communities in the tourism industry, homestay activities can contribute to the financial improvement of the locals as well as maintain the tradition and culture of tourist destinations.

Homestays are generally established in rural areas where there is an absence of other types of accommodation providers, such as hotels and resorts. Thus, this form of tourism has two-fold benefits. Firstly, it can solve the accommodation problems of rural destinations (Bhuiyan et al., 2013). Secondly, it can also become a potential tool to support the improvement of the economic situation of the people of rural areas through their direct participation in providing accommodation facilities to the tourists. The people living in rural areas can easily participate in homestay projects because such facilities can be operated with basic amenities that are already in place, such as, for example houses, traditional food and culture (Guevarra and Rodriguez, 2015).

The above discussion demonstrates that homestay as an alternative form of tourism was mainly developed to deliver the benefits of the industry to the communities where tourism undertakings take place as well as addressing the growing interest to learn about traditions and cultures found in places different from the tourists' home world. However, it should be noted that homestays may not always deliver the expected outcomes. Sood et al. (2017: 333) argue that "host communities may not be able to take advantage of the benefits of homestays and certain sections of the community may get benefits over others." Similarly, due to the nature of the intense contact between the hosts and the guests in this form of tourism, the locals are more likely to be affected by the external cultures, which in the long run can contribute to changes in culture. Thus, like other forms of tourism the negative outcomes of homestay tourism should not be ignored (Mura, 2015: 22). These issues are addressed in section 2.5.

2.4.1. Homestays in Nepal

The Tourism activities in Nepal were mainly concentrated in a few Nepalese cities, such as, for example Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan (Kruk, 2011: 22). According to Sharma (2011: 43), "only about a quarter of visitors to Nepal travel beyond Kathmandu-Pokhara-Chitwan/Lumbini." This shows that revenue generated by the Nepalese tourism industry was not distributed evenly across the country. As a result, the Nepalese rural villages which are characterised as poor and deprived areas could not benefit from tourism development. However, the Tourism Vision 2020 set out by the Government of Nepal in 2009 focused "on generating employment in rural areas; including women and marginalised communities; distributing tourism benefits more broadly at the grassroots level; and enhancing community participation in tourism activities" (Dhakal, 2011: 67). Thus, in accordance with the tourism vision 2020, the Government of Nepal institutionalised the homestay practice as a tourism product through the issue of the document entitled Homestay Operating Guidelines in 2010 (Biswakarma 2015; Bhandari, 2019). The main purpose of promoting homestays in Nepal was to support the people living in the rural sections of the communities to increase their income through their direct participation in the tourism industry.

Although homestay tourism in Nepal officially began in 2010 with the endorsement of the Homestay Operation Guidelines, the practices of homestays in Nepal professionally existed long before. The beginning of homestay tourism in Nepal can be traced back to 1997, when the locals of Sirubari village in the Syangja district started accommodating tourists in their houses (Biswakarma, 2015; Walter et al., 2018). Thus, the villagers of Sirubari are considered the first people to implement the idea of homestay tourism in Nepal. The concept of homestay in the Nepalese context replicates the general notion of homestay which is characterised as accommodation provision in the houses of the residents of a tourist destination. For example, Nepal Government's Homestay Operating Guidelines define homestay as "an accommodation where host provides foods, accommodation and other related services to their guest" (Biswakarma, 2015: 54). Thus, in Nepalese homestays the homestay owners have responsibilities for providing touristic services to the people coming to live in their houses as tourists.

Homestay tourism in Nepal has received significant attention currently making it one of the most popular tourism products. According to Biswakarma (2015), homestay is one of the most admired and adored tourism businesses in Nepal. This is echoed by Karki et al. (2019) who consider that this form of tourism programme has been extremely well received after its official announcement by the Nepalese government through Homestay Operation Guidelines in 2010. According to Keshab Badal, the chairman of the Homestay Association of Nepal, there are around 600 homestays with 1600 bed capacity in operation in Nepal (Puri, 2019). Homestays in Nepal are usually located in the rural settings where most of the locals are dependent on agricultural-based activities for their survival. However, homestays can also be found operating in urban areas of the country.

Homestays are generally practised as CBT products in other countries (Jamal and Othman, 2009; Ismail, 2016). However, in the context of Nepal the situation is different. This is because there are two categories of homestay programmes. The Homestay Operating Guidelines divide Nepalese homestays into two groups. One is urban homestay and the other is the village community homestay programme (Biswakarma, 2015). Urban homestay schemes are run privately by individual households. Therefore, this form of homestay is also

known as private homestay. The hosts of private homestays are allowed to accommodate only four tourists per day (Biswakarma, 2015). By contrast, community homestay programmes, which are the focus of this study, are operated by individuals of a community but as a collective, and there is a requirement for at least five host families to operate homestays in a community (MCTCA, 2010). Also, the homestay operators are obliged to form a local committee that is entrusted with rights to make decisions about the tourism development at the village level. Thus, in the community-owned homestay model, the ownership of the programme by the members of the respective community is ensured and local people are recognised as best equipped to take decisions about local issues (Dhakal, 2011).

However, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, there is a lack of evidence-based studies that are conducted to gauge the actual outcomes of community-managed homestay practices in Nepal. To this end, the research for this thesis examines two Community-run homestay destinations. The findings are discussed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

2.5. CRITICISMS OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

The preceding discussion (Section 2.2) explored the idea that the alternative tourism approach emerged to address the need to respond to the negative impacts associated with the mass tourism model. Therefore, alternative forms of tourism are argued to deliver more positive results in terms of socio-economic, cultural and environmental aspects within a destination community compared to mass tourism. However, according to Weaver and Lawton (2002), the absence of deleterious influences towards the destination communities and their resources in alternative tourism cannot be presumed. Similarly, Scheyvens (2002: 12) considers that “alternative tourism will not always be regarded by communities as more beneficial to them than mass tourism.” These views suggest that the alternative tourism approach is not immune from criticism. Similar to mass tourism, this relatively new approach to the industry is also criticised for a number of reasons including on the bases of economic, socio-cultural, psychological, environmental and political issues for the population of a destination community.

To begin with, like mass tourism, the alternative tourism programmes are also condemned for their interventions in the social and cultural dynamics of tourist destinations. This is despite alternative tourism being introduced with a hope to minimise the negative socio-cultural impacts on destination communities (Scheyvens, 2000). However, alternative tourism in reality can become more harmful than mass tourism in the sense that this form of tourism is culturally more intrusive due to its very nature of probing into the personal space of the residents of destination communities and exposing them to a greater degree to the tourists (Butler, 1992). For Williams (2003: 122), alternative tourism generally “penetrates far deeper into the personal lives of residents than more aloof forms of mass tourism.” This is because many of the alternative tourism programmes are intended to serve the tourist’s desire to understand the destination community’s way of life, cultural traditions associated with them and the natural environment in which they live.

Furthermore, the interactions between tourists and the hosts in alternative forms of tourism are more intense than in the mass tourism model because alternative tourism involves considerable contact between the host population and tourists in the hosts’ private space, for example, in a home compared to a hotel lobby (Butler, 1992). This can become a stimulant to, “cause socio-cultural stress by being overly intrusive in their desire to experience backstage lifestyle over a prolonged period of time” (Weaver and Lawton, 2002: 367). As such, according to Scheyvens (2002: 207) “mass tourism could actually be perceived as less culturally invasive by a local community if it involves busloads of tourists coming to them once a day for a cultural performance and to buy and then returning to their hotels, rather than cultural tourism whereby outsiders stay in their homes for a few days.” This signifies that alternative tourism programmes can become more exploitative than mass tourism in relation to a community’s culture due to the direct and concentrated contact between the host communities and tourists.

In terms of its economic impacts, it has been argued that alternative tourism can become less preferable to local communities than mass tourism. This is because due to its characteristics of operating on a small and medium size scale, alternative tourism produces less monetary benefits than large-scale mass tourism for the local people (Mason, 2003;

Gursoy et al., 2010; Leslie, 2012; Egresi, 2016; Prince and Ioannides, 2017). In Sayeda's (2017: 31) opinion "when the income gained from tourism activities are considered, the concept of mass tourism always comes forefront." The locals of destination communities do not always necessarily consider alternative tourism more beneficial to them than mass tourism because they are more likely to prefer mass tourism if it brings comparatively higher economic advantages to their community (Scheyvens, 2002; Weaver and Lawton, 2002).

Similarly, due to its nature of running as small-scale, as noted in the preceding discussion, alternative tourism may not be able to produce adequate employment opportunities compared to mass tourism. According to Zapata et al. (2011), alternative tourism programmes, such as CBT has been strongly criticised with respect to low economic impact in terms of jobs and income. Hence, the industry's failure to offer the locals adequate income generation opportunities may result in reduced levels of community support for the project, which can throw its sustainability into question. Graci (2012: 65) notes that "alternative forms of tourism ... are generally smaller in scale and strive for sustainability." This is despite the alternative practices to tourism, for example CBT being advocated as an approach of "ensuring the long-term survival of a profitable tourism industry (Blackstock, 2005: 40). On the contrary, mass tourism, which thrives on large-scale infrastructure, can generate more employments and income generation opportunities to the people of destination communities compared to small-scale alternative tourism, and thus, can get more support from the destination communities.

Similarly, the elite domination of the economic benefits of the industry is also discussed as an inherent characteristics of an alternative tourism approach. For example, with regards to CBT, it has been argued that the revenue generated by the CBT initiatives does not reach the people who are in need because most of the economic opportunities that arise from CBT development in rural areas are controlled by the local elites (Scheyvens, 2002). Although, alternative forms of tourism are advocated to create a channel through which revenue earned by the industry directly flows to the local families, bypassing professional enterprises and international chains (Deroni, 1981: 253), according to Scheyvens (2002) and Zapata et al. (2011), local elites of a community often dominate the community-based development

efforts and monopolise the benefits of tourism. Zapata et al. (2011) further note that alternative tourism programmes, such as CBT are highly criticised for the monopolisation of benefits by local elites. This shows that despite alternative tourism products being advocated for distributing tourism income across the wider community, there is a possibility of failing its goal. Therefore, for Scheyvens (2002), the argument with regards to alternative tourism that the residents of a destination community will receive equitable economic benefits of tourism is largely a romantic one.

Furthermore, it has been contested that “small-scale ecotourism is even seen as a way of keeping an area in an underdeveloped, primitive state for the benefits of a few wealthy eco-tourists from the developed countries” (Weaver and Lawton, 2002: 367). In a similar vein, Dolezal and Burns (2015: 138) argue that one of the limitations of “CBT includes losing out on wider development” because the emphasis of such projects is conservation of the local resources and the sustainability of the industry rather than the agenda of development. This is despite tourism being regarded as a community development tool in the least developed world (Ellis and Sheridan, 2015). Furthermore, due to running in small or medium scale CBT does not require large infrastructure and amenities. On the contrary, mass tourism which by its name usually requires a huge investment in infrastructures and other tourist facilities. Jimura (2018) argues that when the visitor number increases in a tourist destination, it can contribute to an increase in the amount of investment from both private and public sectors. Thus, it is fair to say that mass tourism can play a greater role compared to alternative tourism for the wider development of tourism communities by inviting large scale investment in infrastructure development and other facilities required to serve tourists.

From a political point of view, alternative tourism is advocated by its supporters for equality of access to the programme and fair representation of the members of destination communities in decision-making processes. Weaver and Lawton (2002: 638) consider that although “local residents are actually in control of an alternative tourism enterprise, most of this power may rest in the hands of the local elites and economic and social dominance in the community is reinforced.” Similarly, Tamir (2015) claims that because of the structure of power relations within community certain families are likely to lay claim to privileges because

of their apparent position in the social and economic hierarchy. As a result, CBT has often been criticised that it tricks community members into pseudo-participation (Dolezal and Burns, 2015). With regards to this thesis, the caste system, for example, practiced in Nepalese societies affords the so-called upper caste people higher social status compared to the people belonging to so called lower caste group. The issues of caste division and its implication in real life situations are explored in more depth in Chapter 8.

In addition, all residents of destination communities may not be experienced and knowledgeable about the tourism business compared to tourism professionals (Scheyvens, 2002). In such a situation, it is unlikely that every individual of a community has equitable access to participation in tourism development. Furthermore, the residents of a destination community may not be as competent as the people having expertise in the industry, which may become an obstacle to making informed decisions (Scheyvens, 2002). For example, they may lack knowledge and skills about how to engage with tourist and matters related to the promotion of tourism programmes. Scheyvens (2002: 10) argues that “in practice many communities lack the skills, experience or networks... to successfully engage in tourism in such ways and they may prefer to work in partnership with other stakeholders.” Stone and Stone (2011: 100) agree with this view and note that “tourism practitioners working with communities know little about commercial tourism markets and run projects without bringing in business expertise and private partners; this ultimately leads to project failure in many cases.”

In another example, alternative tourism can become more damaging in terms of its impacts on the natural environment of a community than mass tourism. This is despite the fact that it is considered to be less detrimental to nature. For example, ecotourism has been advocated as a responsible way of travelling to natural areas (Scheyvens, 2002). Weaver and Neil (2009) consider that ecotourism as a tourism activity is conducted relatively in undisturbed and uncontaminated natural areas (Sharpley, 2008; Weaver and Neil, 2009). As a result, the impacts of such programmes will be more noticeable. According to Butler (1992) alternative tourism such as ecotourism could be environmentally more invasive than mass tourism because this form of tourism often exposes fragile resources to greater visitation.

Thus, due to its exposure of the natural environment to increased visitor numbers ecotourism can become more harmful than mass tourism (Scheyvens, 1999).

2.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this Chapter was to review the literature about alternative tourism. To this end, the Chapter began with a discussion of arguments associated with the emergence of alternative tourism. It was identified that the alternative tourism approaches emerged as a response to the need to mitigate the negative consequences resulting from mass tourism. There are several forms of alternative tourism and CBT is one of them.

CBT as a form of alternative tourism departs from mass tourism in the sense that this approach to tourism mainly concentrates on providing benefits to the members of local communities where tourism development takes place. As such, CBT recognises the local communities as actual beneficiaries of its development. Hence, the fundamental principal of CBT is the inclusion of destination communities in all aspects of tourism development including the ownership, management and its decision-making processes with a hope that this will support to empower them. The issues of the empowerment for destination communities will be discussed in relation to Ghale Gaun Community Homestay and Dalla Gaun Community Homestay projects in Nepal in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

This Chapter also shed light on homestay tourism, which is generally perceived as a CBT product despite the practice in Nepal of running homestays individually in some parts of the country. For example, homestays in Nepal has been found running both as a community-run and privately-operated tourism product. Additionally, it was also identified that despite being promoted to avert the negative consequences of mass tourism, alternative tourism is not free from limitations.

Having explored ideas related to alternative tourism approaches, the next Chapter offers a detailed discussion about empowerment.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed relevant literature about CBT in Chapter 2, this Chapter is devoted to exploring the notion of empowerment which contextualises the term in tourism studies. To this end, the Chapter opens with a discussion of empowerment. Firstly, it explores the concept of empowerment and discusses the complexities of defining it. The Chapter then continues with a debate of empowerment as a multi-dimensional construct which is accompanied by a further examination of how the term is used in the tourism literature. The discussion is then followed by a consideration of Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment model, which is held as one of the most appropriate frameworks to analyse tourism-related empowerment. The Chapter is brought to a close with a summary of its main points.

3.2. NOTION OF EMPOWERMENT

The term empowerment is widely used in diverse fields of study, such as, for example education, psychology, development and tourism. However, there is a lack of a clear comprehensive definition of empowerment that can be applied in every sector (Hur, 2006; Petric, 2007; Boley et al., 2014; Boley and McGehee, 2014; Lenao and Busupi, 2016; Movono and Dahles, 2017). Writing in the context of tourism studies, Cole (2018) states that there is no one-size-fit-all definition of empowerment. Movono and Dahles (2017) consider that due to the absence of a generally accepted definition, empowerment as an area of study remains ambiguous. This is because empowerment means different things to different people subject to the context in which it is being defined (Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 1995). Sofield (2003) notes that the meaning of empowerment is determined by the people and organisations who are defining it and the state of affairs in which they are working, thus, bringing their own interpretations. This is echoed by Aghazamani and Hunt (2017: 343) who understand that "empowerment is often invoked for different purposes by different

individuals". As a result, it is fair to say that empowerment remains an overused and hard to define concept (Dolezal and Burns, 2015).

Despite of its complexities, a number of authors have attempted to define empowerment. For example, Petric (2007) understands empowerment as a capacity possessed by an individual, or a group, to make their own decisions about their affairs. Similarly, Sutawa (2012) postulates that the process of empowerment is an effort to provide marginal peoples with opportunities to have more power and a voice. For Rappaport (1987), empowerment is the ability of people, organisations and communities to gain mastery over their matters. This is echoed by Sadan (2004: 144) who views empowerment as "a process of transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one's life, destiny and environment." Stern et al. (2005: 102) define empowerment in terms of "having ability to shape one's life." By the same token, Kabeer (1999, 2017) observes empowerment as the expansion of people's abilities to make strategic life choices in a context where this was previously denied to them. Thus, based on the above definitions of empowerment, it can be said that gaining power to have control over one's situation is crucial to becoming empowered.

As far as the tourism literature is concerned, the notion of empowerment is equally emphasised by the researchers (Cole, 2006; Nordin et al., 2014). Empowerment in tourism studies is also understood as the autonomy of the members of destination communities to make decisions about tourism-related issues and activities in their area. For example, Sofield (2003) refers to empowerment as the process that enhances the strength of local community members in decision-making related to local tourism development along with taking responsibility for their decisions. Furthermore, Cole (2006) notes that empowerment is not merely giving an opportunity to an individual to engage in tourism activities, but it is the top end of the participation ladder. According to her, participation can begin from the bottom level of being consulted to the highest level of being fully empowered to control every single aspect of the tourism development course. Thus, empowerment in the true sense is only achieved when every individual of a community is an active agent of change having the "ability

to find solutions to their problems, make decisions, implement actions and evaluate their solutions” (Cole, 2006: 3).

Therefore, it needs to be considered that community members’ participation in decision-making processes does not automatically ensure that the local communities are actually empowered. This is because participation can just become a consultative process where the members of local communities are approached to have their say but in reality, they may not be given power to decide. Their participation can be limited to just being witnesses of the processes. Hunter (2015) notes that empowerment needs to be understood distinctively from community involvement because people can be involved in an initiative, but they may fail to exercise control over the development and influence its outcomes. Hunter (2015: 250) further states that community participation is about developing “a system that affords all relevant community stakeholder groups’ full participation in collaborative decision-making, and ownership of responsibility and benefits.” With regards to CBT, empowerment is about meaningful participation whereby the authority to act, choice and control over decisions and resources lie in the hands of local communities rather than government authorities, multinational companies and external investors (Timothy, 2007). Hence, tourism initiatives, particularly CBT, have the potential to empower the members of local communities because “the hallmarks of a genuine CBT project include local control (rather than mere involvement) at decision-making at all the stages of the project’s life cycle.” (Giampiccoli, 2015: 675).

In addition, empowerment within the context of tourism is also perceived as an essential constituent to achieve and maintain the sustainability of the industry. According to Sofield (2003) and Cole (2006) community participation and empowerment have become a mantra for sustainable tourism development and in the absence of local community empowerment tourism sustainability is hard to achieve. This is because with proper empowerment and community involvement, local community organises the tourism activities keeping social, cultural and natural resources at the centre of the project (Sutawa, 2012). In a similar vein, Choi and Murray (2010) also stress the need to empower local people for the

long-term success of tourism development and argue that failure to empower a local community cannot guarantee the future of tourism development.

3.3. EMPOWERMENT AS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CONSTRUCT

Although empowerment is primarily linked with an equitable distribution of power between those who have more power and those having less (Rizal and Asokan, 2013), it has a wider application than its original roots in political science (Sofield, 2003). As a result, empowerment is perceived as a multi-dimensional notion (Friedmann, 1992; Zimmerman, 1995; Scheyvens, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Hur, 2006; Petric, 2007, Ramos and Prideaux, 2014; Movono and Dahles, 2017). Petric (2007) states that empowerment can become evident in economic, psychological, social and political spheres. Similarly, Hur (2006) points out that empowerment occurs within various dimensions including social, psychological, economic, and political areas. In acknowledgement of this, Movono and Dahles (2017) opine that empowerment is an ongoing multi-dimensional process incorporating various aspects of one's life. As far as the tourism industry is concerned, Scheyvens (1999) notes that empowerment needs to be understood as a multi-dimensional concept including economic, social, psychological and political aspects of a destination community. This is because tourism itself is understood as a multi-dimensional activity, thus, affecting all facets of the lives of those living in tourist destinations (Jimura, 2011; Robinson and Whiltshire, 2011; Diniz et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the multiple facets of empowerment are not perceived completely separately, rather they are interrelated to each other. Zimmerman (1995: 581) points out that "empowerment is a multilevel construct in which each level of analysis is interdependent with the others." Therefore, "a community empowerment framework needs to recognise the significance of social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of empowerment equally rather than focusing on one or some of the dimensions in isolation" (Stone, 2015: 85). In this regard, Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment model integrates various dimensions of empowerment making it one of the most suitable models to explore multiple facets of empowerment that have occurred as a result of tourism development.

Here, it is worth noting that Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment framework was primarily developed for evaluating the possible impacts of ecotourism on a community residents' empowerment. However, this thesis applies Scheyvens's model in CBT setting. Thus, this thesis expands contemporary knowledge about tourism-led empowerment by extending Scheyvens's empowerment model beyond the ecotourism setting. The following section offers a detailed exploration of Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment framework.

3.4. SCHEYVENS'S EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment framework is widely acknowledged as a suitable tool to assess tourism-related empowerment (Boley et al., 2014; Boley et al., 2015; Dolezal, 2015; Boley and Gaither, 2016; Cole, 2018). For Dolezal (2015), the empowerment framework developed by Scheyvens (1999) is an important theoretical model to analyse how tourism development is influencing the empowerment or disempowerment of the local population of destination communities because this approach provides clear indicators for the assessment of empowerment and disempowerment. Dolezal (2015: 52) further states that the important feature of Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment model is that it equally puts emphasis on the intangible aspects of the tourism industry's influence on destination communities by extending beyond an economic angle "to one that is largely based on human interactions." In recognition of Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment framework, Monovo and Dahles (2017) point out that this theoretical tool provides a clear pathway for focused assessments of tourism-based communities. The multiple dimensions of Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment framework are discussed in more depth in the succeeding sections.

3.4.1. Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment within the context of tourism is perceived in terms of positive economic development for the members of a destination community stemming from tourism development. For example, Scheyvens (1999) associates the economic improvement of local residents of destination communities with economic empowerment and states that economic empowerment is about bringing monetary gains to the people living in destination

communities. Similarly, Stone (2015) also considers economic empowerment in terms of positive economic outcomes and suggests that this is predominantly about monetary gains achieved by the local residents of a tourist destination resulting from tourism activities taking place in their communities. Thus, it can be said that tourism development can stimulate the local economy and lead to economic empowerment for members of the local community who are able to improve their financial circumstances as a result of tourism development.

Engaging the local residents of destination communities in the tourism industry as business owners and employees is one of the most widely mentioned methods of facilitating economic empowerment in tourist destinations (Scheyvens, 1999). This is because local residents' participation in tourism businesses and employment ensures their access to some of the financial benefits of the industry. Concerning the tourism industry's impact on income generation, a number of researchers have discussed positive influences through employment creation in host communities. For instance, Harrison and Schipani (2007), Othman et al. (2013) and Salleh et al. (2013) all discuss tourism development as an employment generator. Similarly, in the view of both Chok et al. (2007) and Anuar and Sood (2017), tourism development is acknowledged for its potential to provide employment opportunities to people with various backgrounds and skills. This is because tourism is generally understood as a labour-intensive industry, which employs people with assorted skills and with different skill levels including the low skilled and those with no skills (Muganda et al., 2010).

Moreover, the advocates of CBT argue that such types of tourism products are promoted as a means to generate income to the people living in tourist destinations rather than the outsiders by engendering employment for them, which is further expected to result in better economic conditions than in the pre tourism period (Giampiccoli and Kalis, 2012; Malatji and Mtapuri, 2012). Similarly, Anuar and Sood (2017) consider that CBT projects are often promoted to create employment opportunities in rural areas where people have inadequate income generation opportunities. Thus, the aim of CBT initiatives is to stimulate the local economy through employment creation (Lopez-Guzman et al., 2011), which further contributes to the economic independence of a local community by offering both direct and indirect employment opportunities to the locals (Hall and Lew, 2009). Thus, the increased

access to the economic benefits of tourism development can improve the economic position of the local population, making them economically empowered.

Additionally, tourism development is also recognised for playing an important role to facilitate economic empowerment by allowing the residents of destination communities to be involved in entrepreneurial activities. This is because of tourism development's potential to strengthen an economy by creating grounds for businesses and other commercial activities (Greiner, 2010; Diniz et al., 2014). Turker and Ozturk (2013) believe that the tourism industry contributes to making a local economy stronger by offering space for economic activities. Likewise, Hussin and Kunjaraman (2014) note that host communities can support their family economy by earning additional cash through their involvement in tourism-related and other businesses, which leads to their improved living condition. This signifies that local participation in the tourism industry not only improves the financial condition of the individuals but also contributes to supporting the overall economy of a tourist destination because "new employment, cash, revenues, and other economic benefits may lead to more robust local economies" (Stronza and Gordillo, 2008: 451).

The literature in the preceding discussion identified that the tourism industry, CBT in particular, is promoted for carrying positive economic changes to destination communities. However, there are counter arguments that CBT development does not always necessarily bring positive economic outcomes. There are some negative economic consequences associated with this type of tourism. The negative economic impacts, such as, for example short-term employment because of its seasonal nature, economic leakage and domination of tourism income by local elites are some indicators of economic disempowerment. Linking the seasonal nature of tourism with economic disempowerment Scheyvens (1999) mentions that instead of regular earnings if tourism ventures provide only periodic incomes, which are not stable for maintaining a livelihood, leads to economic disempowerment. This signifies that, tourism initiatives are considered as contributing to economic disempowerment if such developments only result in small and spasmodic cash gains for a host community, rather than providing long-term economic solutions (ibid). Therefore, economic empowerment is more focused on regular and the long-term economic benefit to host communities instead of

transient ones. Furthermore, the periodic economic benefits may lead to problems in the long run. This is because, when people cannot rely on the economic benefits delivered by tourism development, they are likely to lose their interest in it and start looking for alternative sources of income, hence, throwing the sustainable development of the industry into doubt.

Another aspect of economic empowerment is related to the tourism industry's income distribution system. In the view of Scheyvens (1999), equitable sharing of economic benefits among the members of destination communities leads to economic empowerment; whereas uneven distribution of tourism revenue results in economic disempowerment. Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) consider that in order to empower local communities economically there should be a system to distribute tourism income through which revenue earned by the industry is circulated among the maximum possible numbers of community residents instead of being controlled by a handful of individuals. In a similar vein, Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) note that economic empowerment can only be achieved by developing a local system that ensures tourism revenue is spread equitably among the households of the destination community. As far as a CBT initiative is concerned, community wide distribution of economic benefit is at its centre because this form of tourism believes that tourism benefits should also accrue to those segments of a destination population who are not involved in the CBT ventures (Giampiccoli and Kalis, 2012). Thus, economic empowerment is also about how the money earned from the tourism industry is distributed across the tourist destination.

By contrast, tourism development fails to empower the people of destination communities economically if local community elites, outside operators or government agencies have control over tourism revenue instead of the wider community having access to the industry's profits (Scheyvens, 1999). With regards to this, Aghazamani and Hunt (2017: 341) point out that "economic disempowerment can occur when local elites or corporations monopolise economic benefits of tourism." Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) remark that tourism development cannot empower local communities economically if profits earned from tourism ventures are given to a single community organisation instead of evenly distributing them among the maximum number of community residents. This shows that tourism

schemes are considered to be responsible for economic disempowerment if income accrued from the industry is not shared among the residents of destination communities.

Thus, based on the above discussion it is fair to say that tourism industry has both potential to empower and disempower the people of destination communities economically. The issues of economic empowerment and disempowerment are addressed in more depth in relation to the findings of the research for this thesis in Chapter 5. The next section reviews the literature in relation to social empowerment.

3.4.2. Social empowerment

Social empowerment in tourism development is primarily associated with the industry's abilities to unite the inhabitants of a destination community. For instance, Scheyvens (1999) refers to social empowerment as a situation in which a community's sense of cohesion and integrity is strengthened by tourism activities. For Boley and Gaither (2016), social empowerment is a binding force that contributes to creating a cohesive society. Hence, a tourism venture is considered as facilitating social empowerment if it plays a positive role in bringing the members of a destination community together.

Another aspect of social empowerment includes increased collaboration among the residents of a tourist destination due to tourism development. In the view of Boley and Gaither (2016), social empowerment is manifested in the form of community members' collaboration and cooperation. Maruyama et al. (2016) state that social empowerment is about teamwork and connectedness of the people living in a community. For Petric (2007: 434) this form of empowerment "helps maintain a community's social equilibrium and has the power to lead to cooperation and networking." With regards to this, Wuleka et al. (2013) argues that tourism development can play a supportive role to improve social bonds within a community by instigating the feelings of social responsibility.

The above discussion shows that social empowerment follows when one observes tourism development is increasing an individual's connection to their community. According to Scheyvens (1999), in socially empowered communities, people form their social groups

such as women's groups, youth groups and other occupational groups, which are more concerned with group achievement rather than individual success. Timothy (2012: 73) notes that "social empowerment occurs when community members cooperate for the betterment of the whole community." Therefore, existence of community groups, which are motivated by shared goals can be understood as a sign of socially empowered communities. Moreover, social empowerment is important in the tourism sector because it supports the cultivation of a spirit of solidarity between destination community members which is an essential constituent for the growth and sustainability of the industry (Boley and Gaither, 2016).

Additionally, social empowerment is also linked with community wellbeing. For instance, in the view of Dangi and Jamal (2016), besides community cohesion and collaboration in destination communities, social empowerment is about the collective welfare and wellbeing of the people of tourist destinations. A similar perspective can be found in Scheyvens's (1999) work as she believes that social empowerment is most visible when profits gained from the tourism initiatives are utilised for funding social development projects, such as water supply systems or health clinics in the local area, which supports the improvement of the living conditions in destination communities. Spiteri and Nepal (2008) appreciate the practices of funding tourism income for public facilities enhancement in destination communities as an important means to spread tourism income to people who are not directly involved in the industry and improving their standard of living. When people feel that they are getting benefits from tourism development, they are more likely to cultivate positive attitudes towards the overall industry, which further supports the building of a cohesive society (Scheyvens, 1999).

However, tourism ventures are equally criticised for being responsible for instigating social disempowerment. This is because in addition to its positive side the development of tourism activities can also bring negative social impacts with it (Diniz et al., 2014). The negative social impacts of tourism development are often linked with social disempowerment. For example, Scheyvens (1999) is of the opinion that social disempowerment is primarily related with the negative consequences of tourism development, such as social disharmony and the decay of social norms and values. Similarly,

Aghazamani and Hunt (2017) acknowledge that social empowerment in tourism is about the social disintegration caused by the industry. Thus, seen from this perspective, it can be argued that tourism development can be responsible for social disempowerment if such initiatives disrupt community solidarity by creating division among the residents of a tourist destination.

By the same token, tourism development is also blamed for social disempowerment if such ventures provoke feelings of competition among community residents to reap the industry's benefits instead of inspiring them to work for a common purpose (Scheyvens, 1999). The increased feeling of competition may result in the loss of community collaboration and sense of community, which gives rise to individualism destroying the communal flavour previously prevalent in the community, where resentment and jealousy are commonplace (ibid).

Additionally, social disempowerment within the context of tourism is also related with the instances of social ills associated with tourism development, such as crime, begging, crowding and loss of community moral values. According to Aghazamani and Hunt (2017: 341), "social disempowerment is characterised by... the unhealthy by-products of tourism including crime, prostitution, begging, and crowding." Similarly, Telfer and Sharpley (2015: 201) point out that "social disempowerment occurs if there are some of the negative social impacts sometimes associated with tourism such as crime, displacement from traditional lands or prostitution". As such tourism development is condemned for providing a comfortable environment which allows many illegal activities to thrive including, for example, underage drinking, drugs, prostitution, gambling, smuggling and other criminal activities (Diniz et al., 2014; Donny and Nor, 2015), which may have detrimental impacts on the quality of life in destination communities. Thus, if tourism development becomes a catalyst to give rise to the above-mentioned social ills, the industry is regarded as a stimulant for social disempowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). The issues of social empowerment and disempowerment illustrated in this section are further discussed in Chapter 6 with reference to the findings of this thesis.

3.4.3. Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment within a tourism context is related to the tourism industry's power to enhance destination community residents' self-esteem and pride in community resources, such as their natural and cultural possessions. Zimmermann (1995) argues that self-esteem as a component of psychological empowerment results from an evaluation of one's environment. Similarly, Coopersmith (1967) considers self-esteem as an individual's personal judgement of his/her own worth. Mentioning the interrelationship between self-esteem and psychological empowerment, Cole (2006, 2018) remarks that psychological empowerment originates from increased self-esteem and pride in cultural traditions. A similar point was made by Scheyvens (1999) and Boey and McGeehee (2014), who postulate that psychological empowerment is about how the tourism industry stimulates pride of local people and feelings of self-esteem in relation to local traditions, cultural and natural resources. This is because, the members of a psychologically empowered community take pride in their traditional and cultural practices and other natural resources they possess (Scheyvens, 1999).

Tourism development is appreciated for creating value for destination communities and their resources, particularly traditional aspects, cultural characteristics and natural surroundings. According to Boley and McGehee (2014), psychological empowerment is attached with destination residents' positive spirits provoked by the feelings that they are special because they retain unique resources to share with the people living outside of their immediate communities. The increased number of visits to destination communities from different generating markets enables the local residents to recognise the importance of where they live and what they possess in terms of cultural heritage and natural environment, which further contributes to building a sense of pride in their home (Pleno, 2006). In a similar vein, Chen et al. (2017) note that when people from different communities visit their home, the local population feels that they are distinct from others, which supports the installation of feelings of uniqueness, which further builds pride in the community where they are living, who they are and what they possess. This is because the host communities associate the

increased number of visitors as a form of appreciation, which not only results in improved self-esteem but also motivates them to share community resources with outsiders. This can be realised in Boley and Gaither's (2016) argument that increased self-esteem is tied directly to residents' feelings of uniqueness when people travel to purposely experience the unique natural and cultural features of one's community. This further has implications for psychological empowerment. This is because, according to Scheyvens (1999), psychological empowerment is stimulated by the outside recognition of the uniqueness of the destination community's cultural and natural resources. Thus, outside recognition for the people and their resources not only engenders appreciation for the community resources but also leads to the self-respect of the local residents, which is also argued to be the manifestation of psychological empowerment (Winkler and Zimmermann, 2014).

In addition to self-esteem and pride, psychological empowerment is also understood in terms of an individual's level of confidence. In Telfer and Sharpley (2015) and Cole's (2018) opinion, psychological empowerment is a reflection of one's confidence in his/her abilities. Similarly, Huq (2016) notes that self-confidence and self-belief of 'can do' leads to psychological empowerment. McMilan et al. (2011) state that an empowered individual demonstrates his/her confidence and self-assertiveness. As such, tourism development in general and CBT in particular can play an important role to facilitate psychological empowerment by providing locals with platforms to meet the people outside of their family networks along with socialising opportunities with the members of CBT projects and tourists (Cole, 2018). Thus, tourism development is thought to be facilitating psychological empowerment if such practices contribute to instilling a 'can do' attitude among the destination population.

However, there are opposite views as well. Despite tourism development being acknowledged for its contribution to engender the feelings of psychological empowerment, it has equally been criticised for its role to psychological disempowerment. Psychological disempowerment within the context of tourism is mainly concerned with the industry's negative impacts on the traditional cultural practices of destination communities. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the often-cited negative cultural impacts of tourism is its

potential to inculcate feelings of inferiority about traditional and cultural practices of destination communities. In the view of Scheyvens (2002: 60), for instance, psychological disempowerment is reflected when the members of destination communities “are left feeling that their culture and way of life are inferior.” Thus, tourism development is argued to be responsible for psychological disempowerment if it tempts the members of destination communities to give up their cultural traditions and adopt new ones. Psychological empowerment and disempowerment will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 7 with specific examples from Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

3.4.4. Political empowerment

The political dimension of empowerment is closely related with the predominant notion of empowerment, which lays emphasis on gaining power to have control over one’s affairs (Rappaport, 1987; Petric, 2007). Writing in the context of tourism, Scheyvens (1999) notes that tourism development can be considered influencing political empowerment if the members of a destination community are afforded power to lead and control local tourism development programmes. Boley and McGehee (2014) agree with Scheyvens’s view and postulate that political empowerment is about local people having control over the direction of tourism development in their community.

One of the important methods of ensuring that tourism development is under the control of the inhabitants of a destination community is the formation of local institutions that take responsibility about tourism development at the local level. As Scheyvens (1999) notes, the establishment of a local formal institution to manage tourism locally is a sign of political empowerment. This is because in a politically empowered community, the locals have their own organisations to make decisions about tourism activities that are taking place in their area. Similarly, in Boley and McGehee’s (2014) opinion political empowerment is realised in the successful founding of a local agency to determine local tourism development. Thus, tourism development is believed to be facilitating political empowerment if tourism activities are organised and managed through local organisations.

In addition, political empowerment within the context of tourism is also observed based on community residents' opportunities and challenges to participate in the procedures through which decisions are made. For example, Scheyvens (1999) thinks that political empowerment is associated with the access of the residents of a destination community to decision-making. For Winkler and Zimmermann (2014), political empowerment is about the authority to join in decision-making processes. Similarly, Pande et al. (2004) understand that political empowerment is mainly about ensuring equitable representation in decision-making processes, which incorporates freedom to participate in political dialogue. The above discussion indicates that political empowerment means an inclusive decision-making system (Miller, 1994) where the emphasis is on the fair representation of the members of a tourist destination in the local organisations that are delegated to make decisions at the local level. This shows that political empowerment is realised when entire community population has a voice in policy decision making (Timothy, 2007). Thus, political empowerment is more than power to vote, rather it is about empowering the community residents to engage in the practices by which decisions are made (Friedmann, 1992).

Additionally, political empowerment in a tourism context is also about respecting the rights of the members of destination communities to express their personal ideas and concerns about local tourism development. In a politically empowered community, every individual has outlets to disclose their opinions and concerns about tourism development (Boley and Gaither, 2016). Similarly, Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) state that political empowerment is about giving an equal right to everyone to have a say in tourism development and inviting individual ideas and suggestions. In the view of Timothy (2007: 182), this form of empowerment is manifested in "representational democracy wherein residents can voice opinions and raise concerns about development initiatives." Scheyvens (1999) mentions that community residents can establish community forums to discuss tourism development where the locals can freely raise their concerns and questions about tourism practices. Timothy (2007: 186) also emphasises the creation of social forums as platforms to maximise local community involvement in sharing their thoughts as he argues that, "destination residents must have a forum through which they can raise questions and

articulate concerns; that is, participate in the decisions that affect their community most.” Hence, the establishment of community forums that allows local residents to express their views and concerns is valuable for the cultivation of political empowerment (Boley et al., 2014). Consequently, it can be argued that if the residents of a destination community are able to establish discussion forums, tourism is empowering them politically because such practices contribute to the proliferation of their access and input to decision-making processes (Scheyvens, 1999).

By contrast, political disempowerment follows when the local residents of a destination community are restricted to participate in tourism ventures introduced to their community. This is because the lack of equitable opportunities to become involved in local tourism development is a sign of political disempowerment (Scheyvens, 1999).

In addition, political disempowerment in tourism studies is also understood on the basis of community members’ access and restriction to becoming involved in decision-making processes. For example, Scheyvens (1999) argues that limited access of the community residents to the decision-making processes of local tourism development is a clear sign of political disempowerment. This is because in a politically disempowered society “the community has an autocratic and/or self-interested leadership” (ibid: 247). Thus, the decision-makers do not incorporate community opinions and suggestions in tourism planning and operations (Winkler and Zimmermann, 2014). This can lead to the majority of community members developing a feeling that they have little or no say over the way in which tourism operates (Scheyvens, 1999). This shows that political disempowerment is characterised by a situation in which decisions are made by the people living outside of the community or by those residents of the community who are more powerful than their fellow neighbours.

3.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter revolved around the topic of empowerment. Firstly, it began with the concept of empowerment in the wider context and difficulties in defining it. The discussion then continued with how the notion of empowerment is perceived as a multi-dimensional construct. Furthermore, it also contextualised empowerment within the context of tourism

studies. The discussion was then followed by an exploration of Schevens's (1999) empowerment framework which suggests clear signs of empowerment and disempowerment. While doing so, the multiple aspects of Scheyvens's empowerment framework, for example economic, social psychological and political were discussed in detail.

The discussion in this Chapter suggests that tourism development has potential for stimulating both positive and negative consequences in relation to the empowerment of the members of destination communities. For example, it was identified that tourism development can enhance economic empowerment by enabling the local residents of destination communities to improve their financial conditions. However, tourism can also lead to the economic disempowerment of the people of destination communities if it fails to provide sufficient income for their living.

From a social point of view, the literature discussed in this Chapter indicates that tourism can become both a positive and a negative force. This signifies that tourism can work as a catalyst for both social empowerment and disempowerment. Thus, if tourism activities contribute to strengthening the social integration in destination communities, tourism development is contributing towards social empowerment. However, the divisions that may arise among the community residents as a result of tourism is perceived as a sign social disempowerment.

From a psychological perspective, tourism development is believed to be contributing to psychological empowerment if it supports a boost in community residents' self-esteem and pride in their resources e.g. traditional cultural knowledge and their natural environment. However, tourism development is considered to be producing psychological disempowerment if such initiatives become a catalyst to generate feelings of inferiority in community residents about their resources.

The political dimension of empowerment has to do with the equal distribution of opportunities to be involved in the tourism programmes and the levels of participation in decision-making processes. For instance, if the local residents of a destination community believe that there is equality of access to the tourism programme and its decision-making

processes, they are considered to be politically empowered. However, uneven distribution of opportunities is some of the indicators of political disempowerment.

The issues of various facets of empowerment (e.g. economic, social, psychological and political) are further explored in more detail in relation to the findings for this thesis in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively. The discussion now turns to research methodology and methods employed for this thesis.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed the relevant literature around the subjects of alternative tourism approaches including community-based tourism (CBT), homestay tourism and multiple dimensions of empowerment in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, this Chapter sets out the philosophical foundations of the research for this thesis, and describes the specific research methods utilised to collect the data. To begin with, the Chapter opens by laying out the philosophical standpoints. To this end, two opposing epistemological and ontological positions, positivist and interpretive perspectives are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the target populations and the sampling techniques employed for participant selection. The discussion then focusses on the actual data collection instruments. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the objectives of this study are to explore the experiences and perceptions of human subjects, thus, the dataset for this study was collected by adopting semi-structured interviews and participant observation methods, which are deemed appropriate to develop knowledge by interpreting human thoughts, feelings and experiences in their own words. Additionally, ethical concerns addressed throughout the research are also discussed. The Chapter is brought to a close by providing a synopsis of its main points.

4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research is considered to be a logical investigation to understand phenomena in detail. According to Bowling (2014: 1), it is “the systematic and rigorous process of enquiry.” For Pajo (2017: 3), “by conducting research, we attempt to get closer to reality by attempting to build knowledge about it.” Sayira (2015) agrees with this view and considers research to be a procedure to investigate answers to questions in order to establish an understanding between problems and solutions. Thus, research is “a careful critical search for solutions to problems that plague and puzzle mankind” (Van Dalen 1973: 532). This gives rise to different ways of conducting studies depending on the nature of the subject being studied and types of questions that the researcher endeavours to address.

The research paradigm is assumed as a set of values about the way studies are conducted. This is about the position that the researcher takes in her/his effort to answer the questions under investigation. Therefore, the research paradigm is the beginning stage of the research process because it provides the researcher with opportunities to carry out investigations within the framework by offering insights about how relevant data are collected and examined. This can be evidenced in the view of Bryman and Bell (2007: 25) who understand the research paradigm as “a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted.” Thus, the research paradigm is concerned with the process of knowledge acquisition and also about what is acceptable as knowledge. This results in different research paradigms because different theories are introduced to delineate how knowledge is to be generated (Pajo, 2017). The research paradigms are broadly classified into two categories, namely positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism is based on the principle of the existence of an external reality, which is singular, objective and comprehensible. For instance, according to Howell (2013: 4), “positivism considered that an external reality existed, which could be discovered and totally understood.” Keegan (2004:14) agrees with this view and postulates that positivism “assumes that there is an absolute truth to be discovered.” By contrast, the interpretive perspective is based on the argument that reality is not something that is singular, objective and external, as argued by positivists, but rather, it is a social construction. Therefore, there are possibilities for multiple interpretations, thus, having several worldviews of the same phenomenon (Decrop, 2006). This is echoed by Hudson and Ozanne (1998) who note that interpretive perspectives hold the view that reality is neither single nor objective as emphasised by the positivists rather it is multiple and relative. This is because interpretivists “believe that social reality is based on subjective interpretation of actions” (Kura, 2012: 6). Thus, interpretive research is concerned with meanings that an individual ascribes to the phenomenon (Swanson, 2009). This is because knowledge and meaning are individual constructs (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Swanson, 2005). As such, for interpretive researchers, human interpretations are the starting point for developing knowledge (Prasad, 2018). Therefore,

knowledge produced by following an interpretive approach is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Carson et al., 2005).

The dichotomy between positivist and interpretive perspectives is not limited within the supposition of the existence of reality. Moreover, the fundamental differences between these two schools of thought can also be grasped in the approaches they adopt in the process of conducting research. As noted in the foregoing discussion, positivism treats reality as an objective, tangible and single phenomenon; therefore, positivists argue that the phenomenon under investigation should be studied objectively (Decrop, 2006). This means that the role of the researchers, who are following a positivist perspective, is to study a phenomenon without the influence of their subjective feelings and experiences (Carson et al., 2005).

Furthermore, positivism emphasises a researcher's detachment from the research object because a positivist perspective assumes that the researcher and the phenomena being explored are totally separate entities (Howell, 2013). Therefore, a positivist researcher maintains distance between him/herself and the researched. This is considered, by positivists, to be an important step to remain neutral between reasoning and feelings as well as between science and personal experience (Carson et al., 2005). Thus, instead of using the exploratory scientific method generally utilised in interpretive studies, the procedures followed in natural science are the only ways to discover reality for positivists (Smith, 1996; Chilisa and Preece, 2005; Johnson and Christensen, 2012; Howell, 2013). This further restricts the positivist researchers to use only structured methods, for example mathematical techniques utilised in natural science to uncover the presumed single and objective reality (Carson et al., 2005). Thus, positivist researchers construct hypothesis based on existing knowledge and endeavour to verify those hypotheses by following a structured quantitative methodological approach. (Swanson, 2005; Decrop, 2006). Thus, for quantitative researchers, it is important to state one's hypotheses and then test them with empirical data to see if they are supported (Johnson and Christensen, 2012: 33).

By contrast, as mentioned in the preceding discussion, an interpretive perspective is based on the notion that the social world needs to be explored from the close interaction between the researcher and the researched, thus, from an interpretive point of view

researchers and research participants are not two separate entities rather they are interdependent and knowledge is generated through their mutual interaction (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Decrop (2006: 48) agrees with this view and states that this research paradigm “does not suggest a separation but rather an interactive and cooperative relationship between the investigator and the object of investigation.” This allows the researcher autonomy to watch, listen, feel, ask, record and examine the phenomena because all aspects of observations are worthwhile for an interpretive enquirer (Decrop, 2006). Therefore, instead of entering into the field with a purpose of testing previously developed hypothesis, an interpretive researcher goes to the field with some prior knowledge about the issues being investigated but is open to new knowledge throughout the study and allows it to develop with the help of participants. This signifies that the purpose of interpretive research is to produce knowledge by understanding and interpreting human interactions rather than to test previously constructed hypothesis, generalise and predict causes and effects (Hudson and Ozanne, 1998; Neuman, 2014). To this end, against the use of rigid statistical methods, as recommended in a positivist perspective, the interpretive researchers can use various data collection tools that enable them to obtain as much detail as possible about the research subjects. In the view of Thanh and Thanh (2015: 26), “interpretive researchers do not seek the answers for their studies in rigid ways.” Thus, in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis are some of the widely used data collection tools available for this methodological approach (Decrop, 2006).

Therefore, based on the foregoing discussion, it can be said that the choice of an appropriate research paradigm is important because it enables the researcher to work within a structure that is congruent with the aims and objectives of a particular study. With regards to this thesis, the research for this thesis by its nature is situated within the interpretive paradigm as the goal in this study is not to identify the single reality that is waiting to be discovered. Rather, this study is concerned with the thoughts, perceptions and personal experiences of the individual residents of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun following the introduction of homestay tourism. Thus, this thesis does not attempt to approach reality objectively as emphasised in positivism; but is focused on providing platforms to the local

residents of both villages to voice their personal feelings and experiences on the issues of multiple facets of empowerment in their own words so that the social world can be presented as lived, socially constructed and perceived by them. Hence, individual views about the impacts of homestay practices and its implication on economic, social, psychological and political dimensions of empowerment are crucial for this study. To this end, the interpretive paradigm is believed to help the researcher to capture human perspectives, attitudes, feelings and emotions and the meanings that people give to the phenomenon (Schutt, 2006; Prasad, 2017). Thus, this thesis aims to contribute to the contemporary tourism literature by exploring tourism-led empowerment by investigating Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun homestay projects by following the interpretive research paradigm. The findings of the research for this thesis should have value within social science based academic disciplines concerned with issues relating to community development, power relations and tourism development.

As noted above, interpretive research escapes rigid statistical and mathematical frameworks; therefore, this research relies on a qualitative methodological approach with a conviction that this methodology enables the research participants to share their personal narratives in detail. Furthermore, the interpretive worldview relies on the qualitative methodology because it is “characterised by a need to understand the world as it is from a subjective point of view...within the frame of reference of the participant rather than the objective observer of the action” (Ponelis, 2015: 538). Similarly, Decrop (2006: 48) note that interpretive methodology is often related with a qualitative approach because interpretive problems can be better addressed by qualitative methods. This is echoed by Thanh and Thanh (2015: 26) who argue that “there is a tight connection between the interpretive paradigm and qualitative methodology.” This is because the researchers adopting interpretative paradigm often look for experiences and perceptions of individuals for their data rather relying on numbers of statistics (ibid). The next section presents a discussion of a qualitative methodological approach.

4.3. A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A qualitative methodological approach is expected to allow researchers to conduct in-depth investigation by exploring meanings that human beings attach to the phenomena under investigation. Merriam (2009: 13) states that qualitative methodology enables a researcher to “understand the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world.” Creswell (2009: 4) also considers that a qualitative approach is suitable “for exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems.” In recognition of this, Patton (2015) notes that qualitative research often enquires into the stories of individuals to capture and understand their perspectives. This is particularly because “qualitative research seeks to study meanings in subjective experiences” (Nes et al., 2010: 313). As such, qualitative studies are carried out “to explain, clarify and elaborate the meanings of different aspects of the human life experience” (Sanjari et al., 2014: 3).

As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of local residents of two homestay destination communities in Nepal with reference to their tourism-related empowerment. Therefore, this study is concerned with gaining as much information as possible about the impacts of tourism activities on community members in relation to four dimensions of empowerment (economic, social, psychological and political) after the local residents’ participation in tourism initiatives. To this end, qualitative research methodology was deemed appropriate because this approach enables the researcher to conduct detailed analysis of the meanings that the inhabitants of Ghale Guan and Dalla Gaun have attributed towards the influence of homestay tourism on issues of empowerment. Thus, by adopting a qualitative methodology this research collected information in the respondents’ words based on the argument that individual human beings assign meaning to things.

By contrast, a quantitative approach was not considered suitable for this study because of its inadequacy for in-depth investigation of personal meanings and experiences due to its emphasis on the production of numerical outputs rather than textual data (Creswell, 2009; Sanjari et al., 2014; Hesse-Biber, 2016). This is because, in quantitative studies,

respondents are provided with predetermined and limited alternatives from which they are required to select the response that is most appropriate for them. Hence, the respondents do not generally have freedom to express their personal views beyond the choices offered to them even if they have something significant to disclose about the topic of investigation. According to Hesse-Biber (2016), because of the rigid structure in quantitative studies and the negation of personal feelings and subjective interpretation of phenomena, there is not really the opportunity to express thoughts in one's own language and that some concepts are defined by the researcher rather than trying to find out what they mean for the interviewee. Similarly, Clough and Nutbrown (2012) state that this approach produces only partial information which is normally insufficient to explore human experiences in depth. In Clough and Nutbrown's (2012: 33) words, a quantitative approach "generates one form of information at the expense of others, and you would not normally expect to learn much about the experiences of respondents from that sort of enquiry."

However, a qualitative approach is immune from this drawback in the sense that this approach offers the respondents opportunities to express their thoughts spontaneously in their own words. As far as this thesis is concerned, the accounts of local residents of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun about their personal experiences after the villagers' engagement in tourism activities are the fundamental sources of information. Giving opportunities to the local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun to spell out their lived experiences of living in tourism villages was not possible by utilising a quantitative approach. Therefore, in order to articulate the respondents' experiences in their own words a qualitative methodology was the most suitable approach for this study.

Having discussed the relevant research methodologies for this thesis, the discussion in the following section provides details concerning the use of a case study approach in the research for this thesis.

4.4. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CASE STUDY AS A CHOSEN RESEARCH APPROACH

The case study is a widely acknowledged and extensively used research approach in a variety of academic disciplines, but particularly in the social sciences (Crowe et al., 2011). The reason behind its wider application is due to it offering insights that may not be achieved with other methods (Rowley, 2002). Case studies, according to Yin (1984), are instrumental to examine phenomenon in exploratory ways by providing answers to 'how' and 'why' questions. Rowley (2002: 17) supports this assertion when he contends "case studies are one approach that supports deeper and more detailed investigation of the type that is normally necessary to answer how and why questions." This applies to the research for this thesis since the focus here is to develop an understanding of how the locals of the studied communities have perceived the changes in the economic, social, psychological and political aspects of their lives after the introduction of community homestay tourism in their respective villages.

Furthermore, this research has adopted a case study design with a conviction that it enables the researcher to capture the thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences of the people of studied communities in their own words and in the socio-cultural context in which they live. This is because one of the strengths of the case study strategy is that it affords the researcher opportunities to carry out investigations of a phenomenon within the setting in which activities take place (Yin, 2003; Zainal, 2007). As such, according to Eisenhardt (1989: 534), "a case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings." In the words of Yin (2003: 13), the case study method is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context." As a result, a case study is employed to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of issues with consideration of their milieu (Crowe et al., 2011). Therefore, a key benefit of adopting a case study technique for the research for this thesis is that it aids the understanding of the issues relating to different aspects of empowerment without isolating them from the local situation of the communities in question.

The case study approach is often considered as an appropriate tool for the exploration of areas which may be new or not significantly explored by previous research, thus, only a little is known about the phenomena (Eisenhardt, 1989; Rowley, 2002; Fillis and Lee, 2011). With regards to the tourism industry, research that explores the outcomes of tourism development in relation to the empowerment of people living in destination communities is still in its infancy (see Chapter 1). As discussed in more depth in Chapter 1, this is particularly so in the case of community-managed tourism programmes. The issues relating to empowerment in tourism are underexplored and need careful attention. To this end, the case study was considered an appropriate strategy to obtain in-depth knowledge about the subject of tourism-led empowerment to add knowledge to the contemporary tourism literature.

Yin (2003) divides case studies into three categories, namely 1. Descriptive, 2. Explanatory and 3. Exploratory. A descriptive case study is used to describe an intervention, or phenomenon, and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). This view is supported by Hancock and Algozzine (2006: 33) who agree that “descriptive designs attempt to present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context.” An explanatory case study is useful for those studies which are seeking to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions (Yin, 2003). Thus, the aim of an explanatory case study is to identify “how events occur, and which ones may influence particular one” (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006: 33). In both the descriptive and explanatory routes, according to Rowley (2002: 19), “the researcher has to make a speculation, on the basis of the literature and any other earlier evidence as to what they expect the findings of the research to be. The data collection and analysis can then be structured in order to support or refute the research propositions.”

Exploratory case studies are conducted to extend the understanding of complex social phenomena (Ogawa and Malen, 1991). Several researchers (e.g. Yin, 1984; Ogawa and Malen, 1991) argue that an exploratory case study is appropriate for those areas which have not been the subject of extensive empirical investigation. Yin (2003: 15) further states that “this type of case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.” With regards to this thesis, there is limited empirical evidence about the outcomes of community-managed tourism initiatives in terms of their

impact on community residents' empowerment in general and specifically in relation to Nepal, therefore, this research is exploratory in nature.

Case studies can be carried out in both single and multiple settings (Yin, 2003). A single case study is appropriate for investigating the cases which are unique in one way or another (Yin, 2003). This enables the researcher to reveal the distinctive features, or attributes, of the studied phenomena (Adeyinka-Ojo et al., 2014). Additionally, this strategy is also used to test previously developed theory or to examine the cases that were previously inaccessible to the researcher (Yin, 2003).

In multiple case studies, more than one single case is selected. This provides the researcher opportunities to compare across the chosen cases. Hence, employing a multiple case study offers the advantage of the in-depth exploration of the cases through comparison so that the researcher can draw out similarities and differences between them (Yin, 2003; Baxter and Jack, 2008; Heale and Twycross, 2018). With regards to this research, a multiple case study was deemed appropriate because one of the objectives of this thesis was to compare and contrast the outcomes of community homestay tourism in two different homestay destinations in Nepal. Furthermore, the multiple case study approach for this research was adopted to enhance the reliability of the findings. This assertion is consistent with the views of Baxter and Jack (2008) and Heale and Twycross (2018) who argue that the conclusions drawn from multiple case studies are robust and more reliable compared to the single case study.

One of the often cited benefits of using a case study approach is that it allows the researcher to carry out several levels of analysis by combining various data collection instruments, thus, assembling evidence from different sources (Eisenhardt, 1989; Rowley, 2002; Fillis and Lee, 2011). Yin (2003) notes six sources of evidence that can be used in case study research. These include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. This shows that this approach to research "ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed" (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 544). To this end, this thesis also incorporates interviews and participant observation

as data collection methods with a view that these techniques enable the researcher to gain a deep insight of the phenomenon in question. The data collection tools used in this research are outlined in sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2.

Having discussed the case study as a research approach and its relevance to this thesis, the discussion in the following section outlines the study populations and sampling strategies used for participant selection.

4.5. TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Sampling is a process of selecting a subset of people to be included in a study (Daniel, 2012). According to Thompson (2012) and Sharma (2017), it enables a researcher to systematically choose a small number of representatives from a target population to serve as a source of data that can contribute to addressing the research objectives. This gives rise to a wide range of sampling methods that can be utilised in the process of selecting population for a particular study. However, sampling techniques are broadly categorised into two groups; probability and non-probability (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003).

Probability sampling is based on probability theory. In this type of sampling practice, research participants are randomly selected so that affording every individual of the target population equal opportunity to be chosen for study (Pajo, 2017). This shows that in purposive sampling strategy, every individual of the target population is a possible research participant. However, samples following non-probability sampling strategies “are selected in some way not suggested by probability theory” (Babbie, 2007: 203). Thus, every one of the target population does not have equality of chance to be included in the study.

Concerning this study, the target population consisted of all the people who were residing in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun at the time of data collection. As outlined at the start of this Chapter, the goal of this research was to acquire a holistic community perspective about the impacts of tourism development in relation to the multiple dimensions of empowerment in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. To this end, the target population for this thesis was categorised into two groups. The first group consisted of all the villagers who were

directly involved in the tourism business, for example, running homestays, whereas the second group included the villagers who were not directly associated with homestay projects. The decision to involve both homestay operators and other villagers was made based on the rationale that the whole community is the actual beneficiaries of the outcomes of homestay practices regardless of their association in tourism business.

Two different sampling approaches were employed for these two different groups of people. A census method was utilised in the case of homestay operators. Singh (2003: 2) notes that “if we take a whole population as the sample then the sampling survey is called a census.” Singh (2003) further suggests that a census method is suitable for those kinds of studies, which have a fewer number of potential participants compared to the studies having a larger study population and are willing to take part in research. With regards to this thesis, the census method was considered appropriate in the case of homestay operators because the numbers of homestay operators in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun were not unreachable. For instance, according to the data provided by GTDMC and TDMC, there were 32 houses providing homestay facilities in Ghale Gaun at the data collection period whereas 22 households were registered as homestays in Dalla Gaun. Thus, the decision to use the census method in the case of homestay operators was guided by the objective to collect information from as many homestay operators as possible. In addition, all homestay operators of both villages were thought to be approachable because the researcher had to stay in their respective villages for extended periods to collect data by using participant observation.

A purposive sampling method was employed while selecting respondents from homestay non-participants. In Kumar’s (2011) opinion, the principle of purposive sampling is to allow researchers to make use of their judgement as to who can be best placed as a source of data to achieve study objectives. In a similar vein, Babbie (2007: 203) argues, “purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher’s judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative.” In recognition of this, Sharma (2017: 751) states that purposive sampling method which is also known as “judgemental, selective or subjective sampling, reflects a group of sampling techniques that rely on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to

selecting the units (e. g. people, case/ organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied.”

Although the purposive sampling method is criticised for not affording equal opportunities to each member of the study population, the researcher can enjoy the freedom to identify and select research participants who may have possessed important and reliable knowledge and information that she/he is looking for to address the objectives of the study (Pajo, 2017). Thus, in the case of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun research participants from homestay non-participants were chosen based on my personal judgement about who could be a rich source of information. The decision was further influenced by my belief that not every individual living in a destination community is in a position to explain how tourism has influenced their economic, social, psychological and political life. Therefore, the interviews with homestay non-participants in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun were conducted towards the end of my stay in both villages. This is because, after staying in local homestays in the respective villages and having interaction with the locals, I was better able to identify the respondents who appeared to be best suited to provide information to meet the thesis’s research objectives.

4.6. RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods are the specific techniques that are used to gather data for a particular study. For example, Silvermann (2011) and Hesse-Biber (2016) understand research methods as data collection tools that researchers employ to address the issues under investigation. Similarly, in the view of Hammond and Wellington (2013: 107) “research methods provide the means through which data are gathered within a research study.” This gives rise to various data collection methods for different studies, for example, one can use surveying methods to collect relevant information for specific studies whilst others can utilise interviews and observations. Thus, choice of research methods for a study is contingent on the purpose and types of research questions one intends to answer. For example, a quantitative researcher seeks to gather information in the form of numbers and statistics whereas a

qualitative researcher looks for detailed personal accounts of the lived experiences of people in the form of texts (Sanjari, et al., 2014).

As far as tourism studies are concerned, Ramos and Prideaux (2014) state that interviews, observation and focus group discussion are the most widely used data collection methods to investigate community residents' perspectives about tourism's impacts in their lives. This thesis follows a similar trend. To be precise, this thesis employs interviews and observation as data collection tools. The chosen data collection methods are explored in more depth in the proceeding sections.

4.6.1. Interviews

An interview, in general terms, is a form of conversation in which at least two individuals are involved. However, an interview, within the context of research, is perceived differently from its ordinary meaning. This is because an interview for any study is a data collection process in which a person asks questions to another (Babbie, 2007). Similarly, in the view of Kvale (2007: 7), an interview is "a professional interaction, which goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge." Maccoby (1954: 449) perceives interviews as "a face to face verbal exchange, in which ... the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons." Bailey (2007: 95) agrees with these views and states that while interviewing "the researcher asks questions for the purpose of seeking information directly related to the research." Therefore, interviews are conducted to serve the researcher's goal of producing knowledge (Brinkmann, 2018). This is achieved by obtaining in-depth information from the participants' experiences and viewpoints of the topic being studied (Turner, 2010). Consequently, interviews in the field of research are understood as a form of qualitative data collection method that supports the gathering of relevant information about how people observe things in and around them (Clark et al., 1998).

Interviews are broadly categorised into three forms: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Corbetta, 2003). Structured interviews are rigid and the least flexible types of

interviews in the sense that this technique is conducted with a pre-determined set of questions which are administered to each interviewee in a similar manner (Huss, 2009; Grix, 2010). On the other hand, unstructured interviews are not conducted with a list of prescribed questions, thus, the interviewer in such types of interviews does not necessarily ask the same questions to all interviewees in the same order due to the lack of pre-set interview questions (Bailey, 2007). Semi-structured interviews, however, share characteristics of both structured and unstructured interviews. This is because “a semi-structured interview combines questions like those in structured interviews with the open-ended exploration of an unstructured interview” (Wilson, 2014: 24).

Given that this research is concerned with understanding different people’s perspectives about the impact of community-based homestay tourism, semi-structured interviews were regarded to be helpful in gaining detailed information on the issue being investigated. This is because in such types of interview, the researcher is free to ask questions related to the topic to explore respondents’ answers in depth and explore further with the participant if the interviewer feels that he/she needs information on what has been told (Huss, 2009). However, this was not possible by employing structured interviews due to its rigidity in terms of the questions and the manner they are posed.

Similarly, the rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews instead of unstructured is that unstructured interviews tend to be much longer than semi-structured interviews and demand more time than the semi-structured format (Veal, 2017). At the same time, unstructured interviews involve little standardisation and are conducted without having pre-set questions to pose to the interviewees (Bailey, 2007) making the interviews similar to day-to-day conversations. Therefore, there is a possibility of the content of the discussion diverting from the purpose of the research. However, a semi-structured interview is immune from this drawback because a semi-structured interview is conducted with specific questions, which is known as an interview guide or schedule. However, there is a freedom to change the order of questions and ask additional questions that do not exist on the list (Bailey, 2007; Huss, 2009; Wilson, 2014). Thus, the advantage of employing semi-structured interviews in this research is that the researcher on the one hand has an opportunity to prepare a set of

questions and themes which help to keep the interview process controlled and focused and on the other hand flexible enough to pose additional questions if further information is required from research participants.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview method in this case was perceived as an important tool taking the education level of the respondents into account. This is because the respondents of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are not well educated, thus, face to face conversations using the semi-structured model between the researcher and the respondent was expected to allow the researcher opportunities to ensure the respondents understand the interview questions in case any confusion occurs.

4.6.1.1. Development of Interview guide

As noted in section 4.5.1, semi-structured interviews are carried out with an interview guide or schedule, therefore, an interview guide was developed keeping the research aims and objectives at the centre. To this end, the interview guide was categorised into four broad sections that covered economic, social, psychological and political aspects of the study communities. The extensive literature review carried out in the related subject areas contributed for the development of semi-structured interview schedule to incorporate themes that might be useful to explore multiple aspects of empowerment.

The first section of interview schedule consisted of questions related to economic empowerment. Hence, the themes in this part focused on the economic empowerment indicators such as employment generation, financial independence, new business opportunities and distribution of tourism revenue across the wider members of the community.

The second section was designed for the exploration of the issues of social empowerment. Thus, questions in this section incorporated the social empowerment indicators such as community cohesion, quality of life and public facilities enhancement.

The third part of the interview guide was related to psychological empowerment in which questions focused on how local people felt about the influence of tourism development

on community residents' self-esteem and pride with regards to their community and their local traditional and cultural practices. Furthermore, issues related to community members' levels of confidence to face the people from outside of their immediate communities were also explored in this section.

The final part addressed the notion of political empowerment so that questions associated with issues of community participation in the homestay programmes and community members' involvement in decision-making processes were included within this section.

Although all interviews were conducted with pre-set interview guides, I did not adhere to the pre-prepared interview schedule, but rather reviewed and updated the schedule as the discussion proceeded in order to explore in more depth the issues that emerged. In addition, respondents were also encouraged to discuss their experiences freely.

4.6.1.2. Interview processes

Semi-structured interviews for this study were conducted from August to October 2016. Prior to the beginning of each interview, I ensured that the interviewees understood the purpose of being interviewed. Therefore, all interviews began with providing detailed information about myself and the reason why the study was being undertaken. The interviews were conducted after the interviewees agreed to go ahead because I fully respected the respondents' rights to refuse to take part. Furthermore, in order to enable the interviewees to make informed decisions about whether or not to participate in the study, a participant information sheet was provided, which included detailed information about the research and the participants' roles and rights. Those who agreed to be interviewed set the date, time and place for the interview as all the interviews were conducted at the interviewees' convenience. In addition, the participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time or not to answer particular questions.

With regards to the language of communication, the national language of Nepalese was used because although both communities have their own ethnic language - Ghale Gaun

Gurung, Dalla Guan Tharu – both were fluent in Nepalese. Due to the villagers' good understanding and fluency of the Nepalese language, I did not encounter a language barrier while engaging in conversations with them. This is because I am from Nepal and my first language is Nepalese. Furthermore, the use of Nepalese in both study sites also provided consistency in approach, for example, phrasing interview questions in the same way. Additionally, conducting interviews in Nepalese made participation more inclusive. This is because if interviews had been conducted in English, those villagers who did not have a command of English would not have been able to directly contribute to the research of this thesis.

All interviews were administered to the head of the household or a partner (e. g. husband or wife) where possible. However, if unavailable an adult household member of at least 18 years of age was interviewed. The minimum age for participation in the research was set at 18 years because in Nepal people at the age of 18 are considered to be adults. Table 4.1 provides some background information in terms of the demographic profile of the interviewees from both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

Serial Number	Code	Gender	Age	Primary Occupation	Secondary Occupation	Type of interviewee
01	GHO1	Male	65	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of GTDMC
02	GHO2	Male	68	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of GTDMC
03	GHO3	Female	42	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
04	GHO4	Female	48	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of GTDMC
05	GHO5	Female	35	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
06	GHO6	Male	59	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of Fathers' Group
07	GHO7	Female	34	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
08	GHO8	Female	58	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of Mothers' Group
09	GHO9	Female	35	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
10	GHO10	Female	48	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
11	GHO11	Male	45	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
12	GHO12	Female	29	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
13	GHO13	Male	48	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of GTDMC
14	GHO14	Male	28	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider

15	GHO15	Male	59	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Vice Chairperson of GTDMC
16	GHO16	Female	48	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
17	GHO17	Female	46	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
18	GHO18	Male	42	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
19	GHO19	Female	45	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
20	GHO20	Female	26	Teacher	Homestay Owner	Homestay Service Provider/Secretary of Mothers' Group
21	GHO21	Male	52	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
22	GHO22	Male	29	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Secretary of GTDMC
23	GHO23	Male	30	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Office Secretary of GTDMC
24	GHO24	Male	28	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Secretary of Youth Club
25	GHO25	Male	76	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of GTDMC
26	GHO26	Male	55	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Chairperson of GTDMC
27	GHO27	Female	63	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of Mothers' Group
28	GHNP1	Male	41	Business Owner	Farming	Homestay non-registrant/Member of GTDMC

29	GHNP2	Male	67	Farming	N/A	Homestay non-registrant/Member of GTDMC
30	GHNP3	Male	62	Civil Servant	Farming	No Direct Involvement in Homestay
31	GHNP4	Female	48	Shopkeeper	Farming	No Direct Involvement in Homestay
32	GHNP5	Female	39	Handicraft Seller	Farming	No Direct Involvement in Homestay
33	DHO1	Female	30	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
34	DHO2	Female	39	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
35	DHO3	Male	38	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Secretary of TDMC
36	DHO4	Male	42	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC
37	DHO5	Female	48	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
38	DHO6	Female	41	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
39	DHO7	Female	45	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC
40	DHO8	Female	34	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC
41	DHO9	Male	55	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
42	DHO10	Male	45	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Chairperson of TDMC
43	DHO11	Female	54	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC

44	DHO12	Male	68	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC
45	DHO13	Male	46	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
46	DHO14	Female	49	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC
47	DHO15	Male	38	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Treasurer of TDMC
48	DHO16	Female	29	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider/Member of TDMC
49	DHO17	Male	32	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
50	DHO18	Female	58	Homestay Owner	Farming	Homestay Service Provider
51	DHNP1	Female	55	Farming	N/A	Homestay non-registrant/Member of TDMC
52	DHNP2	Female	48	NGO Employee	Farming	No Direct Involvement in Homestay
53	DHNP3	Male	46	Shopkeeper	Farming	No Direct Involvement in Homestay
54	DHNP4	Male	52	Farming	N/A	No Direct Involvement in Homestay
55	DHNP5	Male	32	Farming	N/A	No Direct Involvement in Homestay

Table 4.1. Demographic Information of the interviewees of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. (Source: Author).

(Note: GHO: Ghale Gaun Homestay Operator. GHNP: Ghale Gaun Homestay Non-Participant. DHO: Dalla Gaun Homestay Operator. DHNP: Dalla Gaun Homestay Non-Participant).

Table 4.1 demonstrates that the total number of participants in Ghale Gaun was 32, of which 17 were male and 15 were female. Twenty-seven of the interviewees were homestay operators and the remaining five were village members who were not running homestays. With regards to Dalla Gaun, the total number of interviewees was 23, and comprised of 11 male and 12 female participants, of which 18 were homestay owners and five were non-homestay registrants. In order to ensure anonymity of the interlocutors, each of them was given a code. For instance, the term 'GHO' was used to refer to the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun and 'GHNP' for the respondents who were not directly involvement in the community homestay tourism. In the case of Dalla Gaun, the terms 'DHO' and 'DHNP' were employed for the homestay operators and the homestay non-registrants respectively. Each code is linked to an individual, for instance GHO1, GHNP1, DHO1 and DHNP1. These codes are used in the discussion chapters to identify who is speaking, whilst at the same time safeguarding individual anonymity.

All interviews were audio recorded with prior consent from the respondents. The length of interviews varied depending on the respondents. Some interviewees could not express their views in detail, therefore, such interviews lasted for about ten minutes. On the contrary, some interviewees had many things to share, sometimes on the topic, and sometimes outside the topic. As a result, these interviews lasted for about an hour. At the end of each interview, the respondents were invited to add anything that they felt had not been covered during the interview. Once the interviewees had shared their final thought they were thanked for their participation in the study.

4.6.2. Participant observation

Observation as a data collection method allows researchers to use sense organs to interpret the phenomena under investigation; therefore, observation within a context of research is more than seeing things. For example, Pawar (2004: 19) states that "observation under qualitative methods is not merely ... visually noticing, however, it is about making sense by using some or all of the five sources of perception." A similar view is shared by Kawulich (2005). Ferrante (2018) discusses three types of benefit from using observation as a data

collection method in qualitative research. According to her, firstly, observation enables a researcher to study activities as they happen. Secondly, it permits the researcher to grasp information, which may not be gained by using other methods, and finally, this method also allows the researcher to collect data from informal interaction with the research subjects.

Observation is broadly divided into two categories, namely participant observation and non-participant observation (Ferrante, 2018). Non-participant observation is about detached watching and listening where the role of the researcher is limited as an observer. In such types of observations, the researcher is not expected to interact with the daily lives of the people being researched (Ferrante, 2018). By contrast, in participant observation, the researcher's engagement with the participants and the observation of the phenomena under investigation are simultaneous. Schwandt (2007: 219) defines participant observation as a method of "generating understanding of the way of life of others." Dewalt and Dewalt (2002: 1) agree with such a view and perceive participant observation as a data collection "method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines." For Ferrante (2018), a participant observer not merely observes the interactions of the research participants but also witnesses their activities through directly interacting with them. Thus, the researcher's observation of the participants' actions and direct engagement and interaction with them are at the centre of participant observation, which is expected to enrich the researcher's knowledge about the activities of the everyday lives of the inhabitants in a village or community.

With regards to this thesis, I chose participant observation with the aim to gather first-hand experience of living as a member of the destination communities I was researching. This decision was made based on the argument that this method would provide the researcher with opportunities to immerse himself in the issues under investigation. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) consider participant observation is an appropriate data collection tool for gaining greater understanding of phenomenon from the point of view of participants. Similarly, Andrews (2012: 224) advises that "participant observation is a way of engaging directly with informants in a research setting, of getting to know and understand by sharing in the lives

and activities of the people in question what it feels like and what it means to be part of that social situation or group.” Thus, participant observation in this research was used to obtain in-depth knowledge about how it felt to become a homestay host and/or inhabitant of the villages in question.

Participation observation in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun started immediately I arrived in the villages and lasted until I left the villages. I stayed in one of the homestays in Ghale Gaun and one in Dalla Gaun. This permitted me to observe homestay practices close up. During the stay in the villages, I was determined to participate in various kinds of village activities, particularly tourism related, so that I could collect first-hand experiences of local life. For example, in order to enrich the knowledge through observation, I became involved in daily homestay activities, for instance welcoming tourists, serving food to them, helping homestay owners to clean rooms that were allocated for accommodating tourists and arranging farewell activities when tourists were departing.

On many occasions, I sat in the kitchen during the meal serving time and helped the host family to serve food. I also acted as a translator between the tourists and the homestay hosts many times. Thus, my direct participation in the homestay hosts’ interaction with the tourists and observation of their activities allowed access to how the local people interact with tourists. This further contributed to understanding the hosts’ levels of confidence while they have to communicate with outsiders. In addition, helping the homestay hosts to clean the rooms used by tourists allowed me to engage in informal discussion, which further contributed to my understanding about how the homestay hosts feel when they have to clean the mess left by tourists as well as understand more about the physical work involved in facilitating tourism.

Similarly, participation in village cleaning activities in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun also provided opportunities to observe how local people participate in community works. This further enabled me to understand the degree of community cohesion by getting an insight into how harmonious relationships in the village appeared to be when conducting this task.

In another example, my engagement in community meetings allowed me to increase my understanding of the local people's access to decision making bodies, for example GTDMC and TDMC in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun respectively. I could observe the villagers' level of participation in village meetings. Similarly, it also allowed me to capture the decision-making processes followed in both villages, which supported the analysis of political empowerment in both communities.

During my stay in the village, I often kept myself busy by going around the village and talking with the villagers informally. For example, I used to go to local teashops and participate in discussion with the villagers. I ensured that the people I spoke to were aware of my purpose for staying in their villages and were happy to speak informally. My involvement in such public gatherings and interactions also supplemented information gained from the semi-structured interview process. This is particularly useful because when people are engaged in informal discussion, they tend to be more open than in formal interviews. All information I collected through participant observation was recorded in a fieldwork diary. The findings of the semi-structured interviews and participant observation are discussed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. The discussion in the following two sections first considers the issue of translation then outlines the processes of data analysis.

4.7. NOTE ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE

As noted in the preceding discussion, the working language for the data collection process was Nepalese. Therefore, all interviews that were recorded digitally had to be transcribed using the Nepalese language first and then later translated into English. Halai (2007) contends that the translation process is a time-consuming task. This is exactly what happened in my case. I had to spend a more significant amount of time to translating the interview data into English than I had expected.

Translation involves more than exchanging words from one language to another as it is the process of transferring expressions and meanings (Crystal, 1991). Thus, one of the most important drawbacks of translation is the lack of exact equivalent word in another language which in turn can lead to transliteration. Transliteration "is the process of replacing the words

of one language with meanings of another as sometimes the exact equivalence or exact meaning might not exist” (Regmi et al., 2010: 18). Therefore, in order to minimise the loss of meanings on what was actually said I tried to keep the original sense as much as possible by finding the closest equivalent words in English. My command of the Nepalese language, familiarisation with the local context and understanding of English was useful to maintain the accuracy of original meanings of interview texts. Furthermore, the discussion with the Director of Studies, who is a native English speaker, was supportive to find equivalent words on many occasions. However, I must admit that the loss of meaning in translation process cannot be averted because “if one is to insist that translation must involve no loss of information whatsoever, then obviously not only translating but all communication is impossible” (Nida and Taber, 1969: 13).

4.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The meaning of ethics within a context of research is similar to how it is understood in daily life situations. According to Farrimond (2013), ethics is about what people consider right or wrong with reference to acceptable behaviours. Similarly, the term ethics in research is also used to refer “to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of the researcher throughout the research process” (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002: 16). Therefore, researchers have a duty to respect the individual they are studying and the information they share (Dawson, 2009; Grix, 2010). Furthermore, research participants take part in studies by sharing their personal information and thoughts, therefore, it is necessary to ask their permission and provide detailed information about the research, how data are collected, analysed and disseminated (Grix, 2010). Thus, ethical issues arise in different stages, for example, requesting participation in research, obtaining consent, maintaining confidentiality of information provided, keeping informants safe from possible harm, and respecting the rights of the participants to know the outcome of the research (Kimmel, 2007; Sanjari et al., 2014).

To begin with, obtaining informed consent from research participants is considered as an essential step to conduct research ethically. It is about communicating research aims and

objectives to the potential research participants and providing detailed information about their role in the research along with possible consequences associated with their participation. Thus, respondents can make decisions about whether to participate in a research or not. According to Sanjari et al. (2014), the principle of informed consent is about the researcher's duty to let the participants know the different aspects of research in comprehensible language. This signifies that researchers are obliged to inform the potential respondents about various aspects of research such as why research is being conducted, what happens when they participate in research, risk associated with their participation, how information provided are utilised and how the study results are disseminated.

In terms of this study, I did everything possible to keep the potential respondents informed about the research in the process of obtaining informed consent. For instance, to address the issue of the respondents' rights to information, I introduced myself as a research student of Liverpool John Moores University at the point of initial contact with the villagers of both communities. I also shared the aims and objectives of the study with whoever showed interest. While doing so, I explained to the respondents what they should expect if they agreed to participate. In addition, I also handed out a participant information sheet to the villagers who were interested. Once the potential respondents were given the information sheet, they were asked to take time to read, understand and ask questions if they had any. In order to enable the respondents to understand the content of the information sheet clearly, it was written in Nepalese. In many circumstances, because of the literacy levels of the respondents, I read the information sheet aloud so that the participants would have a clear understanding about the research, their role and rights. It was then up to the individual to decide whether they wanted to participate.

As previously discussed, this research also involved participant observation as a data collection method, therefore, I used any available opportunity to inform the villagers of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun about my intentions to stay in the communities for longer periods than the tourists in general. I introduced myself as a researcher and my purpose for staying in the villages whenever possible such as in informal gatherings, teashops, tourism management office spaces and in the encounters with the villagers while I was carrying out

village walks. This further provided the villagers with opportunities to ask questions about the research and its objectives at any time so that they could make informed decisions about participating in this study and permit the researcher to participate in their daily activities and carry out observation.

Likewise, anonymity of research participants and confidentiality of the information supplied by them were also taken into consideration. Francis (2009) states that anonymity is one of the main ethical issues that needs to be considered in interviews. Thus, in order to maintain anonymity, I have ensured that there is no use of respondents' personal details (for example real names) that would allow them to be identified as individuals. For example, throughout the thesis the respondents are referred to, for example, as one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun or one of the farmers of Dalla Gaun so that it is not possible to identify who is speaking by reading comments.

Additionally, to maintain confidentiality the signed consent forms were stored in a secured cabinet to which only the researcher had access. Furthermore, to ensure the information provided by the respondents was kept secure, all translated versions of the interviews were stored on a password protected computer. Similarly, a copy of the interview transcription was saved in LJMU's M drive, which is also password protected. The supervisory team were given access to the data only for supervision purposes. The respondents were also made aware that the data provided would be treated in the strictest confidence, and would not be passed to other people, and would be used only for the purpose of the study.

4.9. DATA ANALYSIS

The data for this study was collected in two Nepalese rural homestay destinations. All information collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation were analysed by the thematic analysis method, which is one of the widely used data analysis methods in qualitative studies. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 6), thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data." Thus, "the goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i. e. patterns in the data that are important or

interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue” (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017: 3353).

Although thematic analysis is a popular tool to analyse qualitative data, there is no agreement among researchers about how thematic analyses are carried out. Thus, different researchers have suggested different processes (Boyatzis, 1998; Alhojailan, 2012; Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). With regards to this thesis, data analysis was performed by adopting the phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The framework developed by Braun and Clark (2006) is acknowledged to be the most influential approach due to it offering a clear and practical outline for analysing qualitative data (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Table 4.2 below illustrates Braun and Clarke’s (2006) processes of thematic analysis, where the third column indicates how this was applied in the current research. The proceeding discussion expands on these points providing more detail.

Phase	Description of the process	Process of data analysis
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listened to the interview records and transcribed them in the original language of interview • Translated interview transcriptions into English • Checked transcripts against voice records • Re-read transcripts and observation notes • Lists of initial ideas relevant to the research objectives were generated
2. Generating initial codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned codes across the entire dataset by highlighting the words, phrases and sentences • Combined the highlighted data into different groups corresponding to their codes
3. Searching for themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codes having similar attributes were organised and developed into initial themes
4. Reviewing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checked data extracts corresponding to their themes to ensure all relevant data were captured and the themes represented the ideas shared in the data • Created a thematic map
5. Defining and naming themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire data set was revisited in relation to the thematic map generated in the 5th phase.
6. Producing the report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked the analysis to the research objectives and literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3

	final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrote up the data analysis to be incorporated within findings and discussion sections
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Table 4.2 The Phases of thematic analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006).

4.9.1. Familiarisation with data

As shown in Table 4.1, thematic analysis begins with the researcher's familiarisation with the data. This stage is a means to facilitate the researcher's immersion in the data, which is achieved by going through the entire data set continuously until the researcher is confident that s/he has grasped the essence of the data. According to Riger and Sigurvinsdottir (2016), the researcher's familiarisation with the data incorporates transcribing interview records and reading the transcriptions repeatedly. Herzog et al. (2019) agree with this idea and argue that the researcher's familiarisation takes place when s/he begins listening and producing the transcriptions of verbal data into textual form. The researcher in this stage is required to go through the interview texts (or any other type of qualitative data, for example recorded observations, focus groups, multimedia, policy manuals, and photographs (Nowell et al., 2017)), by keeping the research aim and objectives in mind, which allows her/him to identify the way the data yields ideas that satisfy the aim and objectives of the research (Damayathi, 2019). This indicates that the researcher's familiarisation with the data affords opportunities to notice things that s/he is intending to examine.

In line with the ideas discussed in the previous paragraph, the familiarisation with the data in this research began with listening to the audio recorded interviews and producing transcriptions. To get hold of the thoughts and ideas expressed by the interviewees and to maintain the accuracy of what interlocutors had said, the recordings were listened to several times before transcribing. As mentioned in Section 4.4.1.2, all interviews for this thesis were conducted in the Nepalese language; therefore, the interview records were initially transcribed in Nepalese. Further, to become immersed in the data the Nepali version of the transcriptions was read several times. Thus, listening to the audio recordings and reading repeatedly the Nepalese version of the transcription enabled familiarisation with the depth and breadth of the content of the data due to sharing the same first language with the interviewees. Afterwards, all interview transcriptions were translated into English. Although translation is a time-consuming task, it allowed additional opportunities to look at the respondents' views more closely. During this process, the research objectives, which are to understand the community residents' perspectives about the impact of community homestay

tourism in relation to their economic, social, psychological and political aspects of empowerment, were always kept at the back of mind. This helped to identify the extent to which these four dimensions of empowerment emerged from the data. The first stage of data analysis in this thesis also involved going through the observation notes that were recorded during the participant observation period. This was done at the time of listening to the recordings before transcribing in Nepalese.

The researcher's familiarisation with the data also involves noting down her/his initial impressions of the data. This is to say that the researcher in this stage makes note of the relevant information within the data that s/he thinks may have a contribution to address the research questions that s/he has developed (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the case of the research for this thesis, notes were created when something interesting about and/or relevant to the research questions were found while reading the interview transcripts. For example, when the respondents shared their experiences about the positive changes in their economic condition, a note that reflected as a positive influence of tourism in their economic empowerment was written. This technique was implemented throughout the process.

4.9.2. Generating initial codes

The second stage of thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), begins with the production of initial codes. A code is a word or brief phrase that captures the essence of a particular segment of data that the researcher thinks is useful to address the issues s/he is investigating (Braun and Clarke, 2013). For Saldana (2016: 3), a code "assigns a summative, salient and essence capturing attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data." Coding involves highlighting parts of qualitative data, for example sentences and phrases, and using labels to suggest their meaning. In the words of Braun et al. (2016), coding is about generating pithy labels for important features of the data that has some relevance to the research question. For Marks and Yardley (2004), coding is a process of identifying the patterns in data and labelling those patterns so that data can be organised to answer research questions. The generation of codes facilitates organisation of the data into meaningful entities because in the coding process the researcher organises the entire dataset into various meaningful groups

by accumulating all the data extracts that have similar codes together (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, it can be said that coding refers to the process of categorising all important parts of data with respect to the study's aim and objectives.

Coding can be done both by using software programmes (e. g. Nvivo, ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA) and manually. In the case of this research I agreed with Saldana (2016) who argues that coding manually gives the researcher more control over and ownership of the work. Therefore, interview transcripts and field notes were manually coded in hard copy. However, after the completion of coding all the codes generated, and data extracts associated with them were transferred onto electronic files i.e. they were stored as a Microsoft Word document.

Coding for this study was performed by highlighting the patterns of words, sentences and phrases of the interview texts and observation notes that were relevant to address the research objectives. In order to recognise the data by their category different colour highlighters for different types of data chunks were used. For example, red for words, phrases and sentences that were related to the positive and negative aspects of economic empowerment was used. Pink was assigned to the ideas associated with social empowerment. Similarly, green and orange were used in the case of political and psychological aspects of empowerment respectively. For example, in the data set, respondents suggested the creation of a local institution and the inclusion of both homestay owners and the non-participants in the tourism management committee to ensure the community control over tourism development and management at the village level. These ideas were labelled with different codes such as 'formation of local institution', 'locals decide', 'inclusion of homestay non-participants'. Therefore, the coding had two phases. 1. Coding based on the four types of empowerment. 2. Coding based on other themes that emerged from reading the data. Figure 4.1 illustrates the coding process involved in the analysis.

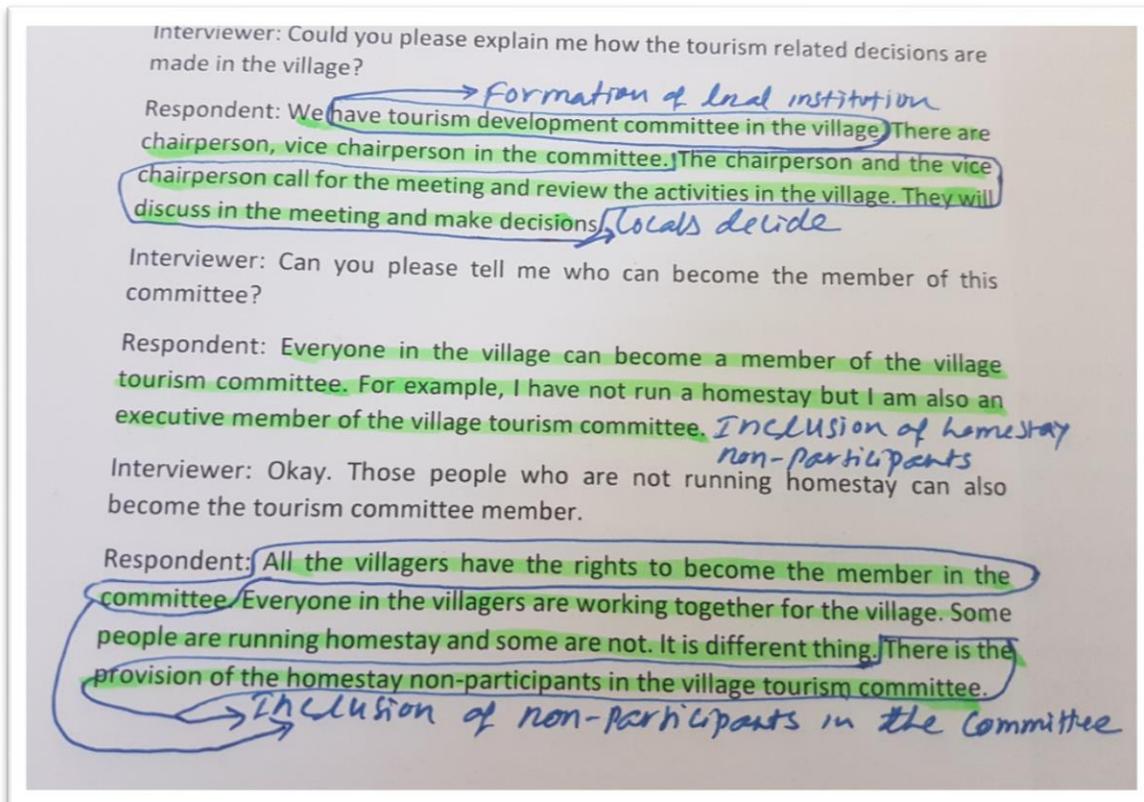


Figure 4.1. Coding process. (Source: Author).

The next task in this stage involves putting all the coded data identified by similar codes together (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Once coding was completed, all the relevant data relating to one code were accumulated in one file and so on. While doing so, the highlighted segments of data were combined into different groups corresponding to their codes. For instance, the data related to the inclusion or exclusion of community members in decision-making processes were kept in one group. Similarly, the ideas associated with the formation of a local body to conduct tourism programmes in the communities were assembled in another cluster, so data were grouped together under codes. The following table (Table 4.2) serves as an illustrative example of how data extracts and their associated codes were combined together. The sentences in the first column are the coded data that were converted into an electronic file after the manual coding, whereas codes representing them are recorded in the next column.

Interview extracts	Codes
<p><i>“The villagers of Ghale Gaun can participate in the discussion of tourism development in the village. We generally discuss about tourism in the monthly village meetings. If we have a very important matter, we can discuss this with tourism committee secretary in his office” (GHO19)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can participate in the monthly village meetings • Can discuss issues in secretary’s office
<p><i>“We do not say this person cannot participate in the village meeting because he is not running homestay. Even though he is not involved in homestay, he is living in this village. He might have been affected by tourism development in one way or other. Therefore, the committee provides equal opportunity to discuss about tourism development so that everyone can feel that GTDMC respects all the villagers.” (GHO13)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-participants can participate in village meetings • Every villager has equal opportunity to participate in meetings
<p><i>“They [Homestay owners] do not ask us anything. They do not even invite us to the meetings. The homestay operators meet up and discuss about tourism, but they do not invite the other villagers.” (DHNP2)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-participants are not included in meetings

Table 4.3. Data extracts and codes associated with them (Source: Author).

4.9.3. Searching for themes

This phase of thematic analysis involves carefully looking at the codes generated in the previous stage, the interview excerpts and field notes associated with them and combining these codes to form themes, which ultimately helps the researcher to answer the questions s/he is committed to answer. A theme is defined as “something that has a certain level of pattern or meaning in relation to the research questions in the data” (Karlsen et al., 2017: 99). Searching for themes, to some extent, is about ‘coding the codes’ generated in the earlier stage to identify similarity in the data (Clark and Braun, 2013). It can also be described as a code analysis process where the researcher is focused on how various codes can be combined to form an overarching theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To be precise, searching for themes is about arranging different codes into potential themes, and organising all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (ibid).

In this stage, the codes generated in the form of words and phrases in the earlier phase were revisited which enabled identification of those codes that could be grouped together to develop into themes. Therefore, all the codes having similar attributes were organised and developed into initial themes. For example, in the case of both villages the interviewees expressed different perspectives about their inclusion and exclusion in making tourism-related decisions at the village level. Therefore, the codes related to this issue such as the practice of organising monthly village meetings, inclusion or exclusion of the community homestay non-participants in local tourism development and management committees were collated to form a theme called 'opportunities and restrictions to participate in decision making processes' (see Table 4.3). This helped to address the issues of political power relations (which is one of the objectives of this thesis), for example, whether the decision-making power was monopolised by a handful of people or rested in the hands of the entire community. A similar method of grouping the codes having similar characteristics was utilised throughout the theme 'development processes'.

Creation of a visual representation of codes and themes, for example drawings, tables or thematic maps is considered as an important practice in this stage (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2016). In this thesis, tables were used for this purpose. An illustrative example of this stage is presented in Table 4.4, which shows how themes were developed from the codes generated in the earlier phase.

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All villagers can participate in the discussion • Monthly village meetings • Discuss with the office secretary in his office • No discrimination between homestay owner and non-participants in becoming committee member • Committee provides each individual with equal opportunities • Committee organises village meeting every month • All villagers can participate in village meetings • Committee does not ask anything • Non-participants not invited • Only homestay operators meet up and discuss • Homestay operators think they do not need non-participant's • Never ask how non-participants are affected • Non-participants not invited in the meetings • Homestay operators decide about tourism • No fixed schedule for village meetings • Meetings conducted as and when necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities and restrictions to participate in decision-making processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can share good and bad experiences in meetings • Can provide suggestion • Can talk in village meetings • Can give opinions in meetings • All non-participants are included in the village meetings • Committee listens what we say • Committee decides after listening villagers' views • Used to organise village meetings but not now • Organise meetings for homestay owners • Committee does not listen the non-participants' voice • They decide on their own way • They do not implement non-participants' suggestions • Always think about homestay hosts • Never think of other villagers • No benefits of sharing thoughts because homestay operators do not listen • Once meeting is over, they forget what we say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways of incorporating the voices of the community

Table 4.4. Codes and their representative themes (Source: Author).

4.9.4. Reviewing themes

This phase is about reviewing and refining the themes developed in the previous phase. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), in order to ensure that the themes represent the codes generated in the earlier phase and the data set as a whole, a researcher is required to review and refine themes in two levels. Firstly, it involves revising at the level of data extracts that have been coded. This is to say that a researcher needs to go through all the coded data items for each individual theme to ensure that they are coherent (ibid). In this stage, I read the data extracts that were associated with each individual theme to ensure whether the themes were supported by the data. The second level consists of a similar process, but this time the researcher is expected to examine themes in relation to the entire data set. This means that the researcher is also expected to check whether the themes accurately replicate the ideas communicated in the data set as a whole (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher here needs to evaluate whether the themes work in the context of the entire data set (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Therefore, this phase gives the researcher additional opportunities to identify if the themes are harmonious in relation to both the coded excerpts and the full dataset (Clark and Braun, 2013). As such, this stage enables the researcher to ask if the themes developed previously make sense or not, thus, allowing her/him to use, modify and/or discard them (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Maguire and Delahunt, 2017).

During this phase, the interview transcripts and the field notes were read one more time to ensure that all relevant themes from the data were captured and the themes represented the ideas embedded in the data. Some initial themes developed in the earlier phase were modified and changed into sub-themes. For example, the theme 'opportunities and restrictions to participate in decision-making processes' was quite long so it was renamed to 'use of community forums'. Similarly, the initial theme 'ways of incorporating voices of the community' was modified into 'incorporation of the voices of community'. Afterwards, both themes became sub-themes under the main theme 'decision-making processes'. Figure 4.2 provides an example of the process in the form of the thematic map for the category of political empowerment that was created in the process of rigorously checking the themes and sub-themes in accordance with both the data extracts as well as the entire data set.

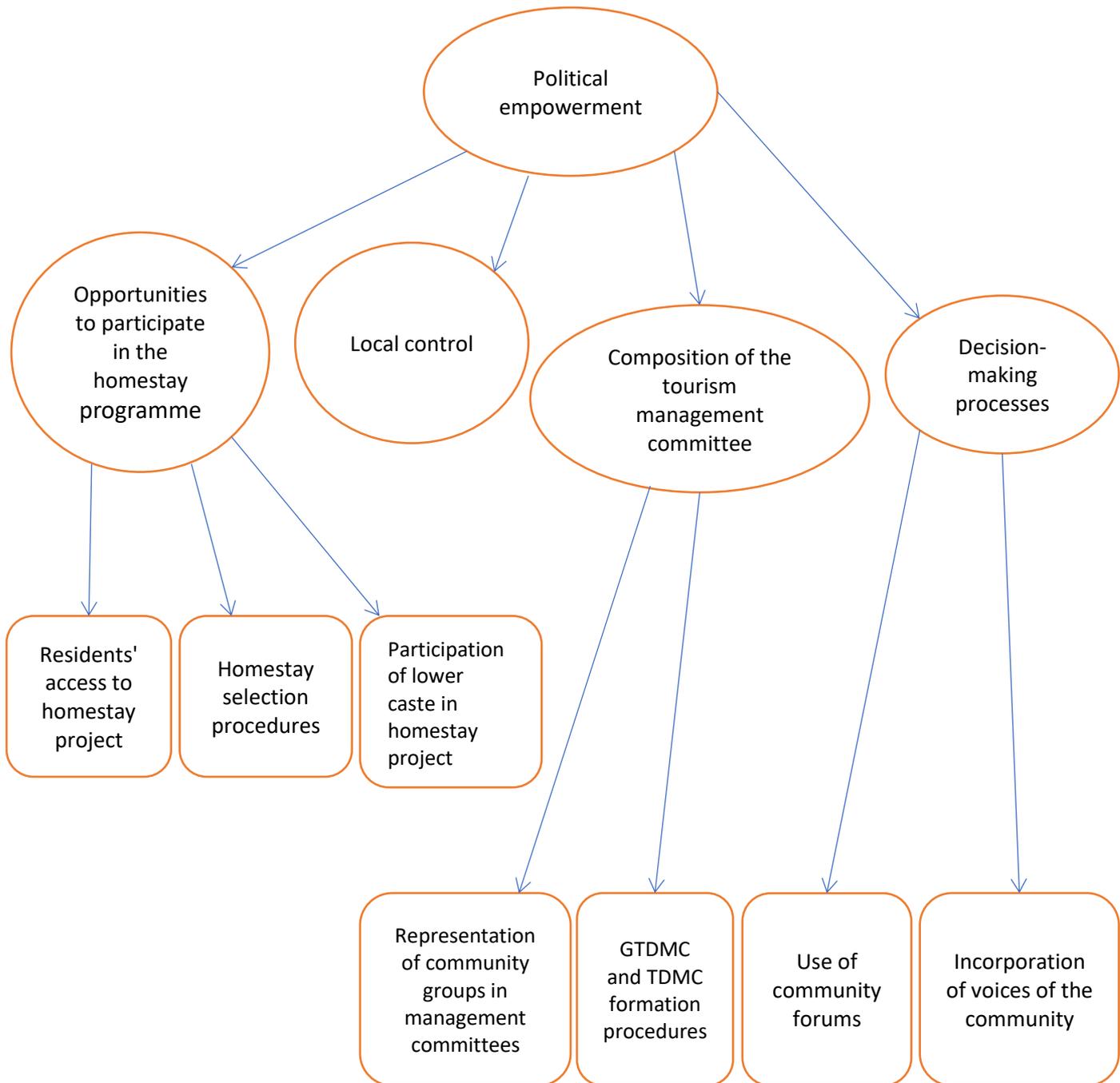


Figure 4.2. Thematic map for political empowerment. (Source: Author).

4.9.5. Defining and naming themes

Once a thematic map is created, there might be a need to refine previously constructed themes. In such circumstances, this stage of thematic analysis provides the researcher an additional opportunity to refine the themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Maguire and Delahunt,

2017). The key tenet in this stage is to identify the central idea in each theme and provide a name that captures the idea (Riger and Sigurvinsdottir, 2016). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the names of the themes and sub-themes need to be concise and punchy which immediately give the reader a sense of what they mean. With regards to this thesis, the themes and sub-themes were generated through a rigorous process of theme generation and refinement outlined in section 4.9.4 above. Therefore, in order to ensure that the themes represented the meanings embedded in the data, the entire dataset was revisited in relation to the thematic map presented in section 4.9.4. An example of themes and sub-themes of political empowerment in Figure 4.1 shows the themes and sub-themes associated with them.

4.9.6. Producing the report

The final stage of thematic analysis is the presentation of research findings. This relies on “weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualising it in relation to existing theory” (Clarke and Braun, 2013: 122). The themes developed following the steps discussed earlier and the data extracted through their codes therefore need to be presented to convey the story embedded in the data in accordance with the research questions as well as in relation to current literature. The researchers generally do so in the discussion sections of their research. With regards to this study, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 are used for this purpose beginning with economic empowerment in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 follows with a discussion of social empowerment and Chapter 7 and 8 discuss psychological and political empowerment respectively.

In this phase, it is important to use data extracts within the analysis to illustrate the meanings about the data and making an argument in relation to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In order to demonstrate the support of data to the discussion of the study’s findings quotations from individual interviewees were used in this stage. In many cases, the quotations from more than one respondent were included to demonstrate that the voices of various interlocutors were incorporated throughout the discussion. Additionally, the findings

were also compared and contrasted with the broader literature surrounding the research topic discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

4.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter has discussed the research methodology and methods for this research. The Chapter began by focusing on the philosophical assumptions of the research paradigms providing explanation for the choice of an interpretive approach in relation to the study aims and objectives. The discussion was followed by the dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches. It identified the strength and suitability of the qualitative approach for this study. The research methods employed to collect relevant data were then elucidated, which explained the appropriateness of the chosen methods. Similarly, the analysis procedures of the dataset derived from the interviews with the locals of both villages and observations of their communities were also explained in detail. In addition, this Chapter also provided insights about how ethical concerns were addressed throughout the research processes.

The next Chapter is the first Chapter to discuss findings of the research for this thesis, which considers the outcomes in relation to economic empowerment.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Chapter is to discuss the perceptions of local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun about their economic empowerment/disempowerment following the opening of community-managed homestay schemes in their villages. The analysis of the interview and participant observation datasets in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrate that the development of homestay services has played a significant role in facilitating economic empowerment in their respective communities. This is because the interviewees of both villages acknowledge the emergence of various economic activities because of homestay developments. The perceived economic empowerment is manifested in the form of positive changes in employment generation, market creation for local products, increased access to new business opportunities, financial independence, and equitable distribution of tourism revenue among the community residents. Each of these facets is explored in the forthcoming sections, beginning with employment opportunities.

5.2. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The positive relationship between the tourism industry and employment generation in destination communities is widely acknowledged in the tourism literature. For instance, Harrison and Schipani (2007), Othman et al. (2013), Salleh et al. (2013) and Meyer and Meyer (2015) agree that tourism development is a means of employment creation in host destinations. Malatji and Mtapuri (2012) argue that tourism development, and CBT in particular, is promoted as a tool to generate income for the residents of destination communities through an increase in the availability of employment opportunities in their local area. Lopez-Guzman et al. (2011) in an earlier study expressed a similar opinion about CBT and its influence on employment prospects as they point out that the aim of a CBT project is to improve the local economy through employment creation. Concerning this study, the interviewees recognise that the development of homestay has led to positive changes to the

employment opportunities for the locals. Elucidating the role of homestay tourism in employment creation, one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO6) mentioned, *“homestay has given jobs to many people in the village. You can see many people are earning money by serving guests in their houses.”* Another homestay owner (GHO1) added, *“serving tourists in homestays is similar to other jobs that pay you money because when I serve them in my house, I get money from them.”*

Similar to the homestay operators, the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun also felt that employment opportunities are positively influenced following tourism development in their village. This is because it allowed the villagers to increase their level of income by working not only in tourism but other sectors that contribute to the needs of the tourists, for example agricultural practices that supply food for tourists. In addition, those who work only in agriculture have increased their income as a result of tourism development because of the supply of foods for the tourist market. A similar situation can be identified for the cultural sector. As one local elderly farmer of Ghale Gaun (GHNP2) commented,

The villagers have sufficient jobs after we started homestay in Ghale Gaun. Prior to this, people had nothing to do except working in their own field. Now the villagers can do many things to earn money. For example, they can produce vegetables. They can brew alcohol. They can work in cultural groups as dancers. People of Ghale Gaun do not need to stay idle these days.

Similarly, in Dalla Gaun the enhanced employment opportunities is identified as one of the widely acknowledged benefits that homestay practices brought to the community. For instance, in the words of a local resident (DHO7),

The residents of Dalla Gaun had limited work opportunities in the village before the villagers started homestay. Many villagers can work now. Some work in homestays. Others work in cultural shows. The villagers are earning money in the village since tourists started coming to Dalla Gaun.

The homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun did not have different opinions about this issue as they also expressed positive views about how tourism development resulted in increased job opportunities in their village. As one individual (DHNP4) commented,

Homestay has created many jobs in Dalla Gaun. You can see, some people running homestays, some are doing vegetable farming. Some are rearing chickens to sell in homestays. Some produce local alcohol. Even some people are earning by participating in cultural dances.

This shows that in accordance with Kim et al.'s (2013) view tourism development is appreciated for having potential to generate employment in the destination communities. Aynalem et al. (2016: 2) argue that "the contribution of tourism for employment is indispensable." Leh and Hamzah (2012) note that promoting new employment opportunities in the tourism sector and other various segments of the economy is one of the irrefutable facts related to the tourism industry. With regards to this study, the perspectives found in both communities, reveal that homestay tourism is enabling employment possibilities in both the tourism sector and other areas. This signifies that community-managed homestay establishments are contributing to facilitating economic development in the local communities of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun by generating employment for the locals. Consequently, this finding agrees with the predominant argument in tourism studies that tourism development has potential to expand the direct and indirect employment opportunities in destination communities (Leh and Hamzah, 2012). The following sections explore the local people's perspectives about the impact of homestay tourism in direct and indirect employment creation in detail.

5.2.1. Direct employment

Direct employment in tourism is the form of jobs driven in the tourism sector and other activities that are closely concomitant with the tourism industry such as, for example accommodation and hospitality. According to Aynalem et al. (2016: 2), "direct employment opportunities are the total number of job opportunities supported by directly in travel and tourism. For example, employment in hotel, restaurants, tourism information offices,

museums, bed and breakfast and guesthouses.” A number of researchers, for example Abdullah and Said (2014), Wijeaundara and Gnanapala (2016), Anuar and Sood (2017) and Mak et al. (2017) recognise the potential of the tourism industry to influence direct employment opportunities in the destination areas. Razzaq et al. (2011) further argue that tourism development, particularly CBT development, allows the local population to engage in tourism activities, which in turn contributes to their economic empowerment. A similar phenomenon was observed in this study. In relation to Ghale Gaun, for instance, the interviewees felt that the homestay development enabled the locals to become involved in tourism activities permitting them to earn revenue. One of the often-cited areas of employment facilitated by the arrival of tourism in Ghale Gaun was the increased working opportunities as an accommodation provider in the form of homestay hosts. As one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO4) stated,

All people who are accommodating guests in the house are employed in their own houses. They do not have to go anywhere to look for job. They provide the tourists with various services such as food and accommodation and make money.

Another homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO2) had a similar conviction as he explained, *“if you ask me whether homestay has provided jobs in my family or not, I will happily say that I am employed in my house because I am earning money by serving guests.”*

Based on the above information provided by the homestay hosts of Ghale Gaun, this thesis demonstrates that the development of homestays in the village created job opportunities in all the households that are directly participating in the project. This is because the homestay owners recognise that working in the homestays provides a regular income. Similar to the Ghale Gaun community members’ perspectives, Wuleka et al. (2013) also identified that the local residents of the community they studied - Mongori Ecovillage, Ghana - had observed tourism development as a source of employment as the residents advised that they were employed in their houses as homestay operators. Indeed, the findings of Ghale Gaun reflect Regmi and Walter’s (2016: 5) argument, that “although not formalised or professionalised, hosting visitors in homestays is clearly a form of tourism work. As such, the home, community and surrounding environment can be taken as workplace.” Leh and

Hamzah (2012) further argue that tourism development provides income generation opportunities to the local communities by allowing them to be involved in tourism activities. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees' experience of being employed at their own house confirms that homestay development can be used as a means to facilitate economic empowerment by allowing the locals to raise their income level. Hence, the case of Ghale Gaun, in this regard, is consistent with the conclusions of the previous studies (e.g. Aref et al., 2009; Hall and Lew, 2009; Naipinit and Maneenetr, 2010; Leh and Hamzah, 2012; Anuar and Sood, 2017) that approved the role of tourism development to the economic improvement of destination communities through improved employment opportunities.

Similar to the findings of Ghale Gaun, the homestay owners of Dalla Gaun also felt that homestay development allowed them to earn supplementary income by working in their own houses. As one of the homestay operators (DHO3) noted,

We have jobs in our own house these days. We need to cook food for tourists. We need clean guest rooms. When we serve tourists in our house, we get money. Therefore, we have to say that we have jobs to serve the people in every house because we get money for that.

The contribution of homestay development to the employment generation in Dalla Gaun can also be confirmed in another respondent's perception who viewed that the arrival of homestay tourism in the village reduced the villagers' obligation to go to the urban centres of the country and abroad, particularly India, in search of income generation opportunities. It became apparent that in the pre-homestay period, many villagers had to leave their community to find employment. One of the interviewees (DHO5) described,

The villagers were compelled to go to other places for income. Some villagers used to go the city areas, and some used to go to India, but people do not have to go anywhere for work now. The number of people going to other places has remarkably decreased because they can work in the village and earn money. You can see so many people are doing homestays and earning money at their home. If people want to work, they do not have to go anywhere.

A similar phenomenon of local people being encouraged to stay in their own community following the inception of homestay tourism was also expressed by another respondent (DHO17), who spent several years in India working as a labourer but at the time of the research was earning a livelihood living in the village. The respondent pointed out the lack of income generation opportunities in Dalla Gaun as a push factor that forced villagers to look for employment in the cities and foreign countries. As he explained this situation by saying,

I used to go to India because I did not have any source of income in Dalla Gaun. It is very difficult to work in India. You have to work hard to earn money there. When I came back to the village, I saw some villagers running homestays. Then I decided to stay in the village and try if I can earn money like other homestay operators. I cannot earn a lot of money from homestay, but I can earn as much money as I used to while working in India.

In relation to Ghale Gaun, a respondent (GHO18), who had spent a few years in the Middle East working as a labourer, also shared the success story of the development of homestay tourism to provide income generation opportunities as host families. The respondent revealed that he went to a foreign country in pursuit of employment so that he could improve the economic condition of the family. However, following his return after six years he could see the opportunities to work in homestay as his wife had already participated in the programme. He explained,

I lived in Qatar for six years so that I could earn money to help my family members. When I came back after six years, I realised that I can earn money from homestay as I could see many villagers including my wife earning money in the village. My wife was making similar amounts of money as I used to in Qatar. Therefore, I gave up the idea of going for foreign employment. I decided to stay in the village and help my wife to run homestay.

Jamaludin et al. (2012: 453) argue that “community-based tourism in the form of homestay means the villagers do not have to leave their villages to seek fortune in the cities.”

Mihalic (2016) agrees with this view and points out that tourism in developing regions provide jobs that prevent migration and make these regions more attractive to young families. In a similar way, Anand et al. (2012) maintain that tourism development can prevent rural migration by providing supplementary income to the rural communities. This is the case in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. It is because tourism development in both communities contribute to control outward migration, as the locals of both villages are encouraged to live in their respective villages. This is particularly due to the homestay development providing the villagers with a solution to the financial hardships that they were facing in the pre-homestay period. The results of this research find similarities elsewhere. For instance, Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010) also found a similar phenomenon of tourism development having played an important role to reduce outward migration as the local people of Sankoyo, Khwai and Mababe villages of Botswana were migrating back to their communities because of the availability of employment opportunities after the implementation of CBT programme. In a similar vein, Mbaiwa (2005) also identified CBT initiatives in Okavango Delta, Botswana as being appreciated for generating considerable income for the local residents, which reduced the community residents' reliance on other external organisations for living. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the local population of both communities do not need to depend on other places for employment and income generation opportunities because they are able to generate employment for themselves through their engagement in tourism activities.

It was observed that there were 32 households providing homestay facilities in Ghale Gaun. The Ghale Gaun interviewees further confirmed this. For instance, one of the female homestay operators (GHO5) mentioned, *"you can see 32 houses are running homestays now. It means these families have jobs in their house. They are working at home but at the same time they are earning money."* Concerning Dalla Gaun, there are 22 houses registered as homestays in TDMC. One of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO18) described, *"currently, there are 22 households involved in homestay practices in the village. All the villagers who are running homestay are busy in their house. They do not have to go anywhere to earn money."* Hence, the establishment of homestay in Ghale Gaun has been able to provide self-employment opportunities in at least 32 households that are directly involved in

homestay tourism whereas 22 families of Dalla Gaun are getting benefits directly by welcoming tourists in their houses.

During the fieldwork, it was identified that that there is more than one person working in each homestay because of the various tasks that need to be carried out when a private house turns into a homestay. According to Rosyidi (2018: 389), “homestay is not just about physical building, but it should also relate with total village experience.” Pusiran and Xiao (2013: 3) shared a similar view in an earlier study arguing that homestay is about tourists interacting with the local community. As they point out “homestay is one type of lodging that tourists share with the homeowner with the intention to learn culture and lifestyle from the homeowner.... The homeowner is the one who prepares lodging and food for the tourists” (Pusiran and Xiao, 2013: 3). As a result, the host family has to undertake various preparations to accommodate strangers in their houses. For example, homestay owners have to prepare meals for the visitors, and need to get rooms tidy for tourists. The host family members are also required to be accessible to discuss village life and other matters that the tourists may be interested in. As one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO7) explained,

Someone needs to cook, someone has to clean guests' rooms [homestay operators address tourists as guests], and someone has to wash bed sheets and dishes. We have to do many tasks in homestay because we have to give good foods and a good place to stay to the tourists.

Another homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO1) stated, “in addition to serving foods and providing clean rooms to the tourists we also need to explain our village life, our tradition and our culture to the tourists.”

The homestay hosts of Dalla Gaun also shared similar perceptions of increased amounts of work after their participation in homestay tourism. A female homestay host of Dalla Gaun (DHO1) mentioned,

We have many things to do these days. The first thing is we have to keep our house and yards clean because tourists do not like it if our house is dirty.... Many people coming to our village want to learn about our village, our local food and local Tharu

culture. We have to sit with them and explain about our village life, Tharu tradition and culture.

However, the respondents of both communities appreciated the additional workloads in the form of employment because of the money they obtain in return. For example, one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO4) opined,

Even if we have to work hard at our home, we are happy because we are earning money. It was very difficult for us to see cash before we started homestay. I believe some of the villagers even had not seen a bank note. If we do not run homestays, we cannot see money. Therefore, working in homestay is similar to working in an office. It is because when people work in the office, they are paid monthly. Similarly, when we provide services to the guests, we are paid. Working in homestays is better than working in an office because we have to wait for a month to get paid if we work in the office but in homestay, we serve the guests today and we get payment tomorrow. Homestay gives us instant cash.

Similar to the respondent of Ghale Gaun, a homestay owner of Dalla Gaun (DHO4) described,

We have to spend more time in cleaning our house and surroundings. We have to keep rooms very clean. I feel that our workload has increased but we are getting money for that. Working in homestay is like doing a formal job. You have to work to get money. I do not think you can make money without doing anything.

Therefore, based on the information supplied by the interviewees and the researcher's observation of their respective communities, this thesis demonstrates that the interest of tourists to know about the local people and their willingness to eat local food allowed the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun additional income generation opportunities. Liu and Wall (2006: 160) believe that tourism development can "be the only remunerative employment possibility in poor and peripheral regions where few other options are available to improve their marginal economic status." Similarly, Anand et al. (2012: 126) contend "tourism is also one of the few available alternative path-ways that can create new

jobs...in the remote and resource-scarce region.” In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the acceptance of homestay operators to be working at home, as touristic service providers can be inferred as a positive influence of tourism development to the income generation activities for the locals, where people had inadequate work prospects prior to tourism development. Hence, the contribution of homestay operations in these two deprived villages to generate employment for the local residents supports the argument that tourism has the potential to generate work opportunities in disadvantaged areas, where insufficient occupational choices are available to the people for improving their financial situation (Akama and Kieti, 2007; Naipinit and Maneeneter, 2010). As a result, this research argues that homestay development in both communities supports the enhancement of economic empowerment by allowing the locals to improve their financial condition through the creation of employment opportunities in homestays.

Having explored ideas of direct employment opportunities, this research now moves forward to discuss the role of homestay tourism in indirect employment creation in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

5.2.2. Indirect employment

In addition to facilitating job creation in the tourism sector, the development of tourism activities in an area is also acknowledged for its potential to engender employment opportunities in other various sectors that are not directly linked with tourism. Lemma (2014) believes that tourism development contributes to the economic wellbeing of destination communities by offering the locals indirect employment opportunities. With regards to CBT projects, Malatji and Mtapuri (2012) and Wuleka et al. (2013) argue that CBT, which is fundamentally owned and managed by the destination community, is intended to deliver widespread benefits to the maximum possible members of a destination community whether or not they are directly involved in tourism projects. This can be achieved by creating a situation where the local communities perceive the positive changes in terms of the availability of work opportunities in other various sectors including tourism. In relation to Ghale Gaun, local residents felt that the inception of homestay practice has been a catalyst

to bring such a change. For example, the increased level of work opportunities that have arisen in different sectors after the villagers introduced homestay can be realised in the words of an informant (GHO9) who stated, *“in the past, people of Ghale Gaun did not have money earning opportunities in the village but after homestay was introduced the locals do not have to stay idle.”* Another respondent (GHO13) added,

People of Ghale Gaun can do various things to earn money these days. For example, they can do farming. They can become cultural dance performers. They can make handicrafts and sell them to tourists. There are many choices available for the locals.

Regarding Dalla Gaun, a similar phenomenon was observed. This is because, similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees of Dalla Gaun also informed improved employment opportunities in other sectors besides homestay activities. For instance, one of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO6) mentioned,

It is not necessary for the Dalla Gaun residents to run homestays to earn money. They can earn by selling their products such as vegetables, milk, ghee, yogurt and other agricultural products to the homestay owners. The villagers can also make money by showing Tharu cultural dance to tourists.

Hence, based on local perspectives identified in both communities, it can be argued that the development of homestay programmes in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have been perceived positively for its contribution to indirect employment generation. Indirect employment opportunities are mainly found in the farming and cultural sectors, which are discussed in more depth in the proceeding sections.

5.2.2.1. Employment in agricultural sector

Agriculture is one of the widely cited industries that was positively influenced by the development of home-based accommodation programmes in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. Lapeyre (2010), Seetanah et al. (2011), Meyer and Meyer (2015) and Prasad and Kulshrestha (2015), argue that tourism development can stimulate the local economy by

establishing linkages between the tourism industry and agriculture. This signifies that the connection between these two sectors can generate employment in agro-based activities. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the respondents believed that the homestay development created employment in agricultural activities by supporting the growth of the farming sector. The increased work opportunities resulted in the agricultural sector following the development of homestay tourism, as one homestay host (GHO3) mentioned,

You can see many villagers are spending more time in farming than before. Some are doing poultry farming and some are involved in goat farming. There are some villagers producing green vegetables. They sell their produce to the homestay operators.

The increased work opportunity in farm-based activities was further emphasised by another homestay operator, a woman who is serving as an executive member of GTDMC (GHO4), as she said,

We are able to create jobs in every house in the village. Some work in vegetable farming, some sell chickens to homestays. Some villagers supply goat and eggs to homestays. The villagers are earning money through their involvement in agricultural activities.

Further exploration indicated that the increase in visits to Ghale Gaun after the homestay establishment boosted the demand for local production of food, which allowed the villagers to dedicate more time in farming than before. As one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP5) advised, *“as many people come to our village, we are able to sell our vegetables, chicken, and other things we produce in the village. Therefore, you find the villagers spending more time in farming nowadays.”* A similar situation has been reported by Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) who identified that the local residents living around Chitwan National Park, Nepal were able to strengthen their financial strength by spending more time in farming as tourism development was perceived to have increased the demand for the local produce such as green vegetables, eggs and chickens in their locality. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the growing demands for the local production resulted from the increasing number of

people visiting the village further contributed to improving the economic condition of the locals from the income received by selling their products locally.

The respondents of Dalla Gaun also suggested similar experiences of increased demands for local agro-based products due to the influx of tourists to their community, which further resulted in improved work opportunities in agricultural activities. Elucidating the increasing demands for local agricultural products in the village, one of the homestay participants (DHO7) mentioned,

We were worried about selling vegetables, milk, and yogurt before, but we do not have to think that where we are going to sell these things now because we can sell these things in homestays. Therefore, many villagers are producing more vegetables, chickens and eggs.

Hence, the increased income generation opportunities through the sale of local products to homestays are identified as a motivating factor for the local people to allocate more time in agricultural activities.

The respondents of Dalla Gaun further pointed out enhanced work opportunities mainly in fresh vegetable production, poultry farming and animal husbandry, particularly goat rearing. One of the homestay operators (DHO12) stated,

In addition to working in homestay, we have also been spending more time in vegetable farming than before. It is because when the guests come to stay in our house, it will be easy for us if we have vegetables in our kitchen garden. If we do not have them, we have to go to villagers' houses.

Another homestay operator (DHO15) said, “because of homestay we have to work in two places.” By which he means that he must work at home and also on the farm. However, he also recognised that homestay provided a new opportunity to sell vegetables. As he said “it was difficult to sell vegetables before, so we spent less time in vegetable farming, but it is not the case now. Everything is sold from our field.”

Similar to the homestay operators, homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun also felt that tourism development supported them to raise the level of income by allowing them to produce more vegetables, chickens, eggs and goats than before the arrival of homestay tourism. One of the villagers who is working in a non-government organisation (DHNP2) stated,

Many people in Dalla Gaun are encouraged to produce more vegetables because they can be sold in homestay. Nobody in the village needs to be worried that their vegetables, chicken, eggs and goats are not sold. Hence, many people are seen working in the field these days than before because they can make money by selling them.

The above views of homestay operators and homestay non-participants of both communities suggest that tourism development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have positively contributed to the employment generation in the villages' respective agricultural sectors by increasing the consumption of local productions in homestays. Muganda et al. (2010) note that when tourism development occurs, local communities can benefit from increased demands for local products. The findings of this research accord with such a view as the local residents of both villages were the primary suppliers of food in homestays. Hence, this research demonstrates that tourism development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun has supported the local residents to be empowered economically by involving them in agro-based activities allowing them to earn income. In previous research, Zapata et al. (2011) also found tourism development contributing to the economic improvement of the local residents by connecting agricultural activities with the tourism industry. Moreover, in the case of the current study, the linkage between the tourism industry and the agricultural sector not only contributed to create employment opportunities indirectly but also became influential to controlling economic leakage because a strong linkage with the agriculture sector limits economic leakage which generally occurs through large scale imports of products (Meyer and Meyer, 2015). Regarding Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun when agro-based products are supplied by the local farmers, it prevents tourism revenue from trickling outside the community.

5.2.2.2. Employment in the cultural sector

In addition to generating jobs in the farming sector, the development of homestay facilities in both villages is also recognised for stimulating employment opportunities in the cultural sector. Richards (1996) believes that cultural consumption can be utilised for economic growth because the use of culture as a tourism product helps to create employment. Boz (2008) understands that tourism development generally allows destination communities to develop their community assets, for example their culture, heritage, cuisine and lifestyles as income generating projects. In terms of CBT, Boz (2008: 97) further argues that “CBT mobilises the local residents to convert their cultural properties into income generation projects.” This is what is happening in Ghale Gaun. According to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, presenting local Gurung traditional and cultural performances is one of the popular activities in the village. One of the locals of Ghale Gaun (GHNP3) mentioned, *“many people, who come to Ghale Gaun want to see Gurung traditional and cultural dances. Gurung tradition and culture is very popular among the visitors.”* As a result, demonstrations of the community’s festivals, folk songs and dances allowed the locals to increase their income by working as cultural show performers. As one respondent (GHNP4) acknowledged this by saying, *“People of Ghale Gaun even make money by singing and dancing”*. Another interviewee (GHO26) shared a similar view, *“do you think people of Ghale Gaun had ever thought they would earn money by singing and dancing? We have made it possible. Now the villagers are earning money by showing their dance to the tourists.”* Another villager (GHO27) commented, *“not only are the adults but also the school going children earning money in the village by participating in cultural shows.”* These statements by the residents of Ghale Gaun demonstrate that tourism development in the village is able to provide income generation opportunities to different segments of society, which may not be able to earn income in the absence of tourism.

Similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees of Dalla Gaun also felt that homestay development in their village allowed them to use local Tharu traditional and cultural practices as a tourism product. One of the interviewees (DHO4) mentioned, *“people come to our village to see how Tharu people are living, what food we eat, and they come to see our tradition and cultures. As a result, many villagers have opportunities to earn money*

by singing and dancing.” Discussing about the money earning opportunities available as cultural show performers to the elderly people of the village, one of the locals of Dalla Gaun (DHO15) explained,

You know the old people of our village also participate in cultural shows. The old people are making money in the village. If the villagers had not started homestay, the old people would not be able to earn money because nobody would come to see Tharu dance in the absence of homestay tourism.

These views identified in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun provide evidence to the success story of homestay practices to empower the local residents economically by providing them with income generation opportunities for people of various age groups, which local people did not think was possible without the homestay initiative. Reflecting this situation of increased employment opportunities for marginalised groups in the community, one of the villagers of Ghale Gaun (GHO26) stated, *“I do not think these elderly people and children would be able to earn money if we had not started homestay.”* A similar situation persists in Sarawak, Malaysia where the local villagers were financially empowered through the income gained as cultural dance performers (Chin et al., 2017). Furthermore, the findings of this study also support the argument that tourism has the capacity to provide employment opportunities for the marginal groups of the community, for example, children, women and elderly people (Hall and Lew, 2009). This is so because the elderly people and school-aged children of both villages are identified as economically benefiting through their involvement in cultural activities intended to showcase the local tradition and culture to the tourists developed after the introduction of homestay practice.

Based on the examples outlined in the preceding discussion, this thesis demonstrates that the development of homestay activities in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun not only facilitates employment in the tourism sector, but also contributes to generating employment by establishing links with various sectors of the economy. Thus, homestay practices in both villages are found to be facilitating the residents’ economic empowerment by offering direct and indirect employment opportunities to them.

Having explored the community members' perceptions in terms of employment opportunities, the following section discusses how well the homestay practices in both villages are contributing to the residents' economic empowerment through the provision of markets for locally produced goods.

5.3. MARKETS FOR LOCAL PRODUCTS

In addition to contributing to the economic wellbeing of the local people of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun through employment generation in both formal and informal sectors, the home-based accommodation facilities in both villages are also appreciated for their contribution to the economic improvement of the members of the communities by increasing community members' accessibility to finance through the creation of market opportunities for locally produced goods. This is particularly so with the agro-based and handicraft productions. The following discussions examine these in detail.

5.3.1. Markets for agro-based products

Interviews with the residents of Ghale Gaun revealed that the villagers could not benefit economically by selling local goods prior to the development of homestay facilities in the village because of the lack of market access to their production. For example, one of the respondents (GHO17) indicated, *"we did not have a market to sell our vegetables and other stuff we produced because there is no marketplace near our village."* Some respondents reminisced about when the villagers had to undertake long journeys in order to sell their products, as the nearest market was in Besisahar (District headquarter of Lamjung in which the village is located), which is 32 kilometres away from the village. Additionally, the journey to Besisahar was challenging due to the lack of an adequate transport infrastructure. One of the homestay operators (GHO25) explained,

I can still remember those days when we had to walk hours to go to Besisahar. It was not possible for us to go to Besisahar every day to sell our goods. When we had to go to Besisahar to buy salt, oil and clothes, we used to carry vegetables,

eggs and chickens to sell them to the city people. We always had fears that what we are going to do with our products if they are not sold.

A similar perspective was echoed in the views of homestay non-participants in Ghale Gaun. For example, one local farmer (GHNP1) stated, *“we could not sell our vegetables in the past because nobody in the village would buy them. We also had difficulties to go to other places to sell them because there were no jeeps running before.”* This lack of an outlet for the villagers’ products coupled with the arduous journey from their place to the nearest market discouraged Ghale Gaun residents from producing more than they required for their own families’ consumption needs. A homestay non-participant (GHNP3) explained this by saying, *“we did not have opportunities to sell our products so that once the villagers would grow food and vegetables only for family use.”*

The difficulty of selling local products before the development of homestay tourism in their village was equally emphasised by the homestay operators and homestay non-registrants of Dalla Gaun. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO2) stated, *“it was difficult to sell fruits and vegetables that we produced because we had to go to other villages and ask them if they wanted to buy.”* In a similar way, another respondent (DHNP1) noted, *“we had to carry green vegetables and fruits in baskets and go from village to village. Otherwise, we had to go to Thakurdwara [Nearest market, which is about three miles away from Dalla Gaun].”*

However, this situation does not persist in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun following the establishment of homestay in their communities. It is because all the agro-based productions are consumed within the village. This change can be understood in the expression of a homestay operator of Dalla Gaun (DHO16), who mentioned,

We did not have any chance of selling our vegetable, chickens, eggs and potatoes in the village in the past, but we do not have to go anywhere to sell these things nowadays. Everything can be sold in the village. Everything can be sold in homestays.

Similar to the above statement of a Dalla Gaun resident, a Ghale Gaun respondent (GHO25) explained *“selling vegetables and chickens is easier than before because everything is sold in Ghale Gaun these days.”* In line with the above views of the respondents, the contribution of tourism development to the provision of market access to the local products was also identified by Bhalla et al. (2016), who noted that tourism development allowed the local communities living in Himalayan region of India to advance their financial circumstances by selling vegetables and dairy products to the homestay operators. Other tourism scholars, for example Seetanah et al. (2011) and Das and Chatterjee (2015) point out that tourism development offers markets for local agro-based products. Similarly, Lopez-Guzman (2011) argues that tourism development can support the local economy by establishing markets for selling local goods and services. Such was the case in the study communities of this research. This is because tourism development in both villages is playing a significant role in making the selling of local products easier than during the pre-homestay period. This interpretation is made because the respondents of both communities recognised homestay development as permitting them to sell local products in their own villages. Hence, this thesis demonstrates that the establishment of markets for local goods in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun in the form of homestay tourism is contributing to improving the financial conditions of the locals by providing them with additional income generation opportunities.

The improved opportunities of selling local agricultural products in Ghale Gaun were also reflected in the opinions of the respondents who revealed that the homestay operators emphasise the use of locally produced food in homestays. For instance, one of the homestay operators (GHO19) stated, *“as far as food is concerned, we serve local foods to the people visiting our place but sometimes if local food is not enough, we buy from the market.”* This view was supported by another homestay operator (GHO21), who mentioned, *“in order to enhance local products we try to feed the local foods as much as possible but if the local production is not enough, we buy from outside also.”* The commitment of the homestay operators to serve local food was also reflected in the words of another homestay operator (GHO1),

We do not have to buy many things from outside as we use the local products. We try our best to feed the locally grown foods and vegetables to the tourists. We feed those local vegetables, local radish, local tomatoes and the locally produced meat products. Local goat meat and local chicken.

A similar phenomenon of procuring local agro-based productions in homestays was also identified in the case of Dalla Gaun. Both homestay operators and the homestay non-participants acknowledged that priority was often given to local products in homestays. For instance, one of the local farmers (DHNP3) mentioned, *“homestay operators buy the local vegetables, eggs, chicken and goats. They buy milk and yoghurt from the local farmers. If they do not find it in the village, only then they go to nearby villages.”* A homestay operator (DHO14) confirmed this view by revealing,

The basic principle of our homestay business is to serve local foods to the visitors in homely environment. Therefore, we have been encouraging the villagers to produce vegetable, eggs and chicken as much as possible because they can easily sell their products in homestays. The local people do not have to be worried about selling their productions.

This situation, as described by the respondents, was further confirmed in field observations. The homestay operators were seen going house-to-house asking for people if they had any fresh vegetables, chickens and eggs to sell. Some homestay operators were seen purchasing these things even from the neighbouring villages. Similar to the findings of this study, Muganda et al. (2010) also identified increased market opportunities for the locally produced goods when the local restaurants and hosts prioritised the purchase of foodstuff from the local farmers. Based on their research, Muganda et al. (2010) further argue that tourism development facilitates economic development for local communities in cases where the local consumers are reliant on the small-hold farmers found in and around the village. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the local residents do not need to be worried about selling their products because they have a guaranteed market in the village in the form of the homestay operators who purchase the goods locally. The homestay hosts buy these products from the villagers because they are committed to use the locally grown food to feed the

tourists. Thus, this thesis argues that the emphasis by the homestay operators to use local foods in homestays has allowed local residents to improve their economic conditions, which contributes to the economic empowerment of the local people.

Additionally, residents of both villages also link the growing numbers of people visiting their communities with the increasing demands for local fresh foods and locally brewed alcohol. For example, one of the homestay owners of Ghale Gaun (GHO5) advised,

You see everyday people come to Ghale Gaun. When people come here to see our village, we have to feed them. The villagers can sell their vegetables in homestay now. They can sell chickens. They can also sell local alcohol. Where are the local people going to sell their chickens, vegetables and alcohol if tourists do not come here to stay in homestay?

Another respondent (GHNP1) added,

The villagers can sell their chickens, they can also sell the locally produced alcohol, and they can sell their locally grown vegetables. If tourists do not come here, there is nobody coming here to drink the local alcohol. Nobody would come to buy chickens and goats. However, after homestay has been started, the villagers do not need to be worried about selling their products because whatever is produced is consumed locally thanks to homestay.

During observation in Ghale Gaun, some villagers were found brewing a large quantity of alcohol. An informal conversation with them revealed that they were producing this to sell in homestays.

Concerning Dalla Gaun, the respondents felt the increased inflow of strangers into their community as a main reason that allowed them to sell their products locally. One of the respondents (DHNP5) opined,

When people started coming to stay in the village, the homestay owners are buying many things such as fruits, vegetables, eggs, chickens, goats and fish. Whatever

we produce, homestay owners buy them. There is nothing in the village that we cannot sell now [Laugh].

Another respondent (DHO2) mentioned how the increasing number of people contributed positively to providing a market for local produce,

Before homestay, people did not know about Dalla Gaun so nobody would come to visit. You could hardly see any people from outside of Dalla Gaun in the village, but you can see many people are coming to this village. Today, hundreds of people are coming to the village every day. This change in the village allowed the local people to earn money by selling their products. If people do not come to Dalla Gaun, we will not be able to sell our products in the village.

The statements of the local people of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun find similarities with other research about tourism development. For example, Zou et al. (2014) also identified the increased demands for chickens and other agricultural products due to increased consumption of local food prompted by the increasing numbers of visitors. Das and Chatterjee (2015) believe that when visitor numbers increase the consumption of local goods also increases. In the current study, the increased number of visitors resulting from homestay development has brought a market for local products to the villages. Consequently, the local residents do not need to be worried about selling their produce because they have a guaranteed market in the village in the form of the homestay operators who purchase the locally produced goods. Prasad and Kulshrestha (2015) argue that this increased consumption of local food stimulated by tourism development helps the local residents to generate more income. Chen (2017) also argues that tourism development can support local residents' abilities to earn an income if they find a market for locally produced goods. In another example, Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) also consider that the increasing numbers of people in a destination allows the local residents to earn extra cash through the sale of local produce as there is a rise in demand for local food and beverages. Based on respondents' views in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun this appears also to be the case because the sale of local foods instigated by the arrival of tourists further permitted the locals to increase their income. Hence, the findings of this study accord with Regmi and Walter's (2016: 5) views that,

“increased numbers of tourists may mean more income for hosts.” Consequently, this study demonstrates that the development of homestay practices in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is playing an important role in strengthening the community members’ economic situation by allowing them to earn additional revenue.

The above discussion demonstrates that the development of homestay tourism contributed to the economic wellbeing of the local people of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun by offering a market for their agro-based production. The following section will examine the tourism industry’s contribution to the provision of market access for handicraft productions.

5.3.2. Markets for handicrafts

In addition to providing markets for local agro-based produce, homestay development in both communities has also been appreciated for offering markets in which to sell local handicraft products. Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) and Abdullah and Said (2014) contend that tourism development allows local residents to boost their income level by selling handicrafts to tourists and other tourism establishments such as hotels, restaurants and resorts. In Ghale Gaun, for example, the villagers have utilised the opportunity presented by tourism development to produce and sell handicrafts to the tourists. One of the homestay non-participants (GHNP2) of Ghale Gaun said, *“because of homestay development the villagers are able to sell raadi [Locally made woollen carpet], paakhi [Locally made woollen blanket] and bakhhu [Locally made woollen coat]. Very few people would make raadi and paakhi before but there are many people producing them now.”* Another respondent (GHO27) confirmed this by saying, *“some people in our village knit small bags and some make raadi, paakh and bakhhu. The villagers are making money by selling raadi paakhi because tourists want to buy from the villagers.”*

Similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees of Dalla Gaun also pointed out that income generation opportunities in the form of handicraft selling arose after the advent of homestay tourism in their village. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO9) said, *“I used to make pankha [Handmade fan using local materials], dhakiya [Locally made baskets] for family use before but I can earn money by selling them to tourists.”* In a

similar way, another homestay owner (DHO11) mentioned, *“many tourists want to buy pankha, dhakiya and muda [Locally made chair from bamboo sticks]. When I do not have enough, I will bring from another person’s house. Sometimes I cannot find in any house.”*

The inability of the local residents to meet the demand for *pankha, dhakiya* and *muda* was further confirmed by the head of the tourism committee (DHO10), who stated,

I have seen some villagers making pankha, dhakiya and muda but we need more people to make them because we have not been able to meet demands. Therefore, we have been planning to provide training to some villagers to make pankha, dhakiya and muda so that the more local people can earn money by selling these products to tourist. It will help to preserve our traditional profession.

These local perspectives in relation to the homestay projects’ contributions to the creation of markets for handicraft production corroborates the conclusions of studies elsewhere. For instance, Wuleka et al. (2013) identified the local residents of Mognori Ecovillage, Ghana were able to increase their income by selling handicrafts to the tourists. Similarly, Gu and Ryan (2010) also reported the residents of Hongcun, China appreciating homestay practice as a channel to sell their handicraft products. In addition, Abdullah and Said (2014) recognised the increased demand for local handicraft in Kampung Serebam, Malaysia in allowing the locals opportunities to make and sell their products. In research for this thesis as evidenced in the statements of the local people of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, demonstrates that the tendency of the tourists to buy locally produced handicrafts as souvenirs means the homestays are outlets for local handicrafts, which has further contributed to the residents’ economic wellbeing.

The next section discusses the local community perspectives’ in relation to the impact of the homestay development to economic empowerment through the creation of business opportunities for community residents.

5.4. NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Prior to homestay people made handicrafts, grew vegetables and reared chickens. These items were largely for family use. Homestay has made them marketable products. This section considers business opportunities that did not exist in any form in the pre-homestay period.

Simpson (2008) and Meyer and Meyer (2015) understand that tourism development has potential to stimulate new business opportunities in destination communities. In the context of Ghale Gaun, one of the visible impacts of tourism development is its role to enable the local residents to run small and medium scale businesses. Villagers explained that before the introduction of tourism projects they had limited opportunities to run businesses in the village. As one interviewee (GHO11) mentioned, *“there was no single shop in the village before we started homestay.”* Another respondent (GHNP4) added, *“we did not have any shop in Ghale Gaun before we started homestay. We had to go to Besisahar to buy everything.”* However, after the villagers started the homestay project some started running shops in their community. This was revealed by a respondent (GHO13) as he noted,

We did not have any shops in our village before but after tourists started coming to our village some people have opened shops. You can see there are grocery shops, meat shops, and a teashop and even we have a furniture shop in the village.

Another respondent (GHO22) added, *“I do not think people of Ghale Gaun would be running shops and furniture houses in the village if the villagers had not started homestay.”*

Similar to the findings of Ghale Gaun, the locals of Dalla Gaun also recognised the contribution of homestay development to permit the villagers to increase their income through their involvement in entrepreneurial activities. For example, one of the locals (DHNP3) advised,

Because of homestay some villagers have been able to earn an income running their own businesses. You can see there is a grocery shop and a restaurant in the village. Another person has opened a shop selling meat in the form of poultry to homestays.

Another interviewee (DHO8) added, *“after we started homestay, some villagers are running small business. For example, a villager has opened a shop and a young person of the village is running a restaurant.”* Ambroz (2008) asserts that when tourism is introduced, the local residents identify new business opportunities and they will be motivated to discover them. In the context of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, these accounts of the members of the communities demonstrate that the local residents are able to explore the business opportunities after the arrival of tourism. Hence, the local perspective of tourism development supporting the establishment of new businesses in their communities is consistent with the findings of Andereck et al. (2005) who identified that the local residents of Arizona believed that tourism development contributed to the establishment of a number of shops and restaurants in their community.

Although homestay practices in both communities are found to be supportive of the economic empowerment of the locals by allowing them to be engaged in entrepreneurial undertakings, these villages are different in terms of the number of existing businesses. In Ghale Gaun there were three grocery shops, a teashop, two meat shops, and a furniture factory. However, in Dalla Gaun there was only a small grocery shop, one teashop, a poultry firm and a restaurant, suggesting that the residents of Dalla Gaun do not seem to have been able to take advantage of the development of homestay to establish businesses to the same degree as was observed in Ghale Gaun.

Having explored the idea of the contribution of homestay development to the creation of business opportunities, the discussion now turns to financial independence.

5.5. FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

The preceding section explored how the development of homestay tourism in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun contributed to economic empowerment by providing local residents with opportunities to become engaged in entrepreneurial activities. This section further discusses the extent to which residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are empowered or disempowered economically following their participation in homestay tourism in relation to financial independence. Improved financial conditions were conveyed from two different

practices; firstly, residents' increased purchasing power and secondly, their ability to pay for their children's education. Each will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.5.1. Increased purchasing power

The recognition of improved financial wellbeing in the form of increased purchasing power due to tourism development is one of the significant themes to have emerged during the interviews in both communities. Ohlan (2017) believes that there is a positive relationship between tourism and financial development. A number of researchers, for example Mbaiwa (2005) and Naipinit and Maneenetr (2010) have documented that the economic advancement of local community residents can be obtained through tourism development. Scheyvens (1999) links financial independence with economic empowerment and argues that the participation of local communities in tourism initiatives empowers them economically by improving their financial conditions. In Ghale Gaun, it was acknowledged that the increased economic activity resulting from homestay development has successfully contributed to improving the financial situation of the villagers. For example, the respondents revealed the enhanced economic conditions experienced in the form of an increased ability to maintain household expenditure levels because income could be derived from different sources including not only homestay practices, but also participation in cultural shows, selling of agro-based and handicraft products and running small businesses, as has been discussed in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. As one elderly villager (GHNP3) mentioned,

In the past [Before the villagers started homestay] the villagers did not have money even to buy salt and oil, they were compelled to cook vegetables without oil. The villagers used to boil vegetables and eat. You can see the difference now. People in our village do not have difficulties to buy these things nowadays.

Another villager (GHO2), who had been running a homestay for eight years described a similar situation as he stated,

The money we get from tourists has supported us to buy the things that we use in our kitchen. We can buy salt. We can buy oil. Not only that we can buy clothes for our children and for ourselves from the money we earn from homestay.

This situation of an increased ability to afford basic goods is analogous with previous studies that documented the influence of tourism development on the financial advancement of the members of destination communities (Razzaq et al., 2011; Leh and Hamzah, 2012; Othman et al., 2013; Knight and Cottrel, 2015; Rodrigues and Prideaux, 2018). For example, similar to the Ghale Gaun residents' views, Rodrigues and Prideaux, (2018) also found that the local people of the Brazilian Amazon appreciated CBT initiatives because it gave them the ability to earn money that enabled them to buy the goods they needed in order to live. Razzaq et al. (2011) also found the local residents of Muar, Johore, Malaysia reporting a notable rise in their income level after their participation in homestay practices. In another example, Herawati et al. (2014) identified that the local residents of Pentingsari village, Yogyakarta, Indonesia were grateful to tourism development for enabling them to increase their family income to be able to afford household expenditures. In relation to Ghale Gaun, CBT in the form of homestay tourism has become a livelihood diversification strategy for the local population who were facing financial hardships in the absence of other economic alternatives to subsistence farming. The case of Ghale Gaun therefore demonstrates that homebased tourism initiatives have the potential to economically empower local communities by allowing the local residents to diversify their economic resources.

The residents of Dalla Gaun also stated that prior to the arrival of homestay tourism in the village, there were limited sources of income resulting in daily financial hardship. For example, one respondent (GHO18) explained, *"I did not have money to buy clothes for my children even in festival time but after I participated in homestay, I can afford to buy clothes for my children."* Another respondent (DHO8) added, *"I believe almost all of the villagers did not have enough money to buy salt and oil before we started homestay."* According to Othman et al. (2013: 68), "tourism establishments of any kind undoubtedly bring in income possibilities." Anand et al. (2012) identified tourism development as being able to provide the community members of the host destination of Indian Himalayas opportunities to earn cash

income. A similar situation persisted in the case of Dalla Gaun. It is because of the introduction of homestay practices to the community that locals have been provided with income generation opportunities, which, in turn, has led to their increased ability to afford the basic requirements for living. This is supported by the views of one homestay operator (DHO6) who advised, *“I did not have enough money to buy anything, for example salt, oil, clothes, for my children. It is different now because I earn money from my home. I do not have to go anywhere to earn money. Money comes to my house. I can buy the things we need for living now.”*

There was no difference of opinion between the homestay operators and the homestay non-registrants on this issue. For example, one of the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun (DHNP1) explained,

Homestay has made our life easier than before. It is because we can earn money by selling the things we have. I can use that money to buy the things we need in households such as oil, salt and clothes for children and other family members.

A similar situation was identified by Eshiliki and Kaboudi (2012) and Slathia et al. (2015) who found their respondents felt indebted towards tourism development for increasing their household income, which, in turn, resulted in their increased purchasing power. Bhalla et al. (2016) also reported that the homestay operators were appreciative of tourism development, as homestay practices were perceived to have eased financial burdens by bringing positive changes in the economic conditions of the local residents of the Himalayan region of India they studied. Similarly, Das and Chatterjee (2015: 136) identified the tourism development in Odisaha, India “as an economic rescuer for many people who do not have a wide-avenue of earning.” In the case of Dalla Gaun the income generated from homestay tourism and related economic activities has provided the local people with a means to afford a living. Consequently, the findings of this thesis concur with Hussin and Kunjurman’s (2014) argument that homestay development is an important tool to raise the income of the village people.

5.5.2. Increased ability to afford children's education

In both communities, economic independence was also perceived in the increased ability of the villagers to afford to pay for their children's education. For example, the villagers of Ghale Gaun advised that they could not afford to do this in the past because of the lack of money. One of the homestay operators (GHO3) said,

Our children could not go to school regularly because we did not have money to pay for their school fees. Instead of sending our children to school, we used to take them to the field to help us in our work.

However, a transformation has occurred in this scenario as the respondents of Ghale Gaun stated their improved ability to pay for their children's school fees and stationery. One of the homestay operators (GHO6) explained, *"I can send my children to school now because I have money for their school fees and lunch. I can buy pens, pencils and other stationery for them."* Another respondent (GHO7) added, *"It is easier now because when tourists come to my home, they pay us in cash. I can use that money to pay for my children's fees."* Hence, the involvement in tourism has resulted in economic self-reliance by providing the locals with a good source of revenue.

Some respondents further believed that the increased income gained from homestay enabled them to financially support their children's study at a higher education institution. For example, the villagers are able to send their children to Kathmandu and other big cities for education. One of the villagers (GHNP2) advised, *"you may know many villagers have sent their children to Kathmandu and Pokhara for education. If we had not started homestay, those children would not have been able to go to the cities for education."* Therefore, the advent of homestay practices in the village has contributed to bringing the solutions to the financial problems deeply rooted in the village. Those villagers who could not afford fees for their education now emphasise that they do not have financial problems. For instance, one of the villagers (GHNP 4) mentioned, *"one of the important things about tourism is that we do not have any problem of money to send our children to school nowadays."*

Similar to the respondents of Ghale Guan, the interviewees of Dalla Gaun also felt that the income generation opportunities facilitated by homestay development allowed them to afford school fees for their children. As one of the homestay operators (DHO13) revealed,

I do not think the villagers would be able to send their children to school regularly if we had not started homestay. The villagers had the problems to meet both ends then how could they buy pens and pencils for their children.

Another respondent (DHNP2) confirmed this by saying,

Some village children were admitted to school, but they would not go to school regularly because their parents did not have money to buy books, pens and pencils. It is different now. Those people who could not afford to buy pens and pencils are sending their children to boarding schools.

During the interviews, some of the respondents of Ghale Gaun also explained why the older generation in the village did not get opportunities to be educated in schools and colleges. This lack of access to education was due to a lack of financial resources. For example, one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO20) stated,

We could not go to school in our time sir because our parents did not have money. We could not learn to read and write because our parents did not have money to send us to school. Even though we are unable to read and write, we are able to earn money from our own home now. Therefore, I think homestay has brought a very important change in our life.

A number of researchers argue that tourism development is perceived as a catalyst for economic transformation because of the industry's ability to provide alternative sources of income (Liu and Wall, 2006; Aref et al., 2010; Anuar and Sood, 2017; Ohlan, 2017). In the case of Ghale Guan and Dalla Gaun, this thesis demonstrates that the arrival of homestay practices contributed to bringing solutions to the financial problems deeply embedded in the communities, which allowed access to education for the village children, which is indicative of an economic transformation in the lives of the villagers. The increased ability of the locals to send their children to school, college and university was also identified in the work of

Lapeyre (2010) and Yang (2016) who noted that participation in tourism permitted their respondents to send their children to the bigger cities and in some cases overseas for education. In a similar way, the findings of this thesis are also consistent with Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) who identified that local residents living around Chitwan National Park, Nepal had increased financial capacity to afford the fees of their children's education following tourism development in their community.

Furthermore, the villagers of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun who reported that they had in the past financial problems maintaining their household expenditures were nevertheless in a position to save money. One of the female homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO5) mentioned, *"we did not have money to buy things needed for our daily life, but we have been able to save money now. I have deposited some money in the local co-operative."* In a similar way, the respondents of Ghale Gaun also thought that homestay development allowed them to save money for future use. In the words of one of the locals of Ghale Gaun (GHO10), *"we had difficulties affording the household expenses before we started homestay because we did not have any source of money but I have been able to deposit some money in the local co-operative now."* The local perspectives of the contribution of homestay tourism to allow some residents to save money is consistent with the findings of Herawati et al. (2014) who also noted that participation in tourism allowed their respondents to make savings.

Having explored the contribution of the development of the homestay activities to the financial independence of the local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the discussion in the next section focuses on the community residents' perspectives about tourism revenue distribution system in both villages.

5.6. DISTRIBUTION OF TOURISM REVENUE

Economic empowerment in tourism is also understood based on how tourism revenue is distributed in destination communities. Giampiccoli and Kalis (2012) argue that community-wide distribution of economic benefits is the centre of CBT because this form of tourism is originated with the principal that tourism benefits should also accrue to the local people who

are not directly involved in the CBT ventures. Therefore, while conducting studies about tourism impact on local communities, it is necessary to focus on whether the community as a whole is able to receive the economic benefits from tourism development or whether this is restricted to a small number of people. Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) mention that economic empowerment in CBT cannot be achieved simply by retaining monetary profits by a small number of community members. Rather, this is more about creating the conditions where the larger number of villagers has opportunities to be involved in income generation activities. In the case of the current study, the inclusion of homestay non-participants in the cultural events, rotation system (See section 5.6.2 for detailed discussion) while allocating homestays to the tourists and the creation of a community fund (See Chapter 6) are used as a means to spread the tourism revenue equitably among the maximum number of households. Each of them is discussed in the following sections.

5.6.1. Inclusion of homestay non-participants in cultural groups

Cultural shows are one of the popular tourism activities in Ghale Gaun. As one of the homestay operators (GHO8) mentioned, *“Gurung cultural shows are very popular among tourists visiting our homestays. Most of the guests coming here want to see Gurung traditional and cultural practices.”* As a result, the villagers have formed various cultural groups. For example, they have Ghatu [Gurung cultural dance], Sherka [Gurung cultural dance] and Ghyabre [Gurung cultural dance] groups. Explaining the existence of various cultural groups in the village, one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP1) stated, *“we have Ghatu, Sherka and Ghyabru cultural groups to show our different cultures.”* The information obtained from the interviewees further revealed that in order to enable the homestay non-participants to draw income from the revenue generated by the increasing tourism activities in the village, priority is often given to the homestay non-participants while forming these groups. One of the villagers (GHO23) described,

If homestay operators take part in cultural shows, only the homestay operators will get money and other villagers who are not involved in homestay will not get money. There will be equality between the homestay owners and the non-

participants if non-participants are kept in cultural committees. The homestay owners keep the guests in the house, feed the guests, and make some money and those who are not in homestay earn the money performing in the cultural shows. When the guests give money for the cultural shows, the homestay operators do not touch that money.

Wijesundara and Gnanapala (2016) argue community-based tourism products, such as homestay tourism, have been adopted mainly to reduce the inequality in the distribution of tourism income. As a result, this approach ensures the practice of increasing the accessibility of the maximum numbers of the villagers to the income generation activities. Linking the equitable distribution of tourism revenue with economic empowerment, Isaac and Wuleka (2012) understand that economic empowerment can be achieved if tourism benefits are equitably distributed among community residents in a host destination. Based on the above statements of local residents, it can be argued that accommodating the homestay non-participants in such a popular tourism activity allowed the homestay non-participants to earn additional income despite not being directly involved in the homestay project. Hence, the inclusion of homestay non-participants in cultural performances is an important means employed by Ghale Gaun residents to spread tourism benefits among the villagers who are not directly associated with the homestay project.

Similar to the homestay participants, the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun also demonstrated their positive attitude towards the income generation opportunities provided by homestay tourism as they felt that their involvement in cultural performances provided them opportunities to earn money in return. For instance, a homestay non-participant (GHNP5) said *“I am a member of a cultural group, so I often participate in cultural shows. The committee deducts 10 percent from the money we collect, and the rest is distributed among the performers.”* Another homestay non-participant (GHNP4) confirmed this view saying, *“although I am not in the homestay group, I am earning money by dancing in cultural shows. When there are many tourists, we can make a large amount of money in one night.”* Chen et al. (2017) also reported a similar practice of the involvement of local community residents in cultural performances as a channel to spread tourism income among

the destination residents, where every individual in the community has equal access to work as cultural show performers. The findings of this research in relation to Ghale Gaun community-based homestay tourism show, through the words of the respondents, that economic benefits have accrued to the wider community, going beyond those who have a direct involvement in the project. This is because both homestay operators and homestay non-participants acknowledge that they are benefiting economically from tourism development.

By contrast, in the case of Dalla Gaun, the opinions were divided into two groups. Although the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun also reported a similar practice, as identified in Ghale Gaun, of accommodating homestay non-participants in cultural shows, there were conflicting opinions between the homestay operators and the non-participants. The homestay operators of Dalla Gaun stated that priority was given to the homestay non-participants to organise and present cultural performances to the tourists. As one of the homestay operators (DHO3) mentioned, *“homestay owners can earn money by keeping guests in their houses so that to enable the other villagers to make money from the tourism development taking place in the village we include the homestay non-participants in cultural activities.”* Another homestay operator (DHO12) added, *“we can earn money by serving the tourists, but the homestay non-participants do not get monetary benefit from tourism. Therefore, the committee gives priority to the other villagers while showing our Tharu culture to the tourists.”*

However, the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun revealed that the homestay non-participants are only given opportunities to participate in cultural shows as performers if the homestay operators are unable to do so because of their busy schedule. One of the homestay non-participants (DHNP1) stated, *“they [Homestay operators] have trained their sons and daughters in cultural dances. If they do not have time, they come to us and ask to participate in cultural shows.”* Another homestay non-participant (DHNP4) had a similar opinion to share,

You can see most of the cultural show performers are from homestay families. They [Homestay owners] have trained their wife, daughter, son or daughter-in-law. The

homestay owners have included only a few homestay non-participants to show that homestay non-participants are also given equal opportunities to earn money.

There were very few homestay non-participants seen contributing to cultural performances in Dalla Gaun. This suggests that homestay practices in Dalla Gaun have not been as effective as those in Ghale Gaun in relation to community wide distribution of economic benefits generated by tourism activities. This is because the overall community of Dalla Gaun is not found to be as actively engaged in tourism activities compared to Ghale Gaun. Marzuki (2011) argues that when people feel that they are benefiting from tourism development, they are more likely to build positive attitudes towards the industry. Hence, the sharing of benefits with the homestay non-participants by prioritising their involvement in cultural committees in Ghale Gaun not only allows the distribution of tourism income equitably but also contributes to engendering positive feelings towards tourism. However, this could not be said of Dalla Gaun where there is less inclusion of homestay non-participants in cultural activities, even though they comprise the majority of the village's population.

The proceeding section discusses the homestay revenue distribution practices among the homestay participants.

5.6.2. Rotation system

Apart from enabling the homestay non-participants to benefit economically from tourism development, the homestay practice in Ghale Gaun is also appreciated for equitable distribution of homestay income among the homestay participants by strictly following the rotation system for allocating tourists to individual homestays. For example, one of the homestay owners (GHO15) mentioned, *"we have our own system to allocate homestays for tourists. I cannot ask the secretary to send guests to my house. I have to wait for my turn. Every homestay has to wait for their turn.* Another homestay operator (GHO12) added,

I do not have to be worried that people will not come to my homestay because the secretary sends guests [The locals have the tradition to address tourists as guests]

turn by turn in all homestays. For example, if he sends guests to homestay number one today, homestay number two will get first priority tomorrow.

While investigating the tourist distribution system, no homestay participant of Ghale Gaun thought that there was partiality. The homestay operators felt that the secretary is distributing the guests fairly. One of the homestay owners (GHO16) mentioned, *“I do not feel that the secretary does partiality because I have not heard anybody complaining that s/he has not received guests in their house.”* Another homestay operator (GHO1) confirmed this by saying, *“the secretary is really working hard to allocate tourists fairly. I think it is a difficult task because people will complain if the secretary does not send guests to their house.”* Hence, the rotation system has allowed the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun to derive economic benefit equitably from homestay development.

However, the villagers of Dalla Gaun are not content with the tourist distribution system currently practiced in their village. A number of homestay operators expressed dissatisfaction in the way tourists are distributed to homestays. They felt that the secretary of the tourism committee, who holds the responsibility of distributing tourists, does not allocate homestays fairly. The homestay hosts complained that some homestays receive guests frequently, while others have to wait for several days. A female homestay operator (DHO2) opined, *“I do not think the secretary sends the guests to homestays fairly because I can see some homestays have guests every day, whilst other homestays have to wait for weeks.”* Another homestay owner (DHO9) explained, *“the secretary sends the guests to the chairperson’s homestay regularly. First, he sends guests to the chairperson’s homestay and then his own homestay. After that he thinks about others.”*

When discussing the distribution of tourists with the executive members of TDMC, they did not oppose the views expressed by the homestay members. The secretary of TDMC (DHO3) revealed that the tourist distribution system is not as effective as it was in the early days of homestay. In the words of the TDMC secretary of Dalla Gaun, *“we used to follow the rotation system strictly at the early days of homestay. I accept that tourist allocation is not as effective as it used to be.”* This view is further supported by the chairperson of TDMC (DHO10), as he noted, *“I have heard some homestay members complaining that the secretary is not*

distributing guests to homestays fairly. I have talked to the secretary about this issue. I hope this problem will be solved soon.” Boley and Gaither (2016: 162) argue that “while economic empowerment through tourism is a common goal of tourism development, it often falls short of its lofty goals.” In the case of Dalla Gaun, from the information obtained from both groups of respondents, it is evident that although the residents of Dalla Gaun have also adopted the similar approach of the rotation system practiced in Ghale Gaun, it has not been as effective. As such, the rights of all homestay owners to have access to an equitable share of revenue generated by CBT activities is denied. Aghazamani and Hunt (2017: 342) argue that “economic disempowerment can occur when local elites or corporations monopolise the economic benefits of tourism.” In a similar way, Scheyvens (1999) understands that unequal distribution of tourism income is a clear sign of economic disempowerment. In the case of Dalla Gaun, the present method of distributing tourists demonstrates that only the people in leading positions of authority in homestay management are enjoying more financial benefits from tourism development compared to the majority of the homestay operators. Hence, instead of facilitating economic empowerment through equitable distribution of tourism revenue, CBT in Dalla Gaun is perceived to have contributed to disempowering some of the locals economically.

As a result, despite offering similar tourism products, these two communities demonstrated different characteristics in relation to the distribution of tourism income among the community residents. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the equal distribution of tourism income is reinforced by encouraging the homestay non-participants to participate in tourism activities such as cultural shows and distributing tourists equitably to all homestays by following the rotation system strictly. However, this is not the case in situation in Dalla Gaun. The analysis of the dataset obtained in Dalla Gaun reveals that there is not an equitable distribution of financial benefits among the homestay operators due to the partiality in homestay allocation practices. Consequently, it can be argued that homestay development in Dalla Gaun does not seem to be as effective as that found in Ghale Gaun in terms of its contribution to the equitable distribution of tourism revenue.

5.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter discussed economic empowerment in relation to the findings of the research for this thesis. The findings discussed in this Chapter identified many examples of economic empowerment in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. For example, homestay practices in both villages have been successful in encouraging economic empowerment by creating income generation opportunities for the villagers. In both villages, it is not only the homestay operators but also the other villagers, who were not running homestays, acknowledged that they were able to increase their income levels. The homestay hosts were able to make money by providing services to the people coming to stay in their homestays. Similarly, those villagers who were not involved in hosting tourists were found earning money by spending more time in the farming sector, particularly producing fresh foods than in pre-homestay period. This was mainly made possible due to the market opportunities facilitated by the homestay development. As such, the tourist visiting Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun and the homestay enterprises are two big markets for locally produced foods and handicrafts. Furthermore, the acceptance of the villagers of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun that they were unable to supply enough foods to the homestays demonstrates that there are more opportunities available for the villagers' economic empowerment. The villagers can dedicate more time in agro-based activities and further strengthen their economic condition.

Additionally, economic empowerment in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun was realised in the villagers' financial independence following the development of homestay tourism. In both villages, the respondents reported improved economic conditions in the form of an increased ability to solve the financial problems that were deeply rooted in the pre-homestay period. For example, the villagers who once had difficulties to buy basic necessities for life are in the position to save money thanks to homestay development.

Another example of economic empowerment was related to the distribution of income generated by the homestay development. With regards to this, Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun revealed differences. The equality of tourism income opportunities among the

homestay operators in Ghale Gaun was ensured by allocating tourists to individual homestays by strictly following the rotation system.

However, this was not the case in Dalla Gaun. The inequality of the distribution of tourism income among the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun was evident in the partiality in homestay allocation for tourists. This interpretation was made based on the views of the respondents of Dalla Gaun who felt that their fellow homestay members having responsibilities of allocating homestays for tourists often send tourists more frequently to some homestays and less to others.

Similarly, the inequality of the distribution of tourism revenue between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants in Dalla Gaun was also understood in the way the villagers are incorporated in the cultural shows organised for tourists. The homestay non-participants felt left out from such cultural performances which could have been a means of income for them. However, it was different in the case of Ghale Gaun. Most of the cultural performers of Ghale Gaun were homestay non-participants, which indicated that the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun had better opportunities to earn money compared to Dalla Gaun. Thus, it can be said that the equitable distribution of tourism income in Ghale Gaun is reinforced by encouraging the homestay non-participants to be involved in cultural activities.

Furthermore, the monetary benefits generated by the homestay enterprises not only benefits the hosts but also reaches to the wider population of the community. This is particularly achieved through the creation of a community fund, which is spent for the benefit of the whole community, such as, for example, the village development projects. However, in Dalla Gaun despite the practice of collecting money for a public fund from income of homestay, there is a lack of transparency about the way the fund is spent (see Chapter 6).

Thus, despite offering similar tourism products, Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrated different characteristics in relation to the industry's contribution to the economic empowerment. In the case of Ghale Gaun, homestay development has been successful in encouraging community residents' economic empowerment by facilitating

income generation opportunities for both homestay hosts and non-participants equitably, as well as ensuring the distributing of tourism income across the community. However, in the case of Dalla Gaun, although tourism development allowed the villagers opportunities to increase their income, it has not been as successful as in Ghale Gaun with regards to the community-wide distribution of the industry's economic benefits. Thus, it is fair to say that the homestay development of Dalla Gaun is not as effective as that in Ghale Gaun for its support for community residents' economic empowerment.

Having explored ideas of economic empowerment in this section, the proceeding Chapter offers a detailed discussion about social empowerment.

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Having explored the impacts of homestay tourism in relation to economic empowerment in Chapter 5, this Chapter discusses how well the development of homestay activities in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun contributed to the various aspects of the villagers' social empowerment. The literature review (Chapter 3) established that social empowerment, within a context of tourism, refers to the situation in which a community's sense of cohesion and integrity is strengthened because of tourism activities. Additionally, the establishment of community groups, provision of community funds derived from tourism revenue to carry out social development projects and the contribution of tourism development to the improvement of overall quality of life of the members of the destination communities are also considered to be signs of social empowerment facilitated by the tourism industry (Scheyvens, 1999; Dangi and Jamal, 2016). Thus, the focus of this Chapter is to discuss these themes in detail. For the purpose of discussion, this Chapter consists of five sections. The first section deals with the community residents' point of view in terms of the establishment of community groups. The discussion is followed by the idea of community cohesion in which the extent to which homestay development has contributed to creating socially cohesive societies is explored. The third section examines how well the income derived from tourism development is utilised for the development and maintenance of social facilities at the community level. The fourth section elucidates the tourism industry's influence on the overall quality of life in both villages. The Chapter is brought to a close by a summary of its main points.

6.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

As noted in Chapter 3, one of the areas of social empowerment within the context of tourism is understood in terms of the industry's support that enables the establishment of community groups in destinations. According to Scheyvens (1999: 248), for example, "strong community

groups, including youth groups, church groups and women's groups, may be signs of socially empowered community." Carter-James and Dowling (2017: 229) support this view and state that "signs of an empowered community include strong community groups." Having analysed community members' perceptions about this issue, the findings of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrate contradictory situations. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the community displays the characteristics of a socially empowered community because with the development of tourism activities in their surroundings, the villagers have successfully been able to form different social groups such as a fathers' group, a mothers' group, youth club and cultural committees. The existence of these community groups in Ghale Gaun is apparent in the utterance of a local farmer (GHNP2), who described,

We have a mothers' group, where all mothers of the village are the general members of the group. We have a fathers' group. We also have a youth club in Ghale Gaun. In addition to these groups, we also have some cultural teams.

Supporting the above view of the local farmer, another interviewee of Ghale Gaun (GHO2), who is directly associated in hosting tourist in his house said, "*we have many community groups in Ghale Gaun. For example, we have a mothers' group, fathers' group, youth club and cultural groups.*" In another example, describing the existence of various cultural groups, one of the female homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun (GHNP5) stated, "*we have different cultural groups to perform different cultural performances. For example, we have Ghyabre cultural group, Sherka cultural group, Krishna Charitra cultural group.*"

However, with regard to the formation of community groups the analysis of the data from Dalla Gaun revealed contradictory findings compared to Ghale Gaun. This is because, unlike the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees of Dalla Gaun did not mention the presence of other community groups except cultural committees. For example, one of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO1) said "*we do not have many community groups in the village. Some people have formed cultural groups to perform our traditional dance to the tourists.*" A TDMC executive member (DHO11) further confirmed the above statement by saying "*we do not have any fathers' groups or mothers' groups in the village, but we have cultural groups. The cultural groups show our local Tharu tradition and culture to the visitors.*"

Sharpley (1994: 52) states that “tourism is a social process which brings people together in the form of social interaction.” Pleno (2006) agrees with this view and argues that tourism development affords socialisation opportunities to the members of destination communities. In a similar vein, Ambroz (2008) also considers that tourism development creates grounds for social interaction, where the local residents have opportunities to discuss issues they are experiencing. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the formation of community groups is found playing significant role to afford opportunities for social interaction to the local people. For instance, the increased opportunity for the village women to interact with each other can be recognised in the words of an executive member of the mothers’ group (GHO4) who pointed out,

It was very difficult for women to gather in a place because we did not have formal regular programmes such as village meetings before. However, the monthly meetings that we started organising after the villagers’ started homestays have given us a platform where we have chances to meet each other and share our opinions.

Hence, the establishment of a women’s group provided space for the women of Ghale Gaun to share their personal experiences and discuss various aspects of village life. For instance, a member of the mothers’ group (GHO8) disclosed, “we have regular meetings of the mothers’ group every month. We discuss about families, tourism development, hardships we may be facing, cleanliness of the village and household.”

Similarly, the existence of the father’s group in Ghale Gaun was also perceived to have offered all fathers of the community with opportunities to interact each other. For instance, a homestay operator (GHO1) mentioned,

We discuss many things in fathers’ group. For example, we talk about tourism development. We also discuss the problems we are facing. At least the fathers’ group has given us an opportunity to meet and discuss tourism development and other village issues. Otherwise, it is not possible to see all of us in one place.

Additionally, the local youths of Ghale Gaun were also found to be united as youth club members. It was spelled out that the purpose of establishing the youth club was to

mobilise the younger generations to make homestay development a success. As a result, GTDMC has entrusted the youth club with responsibilities to organise cultural shows for visitors. This can be evidenced in the words of the secretary of the GTDMC (GHO22) who pointed out, *“in order to support the tourism development in our village we have brought all the youths together through a youth club named Kanya Jyoti Youth Club.”* The secretary further added *“the main duty of the youth club is to engage the young people in cultural activities so that they will understand the importance of our traditional and cultural practices.”* The view of the GTDMC secretary was supported by an executive member of the youth club (GHO24), as he said, *“in order to make our young brothers and sisters aware of the value of our tradition and culture the GTDMC has given the responsibility for organising cultural shows to our youth club.”* These accounts from the locals of Ghale Gaun about the establishment of the youth club showed that, in addition to fostering socialisation processes, the creation of the youth club in Ghale Gaun also contributed to making the young people of the village aware of the importance of local traditions and cultural heritage, which is an indication of psychological empowerment. (psychological empowerment will be discussed in Chapter 7 in more depth).

Thus, based on the foregoing discussion, this thesis demonstrates that the creation of social groups in Ghale Gaun played an important role in bringing various segments of the community’s population together through their association in diverse social groups. This further contributed to enhancing the villagers’ connection with each other. For example, the mothers’ group allowed all the mothers of the village to increase their interconnectedness through their participation in the group’s monthly meetings. Similarly, the Fathers’ group allowed the adult male villagers to have opportunities to network and share their views and experiences. A similar situation was identified in the case of the local youths. Therefore, mothers’ group, fathers’ group, youth club and cultural committees, in the case of Ghale Gaun, were crucial to enhance the villagers’ links to each other. In comparison, the villagers of Dalla Gaun had limited socialisation opportunities. This is because the residents of Dalla Gaun had only cultural committees in their village, which were mainly responsible for performing cultural shows for tourist. The cultural committees of Dalla Gaun allowed the socialisation opportunities only to those villagers who are involved in cultural performances.

Thus, compared to Ghale Gaun, the absence of appropriate community groups in Dalla Gaun did not afford adequate socialisation opportunities for the inhabitants of Dalla Gaun.

In the tourism literature, the improved networks of the residents of destination communities are perceived as a sign of social empowerment. For instance, Boley and McGehee (2014: 87) describe the increased connection among a community's residents with social empowerment and argue that "social empowerment ensues when one perceives tourism increasing his or her connection to the community." Hence, the creation of different community group in Ghale Gaun after the advent of homestay tourism offered the Ghale Gaun residents' opportunities to improve their interconnectedness among the villagers, which contributed to facilitating social empowerment. However, this is not the case in Dalla Gaun. Thus, this thesis demonstrates that homestay development in Dalla Gaun is not as influential as that identified in Ghale Gaun with regards to its contribution to social empowerment through socialisation processes.

Further discussion with the locals of Ghale Gaun indicated that both the fathers' and mothers' groups are also contributing to tourism development by participating in cultural activities, as well as providing their inputs through their representation in GTDMC leadership positions. As one of the members of the fathers' group (GHO6) said,

We are supporting tourism development by providing our opinions in GTDMC as there is representation of fathers' group in GTDMC. Similarly, we regularly perform in cultural shows organised for tourists. We have our own fathers' group dance to show to tourists.

Similarly, a member of the mothers' group (GHO4) stated, "our group participates in the cultural events. We have a mothers' group cultural dance to show our culture to the tourists." Likewise, another respondent (GHO19) mentioned how the mothers' group is actively participating in tourism decision-making through its representation in GTDMC. As she advised, "in addition to participating in cultural shows we also support the homestay development by representing village women in GTDMC." A similar case was identified with the local youths as their representation is always ensured in GTDMC. This was confirmed by

a member of the youth club (GHO24) as he said, *“in addition to organising cultural shows, we also support tourism development by participating in GTDMC.”*

Consequently, it can be argued that the formation of social groups in Ghale Gaun not only contributed to the socialisation process but also supported the facilitation of political empowerment (Political empowerment will be discussed in Chapter 8) by offering opportunities to represent their respective groups in GTDMC. However, the absence of such community groups in Dalla Gaun not only limited the socialisation opportunities of the Dalla Gaun residents but also denied the rights of various segments of the community to be represented on the decision-making body formed to decide policies that have the potential to impact the whole community. Thus, it is fair to say that Dalla Gaun not only demonstrated characteristics of a socially disempowered society but also indicated weak political empowerment compared to Ghale Gaun.

After exploring the idea of community groups as a sign of social empowerment, the next section sheds light on the theme of social cohesion.

6.3. SOCIAL COHESION

The positive and negative impacts of homestay development on social cohesion are some of the key themes that emerged from the interviews with the local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun and the observation of their respective communities. Social cohesion is perceived as a force that holds individuals together in a group (Vergoloni, 2011). This offers a sense of belonging with the place and the society in which people are living (Kamble and Bouchon, 2016). Community cohesion is understood by Scheyvens (1999: 248) as an integral component of social empowerment as she argues, *“social empowerment refers to a situation in which a community’s sense of cohesion and integrity has been confirmed or strengthened by tourism activities.”* Concerning this research, the field data obtained from Ghale Gaun demonstrate that social integration among local residents is positively influenced as a result of the development of the home-based tourism enterprise. As one of the homestay operators (GHO20) stated, *“homestay has not brought division among the villagers. It has inspired us to work together because we know that if we work collectively, we can succeed.”* Another

respondent (GHO2) added that the development of homestay offered the villagers opportunities to learn that the Ghale Gaun residents need to be united to achieve success, as he mentioned, *“we have learnt from homestay programmes that if all villagers work together, we can succeed. You can see we are successfully running homestays. It is because of the villagers’ joint work.”*

The homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun also felt that homestay development in their village did not play a role in bringing social division. Similar to their homestay host neighbours, they also believed that the harmony amongst the villagers is strengthened because of the benefits tourism brings to their community. For example, a female homestay non-participant (GHNP5) advised *“if homestay had brought negative things, the villagers would have been divided, but homestay has brought positive things to the village. I do not think anybody in the village thinks people are divided because of homestay.”* Chen (2005: 7) believes that *“If residents perceive more benefits, they will tend to more loyally support their community tourism business.”* In the case of Ghale Gaun, thus, instead of dividing community members into different sections, the positive results delivered by homestay encouraged the locals to actively support the initiative and make it a success. As one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP3) stated, *“you can see all the villagers are united and they are very active. If the people were not united and actively supporting [Homestay], it would not be possible to run homestays.”*

However, the respondents of Dalla Gaun had different views about social cohesion compared to the villagers of Ghale Gaun. Those residents of Dalla Gaun who were interviewed advised that in place of unity, homestay development in their village negatively influenced the social fabric, which in turn resulted in the emergence of at least two divisions in the society, the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants. Explaining this situation in the village, one of the homestay operators (DHO3) mentioned,

When we started homestay in 2067 [2011], all villagers were together. Those people who were not running homestays were also happy. I do not know the reason, but I have realised the homestay non-participants are not happy and they do not care about homestays these days.

The increased division between the homestay operators and homestay non-participants was confirmed by a local businessperson (DHNP3) who said,

The situation is not like before. In the early days of homestay, there was unity among the villagers, but I do not see that unity these days anymore. I think homestay operators are on one side and rest of the people are on the other.

Further investigation in Dalla Gaun revealed that the lack of harmony not only ensued between the homestay hosts and the homestay non-participants but also was pervasive amid the homestay operators. As one of the homestay operators (DHO16) opined,

When we started homestay, all the villagers including homestay owners and the other villagers stood in one place. Homestay operators and the homestay non-participants were together. It is different now. People do not say openly but we can understand from their behaviour. Even all homestay operators are not happy. You know why. It is because the secretary does not distribute tourists in homestays fairly.

According to Strzelecka et al. (2017: 145), “tourism can either be the social glue that connects community members or the axe that splinters the community.” Boley et al. (2015: 114) describe the effects of tourism industry as a ‘double edged sword’ in terms of community cohesion with social empowerment and disempowerment and state that “social empowerment uniquely describes tourism’s ability to either bring a community together or tear it apart.” In the case of Ghale Gaun, the acknowledgement of the local people that the success of homestay tourism can only be achieved by working collectively exhibits that the development of homestay tourism worked as a unifying force bringing the community members together for common goals. Hence, homestay development in Ghale Gaun can be said to be playing a vital role to facilitate social empowerment by creating a cohesive community, where community residents are encouraged to work as a group for the successful practice of homestay tourism. This accords with Boley and Gaither’s (2016) view of social empowerment as they argue that social empowerment is manifested when the members of a destination community are willing to work together towards a common goal.

In Ghale Gaun, social cohesiveness was also manifested in the village cleaning activities, primarily organised to facilitate homestay tourism by keeping the village and its physical environment clean. Kamble and Bouchon (2016) believe that tourism development has the ability to foster a sense of teamwork. Similar community attitudes were evident in the case of Ghale Gaun. According to the villagers, the locals carry out village cleaning activities every month, where the whole community, including the people not involved in hosting tourists also participate as a team. As one of the villagers (GHNP2) mentioned,

We clean the whole village and its surroundings once a month. Not only the homestay owners but the whole village participates on that day. At least one person from each house comes out to participate in cleaning activities on that special day.

Another respondent (GHO12) shared a similar opinion, saying “*Ghale Gaun is cleaned once a month. All households from the village take part in the cleaning programme. At least one person from each household attends the programme.*” According to Scheyvens (1999: 247), “community cohesion is improved as individuals and families work together to build a successful tourism venture.” The participation of every individual household in the monthly village cleaning activities is an example of how the wider community is taking responsibility to maintain the cleaning standard of the village, which is directly linked with the success of homestay tourism as suggested by Green et al. (1990: 111) “the environment is a key tourism resource, and consequently its conservation and management are vital to the future of the tourism industry.” Hence, the involvement of the wider community in the village cleaning programme in Ghale Gaun not only suggests an example of a cohesive community but also shows the community residents’ support for the long-term success of homestay tourism.

Furthermore, it was observed that the representation of each household is compulsory in the village cleaning programme in Ghale Gaun. In order to ensure the participation of all households, an executive member of the mothers’ group takes an attendance register. This is the responsibility of the mothers’ group because the village cleaning activities are organised under the group’s leadership. This was confirmed by a member of the mothers’ group (GHO4) who said, “*all the households of the village must*

contribute to the village cleaning programme on the village cleaning day. The secretary of the mothers' group takes the attendance at the beginning of the programme and at the end." Another respondent (GHO21) added, *"we take attendance at the beginning and the end of the programme so that we can find out if any household is not present."* According to Timothy (2007: 207), "social empowerment not only allows participation in development, rather, it demands it. Truly empowered societies do not view participation as options, but instead as a social obligation." A similar situation persists in Ghale Gaun, where from what residents say, non-participants consider that supporting the homestay hosts by participating in tourism related activities is their moral responsibility. This is because of their perceptions that not only do the homestay operators benefit, but so does the entire community from the development of homestay activities. As one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP4) mentioned,

We need to help the homestay operators to keep the village clean. If we do not keep the village clean, who comes to visit this dirty village? Although 32 houses are participating in homestay, all villagers are benefiting from the homestay. For example, some are benefiting by selling vegetables, some sell local alcohol and some sell chickens and eggs. Therefore, everyone has to support the homestay operators because everyone is benefiting from tourism.

Hence, the local perspectives of increased responsibility to support the homestay operators through their involvement in community activities support Timothy's (2007: 207) argument who points out, "when individuals and other interested groups work together, social cohesiveness is enhanced." Similarly, Boley and Gaither (2016: 8) argue that "social empowerment is often characterised by residents perceiving themselves as being more connected to community and therefore willing to work together." In the case of Ghale Gaun, homestay tourism contributed to fostering community cohesion by inspiring the villagers to work collectively because of the benefits delivered to the wider community. As a result, the villagers worked collectively to clean their household area, village trails, park and other public places regardless of their participation in homestay. Timothy (2012: 73) further argues that "social empowerment occurs when community members work for the betterment of the whole community." With regards to this thesis, the readiness of the villagers, despite their

direct involvement in tourism development, to support the homestay operators by participating in the village cleaning programme, thus, reflects that the people of Ghale Gaun do not hesitate to contribute their time and labour for the benefits of the community at large.

The existing community cooperation between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun was also revealed in homestay operators' supporting the sale of handicrafts produced by the villagers. As discussed in Chapter 5, the villagers do not have formal outlets to sell handicrafts, the local handicraft producers have to rely on homestay operators to sell them. Therefore, the homestay operators are supporting the villagers by linking-up handicraft sellers with tourists interested buying local crafts. One of the male homestay operators (GHO13) said, *"we have to inform the tourists about the particular houses who sell handicraft products. We take tourists to our neighbour's house who sells handicrafts."* Another male homestay operator (GHO18) added, *"I inform the villagers who make handicrafts when tourists express their desire to buy them. Then the villagers come to my house with their products."* These views were confirmed by a female homestay operator (GHO16), as she revealed,

People sell handicrafts from their own houses if the tourists want to buy, the homestay owners help them to find the things they want to buy. The homestay operators know very well where the things are available. They pass the message to the villagers and the villagers bring what the tourists want to buy.

The support of homestay operator in this regard was confirmed by a village woman (GHNP5), who does not run homestay but earns the major household income by selling *raadi* and *paakhi*, by saying *"if tourists want to buy raadi and paakhi, the homestay owners inform us and we have to go to the homestays. Sometimes the homestay owners bring tourists to our house."*

The enhanced cooperation between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants in Ghale Gaun was also recognised in the way tourists are accommodated in homestay non-participants' houses. I was advised that GTDMC sometimes faces challenges to

accommodate tourists because the village every now and then attracts more tourists than their homestay capacity. As the secretary of GTDMC (GHO22) commented,

Sometimes we receive so many guests that we cannot accommodate them in our homestays. In such cases, we make provision of bed facilities in other households which are not participating in homestay. We provide food services in homestays but sleeping arrangements are made in other houses.

The homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun also supported this view. For example, a homestay non-participant (GHNP2) said, *“although I am not running homestay in my house, I have helped the homestay owners many times by providing accommodation service to tourists.”* Wuleka et al. (2013) believe that the tourism industry has the potential to influence social bonds positively by encouraging collaboration among its members. Explaining the link between community cooperation and social empowerment in tourism, Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) argue that cooperation among the community residents is an essential factor of social empowerment. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the practices of helping the homestay operators by accommodating tourists in the houses of non-participants not only demonstrates that the community members are cooperative but also shows that tourism development has offered income generation opportunities to the villagers who are not directly associated with homestay tourism; therefore, contributing to both social and economic empowerment. Hence, in addition to promoting social empowerment through increased bonding and collaboration amongst the community residents, tourism development in Ghale Gaun has also stimulated economic empowerment by providing additional sources of income to the local population (See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of economic empowerment).

However, this is not the case in Dalla Gaun. This is because, the respondents of Dalla Gaun reported a decline in cooperation between the homestay operators and other villagers. The diminishing support between the two groups was visible in the withdrawal of the non-participants from the village cleaning activities and tourist welcoming programmes. This situation was approved by a member of TDMC (DHO12), as he said,

All households of Dalla Gaun used to help clean the village by participating in village cleaning activities in the early days of homestay, but it is different these days. The homestay non-participants do not take part in the cleaning programme, only the homestay operators clean the whole village every month.

Further investigation revealed that there were no issues about the lack of support between the homestay operators and the other villagers at the beginning of the project's implementation. However, the problem developed after the homestay operators undervalued the importance of the homestay non-participants in tourism development by not inviting them to the meetings organised to discuss the tourism development issues. As one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP5) described,

We used to help in the homestay operation in the early days of homestay development thinking that this is all of the villagers' programme. We supported the homestay operators by participating in the village cleaning programme. We helped them by participating in welcoming activities when the political leaders, cinema actors and other prominent people came to our village. Later we realised that the homestay operators were using us for their benefit. We knew it when we realised that they stopped involving us in the village meetings. They started making decisions themselves without involving us so that we stopped participating in the village cleaning programme.

The above accounts of both groups of respondents demonstrate that Instead of fostering community integration, homestay practices in Dalla Gaun negatively influenced collaboration, although this had been present at the beginning of the project. The major cause behind this weakening cooperation between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants in Dalla Gaun was the homestay non-participants' feeling of the lack of ownership of the project that has resulted from their lower level of involvement in decision-making processes. The homestay non-participants felt that they were not a part of the project. For example, one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP1) revealed this by saying,

The homestay operators need us when they have many works to do. For example, they want us to help them to clean the village, but they do not invite us in the tourism committee's meetings and they never ask us what we are thinking about tourism development.

Another homestay non-participant of Dalla Gaun (DHNP2) added, “*we do not feel that homestay development is our [The homestay non-participants'] programme but it is their programme [homestay owners].*” Kibicho (2003: 39) understands that “when the local people are fully integrated into the industry, they become part and parcel of it, and they support tourism activities.” In the case of Dalla Gaun the feeling of being excluded from the programme made the homestay non-participants feel that they are not part of the tourism programmes taking place in their village, which made them less supportive to the overall homestay development. Scheyvens (1999) suggests that the increased disharmony and social decay are some of the indications of a socially disempowered community. In the case of Dalla Gaun the lack of wider community involvement in village meetings and discussions about the overall homestay activities - understood as an indication of political disempowerment (See Chapter 8) - became an obstacle to achieving social empowerment. Hence, the argument of Salleh et al. (2013) that homestay can be a stimulant to enhance solidarity among the destination community residents is not supported in Dalla Gaun.

Based on the preceding discussion, this thesis demonstrates that tourism development in Dalla Gaun is not playing a role in bringing community residents together as there is tension prevalent in the community. For example, the unequal distribution of tourists to the homestay providers, as discussed in Chapter 5, led to the conflict between those who receive guests more often than those who need to wait for several days. Similarly, the exclusion of homestay non-participants in the meetings organised to discuss tourism-related issues contributed to division between the homestay hosts and the other villagers who are not hosting tourists in their houses. As a result, tourism development in Dalla Gaun has become a catalyst to disrupt the social harmony that was in place in the early days of its development. Therefore, based on the analysis of the information obtained in Dalla Gaun, this thesis shows that instead of fostering social empowerment by inspiring the community

residents to work more closely together for the common interest, homestay practices in Dalla Gaun were playing a role to worsen social integration. Thus, the present situation of erosion of social cohesiveness in Dalla Gaun reflects Scheyvens (1999) notion of social disempowerment, as she believes that tourism development can be considered to be contributing to social disempowerment if it is responsible for undermining existing unity within a community.

The following section explores the influence of homestay tourism in terms of community development projects.

6.4. HOMESTAY AS A SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The information derived from interviewees and field observation in this section provides an overview of how the local residents of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have perceived the contribution of tourism revenue to the development and improvement of community services in their respective villages, which is related to the levels of social empowerment at community level.

Scheyvens (1999) states that social empowerment is manifested when some money earned by tourism activities is used for community development purposes, for example to build schools or improve roads. Carter-James and Dowling (2017: 229) agree with such a view and point out that “social empowerment through community based tourism occurs when revenue earned through tourism activity is used to fund social development projects, such as water supply systems or health clinics etc., in the local area.” A similar situation persists in the case of Ghale Gaun as both groups of respondents, the homestay hosts and the other villagers, revealed that the community development projects such as the construction of the public toilets, museum, community hall, passenger waiting hall, bus park, provision of streetlights and upgrading of village trails were accomplished due to funding from the contribution of revenue generated by homestay tourism. For example, one of the homestay operators (GHO25) explained that in order to distribute tourism income fairly across the community the homestay operators use the fund generated from their income for the village

development projects. As he stated, *“with an aim of sharing the income we receive from homestay with the villagers, who are not hosting tourists in their houses, we have created a community fund. We use that money for the development of the village.”* Further interviews with GTDMC leaders showed that 22 percent of the total income derived from homestay activities goes to the community fund, which the villagers spend on the welfare of the community as a whole. The GTDMC secretary (GHO22) stated,

A large amount of money, 22 percent of the total income of homestay overflows to the community. You know how? We collect seven percent from the homestay operators’ incomes and we also charge 15 percent service charge to tourists. Overall, we have 22 percent of tourism revenue that goes to the community fund. We spend that money on various kinds of village development works. For example, you can see there are toilets, bus stand, passenger hall, community hall, museum and better foot trails in the village. We constructed all of them from the income of homestay.

Another villager of Ghale Gaun (GHO1), who has been running homestay from the days of its establishment supported the GTDMC office secretary’s views by saying,

The GTDMC deducts seven percent from us [homestay operators] and 15 percent from the guests [the villagers have the tradition of addressing tourists as guest] when we take the guests to the committee office after they are ready to depart. The committee uses that money for village development works.

Further enquiry regarding the funding for the village development works with the homestay non-participants demonstrated that social development works were the direct consequence of the financial assistance of the funds created from the revenue generated by the homestay programme. It was revealed that the development of social services was possible only because of the homestay operators, who are keeping a part of their income aside for the village development projects. One of the homestay non-participants (GHNP3) viewed,

Homestay operators have made a community fund. They spend money for developing the village from that fund. They have improved the village trails. You can see all village trails are stone paved. They have constructed toilets at the entrance of the village. There is a passenger-waiting hall. They have also built a community hall in the village.

The above accounts of the homestay hosts and the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun demonstrate that contribution to the development and improvement of public facilities in Ghale Gaun was used as a means to distribute tourism income including the villagers who are not directly involved in tourism activities. Boz (2008: 48) argues that in CBT, “it is important that a reasonable share of the revenues is enjoyed by the community in one way or other.” Goodwin and Santilli (2009) understand that CBT initiatives should provide community wide benefits. Pertaining to Ghale Gaun, the respondents reveal many examples of community development works accomplished due to the contribution of revenue generated by tourism activities in their local areas, which they recognise as benefits brought to the community by tourism development. For example, one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP4) mentioned,

It is because of homestay development that we have been able to walk on smooth stone paved trails, otherwise we had to walk on dirty muddy trails. You can see we have bright village streets at night. We do not have to pay for the electricity, the committee pays for that.

In a similar way, another respondent (GHNP1) stated,

The committee plays an important role to develop the village by providing money for work for village development projects. You can see the committee has built a public toilet, community hall and they are building a new building for museum in the village. The committee has done a lot for village development.

These narratives by the local people further signify that the economic benefits of the homestay development do not go only to the hands of a few community residents; but rather, tourism development in Ghale Gaun is able to spread economic benefits to the community as

a whole by investing some of the money generated by tourism into projects that benefit the wider community. Scheyvens (2002) states that in order to foster social empowerment tourism income can be used as a source of revenue for community development. In the case of Ghale Gaun, tourism development is perceived as a revenue generator for community development works. Hence, homestay development in Ghale Gaun is found to be contributing to social empowerment by distributing tourism revenue across the wider community.

Concerning Dalla Gaun, similar practices of creating community funds from the income accrued from homestay programmes was discussed by the interviewees. However, unlike Ghale Gaun, where both the homestay owners and homestay non-participants had similar opinions about community funds and its use, the respondents of Dalla Gaun had mixed experiences about it. For example, a homestay operator (DHO2) mentioned *“to share the benefits we are receiving from homestays with other members of the community we give 10 percent of our income to the community fund, which is used for the village development works.”* Another homestay operator (DHO17) supported this by saying,

Every homestay contributes 10 percent from its total income to the community fund. The community fund is mainly created to contribute to enhancing public facilities so that all the villagers can realise that they are also benefiting from homestay.

However, the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun had different experiences to share. Although the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun expressed their knowledge about the community fund, they showed a lack of awareness of how much money was collected in the fund and how the fund was being utilised. For example, one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP5) said,

I have heard that they [homestay owners] have created a community fund but I do not have any idea how much money there is in the fund. They do not inform us about it. I think they collect the money and use it for themselves.

Another homestay non-participant (DHNP2) also had a similar opinion,

I do not know what they are doing with the fund they have created. I do not know whether they are contributing 10 percent from homestay income or they are just saying that they are giving 10 percent for the community welfare.

Not only the homestay non-participants, but also some homestay operators of Dalla Gaun expressed their ignorance about the way the community fund was spent. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO1) mentioned,

When the secretary pays us, he takes 10 percent of the earnings. I do not know what he does with that money. I have heard they use that money for community works but I do not know in which development works they used that money.

The statements of the local residents of Dalla Gaun reflected the lack of transparency in the way the community fund is being utilised. This signifies the absence of a robust system to ensure that the financial benefits of community-managed tourism are fairly distributed among the community residents, putting the long-term success of homestay development in Dalla Gaun at stake. This is because, according to Sebele (2010: 140), “the lack of a benefits distribution system may have harmful consequences and may affect the success” of tourism enterprises. Thus, the lack of transparency in the use of the community fund in the case of Dalla Gaun not only stimulated resentment among the villagers, but also appeared to throw in doubt the long-term success of homestay development.

Unlike the respondents of Ghale Gaun, who had appreciation for the homestay development for providing funds to carry out various community development projects and public facilities enhancement, the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun believed that the contribution of the homestay initiative to the development and maintenance of public facilities is very limited. For instance, one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP1) said, “the village is getting limited benefits from homestay development. They pay for the streetlights and they have constructed a public toilet. They have not done anything except that for the village.” Hence, the unequal distribution of tourism income in Dalla Gaun has been detrimental to social cohesion, due, in part, to the perception that there were inadequate benefits from tourism development. This was evident in that the homestay non-participants

were unwilling to support the homestay operators by taking part in tourism related activities. As one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP5) said,

We do not participate in the village cleaning programme because we do not get anything in return. The homestay operators say that they would give money for the village development, but I do not see that in practice. Only a few people who are running homestay get money, the rest of the villagers get nothing.

Hence, the unequal distribution of tourism income, which according to Scheyvens (1999) and Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) is a form of economic disempowerment, in Dalla Gaun also influenced social empowerment negatively reducing whole community support that was customary in the early days of homestay development.

In Ghale Gaun, in addition to the construction of public facilities in the village, the respondents also appreciated the community fund generated from tourism revenue for supporting the development of recreational facilities, for example the construction of the football ground (Under construction at the time of data collection) and park in the village. One of the locals (GHNP4) mentioned, *“the tourism committee is building a football ground. You may have seen the park there. It was also built by the committee.”* In a study by Mbaiwa (2005) in Okavango Delta, Botswana, a similar approach of using community funds generated by tourism development to spend on community projects, including the construction of a sports ground and community hall was identified. However, this is not the case in Dalla Gaun. The respondents of Dalla Gaun did not refer to any recreational facilities developed from the monies earned through the homestay practices. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO4) mentioned *“we have not been able to fund for recreational facilities in the village.”* Hence, the predominant notion in tourism studies that tourism development supports the enhancement of recreational facilities in tourist destinations is not conclusive in the case of Dalla Gaun (Aref et al., 2009).

In addition to supporting community development projects and developing recreational facilities the villagers of Ghale Gaun also appreciated the community fund for its contribution to the education sector. For example, the local primary school was able to add

its classrooms from the money they received from GTDMC. Moreover, the GTDMC regularly pays the salary of one of the primary school teachers. One of the female homestay operators (GHO20), who is serving as a teacher in the local school opined, *“the GTDMC helped us by providing funds to build classrooms in our school. They have also been regularly helping us by providing a salary for a teacher in our school.”* However, the practice of supporting education in the same or a similar way was not confirmed by any of the interviewees in Dalla Gaun.

Thus, based on the foregoing discussion, this thesis demonstrates that tourism development in Dalla Gaun is not as influential as compared to Ghale Gaun with regards to its contribution to facilitate the community development projects. The next section will explore the community members’ attitudes about the influence of homestay development on the quality of life in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

6.5. QUALITY OF LIFE

Another aspect of social empowerment in the context of tourism is concerned with the quality of life in destination communities. Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) understand the quality of life as a subjective experience dependent on an individual’s perceptions and feelings. This signifies that quality of life can be understood as an individual’s judgement of satisfaction with one’s life. Therefore, quality of life is about how people view or what they feel about their living styles. Social empowerment, in tourism, is not only about the industry’s contribution to create a cohesive society and financial assistance for the social development works in destination communities, but is also understood in terms of the industry’s support to improve the overall quality of life in destination communities (Dangi and Jamal, 2016). They further argue that in addition to social cohesion and community collaboration, social empowerment encompasses community welfare and social wellbeing.

The influence of the tourism industry on the quality of life in destination communities is recognised by a number of researchers. For instance, Uysal et al. (2016: 245) state that *“once a community becomes a destination, the quality of local residents’ life is also affected by tourism development.”* Similarly, Andereck et al. (2005) and Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) also believe that the tourism industry has great potential to affect the lives of

community residents. Supporting these views Ambroz (2008: 64) mentions, that “when a tourism destination is born, the quality of the life of the local residents goes through radical changes, which are not necessarily negative.” Therefore, a tourism venture is considered to be contributing to social empowerment if the members of the destination communities believe that tourism development in their area supports the elevation of their quality of life. Concerning the case of Ghale Guan and Dalla Gaun, this thesis identifies the positive contribution of homestay activities to the quality of life in both villages. The improved quality of life is expressed in relation to economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Each of them is explored in the proceeding discussions.

6.5.1. Increased income and economic wellbeing

The previous Chapter (Chapter 5) demonstrated that local residents of both villages appreciated tourism development for its support to enable the villagers to diversify their economic activities through their engagement in different types of income generation activities. Various tourism researchers have acknowledged the increased income from tourism development for its contribution to economic wellbeing, which further supports an improvement in the quality of life. For example, Turker and Ozturk (2013: 48) point out that “tourism boosts the economic quality of life by increasing personal income.” In terms of homestay tourism, Salleh et al. (2013) state that such types of tourism programmes contribute to the improved living standard of the residents of destination communities by allowing them to earn extra income. In the case of Ghale Gaun, as identified in Chapter 5, tourism development was perceived as a source of regular and stable income, thus, the income generated from the local residents’ direct and indirect association with tourism activities is perceived to have played a significant role in improving their living standard permitting the locals to solve deeply rooted day to day financial problems. For instance, a local farmer of Ghale Gaun (GHNP2) described how the introduction of homestay made the villagers able to afford basic things required in daily life. As he stated,

In the past [before the villagers started homestay] the villagers did not have money even to buy salt and oil. The villagers were compelled to cook vegetables without

oil. The villagers used to boil vegetables and eat. You can see the difference now. People in our village do not have difficulties to buy these things these days. All the villagers can easily afford these things.

Another villager (GHO2), who has been running a homestay for ten years, described a similar situation by saying,

The money we get from tourists has supported us to buy the things that we use in our kitchen. We can buy salt. We can buy oil. Not only that we can buy clothes for our children and for ourselves from the money we earn from homestay. At least we are in the position to buy basic things.

Furthermore, the improved quality of life resulting from increased income generation opportunities, after the inception of homestay practice in Ghale Gaun, can also be realised in the expressions of the locals who compare their living conditions with neighbouring villages. The respondents revealed that the quality of life in other villages is worse than Ghale Gaun due to the absence of the necessary income generation opportunities locally. Comparing the quality of life in Ghale Gaun with other adjacent settlements one of the locals (GHO5) said,

You can see the how people in our neighbouring villages are living. They do not have income sources like us. They have to work hard in the field, still they cannot feed themselves throughout the year with the food they grow. They have to go to other places to look for work.

However, this situation does not persist in Ghale Gaun as one of the locals (GHO14) mentioned,

The residents of Ghale Gaun are fortunate because we do not need to be worried to earn money in Ghale Gaun. There are various opportunities to earn money in the village. People can do farming. They can do homestay. They can rear chickens and sell in homestay. They can sell eggs. There are many money earning opportunities in Ghale Gaun.

Concerning Dalla Gaun, both groups of respondents suggested that the financial gains achieved through tourism development allowed them to increase their purchasing power, which in turn contributed to the positive transformation to their way of life. Similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun who had the appreciation for tourism development for their economic wellbeing, the local residents of Dalla Gaun also believed that the income generation opportunities stimulated by tourism development contributed to their living standard by allowing them to purchase food, clothes and afford school fees for their children. As one of the homestay operators (DHO9) mentioned, *“we did not have money to buy basic things, but we are free from that problem now. We do not need to worry about that. I can feed my family from the income of homestay.”* Another homestay operator (DHO11) supported this by saying

We did not have enough food to eat. We did not have enough money to buy clothes for our family members. We did not have money to educate our children. Now I can buy salt. I can buy cooking oil. I can buy clothes for my children. It is all due to homestay development.

In this regard, a homestay non-participant (DHNP2) supported the views of homestay operators by explaining,

Although I do not run homestay in my house, homestay development has helped me to improve the living condition of my family by enabling me to earn money by selling vegetables, chicken, eggs and goat to the homestay runners. Now, I have been able to send my children to school. I can afford new clothes for them in festivals.

Several researchers acknowledge the tourism industry’s contribution to improving the quality of life in destination communities through income generation opportunities. For example, Aref et al. (2009) understand that one of the immediate impacts of tourism development is the creation of opportunities for people to increase their income and standard of living in local communities. Kumar et al. (2011) contend that tourism development plays an important role in the economic wellbeing of the people of host regions.

In terms of CBT, Rodrigues and Prideaux (2018) maintain that CBT contributes to the wellbeing of local communities through the generation of economic benefits. In the case of this study, the above accounts of homestay operators and the homestay non-participants of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrate that the income generated from their involvement in homestay tourism and other economic activities stimulated by tourism practices became a means of economic wellbeing for the local residents of both communities. This is because, unlike in the pre-homestay period, the inhabitants of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have easy access to basic needs due to the income facilitated by the homestay tourism. Hence, economic wellbeing achieved because of homestay development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is playing a vital role to improve the quality of life in the respective communities. In a study by Salleh et al. (2013) homestay development in Negeri, Sembilan, Malaysia was discussed as contributing to the improvement of living standards by allowing the local villagers to earn extra income. In another example, Yang (2016) also identified tourism development as contributing to improving living conditions of the destination communities by offering them more disposable income as the respondents of Yunnan, China reported substantial increases in household income after tourism activities were introduced. The findings of this research in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun accord with such findings. Moreover, in the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the financial security of the community residents resulting from the development of the homestay supported the improvement of the quality of life by increasing the communities' access to the basic goods and services required for their daily lives, which was lacking in the pre-homestay period.

The next section explores the communities' perspectives about the contribution of the homestay programme to improve the quality of life through public facilities enhancement.

6.5.2. Improved public facilities and social wellbeing

The improved public facilities developed after the implementation of homestay tourism in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is perceived as playing an important role to improve the villagers' living conditions. In the case of Ghale Gaun, for instance, locals appreciated the community development programmes such as drinking water facilities, public toilet

construction, provision of streetlights and improvement of village trails for enabling them to live in a better village than in the pre-homestay period. For example, one of the shopkeepers (GHNP4) stated, *“several development works have been carried out after the villagers started homestay practice. You can see we have clean drinking water facilities. We have streetlights. We have stone paved clean village trails. Our village is much better than before.”* Likewise, a local farmer (GHNP5) appreciated homestay development for allowing the local people to walk on improved village trails by saying,

The village trails would be muddy in the rainy season making it difficult to walk. However, after the villagers started homestay the villagers have widened the narrow roads and stone paved the village trails. We can walk comfortably now. You can see the village trails. They are beautiful, aren't they?

In a similar way, mentioning the water facility improvement, it was revealed that the villagers had to wake up at four o'clock in the morning and go to the nearby well to fetch drinking water in the past; however, this has been changed as the villagers have running water taps in the village. The respondents showed appreciation for tourism development for this change. For example, one of the homestay operators (GHO26) stated,

We had a big problem of drinking water before. You may have seen we had to walk a long way to collect the drinking water. We had to go to the kuwa [well] early in the morning at 4 o'clock. It is easy now. You can see water taps in almost every house. I think we would have been carrying water from kuwa if we had not started homestay.

Another respondent (GHO27) confirmed this and explained how she had to stay in a long queue if she did not reach the well as early as four o'clock in the morning, as she said,

You have seen there is a kuwa near the Uttar Kanya temple. We had to carry water from that well. We had to go to the well early in the morning to get water. There used to be competition among the villagers who would reach there in the morning otherwise, we had to wait for a long time for our turn to get water.

Another villager (GHO15) added,

We do not have to walk for water now. There is good facility of drinking water in the village these days. Every household has a water tap in their house. We just need to join our water pipes and bring water home directly.

Concerning Dalla Gaun, the respondents appreciated the contribution of homestay tourism to the living condition improvement of the local residents by increasing their access to increased public facilities. The provision of streetlights and upgrading the village streets to the gravel level are two widely mentioned development projects, which helped to facilitate improvements in community life. For instance, one of the homestay operators (DHO3) mentioned,

I can say that life in Dalla Gaun is better than before. It is because we have streetlights these days. Homestay has allowed us to live in light. Similarly, it is easy to walk on village streets because all village streets have been gravelled.

Although tourism development in Dalla Gaun was perceived to have contributed to the quality of life by offering the streetlight facilities and upgraded village streets, the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the current level of facilities available in the village. This can be understood in the expression of a homestay operator (DHO4), as he said, *“although Dalla Gaun is a famous tourism village, we still lack basic facilities such as clean drinking water. We still need to rely on tube well for drinking water.”*

Tourism development is understood as a means to facilitate development works in destination communities. For example, Bilali et al. (2014) and Seetanah et al. (2011) argue that tourism development often induces improvement in public utilities such as water, lighting and public restrooms in the host region. This is because these are some of the basic facilities required for tourism development. Thus, the facilities introduced to facilitate tourism development also support improvements to the quality of life of destination populations. This is because the improved public facilities contributed by tourism development can also be used by the local residents (Nyaupane and Poudel, 2011; Uysal et al., 2016). In previous research, Zapata et al. (2011) also found that the local residents of

Nicaragua indirectly benefited from tourism through improvement of public facilities such as clean drinking water and improved pathways. Similarly, Kuvan and Akan (2005) also attested the local people of Belek, Antalya, Turkey acknowledged that tourism development contributed to the enhancement of living standards by increasing both the quantity and quality of public facilities. In another example, Spiteri and Nepal (2008) identified the local residents of ACAP area benefiting from the improvement of trails and bridge construction following the implementation of tourism programmes. The research for this thesis accords with these earlier studies and demonstrates that tourism development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is a contributory factor to improving the villagers' quality of life. Thus, the findings in the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is in agreement with the predominant view in tourism studies that tourism has the potential to enhance the living conditions in a destination by developing and improving public services (Muganda et al., 2010; Eshliki and Kaboudi, 2012; Rodrigues and Prideaux, 2018).

The contribution of the tourism industry to increase local access to public facilities is interpreted as a form of social empowerment. For instance, according to Scheyvens (1999: 248), "social empowerment can be seen when tourism initiatives indirectly or directly result in greater local access to services, such as water supplies or health clinics." This is the case in this thesis. This is because the local residents of both villages interviewed were to link the increased public facilities in their villages as a consequence of homestay development. Thus, based on the foregoing discussion, it can be said that tourism development in both communities is found to be contributing to social empowerment by improving the quality of life through the development and enhancement of public facilities stimulated by tourism development.

6.5.3. Opportunities to live in clean villages

The impact of the tourism industry on the environment of destination communities is perceived to be both negative and positive. Those who believe that the development of tourism affects the local environment negatively argue that tourism development can have destructive effects on pristine environments (Kim et al., 2013). On the contrary, Yang (2016)

argue that tourism is a clean industry; therefore, tourism development allows the residents of destination areas to live in an unpolluted environment by inspiring them to keep their surroundings clean. The interviewees of both communities in this study believe that the physical surroundings of their respective villages were better than in the pre-homestay period. For instance, compared to the current cleanliness standard of Ghale Gaun, in the past in the words of one female homestay operator (GHO3),

It was a dirty village. You could see garbage everywhere. You cannot believe nobody in the village had toilet. Children were seen defecating on the sides of the village trails and the grownups on the open spaces. However, this is different now. You can see Ghale Gaun as a clean village.

Another homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO6) confirmed the low standard of sanitation in the village in pre-homestay period by saying,

Before we started homestay, Ghale Gaun was not as clean as you see nowadays. You would see rubbish everywhere; on the village trails and the yards. The houses were very dirty. You cannot see those dirty houses in Ghale Gaun.

Concerning Dalla Gaun, both groups of respondents felt that the development of the homestay programme contributed to improving the cleanliness of the village. As a result, the villagers are living in a better-quality environment compared to prior the advent of homestay tourism. For example, a homestay operator of Dalla Gaun (DHO12) stated, *“Dalla Gaun was not a clean village before. People could see litter everywhere. It is different now. Dalla Gaun is a clean village.”* Similar views were expressed by a female homestay non-participant (DHNP2), who said, *“Dalla Gaun has been changed into a clean village due to homestay. After homestay tourism the villagers are seen keeping their houses, front yards and the streets in front of their houses clean.”*

In both communities, the villagers expressed their lack of awareness about sanitation and hygiene issues before they participated in tourism businesses. As a result, they were not bothered about maintaining higher sanitation standards. This can be reflected in the view of a local farmer of Ghale Gaun (GHNP2), who said,

We did not know that we have to keep our houses, our yards and our village streets clean before we started homestay. You could see our dirty houses, our dirty yards and the dirty village street because we were used to throwing rubbish everywhere.

Similar perspectives were identified in the words of Dalla Gaun residents. For example, a homestay operator (DHO15) mentioned, *“we did not know that the rubbish we throw affects our health negatively. As a result, people used to dispose of refuse anywhere they liked. There was no waste disposal system.”* Another homestay operator of Dalla Gaun (DHO18) added *“we had no idea that keeping our house and its surroundings is important for us.”*

However, there have been changes in local people’s knowledge and behaviour of waste management in both villages. For example, one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO23) mentioned, *“now we have learnt that we have to keep our house and our surroundings clean. It is because if we keep houses and our surroundings clean, we are less likely to get infected by diseases.* A homestay non-participant of Ghale Gaun (GHNP3) added, *“you can see our houses and village streets. They are clean because we throw rubbish in designated places only. If we see any rubbish, we pick it up and throw it in the rubbish bins.”*

Similarly, the respondents of Dalla Gaun revealed that because of the lack of awareness of the importance of a clean environment, the locals were used to using the open spaces for urinating and defecating. As a result, the village streets were dirty and characterised by an unpleasant odour. However, this situation does not persist in the village after the villagers have been made aware of how it adversely affects to them. Interviewee DHO3 commented,

Sometimes I feel ashamed to say that before we started homestay nobody in the village had proper toilet facilities. We used to urinate in the fields and some people, particularly children, used to do so on the village trails. The village streets were so stinky we had to cover our noses. You see this has been changed now. Every household has a toilet in their house.

The locals of both villages appreciated the development of the homestay programmes for enabling them to live in cleaner villages, which is perceived to have contributed to improve the quality of life. For instance, one of the locals of Ghale Gaun (GHO26) mentioned,

We are living in a healthy environment because of tourism development. We did not have the practice of keeping our houses and surroundings as clean as now because we were not aware of sanitation and hygiene issues. Tourism development helped us to understand the importance of living in a clean environment. Therefore, we keep our houses and surroundings clean nowadays.

The views of the local residents of Dalla Gaun on this issue coincided with the community's perceptions expressed by the locals of Ghale Gaun, as one of the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun (DHNP3) said,

We have been living in a clean environment now. Our houses are clean, our yards are clean and the whole village is clean. If we had not started homestay, who would have come to our village to make the villagers understand the importance of staying in a clean environment.

As stated earlier, tourism development is understood as having the potential to bring both positive and negative consequences to the physical environment. In a previous study, Reimer and Walter (2013) identified the local residents of Cardamom Mountains of Cambodia as being more aware of environmental issues following CBT projects. In another example, Sallah et al. (2013) also identified how the increased tourism activities in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia contributed to improving the village's level of cleanliness, which in turn resulted in an improved environmental quality of the village. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the above statements of the local residents signify that the inception of homestays in both villages did not bring any undesirable changes to their environment. Moreover, tourism development worked as a catalyst to influence positive transformations on the local environment. This is due to the contribution of homestay tourism to increase the villagers' awareness to keep their environment clean. As a result, the village clean-up activities, as discussed in section 6.3, allowed the locals to manage and reduce the amount of waste in the

village, which in turn resulted in cleaner villages than compared to the pre homestay period. Thus, based on the foregoing discussion, this thesis demonstrates that tourism development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun contributed to the improvement of the quality of life by allowing the locals to live in a cleaner environment than before the villagers were involved in tourism activities.

Based on the examples outlined in the preceding discussion, this thesis demonstrates that the development of homestay activities in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun contributes to the improvement of quality of life by increasing personal income, providing the locals with improved public facilities and allowing them to live in a clean environment. Thus, homestay practices in both villages are found to be facilitating social empowerment by improving the villagers' quality of life.

6.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter discussed the community residents' perspectives with regards to the impact of homestay tourism about their social empowerment. In this regard, this research identified remarkable differences between the perceptions of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In terms of Ghale Gaun, the villagers interviewed demonstrated a positive impact on social empowerment indicating that homestay tourism has been successful in encouraging the social dimension of empowerment. The visible sign of social empowerment in Ghale Gaun was manifested in the establishment of community groups that offered the community members increased socialisation opportunities, which resulted in improved connections among the community residents. Similarly, social empowerment in Ghale Gaun was also confirmed in terms of social cohesion, where the community members were found to be supportive of each other and working together for making tourism a success. Likewise, the financial contribution of homestay development through the provision of the community fund from tourism revenue was another sign of social empowerment that emerged from the research in Ghale Gaun. In addition to that, homestay development of Ghale Gaun was also identified as contributing to the enhancement of social empowerment by improving the quality of village life. This is particularly achieved by providing the villagers with increased

income generation opportunities, developing and maintaining public facilities and allowing the locals to live in a cleaner village compared to the pre-homestay period.

However, the findings of Dalla Gaun are different from the results obtained from Ghale Gaun. This is because unlike the situation in Ghale Gaun, the respondents of Dalla Gaun demonstrated both positive and negative perceptions in terms of social empowerment. For instance, similar to Ghale Gaun, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also acknowledged the contribution of homestay development in terms of its contribution to the improvement of the quality of life. This interpretation is made based on the views of the locals of Dalla Gaun who also felt that tourism allowed them to solve the financial problems that they faced in their daily life. Similarly, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also felt that the villagers' quality of life is improved due to the improved public services and sanitation standard of the village. Nevertheless, some clear signs of social disempowerment were also visible in Dalla Gaun in terms of the establishment of community groups, social cohesion and in the creation and utilisation of community funds. Thus, the development of homestay tourism in Dalla Gaun is not found to be as effective as that identified in Gale Gaun in terms of its contribution to the enhancement of social empowerment.

Having explored ideas of social empowerment in this section, the proceeding Chapter offers a detailed discussion about psychological empowerment.

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Having explored notions of economic and social empowerment in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively, the focus of this Chapter is to discuss community residents' viewpoints in relation to their psychological empowerment. To this end, this Chapter considers the extent to which the local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla are empowered, or disempowered, psychologically following their involvement in community-managed homestay practices. For the purpose of discussion, this Chapter is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the perceptions of local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun about the impacts of homestay tourism with regard to the villagers' self-esteem and pride in their place of residence. This discussion is followed by community residents' evaluation of the impact of homestay tourism on their traditional cultural resources. The third section explores how well the homestay programmes in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun contributed to boosting community members' self-confidence and assertiveness which, in turn, enabled them to express their thoughts and beliefs with other people. This section also illuminates community residents' confidence to communicate their ideas with the individuals living outside of their immediate communities. The Chapter will close with a summary of its main points.

7.2. COMMUNITY PRIDE

Psychological empowerment within the context of tourism is recognised in terms of the industry's contribution to fostering the destination residents' self-esteem and pride. For example, Scheyvens (1999) and Boley et al. (2014) argue that tourism projects are considered to contribute to psychological empowerment if such initiatives successfully enhance the community residents' sense of pride and self-esteem in being members of that particular community. Community pride, according to Pookaiyaudom (2015), means an individual's positive feelings of attachment with the society in which she/he is living and the resources the community possesses. Therefore, in a psychologically empowered community, the

residents are likely to exhibit high self-esteem in their community and their pride with communal assets, such as, for example, natural resources, traditional lifestyles and cultural heritage and demonstrate a certain level of attachment to them. In this study, the practices of homestay tourism in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have been found to play an important role in upholding the community residents' pride in their traditional cultural resources. The enhanced pride in both villages is influenced by various factors including, for example, increasing popularity of the village as a homestay tourism destination, engendering respect for the place and people living in them, facilitating community identity, and increased media coverage. Each of these will be discussed in the proceeding sections.

7.2.1. Increased popularity of the village

The role of tourism development as a catalyst to engender popularity of a place is widely acknowledged in the tourism literature. For example, Chin et al. (2017) argue that the development of tourism activities played a prominent role to enhance the popularity of the rural Malaysian community, Kampung Semadang. With regard to this study, similar community perspectives were identified in the case of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In relation to Ghale Gaun, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the village was perceived as isolated in the pre-homestay period, however, the growth of tourism activities stemming from the inception of the homestay programme contributed to the village's gain in status as a successful homestay destination. As one of the female homestay hosts (GHO5) said, *"everybody knows about Ghale Gaun these days. People know about this village even if they have never been here because Ghale Gaun has become a famous homestay village."* Another homestay operator (GHO21) expressed similar opinion saying, *"our village is a famous place among the people who want to experience homestay facilities in rural areas."*

The interviewees of Ghale Gaun recognised the increasing number of visitors in terms of the village being popular among the people living outside of their communities. For example, one female homestay operator (GHO17) noted,

You can realise how popular Ghale Gaun is from the number of people visiting every day. Sometimes we receive more than 200 tourists per day in this small village. It

is really a matter of happiness to see many people choosing this remote village to spend their time.

Not only the homestay hosts of Ghale Gaun, but also the villagers who are not directly associated with the practice of hosting tourists in their houses also felt that the village had turned into a renowned place due to homestay tourism. As one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP3) pointed out, *“many people are coming to visit our village after we started homestay. Not only domestic tourists but also people from foreign countries come to Ghale Gaun. Ghale Gaun is not like before. It is a very famous village now.”*

Similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the villagers of Dalla Gaun also thought that homestay development in their village played a role in making the isolated rural village a well-known tourist destination. This can be illustrated in the view of a homestay operator (DHO1), who stated, *“Dalla Gaun was not in existence for many people before the opening of the homestay programme. This is not the case now. I do not think there is anyone in Nepal who does not know about this village.”* Another homestay operator of Dalla Gaun (DHO4) perceived the selection of Dalla Gaun as a case study for this research as evidence of the popularity of the village at an international level, as he said, *“your presence in this village verifies that people living in the United Kingdom also know about our village. This is a proof that Dalla Gaun is known to the universities of the United Kingdom.”*

The homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun did not have a difference of opinion from their homestay operator neighbours. For example, similar to the homestay hosts, a homestay non-participant (DHNP4) indicated, *“Dalla Gaun is a very famous village now. People did not know about Dalla Gaun before tourism development in the village. Homestay made the village famous.”* Another homestay non-participant (DHNP2) confirmed the above judgement, as he added, *“it is the homestay that made Dalla Gaun a popular tourist village. Everyday people are coming to Dalla Gaun because this is a famous homestay village.”*

Similar to the above accounts of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, a number of researchers have documented the contribution of tourism development for its role in changing isolated societies into popular tourist destinations. For example, Salleh et al. (2013)

noted the increased popularity of Negeri Sembilan community as a tourist destination to experience Malaysian rural life following the villagers' participation in homestay enterprise. In another example, Wuleka et al. (2013) identified the citizens of Mognori Ecovillage, Ghana believing that their village had gained a reputation as a popular place to visit due to tourism development. Jimura (2011) attests that the development of tourism activities engenders popularity of place by bringing the destination communities into view among national and international tourists. Similar situations persist in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. This is because the homestay programmes in both villages are found to have played an important role in transforming these once desolate rural communities into popular homestay destinations. Dyer et al. (2003) argue that tourism has potential to reduce stereotypical images of destination communities as backward and underdeveloped places. This applies to both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. The development of homestay in both villages has contributed to a change of image as popular tourist destinations, which were once characterised by remote and unnoticed places lacking basic facilities in the pre-homestay period. Consequently, based on the above discussion, it can be argued that the inhabitants of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are fortunate in the sense that if it were not for the homestay programmes, they would still be living in isolated villages. This is because there were fewer other development opportunities available that would have had the same impact.

The popularity of a place supported by the development of tourism is also acknowledged as the industry's contribution to foster the local people's sense of pride in the community where they live. For example, K. C. et al. (2015) argue that the presence of tourists promotes local people's pride in their area. In the case of this thesis, it was identified that increased visitor numbers to the communities after the beginning of the homestay programmes in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun also served as a source of villagers' pride for their respective communities. This is because the residents of both villages feel privileged to be known as the inhabitants of villages which are famous nationally and internationally and visited by the people from around the globe. For example, a farmer of Ghale Gaun (GHNP1) advised, *"I have to say that Ghale Gaun residents are lucky because we can tell other people that we are living in a village which is visited by many national and international tourists."*

Another villager of Ghale Gaun (GHO11), who is a major income earner as a homestay host, confirmed the sense of pride felt by inhabitants of Ghale Gaun by saying, *“it is a matter of pride for the residents of Ghale Gaun to say that we are living in a popular homestay village.”*

Similar views were echoed in the accounts of the respondents of Dalla Gaun as they also expressed increased pride when Dalla Gaun is visited by many tourists, who are choosing their village rather than other Tharu villages. A homestay non-participant of Dalla Gaun (DHNP3) stated, *“there are many Tharu settlements in Nepal, but people are coming to visit Dalla Gaun. This makes us proud of our village.”*

Furthermore, the local residents of both villages accessed during the field study also recognised the visits by famous people to their communities in the form of pride facilitated by homestay tourism. For example, in Ghale Gaun, the respondents advised increased pride in hosting prominent public figures for example political leaders, ministers, bureaucrats and celebrities in their homestays. As one of the female homestay operators (GHO20) mentioned, *“many political leaders have visited this place. The present Prime Minister also visited Ghale Gaun once. I think all former prime ministers, who are alive now, have visited our village.”* Likewise, the increased pride in having the head of the country in Ghale Gaun can also be understood in the opinion of a villager (GHNP2), who proudly mentioned the visit of Respected Honourable Mrs Bidhya Devi Bhandari, the President of Nepal, to Ghale Gaun, as he said,

You know that our village has also been visited by the President of Nepal. Is not this a matter of pride for the entire Ghale Gaun residents? Now people know our village as a place visited by the President of Nepal.

Similarly, the increased pride in welcoming political leaders and other influential people to their community was also evident in the expressions of the respondents of Dalla Gaun. For instance, one of the homestay operators (DHO6) explained, *“in addition to tourists, Dalla Gaun is frequently visited by the political leaders after Dalla Gaun became a popular place. All the prominent leaders of the major political parties have stayed in our homestays.”* Another homestay participant (DHO10) described the visits of several artists from the

Nepalese film industry including the superstar Rajesh Hamal as a matter of pride. As he said, *“many actors of the Nepalese film industry have been to our village. You know even Rajesh Hamal also came to Dalla Gaun once. Rajesh Hamal does not go to other remote villages like Dalla Gaun.”*

In addition to the visit of political leaders and cinema workers, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also reminisced about a visit paid by the UK’s Prince Harry, to their community in 2016. A female homestay non-participant (DHNP2) stated, *“you know even Harry, a Prince of the United Kingdom, came to see Dalla Gaun when he was here in Nepal in 2016.”* There was not a single respondent of Dalla Gaun who did not discuss Prince Harry’s visit to their community during the interviews. Also, the villagers of Dalla Gaun frequently spoke about Prince Harry’s visit in informal conversations. This demonstrates that Prince Harry’s visit is a matter of pride for the residents of Dalla Gaun because they were always excited to share this information with the outsiders. This can be further understood in the views of the interviewees who perceive themselves fortunate to have had the opportunity to welcome the Prince to their village. As one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP5) mentioned, *“I have to say that Ghale Gaun residents are lucky to have hosted Prince Harry in the village. We had not even imagined that Prince Harry would come to our village, but homestay made it possible.”*

The contribution of the tourism industry to enhance a destination community’s pride is well discussed in the tourism literature. To cite a case, in a previous study in Nepal, K. C. et al. (2015) identified the local residents of ACAP as having increased pride in their village thanks to the presence of tourists. Similarly, Suntikul et al. (2016) found the residents of Hue City, Vietnam having pride as members of the community when they witnessed an increased in visitor numbers. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, this thesis demonstrates that tourism development not only contributed to increase the popularity of the village as a tourist destination but also reinforced community residents’ higher self-esteem for their village because of an increase in visitors following the opening of homestay tourism.

Furthermore, the interest shown by national political leaders, members of the Nepalese entertainment industry and distinguished personalities such as Prince Harry, is also

found as contributing to instilling a sense of pride in the village and boosting the self-esteem of the villagers. Thus, the increased pride in place identified in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun can be understood as one of the benefits induced by homestay development. This has further implications for psychological empowerment. This is because, according to Boley and Gaither (2016: 164), “psychological empowerment is the dimension of empowerment concerned with the self-esteem boost and sense of pride that tourism can bring from visitors travelling to see... their community.” In the case of this study, the remoteness of the Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, which once cultivated feelings of embarrassment (See section 7.2.2), is changed into a means of self-esteem. This is due to the increased attention from outside brought to the community by tourism development. Thus, homestay tourism in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is not only a tourism product but also a source of pride for the local populations. Consequently, based on the foregoing discussion, this thesis demonstrates that the development of homestay activities can be influential in promoting psychological empowerment by enhancing the popularity of a place.

After discussing the subject of community pride facilitated by tourism development, the following section explores the influence of homestay activities in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun in relation to the development of a positive sense of identity.

7.2.2. Homestay as a means to develop a positive sense of identity

The increased popularity of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun as tourist destinations discussed in section 7.2.1 was further identified as contributing to develop a greater sense of place identity of both villages and the people living in them. The lack of identification of Ghale Gaun as a village prior to the development of the homestay programme was understood in the words of an interviewee (GHO15) who is actively participating in homestay management, as he stated, *“people would not recognise our village when I told them I am from Ghale Gaun. They would ask, ‘where is Ghale Gaun?’ It felt like Ghale Gaun did not exist in Nepal.”* A female homestay operator (GHO3) confirmed this situation by saying, *“we had to tell others that our village can be reached by walking six hours from Besisahar [The District headquarter of*

Lamjung, where Ghale Gaun is situated]. *If we did not mention the name of Besisahar, nobody would know where Ghale Gaun is.*"

Similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees of Dalla Gaun also explained that Dalla Gaun was not recognised by its name before the homestay programme was introduced. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO2) stated, *"if someone asked me about my whereabouts, I had to mention the name of Thakurdwara [A famous place near Dalla Gaun]"*. Likewise, a homestay non-participant of Dalla Gaun (DHNP4) had a similar view as he revealed, *"if I told someone that I am from Dalla Gaun, s/he would ask me 'where is Dalla Gaun?' Then I had to refer to other famous places."*

The above views found in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrate the lack of recognition of the existence of the villages as places of residence, which resulted in the villagers' needing to name nearest famous settlements while introducing themselves as inhabitants of their villages. As a result, the locals had low self-esteem as one homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO22) advised,

It made me feel embarrassed to reveal that I am a resident of Ghale Gaun because even if I told people that I am from Ghale Gaun, they would not know our village and would not be interested to talk to us.

Similarly, the reluctance of the villagers to disclose the name of their village resulting from the outsider's lack of knowledge about Dalla Gaun as a place can also be revealed in the view of a female homestay non-participant (DHNP1). As she said,

I did not want to give the name of Dalla Gaun when people asked me where I am from because they would not recognise my village. So, in the past, when people asked, I had to tell that I live near Thakurdwara.

However, this situation has not persisted in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. This is because the development of homestay tourism in both villages has contributed to developing the villages' profile as well-known tourist destinations. This can be evidenced through the words of the interviewees of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun as they widely acknowledged the homestay practices for nurturing a positive place identity. For example, one of the

homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO2) explained, *“If we had not started homestay in the village, who would come to our village? Who would know about Ghale Gaun?”* Similarly, another respondent (GHNP3), who is not directly associated with homestay operation, said, *“why didn’t people come to visit this village in the past? Because we did not have homestays. Now we have homestays so that people know about this place and come to visit.”* Another respondent (GHNP5) added, *“If local people had not started homestay, the village still would have remained a dead village”.*

The analysis of interview responses of Dalla Gaun in this respect also identified similar findings to those found in Ghale Gaun. This is because, similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the homestay operators and homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun were also found to be appreciative towards tourism development for building community identity. For instance, one of the homestay operators (DHO5) stated, *“along with economic benefits, homestay has also helped to make Dalla Gaun known to the people living in different places. If we had not started homestay, who would have known us?”* Supporting the homestay owner’s opinion, interviewee DHO9 commented, *“homestay has played a very important role to make the village and the villagers known to other places. People did not know us before, but we are known as people from a homestay village now.”*

Similar views were echoed in the expressions of the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun. For instance, one of the locals (DHNP5) who is earning his major income by selling agricultural productions in homestays revealed, *“we do not have to mention Thakurdwara to introduce our village these days. People know our village by its name. This is all because of homestay.”* Another homestay non-participant (DHNP2) added, *“we used to take the name of Thakurdwara to introduce our village and ourselves before but many people these days do not know about Thakurdwara but they know about Dalla Gaun.”* Another respondent of Dalla Gaun (DHNP3) supported these views and mentioned, *“if we had not started homestay in Dalla Gaun, people would not have known about this village.”*

The influence of the tourism industry in terms of its contribution to enhance the place identity of destination communities is acknowledged as one of the benefits that tourism brings to these communities. For example, Pizam (1996) understands that tourism

development helps destination communities to strengthen their place identity. Similarly, Kneafsey (1998: 112) argues that tourism development “is viewed as a means of regenerating crumbling senses of identity.” This is because outside interests encourage the reinforcement of local identity (Ferreira, 2007). Amsden et al. (2011), through their research, showed that tourism development in Seward, Alaska contributed to developing the sense of community identity. In this thesis, the interest shown by the members of outside communities to see the homestay practices, the natural and cultural resources of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun has been influential in strengthening the place identity of both villages as tourist destinations. Moreover, homestay developments in both villages have become an impetus to inspiring community residents’ sense of place identity by bringing the respective village to notice. These findings accord with the view of Timothy et al. (2007) that the development of tourism contributes to the residents of destination communities having a stronger sense of identity in their place of residence by making their locality well-known.

The strong sense of place identity further contributed to cultivating the pride of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Gaun in their local area. This interpretation is made based on the responses of interviewees who were hesitant to introduce themselves as inhabitants of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun in the pre-homestay period but were proud to introduce themselves as the residents of their respective communities at the time of the research. This change can be understood in the expression of the following views by a homestay host of Ghale Gaun (GHO23), who said,

We used to feel embarrassed to introduce us as Ghale Gaun residents in the past, but homestay brought prestige in becoming the resident of this village. We do not have any hesitation to call ourselves a member of this rural village now because this rural village is a model tourism village of south Asia. Therefore, we feel honoured to call ourselves Ghale Gaun inhabitants.

Another respondent (GHNP3), who is an employee of the Village Development Committee asserted, “the villagers were ashamed to introduce themselves as Ghale Gaun residents, but you can see the difference now. We can proudly say that we are from Ghale Gaun.” Similarly, the pride to become the inhabitants of Ghale Gaun was reflected in the expression of a female homestay non-participant (GHNP4), as she thought,

Once people asked us where Ghale Gaun was. It is different now. When I tell them, I am from Ghale Gaun, people say 'oh! You are from Ghale Gaun. You are from that beautiful village.' It feels good to hear that.

Similar to the respondents of Ghale Gaun, the villagers of Dalla Gaun also reported higher self-esteem in being a resident of the village that ensued from the increased tourism activities after the launch of homestay practices. For instance, one of the residents (DHO3) noted, *I can proudly say the name of my village now. I can proudly tell anybody that I am from Dalla Gaun. I do not need to take the name of Thakurdwara and other places while introducing me.*

Timothy et al. (2007: 104) state that “the development of tourism can foster civic pride in their locality.” In a previous study, Jimura (2011) found the people living in and around Ogimachi, Japan, who were hesitant about introducing themselves with reference to the name of their village before the inception of tourism development, acknowledged the role of tourism development for bringing a sense of pride about their locality because the industry made them well-known. In the case of the current study, the words of the villagers of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun reveal that the feeling of embarrassment as an inhabitant of a remote village turned into a matter of pride because of the increased visibility and attention brought to their respective villages by homestay developments. Hence, this thesis shows that the development of homestay programme has been successful in fostering the pride of the members of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun by cultivating a positive sense of identity of the villages where they are living.

In both villages, community residents' feelings of pride in place are also reflected in the ways the community members associate their identity with their village. This is because the respondents of both villages believe that the villagers are known by the name of their village. For example, one of the homestay participants of Ghale Gaun (GHO1) said, *“when I go to other places, the name of my village is enough to introduce myself.”* Similar views were echoed in the interviews with the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun. For example, one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP1) stated, *“homestay has given the villagers their*

identity. Other communities even in Nepal did not know us before. However, after we started homestays we are known as the residents of SAARC model tourism village."

In Dalla Gaun, a female homestay non-participant (DHNP2) thought, *"people of Dalla Gaun are known by the name of the village these days. It is a good thing that we are known by the name of our own village."* Similarly, a homestay operator (DHO17) also shared a similar view by saying, *"when we tell others that we are from Dalla Gaun, people know that we are from a famous homestay village."* The contribution of homestay development in this regard was further confirmed by a homestay non-participant of Dalla Gaun (DHNP4), as he felt, *"one of the best things about homestay is that it made the villagers known as the residents of a homestay village."* Andrews and Leopold (2013: 82) argue that "identity is formed by people's sense of belonging to a certain place." Similarly, Liu and Cheng (2016: 77) believe that "the feeling of belonging can be so strong to help establish self-identity." These arguments apply in this study because respondents of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun identify themselves with their respective communities. This further contributed to cultivating a sense of pride in place. This is because of the local people's awareness that they are known as residents of a particular place. In a previous study, Pookaiyaudom (2015) identified the local residents of Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand as demonstrating pride of their place when they felt that they were recognised by the name of their community. Similar findings are revealed in the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. This is because those people who once demonstrated lower self-esteem to identify themselves with their villages are now proud to refer to the name of their village, which signifies the residents' feelings of attachment with their respective communities. Thus, based on the foregoing discussion this thesis demonstrates that tourism development can be used to bring about destination communities' pride in place by reinforcing a positive place identity.

The next section examines the role of tourism development as a catalyst to creating respect and appreciation for the village and the villagers.

7.2.3. Homestay as a source of appreciation

In addition to contributing to the fostering of a positive place identity of remote and unnoticed villages as famous tourist destinations, homestay programmes in both Ghale Gaun

and Dalla Gaun were also acknowledged for their support to prompting respect for the communities and their resources by those from outside communities. In Ghale Gaun, for example, one of the homestay operators (GHO17) mentioned,

Tourists visiting Ghale Gaun say that our village is a beautiful village. They also say that the residents of Ghale Gaun are very friendly... Some tourists admire us for keeping our traditional rural life alive. It feels happy when people admire you, doesn't it?

The above statement signifies that the development of homestay tourism in the village contributed to a gain in respect for the village, its surrounding, the inhabitants and the traditional and cultural assets of the community. The appreciation shown could also be summed up in the words of a homestay non-participant of Ghale Gaun (GHNP1), who explained, *"many people from different places come here and praise the beauty of the village. They also admire us for running homestays successfully. The visitors appreciate our tradition and culture. When people show appreciation, it makes us happy."*

Similar findings were identified in Dalla Gaun. The respondents of Dalla Gaun also reported a sense of honour when people from various places show interest to their community. One of the homestay owners (DHO7) believed,

People are interested in seeing our place. They are interested to talk to the villagers, and they are curious to know about Tharu tradition and culture. They also appreciate us for running homestay.... It makes me happy when I see people being interested about us. I am pleased when I see many people from different places come to our village and admire us.

A similar view was echoed in the expression of a local shop owner of Dalla Gaun (DHNP3), who said,

You can see everyday people from different places come to Dalla Gaun. I think people believe that Dalla Gaun is a good place to visit so that they are coming here. People come here and admire us. They admire our tradition and culture.

The role of tourism development with regard to its contribution to enhance respect for the residents of destination communities and their resources is perceived both in positive and negative ways. For example, Cole (2006, 2007) understands that tourism development can stimulate feelings of honour. Similarly, Jaafar et al. (2017: 125) acknowledge the tourism industry's power to enhance respect for destination communities' heritage, and, as they state, "tourism can also engender respect for local heritage." On the contrary, Sayira (2015), based on her research in Pakistani communities, argues that tourism development sometimes leads to an opposite reaction in terms of its contribution to a destination community's feelings of honour. In the case of this thesis, the local populations of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun perceived an appreciation for the physical locality, local traditions and cultural practices and the villagers themselves in the form of respect and honour shown by non-villagers towards the village, its inhabitants and their resources. Consequently, the villagers of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun feel respected and honoured when people visit their respective communities. Similarly, Briedenhann and Ramchander (2005) found the local people of Soweto, South Africa confirming pride in their interaction with the tourists due to the tourists' interest in learning about their home, lives, customs and traditions. The research for this thesis also demonstrates that the appreciation shown by outside communities towards Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun and their and cultural and traditional assets boosted the community members' pride in their place of residence and their resources. Thus, the findings of this study accord with Cole's (2007) view which is that tourism brings pride for natural and cultural resources.

In both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the respondents stated the reputation of their villages as homestay destinations is not confined within the national boundary, therefore people from around the world visit. As a result, the local residents of both villages feel appreciated by an international audience. For instance, one of the villagers of Ghale Gaun (GHO15) reported,

This rural village is not only famous in Nepal but also in other countries. You saw a group of Italian tourists yesterday. They came to see our village from Italy. The foreigners visit our village and say that our village is beautiful.... I smile with pride when people from other countries appreciate our place and people living here.

Therefore, the increased visits by members of the international community are acknowledged in the recognition received. As one of the respondents (GHO20) mentioned,

It is a matter of pride for us that people from different countries are coming to our village. We cannot go to their countries, but they come to meet us. People from around the world are coming to meet us even though we are living in a remote village. It makes us happy.

With regards to Dalla Gaun, the aforementioned visit of Prince Harry (see section 7.1.1), is also perceived as a form of recognition that the village is receiving from the international communities. As one of the respondents (DHO8) advised, *“you know our village is visited by prince Harry also. Prince Harry came to our homestay, talked with us and tested the Tharu food. This is a matter of pride to all the Dalla Guan residents.”*

In Ghale Gaun the recognition of the village as a SAARC model tourism village was also perceived as a direct influence of homestay development, which became a stimulant to generate community pride. One resident (GHNP1) stated, *“Ghale Gaun would not have been a SAARC model tourism village if the villagers had not started homestay practice.”* This comment demonstrates that homestay development enabled Ghale Gaun to change the image of the rural village into a model tourism village among the SAARC member countries. Thus, it can be argued that the development of homestay in Ghale Gaun contributed to boost the image of the village from obscurity to the most well-known example of community-driven tourism project in South Asia. This international recognition also contributed to fostering community pride of place because the villagers think of themselves as fortunate to be inhabitants of a model tourism village. For instance, one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP5) felt, *“because of homestay practice, we can proudly say that we are living in a model village.”* Another respondent (GHNP2) added, *“it is a matter of pride to say that I am living in a model tourism village. People living in other villages cannot say that they are from a model tourism village, can they?”*

The enhanced community pride in Ghale Gaun was also reflected in community residents' perception that the village has been admired as a training centre for those

communities from other villages willing to initiate their own homestay practices. It was mentioned that representatives from other communities often visit Ghale Gaun to understand how homestay tourism is managed in Ghale Gaun. For instance, one of the GTDMC members (GHO25) said, *“many people from different parts of the country visit our village to see how we are running homestay.”* Another respondent (GHO27) added,

Many people from different parts of the country come to see and understand how we are running homestay in Ghale Gaun. They come and ask us how we started homestay and how we are running homestay successfully for such a long time.

The frequent visits from outside communities for educational purposes also contributed to developing pride in the homestay knowledge the community possesses, this is reflected in the opinion of the GTDMC secretary (GHO22), *“many people come here to learn about homestay practice. We are not well-educated people, but still people are coming here to learn from us. We are happy to share our knowledge about homestay with other people.”* The community perception of Ghale Gaun as a training centre for homestay was supported by the researcher’s observations. The researcher also met a group of people who had come to the village to understand homestay practice. A discussion with the group members revealed that they were going to launch homestays in their village, so they had visited Ghale Gaun to learn basic ideas for running homestay.

The enhanced pride of the members of destination communities resulting from outside recognition is acknowledged by various researchers. For example, Cole (2005: 98) argues that *“outside recognition of tourism initiatives adds to the self-esteem brought to individuals and communities.”* In addition, Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2015) understood that local community pride increased in Mae Kampong, Thailand when the success of their homestay practice was recognised with various awards. Similarly, Suntikul et al. (2016) also identified their research participants to have felt proud of their community with an increased self-esteem when the complex of Hue monuments was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the recognition of their homestay initiatives as a SAARC model tourism village and the success of homestay as a model of exemplary practice contributed to stirring a sense of achievement. This further resulted in enhanced community

pride because the residents of Ghale Gaun feel they have something important to offer to people living outside of their village.

As discussed in Chapter 3, psychological empowerment within a context of tourism is associated with the industry's power to generate respect for the destination communities and the resources they have. For example, Park and Kim (2016: 357) state that "psychological empowerment will become visible when there is outside recognition and respect for... the local community." Thus, based on the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that tourism development in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is playing a crucial role to empower the villagers psychologically by producing respect for the place, community resources and the villagers' achievements.

Having explored ideas of tourism development as a means of stimulating respect for the residents of destination communities, the next section discusses increased media activities associated with the villages and their impacts on the psychological empowerment of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun residents.

7.2.4. Media attention

The increased media coverage of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun after the introduction of the homestay programmes is another theme that contributed to enhancing the local people's pride. "The word media relates to both the practice of broadcasting and the dissemination of information by other means" (Andrews and Leopold, 2013: 106). In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, it has been identified that the enhanced media coverage of both villages, particularly by television and newspapers, after the launch of homestay practices further contributed to foster residents' pride as members of their respective communities by spreading information about respective villages. In Ghale Gaun, all interviewees expressed their happiness seeing their village on national television channels and perceive this as a matter of pride. For instance, one of the homestay participants (GHO1) revealed, "*you know, our village is frequently shown on different television channels. It is a matter of pride for us to see remote villages like Ghale Gaun on television.*" The increased media attention towards Ghale Gaun can also be assumed in the understandings of a female homestay non-participant (GHNP5), who disclosed that the village is already covered by all major Nepalese television

channels, as she stated, *“Ghale Gaun and the villagers are shown on all national television stations. Our village was shown on Kantipur Television, Nepal Television and many other Nepalese television channels.”* Another respondent of Ghale Gaun (GHO18) added, *“in addition to television, national newspapers such as Kantipur, Annapurna Post and Himalayan Times also carry news about Ghale Gaun homestay.”*

The respondents of Ghale Gaun further revealed that the television coverage of the village allowed the villagers to become aware of the beauty of where they live. According to the villagers, when the village was shown on television Ghale Gaun residents found their place more beautiful than they had thought. For example, one of the homestay operators (GHO2) mentioned, *“when they [Television channels] show our village on television, our village looks more beautiful than we think. The village looks different from how we see it every day.”* These accounts of the local resident of Ghale Gaun revealed that the increased media attention brought by the homestay development also reinforced the local residents’ appreciation for their physical surroundings, which went largely unnoticed in the pre-homestay period. Hence, tourism development in Ghale Gaun also contributed to engender a sense of place attachment by making the villagers aware of the beauty of the local surroundings, which further cultivated the sense of pride in the village.

Similarly, the villagers of Dalla Gaun commented on an increase in media activities in the community after the inception of homestay practices. The respondents of Dalla Gaun reported that the village was able to bring the media to their community from the very beginning of the homestay project. Explaining the media coverage of the homestay inaugural ceremony, one of the homestay operators (DHO10) mentioned,

Our homestay was jointly inaugurated by the honourable Constituent Assembly member and the Chairperson of the Natural Resources Sub-Committee, Honourable Santa Chaudhary and Miss Nepal Sadichhya Shrestha, 2011. There were many journalists on that day in Dalla Gaun. Many newspapers and television channels made news about our village, which helped to spread the name of the village.

Another respondent of Dalla Gaun (DHNP4) said, *“sometimes we can see our village on television. Our village was never shown on television before homestay was introduced in*

Dalla Gaun.” Furthermore, the image of Dalla Gaun was spread widely in different national and international media after Prince Harry’s visit to the village. This is because the Prince’s visit was covered not only by national media outlets but also the international media, for example the UK broadsheet *The Telegraph*.

The villagers of both case study communities extended their gratitude to the homestay developments for bringing media attention to their communities. For example, the residents of Ghale Gaun had the opinion that if the villagers had not started homestay, the television and newspaper publishers would never have noticed the village and its inhabitants. Appreciating homestay activities for the increased media activities, one of the female homestay operators (GHO20), who appeared on national TV sharing her views about the impact of homestay in the village said, *“I cannot imagine myself to be shown on the national television if our village had not started homestay.”* A similar manifestation was echoed in the expressions of villagers who are not involved in homestay development. For example, one of the local farmers (GHNP2) mentioned,

People can read about Ghale Gaun in newspapers. They can watch Ghale Gaun on television. You know, it is because of homestay. Do you think people would come here to make news if we did not have homestays? I do not think television workers would come here if our village had not been a homestay destination.

Similar to the perceptions of the local residents of Ghale Gaun, the residents of Dalla Gaun also acknowledged the contribution of homestay development for gaining media coverage of the village. In this regard, the secretary of TDMC (DHO3) stated,

I do not remember our village being covered by any newspaper and television before 2011[The year homestay started]. However, we often can read about Dalla Gaun in newspapers and we can watch the village on television these days.

This situation can also be revealed in the expression of the following respondent (DHO17), as he said, *“when the news about Dalla Gaun comes, it is mainly about homestay. Therefore, I have to say that it is the homestay that brought the village into focus.”*

The above understanding by villagers that their appearance in media outlets can be attributed to homestay development seems reasonable given that there are numerous villages similar to Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, which have not been able to attract to the same level of media attention. Therefore, to be covered regularly by media along with the dissemination of messages about the villages and the village life to others is a matter of pride for the villagers. This is because the increased media activities in the communities contributed to the feelings of living in a special place. This can be understood in the view of the homestay owner (DHO6) who said, *“this village is a unique village. Therefore, the television workers and other media workers come here to make news.”* Similarly, a homestay non-participant of Dalla Gaun (DHNP3) advised, *“our village is different than other villages, so people make news about our village. Dalla Gaun is a special village.”*

The positive influence of the media to generate community pride is recognised by other researchers. For example, Mcgettigan et al. (2005) identified the residents of Kiltimagh, Ireland having their pride in place heightened when the success of their community-driven initiatives was covered by national media. In another study, Wuleka et al. (2013) identified the local residents of Mognori Ecovillage, Ghana as feeling pride when they saw their village advertised on the internet. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the increased media attention towards their village made the locals feel that they are living in special communities, which in turn instigated feelings of pride. Furthermore, the television coverage of the village in the case of Ghale Gaun enabled the local residents to apprehend the natural beauty of the village, which resulted in the feeling of pride in the village’s natural surroundings.

The next section is about community residents’ perspectives regarding the influence of homestay development on local traditions and cultural practices.

7.3. COMMUNITY RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LOCAL TRADITION AND CULTURE

7.3.1. Local tradition and culture as a source of pride

Exploring perceptions of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun with regard to their local traditions and cultural practices is crucial for this study because psychological empowerment within a context of tourism is also related to how the destination communities perceive the influence of tourism activities on their traditional and cultural resources. For instance, Boley and Gaither (2016) understand psychological empowerment in terms of the tourism industry's strength to heighten self-esteem and the pride of the residents of destinations in community possessions such as traditions and cultural resources. According to Scheyvens (1999), Boley (2014) and Boley and McGeehe (2014), residents of a psychologically empowered community demonstrate their pride in their traditional and cultural richness. This is because increased numbers of visitors to their communities to see local tradition and culture allows the inhabitants of destination communities to re-evaluate their customs cultural practices which may have been previously neglected (Boley, 2014). This is the case in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. This is because tourism development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun enabled the villagers to understand that local heritage and cultural practices can be used as important means to attract tourists to their villages. In Ghale Gaun, for example, the traditional way of life and culture are acknowledged as important elements attracting visitors to Ghale Gaun. As one of the homestay operators (GHO6) mentioned, *"people from different places come to see Gurung tradition and culture. They come to see our festivals."* A female homestay operator (GHO17) added, *"some people come to see our festivals. They come to learn about our festivals and the rituals we perform in different situations. For example, we have different rituals to perform when someone is born and different rituals when someone dies."* A local farmer of Ghale Gaun (GHNP2) confirmed this situation by saying, *"people come to see how we live in our community, what food we eat. They come to learn about our daily activities, the clothes we wear and our local dances, festivals and rituals."*

Similarly, in Dalla Gaun, increased visitor numbers are perceived as an outcome of the desire of the tourists to view Tharu festivals, the traditional Tharu costume and taste traditional Tharu food. For example, one of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO5) believed, *“our Tharu culture, particularly Tharu cultural dances are the major attractions of Dalla Gaun. People mainly come here to observe Tharu cultural dances.”* Another respondent (DHO15) supported this view,

People from different places come here to see Tharu tradition and culture. They come to watch Laathi naach [Tharu cultural dance], Jhumra [Tharu cultural dance] and Sathiya [Tharu cultural dance]. Tourists in Dalla Gaun come to eat Tharu traditional food also.

As noted in Chapter 3, CBT projects, for example homestays, are intended to address the desire of those tourists who wish to visit local communities to understand the destination community’s culture and the way of life (Ali et al., 2014). In the case of the current study, the local residents of both villages demonstrate an understanding that their way of life is the major component bringing tourists to their homestays. Kim et al. (2013) argue that tourism development helps to increase local residents’ appreciation for their own traditions and culture. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, this situation is revealed in the accounts of the respondents who felt that the disappearance of the traditional practices would result in the loss of tourists’ interest in their communities. In Ghale Gaun, one of the villagers mentioned (GHO1), *“people come to Ghale Gaun to see Gurung tradition and culture. If we do not preserve our tradition and culture, they will not come here.”* Another respondent (GHO7) added, *“most of the people who come to our village want to see cultural dances. If we are not able to show our cultural dances, why would they come here?”*

Similar ideas were echoed in Dalla Gaun. For example, a homestay operator (DHO4), who also participates in cultural shows revealed,

If we cannot preserve our traditional way of life, the traditional food we eat, our festivals and our cultural dances, we cannot run homestay for a long time because

people come to see these things. If we fail to show what people want to see, we cannot run homestay.

Another homestay operator of Dalla Gaun (DHO11) added, *“we cannot run homestay without showing our culture because people come to this village to see it. If tourists do not find what they want, they will not come here.”* In a previous study, Suntikul et al. (2016) identified the respondents of Hue, Vietnam as acknowledging the importance of local tradition and culture for running a successful tourism industry. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, the words of the local people about the importance of their customs indicate that the local residents of both villages do not want their traditional and cultural practices to vanish due to their conviction that continuing homestay activities without them is not possible sustainably. This is because the villagers of both communities believe that the local traditions and cultural resources are the main forces of attraction for outsiders to their communities.

Therefore, in order to attract more tourists, the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are using cultural shows to showcase local festivals and community rituals to the tourists. Thus, based on the preceding discussion, this thesis demonstrates that homestay programmes in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have become successful to generate community residents' appreciation for local traditions and cultural heritage. Kamble and Bouchon (2016) link the monetary value of the cultural resources with community pride and argue that the awareness of the financial value attached with cultural resources can inspire the feeling of pride in local heritage. Similarly, Besculides et al. (2002) argue that the use of cultural practices as tourism products can cultivate local people's pride in them. Hence, the villagers' understandings of the value of traditional and cultural possessions identified in Ghale Guan and Dalla Gaun not only boosted local people's self-esteem for their cultural possessions but also contributed to enhance community residents' pride in their cultural assets. Consequently, tourism development in both villages is influential for psychological empowerment enhancement because as Boley and McGehee (2014: 87) state psychological empowerment helps local “communities to reevaluate the worth of their culture, which leads to an increase in residents' self-esteem and pride since residents become aware of the value

tourists place on their community's unique attributes." Therefore, when local people believe that their traditional and cultural characteristics are playing an important role to sustain the tourism industry owned and managed by them, they are encouraged to preserve it. This is because the locals feel that their traditions and culture are distinctive community resources to share with the outsiders on which the success of tourism depends.

The feeling of cultural uniqueness of the members of the destination community is further understood as a sign of psychological empowerment. For instance, Boley et al. (2014) state that the residents of a psychologically empowered community believe that they possess unique traditional and cultural practices that can be presented to outsiders such as tourists. This is the case in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. This is because the respondents of both villages believe that tourists are visiting due to the traditional and cultural uniqueness found in their respective communities. In Ghale Gaun, the respondents felt that their village is famous for its distinct traditions and culture so that many people are visiting Ghale Gaun to experience how Gurung practices are different from those found in non-Gurung communities. As a homestay operator (GHO24) advised,

Many people choose to visit Ghale Gaun because we have been practicing our own cultural practices for a long time which are different from the traditional practices of other communities so that many people come to see what distinctiveness we have in our culture.

In Dalla Gaun, one of the homestay operators (DHO2) mentioned,

You know, why Dalla Gaun homestay is successful? It is because of our cultural dances. If we did not have laathi dance [Stick dance], nobody would come to visit this place. Our laathi dance is very special because it cannot be found in other communities so that people come here to see them.

Boley and Gaither (2016) argue that the local residents of destination communities feel that they possess unique natural and cultural resources when they realise that people from different places travel to their communities to experience the different nature and culture. Hence, the locals feel privileged when they have opportunities to present their

unique traditions and culture to others. The members of both destination communities studied for this research were delighted and honoured when they had to show their cultural practices to tourists because they perceived tourism development as a platform where they could show outsiders who they are and what they possess. For instance, one of the respondents of Ghale Gaun (GHO3) stated,

It is a matter of happiness for us to find many people being interested in our traditions and culture. We feel pleasure when people request that we perform our culture to them. It is because of homestay development we have been able to show our culture to others.

Similarly, in Dalla Gaun, the increased pride resulting from the increased number of tourists to experience local traditions and cultural resources can be recognised in the words of a homestay non-participant (DHNP4), who said,

We are happy to show our tradition and culture to tourists because they are coming from different places in search of our traditions and culture. It makes us happy to see many people interested in our traditions and culture. We feel that our culture is valuable culture because so many people come to see them.

Similar to these accounts Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2015) observed that the research participants in the Thai communities they studied were happy and honoured to have opportunities to share their cultural practices with the tourists who visited them. Boley and McGeehee (2014) consider that psychological empowerment is about the destination residents' positive spirits promoted by the feeling that they are special that they retain unique resources to share with the visitors. The findings from Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun accord with such views.

The next section explores how tourism development allowed the local residents of both villages to construct a sense of cultural identity.

7.3.2. Homestay as a means to develop cultural identity

Another theme that emerged from the data is the idea of cultural identity, which is also found to play an important role in fostering residents' pride in local cultural resources. In the case

of Ghale Gaun, the villagers acknowledged the contribution of homestay practice for its support to strengthening their cultural identity as Gurung people. This is because the development of homestays in Ghale Gaun enabled the villagers to promote their culture through the tourists. One of the elderly people from the village (GHO2) mentioned,

When tourists return to their homes, they tell other people about us. They tell about our dress, our food and our cultural dances to other people. I believe those people who have never visited our place also know us that we are Gurung by looking our dress.

Another respondent (GHO8) had an identical opinion, as she said,

When we go to other places, we do not have to introduce ourselves as people of a Gurung village. People know that we are from a Gurung community looking at our dress. I think because of homestay Gurung cultural dress is famous in many places.

Concerning Dalla Gaun, the local residents felt that the inception of homestay activities in their village offered the villagers opportunities to spread the cultural characteristics of Tharu people countrywide and internationally, which further contributed to spreading the identity of the Tharu ethnic group beyond the village. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO12) thought, *“homestay development in our village is able to spread the identity of the Tharu people. We are easily recognised from our dress. Homestay made the Tharu people known to other places.”* Similarly, another respondent (DHO10) added, *“homestay helped us to be known as Tharu people. I do not think people would be able recognise our Traditional dress if we had not started homestay.”*

The contribution of tourism development in spreading the cultural identity of the people of a tourist destination is one of the frequently mentioned topics in the tourism literature. For example, Jaafar et al. (2017) argue that tourism development can support a local community to nurture their cultural identity. Similarly, Pratheep (2017) states that community cultural aspects are important constituents of tourism activities because cultural features of destination communities help to create their distinct image in the crowded marketplace. A similar perception is identified in Shahzalal's (2016) view who also

acknowledges the strength of the tourism industry to promote a destination community's cultural identity, as he believes that people of the host destination will be recognised by their dress and other cultural features. A study by Liu and Var (1986) found the local residents of Hawaii believing that tourism development was playing an important role to foster the cultural identity of the local people. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, as the locals believed that after they started practicing homestay in their villages, the villagers were recognised by their cultural characteristics such as in their dresses and festivals for example, therefore, the development of homestay practices helped to spread the cultural image of the village in different places, which, in turn, has successfully enhanced the cultural identity of the Gurung and Tharu people. Regmi and Walter (2016) argue that increased numbers of tourists can also threaten community identity. However, the findings of this research do not agree with such a view. This is because the development of tourism activities in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun is found supportive of the reinforcing of cultural identity for the villagers by emphasising the difference between what the community possesses and what others do not. Thus, the findings in the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun support the research of Cole (2007) who noted that tourism development in the Nagda Region of Flores, Indonesia as supporting the villagers to become a recognisable ethnic group through their traditions and cultural features.

The community perception of the positive relationship between traditional and cultural practices and their contribution to the enhancement of cultural identity encouraged the local residents of both communities to be more attached with their traditions and culture. For example, one of the locals of Ghale Gaun (GHO23) thought, *“we cannot call ourselves Gurung if we do not preserve our culture. Our traditions and culture are our identity.”* Similar community voices were identified in Dalla Gaun as the respondents of Dalla Gaun also felt that the villagers' identity is associated with their cultural resources. For example, one of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO3) stated, *“you know, Tharu people of Dalla Gaun are famous for our traditional and cultural dresses. If we do not preserve them, we will not be different from other people. We will not be recognised as Tharu.”*

Furthermore, the members of a community who believe that their traditional and cultural practices are instrumental to strengthening their identity work to preserve these cultural assets because the residents feel that a decline of tradition and culture results in the loss of identity. This was the case in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. For example, a homestay non-participant of Ghale Gaun (GHNP4) revealed this situation by saying,

We have different traditions and culture from other people so that we are called Gurung. If we do not preserve our Gurung tradition and culture, we are not different from other people. Therefore, we have to preserve our culture for our identity.

Similar views were echoed in Dalla Gaun, as one of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO7) mentioned, *“Tharu people are culturally different from other people due to our cultural characteristics. If we lose them, people will not know us as Tharu. So, we need to protect our cultural resources to continue our identity.”* Besculides et al. (2002: 306) state that *“the act of presenting one’s culture strengthens the idea of what it means to live within a community, thus increasing identity and pride.”* In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, therefore, tourism development not only encourages the use of cultural resources for identity construction but also helps to foster local people’s pride in local resources. This is because the locals of both villages acknowledge that tourism development permitted them to live in the villages which have distinct images compared to other Nepalese villages. As a result, the villagers of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun have the feeling that they are living in exclusive villages with unique resources to share with the outsiders. Hence, this thesis demonstrates that tourism development in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun has not only contributed to fostering cultural identity of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun but also served as a means to instigate community pride due to its support to foster cultural identity.

The next section explores the extent to which community-managed homestay practices in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun contributed to the psychological empowerment or disempowerment through its influence on community residents’ self-confidence and self-assertiveness.

7.4. INCREASED LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE

The villagers' increased levels of confidence to express their opinions with the people living in their respective communities and their assertiveness to communicate personal thoughts and experiences with the outsiders after the introduction of homestay tourism in the village was another theme identified in the data from Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the respondents revealed their difficulties to interact with people from outside of their immediate community due to their shyness prior to the opening of the village to tourists. For example, a homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO2) mentioned, *"we could not talk in this way before. When we had to talk to the people from other communities, we felt awkward. We always thought that we would make mistakes."* A similar view was echoed in the expression of another homestay operator (GHO18), as he said,

It was very difficult for us to talk with the strangers because the people of Ghale Gaun were very shy as they were not used to meeting people from other places. They could not talk properly because of their shyness.

Similarly, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also revealed their lack of confidence to engage in social activities and share their opinions in front of other people. This can be recognised in the view of a male homestay operator (DHO3) who revealed this situation by describing how he was unable to speak out in the village meetings that were organised in the early days of homestay practices. As he said, *"in village meetings, we had to share our thoughts about the homestay programme. In the early days, I could not speak a single word in those meetings."* This statement revealed that the locals of Dalla Gaun felt unable to speak in front of the outsiders but also could not communicate their opinions effectively among their fellow villagers.

Although the male community members of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun reported the lower level of confidence, the situation of women in the pre-homestay period was even worse. For instance, a female homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO5) explained her experience of attending the early meetings that were conducted to discuss opening homestays, as she advised, *"I was attending the first meeting in my life. We were told to*

introduce ourselves. When my turn came, I stood up and tried to say my name, but nothing came to my mind. I even forgot my name.” Another villager (GHO19) shared a similar experience by saying *“when I had to say my name in the meetings, my whole body would shake. I was so nervous. I was trying to say my name, but I lost my voice. It happened many times.”*

In Dalla Gaun, several village women had a similar experience. For instance, one of the female respondents (DHO1) said, *“I was scared to say my name in front of other people while participating in seminars and training. When I could see my turn was coming, my heartbeat would increase and my face would become red.”* Likewise, another female homestay operator (DHO6) shared her experiences of the difficulties of introducing herself by saying, *“sometimes I could not speak out any word. My mouth used to be so dry I could not even speak.”* Another female respondent (DHO16) added, *“I could not even pronounce my name in some circumstances. When I stood in front of other people, I even forgot my name.”*

However, this was not the situation in both villages at the time of data collection. The male and the female members of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun were seen communicating with the villagers and tourists without any shyness and hesitation. This was further confirmed by the respondents during the interviews because the interviewees of both villages revealed that they did not have any difficulties interacting with their neighbours and the people of outside of their communities. Those people who could not even introduce themselves in front of other people in the past did not have any hesitation to engage in conversation even with strangers, as one of the female homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO27) pointed out, *I feel ashamed when I remember the past days when I was unable to utter my name in the meetings. I do not know what stopped me from telling my name. I do not have any hesitation to speak with anybody now. I can express my opinion in front of anybody these days.*

Another homestay host of Ghale Gaun (GHO21) confirmed this change in his behaviour by saying, *“we do not hesitate to talk to the strangers because every day we need to talk with them.”* A female homestay participant of Ghale Gaun (GHO10) also confirmed this change by saying, *“I do not feel uncomfortable to talk to the tourists, like before. We are used*

to talking with the outsiders. Therefore, we talk to them as if we are talking with the Ghale Gaun residents.”

The respondents of Dalla Gaun had similar insights to share as they also informed improved self-confidence and assertiveness to express their thoughts and opinions after their exposure to the outsiders following the development of homestay practices in their area. This change can be understood in the expression of a female homestay operator (DHO2), who said,

I used to say yes even if I did not like the proposals brought to the meetings because I did not have courage to speak even if I disagreed. I do not have to say yes if I did not like something now because I can talk with others now.

Similar perceptions were found in the expressions of the villagers of Dalla Gaun who were not participating in the homestay programme. For example, a local farmer (DHNP1) disclosed, *“the villagers have learnt to speak. The people of Ghale Gaun could not speak properly before. They were very shy, but this is changed now.”* McMilan et al. (2011) describe increased levels of confidence with a sign of empowerment and state that empowered people demonstrate increased levels of self-confidence and self-assertiveness. Cole (2018) agrees with this view and argues that greater self-confidence, which provides an individual with the power to believe in oneself, is one of the most commonly reported forms of psychological empowerment. In the case of the current study, the local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun are fortunate because in the absence of homestay practices in their villages, they would still be cultivating lower levels of confidence which would inhibit them to speak openly even amid the villagers and the people living outside of their immediate communities.

Further inquiry with the villagers of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun found that the absence of adequate socialisation opportunities (See Chapter 6) among the villagers and lack of opportunities to meet outsiders in the pre-homestay period were two major obstacles inhibiting the locals of both villages from developing their self-confidence. A female homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO20) described this by saying,

Before we started homestay, the villagers had limited opportunities to go beyond their household activities. People were busy in household work and farming. We

did not have village meetings as well. So, people were not used to speaking in front of many people.

A male homestay operator of Ghale Gaun (GHO22) supported the above statement and said, *We did not often have to talk to the people from outside communities in the past so that when we had to talk to them, we used to feel embarrassed. Therefore, we had difficulties to express what we had in our mind.*

Likewise, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also suggested the lack of sufficient social interaction opportunities prior to the introduction of homestay tourism, which was found one of the reasons for the villagers' lower levels of confidence. For example, one of the locals of Dalla Gaun (DHO11) advised, *"the villagers did not have opportunities to gather together in the past. Homestay has become a means for the villagers to gather in one place."* Another respondent of Dalla Gaun (DHO17) confirmed this situation, as he mentioned,

The villagers did not have enough opportunities to interact with the people outside of their immediate family because nobody in the village had free time. They used to work in the field the whole day. When they came home, they would eat food and sleep.

The increased opportunities to meet people from different places were also recognised as a critical factor to boost the villagers' confidence in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. As one of the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun (GHO13) said,

We could not visit other places because we did not have money. Therefore, we hardly got opportunities to meet people from other places. After we started homestay, we have opportunities to talk to people of different places. This made us more confident.

Another respondent of Dalla Gaun (DHO18) felt that, *"because of homestay we get a chance to talk to the people of different places. Every day we get to talk to the people of different communities. This taught us how to talk with strangers."* Chin et al. (2017: 242) argue that with the development of tourism activities the local residents of destination communities "gain opportunities to interact personally with the people from diverse backgrounds." The statements of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun highlighted a similar situation. The increased opportunities to have regular communication with people from different places

facilitated by homestay tourism in both villages further contributed to strengthening the level of confidence of the villagers to communicate their views to others.

In addition to increased opportunities to interact with the villagers and the people outside of their immediate communities, the availability of training opportunities after the implementation of the homestay programme was also perceived as an instrumental for enhancing the confidence levels of the members of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun communities. Pleno (2006) argues that training and seminars not only allow the learning of new skills but also provide opportunities to come out of the daily household activities which equip the people with skills to improve human relations. In the case of this study, hospitality-related training for the villagers willing to participate in homestay tourism and skills development training for other villagers were found to be influential in making the locals more confident. For example, in Ghale Gaun, the head of the GTDMC (GHO26) noted, *“we provided hospitality and other skills development training for the homestay operators and other villagers with the help of different organisations. The training even included public speaking training which helped the villagers to develop their communication skills.”* It was identified that the skill development training sessions were organised by various organisations working in other parts of the country, which allowed the villagers to have some experience of interacting with people from outside of their immediate community. Also, the training programmes supported the villagers, particularly homestay hosts, for increasing their capacity to face the outsiders. The villagers’ attendance in different training sessions allowed them to learn basic skills about how to communicate with people. For instance, one of the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun (DHO5) said,

We were given training in the early days of homestay practice that also helped us to learn how to talk with strangers. They [The trainers] made us practice many times in the training. They also made us speak and we gradually learnt to speak confidently.

Similar to the perspectives identified in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, other studies have acknowledged the contribution of increased tourism activities in fostering the self-confidence and self-assertiveness of the people living in destination communities. For instance, Herawati et al. (2014) recognised the local residents of Pentingsari village, Yogyakarta, Indonesia as

having developed the confidence to get along with the tourists although prior to tourism development they were shy and lacked the confidence to engage effectively with people from outside of their region. Similarly, McMillan et al. (2011) also found increased confidence as a consequence of participation in tourism businesses in Nepal as their “participants remarked that they felt more confident to talk to others or had become bolder while they found it easier to speak to men where they once had been scared of them.” In the case of this study, the accounts of the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrate a positive transformation in terms of the community members’ levels of confidence to communicate with the residents of their respective communities and outsiders. This interpretation is made based on the views of the respondents who did not know how to engage with members of their own community in the pre-homestay period but did not have any hesitation in interacting with anybody after participating in the homestay programme. Thus, based on the foregoing discussion, it can be said that the local residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun gained confidence by socialising with one another and with the people visiting their respective communities and learning communication skills by attending seminars and workshops.

7.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter analysed the findings of data derived from interviews with the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun and the observation of their respective communities with regard to the role of homestay development in community residents’ psychological empowerment. Based on the voices of the community members of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, this thesis demonstrates that tourism development offered opportunities for the local residents of both villages for psychological empowerment. This is achieved by enhancing residents’ pride in their natural and cultural heritage and bringing a positive change of image of the communities where they live. Also, the contribution of the development of homestay practices contributed to fostering the psychological aspects of empowerment by improving self-esteem and pride of the locals of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun through increased media attention and strengthening cultural identity. The development of homestay in both villages was also found to be supporting the locals of both villages to share their views with higher levels of

confidence while speaking in public compared to the days in the pre-homestay period. Thus, based on the evidence discussed in this Chapter it is fair to say that CBT products - in this case homestays - can promote the psychological empowerment of the local residents of destination communities.

CHAPTER 8: POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

8.1. INTRODUCTION

Having discussed ideas of economic, social and psychological aspects of empowerment in the preceding Chapters, the discussion now turns to the political dimension. This Chapter is divided into six sections. The first section explores the community residents' opportunities and obstacles to participate in homestay programmes. The second section discusses the overall tourism management practices incorporated in both communities; thus, it examines the extent of local control over tourism planning and its management at the community level. The third section explores residents' perceptions about their representation in decision-making bodies relating to homestay. It is about the mechanisms implemented to ensure the representation of various community groups such as women, youths and the marginalised group of people known as Dalit in the management committees that are formed to make tourism related decisions in the village. Dalit are the lowest echelon in the caste hierarchy (Dahal et al., 2014). This discussion is followed by the tourism management committee formation procedures. The fifth section concentrates on how the views of the individual community members are incorporated in the decision-making processes. A summary brings the Chapter to a close.

8.2. OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN HOMESTAY PROJECT

While exploring political empowerment in tourism it is noteworthy to understand the extent to which the local residents of destination communities are provided with opportunities to be directly involved in the tourism programmes introduced to their communities. This is because political empowerment in tourism, as argued by Nyaupane and Poudel (2011), is more related to an individual's power to join the tourism activities taking place in her/his surroundings than an individual's right to vote. The local residents' opportunities and limitations to participate in the local tourism projects are explored in subsequent sections.

8.2.1. Residents' access to homestay programme

Understanding community residents' opportunities and obstructions to participate in homestay projects is important for this study. This is because it illuminates the existing power relations among the community members i.e. whether or not every community member has equal power to enter into the homestay project established in their locality. Therefore, the interviewees of both communities were asked to share their opportunities for and obstacles to be included in the project. In response, all respondents of Ghale Gaun mentioned that all individual households in the village have equal rights to become a member of the homestay programme. For example, one of the villagers (GHO7), who joined the enterprise, five years after the homestay project establishment in Ghale Gaun, noted, *"all people of this village can participate in the homestay programme. Even if all households want to, they still can. One hundred percent of the villagers can participate in the homestay programme if they want."* Another homestay owner (GHO5) had a similar opinion as he said, *"every house of Ghale Gaun can join the homestay programme if they like."*

Not only the homestay operators but also homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun indicated that the opportunities to enter into the homestay business are open to all community residents. It is because, similar to the homestay hosts, the homestay non-participants also felt that no community resident is deprived of participating in the homestay initiative, this can be understood from the views of villagers who are not directly hosting tourists in their homes. For example, one elderly villager (GHNP2) said, *"every household of Ghale Gaun can run homestay."* Similarly, a local shopkeeper (GHNP4) stated, *"I am not running homestay in my house now, but if I want to run homestay in the future, nobody in the village stops me. Every individual household can run homestay."*

Similar to the interviewees of Ghale Gaun, the residents of Dalla Gaun also revealed the impartiality to participate in the local tourism programme. The villagers' equal access to the project in Dalla Gaun can be understood in the words of the villagers who said that participation in the homestay project entirely rests on the household members' willingness to join it. For instance, one of the homestay operators (DHO1) said, *"every household of Dalla*

Gaun can do homestay. It is up to the desire of the families living in Dalla Gaun. If they want, they can run homestay. No villagers are restricted to run homestay.” For the same reason, the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun also did not perceive any limitations imposed by TDMC on any resident preventing them from running homestays. This was evident in the perceptions of a homestay non-participant (DHNP3), who runs a small business in the village, he stated, *“TDMC has given equal rights to participate in homestay to every household in the village so that every household can participate in homestay once they are ready to accommodate tourists.”*

From the above views expressed by members of both communities, it is evident that GTDMC and TDMC in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun do not prevent any villagers, whether they are rich or poor, from gaining benefits from tourism development by participating in the homestay programmes in their respective communities. Therefore, the argument of Kumar and Colbridge (2002) that poor people of a community are not provided with equal opportunities to be directly involved in tourism initiatives does not hold in the cases explored here. This thesis demonstrates that the villagers of both communities are enjoying the freedom to run homestay businesses in their locality. As a result, criticisms of tourism development by Alam and Paramati (2016) and Dolezal and Burns (2015) that it is only the elite and those with influential roles in a community that have benefits from tourism development is not supported by this study. This is particularly so because the opportunities to benefit from CBT projects, through participation in homestays, are open to the wider community in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

While further exploring villagers’ opportunities and restrictions to participate in the homestay programmes, respondents of both communities recollected the initial days of homestay practice, when the villagers had difficulties finding households who were ready to participate in the project. The locals of Ghale Gaun were indifferent to the project when the village chief initially introduced homestay to them because they were not familiar with the idea of commercial hospitality. Further, the villagers could not see tourism as a way to make their living because they felt that taking money from tourists is immoral. One of the villagers of Ghale Gaun (GHNP2) remarked, *“when we talked about homestay in the village, people*

were not ready to start homestay because they thought it was not a good idea to take money from the people who come to visit our village.” Similarly, another villager (GHNP5) added, “the elderly people of the village thought that it was immoral to collect money from guests. They said that ‘guests are Gods and you are going to take money from God’. It was very difficult to convince the villagers.”

The lack of awareness of the villagers in terms of the homestay as a tourism product can also be found in the words of a homestay host from Ghale Gaun (GHO21) who mentioned that prior to their visit to Sirubari village (The first homestay destination in Nepal) the villagers were completely ignorant about how homestay works. As he said, *“we did not know anything about homestay at that time. We had heard that people of Sirubari village had started homestay. We had only heard the word homestay. Nothing more than that.”*

Therefore, the promoter of homestay tourism in Ghale Gaun had to work hard to convince the villagers to run the project. One of the elderly people, who is currently running homestay (GHO25), revealed,

Nobody was ready to start homestay in the beginning so that Prem Ghale [Homestay promoter in Ghale Gaun] used to ask the people every day. He arranged village meetings many times, took the villagers to Sirubari to show homestay and finally a few villagers were ready to start homestay.

Interviewee GHO26, who is supporting the villagers by working as the head of GTDMC currently, verified this by saying,

It took a long time to make the local people understand the benefits of running homestay businesses. At first, the locals did not have any idea about homestay. However, after discussing about homestay many times with the villagers and taking them to another homestay village to see for themselves, the villagers became ready to receive guests in their houses. When people saw tourists coming to the village, the villagers realised that it was a good idea to run homestay so that many other people started showing their interest to participate in homestay businesses. As a result, there are thirty-two homestays registered in GTDMC today.

Similar to the interviewees of Ghale Gaun, the villagers of Dalla Gaun also exhibited their unfamiliarity with homestay as a tourism product, until they were shown another homestay destination. Prior to their visit to Vada Gaun (A homestay destination in Nepal), the Dalla Gaun residents believed that running homestay would be beyond their capacity because they thought that homestay requires a big investment to develop tourism facilities in their houses. For example, one of the Dalla Gaun interviewees (DHO1) mentioned, *“when we talked about starting homestay, none of the household members thought that we can do it because welcoming tourists to our house was impossible as we did not have good provision of kitchen and beds.”* Another Dalla Gaun resident (DHO10) added, *“after we visited Vada Gaun, we realised that we do not need a lot of money to run homestay. When we saw Vada Gaun, we understood that we can use our houses to accommodate tourists.”*

Hence, the information obtained from the local residents of Ghale Guan and Dalla Gaun reveals that the villagers’ freedom to be engaged in homestay activities has been there ever since they were introduced to the concept. However, the villagers’ ignorance about homestay as a tourism product discouraged them from participating in the early days of the projects’ establishment. This finding accords with that of Briedenhann and Wickens (2004) who argue that a lack of knowledge about tourism projects results in the reluctance of the locals to participate in tourism programmes.

Although both communities demonstrated similarity in terms of the availability of equal opportunities to benefit from tourism through their engagement in homestay enterprises, TDMC in Dalla Gaun was intending to limit the maximum number of homestay participants in the imminent future. One of the TDMC leaders (DHO8) stated,

We have twenty- two houses registered in our tourism office. We are going to stop registering homestays when the number reaches twenty-five because if all houses run homestays, it is not possible to run homestay sustainably. We will not have tourists to distribute to all houses.

This view was echoed by the TDMC secretary (DHO3) who noted, *“if all houses of the village participate in homestay, they have to wait for a long time to receive guests because there are 112 houses in the village.”*

However, the respondents of Ghale Gaun did not indicate any plans to stop registering the households as homestays despite the number of the homestay registrants having already reached to 32, as the GDMC secretary (GHO22) said, *“we have not thought of restricting the villagers from participating in homestay. We are running tourism activities in the village so that we cannot say to anybody that you cannot do homestay.”* Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011) remarks that access to tourist activity must encompass as many members of the community as possible rather than just being dominated by a few families or groups. The lack of equal opportunities available to residents in a local community to become involved in tourism development can be understood as political disempowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). In the case of Dalla Gaun, therefore, the limitations based on the number of households involved in community homestay means there is not equality of opportunity as a larger number of villagers will be denied the right to participate in the homestay programme once 25 have been registered. This situation in Dalla Gaun, suggests that homestay tourism is not actually open to the wider community, which, in turn, leads to the excluded being politically disempowered.

Having explored community views in terms of the available opportunities and obstacles to join the homestay programmes, the following section discusses the homestay selection procedures adopted in both villages.

8.2.2. Homestay selection procedures

In both communities, at the time of writing there was no restrictions on who can participate in the CBT project as a homestay provider. Participation in homestays in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun has always been on a voluntary basis. For example, in Ghale Gaun, the households are required to inform the GTDMC of their wish to participate in homestay operations. As one Interviewee (GHO7) noted, *“the committee does not choose the house for homestay. If somebody wants to do homestay, s/he has to inform the GTDMC.”* This practice of not choosing houses for the homestays by GTDMC reveals the impartiality in the homestay

selection procedures. Hence, the voluntary participation allows every household the autonomy to propose themselves as homestay providers.

The residents of Dalla Gaun also advised of a similar process of selecting homestays where the TDMC is not responsible for identifying the households that could be potential participants. Similar to the processes identified in Ghale Gaun, the households of Dalla Gaun also need to inform the TDMC if they want to be included in the project. One of the Dalla Gaun villagers (DHO4) said, *“instead of TDMC choosing a house for homestay the homeowners should inform the TDMC if they want to register their house for homestay.”* Ali et al. (2014: 380) postulate that homestay practice is understood “as an opportunity for voluntary participants to earn living besides their normal occupations.” In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, this thesis demonstrates that the community residents’ autonomy over their participation in the homestay project shows that every individual household has equal access to benefit economically through their involvement in the projects.

Further discussions with the villagers in both communities revealed that once the villagers inform their respective committee about their willingness to run homestays, the members of GTDMC and TDMC in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun support the households to prepare their houses as specified in the GTDMC and TDMC guidelines. Regarding the GTDMC’s support in this process in Ghale Gaun, one of the homestay hosts (GHO3) described, *“when the villagers inform the GTDMC, the committee members inspect the house and suggest to the house owner if s/he needs to make any improvements.”* Another respondent (GHO18) supported this, as he said, *“the secretary and other members of the committee provide suggestions to the house owner about the preparation s/he has to make to receive guests like other homestay hosts.”*

In relation to Dalla Gaun, a homestay non-participant (DHNP3) explained,

If I inform the committee members that I want to run homestay, they come to my house and check the rooms and kitchen. If they think everything is good, they will register my house in the committee. Otherwise, they will ask me to make some

changes. For example, they might ask me to clean the house or they might ask me to install new toilets and bathrooms.

A TDMC member (DHO7) supported this view as she said, *“we assist the house owners if they want to run homestay. For example, we suggest to them how to keep their house clean. We also help them to add other facilities needed to host tourists.”* Therefore, contrary to the argument of Paimin et al. (2014) that only a handful of influential community elites have opportunities to be involved in tourism initiatives, this thesis demonstrates that all members of the communities can be providers of tourism facilities. This is because in the case of the study sites for this research the elites in both villages are found encouraging the notion of participation by all in the projects by allowing all community residents to participate in the homestay programmes voluntarily and assisting the villagers to develop basic facilities required to run homestays.

8.2.3. Participation of lower caste in homestay programme

The population of both communities includes Dalit families, who are considered to be at the lowest level in the caste hierarchy prevalent in Nepalese communities (See Chapter 1). Therefore, this thesis also explored the community residents’ perceptions about the Dalit families’ access to the homestay projects to identify the inclusion of the community population who are already marginalised due to their caste. In politically empowered communities there is not supposed to be discrimination within communities to prevent participation in tourism programmes in terms of caste or on any other grounds (Scheyvens, 1999). In the case of Ghale Gaun, Gurung people, who are higher in the caste hierarchy than the Dalit families, said that caste does not play any role in community residents’ participation in homestay. The Gurung respondents emphasised that being the residents of the same village, Dalit families also have equal rights to be involved in the homestay programme. One of the Gurung homestay operators (GHO6) said, *“Dalit families are living in this village for a long time. Therefore, like Gurung families, Dalit people also have equal rights to participate in the homestay.”* Another Gurung respondent (GHO20) supported this view and added, *“this*

village does not belong to Gurung families only. There are Dalit families in the village. This is the village of everyone living here so that Dalit also can run homestay.”

Further investigation into this issue in Ghale Gaun revealed that only Gurung people were involved in the homestay programme in the early days of its practice. However, Dalit people have since been included in the project with the hope of making the homestay programme inclusive. Discussing the changes taking place in the village, one of the homestay owners (GHO13) reported, *“only Gurung people were running homestay before, but some Dalit families have also prepared their houses for homestay now.”* It appears that the villagers have realised that the exclusion of Dalit from homestay does not send a good message about the village to the visitors. Similarly, it suggests that the villagers want to give a message to the people beyond the village in other areas of Nepal living in similar circumstances that caste-based discrimination does not exist in Ghale Gaun. Therefore, the GTDMC has been constantly encouraging members of the Dalit group to participate in homestay. The result of constant efforts to empower Dalit families to take part in homestay is that two Dalit families have joined the project recently. As the GTDMC office secretary (GHO23) reported, *“two Dalit families have made their houses ready to start homestay. I hope they will now register their house in GTDMC and start welcoming guests very soon.”*

Dalit people of Ghale Gaun shared similar opinions as their Gurung neighbours. As one Dalit family member (GHO22) said,

It was different in the initial phase of homestay practice. People had the impression that we are from an inferior caste. The villagers thought that if they include us in the homestay program, people would not come to live in homestays. However, this situation is changed now. The villagers have realised that if Dalit families are included in homestay, it will spread positive image of the village. They [Gurung people] do not restrict us from participating in homestay rather they encourage us to start homestay in our houses.

Furthermore, another Dalit respondent (GHNP1) reported that GTDMC regulations do not mention that Dalit people cannot run homestays, as he revealed, *“If you read GTDMC*

regulations, it does not say which caste group can do homestay and which cannot. The regulations clearly describe that every household living in the village can participate in homestay."

Concerning Dalla Gaun, the information obtained from the interviews indicated that the villagers are not discriminated based on upper or lower caste. For instance, one of the Dalit family members of Dalla Gaun (DHNP5) mentioned, *"people of all castes can run homestay. Nobody in the village says that the people from Tharu families can participate in homestay and Dalit families cannot run homestay."*

Similar to the respondents of Dalit people, the Tharu respondents also did not advise any regulations that prevent the Dalit families of Dalla Gaun from being involved in the homestay programme. As one of the Tharu interviewees (DHO1) explained, *"it does not matter whether someone is Dalit or Tharu to run a homestay. Similar to the Tharu families, Dalits also can be homestay hosts. Nobody can say that Dalit families cannot participate in homestay."* Another homestay operator (DHO17) added, *"we do not discriminate against people based on their caste. All people Dalit and Tharu are the dwellers of this village so all of them have equal power to join homestay."*

The above views by the residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun reveal that despite the caste-based discrimination being inherent in Nepalese societies, Dalit families of both villages are receiving equal treatment from their so-called upper caste neighbours. The experiences shared by the Dalit families of Gale Guan and Dalla Gaun contradict the findings of previous research. For instance, Dolezal (2015) discovered caste played an important role inhibiting the participation of so-called lower caste groups from joining homestay practices in the Indonesian village she studied for her research. In Dolezal's case the upper castes, known as Brahmin and Ksatriya, were dominant in the provision of homestay accommodation. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, however, discrimination based on the caste system does not seem to have played a role in preventing the Dalit people from being involved as providers of homestay accommodation. Thus, the findings of this study are similar to the conclusions of Dahal et al. (2014), who identified the Dalit communities in the ACAP area were equally

entitled to participate in tourism activities despite caste-based discrimination existing in the communities.

Although the respondents of both caste groups of Dalla Gaun mentioned that no discrimination exists in terms of the caste, unlike the findings of Ghale Gaun where the Dalit families are encouraged to participate in the homestay programme through regular consultation and financial assistance, the Dalit respondents of Dalla Gaun did not report any such initiatives. For instance, a Dalit respondent (DHNP5) disclosed,

Nobody says that we cannot run homestay, but they also do not encourage us to participate in homestay. It is difficult for us to participate in homestay because we are known as the people of so-called Dalit families. So, if the homestay operators encourage us by saying 'you can run homestay', we can also get a chance to benefit directly from homestay.

As a result, though the two communities studied for this research demonstrate similarities in terms of the residents' access to the provision of local tourism products, the findings in relation to Dalit families is different. This is particularly because the Dalit families of Ghale Gaun are encouraged by their Gurung neighbours whilst the Dalit people of Dalla Gaun do not feel their Tharu counterparts are supportive and encouraging for their inclusion in the homestay development.

Having discussed the local residents' opportunities and obstacles to join the homestay projects, the discussion in the next section is focused on the control over the tourism projects in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. This is undertaken by evaluating the extent of community control over homestay programmes.

8.3. LOCAL CONTROL

Local control in tourism development and management is emphasised as a distinctive characteristic of effective CBT initiatives. For instance, Zou et al. (2014: 262) argue that "community-based tourism requires that the local community should have substantial control and participation in the tourism development." Giampiccoli and Kalis (2012), Giampiccoli and

Nauruight (2010) and Scheyvens (2002) all share similar views and maintain that local communities need to have greater control over the tourism industry in CBT ventures. It is because tourism activities in such types of enterprises are expected to be owned and managed by the destination populations, as Dangi and Jamal (2016: 475) argue “a key principle of CBT is that development and use of the community’s goods and resources should be locally controlled, community-based and community driven.” As discussed in the literature review, community control in tourism development, planning and management is associated with political empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999; Boley and McGehee, 2014), therefore, this study explored community residents’ perceptions about the extent of community governance in tourism development and planning in both villages: Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In response, the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun revealed that the locally established tourism development committee, GTDMC has entire responsibility to organise, manage and decide tourism activities and tourism development in their village. Elucidating the community’s authority to manage the local tourism industry, one of the homestay operators (GHO2) said, *“all tourism activities in our village are managed by the local tourism management committee. GDTMC makes all decisions about tourism in Ghale Gaun.”* This assertion was supported by another male homestay operator (GHO6) who stated, *“we have a tourism development committee in our village to make tourism related decisions.”* This perspective was echoed by several other respondents. For example, a villager (GHO12) who recently joined the homestay enterprise noted, *“the local tourism development committee makes tourism related decisions in our village”*. Likewise, another homestay owner commented (GHO19), *“our tourism management committee makes decisions in the village.”*

With the aim to understand as many views in the local community as possible non-participants in the homestay initiative were also posed similar questions concerning the local community’s authority to utilise community resources to organise and manage tourism activities in Ghale Gaun. In response, no difference was identified in the views of both groups of respondents. For example, supporting the homestay operators’ views, one homestay non-participant (GHNP1) said, *“the villagers have formed a tourism development committee to decide tourism activities. There are nine members in the committee. The committee makes*

decision after collecting opinions from the villagers.” Another respondent (GHNP4), who is running a small shop in the village added, *“our tourism committee decides everything about homestay practice and other tourism related activities in Ghale Gaun.”* Giampiccoli (2015) advocates for a community bottom-up approach in CBT where the destination communities exercise their control over local tourism projects. Similarly, Johnson (2010: 151) argues, “CBT is different from traditional top-down tourism planning approaches in that it emphasises local input and control over the type, scale and intensity of tourism development.” In the case of Ghale Gaun, the above comments of the interviewees, demonstrate that the villagers are the key organisers and the managers of the tourism programmes in their community. This is because the community holds the ownership of the project and retains authority to make tourism related decisions. Thus, local community having power to manage tourism activities at the community level ensures local control over the development and management of the tourism industry of Ghale Gaun. This further differentiates the homestay development of Ghale Gaun from the traditional top-down tourism practices in which, according to Zapata et al. (2012), tourism decisions are induced by external authorities.

The development of a formal local tourism institution has allowed local community autonomy over the direction of tourism activities of Ghale Gaun. One of the GTDMC members (GHO25) explained, *“the government organisations do not tell us ‘do this and do that’ as long as we follow homestay operation procedure.... The local committee can decide what it thinks is good for the village and the villagers.”* Similar perspectives resounded in the views of other respondents. For instance, one local farmer (GHNP2) mentioned, *“the committee [GTDMC] decides everything about tourism development in Ghale Gaun.”* Likewise, a woman respondent (GHO27) remarked, *“the villagers decide about homestay.”* Against Liu and Hall’s (2006: 159) argument that decision-making in tourism in developing countries is often “based on the intervention of government agencies and large tourism firms”, this study demonstrates that the local people of Ghale Gaun are empowered to make tourism related decisions at the community level. This can be achieved by retaining the decision-making rights in the community. Therefore, the findings of Ghale Gaun support the argument of Giampiccoli (2015), Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2013) and Zapata et al. (2011) who understand that a

genuine CBT project emphasises local community control, where the destination communities have a decisive role in the design and implementation of tourism products. As such, based on local community members' perspectives, this thesis demonstrates that the homestay practice in Ghale Gaun is a genuine CBT project, where the villagers enjoy full authority to utilise the community resources to manage tourism in the way the locals feel is beneficial for the wider community.

Similar to the Ghale Gaun interviewees, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also reported the establishment of a local tourism development committee, TDMC which is delegated with authority to make decisions about tourism development and its management in Dalla Gaun. As a result, there was no difference identified between these two homestay destinations in terms of the presence of local institutions to run tourism businesses in their respective communities. Confirming the existence of a village organisation in Dalla Gaun, one homestay operator (DHO5) stated,

There is a committee in our village that makes tourism related decisions. The committee decides how to run homestay. The committee decides about other things such as cultural performances. The committee decides which cultural dance to show to the visitors. The TDMC decides and instructions are given to the villagers.

Similarly, another respondent (DHO3), who has been involved in homestay tourism ever since it was established in his village stated, *"the tourism development and management committee take all tourism related decisions. Only Dalla Gaun villagers are in the committee so that when we have to decide, we sit together and make decisions."*

Similar perspectives were echoed in the views of Dalla Gaun's homestay non-participants as they also acknowledged the existence of a tourism development committee in the village, which makes decisions about tourism related issues. For example, one local farmer (DHNP4) mentioned, *"the tourism development and management committee decides everything about homestay and other tourism related activities. They [Villagers] have formed a committee in the village to make decisions regarding tourism."* Giampiccoli (2015: 682)

argues that “CBT should be rooted within the community where community members are the actors of development.” Similarly, Zou et al. (2014), Muganda et al. (2010) and Leh and Hamzah (2012) suggest that in order to attain desired outcomes from tourism initiatives, local people should not be treated as passive observers, but, rather, they need to be perceived as active agents of the industry so that they can play decisive roles in their community. In the context of Dalla Gaun, this thesis identifies that the local residents play a strong role in the local tourism industry. This is because, as identified in the case of Ghale Gaun, the local people of Dalla Gaun are also the owners of and decision makers about tourism development in their village. The following comment of a male respondent (DHO12) exemplifies this,

The people of Dalla Gaun are running homestay. Therefore, the villagers can make decisions about tourism themselves. If there had been people from other communities running tourism activities in our village, it would have been different. Only Dalla Gaun villagers are involved in tourism activities, so that if they do not decide, who will decide about it? Therefore, we have a committee to make decisions.

Tamir (2015) views the local community, rather than a national government, should be the decision makers in CBT. In the case of the current study, it can be argued that the local residents of both villages are the decision makers about village tourism development. This is because, according to the respondents, all tourism decisions in their respective villages are made through local organisations, GTDMC in Ghale Gaun and TDMC in Dalla Gaun. This situation of local people having authority to decide tourism related issues without intervention from outside organisations such as provincial and central government bodies is the manifestation of community residents exercising power over local issues. Johnson (2010) understands that local control over tourism development allows destination communities to drive tourism development in accordance with community values and interests. Similarly, Zou et al. (2014: 269) argue, “community driven tourism development means that the community plays a determining role in the process of tourism development.” Hence, by retaining control

over tourism management the local residents of Dalla Gaun and Ghale Gaun, are able to lead tourism according to the wishes of their respective community.

Therefore, the residents' perspectives regarding the autonomy of the local institution to drive tourism development in accordance with community expectations identified in both villages accord with Scheyvens's (1999) view of political empowerment. Scheyvens (1999) noted that the establishment of a local formal institution to manage tourism locally is a sign of political empowerment because in a politically empowered community the destination communities have their own local organisation to make decisions about the activities that are taking place in their community. Boley and McGehee (2014) agree with such a view and comment that political empowerment could be realised in the successful founding of a local agency to determine local tourism development. In the case of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, therefore, the local residents' conviction that the villagers are controlling the direction of tourism development through GTDMC and TDMC is an indication of devolution of power to the community level, which in turn suggests the enhancement of political empowerment.

The political empowerment of a local community is also emphasised for the sustainability of the tourism industry. For instance, Tamir (2015) and Cole (2006) argue that when local people are empowered to decide about CBT this supports the sustainability of the industry. Sebele (2010: 143) emphasises the importance of active community involvement for the success of tourism ventures. This is because the local people have more of a vested interest in keeping it going compared to outside agencies because tourism development in such communities is linked with the community residents' livelihood strategies (*ibid*). In the case of this thesis, the findings demonstrate that the local power to organise and manage tourism in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun not only enhances political empowerment but also appears to be contributing to the sustainability of homestay practices.

This section highlighted the extent of community control over tourism development in both study sites. The proceeding section will discuss how the community members are integrated into the community organisations that are established to make decisions at the community level.

8.4. COMPOSITION OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The previous section identified that both villages enjoy control over the direction of tourism development and its management practices. This is because tourism activities in both villages are planned, managed and operated through local organisations. However, in order to address the theme of community control at a deeper level, there is a need to explore the degree to which individual members of the two communities have access to, and input into, their respective organisations. Understanding local perspectives regarding access to participation in the tourism development committee is essential for this study since political empowerment in tourism, as argued by Miller (1994) and Scheyvens (1999), emphasises a democratic process where there is the presence of the wider community in decision-making bodies. The following discussion explores the levels of community residents' inclusion in decision-making organisations in detail.

8.4.1. Representation of community groups in management committees

Community participation in decision-making is greatly emphasised in CBT. For instance, Reggers et al. (2016) argue that CBT enhances the involvement of the local community in decision-making as this form of tourism honours local knowledge and incorporates that in decision-making processes. The need to incorporate local communities in decision-making processes in CBT is also emphasised by Butler (1991) and Kilipiris (2005), who argue that the destination community residents are the critical stakeholders of tourism development. Sebele (2010: 137) states that "community involvement can be seen as important due to the local knowledge that exists within communities, which can be of major importance in tourism development." The close connections of the local people with their physical environment develop specialist knowledge, which helps to make informed decisions (Scheyvens, 2000).

Emphasising the importance of a community's role in the tourism industry Scheyvens (1999), further, advocates for a fair representation of diverse community groups in decision-making bodies as an indication of a politically empowered society. Therefore, in order to identify the degree to which community residents are represented in the tourism

management process, the informants of both villages were asked about the community residents' access to the leadership positions in the local tourism management committees. In response, the respondents of Ghale Gaun expressed positive views. Interestingly, the information obtained from Ghale Gaun revealed that being a homestay operator is not a requirement to become a member of the local tourism management committee. For example, one of the homestay operators (GHO3) stated, *"you can see some committee members do not have homestays. Even though they do not receive guests in their houses they are supporting homestay management as GTDMC executive members."*

All interviewees of Ghale Gaun acknowledged the inclusion of wider community groups such as women, youths and the villagers who are not directly associated with homestay practices in GTDMC. Describing the inclusion of different community groups' in GTDMC, another homestay operator (GHO21) added, *"there are homestay operators in the committee. Similarly, there are members from mothers' group, youth club, homestay non-participants and Dalit families in the committee."* In a similar way, another homestay operator (GHO1) stated, *"the committee [GTDMC] comprises of homestay operators, people who are not doing homestay and some people from the youth club and women's group. Similarly, they also include some people from Dalit families."*

The homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun also confirmed the homestay operators' views. This can be exemplified in the expression of an interviewee (GHNP2), who is serving as a GTDMC leader, as he mentioned, *"not only the homestay operators, but also the other villagers can become members of the committee. You can see there are female members, local youths and Dalit in the committee."* Another homestay non-participant (GHNP3) confirmed this by saying,

We do not need to be homestay operators to become GTDMC members. I do not have a homestay, but I am working as a GTDMC member. Similarly, you will find some other people who are not running homestay, but they are committee members.

These accounts of the homestay non-participants reveal that villagers who are not directly associated with homestay tourism in Ghale Gaun do not feel left out from decision-making because of their inclusion in GTDMC. Hence, the homestay non-participants are not marginalised in terms of their inclusion in the management institution. Furthermore, the presence of community groups was observed in the GTDMC where the representation of homestay owners, non-participants, mothers' groups and Dalit families was assured. According to Scheyvens (2000: 242), "if a community is to be politically empowered...diverse interest groups within a community, including women and youths need to have representation on community and broader decision-making bodies." Similarly, Zimmermann (2014) remarks that diverse interest groups within a community, including women and youths, need to have representation on community and broader decision-making bodies. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the analysis of the information demonstrates the characteristics of a politically empowered community. This is because the whole community actively participates in tourism through the representation of varied community groups in the tourism management committee. Therefore, the equal access of the homestay non-participants and other community clusters such as women, young people and Dalit families to the GTDMC can be understood as a sign of political empowerment, where the local residents' rights to become part of the decision-making organisations is not constrained.

By contrast, the information obtained from both groups of respondents in relation to community representation in the decision-making board of Dalla Gaun, shows a different situation. This is because unlike the findings of Ghale Gaun, where all interviewees have positive views in terms of their representation in GTDMC, the opinions of Dalla Gaun divided into two groups. The homestay operators of Dalla Gaun argue that in order to assure wider community inclusion in the tourism management processes, the representation of homestay non-participants in the TDMC is ensured. The homestay operators argue that TDMC is inclusive as there is a member of the homestay non-participants in the TDMC. For example, one of the executive members of TDMC (DHO4), who is also running homestay and has been since the scheme was first set up, noted, "*we have included a representative from the homestay non-participants' group in our committee [TDMC]. Currently, we have a woman*

from a non-homestay group.” A female homestay operator (DHO1) confirmed the participation of a female community member as a representative of homestay non-participants in TDMC, *“there is a woman in the committee. She is not doing homestay, but she is in the homestay committee. I think all other committee members are homestay owners.”* These statements reveal that TDMC in Dalla Gaun is not evenly balanced in terms of community members’ representation.

The imbalance of representation of homestay non-participants in TDMC can also be understood in the views of the homestay non-participants. For example, one homestay non-participant (DHNP5) reported,

I think there is a woman in the tourism committee, who is not a homestay operator. All committee members are homestay operators except her. Although, she is a TDMC member, I do not think the homestay operators invite her to the committee’s meetings. Only the homestay owners sit together when they have to decide about tourism activities.

Similarly, another homestay non-participant woman (DHNP2) opined,

The homestay operators do not want us to be in the committee. They think that they know everything so that only the homestay operators are in the committee.... They have kept a woman in the committee just to show other people that there are both homestay operators and the homestay non-participants in the committee.

Further discussions with the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun revealed their effort to increase the number of homestay non-participants and include new members from Dalit families in TDMC in order to make the tourism management committee more inclusive. The secretary of the TDMC (DHO3) said,

We have been trying to accommodate as many community groups as possible in TDMC such as women and Pariyaars [Dalit] but they do not show interest in becoming TDMC members. We are trying to convince them, but we are not successful. For example, we want to include at least one person from Dalit families in the committee so that it will spread a positive message that there is no

discrimination between Dalit families and others in Dalla Gaun, but we have not succeeded yet.

Another homestay operator (DHO10) added, *“currently we have a committee member who is not a homestay operator. We will bring other community groups also into the committee gradually. We are trying. I hope other people will also be involved in the committee in future.”*

By contrast, the homestay non-registrants of Dalla Gaun had remarkably different opinions. For example, a homestay non-participant (DHNP5) advised,

They just say that they want to include homestay non-participants and Dalit in the community, but they never do that. You know, the homestay owners have included a village woman in the committee, they never invite her to the committee meetings. How can we think that they want to include other homestay non-participants in the committee?

The female TDMC member (DHNP1), who is representing the homestay non-participants in the TDMC further confirmed this view by saying,

They have nominated me as a tourism committee member, but I never know when the committee members sit together to discuss tourism development. Only the homestay operators meet when they need to make decisions. Once they make decisions, they come to my home with the register and ask me for my signature.

These comments of both homestay operators and the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun, demonstrate that the homestay non-participants and other community groups are poorly represented in the TDMC. Simmons (1994: 99) argues, “the public’s right to participate in the planning of the activities that affect their daily lives is now a widely accepted principle throughout the democratic world.” However, in the case of Dalla Gaun, the inadequate representation of the homestay non-participants and the lack of participation of other community clusters in TDMC has prevented the majority of the local residents of Dalla Gaun from being included in the organisation that makes decisions that not only affect the homestay operators but the whole community. In the view of Sangkakorn and Suwannart (2013: 8), “community participation increases people’s sense of control over issues that affect

their lives.” However, in the case of Dalla Gaun, the lack of access of the homestay non-participants to decision-making committees shows that the majority of the community population is not involved in running homestay business. Hence, these findings are in accordance with the view of Blackstock (2005: 42) that “local control does not automatically lead to participatory decision-making.” This is exactly what is happening in Dalla Gaun. This is because, although the community possesses power to control tourism development in the village, the absence of a democratic management system in Dalla Gaun reveals that the village based tourism programme in Dalla Gaun is not controlled by the overall community, but, rather a handful of people, who are at the forefront of homestay tourism, are controlling the pace of tourism development through their domination of TDMC. Therefore, despite the local community having power to control tourism development and its management in Dalla Gaun, as discussed in section 8.2, the TDMC appears to have failed to safeguard the rights of the local people to be involved in the local organisations responsible to make village level decisions, making the excluded politically less powerful. However, this is not the case in Ghale Gaun, where both groups of informants acknowledged their fair representation in GTDMC suggesting wider community control over the direction of Ghale Gaun homestay tourism.

Scheyvens (2000: 242) argues that “in programmes encouraging community involvement..., it is typically expected that a representative body will be formed to convey community interests and act on behalf of the community.” In the case of Dalla Gaun, the domination of homestay operators in TDMC shows the possibility that the decisions in Dalla Gaun may not be made in the interest of the whole community. This finding demonstrates similarity with the ideas of Zou et al. (2014: 269) who assert that “without a democratic management system, village-level cadres may abuse their power.” This is in accordance with Scheyvens’ (2002: 9) argument that “elites often dominate community development efforts and monopolise the benefits of tourism.” Hence, contrary to the findings of Ghale Gaun, tourism development of Dalla Gaun is not driven by the interest of the whole community but by some people who are at the forefront of the projects. Therefore, tourism development in Dalla Gaun is not found to be as influential as in Ghale Gaun in relation to its contribution to political empowerment enhancement. Thus, the predominant notion in tourism studies that

the local elites exercise control of tourism development in rural communities is convincing in the case of Dalla Gaun.

The findings of this study reveal that these two communities differ in terms of community representation in decision-making bodies. This is because, unlike the findings for Ghale Gaun, the information obtained from interviews with the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun demonstrate that the TDMC is not evenly balanced in terms of its membership. This imbalance in representation further implies that the local communities – particularly the homestay non-participants, women and other marginalised people e.g. Dalit – are underrepresented as decision makers. Although the authority to plan and manage tourism activities in Dalla Gaun rests with the community, the homestay operators are unable to make TDMC as inclusive as identified in the case of Ghale Gaun. In terms of Ghale Gaun, the rights of the various community groups including Dalit, local youths and women to participate in the decision-making is equally respected by assuring their involvement in the GTDMC. However, the other community clusters of homestay non-registrants, women and Dalit families of Dalla Gaun are not considered as the homestay operators' equals. As a result, in comparison to Ghale Gaun political empowerment in Dalla Gaun is weak, because, as Boley and Gaither (2016) and Scheyvens (1999) argue an indication of a politically disempowered community is evidenced in the exclusion of diverse community interest groups within a community, including women and youths, from decision-making organisations. Therefore, homestay development in Dalla Gaun does not seem to be contributing to political empowerment because the focus of political empowerment, as discussed in Chapter 3, is fair representation of community residents in decision-making structures which the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun have failed to achieve. Moreover, the failure to integrate the woman, who is representing the homestay non-participants in the TDMC, in TDMC meetings demonstrates a vivid sign of political disempowerment because in a political disempowered community, the decision makers do not incorporate the community views and suggestions in tourism planning and operations (Winkler and Zimmermann, 2014).

Having discussed notions of community representation in decision-making bodies, the next section will examine the procedures to elect GTDMC and TDMC leaders in both communities.

8.4.2. GTDMC and TDMC formation procedures

The previous section discussed the representation of existing community groups in local tourism management institutions, GTDMC in Ghale Gaun and TDMC in Dalla Gaun and highlighted differences in membership between the organisations. Therefore, it seemed necessary to understand the GTDMC and TDMC formation procedures to identify how the different communities participate in electing GTDMC and TDMC members. In order to understand the community residents' perceptions about their inclusion/exclusion in this process, the respondents of both villages were asked to explain how GTDMC and TDMC are formed in their respective communities. In this regard, this study revealed remarkable differences between the two communities. For instance, no respondent of Ghale Gaun feels being excluded while selecting the leaders for GTDMC. This is because all respondents acknowledged opportunities to become involved in this process. The wider community access to the formation of the decision-making body was evident in the words of the interviewees who advised that GTDMC is formed on a consensus basis, where the consent is sought not only from the homestay operators but also from the villagers with no direct involvement in the homestay accommodation system. For example, one of the homestay operators (GHO1) said, *“while forming GTDMC, we reached the conclusion after getting approval from all villagers, whether they are running homestays or not.”* Another interviewee (GHO25), who is working as a homestay operator, from when the project was first established supported this view and said,

All villagers including the homestay non-participants decide who can become GTDMC members. You know, we have developed our own system to select our leaders to lead GTDMC, where not only the homestay operators but also the homestay non-participants can have their say.

Furthermore, the information obtained from the interviews revealed that in order to provide every individual household of the village with opportunities to contribute to selecting the members of the local decision-making board the villagers have the tradition of organising a community gathering ever since the concept started. This can be understood in the expressions of an interviewee (GHNP4), who owns a small business in the village, as she mentioned, *“we decide the GTDMC members through a village meeting. All household members, whether they run homestay or not, gather on that special day and discuss about the new GTDMC committee.”* Hence, the village meetings are used as opportunities for the community residents to discuss while fulfilling the GTDMC leadership positions in Ghale Gaun. These expressions demonstrate the consensus based participatory approach as recommended by Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011). Thus, the tradition of organising village meeting to reach consensus amongst the entire community can be seen as a good example of satisfying the rights of the local people to be involved in the decision-making system in Ghale Gaun.

By comparison, the information obtained from both groups of respondents of Dalla Gaun contradicts the views expressed in Ghale Gaun. This is because, unlike the community residents’ perceptions of Ghale Gaun, the respondents of Dalla Gaun did not indicate the practices of organising public meetings or other similar procedures to ensure wider community involvement while forming the village level decision-making board. For example, one of the homestay operators (DHO1) mentioned, *“we organise homestay owners’ meetings and decide about the TDMC leadership positions.”* Another homestay operator (DHO3) supported this view by saying, *“only the homestay operators are invited to the meeting when we have to select executive members of TDMC.”* The lack of wider community involvement in this process was further evidenced by a homestay operator (DHO15) who said, *“all the homestay operators sit together and decide about the leadership positions.”*

As identified in the views of the homestay operators, the exclusion of the homestay non-participants in this process in Dalla Gaun can also be realised in the perceptions of the homestay non-participants who feel that homestay operators are not interested in listening to the voices of the homestay non-participants at the meetings that are meant to make decisions about the TDMC leadership positions. For example, one of the homestay non-

participants (DHNP2) said, *"I do not feel the homestay operators want us to be in TDMC positions because they never invite us to discuss TDMC membership positions. They have never asked us who is a suitable candidate to run TDMC."* This situation has further been reflected in the opinions of another homestay non-participant, who informs that instead of involving the whole community, only the homestay operators decide the members of TDMC. One of the non-participants (DHNP4) said, *"They conduct the meetings of homestay operators and decide their chairman and other committee members. They do not invite us."* This view was supported by a local farmer (DHNP5), who mentioned, *"we do not even know when they select TDMC members. We only know who the president is and who the secretary is."* In the view of Miller (1994), political empowerment advocates the necessity to develop an inclusive system. In the case of the current study, these views identified in Dalla Gaun demonstrate that the TDMC formation procedure in Dalla Gaun cannot be acknowledged as an inclusive process when compared to the process found in Ghale Guan. Hence, tourism development of Dalla Gaun is not found as effective as that of Ghale Gaun in terms of its contribution to political empowerment.

By contrast, the findings of Dalla Gaun, where the homestay non-participants revealed the homestay hosts' unwillingness to include the homestay non-participants to choose tourism leaders, the secretary of GTDMC reported that the homestay operators encourage the homestay non-participants to take part while selecting the GTDMC leaders. This is because they felt that gaining the maximum level of consensus from the community residents is a secret of successfully running homestay ventures in the community. Explaining the importance of wider community inclusion, the secretary of GTDMC (GH022) reported,

We can run homestay in the village if all the villagers support us. If some people do not support homestay operators, we cannot run homestays. Therefore, all the villagers have to be united to run homestay successfully.... If we involve all the villagers in different aspects of homestay, they will support us.

Mak et al. (2017) argue that community involvement is a key to gain community support for the programmes being introduced because the inclusion of the local residents inspires them to support tourism development. Likewise, Kilipiris (2005) mentions that when a community

is involved in the direction of tourism, it is more likely to become an active partner. Therefore, the local perspectives identified in Ghale Gaun that the villagers can only run tourism businesses successfully by gaining support from the overall community lends support to the argument of those who believe community support is an essential ingredient for the success of tourism businesses (Kibicho, 2005; Cole, 2006; Tamir, 2015).

Therefore, although both villages possess authority to choose their leaders to manage tourism development in their respective communities, they are different in terms of its practice. In the case of Ghale Gaun, they adopt a systematic democratic participatory approach in the form of community meetings, where every individual household has access to this procedure. This approach employed in Ghale Gaun ensured the wider community engagement in the process of forming GTDMC. By contrast, the methods adopted to elect committee leaders in Dalla Gaun is not inclusive, as the decisions about the leadership positions are made only by some of the villagers who are involved in homestay operations and the decision is made without consulting the majority of the community population. Therefore, although both villages have similar tourism products, there are differences between these two destinations. This is because, unlike Ghale Gaun, only a few local people are able to voice their opinions to determine who their leaders should be in Dalla Gaun. Hence, the locals of Dalla Gaun, who are not running homestays, are not found to be as politically empowered as the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun due to the lack of participation in forming the local management committee.

Having discussed the local community perspectives in relation to community access to decision-making organisations, the next section will consider the local community perspectives about the decision-making processes adopted in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun.

8.5. DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Exploring ideas of community inclusion in the decision-making boards and community residents' access to the formation of decision-making institutions in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun, this thesis now turns to the actual decision-making processes.

8.5.1. Use of community forums

Community involvement in decision-making processes is considered as a vital element for running a successful tourism industry (Pusirsan and Xiao, 2013). This is because a local community is the primary stakeholder of tourism (Kilipiris, 2005; Aref et al., 2010; Anuar and Sood, 2017); it is their lifestyle, culture and traditions that are some of the major attractions that appeal to potential tourists (Boonratana, 2010; Razzaq et al., 2011; Ebrahimi and Khalifah, 2014). Therefore, tourism development needs to address local community aspirations (Kilipris, 2005; Mbaiwa, 2008). The inclusion of the local community in decision-making processes, which according to Kilipiris (2005) can also be used as a tool to address local expectations from tourism development, is further understood as an indication of political empowerment. For instance, according to Scheyvens (1999), in a politically empowered community local people participate in the discussion of tourism planning, management and its consequences. Therefore, in order to identify the level of community inclusion in decision-making processes, the villagers of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun were asked whether GTDMC and TDMC allow the locals to take part in the discussion of tourism development in their respective communities or not. In this regard, significant differences were identified in the perceptions of the residents between Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the interviewees acknowledged the provisions made to discuss homestay practices and other tourism related activities in the village. This situation can be realised in the expression of a female homestay operator (GHO19) who is using community meetings and the GTDMC office spaces as platforms to discuss the issues of tourism development, as she noted,

The villagers of Ghale Gaun can participate in the discussion of tourism development in the village. We generally discuss about tourism in the monthly village meetings. If we have a very important matter, we can discuss this with tourism committee secretary in his office

Another homestay operator (GHO13), who is also serving in the GTDMC as an executive member confirmed the use of village meetings as a centre to discuss the issues of tourism development, where every individual household can participate, as he noted,

The uniqueness of our village is that we treat every villager equally. We do not say this person cannot participate in the village meeting because he is not running homestay. Even though he is not involved in homestay, he is living in this village. He might have been affected by tourism development in one way or other. Therefore, the committee provides equal opportunity to discuss about tourism development so that everyone can feel that GTDMC respects all the villagers.

The homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun also supported the above statements of homestay owners regarding their freedom to participate in the discussions of local tourism development in the village meetings. For example, one of the homestay non-participants (GHNP1) mentioned,

The committee organises village meetings every month. The villagers can participate in the meetings. We can say what we like about homestay and we can say what we do not like about it. If we do not like anything, we can discuss it in the meeting.

By contrast, the respondents of Dalla Gaun had different perspectives about the way local people are involved in the discussions of tourism development in their village compared to those identified in Ghale Gaun. Unlike the interviewees of Ghale Gaun, the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun felt that the non-homestay villagers are not welcomed to participate in the activities organised to discuss tourism related issues. To cite a case, one of the homestay non-participants (DHNP2) commented on what he saw as a lack of effort by the homestay operators to understand the views and expectations of homestay non-participants:

“they [Homestay owners] do not ask us anything. They do not even invite us to the meetings. The homestay operators meet up and discuss about tourism, but they do not invite the other villagers.” A similar idea was echoed in the words of another non-participant (DHNP5),

They [Homestay participants] think that they do not need us [Non-participants] so that they do not ask us anything. Neither do they come to us and ask how we are affected by homestay development nor do they invite us to the meetings. They should have invited us to understand our views.

Similar to the homestay non-participants, the homestay hosts of Dalla Gaun also indicated the lack of community mechanisms to ensure the overall community inclusion in the discussion of tourism development. The homestay participants confirmed that the homestay non-participants are not consulted when the homestay operators discuss and make decisions about tourism development and its management. This can be illustrated in the understanding of a homestay operator (DHO5) who said, *“when we have to discuss about homestay practices and other tourism related matters, we do not invite the homestay non-participants to the meetings.”* Another homestay operator (DHO15) further confirmed the absence of regular village meetings and the exclusion of the homestay non-participants in the occasional meetings that make tourism related decisions at the village level. As he said, *“we conduct meetings whenever necessary, but we do not have any fixed schedule to conduct meetings. We organise the homestay owners’ meetings and decide.”*

It is evident from the accounts of Dalla Gaun respondents that the villagers do not have the practice of organising community meetings and other similar approaches to enhance overall community inclusion in the discussions of homestay practices, which has further restricted the homestay non-participants from being involved in the decision-making processes.

Timothy (2007: 205) argues that “destination communities must have a forum through which they can raise questions and articulate concerns.” Boley et al. (2014) attest that community forums can be important to facilitate interactions among members of a destination community, which allows the incorporation of community aspirations in the

decision-making process. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the perceptions expressed in the interviews, thus, demonstrate that the villagers in Ghale Gaun have been using the regular monthly village meetings and GTDMC office space as community forums, where each individual household, can participate to discuss tourism development, which in turn can inform the decision-making processes. Hence, the use of GTDMC office space and community meetings as the forums to discuss and make tourism-related decisions offered the Ghale Gaun residents opportunities to be included in the decision-making processes. This has further implications for political empowerment as Boley et al. (2014) and Scheyvens (1999) believe that the creation of community forums that enable locals to participate in the discussions of tourism activities taking place in their locality is important for the cultivation of political empowerment. This is because, according to Cole (2006), these forums provide opportunities for the locals including the people of authority and the community residents to understand various standpoints that people have. However, the lack of regular meetings and the unwillingness of the homestay operators to include the homestay non-participants, in the meetings have excluded the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun from participating in the decision-making process. The exclusion of the homestay non-participants from the decision-making processes has made the homestay non-participants less powerful than the homestay participants in the direction of tourism development in their community. Hence, the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun are not as politically empowered as the homestay operators are.

Therefore, despite the villagers offering similar tourism products, these two homestay destinations differ in terms of the use of community forums as a means to include the wider community in decision-making processes. In the case of Ghale Gaun, the village meetings and GTDMC office spaces are found influential to enhancing political empowerment as they are used as community platforms, where diverse community views are debated and settled. By comparison, the lack of opportunities to participate in community meetings prevented the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun from participating in the decision-making processes. This situation of Dalla Gaun reveals that the decision-making power in Dalla Guan is concentrated in the hands of the homestay operators. Therefore, this thesis shows that due

to the absence of community forums to participate in the tourism decision-making processes the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun have less power to influence decisions than the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun.

8.5.2. Incorporation of voices of the community

The establishment of community forums, as discussed in section 8.5.1, allowed the local residents of Ghale Gaun freedom to express their opinions about the tourism development in their village. This can be exemplified in the expressions of the homestay operators. For example, a female homestay operator (GHO4) mentioned, *“We can share our good and bad experiences of tourism development in village meetings. We can also provide our suggestions to the committee in the meetings.”* Supporting the view of Interviewee GHO4, a male homestay host (GHO6) stated, *“we do not have to wait for a village meeting to share our concerns and opinions. We can go to the committee office any time and tell the secretary about our problems. He listens to our problems.”* Another homestay operator (GHO21) had a similar opinion, as he said,

We can tell them [GTDMC executives] if we do not like something about tourism development. People are free to say what they have in their mind. I go to the tourism office and tell the office secretary if I have anything important. Otherwise, I can talk about it in the monthly village meetings. The committee listens to our voice and decides.

This opportunity to express individual opinions and raise questions and concerns about tourism development was further noted by the homestay non-participants of Ghale Gaun. For instance, one of the villagers who is running a butcher (GHNP4) said,

I do not run homestay in my house, but I attend village meetings regularly. There are many people like me in the meeting. We can give our opinion in the meeting. The committee listens to the voice of the villagers and decides what is good for the overall village.

These views of the individual community members of Ghale Gaun demonstrate that the local residents of Ghale Gaun are actively involved in the decision-making processes by participating in regular meetings and providing their input about tourism development and its consequences. Winkler and Zimmermann (2014) argue that political empowerment is manifested in there being equal rights for every community resident to bring their thoughts and proposals about tourism activities taking place in their locality. Mgonja et al. (2015) also contend that CBT approaches need to ensure the rights of the local community to voice their opinions regarding tourism development. Similarly, Scheyvens (1999) mentions that in a politically empowered community local people can participate in the decision-making processes by sharing their opinions about tourism planning, its management and its consequences in their community. In a similar way, Timothy (2007) and Boley and MCGeehee (2014) argue that political empowerment includes a democratic process where individuals residing in the community have rights to voice their views and raise concerns, should they wish. Hence, the practice of organising the regular monthly village meetings and collecting community residents' opinions through GTDMC workers in Ghale Gaun has offered the opportunity to every individual resident of Ghale Gaun to share their views and concerns. Thus, this thesis demonstrates that GTDMC in Ghale Gaun is contributing to facilitating political empowerment, which is achieved by urging the individual community residents to attend the monthly village meetings and collecting local people's opinion through GTDMC workers.

Similar to the Ghale Gaun interviewees, the respondents of Dalla Gaun also mentioned that the villagers used to organise regular village meetings in order to collect local views and concerns about tourism development when homestay was being established. However, Dalla Gaun residents have not been able to sustain this. Interviews with the homestay operators reveal that the TDMC currently does not involve the whole community in the meetings when there is a need to make decisions about homestay tourism. This is because of the decreasing number of villagers interested in attending the meetings. According to the homestay operators, the non-participants were not showing interest in attending meetings, even if they are invited. Hence, the homestay owners stopped inviting the homestay non-participants to

the meetings to discuss tourism development and homestay management practices. As one of the homestay operators (DHO7) explained,

We used to organise regular village meetings when we started homestay, but we do not organise such meetings these days. Even if we inform the villagers about the village meeting, many of them do not attend. Therefore, we organise meetings for the homestay operators and make decisions about tourism practice.

The above statement of the homestay operator indicates that the community members of the Ghale Gaun were actively involved in the homestay practices and its decision-making processes in the early days of the programme. However, after the project was set up the homestay non-participants are not involved in tourism management and decision-making processes.

Nevertheless, the homestay operators have maintained the tradition of organising village meetings once a year with a view to collecting wider community opinions about tourism development so that they could incorporate non-participants' views while making tourism related decisions. In this context, the head of the TDMC (DHO10) reported,

We organised village meetings many times in the past, but many villagers were not interested to attend. I do not know the reason. It may be because of their busy work schedule. Therefore, we do not organise village meetings these days when we have to make tourism-related decisions. Nevertheless, we invite all the villagers on the anniversary of homestay and ask their opinions. We ask them what they like about homestay and what they do not like about it. We also ask for their suggestions. We try to accommodate their opinions when we make decisions.

However, this seems to contradict the information obtained from the words of the homestay non-participants. This is because when the homestay non-participants were asked about the issue, they reported that because their views were not taken on board by the homestay operators so that they stopped attending the meetings, as one of the non-participants (DHNP2) reported, *“they ask our opinions in the meetings so that we also tell them our opinions. Even if we provide our suggestions, they decide on their own way.”* A local

businessperson (DHNP3) shared a similar opinion as he said, *“there is no point attending meetings if they do not implement our suggestions. They always think of homestay operators only. They never think of other villagers.”* Hence, this thesis demonstrates that the participation of homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun in village meetings is limited just to attending the meetings. This gives a pretence of consultation, but the perception of the non-participants is that they are not actually listened to. This gave rise to the feelings among the homestay non-participants that the homestay participants disregard the needs and interests of the homestay participants and make decisions only in favour of the villagers who are directly involved in the homestay project. This, further, discouraged the homestay non-participants from attending village meetings that are principally organised with the view to address the need to incorporate the wider community views so that the decisions are not only made in favour of the homestay operators but also congruent with the wider community expectations. Hence, the findings in the case of Dalla Gaun are consistent with the conclusion of Paimin et al. (2016) who identified that the role of the local, ordinary people of the Kiulu, Malaysia was confined to attending meetings and providing their viewpoints, whereas the local elites enjoyed the authority to make decisions about tourism development. A similar situation was reported by Duim et al. (2005) who identified the local elites of the communities monopolising the decision-making power at the expense of the majority of people in Kenya and Tanzania. This is the situation in Dalla Gaun. The absence of community meetings and other similar activities in Dalla Gaun shows that the views of the majority of the community population are barely heard. Consequently, the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun seem to have failed to accommodate the opinions of the wider community in decision-making processes indicating that not all members of the community have been politically empowered to influence the decisions related to local tourism development.

Although the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun mentioned that TDMC is committed to addressing the non-participants’ views and expectations expressed during the annual celebration of homestay practice, the non-participants felt that their attendance in the ceremony is worthless because the TDMC executive members do not bother to address the non-participants’ views. One of the homestay non-participants (DHNP5) stated,

They invite us once a year to celebrate the annual day of the establishment of homestay. They ask us to share our viewpoints on that special day. We used to share our thoughts and feelings before, but we do not say anything these days. We go to the meeting and listen to what they say and come back. I do not see any benefits of sharing our opinion in the meetings. They just listen, but once the meeting is over, they forget whatever we said.

Hence, the participation of homestay non-participants in the annual village meeting of Dalla Gaun seems to be merely tokenistic. It is because “tokenistic involvement occurs when people in power seek nominal input from community members, sometimes only local elites, to fulfil participatory policies. The input received may or may not be regarded in final decision-making” (Timothy, 2012: 73). In the case of Dalla Gaun, the exclusion of the wider community in decision-making processes has isolated the majority of the community population from tourism development and its decision-making processes, which has made the homestay non-participants feel powerless to influence any decisions in the village as, according to Muganda et al. (2013: 55), “the power of the local communities to influence decision-making...depend on the level of participatory approach being in operation in a particular destination.” In fact, this feeling of powerlessness to make changes in what is happening in their community is an expression of political disempowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). Further, this situation not only suggests the absence of democratic decision-making practices but also demonstrates the lack of community control over the tourism enterprise that is principally implemented as a community-based project. The situation found in Dalla Gaun reflects Sebele’s (2010: 143) views that the lack of meaningful participation by the whole community in decision-making signifies the lack of community control over the “running and decision-making of the project they supposedly own and control.” As a result, instead of enhancing the involvement of the members of the community in tourism development and its management to make the locals politically empowered, the exclusion of the locals in decision-making processes has contributed to the disempowerment of most of the community’s population.

The information obtained from the interviews with both groups of interviewees indicated that individual community members of Ghale Gaun participated in the decision-

making process in two ways: 1. through their participation in the regular village meetings and 2. Sharing their perceptions with the GTDMC secretary in the tourism management office. However, these two practices were not identified in the case of Dalla Gaun as both groups of respondents revealed that the villagers neither have the practice of conducting village meetings nor do they have a responsible person who is accountable for collecting individual members' views about tourism development in the village. Therefore, this research has identified that in both case studies efforts to ensure community involvement in the homestay projects has been in place since before the operations were established. However, the analysis of the interview dataset of Dalla Gaun demonstrates that there is now a lower level of community involvement in tourism development. Consequently, unlike the residents of Ghale Guan, the villagers of Dalla Guan did not feel involved in the decision-making processes once the homestay initiative was up and running. This has implications for political empowerment in the two communities, in that while it is possible to identify an increase in political empowerment in Ghale Guan the same cannot be identified in Dalla Guan. Indeed, the lack of effective involvement of the majority of the community members in Dalla Gaun has made them less empowered politically.

8.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter discussed the community residents' perspectives regarding the impact of homestay tourism about their political empowerment. In this regard, this research identified significant differences between the perceptions of the community residents of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In terms of Ghale Gaun, the local community perspectives demonstrated a positive impact on the community's residents' political empowerment, thus, demonstrating that homestay development has been successful in encouraging political empowerment. A visible sign of political empowerment in Ghale Gaun was perceived in the form of wider community control over the local tourism industry and the inclusion of the broader community in the formation of decision-making bodies and the practices of involving the whole community in the decision-making processes. This is particularly achieved by urging the whole community to attend the regular village meetings that are organised on a monthly

basis. Similarly, the equal opportunities to all the community residents to be included in the tourism programme can also be realised as an indication of political empowerment enhancement in Ghale Gaun, as it allowed every individual household of the community to participate in the tourism project implemented in their community.

However, the findings of Dalla Gaun depart from the results derived in Ghale Gaun. This is because unlike the findings revealed in Ghale Gaun, the views of individual community members of Dalla Gaun demonstrated both positive and negative perceptions. Similar to Ghale Guan, the tourism development of Dalla Gaun is controlled by the local community; however, instead of the whole community only a handful of influential people from the community have control over the overall tourism development. This is because the majority of the community's population are, or feel, restricted, from participating in decision-making processes. Hence, the homestay development of Dalla Gaun is not as effective as that identified in Ghale Gaun in terms of its contribution to the political empowerment enhancement.

The next Chapter is the final Chapter which presents concluding remarks and brings this thesis to an end.

9.1. INTRODUCTION

This is the final chapter of the thesis and brings it to a close. The purpose of this Chapter is to recapitulate the aim and objectives of the research, summarise the methods utilised and outline the work's main findings. To this end, the Chapter begins by reminding the reader about the rationale for this research. This is followed by the overall conclusion drawn based on the discussion presented in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. It then provides some recommendations in relation to the studied communities, particularly in the case of Dalla Gaun. In addition, this Chapter also outlines the study's contribution to the existing knowledge in tourism studies, and particularly the tourism literature about Nepal. The Chapter is concluded by discussing limitations associated with the research for this thesis and indicating direction for further research on CBT in Nepal.

The literature review recognised that alternative tourism products including CBT are not only important for the expansion of touristic activities in rural underdeveloped areas but also are touted by its advocates for having potential to empower the members of destination communities. It was also identified that empowering the residents of a tourist destination is key for the success and sustainability of the industry (See Chapter 3). Thus, alternative tourism initiatives are promoted with the goal of empowering the inhabitants where tourism takes place so that tourism activities can be conducted sustainably. Furthermore, empowerment of the people of destination communities has also been identified as a means to make the locals the actual beneficiaries of the positive values accrued from the industry.

Although local community empowerment is linked with both the viability of the industry itself and the maximisation of benefits at the local level, it is an under researched area, thus, having limited empirical studies focused on ascertaining the extent of empowerment/disempowerment facilitated by the tourism industry. This is particularly the case in Nepal, which despite of the rapid growth of CBT projects, particularly community-based homestays, in Nepalese villages due to the government aggressively promoting this

form of alternative tourism intervention as an important tool for the overall development of rural communities in sustainable manner. These further contributed to develop the aim of this thesis which was to evaluate the tourism-led empowerment or disempowerment by investigating two well-known CBT destinations of Nepal, Ghale Gaun Community Homestay and Dalla Gaun Community Homestay.

In order to achieve the aim of the study three objectives were identified. The first objective was to investigate, from the perspectives of the local people, how community-based homestay programme influences the empowerment or disempowerment of the residents of Ghale Gaun (Case Study 1). The second objective was to investigate, from the perspectives of the local people, how community-based homestay programme influences the empowerment or disempowerment of the residents of Dalla Gaun (Case Study 2). Finally, the third objective was to compare and contrast the consequences of homestay practices of Ghale Gaun (Case Study 1) and Dalla Gaun (Case Study 2) in terms of their effectiveness in empowering or disempowering the members of the respective communities.

In order to address the aforementioned aim and objectives, an interpretive qualitative methodological approach in the form of semi-structured interviews and participant observation was utilised. The interviews and observation were not limited to the people engaged in the tourism businesses in both places but also extended to the villagers who were not directly involved in homestay operations. Thus, this study contributes to the debate about the implementation of CBT initiatives as a tool to empower the residents of destination communities by developing an understanding of empowerment from not only the perspectives of the people directly involved in CBT projects but also from the experiences of the locals who were not directly linked with the programme.

The outcomes of the research about community-based homestay tourism in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun were discussed in detail from Chapters 5 to 8 beginning with economic empowerment in Chapter 5. Table 9.1 provides a synopsis of the key findings.

Dimension of empowerment	Signs of empowerment	Signs of disempowerment
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community homestay tourism contributed to the economic gains through the generation of employment opportunities for the members of households that are running homestays in their own houses and to other members of the communities in agro-based activities and cultural sectors. • Community homestay tourism also brought income to the members of local communities by offering markets for local production, e.g. agricultural goods and handicrafts. • Community homestay tourism improved the economic condition of the local people by creating opportunities for small scale businesses (e.g. grocery shops, teashops). • Visible signs of financial independence, e.g. income derived from tourism increased purchasing power of the locals and also enabled them to afford their children’s education. • Incomes earned from the tourism development remained in the communities due to the local ownership of the tourism businesses. • Money earned was equitably distributed among the community members (only in Ghale Gaun) through 1. Allocating homestays by strictly following rotation system 2. Prioritising the participation of homestay non-registrants in cultural shows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotation system was not strictly followed (only in Dalla Gaun). • Only the people in leading positions of authority in homestay management captured more financial benefits from tourism compared to the majority of the homestay operators (only in Dalla Gaun). • Minimal inclusion of homestay non-registrants in cultural shows (only in Dalla Gaun).
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villagers were organised in community groups, e. g. mothers’ group, fathers’ group youth club (only in Ghale Gaun). • Improved community cohesion and cooperation, e.g. the whole community taking part in village clean-up activities, accommodating tourists in the houses which were not participating in the homestay programme when required (only in Ghale Gaun). • Community as a whole benefited from the income derived from the community homestay programme, e.g. provision of community fund, which is spent for the benefit of the whole community (Only in Ghale Gaun). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of appropriate community groups (only in Dalla Gaun). • Conflict between the homestay operators as well as between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants (only in Dalla Gaun). • Diminishing social cohesion and weakening cooperation, e.g. withdrawal of the homestay non-registrants in village clean-up activities (only in Dalla Gaun).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life was enhanced due to improved economic, social and environmental wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assurance among the residents whether the community fund generated from the tourism income was spent for the benefit of the community as a whole (only in Dalla Gaun).
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of self-esteem and pride of the locals due to the increased popularity of the village as homestay tourism destination, development of positive sense of identity of village and the villagers and also bringing respect for community assets (e.g. natural resources, cultural practices, knowledge to run homestay tourism successfully). • Community residents' pride in their respective villages was also instilled due to increased media coverage. • Increased levels of confidence to engage in social activities and interact with the people outside of their immediate communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visible signs
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities to become a homestay operator. • Formation of local institution to run and manage tourism businesses locally. • Fair representation of diverse community groups in the decision-making organisation (only in Ghale Gaun). • Use of community forums, e.g. village meetings to fulfil leadership positions (only in Ghale Gaun). • Incorporation of voices of the community in decision-making processes through regular monthly village meetings (only in Ghale Gaun). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities to participate in the homestay programme at present but imposing restrictions in imminent future once the number of homestays reaches to 25 (only in Dalla Gaun). • No equitable representation of different sectors of community population except the homestay operators in the decision-making organisation (only in Dalla Gaun). • No inclusion of homestay non-registration in decision-making processes (only in Dalla Gaun) • Homestay non-registrants' voices were not heard (only in Dalla Gaun).

Table 9.1. Signs of empowerment and disempowerment. (Source: Author).

From an economic point of view, as shown in Table 9.1, the findings of Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun revealed that there are some similarities and differences between the two sites. With regards to the similarities, homestay developments in both villages were found supporting the economic empowerment of the villagers by bringing positive changes to their financial condition, which was mainly achieved by enhancing their accessibility to income generation activities. The implementation of homestay projects in both villages was contributing to the income generation opportunities for the homestay operators as well as the homestay non-participants of the respective villages. For example, it was obvious that the homestay operators were able to increase the levels of income by accommodating tourists in their unused rooms and making provision for additional touristic services, such as preparing food and helping the tourists to understand the community's way of life. Similarly, the homestay non-participants acknowledged the arrival of homestay tourism in the village for enabling them to earn money by selling their goods, particularly agro-based productions and handicrafts and getting involved in entrepreneurial activities, e. g. running grocery shops, teashops. This demonstrates that the development of homestay tourism in Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun was supporting economic empowerment by creating direct employment opportunities in the homestays as a tourist host and indirect employments in other economic sectors such as agro-based activities and handicraft production. Thus, it is fair to say that the established linkages between the tourism industry and the agricultural and cultural sectors worked as a vehicle for the economic empowerment of the individuals of both villages by not only creating direct and indirect employment prospects but also by providing outlets for the local productions.

In addition to the similarities noted above, Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun exhibited some differences in terms of distribution of income accrued from the industry. As discussed in Chapter 3, economic empowerment within a context of tourism is not only about the creation of income generation sources but also related with how the revenue earned by the industry is equally distributed across the destination community. With regards to Ghale Gaun, for instance, in order to ensure the equitable flow of the homestay income amongst the owners, the GTDMC strictly followed the rotation system, which ensured that each homestay received

similar numbers of tourists. However, this was not the case in Dalla Gaun because the TDMC was criticised for sending tourists to a few specific homestays more frequently whilst the other homestay hosts were waiting for their turn. This is despite the TDMC of Dalla Gaun principally having embraced similar methods of allocating homestays to the tourists on a rotation basis followed in Ghale Gaun. Thus, the partiality in terms of homestay allocation in Dalla Gaun serves as an example of an unfair distribution of tourism income among the homestay operators. This further demonstrates that the major share of the revenue generated by the homestay tourism of Dalla Gaun is more likely to go into the hands of a few of the villagers who are at the forefront of the project. Thus, the predominant notion of the monopolisation of the economic benefits of tourism by the local elites in the CBT literature (Scheyvens, 2002; Mason, 2003), which is also considered as a sign of economic disempowerment, is relevant in Dalla Gaun.

On the contrary, the case of Ghale Gaun establishes a good example of the equitable flow of tourism revenue. This is because, in addition to providing equal opportunities to earn money for the homestay operators by strictly following the rotation system, the tourism revenue of Ghale Gaun also reaches beyond the homestay operators. This is achieved by the creation of a community fund to be spent for the village development projects (which is also a sign of social empowerment as shown in Table 9.1), such as the maintenance of the village streets, construction of public toilets and the building of a museum, upgrading tap water facilities and providing streetlights and rubbish bins. Thus, to ensure that the economic benefits of homestay development reaches the wider community, the homestay operators of Ghale Gaun had the practice of allocating 22 percent of the total income generated by the tourism industry for the village fund. This is evidence that a significant amount of tourism revenue extends to the wider community in Ghale Gaun.

By comparison, Dalla Gaun is different. Although the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun had similar methods of raising community funds from the income raised through the homestay tourism, there was no assurance that the collected monies were being used for all of the villagers' welfare (which is also a sign of social disempowerment as described in Table 9.1). This is because many of the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants of

Dalla Gaun expressed their ignorance about how the community fund was being utilised. Numerous respondents expressed concerns that some people in the leadership positions are using the fund for their personal benefits. This situation in Dalla Gaun shows that there is confusion among the villagers about whether the money contributed by the homestay operators for community development works spreads to the community or goes to a few villagers, for example the TDMC executive members, who are enjoying preferential treatment in running homestay.

Thus, from the economic perspective, it is fair to say that although both homestay destinations were implementing similar tourism initiatives, in the case of Dalla Gaun, however, findings revealed some problems particularly in terms of income distribution channels, which indicate that CBT projects can simultaneously lead to economic empowerment and disempowerment of the individuals of a tourist destination.

In terms of social empowerment, the research for this thesis identified remarkable differences between Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. As mentioned in Chapter 3, social empowerment is primarily about the social integration enhanced or confirmed by tourism development. Having seen from this perspective, it was found that tourism development in Ghale Gaun was contributing for the social integration by improving the community residents' bonding to each other. The improved social cohesion was evident in the villagers' participation in the monthly village cleaning activities which were only initiated after the arrival of homestay tourism and primarily introduced to support it. Every individual household of Ghale Gaun participated in the village clean-up programmes despite only 32 houses offering homestay facilities. The readiness of the homestay non-participants to be involved in village cleaning activities despite their not being directly involved demonstrated that the residents of Ghale Gaun did not hesitate to support each other. This further indicated that tourism development in Ghale Gaun was able to promote the sense of mutual cooperation among the community's residents, which is a good example of a cohesive society where the individuals are supportive to each other. Furthermore, the contribution of homestay tourism to social cohesion was also visible in the founding of community groups that inspired the villagers to work together for common goals. This research identified that the villagers of

Ghale Gaun had successfully formed mothers' groups, father's groups, a youth club and many other cultural groups which worked collectively.

However, the opposite is found the case of Dalla Gaun. Instead of bringing the community's population together for a common purpose, tourism development in Dalla Gaun divided the villagers in to at least two visible groups, the homestay owners and the homestay non-participants. The social division was evident in the village clean-up activities in which both the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants partook in the initial days of homestay development. However, the homestay non-participants withdrew their participation after the project started to grow up. This is evidence of the erosion of the social cohesion that was in place at the beginning stage of the project implementation, which is a clear sign of the negative influence on social empowerment.

From a psychological point of view, Table 9.1 illustrates that both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun demonstrated similar characteristics. The development of homestay tourism in both villages contributed to boost community residents' pride and self-esteem in their respective villages and their natural and cultural resources. The sense of pride in place was instilled due to the realisation of living in a place which is worthy of being visited. Furthermore, tourism development in both villages was found to have strengthened the identity of the place and the people living in them by transforming the image of their communities from rural underdeveloped villages to the height of famous tourist destinations. This shows that the villagers' sense of pride in their village was also facilitated by increasing the visibility of both villages.

Similarly, tourism development in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun allowed the villagers to have a higher self-esteem in their traditional and cultural practices from the knowledge that people living outside of their communities are interested in them and visit their villages to understand and experience them. In addition, psychological empowerment in both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun was also revealed in the form of increased levels of confidence of the villagers to communicate in front of groups of the villagers and, accordingly, the people living outside of their immediate communities.

In another example, the evidence of Ghale Gaun reveals that those women who were hesitant to talk even with the male members of the community are in the position to lead the village activity, such as, for example village cleaning programmes. The increased confidence of women of Ghale Gaun to organise and lead the village cleaning activity is a good example of psychological empowerment of the local women thanks to homestay development.

With regards to political empowerment, this study identified substantial differences between Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun. In terms of Ghale Gaun, the development of homestay tourism was successful in encouraging political empowerment. A visible sign of political empowerment in Ghale Gaun was identified in the form of wider community members' control over the local tourism industry. This was reflected in the GTDMC in which the representation of different segments of the community population was ensured. For instance, there was the representation of homestay non-participants, women, youths, socially marginalised people namely Dalits and obviously the homestay operators in GTDMC. Likewise, the inclusion of the wider community in decision-making processes in Ghale Gaun was assured by encouraging the members of all individual households of the village to attend the monthly village meetings that were organised with a view to discuss tourism related issues. This practice in Ghale Gaun contributed to achieving political empowerment by affording a platform to the villagers to share their thoughts about the tourism activities taking place in their area.

However, the findings of Dalla Gaun in this regard demonstrated differences compared to Ghale Gaun. This is because the alienation of the homestay non-participants in TDMC and decision-making processes (See Chapter 8) demonstrated that the majority of the community population of Dalla Gaun lacked control over the CBT project. This is against the basic standard of CBT because this approach to tourism is based on the principle of the wider community control over the tourism interventions. Furthermore, it was also revealed that the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun were rarely consulted for their views about local tourism development matters. If they were asked on some occasions, their suggestions were not taken on board while making decisions. This further gave the homestay non-participants the sense of being excluded from the activities that are taking place in their community. Thus,

the majority of the community's population felt restricted from participating in decision-making processes indicating that the small group of people who are running homestay businesses are regulating all tourism related activities in Dalla Gaun. Thus, the absence of the equality of representation of the wider community in TDMC and the lack of adequate community members' engagement in decision-making processes cast doubt on whether Dalla Gaun homestay is a genuine CBT project or merely a tourism programme run in the community controlled by a few of its inhabitants. Therefore, it is fair to argue that tourism development in Dalla Gaun does not seem to be contributing to political empowerment. Moreover, instead of fostering political empowerment, homestay practices in Dalla Gaun appear to be contributing to the political disempowerment by rejecting the notion of wider community inclusion in decision-making processes.

Thus, based on the preceding discussion, this thesis concludes that the CBT project of Ghale Gaun is a good example of a community-managed homestay practice, which is achieving its goal of community empowerment. By comparison, the people of Dalla Gaun who are in the leadership positions of the homestay programme need to consider improvements to develop Dalla Gaun Community Homestay into an exemplary CBT intervention that is able to promote multiple areas of empowerment of all its residents. The following section provides some recommendations which Dalla Gaun community can implement to achieve improved outcomes.

9.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has identified a few issues which require considerable attention, particularly in the case of Dalla Gaun. Thus, it is recommended that the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun take some steps to solve the problems that have become obstacles to strengthening residents' empowerment.

From an economic point of view, the absence of an equitable distribution of monetary benefits of the industry is one example. As the findings from Dalla Gaun show, there is a lack of a healthy practice of allocating homestays for the tourists, which made many of the

homestay operators feel that they are getting less monetary benefits compared to their neighbouring homestay owners who are leading the project (See Chapter 5). Thus, in order to ensure the equitable flow of income to homestays, there is a need to strictly follow the rotation system that is agreed amongst the homestay operators but is not adequately being practiced.

The findings from Dalla Gaun also reveal that there is a marginal inclusion of homestay non-participants in cultural shows organised for the entertainment of tourists indicating that the income generation opportunities facilitated by the industry are mainly enjoyed by the homestay operators only (See Chapter 5). This shows that there is a serious issue with regards to the distribution of the benefits of tourism income between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants of Dalla Gaun. Thus, in order to spread the economic benefits of homestay development reasonably amongst the wider community, the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun are recommended to include as many homestay non-participants as possible in the cultural shows. This will ensure that the homestay non-participants are also receiving some economic benefits from the homestay development.

Another major concern that has hindered the effective promotion of economic empowerment in Dalla Gaun is the issue related to the transparency of the use of the community fund generated from tourism. Thus, people occupying the leadership positions of Dalla Gaun homestay are suggested to make the villagers well informed about the collection of community funds and how they are spent.

Another utmost concern of Dalla Gaun is the lack of equitable representation in the local institution that has power to decide and manage tourism development at the village level. Thus, there is a need to remove barriers that have resulted in the exclusion of the villagers from decision-making processes. To this end, the homestay operators of Dalla Gaun are recommended to make the TDMC more balanced in terms of community residents' representation. The present TDMC needs to be more inclusive. This can be achieved by engaging diverse community groups such as homestay non-participants, women, youths and marginalised people of the village in TDMC.

Furthermore, to increase community residents' access to decision-making processes, the leaders of Dalla Gaun homestay are advised to utilise planned village meetings, as identified in Ghale Gaun, where every individual of the community can freely share her/his thoughts and experiences. In doing so, it can also support the strengthening of Dalla Gaun's social cohesion. This is because the main reason behind the deteriorating social cohesion of Dalla Gaun is the lack of wider community inclusion in the decision-making body and the meetings that decide about tourism development in the village. The inclusion of the wider community in tourism management and its decision-making processes can result in improved community cohesion by inculcating feelings of inclusion. It is believed that a monopoly of power by a certain segment of a community tends to divide that community, making it difficult for the locals to unite (Duim et al., 2005). In the case of Dalla Gaun, the lack of participation in tourism management has become an important cause to fuel resentment between the homestay operators and the homestay non-participants. If the homestay operators incorporate the homestay non-participants in political processes, it can improve social empowerment by rebuilding the lost community cohesion that was present at the initial stage of the homestay development. Thus, the solution to the problems related to political participation can contribute to solving the issues related to both political and social empowerment in Dalla Gaun.

9.3. CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

The research undertaken for this thesis has presented a critical investigation of two community-managed homestay destinations of Nepal in relation to the multiple aspects of community residents' empowerment. In doing so, this thesis has contributed to the existing body of literature in various fields of studies including CBT, community development literature and empowerment studies by constructing an understanding of these issues within the context of an LDC. This was achieved by laying special emphasis on tourism-led empowerment which is still an emerging area of enquiry. Research within the area of tourism-led empowerment - to date - has been insufficient to develop an understanding from the real-life experiences of the people living in such destination communities. Tourism and

development literature are generally concentrated on measuring the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of the industry whilst placing less emphasis on the various dimensions of community life beyond them. To be precise, there are only a few studies that have attempted to explore the outcomes of CBT in terms of its impacts on the issues of community residents' empowerment.

With regards to Nepal, as stated in Chapter 1, there is a lack of critical evidence-based studies that have been conducted to understand whether CBT interventions are producing the desired outcomes or not. This is despite the Nepalese government promoting such initiatives to increase the access of the rural people to tourism income as well as for the overall development of the rural communities. Thus, this thesis begins to fill this gap by evaluating two popular community-managed homestay destinations of Nepal. I have addressed this research gap by exploring the views and experiences of the members of destination communities in their own words. In doing so, this research has made a significant contribution to knowledge by offering the residents of destination communities a platform to voice their opinions about their experiences of the pre-homestay period and after the project implementation. This was done by enabling the residents of both Ghale Gaun and Dalla Gaun to speak freely on the topic. Furthermore, this thesis treated both the tourism practitioners and the locals having no direct association with the industry as a source of data. As a result, this study also contributes to the debates about the implementation of CBT initiatives as a tool to empower the host destination residents by developing an understanding from not only the perspectives of the people directly involved in community-based homestay practices, but also from the viewpoints of the people not directly involved in CBT projects.

The issues related to the empowerment of the people of destination communities were addressed by examining all areas of empowerment (i.e. economic, social, psychological and political) instead of focusing on one aspect only. To this end, I used Scheyvens's (1999) empowerment model due to it giving equal emphasis to the multiple dimensions of empowerment that can be affected by the introduction of the tourism industry to a community. Here, it is worth mentioning that Scheyvens's (1999), empowerment framework was initially devised for the assessment of empowerment in the field of ecotourism. Thus, this

thesis contributes to the existing body of empowerment literature by extending the use of Scheyvens's model beyond the ecotourism setting, which is illustrated in Table 9.2. This is carried out by considering the theoretical underpinning outlined in Chapter 3, which is revisited here in the light of the study findings.

Type	Signs of empowerment based on Scheyvens's framework	Signs of empowerment developed from the research for this thesis	Signs of disempowerment based on Scheyvens's framework	Signs of disempowerment developed from the research for this thesis
Economic empowerment	<p>1). Tourism brings economic gains to a local community over both the short and long-term.</p> <p>2). Cash earned is shared between many households in the community.</p> <p>3). There are visible signs of improvements from the cash that is earned (e.g. houses are made of more permanent materials; more children are able to attend school).</p>	<p>1). Community homestay tourism empowers the residents of destination communities economically by generating income through employment creation in tourism as well as other sectors of the economy, e.g. agricultural, cultural by establishing linkages between the different sectors; by providing a market for locally produced goods, for instance agricultural and cultural products, e.g. vegetables and handicrafts and allowing them to be involved in entrepreneurial activities, e.g. running grocery shops.</p> <p>2). Community homestay tourism empowers the locals by enabling them to improve their economic circumstances by distributing tourism revenue equitably among the community residents, e. g involving homestay non-registrants in cultural shows, fairly allocating homestays to tourists.</p> <p>3). Economic empowerment can be realised through financial independence, e.g. increased purchasing power of the locals</p>	<p>1). Tourism merely results in small spasmodic cash gains for a local community.</p> <p>2). Only a few individuals or families gain direct financial benefits from tourism.</p> <p>3). Most profits go to local elites, outside operators, government agencies, etc.</p>	<p>1). Community homestay results in economic disempowerment if the income gained from tourism is not sufficient for living.</p> <p>2). Community homestay disempowers the locals if tourists are not fairly allocated to homestays.</p> <p>3). Community homestay disempowers if people in leading positions of authority in homestay management obtain greater financial benefits compared to the majority of the homestay operators.</p> <p>4). Community homestay disempowers if the homestay non-registrants are not encouraged to be involved in income generation opportunities, e.g. cultural shows, resulting from homestay development.</p>

		and their economic strength to afford children's education.		
Social empowerment	<p>1). Tourism maintains or enhances the local community's sense of cohesion and integrity.</p> <p>2). Community cohesion is improved as individuals and families work together to build a successful tourism venture.</p> <p>3). Establishment of community groups, e.g. youth groups, savings clubs, women's groups are signs of social empowerment.</p> <p>4). Some profits from the tourism activity are used to fund community development purposes, e.g. to build schools or improve water supplies.</p>	<p>1). Community homestay can strengthen social cohesion by bringing positive changes to the community, e. g. income opportunities and public facilities improvement.</p> <p>2). Community homestay empowers the locals by encouraging them to work together for common goals.</p> <p>3). Community homestay tourism facilitates social empowerment by allowing the locals to be organised in community groups, e.g. mothers' groups, fathers' groups, youth club.</p> <p>4). Community homestay empowers the locals by creating a community fund to be spent for development works carried out at the local level, e.g. construction of public toilets, provision of rubbish collection.</p> <p>5). Community homestay can assist in empowering the locals socially by enhancing the quality of life by improving</p>	<p>1). Tourism results in disharmony and social decay.</p> <p>2). Many in the community take on outside values and lose respect for traditional culture and their elders.</p> <p>3). Rather than cooperating, the community members compete with each other for the perceived benefits of tourism.</p>	<p>1). Community homestay disempowers socially if it initiates division between the homestay operators and/or between the homestay operators and the homestay non-registrants.</p> <p>2). No visible signs</p> <p>3). Community homestay disempowers socially if it becomes a catalyst for weakening cooperation amongst the community residents.</p> <p>4). Community homestay tourism can disempower if there is a lack of transparency of how community funds generated from the tourism revenue is spent.</p>

		their economic, social and environmental wellbeing.		
Psychological empowerment	<p>1). Self-esteem of many community members is enhanced because of external recognition of the uniqueness and value of their culture, their natural resources and their traditional knowledge.</p> <p>2). Tourism development leads to an increase in status for traditionally low-status sectors of the society, e.g. youth, the poor and women.</p> <p>3). Increasing confidence of community members in their abilities.</p>	<p>1). Community homestay empowers the locals by bringing appreciation for the community's assets, e.g. natural resources, cultural practices, knowledge to run homestay tourism successfully.</p> <p>2). Community homestay enhances psychological empowerment by enhancing the status of the community as a whole from remote and underdeveloped area to a model tourism village.</p> <p>3) Community homestay empowers the locals by increasing their levels of confidence to engage in social activities and interact with the people outside of their immediate communities.</p> <p>4). Community homestay empowers the locals psychologically by making where they live a popular tourist destination.</p> <p>5). Community homestay contributes to psychological empowerment by bringing positive media attention.</p>	<p>1). Those who interact with tourists are left feeling that their culture and way of life are inferior.</p> <p>2). Many people are confused, frustrated, uninterested or disillusioned with the initiative.</p>	The studied communities for this thesis did not demonstrate signs of psychological disempowerment.

<p style="text-align: center;">Political empowerment</p>	<p>1). The community's political structure provides a forum through which people can raise questions relating to the ecotourism venture and have their concerns dealt with.</p> <p>2). Agencies initiating or implementing the tourism venture seek out the opinions of a variety of community groups (including special interest groups of women, youths and other socially disadvantaged groups) and provide opportunities for them to be represented on decision-making bodies, e.g. Wildlife Park Board or the regional tourism association.</p>	<p>1). Community homestay contributes to achieving political empowerment through village meetings in which representation of each individual household is ensured to incorporate community voices while planning and making decisions about local tourism development.</p> <p>2). Community homestay supports political empowerment by confirming the fair representation of different sectors of the community e.g. homestay non-registrants, women, youth in decision-making institutions.</p> <p>3). Community homestay empowers the locals politically by providing platforms for expressing views, e.g. village meetings while determining leadership positions at the local level.</p> <p>4). Community homestay can facilitate political empowerment by creating a local body to decide about local tourism development.</p> <p>5). Community homestay empowers the locals politically by allowing every households of the community equal opportunity to join the project should they wish.</p>	<p>1). The community has an autocratic and/or self-interested leadership.</p> <p>2). Agencies initiating or implementing the tourism venture fail to involve the local community in decision-making, so the majority of community members feel they have little or no say over whether the tourism initiative operates or the way in which it operates.</p>	<p>1). Community homestay disempowers politically if the different voices of the community are not heard by the decision makers.</p> <p>2). Community homestay disempowers politically if there is unfair representation of different sectors of community in the decision-making organisation.</p> <p>3). Community homestay disempowers politically if the homestay non-participants are not involved in local tourism development decision-making processes.</p> <p>4). Community homestay disempowers if each household is not given equality of access to the project.</p>
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Table 9.2. Comparison of Scheyvens's (1999, 2000, 2002) empowerment framework with the findings of this research. (Source: Author)

In addition to its contribution to the existing body of knowledge about tourism-led empowerment, the findings of this research also have practical implications for the communities studied for this thesis. This is because this research demonstrates how CBT interventions can become both positive and negative forces in terms of their impacts on community residents' empowerment. For instance, in the case of Ghale Gaun there are clear indicators that homestay tourism is already playing an important role to strengthen the community members' multiple dimensions of empowerment. However, there is much room for improvement in the case of Dalla Gaun (See section 9.2).

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study can also be useful to other CBT destinations. By saying so, it also needs to be considered that the findings identified in this study may not be applicable in other situations due to the varied nature of communities and the settings where tourism activities take place. Hence, instead of following the findings of this research as a code of practice, tourism practitioners can use them for reference purposes.

9.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Although this research has been able to contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the existing body of tourism research as well as providing some practical recommendations to the communities studied, this research is not free of its limitations. The major limitations include time and budget which restricted the length of my stay in the destination communities.

In terms of methodological limitations, I used participant observation along with semi-structured interviews as data collection methods. Participant observation usually requires spending a considerable amount of time in the field. It could have been better if I had more time to spend in the study sites and participate in the daily activities in destination communities in more depth, for example, seeing the community during the high and lows of tourists visiting, seeing more changes in the communities and how people react to these.

9.5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research is an initial effort to understand tourism-led empowerment particularly in the context of Nepalese tourism sector. As such, there is no research initiative that has attempted to gauge multiple facets of empowerment influenced by community-managed homestay practices in Nepal. This is despite Nepal having more than 20 years of history of homestay tourism as well as the Government of Nepal promoting homestay tourism as a vehicle for the overall development of rural communities. Therefore, this study has opened avenues for future research to explore whether homestay tourism in Nepal has been effective in its goal of empowering the people of rural areas or whether it is producing negative outcomes. Thus, there is plenty of potential for further research as this study has been able to explore only two homestay destinations. It would be interesting to carry out studies in other homestay settings of Nepal and compare results.

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Appendix 1

SDGs	Tourism industry's links to SDGs
1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Tourism provides income through job creation at local and community levels. It can be linked with national poverty reduction strategies and entrepreneurship. Low skills requirement and local recruitment can empower less favoured groups, particularly youth and women.
2: End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture	Tourism can spur sustainable agricultural by promoting the production and supplies to hotels, and sales of local products to tourists. Agro-tourism can generate additional income while enhancing the value of the tourism experience.
3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all stages	Tax income generated from tourism can be reinvested in health care and services, improving maternal health, reduce child mortality and preventing diseases. Visitors fees collected in protected areas can as well contribute to health services.
4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all	Tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness. A skilful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The tourism sector provides opportunities for direct and indirect jobs for youth, women, and those with special needs, who should benefit through educational means.
5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Tourism can empower women, particularly through the provision of direct jobs and income-generation from MMEs in tourism and hospitality related enterprises. Tourism can be a tool for women to become fully engaged and lead in every aspect of society.
6: Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Tourism investment requirement for providing utilities can play a critical role in achieving water access and security, as well as hygiene and sanitation for all. The efficient use of water in tourism, pollution control and technology efficiency can be key to safeguarding our most precious resource.
7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	As a sector, which is energy intensive, tourism can accelerate the shift towards increased renewable energy shares in the global energy mix. By promoting investments in clean energy sources, tourism can help to reduce greenhouse gases, mitigate climate change and contribute to access of energy for all.
8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth,	Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism,

employment and decent work for all	particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism positive socio-economic impacts.
9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation	Tourism development relies on good public and private infrastructure. The sector can influence public policy for infrastructure upgrade and retrofit, making them more sustainable, innovative and resource-efficient and moving towards low carbon growth, thus attracting tourists and other sources of foreign investment.
10: Reduce inequality within and among countries	Tourism can be a powerful tool for reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development by giving people the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Tourism is an effective means for economic integration and diversification.
11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists.
12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, and biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.
13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. Tourism stakeholders should play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By reducing its carbon footprint, in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can benefit from low carbon growth and help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.
14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Coastal and maritime tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.
15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and halt biodiversity loss	Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Tourism can play a major role if sustainably managed in fragile zones, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in

	generating revenue as an alternative livelihood to local communities.
16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build inclusive institutions	As tourism revolves around billions of encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, the sector can foster multicultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. Tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also consolidate peace in post-conflict societies.
17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development	Due to its cross-sectorial nature, tourism has the ability to strengthen private/public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Public policy and innovative financing are at the core for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Table 1.1 Tourism's links to 17 SDGs. Source: UNWTO and UNDP, 2017