

Homestay Tourism Engagement and Migration Intentions: Mediating Roles of Livelihood Perception and Community Well-being



Sapna Rauthan¹, Dr. Atul Razdan²

¹Research Scholar, Hotel Management and Tourism, Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand University, Email: rauthansapna@gmail.com

²Supervisor, Professor, School of Management & Commerce, Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand University, Email: somc.atul@dbuu.ac.in

Abstract

There are many socio-economic issues in Garhwal region of Uttarakhand such as distress migration which has promoted the growth of home stay tourism as an important community-based tourism model for sustainable rural development. This research is aimed at exploring the effect of the homestay tourism involvement on the prevention of distress migration mediated by livelihood perception and community welfare. The research design employed was a quantitative study and the data obtained were primary data by distributing questionnaires to 500 respondents who are related to homestay tourism. The conceptual framework proposed was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results show that the involvement in homestay tourism has a positive effect on the perception of residents' livelihood and the well-being of the community, which are factors in reducing the intention to migrate due to distress. The study also verifies the success of the mediating role of livelihood perception and community well-being between the involvement in homestay tourism and preventing from distress migration. The results demonstrate the potential of homestay tourism as a sustainable business solution for sustaining the local economy, improving social welfare and facilitating the attraction of residents to stay in mountain areas. The study has significant theoretical and practical implications for the design of community-based tourism policies for sustainable development and reduction of migration in the Himalayan region for policymakers and tourism planners.

Keyword: Homestay Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Livelihood Perception, Community Well-being, Distress Migration, PLS-SEM and Uttarakhand.

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most powerful sectors that has been affecting the economic growth, employment creation and regional development worldwide. In addition to its economic value, tourism in recent years has also become a tool to foster social inclusion and boost livelihoods, as well as sustainable community development, especially in rural and mountain areas where traditional employment prospects are scarce. Community based tourism has brought a change in the focus of tourism development from destination oriented to people oriented, which is based on the active participation of local communities in tourism activities. This interaction can lead to the generation of income, strengthen social cohesion, increase local capabilities, and improve overall quality of life. In this way, tourism is no longer considered only as a commercial activity but has come to be seen as a tool for inclusive development, have a positive impact on reducing disparities in development in the region and an effective instrument for the development of rural communities. Rural tourism is one of the types of tourism, and homestay tourism is among them that is gaining much attention as a community based tourism model and model that facilitates inclusive

and sustainable development. Homestay sites provide added livelihoods to local families, through the use of existing household resources, and they help to maintain the authenticity of rural life and cultural traditions. The model creates additional revenue and fosters entrepreneurship, community involvement and women and youth engagement in tourism activities. Nowadays, homestay tourism is seen as an effective method to enhance rural livelihoods and make sure that the economic and social impacts of the tourism industry stay within the host community. (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015).

More recent research also highlights the role of community based tourism in fostering inclusive economic growth through job creation in the community, encouraging entrepreneurship, enhancing community resilience and helping in sustainable rural development. As mountain communities' economic opportunities shrink, there has been a growing importance of tourism-based livelihood diversification, while homestay tourism has been recognized as a successful tool for enhancing the livelihood of the mountain people without depending on their migration. (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021) The benefits of tourism related to self-

confidence, financial stability. A stable employment and income generation in the tourism sector attracts local communities to view tourism as a sustainable livelihood and promotes their enthusiasm to further develop it in the future. (Uysal et al, 2016)

Rural people in Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) remain facing many issues like low employment opportunity, agriculture-based livelihood, poor infrastructure, distress migration etc. in the region in particular in Uttarakhand. Due to these socio-economic factors, several mountain hamlets have been on the verge of depopulation and several 'ghost villages' have come up in the Garhwal region. It is not only the local economy that has been impacted by the ongoing out-migration of the working-age population, but so have traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and community cohesion. In this context, homestay tourism can be considered as a potential livelihood diversification measure as it creates jobs in the local community, provides additional income to the household, and helps the residents to take part in the economic activities related to tourism, which promotes sustainable rural development (Kumar & Misra, 2024). While a large number of studies have specifically explored the economic, socio-cultural and environmental implications of homestay tourism, little has been done to examine the relationship between tourism engagement and the migration outcomes associated with changes in livelihood perception and community wellbeing, especially in mountain areas. The existing literature mainly discusses the impacts of tourism on income generation, employment generation or tourist satisfaction, without sufficiently analyzing the interconnections between the engagement with tourism, perceived improvement in livelihoods, community well-being and migration. Considering the Garhwal region, where sustainable livelihood is crucial to curbing distress migration and bolstering rural resilience (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021), addressing this gap is especially vital.

Positive attitudes towards the improvement of livelihoods are strongly related to increased satisfaction with life, involvement in community and attitudes towards sustainable tourism. These attitudes foster resilience in the area and further sustain active participation in community-based tourism development. (Wani et al, 2024)

With this background in mind, the current study aims to identify the mediating role of livelihood perception and community well being between homestay tourism engagement and distress migration in Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. The study seeks to empirically establish the benefits of active involvement in homestay tourism for livelihoods and socio-economic wellbeing that could in turn help mitigate distress migration. Combining these perspectives in one conceptual perspective fills the gap in the current literature on community-based

tourism and provides practical implications for policy makers, tourism planners and local stakeholders wanting to create sustainable rural development in mountain areas (UN Tourism, 2023).

Objectives:-

- 1.To analyse the effect of Homestay tourism involvement on satisfaction of locals and the prevention of distress migration in Garhwal region of Uttarakhand.
- 2.To explore how the livelihood perception and community well-being mediator between the homestay tourism engagement and the prevention of distress migration.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Homestay Tourism Engagement

A majority of the respondents indicated that they receive a low income due to homestay tourism. Majority of the respondents stated that income from homestay tourism is low. The notion of homestay tourism engagement is now seen as a basic element of community-based tourism that involves the active involvement of local communities in the planning, decision-making and service provision process of tourism. The use of the homestay concept in tourism is different from traditional tourism because it allows tourists to have genuine experiences and the host families to make use of their local resources, traditional culture, traditional knowledge, and house for the benefit of the tourists. Engagement does not stop with the accommodation, but is also reflected in entrepreneurship, enhancing community involvement and encouraging local control of tourism development. The active participation in homestay tourism can help rural households diversify their income sources, maintain their cultural identity and strengthen social cohesion. Therefore the importance of greater participation in homestay tourism in the process of sustainable tourism development and in improving the socio-economic situation of the host community is of crucial importance (Kontogeorgopoulos et al. 2015).

The importance of community participation for successful homestay tourism has been pointed out in recent research. The local involvement in planning, decision making and delivery of tourism services increases local ownership and boosts competitiveness and long term sustainability of tourism projects. Moreover, community managed homestays create diversified livelihood opportunities and maintain the local traditions and cultural

heritage. (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Bhalla et al., 2016; Sood et al., 2017). Tourism and homestay engagement and livelihood perceptions are becoming a growing concern in tourism research. The results of the study indicated that active involvement in homestay tourism can provide various livelihood

opportunities which can be seen from the creation of employment, the growth of household income, the development of local entrepreneurship and utilizing local resources and indigenous knowledge. The development of homestay tourism also has an impact on improving residents' self-confidence in the tourism industry as a source of income, so that they have a high motivation to be involved in tourist activities. This means that communities that are involved in homestay tourism see greater economic security and sustainability of their livelihoods (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021). In addition, recent studies indicate that the success of homestay tourism not only relies on the availability of tourism resources but also on the level of participation and involvement of local people in tourism development. Greater community participation promotes knowledge transfer, capacity building, and foster increased partnerships among stakeholders resulting in better livelihood perceptions. But there is limited empirical evidence that looks at this relationship in the Himalayan region especially with regards to distress migration and homestay tourism. Hence, it is important to explore the effect of homestay tourism engagement on the perception of livelihoods to understand the role of tourism in sustainable rural development and increase the quality of life of local people. (Bansal et al., 2024).

Engaging the community has been identified as one of the key elements of successful community-based tourism. Involving local residents in tourism planning, management, and benefits sharing helps create destination sustainability, build local ownership and build local buy-in to long-term tourism development. The outcomes are very significant in rural tourism destinations, where tourism is more considered as a community development program than as an economic activity. (Okazaki, 2008).

2.2 Livelihood Perception and community well being

Livelihood perception is a measure of how much people feel that the economic security, employment opportunities, or quality of life of working in tourism is enhanced. Positive livelihood perception occurs when homestay owners in the community feel that there are concrete benefits from the homestay tourism, including their household incomes, self-employment, skill improvement, and diversified income sources. The perceived benefits create an incentive to involve more people in tourism activities and boost the confidence on tourism as a sustainable livelihood option in the community. Thus, the concept of livelihood perception is crucial for the knowledge of how tourism affects residents' perception and sustainability of community-based tourism projects. Therefore, the notion of livelihood perception has emerged as a significant construct to understand the effect of tourism on the attitude and

support of residents to CBT projects. (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021).

Some empirical evidence has shown that a positive perception of livelihoods is a significant factor in improving people's lives in tourism-dependent regions. A sense of economic security, social satisfaction, and future confidence are often linked to residents' perceptions that tourism offers stable jobs, multiple incomes and skill development. These positive perceptions also foster community engagement in community activities and build trust between stakeholders, which ultimately enhances the overall wellbeing of the community. Therefore, the residents' livelihood perception is included among the important factors determining their quality of life and support of the tourism development in the region. (Woo et al., 2015).

The evidence indicates that livelihood diversification via tourism also helps to raise the incomes of households and increases the economic resilience and community members' confidence in the employment opportunities available in their community. The revenue from tourism is steady which helps to enhance the involvement in community-based tourism activities and residents' acceptance towards long-term tourism development. The sustainable development of rural communities comes from these livelihood improvements (Wani et al., 2024; OECD, 2024).

It has also been recently highlighted that when local communities feel the benefits of tourism are improving their livelihood, these benefits go beyond the economic dimension. Strengthening livelihoods leads to better welfare of the household and also contributes to building social relationship, social resilience and overall life satisfaction. In spite of these findings, very few studies have considered this relationship in the context of homestay tourism in the Himalayan region where tourism has become an important avenue for livelihood diversification. Thus, the effect of livelihood perception on community well-being must be investigated in order to gain a full understanding of homestay tourism's development role in the community (Uysal et al., 2016).

The sustainable livelihoods approach has increasingly been applied to the tourism sector given the fact that when local communities are engaged in tourism enterprises, the sector can positively contribute to the livelihoods of these communities through various means such as strengthening assets, diversifying income, increasing the communities' vulnerability to economic shocks, and improving long-term livelihood security. (Ashley & Carney, 1999).

2.3 Community Well-being and distress migration

Community well-being is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that is measured by a person's overall satisfaction with life and the community's overall

quality of life enhanced by better economic conditions, social relationships, opportunities and psychological satisfaction. Community well-being in the context of homestay tourism is more than just economic benefits; it includes better social cohesion, cultural heritage and culture, community involvement, and better living standards. Local people are more likely to be positive about tourism and will be more willing to engage in community-based tourism when they believe it adds value to their lives. Thus, development of the community well-being is one of the important factors to consider in the assessment of the sustainability and success of homestay tourism in rural areas. (Woo et al., 2018).

Community well-being goes beyond economic benefits to the enhancement of social relations, cultural identity, services provided to the community, and the quality of life of the people living within it. In recent years, tourism policies have also acknowledged that the enhancement of community well-being through locally managed tourism is a way to inclusive rural development and that attachment to the place is one of the elements that can contribute to tourism sustainability in the long term. (Wani et al., 2024).

The importance of community well-being is growing and is now seen as a key goal of sustainable tourism, and not just one for economic development, but for the enhancement of people's social relations, emotional well-being, environmental quality and quality of life. Tourism development is considered to be sustainable if it positively impacts these wider aspects of community health and welfare (McCool & Moisey, 2001).

Previous studies have pointed to the importance of improving the well-being of the community, which in turn improves the satisfaction of living in the community and reinforces the sense of belonging to the community, in reducing migration tendencies. Residents of villages are more likely to feel their village is a good place to live and work when tourism improves employment, infrastructure, social relationships, and has a greater level of involvement. The positive outcomes lessen the economic and social incentives that can drive rural household migration in search of better opportunities. Thus, community welfare has been considered as one of the vital elements for sustainable rural development and reducing distress migration. (Woo et al., 2015).

In recent tourism research, the overall well-being of local residents is also found to be a key factor in sustainable community development, in addition to economic growth. In areas with high rural outmigration rates due to poor livelihoods, better community wellbeing can improve the social resilience of communities, thereby helping to encourage people to stay in their local communities. Empirical studies on the link between well-being of a community and its capacity to prevent distress

migration through homestay tourism, however, are limited, especially in the Himalayan region of India. Hence it is of vital importance to explore this link to understand the contribution of homestay tourism to overall rural sustainability. (UN Tourism, 2023).

2.4 Homestay Tourism Engagement and Distress Migration Prevention

Distress migration is the process of people or families moving from their home countries because they lack access to adequate livelihoods and employment, have poor infrastructure and have long-term socio-economic problems. The condition of distress migration has emerged as a serious development problem in the Himalayan states especially in Uttarakhand, leading to population loss, deserted villages, shortage of labour and deterioration of local culture. From this perspective, homestay tourism has been considered as a viable livelihood diversification means for rural households to earn their living in their own community. Homestay tourism can also alleviate the economic pressure that push people, especially the youth, to move to other places for jobs as it generates local jobs and increases economic resilience. In this context, enhancing the involvement of the community in homestay tourism can play a considerable part in reduction of distress migration as well as in sustainable rural development. (Kumar & Misra, 2024).

The recent policy measures focus on the possibility of rural tourism business as a year-round employment opportunity, rather than relying on migration to survive economically; it also highlights the need to promote local business and entrepreneurship, especially through homestay development. Enhancing the livelihoods of the mountain communities through tourism is therefore seen as one of the good methods to encourage balanced regional development. (OECD, 2024; Bansal et al., 2024).

In recent years, the potential of homestay tourism as a viable means to solve outmigration problem from rural areas and to provide sustainable livelihoods opportunities within the rural communities has been increasingly realized. Engaging in homestay tourism leads to direct and indirect employment, creates entrepreneurial opportunities, and deploys local resources, thereby decreasing the reliance of locals on migration for economic survival. Furthermore, the involvement of tourists in the rural area helps to build the confidence of residents in the rural development projects and increase their participation in the process, which results in rural settlements being more attractive places to live and work. This means that communities that are more involved in homestay tourism are more likely to have less migration pressure, and higher socio-economic resilience. (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021).

While the economic benefit of homestay tourism has

been recognised in earlier research, few studies have focused on the capacity of homestay tourism to prevent distress migration, through sustained community involvement. The research gap is more visible in the Himalayan region where the migration is still problem despite increase in the tourism activities in the region for rural development. It is therefore crucial to understand how the engagement of homestay tourism can help prevent distress migration when designing effective tourism policies to ensure inclusive growth, improve the capabilities of rural communities' livelihoods and promote the willingness of the communities to stay in their native village.(Kumar & Misra, 2024).

Rural tourism is well recognized as a successful policy for the improvement of rural areas, since it promotes employment, adds local entrepreneurship, increases investment in the rural infrastructure and offers alternative income sources that help to make rural areas less dependent on migration (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015).

2.5 Mediating Roles of Livelihood Perception and Community Well-being

Past research has consistently shown that active participation in homestay tourism contributes to the residents' perception of their livelihoods, bringing about multiple ways of income generation and enhancing economic resilience. Local communities engage in various tourism-related activities such as accommodation services, food preparation, cultural activities, handicrafts and other activities, which leads to their increased economic status and employment opportunities. These can reduce poverty and enhance entrepreneurship skills, and foster investment in local tourism development for the future. Furthermore, residents that believe they are receiving tangible economic gains from tourism are more likely to have positive attitudes towards homestay initiatives and are more likely to actively endorse the growth of homestay.

The results indicate that the higher the engagement levels of homestay tourism, the more positive the livelihood perceptions of local communities are. (Pasanchay& Schott, 2021).The connection between homestay tourism engagement and prevention of distress migration is not always straightforward and is mediated by the benefits of the socio-economic aspects of the local community. Residents who are active in homestay tourism are more likely to feel their livelihood has improved due to their improved income, employment opportunities, entrepreneurial activities and skill development. Having these positive livelihood perceptions increases their confidence in their local economic opportunities, decreasing the need to migrate in search of other livelihoods. Thus, livelihood perception is one of the significant factors as a leverage to prevent distress migration caused by homestay tourism engagement. (Pasanchay& Schott, 2021). Moreover, if there are

positive changes in livelihood perception, this will contribute to the wellbeing of the community by improving the satisfaction of the people, social cohesion and their involvement in the development of the community. These communities show stronger place attachment, optimism about future development and local tourism support when they experience high levels of wellbeing.

These positive outcomes foster the idea for residents to stay in their own communities, which helps to prevent distress migration over the longer term(Woo et al., 2015). While various studies have focused on homestay tourism, livelihood improvement and community well-being, empirical studies that combine these elements in a single framework to understand the prevention of distress migration, especially in the Himalayan region are scarce. Those intervening variables – livelihood perception and community well-being – are also examined to gain a richer understanding of the mechanisms by which homestay tourism engagement affects the outcomes of migration. Based on this integrated approach, this work adds to the existing body of knowledge on community-based tourism and has important implications for policy makers interested in the promotion of sustainable rural development and in the alleviation of distress migration.(Bansal et al., 2024).

Previous studies on tourism have shown consistently that residents who feel that tourism has a positive impact on their quality of life and the welfare of their community are more likely to be pro-tourism and to actively engage in local tourism activities. They help to establish a positive perception that can be channeled into the positive contribution of tourism for sustainable community development (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011).

Hypotheses Development

H1: The Homestay tourism engagement is significant positive influence to livelihood perception.

H2: The livelihood perception has a significant positive relationship with the well-being of the community.

H3: Distress migration prevention is positively affected by community well-being at a high level.

H4: There is significant positive relationship between the level of involvement in homestay tourism and the prevention of migration in distress.

H5: Livelihood perception is a mediator of the relationship between engagement in homestay tourism and prevention of distress migration.

H6: There is indirect relationship between homestay tourism engagement and distress migration prevention through the mediator variable of community well-being.

H7: There is a mediating effect between homestay

tourism engagement and distress migration prevention by livelihood perception and community wellbeing.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study used a cross-sectional research design with quantitative approaches to explore the relationships between homestay tourism engagement, livelihood perception, community well-being and distress migration prevention in Garhwal region, Uttarakhand. A quantitative method was appropriate for this study because the study is an attempt to test the proposed conceptual framework empirically and to measure the direct and indirect relationships between the study constructs statistically.

The nature of the research is explanatory type because it seeks to know how the homestay tourism engagement can help to prevent distress migration. In particular, it investigates the role of livelihood perception and community well-being as a mediating variable in understanding this relationship. The proposed framework is based on 7 hypotheses involving direct and sequential mediation effects between the latent constructs.

The survey design used in collecting the data was cross sectional, due to the respondents were sampled at a specific time and time only, with a structured questionnaire. It is a common design used in tourism, hospitality and community development research when exploring behavioural perceptions and evaluating theoretical relationships between various constructs. The quantitative design also allows for the use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) that can be used to analyse several relationships in the proposed conceptual framework.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, India, which is well known for its natural beauty, heritage, religious importance, and increasing popularity as a tourist destination, especially for rural tourism. In recent years, homestay tourism has become one of the significant livelihood options of the local communities of several districts of Garhwal, enabling them to diversify their livelihoods, create employment opportunities and sustain their livelihoods, preserve and promote their culture and participate in tourism activities.

3.3 Population, Sampling Technique and Data Collection

Many of the rural areas of Garhwal still are facing distress migration because of limited employment

opportunities, poor infrastructure and seasonal livelihoods. Government of India and Government of Uttarakhand have taken steps to overcome these challenges by promoting the development of homestays in rural regions as a viable tourism alternative. Hence, the Garhwal is an appropriate region to study the relationship between involvement in homestay tourism and livelihood perception, betterment of well-being of communities and preventing distress migration. The population is a group of individuals that share a characteristic of interest. The population consists of a group of people with a common attribute of interest. The target population consisted of persons directly or indirectly connected with homestay tourism in Garhwal such as homestay owners, family members of homestay operators and local people engaged in tourism activities. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling to make sure that the respondents have good knowledge and experience in homestay tourism and socio-economic implications.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed with previously validated measurement scales with appropriate contextual modification to fit the purpose of the current study. Google Forms and face-to-face when needed, were used to administer the questionnaire. Out of the questionnaires, 500 that were complete and consistent were screened and retained. The final sample size is deemed to be sufficient for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and for testing purposes of direct and mediation effects as well.

3.4 Measurement of Constructs

Research instrument was divided into 2 parts. The first part gathered information regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as sex, age, education, occupation, district and involvement in homestay tourism. The second part was the measurement of the four constructs of the conceptual framework, which are the constructs of Homestay Tourism Engagement (HTE), Livelihood Perception (LP), Community Well-being (CWB), and Distress Migration Prevention (DMP). The ratings for all construct items were given on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). The items for measurement were adopted from the relevant studies in tourism, sustainable livelihood, community development and migration sectors with slight modification in the context of homestay tourism in Garhwal region.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data collected were coded, screened and analyzed with the appropriate statistical software. Demographic characteristics of the respondents were initially summarized using descriptive statistics. Cronbach's Alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), indicator loadings, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to evaluate the reliability

and validity of the measurement model. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed hypotheses in the software of SMART PLC. The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapping to understand the significance of direct, indirect and sequential mediation effects. This type of analysis is suitable for analyzing complex causal relationships with multiple latent variables and mediation processes.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The survey was conducted on a voluntary basis. Participants were briefed about the academic research before they filled out the questionnaire. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were ensured throughout the study, and personal details were not shared. The data gathered were only used for research purposes and analysed in an aggregated form to ensure privacy and ethics.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Introduction

The study results obtained from the field by the study team on the basis of primary data gathered from 500 respondents belonging to homestay tourism in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand are presented in this section. The study aimed at analyzing the relationships between Homestay Tourism

Engagement (HTE), Livelihood Perception (LP), Community Well-being (CWB), and Distress Migration Prevention (DMP).

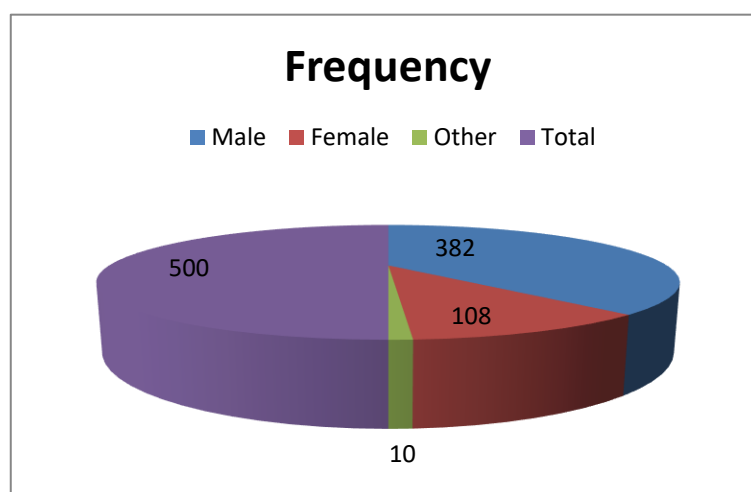
The proposed hypotheses were tested by the technique of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The analysis was carried out in two stages. The first step involved an assessment of the measurement model through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The second stage involved the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships, direct, mediation, and sequential mediation.

4.2 Respondents' Demographic Profile

Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The profile gives an overview of males and females, age and education level, occupation, district of residence, and level of involvement with homestay tourism. The gender distribution of the respondents is shown in table 1. Out of the total 500 valid respondents, 382 (76.4%) were male, 108 (21.6%) were female, and 10 (2.0%) identified as other. From the results, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents were male. This distribution is due to the higher involvement of males in homestay tourism and livelihoods of the study area.

Table 1: demographic profile of the respondents (N = 500)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	382	76.4%
Female	108	21.6%
Other	10	2%
Total	500	100%



Source: Field Survey (2025-26)

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to understand the respondents' perceptions regarding the key constructs of the study. A total of 500 responses were analyzed on a 5-point Likert scale.

Livelihood Perception showed the highest mean score ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.99$) indicating that homestay tourism has contributed positively to household income, jobs and economic security of the respondents, as can be seen in Table 2. Positive perceptions were also found in the Community Well-being scale, with mean scores ranging from 3.82 to 4.26 ($SD \approx 0.86$ – 0.95), which includes positive changes in cultural preservation, social cohesion,

cleanliness, and general life satisfaction. The mean score of Distress Migration Prevention was 3.98 ($SD = 0.98$), indicating that local communities have high confidence that homestay development can help to prevent distress migration of youth. The government support was rated moderately favourably ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.02$). Overall, the descriptive results suggest generally positive attitudes towards homestay tourism engagement and their contribution in improving livelihood and community well being in Garhwal region. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the study constructs ($N = 500$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs (N = 500)

Construct	Mean	SD	Mode
Livelihood Perception	4.19	0.99	5
Community Well-being	4.04	0.92	4
Distress Migration Prevention	3.98	0.98	4
Government Support	4.06	1.02	4
Overall Satisfaction	4.14	0.89	5

Source: Field Survey (2025-26)

4.4 Measurement Model Assessment

To test the constructs' reliability and validity, the measurement model was tested with the method of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The reliability of the indicators was tested using outer factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) was used for internal consistency reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used for convergent validity, and

Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used for discriminant validity. All the measurement model criteria exceeded the recommended values indicating acceptable psychometric properties. The measurement model was also assessed as shown in Table 3. Construct Cronbach's Alpha Composite Reliability(CR)AVE

Table 3: Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Homestay Tourism Engagement	0.882	0.915	0.682
Livelihood Perception	0.874	0.908	0.665
Community Well-being	0.891	0.921	0.703
Distress Migration Prevention	0.836	0.892	0.735

Source: Field Survey (2025-26)

Table 4: Discriminant Validity – HTMT Matrix

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1. Homestay Tourism Engagement	-			
2. Livelihood Perception	0.712	-		

3. Community Well-being	0.685	0.734	-	
4. Distress Migration Prevention	0.658	0.691	0.702	-

Note: All HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.85, confirming discriminate validity.

Source: Field Survey (2025-26)

4.5 Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was tested to assess the hypothesized relationships between the constructs, after the measurement model was confirmed. Bootstrapping (5,000 resampled data sets) was used to evaluate the importance of the structural paths. To assess the explanatory and predictive potential of the proposed model, the path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size

(f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) were analyzed. The direct effects tested the effects of Homestay Tourism Engagement on Livelihood Perception and Distress Migration Prevention; Livelihood Perception on Community Well-being; and Community Well-being on Distress Migration Prevention. The indirect effects involved testing the indirect effect of LPE and CWE individually and sequentially on the relationship between HTE and DMP.

Table 5: Hypotheses Testing Results (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision	f^2
H1	Engagement → Livelihood Perception	0.612	12.45	0.000	Supported	0.378
H2	Livelihood Perception → Community Well-being	0.548	9.87	0.000	Supported	0.265
H3	Community Well-being → Migration Prevention	0.473	8.12	0.000	Supported	0.192
H4	Engagement → Migration Prevention	0.285	5.34	0.000	Supported	0.089

Note: R^2 (Migration Prevention) = 0.642; Q^2 = 0.451

Table 6: Mediation Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Indirect β	t-value	p-value	Decision	Hypothesis
H5	Engagement → Livelihood Perception → Migration Prevention	0.335	7.68	0.000	Supported	H5
H6	Engagement → Community Well-being → Migration Prevention	0.261	6.45	0.000	Supported	H6
H7	Engagement → Livelihood → Well-being → Migration Prevention (Sequential)	0.159	5.92	0.000	Supported	H7

Table 5 and Table 6 - Source: Field Survey (2025-26)

4.6 Summary of Results

The empirical analysis supports the conceptual framework proposed. The measurement model data showed good reliability and validity with Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, and HTMT ratio

for all constructs as recommended. The results of the structural model indicated that H1 and H4 significantly positively affected by Homestay Tourism Engagement with a percentage of 60% and 78%,

respectively. Community Well-being (H2) was improved by Livelihood Perception which had a positive effect on Distress Migration Prevention (H3). Moreover, the mediation analysis showed that Livelihood Perception (H5) and Community Well-being (H6) alone mediated between Homestay Tourism Engagement and Distress Migration Prevention. More importantly, the sequential mediation of Livelihood Perception and Community Well-being was found to be significant (H7) as the engagement with homestay tourism positively affects the livelihood perception which in turn positively affects the community well-being which ultimately

4. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, the conceptual framework of this study is empirically supported in the context of Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh (India) with the presence of two intervening variables Livelihood Perception and Community Well-being between Homestay Tourism Engagement and Distress Migration Prevention.

The results of the analysis of the positive contribution of Homestay Tourism Engagement to the Livelihood Perception (H1) showed that involvement in homestay activities had a significant positive impact on livelihood perception of the local community. This discovery is in line with the sustainable livelihood approach and points to the potential of homestay tourism to provide a suitable tool for the economic diversification of rural areas. Livelihood Perception also had a significant positive effect on Community Well-being (H2) that in turn led to Distress Migration Prevention (H3). The findings highlight the interdependency between economic benefits, social-cultural benefits and intentions to migrate. The result of the Homestay Tourism Engagement and Distress Migration Prevention (H4) relationship is directly positive, meaning that the more that youth become involved in homestay activities, the less likely that they are to migrate to the cities. However more important, the mediation analysis indicated very strong indirect effects. Both Livelihood Perception (H5) and Community Well-being (H6) partially mediated this relationship. The sequential mediation path (H7) was also supported, indicating that homestay tourism first improves the perception of livelihood, which, in turn, has a positive effect on the well-being of the community, which eventually reduces the odds of distress migration.

The policy implications of these findings highlight the need to create targeted interventions, including the implementation of easier subsidy procedures, skill development training for hospitality and marketing as well as community involvement in homestay planning. There is moderate satisfaction with government support indicating that the implementation of the policy is not successful at the grassroots level. Specific attention must be given to make women more involved and encourage

helps in preventing distress migration among the youth in Garhwal region. The overall results indicate that the economic benefits of homestay tourism, community-based livelihoods and mitigation of distress migration in rural Uttarakhand is very important. The model showed good explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.642$ in the Distress Migration Prevention model) and predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.451$ in the Distress Migration Prevention model), thus confirming the theoretical framework of this study.

sustainable and environmentally friendly practices for future sustainability.

In an ideal theoretical sense, this research explores the addition of a sequential mediation model to the existing body of literature on tourism-migration. Ideally, the present study adds a sequential mediation model to the existing body of tourism-migration literature, in the context of mountain economies. It has proven that the economic and non-economic benefits of homestay tourism go hand in hand in decreasing distress migration

6. Conclusion

The study examines the influence of Homestay Tourism Engagement on the Distress Migration Prevention with the mediating effect of Livelihood Perception and Community Well-being in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. The empirical results are very positively related to the proposed conceptual framework. The seven hypotheses were tested in the field and found to be supported, meaning that homestay tourism development positively improves livelihood opportunities, community well-being, and ultimately lessens distress migration by the local youth. The findings emphasize the potential of the homestay tourism as a one such sustainable strategy for the sustainable development of the Himalayan region. Homestay tourism provides a positive cycle that helps to reduce distress migration through improving the income of households, employment throughout the year, maintaining the cultural heritage, and involving local communities in the tourism. The findings of the significant sequential mediation effect also indicate the process whereby tourism engagement leads to migration prevention. Theoretical implications: The study combines theory on livelihood and community well-being with theory on migration in the context of rural tourism, adding to the literature. It empirically supports a sequential mediation model that can help better understand the mechanisms through which tourism interventions affect socio-economic results in mountain economies. Policy implications of the results are discussed. There is a need to simplify government schemes, provide regular training and capacity building programmes, ensure timely

financial support and encourage community led homestay models. Emphasis should be given to women empowerment and involvement of the youth in the homestay tourism so that the homestay tourism becomes more inclusive and sustainable. The study is restricted to cross sectional and Garhwal region. Longitudinal designs, comparative studies between various states in the Himalayas, and the investigation of the role of other mediating and moderating factors like environmental sustainability

and digital marketing are recommended for future studies.

To conclude, there is very high scope of homestay tourism to create the change in rural livelihoods and reduce distress migration in Uttarakhand. It has the potential to be a model for sustainable tourism-based development if supported by suitable policies and involving the communities.

References: -

1. Acharya, B. P., & Halpenny, E. A. (2013). Homestays as an alternative tourism product for sustainable community development: A case study of women-managed tourism product in rural Nepal. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 10(4), 367–387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2013.779313>
2. Andereck, K. L., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2011). Exploring the nature of tourism and quality of life perceptions among residents. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(3), 248–260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287510362918>
3. Ashley, C., & Carney, D. (1999). Sustainable livelihoods: Lessons from early experience. Department for International Development (DFID), London.
4. Bansal, J., Shukla, P., & Tripathi, P. K. (2024). Homestays: A way forward to sustainable development goals. In A. Sharma (Ed.), *International handbook of skill, education, learning, and research development in tourism and hospitality*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-3895-7_59-1
5. Bhalla, P., Coghlan, A., & Bhattacharya, P. (2016). Homestays' contribution to community-based ecotourism in the Himalayan region of India. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 41(2), 213–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2016.1178474>
6. Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
7. Kontogeorgopoulos, N., Churyen, A., & Duangsaeng, V. (2015). Homestay tourism and the commercialization of the rural home in Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(1), 29–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2013.852119>
8. Kumar, S., & Misra, P. (2024). Remote sensing of 'ghost villages': The challenge of rural migration in the mountainous state of Uttarakhand, India. In *Navigating Natural Hazards in Mountainous Topographies*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-65862-4_14
9. Lane, B., & Kastenholz, E. (2015). Rural tourism: The evolution of practice and research approaches—Towards a new generation concept? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(8–9), 1133–1156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2015.1083997>
10. McCool, S. F., & Moisey, R. N. (Eds.). (2001). *Tourism, recreation and sustainability: Linking culture and the environment*. CABI Publishing.
11. OECD. (2024). *OECD tourism trends and policies 2024*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/80885d8b-en>
12. Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159594>
13. Pasanchay, K., & Schott, C. (2021). Community-based tourism homestays' capacity to advance the Sustainable Development Goals: A holistic sustainable livelihood perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 37, 100784. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100784>
14. Sood, J., Lynch, P., & Anastasiadou, C. (2017). Community non-participation in homestays in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, India. *Tourism Management*, 60, 332–347. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.12.007>
15. Uysal, M., Sirgy, M. J., Woo, E., & Kim, H. (2016). Quality of life (QOL) and well-being research in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 53, 244–261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.12.007>

- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.07.013>
16. Wani, M. D., Batool, N., Dadab, Z. A., & Shah, S. A. (2024). Investigating the impact of community-based tourism on the residents' quality of life and their support for tourism. *Community Development*, 55(1), 138–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2023.2272271>
 17. Woo, E., Kim, H., & Uysal, M. (2015). Measuring tourism impacts and quality of life: A conceptual review. In M. Uysal, R. Perdue, & M. J. Sirgy (Eds.), *Handbook of tourism and quality-of-life research: Enhancing the lives of tourists and residents of host communities* (pp. 57–75). Springer.
 18. Woo, E., Uysal, M., & Sirgy, M. J. (2018). Tourism impact and stakeholders' quality of life. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 42(2), 260–286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348016654971>
 19. UN Tourism. (2024). *Tourism for Rural Development Programme: Impact Report 2021–2024*. UN Tourism.