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## Motivation and Challenges of Homestay Owners in Uttarakhand

kamal Joshi

*Medhavi Skill University, India, kamaljoshihnbgu@gmail.com*

Pinky Bahuguna

*Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand University, India, pinkybahuguna0@gmail.com*

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## Introduction

Uttarakhand is popularly known as Devbhoomi (land of gods); it is a magical land of mountains and mythology, breathtaking scenery and exhilarating adventure, wellness and yoga. Every individual can find something new in Uttarakhand. The state is known for its magnificent tourist spots; Nainital, Mussoorie, Corbett National Park, and Auli are just a few well-known destinations in the Uttarakhand. The state is also one of the pilgrimage places for Hindus, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh, and Haridwar are some of the well know pilgrimage places in the state. Large number of tourists visit Uttarakhand every year. In 2017, 3.5 million people visited to Uttarakhand; this number increased to 3.7 million in 2018; and to 3.9 million in 2019 (Times of India, 2021). Although due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of tourists came down in 2020 due to restrictions on travel and other tourist activities.

Due to the rise of low-budget travellers in recent years, there has been a paradigm change in the tourism industry. This change has created a different market segment for small hotels and homestays. Uttarakhand government has also decided to promote homestay in the state so that the state's tourism potential can be utilised and employment for the locals can be generated. Pursuing this vision, DeenDayalUpadhyayGrihaAwaasYojana, popularly known as the homestay programme, was introduced by the government of Uttarakhand in 2018. Table 1 provides information on homestay registration in 13 districts of Uttarakhand. The tourism industry is one of the major industries for Uttarakhand as it generates employment for the resident and revenue for the state. Homestay adds more value to the tourism industry.

Generally, the homestay provides affordable accommodation to tourists but is not limited to providing accommodation. It is more than this; it offers an opportunity to live like a local common person lives and experience a completely new environment, culture, heritage and lifestyle. Some people visit the places to know how people live in some other place, what type of food they have, and what they do in life. Homestay provides all this in one package. For small entrepreneurs, it is an opportunity to earn a livelihood and start a business at a very reasonable cost. Mbaiwa (2005) and Kunjuran&Hussin (2017) stated that CBT has provided various benefits to the host community and is a tool for development.

**Table: 1 Homestay Registration in Uttarakhand**

S.No.	District	Year		
		2018- 19	2019- 2020	2020- 2021
1	Dehradun	211	220	77
2	Haridwar	13	05	03
3	Tehri	95	51	33
4	Uttarkashi	60	195	57
5	Rudraprayag	57	69	25
6	Pauri	19	76	14
7	Chamoli	125	195	61
8	Nainital	149	127	64
9	Almora	59	87	30
10	Pithoragarh	141	177	85
11	Champawat	05	29	51
12	Udham Singh Nagar	02	06	00
13	Bageshwar	29	27	37
Total		965	1262	437

*Source: Uttarakhand Tourism Department*

Table no 1 shows the number of homestays registered during the three years. It can be seen from the table that due to Covid 19, the registration in 2020- 2021 is declining. Although it is temporary and as the covid 19 get under control, more people will start the homestay. The government is providing various benefits to motivate the people to start homestays. The capital subsidy, lower interest rates, the domestic connection for electricity and water bill (though it is a commercial activity) and no registration fee for homestays are some of them. The homestays are in the infancy stage in the state. Hence, the present study attempts to analyse what motivates people to start the homestay and what challenges the homestay owners encounter in operating the homestay.

## **Literature Review**

Homestay is prevalent in many tourism-based countries like Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, etc. It is now becoming popular in India also. Indian states such as Himachal, Assam and Uttarakhand promote it to increase tourism and generate employment opportunities. In Uttarakhand, it is a recent phenomenon; hence it is necessary to know the motivation of homestay owners and the challenges in their entrepreneurial journey. Therefore, the literature review is classified into two categories; the first section reviews studies related to the motivation behind starting homestays and the second section reviews the studies focusing on the challenges of homestay owners.

### **Motivation for Starting the Homestay**

Several factors influence someone to open a homestay business (Dubey & Sharma 2018). According to Ranasinghe & Rathnayake (2016, and Sumithra (2020), homestays have been driven by a variety of factors, including the source of revenue, business possibilities, persuasion and expertise, the charm of the place, personal appeal, and the availability of resources, even if a business primarily focuses on monetary and material goals. The desire for financial gain is an apparent factor in people's decision to become homestay owners and make their homes available for visitors and tourists. However, many academics claim that money isn't the main driver. Only a small percentage of the hosts had initial motivations solely pecuniary (Richardson 2004, Salleh et al. 2014 & Dubey & Sharma 2018). According to Korir et al. (2013), homestays provide for work-from-home flexibility. Ahmad et al. (2014) proposed two sets of factors behind the motivation of homestay owners. These factors include pull and push factors. Some of the pull factors are: homestay market potential, owning a business, earning more income, inheriting a business endeavour, and retirement planning. The push factors are personal fulfilment, enjoyment of interpersonal interactions, personal interest, and community support.

Another study conducted by Ariff et al. (2015) also classified the homestay entrepreneurial factors into the pull and push factors; according to them, to make more money, to be passionate about the homestay industry, to demonstrate one's own capacity for success, to find personal fulfilment, pursue one's interest in entrepreneurship, want to own a business, want to have control over what one is doing, want more flexibility in managing one's own time, and to take advantage of the opportunity or potential that available homes present are some of the potential pull factors that may lead an individual to engage in the homestay industry that has been highlighted in previous studies.

While economic downturn, host unemployment, layoffs, discontent with prior employment, a lack of job stability at the prior employment, and an unacceptable amount of income obtained at the preceding work are the push factors that encourage homestay entrepreneurs. Yasin & Ramlan (2015) claimed that internal factors highly drove homestay entrepreneurs to engage in the homestay industry. Literature indicates that homestay owners are motivated by several factors; these factors are either pull or push.

### **Challenges before the Homestay**

Homestay is one kind of entrepreneurship; challenges are part and parcel of entrepreneurship. Many scholars have identified the challenges of homestays around the world. Wijesundra & Gnanapala (2016) found that lack of clear understanding of the concept, lack of skills, knowledge, poor community participation, and lack of incentive programmes are a few main challenges homestay owners face. The study pointed out one of the crucial facts that it is difficult to get success without the participation of the community. In line with Wijesundra & Gnanapala (2016), Maheshwari (2020) also extends this point and analyses the local community's attitude and perception towards community-based tourism (CBT), popularly known as a homestay. The study found that (CBT) is considered a tool for advancing the Har Ki Dun region. Further, Pusirun & Xiao (2013) explored the challenges of homestays in Malaysia; according to the study, homestay faces external and internal challenges; lack of creativity and entrepreneurial skills, lack of knowledge and understanding of the industry and insufficient networking are a few of them.

Similarly, Kunjuraman & Hussin (2017) also classified challenges into internal and external. According to the study, internal challenges include a lack of trained workers, lack of leadership and lack of financial resources and capital. In contrast, the external challenges of homestay owners include: safety and security threats, lack of infrastructure and monitoring systems, and lack of marketing and promotional opportunities are major external challenges.

Othman et al. (2015) found that facility, privacy, safety, security, and cleanliness are significant challenges for homestay owners. Talib & Sulieman (2017) also explored challenges in running a homestay in Malaysia. The study found that cultural differences, lack of promotion, power cuts, and less active members are some of the problems faced by homestay owners. Imran & Ngugen (2018) explored homestay possibilities and the opinion of residents about the homestay programs in Uttarakhand. The study found that homestay has not brought significant economic benefit to the household involved in the business.

In contrast, Kulshreshta & Kulshreshta (2019) found that homestays have potential and generate employment opportunities for local people. Dey, Mathew & Chee-Hua (2020) accessed the role of destination attractiveness factors and travel motivation in homestay choice. The study is based on primary data; a survey method was used to conduct the research. The study finds that culture, travel attractiveness, and destination location and transport significantly correlate with rural homestay choices.

Another study conducted by Nazim (2021) explored the challenges in starting CBT in ThaaGuraidhoo, Maldives. An exploratory study was conducted, with qualitative data collected through purposive sampling via interviews. The findings emphasise the importance of land use, planning and a tourism development monitoring framework. Johan et al. (2011) found that the development of the homestay industry is gradual since the operators lack knowledge and exposure to operating their businesses. They also lack the necessary investment funds, entrepreneurial skills, and talents to run a homestay. Homestay operators in rural villages frequently rely primarily on government help to make their businesses profitable.

### **Research Gap**

In 2018, the Uttarakhand government launched Deen Dayal Upadhyay Griha Awas Yojana (Homestay Scheme). Since then, the state government has made a lot of efforts to popularise it. The homestay scheme has created a buzz in Uttarakhand. However, homestays are still in the nascent stage. The researchers have not explored much in this area; this stimulates the need to explore more about the homestays in the state. Pusiran & Xiao (2013) stated that many challenges affect the effectiveness of the homestay programme, and each one may differ from one community to the other community. Hence, researchers need to address the challenges that may influence the success or failure of homestays. Kunjuraman & Hussin (2017) also follow Pusiran & Xiao (2013) and explore the challenges of homestay owners in Saah, Malaysia. By drawing attention to the fact that much remains unexplored about homestays in Uttarakhand, the current study examines the challenges and motivation of homestay owners. Further, the study makes a significant contribution to the homestay literature by providing insights into motivational factors and challenges of homestay owners. Additionally, the study will be beneficial for policymakers, government, potential and existing homestay owners and other researchers.

## **Objectives**

1. To analyse the motivational factors behind starting homestay.
2. To analyse the challenges faced by homestay owners of Uttarakhand.

## **Research Methodology**

This study adopts an exploratory approach, utilizing primary data as the foundation. A qualitative research design was employed to conduct the investigation. To gather firsthand information, telephonic interviews were conducted with ten homestay owners. The selection of respondents for interviews followed a judgmental sampling method. Initially, a list of homestays was obtained from the official website of the Uttarakhand government. Subsequently, random calls were made to homestay owners based on this list. Before conducting the interviews, a clear explanation of the purpose behind the interviews was provided to the homestay owners. Additionally, explicit consent from the respondents was obtained, ensuring their voluntary participation in the study.

## **Sample Size**

Determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies poses a unique challenge, as there is no established formula to guide this process. To address this issue, we conducted a comprehensive literature search using the specific phrases "sample size selection in qualitative research" or "sample size determination in qualitative research."

Two prominent approaches emerged from the literature: the saturation point approach and the information power approach. After careful consideration, we opted to utilize the saturation point approach to determine the sample size. This approach is widely employed in qualitative research and offers clear decision criteria. According to the saturation point approach, the researcher continues data collection until reaching a stage where additional participants no longer contribute new insights or information. At this point, data saturation is considered to have been achieved. In alignment with this approach, a total of ten homestay owners were selected for interview, as this number was deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation based on the available resources and research scope.

### **Data Collection**

This study relies on primary data obtained through telephonic interviews. The respondents were presented with a set of pre-structured questions pertaining to the challenges and motivations associated with initiating a homestay. The duration of each interview ranged from ten to fifteen minutes. Throughout the interviews, diligent note-taking was conducted on paper to capture key points and insights. Subsequently, these notes were meticulously transformed into transcripts for further analysis and interpretation.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were subjected to a comprehensive analysis employing both descriptive and Thematic Analysis (T.A.) techniques. Thematic Analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), involves an exploration of the entire dataset to identify, analyze, and report on recurring patterns. Kiger and Varpio (2020) elaborate on Thematic Analysis as a six-step process that encompasses familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming each theme, and finally, writing a research report. Thematic Analysis was selected due to its wide utilization in qualitative data analysis.

An inductive approach to Thematic Analysis was employed in this study, allowing the data itself to guide the identification of themes. Given the exploratory nature of the research, an inductive approach was deemed appropriate. The initial step involved familiarizing the researchers with the data by thoroughly reading the transcripts generated from the interviews, thereby gaining an overall understanding of the dataset and its collective insights.

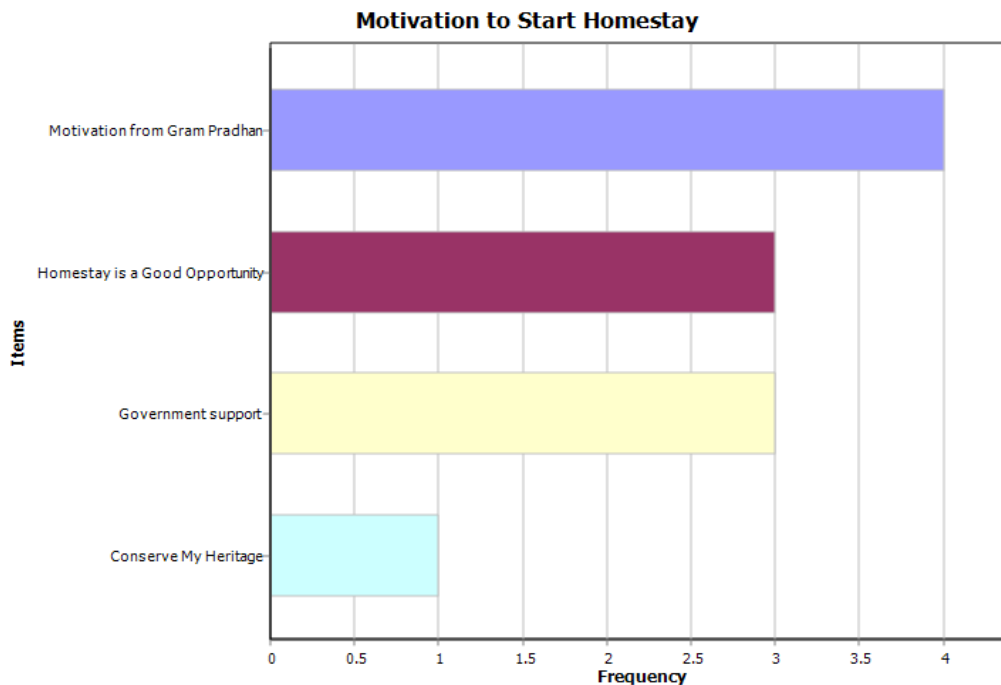
Following the familiarization process, initial codes were generated using an inductive coding approach, directly derived from the content of the interview transcripts. The open coding method was employed, involving a line-by-line examination of the interview transcripts. Subsequently, themes were established by aggregating relevant codes, akin to how factors encompass variables in quantitative research. These themes underwent a rigorous review process, and the research findings were meticulously documented.



## Findings

The primary objective of this research was to discern the motivations that drive individuals to establish homestays. To accomplish this objective, the factors that motivated homestay owners to embark on this venture was inquired. The responses revealed several key motivating factors among homestay owners in the state, which are elucidated in the subsequent section. Notably, motivations stemming from the Gram Pradhan, the recognition of homestay as a lucrative opportunity, government support, and the desire to preserve cultural heritage emerged as prominent themes. These motivating factors will be further explored and discussed in the following section.

**Figure :1Motivation to Start the Homestay**



**Source: Author's Calculation**

### **Motivated by Opportunity**

The proprietors of homestays articulate their motivation to delve into this line of business, citing their entrepreneurial drive as the primary impetus. In their quest for a viable business opportunity, they serendipitously encountered the homestay scheme. They astutely opted for homestay as it presents several favorable attributes, most notably its relatively low capital requirement and the prerequisite of owning a four-bedroom domicile wherein they themselves reside. By aligning with the government's predefined criteria, they gain access to a range of advantageous provisions extended by the governing body. These provisions encompass a substantial subsidy of one million, specifically earmarked for launching their homestay enterprise. Additionally, they become entitled to domestic utility connections for electricity and water, financial assistance, and even preferential interest rates on loans. Encouraged and emboldened by these enticing incentives, they wholeheartedly embark upon their entrepreneurial odyssey by inaugurating their very own homestay establishment. One of the homestay owners stated that :

“I live near to secretariat, lots of people come here for official work. I heard from many visitors that they have to go far to stay. I thought it would be a good idea to provide residents near the secretariat. One day, I came to know about the homestay scheme from the newspaper, so I thought homestay could be a good opportunity.”

### **Motivation from Gram Pradhan**

Another noteworthy motivating factor identified among homestay owners was the influence and support received from the Gram Pradhan or local social workers. Homestay owners reported that their respective Gram Pradhan or social worker played a pivotal role in informing them about the homestay scheme and providing crucial assistance in establishing their homestays. This assistance encompassed aiding in loan applications, facilitating access to government subsidies, and actively promoting their homestays within the local community. The guidance and support received from the Gram Pradhan or social workers were instrumental in motivating and enabling the homestay owners to initiate their ventures successfully. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“I heard from the gram Pradhan about the homestay scheme. He took a meeting and explained to us about the scheme and promised to help in getting government assistance, so I thought homestay could be a good opportunity for earning.”

## **Government Support**

The government's extensive support measures, including loan subsidies, provision of domestic electricity connections instead of commercial ones, and financial assistance through the government's homestay scheme, played a significant role in motivating homestay owners to initiate their homestays. Homestay owners further asserted that the government's enticing interest rates and loan subsidies provided them with a lucrative opportunity to leverage their ancestral homes and generate additional income. These government offerings proved instrumental in fostering the decision to establish and operate homestays, enabling homestay owners to capitalize on the benefits and opportunities presented by the government's initiatives. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“I have been running a lodge for ten years. One day, I came to know about the homestay scheme. My lodge was fulfilling the criteria of homestay, so I converted the lodge into homestay to get the benefit provided by the government like funding, offering domestic electric connection in place of commercial.”

## **Preserve the Heritage**

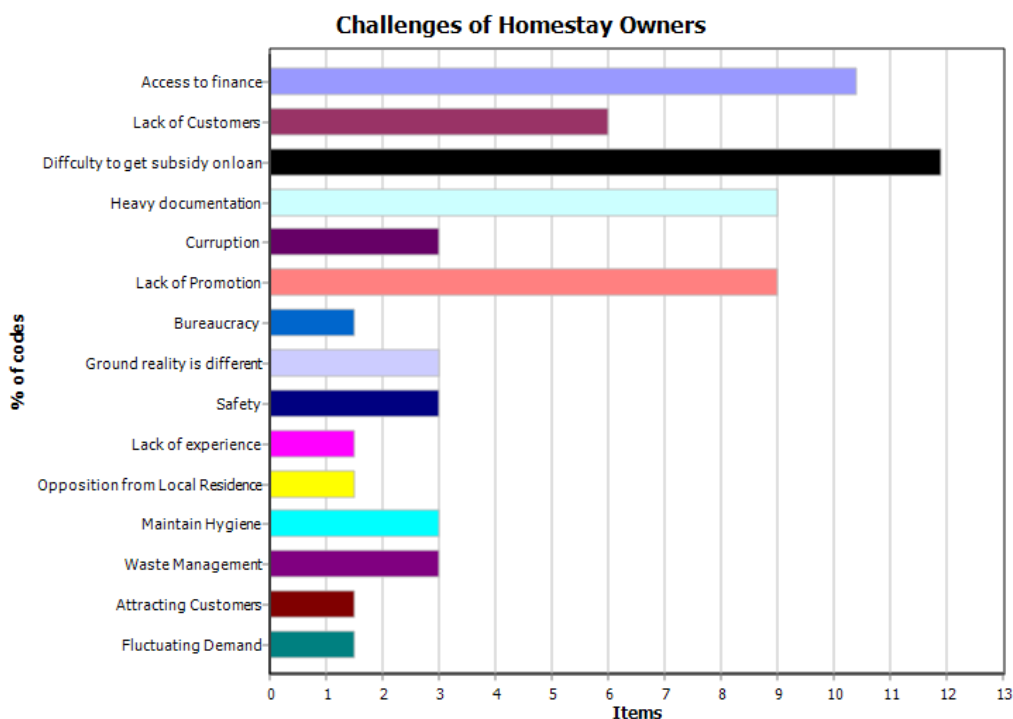
Homestay owners perceive this endeavor as a unique opportunity to preserve their heritage and revive neglected properties by transforming them into thriving homestay establishments. The initiative not only enables them to generate supplementary income but also serves as a means to safeguard and conserve their ancestral legacy. By embracing the homestay concept, these owners are actively contributing to the preservation of their cultural heritage, ensuring that their traditions, architecture, and stories are passed down to future generations. The homestay venture allows them to breathe new life into abandoned properties while simultaneously cherishing their heritage, making it a personally fulfilling and meaningful endeavor. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“15 years back, we moved to the city with family for better job opportunities, but we used to come here frequently. We have a house built by my grandparents and we wanted to protect that house. I came to know about the homestay scheme of Government and I decided to convert my forefather's house into a homestay.”

The second objective of this study aimed to identify the challenges faced by homestay owners. The thematic analysis conducted yielded a comprehensive understanding of these challenges, as illustrated in Figure 2 (refer to the figure provided). The ensuing section will delve into a detailed discussion of these

challenges, shedding light on the specific issues encountered by homestay owners in their operational endeavors.

**Figure: 2 Challenges of Homestay Owners**



**Source: Author's Calculation**

### **Access to Finance**

A prevalent challenge reported by nearly every homestay owner is the limited access to finance, which poses a substantial obstacle in establishing their businesses. They encountered difficulties in obtaining loans for the purpose of initiating and developing their homestay enterprises. The lack of financial resources resulted in various consequential challenges, including delays in construction, promotional activities, and hiring processes. These financial constraints significantly impeded the smooth progression of their homestay operations, requiring owners to navigate through additional hurdles to overcome these limitations. One of the respondents stated that:

“I went for taking loan under the homestay scheme to the bank, but bank refused to give me a loan and bank said that they have not received any government order regarding this scheme.”

Another respondent stated that:

“I approached the bank for a loan under a government scheme (DeenDayalUpadhyayGrihaAwaasYojana), but the bank refused to disburse the loan to me. After that, I took a loan from the bank, keeping my assets mortgage with the bank and now I am paying high interest also.”

### **Lack of Customers**

Ensuring an adequate customer base is crucial for the sustainability of homestay operations. A significant number of respondents expressed difficulties in attracting customers, possibly due to inadequate promotion efforts. Homestays are often situated in locations that are not in close proximity to mainstream markets, making it challenging for potential customers to discover them. Since many homestay owners have converted their own residences into homestays, the location might not be conveniently situated near commercial hubs.

However, it is worth noting that tourists often seek serene and peaceful environments to enhance their experience. Therefore, addressing the issue of customer scarcity may be resolved through effective marketing and promotion strategies. By leveraging targeted marketing techniques, highlighting the tranquil and idyllic aspects of the homestays, and emphasizing the unique experiences they offer, the challenge of attracting customers can be mitigated. Implementing comprehensive marketing campaigns that emphasize the distinctive qualities and advantages of the homestays could prove instrumental in enhancing their visibility and attracting a broader customer base. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“For two years, I faced difficulties in finding customers, but after registering with Oyo, I am getting enough customers.”

### **Difficulty in Getting the Subsidy**

Under the homestay scheme, the government offers capital and interest subsidies to support homestay owners. However, homestay owners have reported significant challenges and difficulties in obtaining these subsidies. The process of acquiring government subsidies has been described as arduous and complex, posing obstacles for homestay owners seeking financial assistance. These difficulties may include lengthy application procedures, bureaucratic hurdles, and a lack of clarity regarding eligibility criteria. Consequently, homestay owners face considerable challenges in accessing the subsidies provided by the government, hindering their ability to fully benefit from the intended support. One of the respondents stated that:

“So far, I have not received any subsidy, but I am trying to get it. I have applied for it. I have been struggling for a long time to get it.”

### **Documentation**

Prior to commencing the construction of a homestay, homestay owners are required to submit specific documents, including a certificate of non-agricultural land, commonly referred to as "one for three." Additionally, they need to furnish various documents to obtain financial assistance and obtain no-objection certificates from multiple departments. The process of arranging and obtaining these documents poses a considerable challenge for homestay owners, as it necessitates navigating through different government departments to fulfil the necessary requirements. This multi-step and time-consuming process adds to the complexity and difficulty faced by homestay owners, as they must invest significant effort in acquiring the requisite documents from various authorities. One of the respondents stated that:

“Arranging documents to get a loan is a tedious task. Apart from this, I have to arrange many other documents from different departments, like a no-objection certificate from the fire department. Believe me; it takes more time than you think it should”.

### **Lack of Promotion**

A substantial number of homestays are situated in rural areas, which often face challenges in terms of popularity and recognition. Given that the concept of homestays is still in its infancy stage, effective promotion is crucial to raise awareness and attract potential customers. However, promoting homestays requires a significant investment in advertising and marketing efforts. Homestay owners encounter various obstacles when it comes to promoting their businesses. Financial constraints often limit their ability to allocate sufficient funds for advertising purposes. Additionally, they may struggle with selecting the most suitable methods of promotion, lacking knowledge and experience in marketing and advertising strategies. These factors collectively hinder their promotional efforts, making it difficult for homestay owners to effectively showcase their offerings and reach their target audience.

Addressing these challenges would necessitate overcoming financial limitations, enhancing marketing literacy, and providing support and guidance to homestay owners in developing effective promotional strategies. By equipping homestay owners with the necessary knowledge and resources, they can overcome the barriers to promotion and maximize their visibility, ultimately fostering the growth and popularity of their businesses. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“Initially promotion of homestay was challenging, I faced difficulties in promotion, I could not figure out the way of promotion, the suitable medium for promotion and had not a large amount for the promotion .”

## **Corruption**

Throughout the establishment process, homestay owners have consistently reported instances of corruption at the Tashil level. This unfortunate situation has presented them with numerous challenges, primarily impeding their ability to access the benefits and incentives provided by government schemes. The presence of corruption has led to frustrating delays in official procedures, causing significant obstacles for homestay owners seeking to avail themselves of the intended support.

The difficulties faced by homestay owners in accessing scheme benefits and experiencing delays in official work highlight the need for immediate attention to address corruption at the Tashil level. By implementing transparent and efficient processes, ensuring accountability, and fostering a culture of integrity, the barriers hindering homestay owners' access to support can be gradually dismantled. It is imperative to create an environment that promotes fair and streamlined procedures, allowing homestay owners to navigate the setup process with ease

and avail themselves of the benefits they are entitled to without encountering undue hurdles caused by corruption. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“I needed no objection certificate(NOC) from the fire department, but they make me run a lot for that. I have to visit the department many times for NOC.”

The study further found that some of the challenges of the homestay owners were: bureaucracy, safety, lack of experience, opposition from residents, maintaining hygiene, waste management, attracting customers, and fluctuating demand.

### **Safety**

Homestay owners sometimes face safety concerns when welcoming unknown guests into their properties. While the majority of guests are likely to be respectful, it is crucial for hosts to take precautions to ensure their own safety. Measures such as guest screening, maintaining open communication, securing personal belongings, trusting instincts, establishing boundaries, and being prepared for emergencies can help mitigate potential risks and create a safe environment for both hosts and guests. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“Operating a homestay in rural hills presents a unique safety challenge as owners are required to accommodate unknown individuals without the convenience of a nearby police station. This situation necessitates a proactive approach to ensure the safety and security of both hosts and guests.”

### **Lack of Experience**

Homestay owners face significant challenges due to their lack of experience in the industry. The absence of familiarity with running a homestay can lead to difficulties in providing a seamless and satisfying experience for guests. Operational knowledge, understanding guest expectations, ensuring safety and security, delivering exceptional customer service, effective marketing and promotion, and sound financial management are key areas where inexperienced owners may struggle.

One of the homestay owners stated that:

“As a homestay owner without prior experience, I acknowledge that I may occasionally miss marketing opportunities. However, I embrace each guest as a chance to learn and improve. Their valuable feedback and preferences



contribute to refining my marketing strategies and enhancing the homestay experience. I actively engage with guests, listen to their input, and adapt my services accordingly. Additionally, I continuously educate myself on marketing techniques and stay updated on industry trends. Through networking with experienced homestay owners and a commitment to learning, I aim to expand my marketing reach and attract more guests, ensuring the growth and success of my homestay business..”

### **Opposition from local residents**

Homestay owners often face opposition from local residents in their communities due to concerns about increased traffic, noise, and the impact on the neighborhood's character. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“As a homestay owner, it is not uncommon to encounter opposition from the local public, who may voice concerns about safety, hygiene, and other related issues. These concerns can stem from a lack of familiarity with the homestay concept and uncertainty about the impact it may have on the community.”

### **Maintain hygiene**

Maintaining hygiene in a homestay poses a significant challenge for owners as they strive to uphold cleanliness standards while accommodating guests. The responsibility of regularly cleaning and sanitizing various areas, including bedrooms, bathrooms, and common spaces, requires diligent effort and attention to detail. Additionally, ensuring proper ventilation and a safe water supply further adds to the complexity. Managing these tasks amidst the constant influx of guests, coordinating schedules, and addressing individual needs can be demanding. However, through meticulous planning, establishing efficient cleaning protocols, and prioritizing the well-being of guests, homestay owners can overcome this challenge and create a safe and hygienic environment for everyone's enjoyment. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“As a homestay owner, I face challenges such as regularly cleaning and sanitising various areas such as bedrooms, bathrooms, and common areas, which necessitates diligent effort and attention to detail.”

### **Waste management**

As a homestay owner, waste management is a crucial responsibility to ensure a clean and sustainable environment for both guests and the local community. Effectively managing waste can be a challenge, but implementing proper waste management practices is essential. Here are some key steps that homestay owners can take: One of the homestay owners stated that:

“waste management presents significant challenges that require careful attention and planning. Managing the waste generated by guests, ensuring proper segregation, recycling, and disposal practices can be demanding..”

### **Attracting customers**

Attracting customers poses a significant challenge for homestay owners due to the competitive market. To overcome this, owners should focus on establishing a strong online presence, utilizing online booking platforms, encouraging positive reviews and testimonials, implementing targeted marketing campaigns, offering unique experiences, collaborating with local tourism organizations, and providing personalized customer service. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“As a homestay owner, attracting customers presents a myriad of challenges in today's highly competitive market. Standing out among numerous accommodation options and capturing the attention of potential guests requires strategic planning and innovative approaches.”

### **Fluctuating demand**

Fluctuating demand is a common challenge for homestay owners, as it can make it difficult to predict and manage occupancy levels effectively. The nature of the hospitality industry often leads to variations in guest bookings due to seasonal trends, holidays, and other external factors. This fluctuation in demand can create challenges in terms of revenue management, resource allocation, and maintaining a consistent level of customer satisfaction. One of the homestay owners stated that:

“The demand for accommodations can vary throughout the year due to seasonal patterns, holidays, events, and other factors which leads to difficulty in managing the homestay”

### **Conclusion**

The concept of homestays provides visitors with a distinctive and immersive experience while also offering homestay hosts additional income and employment

opportunities. Uttarakhand, known for its captivating natural beauty, is a popular destination for homestay vacations. This study aims to shed light on the motivations and challenges faced by homestay owners in Uttarakhand state. The study concluded that homestay owners in Uttarakhand are primarily motivated by the prospects of establishing their own businesses, the support offered by the government, and the encouragement received from Gram Pradhan or local community leaders. Additionally, the preservation of heritage emerged as another motivating factor for some homestay owners, as they view homestays as a means to safeguard their cultural legacy. However, the study also uncovers various challenges faced by homestay owners in Uttarakhand. These challenges include limited access to capital, difficulties in attracting customers, and the complexities associated with obtaining government subsidies. Addressing these challenges is crucial, as fostering a favourable business climate for homestays has the potential to significantly enhance employment opportunities in the state. By recognizing and addressing the motivations and challenges faced by homestay owners, policymakers and stakeholders can create an enabling as well as conducive environment that promotes the growth and sustainability of the homestay industry. This, in turn, can lead to a substantial increase in employment opportunities and contribute to the overall development of the state's tourism sector.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the research findings and insights obtained from the homestay owners, the following recommendations are proposed:

**Improve Access to Capital:** Enhancing access to capital is of utmost importance, as it emerged as the most commonly cited challenge among homestay owners. Prompt resolution of this issue is crucial, as the survival and growth of homestay businesses heavily rely on adequate financial resources. The government can play a proactive role by encouraging angel investors and venture capitalists to invest in homestay businesses, providing them with the necessary capital infusion.

**Promote Homestays through Government Initiatives:** Given that many homestays are operated by middle-class families with limited financial means, the ability to allocate substantial funds for advertising and promotion becomes challenging. To overcome this barrier, the government can step in and support homestay promotion through generic advertising campaigns. By leveraging government initiatives, homestays can receive wider visibility and attract more potential customers.

**Address Corruption at the Tehsil Level:** To curb corruption and streamline administrative processes, corrective measures should be implemented at the

Tehsil level. The government should establish specific time limits for issuing approvals, certificates, and benefits related to homestay operations. By ensuring timely and transparent procedures, delays and instances of corruption can be significantly reduced, providing a conducive environment for homestay owners to operate.

**Develop an Effective Monitoring System:** The government should establish a robust monitoring system to maintain accurate records of homestay owners. This system would enable efficient implementation of the homestay scheme and ensure compliance with regulations and guidelines. By effectively monitoring the sector, potential issues can be identified and resolved promptly, promoting the growth and sustainability of the homestay industry.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and stakeholders can foster an enabling environment for homestay owners, facilitating their access to capital, promoting their businesses, combating corruption, and ensuring effective implementation of the homestay scheme. These efforts will not only contribute to the growth of the homestay industry but also generate employment opportunities and support the overall development of the tourism sector.

### **Limitations and Future Scope of Study**

The present study acknowledges two notable limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the study focused exclusively on registered homestays with the government of Uttarakhand, thereby excluding unregistered homestays from the analysis. This limitation may limit the generalizability of the findings to the entire population of homestays operating in the region. Future research could address this limitation by including a broader range of homestays, both registered and unregistered, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the industry.

Secondly, the study did not incorporate the perspective of customers who have stayed in these homestays. By neglecting the customers' viewpoints, valuable insights into their satisfaction levels, preferences, and experiences were not captured. Considering customer satisfaction is crucial as it directly impacts the success or failure of homestays. Future studies should aim to include the perspectives of customers to gain a holistic understanding of the homestay experience and to identify areas for improvement.

To address these limitations and enhance the knowledge in this field, future studies can be conducted. Specifically, conducting research on customer

satisfaction with homestays would provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to their satisfaction and the areas that require attention and improvement. Additionally, future studies can consider expanding the sample size to include a larger number of homestay owners and customers, allowing for a more comprehensive and representative analysis. By addressing these limitations and conducting further research, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the homestay industry, its challenges, and the factors that influence its success.

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