

## Homestays - Promoting Culture & Entrepreneurship in Manipur

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**Abstract:** Tourism which is one of the most leading sector in boosting a Country's economy, serves as an attractive sector for investors and entrepreneurs, commonly known as Tourism Entrepreneurship. The hospitality and tourism sector has been an efficient area for entrepreneurial attempts e.g., Travel Packages by Club Mahindra, Thomas Cook's tour packages etc. Rural tourism, agri-tourism, homestay and social entrepreneurship are some examples of entrepreneurship that have emerged in the recent years. There is also an increasing trend of 'experiential tourism' to know new things and experiencing cultures, cuisine, traditions etc. Today, the discerning traveller is prepared to go great distances and to unknown places to get the unique experience and give back to the host communities. Homestays have proved to be quite successful in this regard. 'Homestay' is a concept where visitor tourists get to stay with a local family and experience the daily activities of the hosts. Tourists are provided with an accommodation and authentic local experience and interaction with the local host community. They are popular among budget tourists who want to exclusively experience the cultural nuances of the area. Manipur being a land of unique cultural traditions and a varied landscape, possess a great potential of boosting Tourism Entrepreneurship. Shirui Festival of Ukhrul, Orange Festival of Tamenglong, Sangai Festival are some of the major festivals where a huge turnout of people is seen annually. These are held in rural areas of the State where homestays are the main place to stay as hotels are not much prevalent. Homestays are one aspect of sustainable tourism, which aid in boosting rural economy, promoting entrepreneurship and generating employment. Therefore, this study aims to critically analyse the functional efficacy

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of homestays, financial benefit and how it contributes in promoting the culture and entrepreneurial vision and capacity of the locals.

**Keywords:** Tourism, entrepreneurship, homestays, experiential tourism, sustainable tourism.

### **Introduction**

Tourism is one such sector which provides thrust to a country's economy. Tourism provides the tourists with an opportunity to travel to and enjoy at unseen exotic and/or famous places, to experience the local culture, cuisine and handloom and handicrafts. It serves as an escape mechanism for people living in crowded cities with hectic work schedules who rarely get an opportunity to breathe fresh air without any work pressure. In this ever changing world, tourism allows people connect to nature and find peace at faraway places.

Apart from visiting monuments and metropolitan cities, tourists now prefer to enjoy the peace and serenity at the countryside. Rural Tourism finds its significance in this new tourism movement. It is now becoming equally important in Rural India. While on one hand it provides a more individualized holiday experience to tourists by ensuring absolute peace and escape from their busy city life, on the other hand it also contributes in creation of employment for the local community and thus boosting regional employment.

Various forms of rural tourism include farm-based holidays, nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding, adventure sports, hunting and angling, arts and heritage tourism, ethnic tourism etc. The rural tourism in India is a link between the tourist and the villagers and local entrepreneurs of these rural areas. Tourism entrepreneurship typically promotes new investment, creation of jobs and income, and help in promoting their local products e.g., handloom and handicrafts. Such entrepreneurs appear to be valuable players in boosting local economy and the sustainable development of the region where they operate their businesses. Many entrepreneurs in tourism are particularly capable of understanding tourists' needs and desires because they actually value what these tourists look for in their holiday or visit to such rural areas or countryside's.

In view of this, there has been an increasing trend of Homestay tourism or simply put as Homestays. 'Homestay' is a concept where visitor tourists get to stay with a local family and experience the daily activities of the hosts. Tourists are provided with an accommodation and

authentic local experience and interaction with the local host community. They are popular among budget tourists who want to exclusively experience the cultural nuances of the area. Nonetheless, tourists today who visit a new and remote area prefer to stay in Homestays rather than in hotels, in order to get the first-hand experience of the local tradition, cuisine, folklore etc, Regardless of their financial status or budget with which they are travelling, tourists of today seek to ensure themselves of the authentic socio-cultural richness of the experience. The Govt. of India formulated a revolutionary scheme in the tourism sector in June 2016, called the Bed & Breakfast Scheme or the Homestay Scheme that comes under the Incredible India Campaign. The main focus of the Scheme include:

- i) Extend hospitality in places where there was a shortage
- ii) Expand hospitality in places where facilities already existed
- iii) Offer a clean and affordable space for domestic & international guests and
- iv) Enable foreign nationals to understand Indian Culture & Customs through their stay in an Indian household.

Homestay tourism has proved to be quite successful astoday, the discerning traveller is prepared to go great distances and to unknown places to get the unique experience and give back to the host communities.

Our state of Manipur is not far too behind in this new trend of Homestay tourism. Manipur being a land of unique cultural traditions and a varied landscape, possess a great potential of boosting Tourism Entrepreneurship. Shirui Festival of Ukhrul, Orange Festival of Tamenglong, Kwatha Festival of Kwatha Village, The Sangai Festival are some of the major festivals where a huge turnout of people is seen annually. These are held in rural areas of the State where homestays apart from tents are the main place to stay as hotels are not much prevalent.

### **Review of Literature**

Bhuyan and Deka (2019) in their paper state that “an effort has been made to promote rural homestay tourism in northeast India, which consists of eight states that share borders with ASEAN countries. Presented in this paper are best practices and catalytic factors and processes in community-based rural homestay tourism adopted by ASEAN countries. An attempt has been made at rural homestay tourism across the ASEAN countries which can be recreated in Northeast India. “Choudhury, Dutta and Patgiri (2018) state in their paper that

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“the (north east) region has the greatest potential for developing into a powerful force by introducing tourism that will allow them to earn income for their livelihood, which will also increase their quality of life.”Dr. Thomas and Nichinta Devi (2017) in their study found that “presently, accommodation and fooding, strategic and planning management, and facilities are not being effectively used to promote tourism in Manipur and there is an urgent need for the development of a workable role for promoting tourism in Manipur. Furthermore, it was suggested that the study could help in promoting the tourism industry, but surveys are to be conducted periodically to enable hotels able to play the proper role in promoting tourism.”

Nongsiej and Shimray (2017) describe in their study “the exceptionally imperative role of entrepreneurs in the tourism industry in reducing the unemployment rate of skilled and unskilled workers and driving the nation economy. In order for tourism to flourish, it requires a substantial long-term government support, extensive training, research, and planning processes. Entrepreneurship success leads to economic growth for society.”

Acharya and Halpenny (2013) conducted a study on homestay as an alternative product for sustainable community development. They state that in the poor countries where the development of tourism products is not so feasible, and hence the homestay is the best alternative for the development of tourism. Homestay helps improve socio-economic, ethnic, and gender disparities. As per the study, the homestays are successful when there is a good partnership between local community members, line agencies and different levels of government. Proper hospitality training and regular monitoring are required to operate homestay activities.

### **Objectives**

1. To understand the significance of Homestays in promoting Culture in Manipur
2. To find out the role of Homestays in promoting Entrepreneurship in Manipur
3. Finding out the Benefits and Challenges of Homestays in Manipur
4. Suggestions to Homestay Entrepreneurs.

### **Research Methodology of the Study**

The methodology which was followed for conducting the study is discussed under the following heads:

- i) Topic: “Homestays - Promoting Culture & Entrepreneurship in Manipur”

- ii) Operational area of the study: The study was conducted in 5 Districts of Manipur, viz., Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur, Churhandpur & Tamenglong.
- iii) Type of research: The study is mainly exploratory and descriptive in nature.
- iv) Sample Universe: The units of the study are the successfully established and functional Homestays selected from 5 Districts of Manipur.
- v) Size of the Units: Twenty homestays were selected as sample size of the study.
- vi) Type of sampling used: Convenient random sampling was conducted for the homestays under study.
- vii) Type of data used: Primary Data were used for the study.
- viii) Method of data collection: Questionnaire cum interview method was used to collect primary data. The questions were structure and undisguised consisting of both open ended and close ended questions.
- ix) Data presentation & analysis: Data collected are presented in tables & graphs and both quantitative and qualitative analysis were made.

### **Data Analysis**

The following are the analysis and interpretations were made after collecting primary datas from various homestay owners of 5 districts of Manipur.

<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20-30	1	5%
30-40	6	30%
40-50	8	40%
50-60	3	15%
60-70	2	10%
Total	20	100%

**Table 1. Age group of Homestay Owners (Source: Field Survey)**

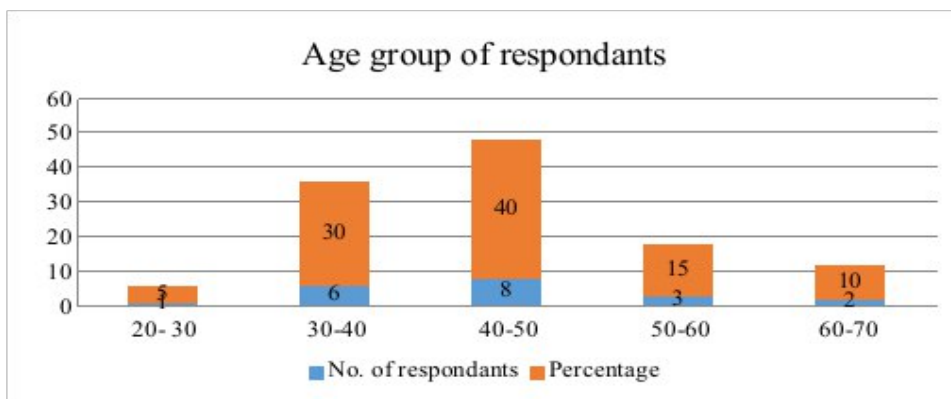


Fig 1: Depicting age group of Homestay owners

Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Entrepreneur	7	35%
Homemaker	8	40%
Retired Personne	1	5%
Businessman	3	15%
Socialworker	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 2: Occupation of respondents (Source: Field Survey)

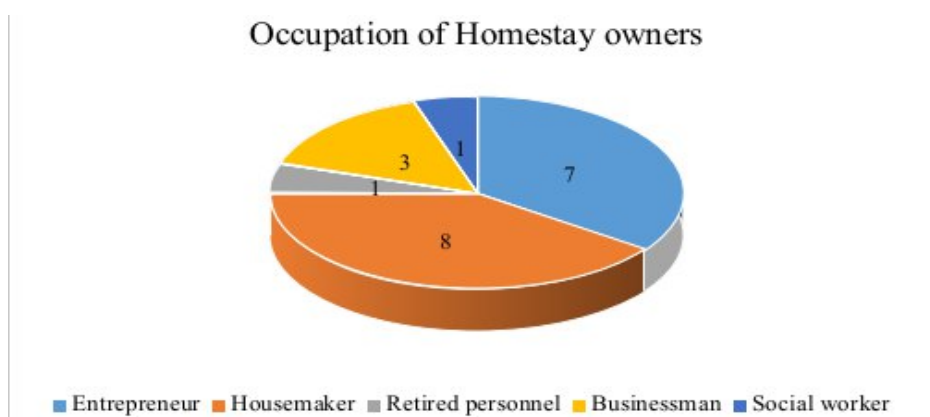
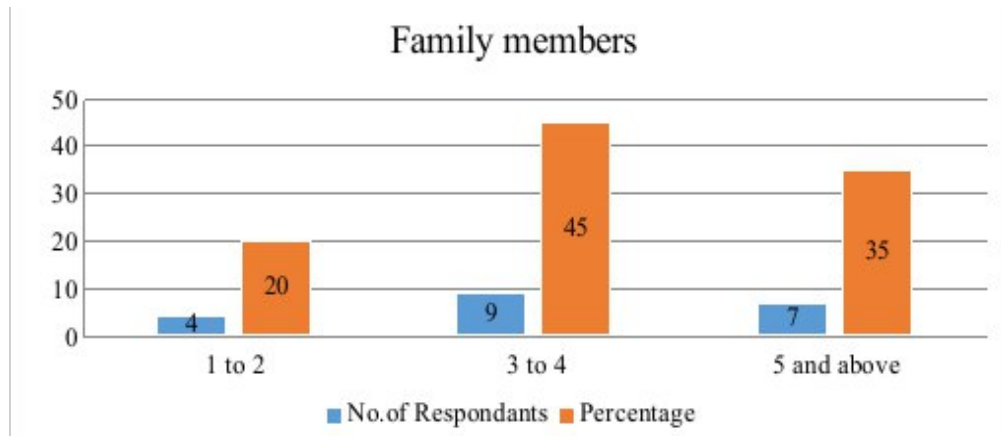


Fig 2: Occupation of Homestay owners

**Interpretation:** The above analysis clearly shows that a maximum of 40% respondents are homemakers followed by entrepreneurs at 35% and 15% other business owners.

No. of family members	No. of respondents	Percentage
1 - 2	4	20%
3 - 4	9	45%
5 and above	7	35%
Total	20	100%

**Table 3: Family members of respondents (Source: Field Survey)**



**Fig 3: Family members of Homestay owners**

**Interpretation:** About 45% of the respondents reside in a family consisting of 3 to 4 members, while 35% live in a family of 5 or more family members and about 20% live with a least number of 1-2 members in the family.

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No. of family members	No. of respondents	Percentage
1 - 2	6	30%
3 - 4	12	60%
5 and above	2	35%
Total	20	100%

**Table 4: Rooms with attached bathroom (Source: Field Survey)**

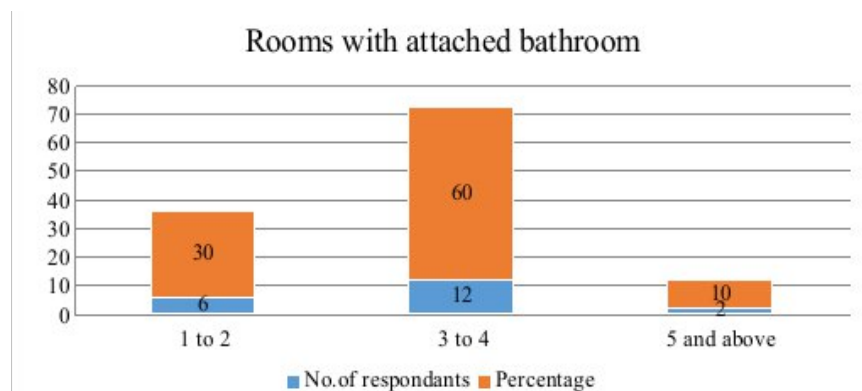
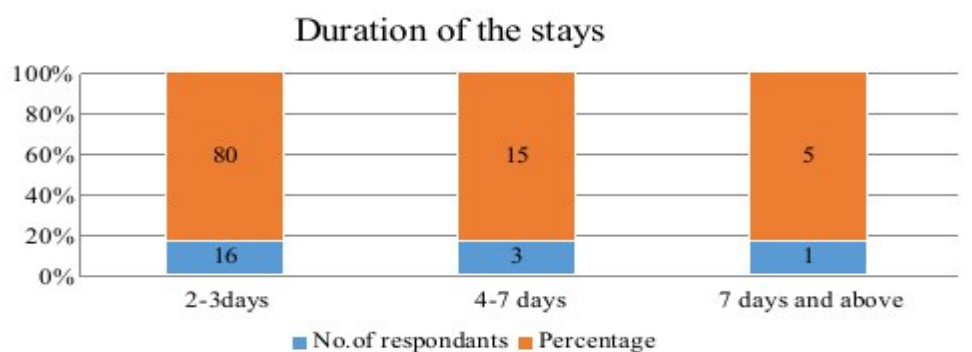


Fig 4: Rooms with attached bathroom

**Interpretation:** According to the data, about 60% of homestays provide 3 to 4 rooms with attached bathrooms, while 30% provide 1 to 2 rooms with attached bathroom and 10% provide 5 and above rooms also with attached bathrooms.

Duration of the stay	No. of respondents	Percentage
2 -3 days	16	80%
4 -7 days	3	15%
7 days and above	1	5%
Total	20	100%

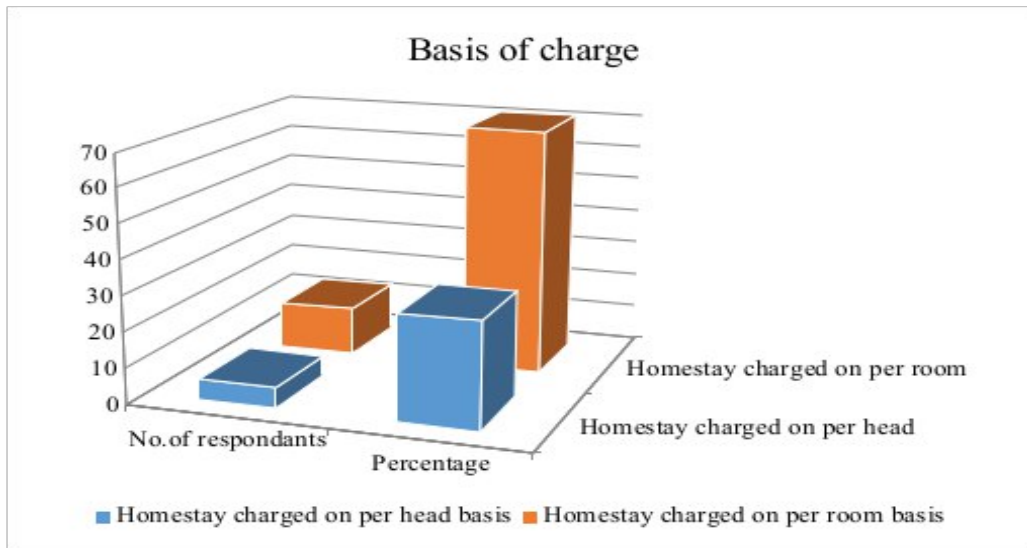
Table 5: Duration of the Stay (Source: Field Survey)



**Interpretation:** From the above analysis we find that 80% of the rooms are occupied for 2 to 3 days, 15% for 4 to 7 days and only 5% stay for 7 days and above.

Basis of charge for homestays	No. of respondents	Percentage
Home stay charged on per head basis	6	30%
Homestay charged on per room basis	14	70%
Total	20	100%

**Table 6: Basis of Charge (Source: Field Survey)**



**Fig 6: Basis of Charge**

**Interpretation:** The graph depicts that 70% of the homestays charge on per room basis while 30% of the homestays charge on per head basis.

Tariffs for per head basis	No.of respondents	Percentage
500 - 800	4	66.67%
900 - 1200	1	16.67%
1300 -1500	1	16.67%
Total	6	100%

**Table 7: Tariffs for per Head Basis (Source: Field Survey)**

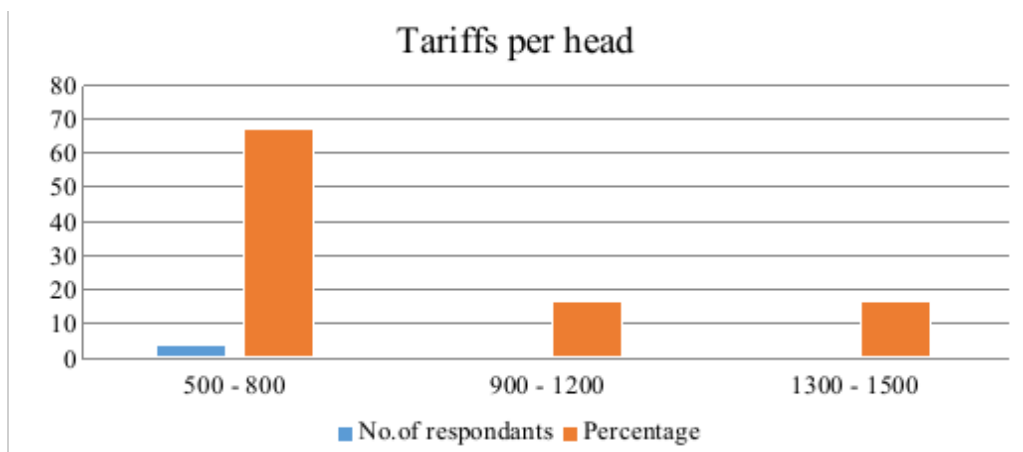
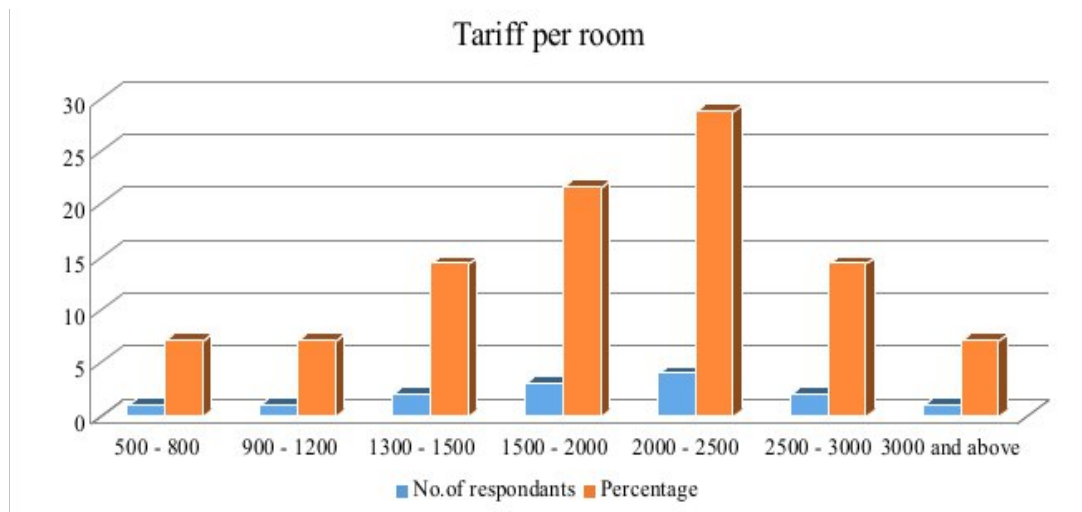


Fig 7: Tariffs per head

**Interpretation:** From the 6 respondents of homestays that charge on per head basis, 66.67% charge tariff between Rs.500/- to Rs.800/- and two equal parts of 16.67% of respondents charge a tariff of Rs.900 to Rs.1200/- and Rs.1300/- to Rs.1500/- respectively.

Duration of the stay	No. of respondents	Percentage
500 - 800	1	7.14%
900 - 1200	1	7.14%
1300 - 1500	2	14.29%
1500 - 2000	3	21.43%
2000 - 2500	4	28.57%
2500 - 3000	2	14.29%
3000 and above	1	7.14%
Total	14	100

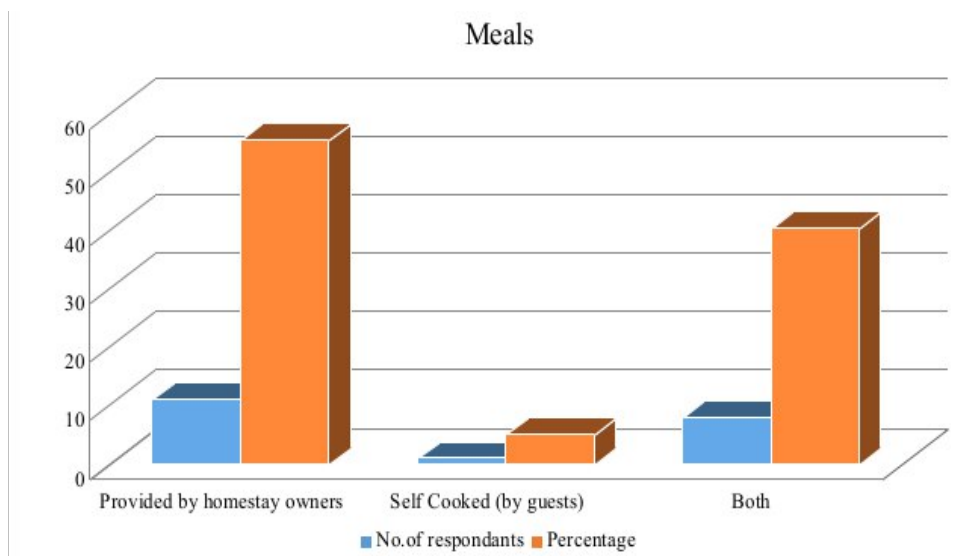
Table 8: Tariffs for per Room Basis (Source: Field Survey)



**Fig 8: Tariffs per room**

**Interpretation:** According to the above analysis, out of the total number of homestays, 14 of them are providing tariffs on per room basis. Around 28.57% are in the range of Rs.2000/- to Rs.2500/-, followed by 21.43% in the range of Rs.1500/- to Rs.2000/- and only 7.14% are in the range of Rs.500/- to Rs.800/-, Rs.900/- to Rs.1200/- and Rs.3000/- and above respectively.

Meals	No. of respondents	Percentage
Provided by homestay owners	11	55%
Self-cooked (by guests)	1	5%
Both	8	40%
Total	20	100%

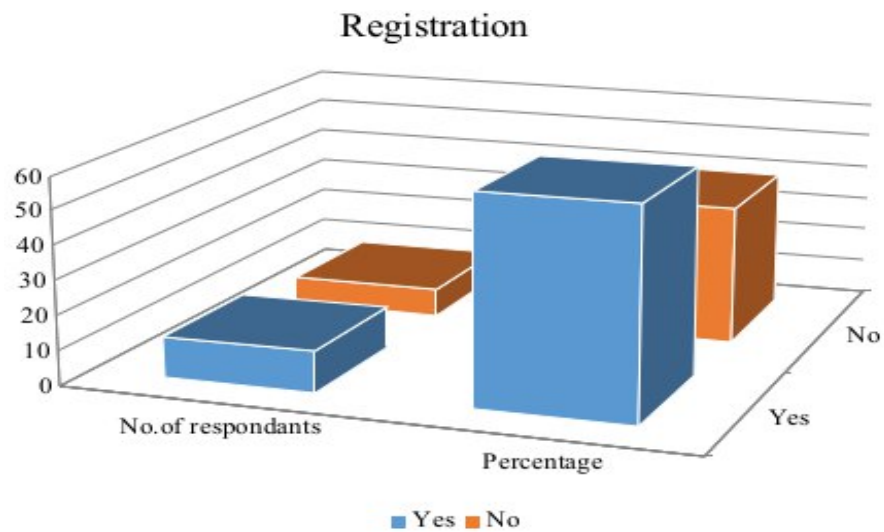


**Fig 9: Meals**

**Interpretation:** As per the graph, 55% of the homestay owners provide meals and only 5% have provision for separate kitchen and about 40% provide both home cooked meals as well as separate kitchen. We observe that most of the homestays provide home cooked meals as most of the tourists have preference for variety of our local cuisine.

Registration under Govt. body	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
Total	20	100%

**Table 10: Registration (Source: Field Survey)**

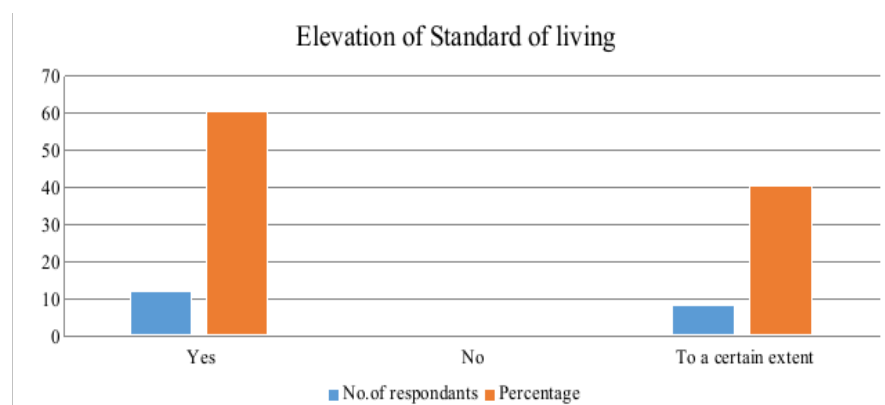


**Fig 10: Registration under Govt. body**

**Interpretation:** From the table it is found that about 60% of the homestays are registered and 40% are unregistered which are situated in rural and hill areas. The reason is due to complexities in the criteria that are listed out in the Ministry of Tourism website.

Earnings elevate standard of living	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	0	0
To a certain extent	8	40%
Total	20	100%

**Table 11: Elevation of Standard of Living (Source: Field Survey)**

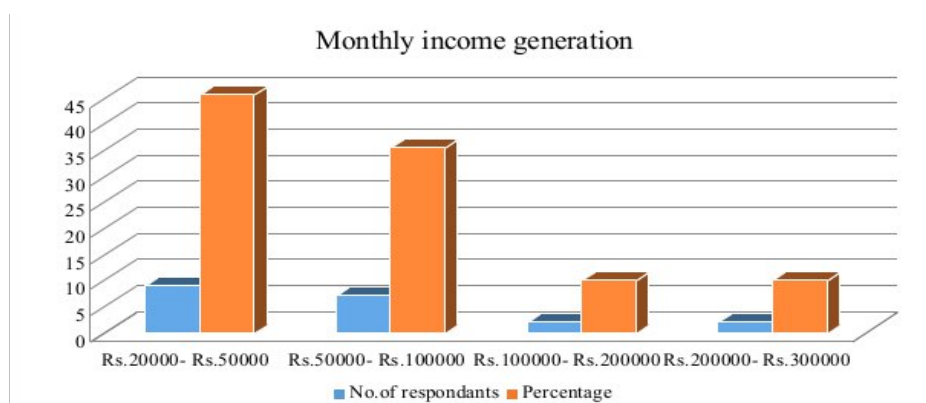


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**Interpretation:** As per the data, 60% of the homestay owners believe that the earnings from the homestay contribute in raising their standard of living, whereas 40% feels that it does contribute but less significantly. This 40% are homestay that reside in rural and hill areas.

Monthly income generation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Rs.20,000 - Rs.50,000	9	45%
Rs.50,000 - Rs.1,00,000	7	35%
Rs.1,00,000 - Rs.2,00,000	2	10%
Rs.2,00,000 - Rs.3,00,000	2	10%
Total	20	100%

**Table 12: Income Generation (Source: Field Survey)**



**Fig 12: Monthly income generation**

**Interpretation:** Around 45% of the homestay owners generate a monthly income between Rs. 20,000 - Rs. 50,000 and 35% of them generate between Rs. 50,000 - Rs.1,00,000. An equal percentage of them i.e., 10% generate between Rs.1,00,000 - Rs.3,00,000. There is a scope of improvement in the income generation if we allow more.

Viable option for unemployed individuals	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	16	80%
No	1	5%
To a certain extent	3	15%
Total	20	100%

Table 13: Employment Generation (Source: Field Survey)

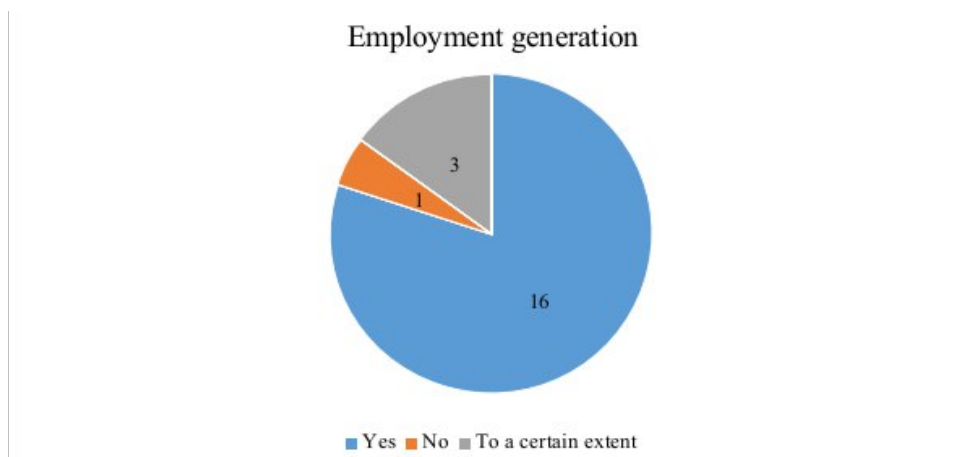


Fig 13: Employment generation

**Interpretation:** More than half of the respondents i.e., 80% believe that running a homestay is a reliable source of livelihood for unemployed individuals and 15% believe it to be the same but less notable and about 5% feels otherwise.

### Findings of the Study

1. Maximum homestays are in the urban areas as compared to the rural and hill areas.
2. All 20 homestays were established recently around 2016 to 2018.
3. Most of the homestays that are operating in the rural and hill areas (Bishnupur, Ukhrul, and Churchanpur) charge the occupants on per head basis, while homestays in the urban areas (Imphal east and Imphal west) charge occupants on per room basis.
4. Only home cooked meals are provided in all homestays operating in rural and hill areas whereas in urban areas there are provisions for both cooked and separate kitchen for the guests as well.
5. Most of the homestays does not provide transportation facility while very few do.
6. Modern amenities are available in homestays located in Imphal East and Imphal West districts.
7. Maximum homestays are run and owned by individuals and family while very few in the urban homestays employ staffs.
8. Homestays in rural and hill areas reflect and preserve the local cultural heritage and identity in terms of local cuisines, theme & decor of the home, lifestyle & habits, and rituals & beliefs whereas in urban homestays these are compromised to a great extent.
9. Various sustainable measures have been taken up such as the use of solar energy, rain water harvesting, grey and black water harvesting and garden/farm for vegetables and fruit harvesting

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Major medium of enquiry is through homestay and travel apps as well as through friends and past visitor

### **Suggestions of the Study**

1. Since homestays are a fresh concept in Manipur, it needs to be advertised and promoted widely on various social media platforms.
2. Since most of the tourist sites are located in the rural and hill areas, promotion on rural tourism will be more advantageous for the state.
3. The state government can give certain relaxations or make changes on the criterias listed out on the Manipur tourism website to raise the number of rural homestay registrations.
4. In view of the culture and tradition of the state, homestays could offer more of traditional touch in terms of interior and traditional habits that have been followed through generations.
5. Homestays could collaborate with tour guides, transportation providers and local artisans to promote handloom & handicrafts industry as well as art & culture (folklore, songs and dances) to preserve cultural heritage thereby, encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

Through this study, it can be said that Homestays are the new preferred mode of stay at major tourist spots. Homestays reflect and preserve the local cultural heritage and identity in terms of local cuisines, theme & decor of the home, lifestyle & habits, and rituals & beliefs. If promoted under proper guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, Homestays can indeed contribute towards revenue generation, hence entrepreneurial growth and development.

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