

# How Does Homestay Business Empower Rural Women? An Empirical Study on Ladakh

Gyan Management

1-17

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DOI: 10.1177/09747621261449536

neom.ubijournal.com



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## Abstract

This study investigates the role of homestay entrepreneurship in the economic empowerment of women in rural Ladakh, with a special focus on the managerial skills and training programmes in enhancing homestay performance. A cross-sectional survey of 270 women who actually own and operate homestays was conducted to test the hypotheses. Structured questionnaires were used to collect the data from respondents, and PSpss software was used to analyse the relationship. Our findings reveal that entering homestay entrepreneurship acts as a major catalyst for economic empowerment. We also found a direct link between sharper managerial skills and better overall business performance, with training programmes playing a key role in making management more effective. Moreover, we did not find a significant interaction effect between having managerial skills and attending training programmes. The findings imply that while both factors play a role on their own, their combined impact did not create a unique boost beyond what they already contribute individually.

## Keywords

Rural entrepreneurship, women empowerment, managerial skills, Ladakh

Received 02 March 2026; revised 22 April 2026; accepted 22 April 2026

## Introduction

The tourism sector is emerging as an indispensable tool for socio-economic development in rural areas across the world, offering avenues for earning a livelihood,

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cultural exchange and community development. Among various avenues, the homestay business is seen as an appropriate revenue model for rural households, especially for women living in rural areas. Homestays enable visitors to experience authentic indigenous cuisine, while also allowing families to expand their streams of income without the need for large financial investment. Since women have a central role in the overall management of the household, the homestay business has emerged as a profitable platform for women's empowerment and leadership (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). In rural areas, homestay entrepreneurship enables women to attain financial autonomy, which enables them to attain social status, develop self-confidence and have their say in their community. In this context, extant literature has repeatedly reported that women's active involvement in tourism-related ventures promotes gender equality, responsible resource utilisation, culture preservation and skill development (Ferguson, 2011). In regions where conventional career avenues are inadequate, women-led homestays have evolved as a culturally aligned and sustainable method to bridge the gap. Beyond providing a bed for travellers, these ventures foster deep community involvement that translates into real-world gains: higher purchasing power, better living standards, and a tangible boost in quality of life for the families involved (Salleh et al., 2014). For women, minorities, and locals, this model of community-based tourism often yields the most significant positive outcomes (Zapata et al., 2011).

Running a successful homestay, however, is no small feat. It demands a sophisticated mix of soft and hard management skills, ranging from personalised customer service and financial oversight to digital literacy and supply chain logistics. Improving these capabilities does not merely help a business thrive; it equips women with the tools they need to hold their own in a highly competitive global tourism market. Studies show that as soon as women have access to hospitality training, capacity-building workshops, and digital platforms, their entrepreneurial performance in rural sectors scales significantly (Baniya & Paudel, 2018).

This is especially vital in remote areas like Ladakh. Here, the combination of a short tourist season, geographical isolation, and few job prospects makes homestay entrepreneurship a primary and often the only pathway toward economic independence. By leading these businesses, women are not just earning an income; they are preserving local heritage and driving inclusive, sustainable development from the ground up. By viewing this through a management lens, we can better design the specific policies and training modules needed to cement women's roles as leaders in the tourism economy. While we know homestays are central to environmental and social sustainability (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Janjua et al., 2021), we still lack a complete picture of the holistic benefits these businesses offer women in rural settings. Previous studies report that there are positive outcomes of community-based tourism, especially for women, minorities and local people and suggest that further examination of these phenomena. Yan et al. (2020) report that the homestay business has seen rapid growth, especially in regions with a rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. Similarly, the study conducted by Harris et al. (2001) reveals that the engagement of women, minorities and local people in community-based local level tourism enterprise is important for

achieving economic, environmental and social development. Ladakh, being a rural region endowed with rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, offers the perfect context to study the role of homestays in empowering rural women.

## **Review of Literature**

### *Homestay Entrepreneurship*

Homestay entrepreneurship has evolved as a perfect and sustainable model for community-based tourism, particularly in remote regions. Extant literature shows that homestay initiatives offer an important and sustainable livelihood avenue for the female population in rural areas (Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017). The idea of women converting parts of their residences into small-scale hospitality accommodations allows them to earn income in the tourism sector while simultaneously fulfilling family duties, as noted by Sharma and Dhir (2019). This approach aligns perfectly with the social and cultural dynamics often found in rural areas. Homestay businesses have become a vital element of both rural and sustainable tourism, especially in areas characterised by ecological fragility and rich cultural heritage. Researchers such as Acharya and Halpenny (2013) suggest that homestays foster community-based tourism by actively involving local households within the tourism's economic framework. In mountainous regions, homestays play a role in diversifying local economies, safeguarding cultural traditions, and mitigating the issue of rural depopulation (Saarinen et al., 2017).

Extant studies indicate that homestay ventures are generally small, family-operated businesses that demand minimal initial investment but require strong interpersonal and service-oriented abilities. This business model is particularly well-suited to the cultural and social characteristics of rural communities. The popularity of homestay entrepreneurship has significantly contributed to rural and sustainable tourism, especially in regions with sensitive ecological systems and vibrant cultural legacies. Experts contend that homestays bolster community-based tourism efforts by integrating local families into the broader tourism value chain (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). Within mountain economies, homestays support economic diversification, the preservation of cultural heritage, and a reduction in the exodus of people from rural areas (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

### *Women Empowerment*

Previous literature on women's empowerment underscores the economic advantages that women accrue from running homestays. For example, Baniya and Paudel (2018) report that participation in tourism activities increases women's influence in household decision-making and supports their financial independence. In a similar vein, Karki (2020) observes that women who operate homestays often experience greater economic empowerment and exhibit more activity in their communities. These results are in sync with broader global findings signalling that women's involvement in tourism-related ventures assists in achieving gender equality and rural community development (World Bank, 2019). Women's entrepreneurship is now widely acknowledged

as an engine of both economic development and social transformation in the literature. Kabeer (2020), while working with access to resources, agency and achievements, goes deeper to assert that empowerment is not always what happens with economic participation and that economic participation does not in itself guarantee transformative empowerment. In rural tourism, for example, female entrepreneurs often gain more confidence in themselves, have more rights to make decisions and are better socially recognised (Boley et al., 2021). In the developing regions, tourism-based enterprises such as homestays have led to women having home-based income opportunities, facilitating a balance between domestic duties and entrepreneurship (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). Nonetheless, outcomes of empowerment are differentiated based on access to training, financial literacy and institutional support.

### *Managerial Skills*

From a managerial point of view, empirical research has highlighted the fact that the key management that operates a successful homestay demands more than merely offering cooked space and food to what one perceives as visitors; it requires an integrative aspect of hospitality competencies, customer service skills, financial planning, promotion skills and an ever-growing-only-with-digital-tools fluency (Saarinen et al., 2021). However, for the majority of rural women, these expectations of visitors are difficult to meet, primarily due to challenges like limited access to formal training, lack of managerial experience, and constraints in using technology (Gurung & Thapa, 2020). As a result, many homestay operations find it difficult to function smoothly or expand beyond a basic level. These challenges are more witnessed in mountainous regions such as the Himalayas, where studies have noted persistent issues including weak infrastructure, unpredictable weather patterns, and limited market connectivity. Lama (2019) contends that the women running homestays often struggle to secure reliable supplies, negotiate fair prices, and manage the ebb and flow of tourist demand. Even with these constraints, they remain essential contributors to their local economies and communities.

Studies like Thomas et al. (2011) indicate that small tourism entrepreneurs often lack formal training in accounting, marketing, customer relationship management, and digital promotion. Evidentiary research has it that managerial competencies deficiencies are the precursors to business stagnation, reduced customer retention, and reduced profitability (Fatoki, 2021). To some extent, within the rural context, the role of learning experientially often substitutes that of learning formally via managerial training, limiting the capacity for scalability. Among women entrepreneurs in particular, confidence for managerial decision-making shows a strong correlation with exposure to capacity-building interventions (Boley et al., 2021).

### *Training Interventions*

To overcome the challenges, there are different organisations such as government departments, non-governmental organisations, and tourism authorities that have introduced programmes to train women to develop their managerial skills and also improve the quality of the provision of services by women (Joshi, 2017).

Thapa and Poudel (2017) further emphasise the role of homestays led by women in upholding the cultural traditions and the concept of social cohesion in rural settings. Collectively, these economic and cultural contributions highlight the need for the application of women's managerial capacity in the homestay sector. Prior studies suggest that the success of homestays depends on high levels of management skills, access to training opportunities, appropriate policy frameworks, and the broader socio-economic conditions. Consequently, there is a need for further studies to better understand the challenges in local areas and to develop strategies that will increase women's leadership, skills and resilience in homestay enterprises. McKenzie et al. (2022) claims that financial literacy, record keeping practices, marketing strategies, business plan's homework improve after structured training initiatives. In rural and tribal areas, single-session training programmes have often not ensured sustainable behavioural change because of limited post-training support. Moreover, digital training deficits are also pronounced in remote and mountainous areas where the connectivity of the Internet and familiarity with technologies are limited in nature.

Based on the foregoing review of literature, the extant study identify that the majority of investigations of homestay entrepreneurship focus on mainstream international tourism destinations. There is a lack of study on the remote, high-altitude, tribal dominated areas. Existing studies have usually studied homestay entrepreneurship, women empowerment, managerial skills and training interventions separately. There is still a need for integrated models of associations between training interventions, managerial skill development and the homestay performance and women's empowerment outcomes (Figure 1). Empirical exploration on how managerial skills distinctly affect empowerment results of women homestay entrepreneurs is limited. The literature shows that homestay entrepreneurship offers many promising opportunities for rural livelihood diversification and female empowerment, yet empirical research that combines managerial competencies and training interventions in the context of tourism-based micro-enterprises is inadequate.

Therefore, the present study framed the following research objectives:

1. To study how the homestay business supports economic empowerment among women living in rural communities.
2. To identify the essential managerial skills and operational practices required for the effective management of women-led homestays.
3. To examine the impact of training programmes on management performance in women-led homestay enterprises.

## **Hypotheses Formulation**

### *Homestay Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment*

Homestay entrepreneurship equips rural women with ability to generate income directly from tourism activities, empowering them to become agents in the market economy without the requirement of large capital investments. Researchers note that women involved in homestay tourism gain greater control over household finances, experience increased mobility, and develop confidence in decision-making (Baniya

& Paudel, 2018). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2020), community-based tourism initiatives often create pathways for the female population to be involved in small-scale entrepreneurship, resulting in enhanced economic independence. Furthermore, prior studies report that tourism-related micro-enterprises contribute to long-term livelihood security and foster financial self-reliance for women (Karki, 2020). Based on these findings, it is reasonable to hypothesise that homestay entrepreneurship significantly strengthens the financial empowerment of women in rural areas. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

$H_1$ : Homestay entrepreneurship significantly improves the economic advancement of women living in rural areas.

### *Managerial Skills and Women-Led Homestays*

Effective management has a central role in the operation and sustainability of homestay businesses. Researchers highlight that managerial skills such as customer service, budgeting, marketing, digital literacy, and supply chain management are vital for improving service quality and maintaining competitiveness in the tourism industry (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2021). Nevertheless, the majority of women in rural regions do not have access to training or prior business experience, which can hinder their ability to manage homestays effectively (Gurung & Thapa, 2020). Extant studies reveal that women equipped with strong managerial competencies are better positioned to attract tourists, address operational challenges, and achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction (Sharma & Dhir, 2019). These findings indicate that managerial capacity is the critical ingredient for the success of women-led homestays. Therefore, the study's model tests the following hypothesis:

$H_2$ : Managerial skills have a significant and positive effect on the success of women-led homestays.

### *Training Programmes and Women-Led Homestays*

Capacity-building programmes like skill training perform a critical function in inculcating and honing managerial acumen among rural women entrepreneurs. Previous studies (e.g., Joshi, 2017) show that well-conceived training in hospitality and client management, financial literacy, and digital marketing has a significant and positive impact on the performance and sustainability of homestay businesses. As per a report by the World Bank (2019), proper intervention, like skill development training, empowers women by skilling them with the expertise and skills required to run business entities efficiently and effectively. Moreover, skill development programmes assist rural women in adopting contemporary tools, like using online booking and online promotions, which help improve the visibility of the business (Thapa & Poudel, 2021). Based on the above argument,

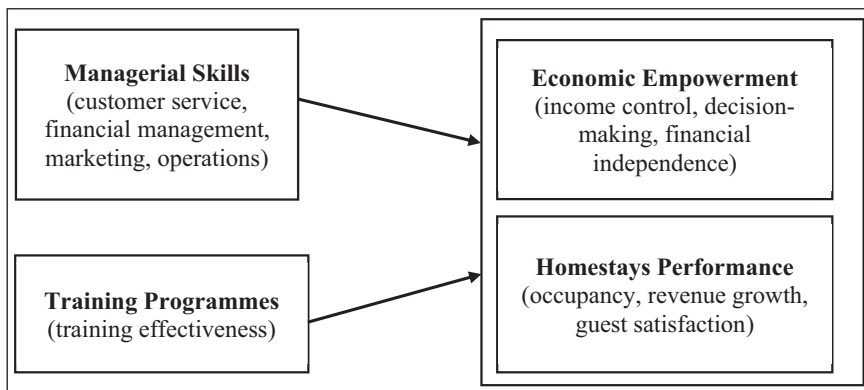
it is hypothesised that skill training ensures better management performance in women-led rural homestays and leads to the following hypothesis:

$H_3$ : Training programmes significantly enhance management performance in women-led homestays.

## Research Methodology

The present study adopts a quantitative research design with a descriptive-cum-correlational approach to explore the association between managerial skills, training, and the economic empowerment of women-led homestay entrepreneurship. The study's population consists of women in rural areas who run homestay businesses in Ladakh, and we obtained the official list of homestays from the Tourism Department in Leh, which shows 1,220 registered units across the district. For sample size determination, we applied the formula given by Burns and Bush (2007, p. 378):  $n = S^2Z^2/e^2$  where, ' $n$ ' is the sample size, ' $Z$ ' is the standard error associated with the chosen level of confidence, which is 1.96, ' $S$ ' is the variability indicated by an estimated standard deviation as per the pretesting results which came out to be 0.346 and ' $e$ ' is the amount of precision or allowable error in the sample estimate of population. We assumed the margin of error to be 5%, and the required minimum sample size was estimated at 184. For the selection of the sample, we used purposive sampling as it is more frequently used and practical in fieldwork research (Bryman & Bell, 2015), particularly in studies involving humans as subjects are less likely to be random samples (Polit & Beck, 2010). To ensure representation and improve the generalisability of the findings, we aimed to survey 300 respondents. However, we could collect data from the final sample of 288 respondents and the remaining 12 were not found during the field survey. This final sample of 288 is well above the minimum required number of 184.

The primary variables include economic empowerment and homestay performance as dependent variables, while managerial skills and training programmes



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model.

serve as independent variables. These variables are measured using a structured questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. The items of all the variables were adapted from established scales. Managerial Skills were adapted from Manolopoulos et al. (2020) and Mumford et al. (2000), technical skills items from Sigala (2018), economic empowerment items were adapted from Malhotra and Schuler (2005) and Alsop et al. (2006) and the items of homestay performance were adapted from Sigala (2018) and Testa et al. (2019). Data were collected either in person or through online platforms, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.

## Data Analysis, Results and Discussions

Once the responses were gathered and subsequently organised and entered into PSPP for analysis. Before conducting statistical analyses, the dataset was examined for any missing values and unusual values using boxplots, frequency tables, and other descriptive tools. Demographic information was summarised using measures such as means and standard deviations. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to check the internal consistency of the scales used in the study. The analysis also included Pearson correlation to explore how managerial skills and training relate to overall performance. Finally, linear regression was conducted to evaluate the extent to which managerial skills and training influence the performance of homestays. Moreover, to test the hypotheses, the study used ANOVA to compare differences in performance based on categorical variables (e.g., trained vs. untrained).

The final data collected from 288 rural women homestay entrepreneurs in Ladakh were analysed using PSPP software to explore the associations between managerial skills, technical skills, training programmes, and economic empowerment. Outliers and missing data were analysed before analysing the final data. Out of 288 respondents, the study detected 7 outliers and 11 incomplete responses, which were completely removed from the data set. Thus, the usable sample size arrived at 270. The 270 respondents' demographic profile revealed a diverse distribution across age groups, marital status, education, family type, homestay experience, and income (Table 1).

The reliability of the questionnaire items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of each construct. The results indicated that managerial skills had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, technical programme scored 0.79, economic empowerment scored 0.89, and homestay performance achieved 0.85. Since all values are above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), the scales can be considered reliable and internally consistent, indicating good internal consistency (Field, 2018). This suggests that the items within each construct measure the same underlying concept consistently, ensuring that the data collected are dependable for further statistical analysis. High reliability also increases confidence that the observed relationships among variables show genuine associations rather than measurement errors (Table 2).

The ANOVA results show that all three hypotheses were supported.  $H_1$  Homestay entrepreneurship significantly impacts the economic empowerment of

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Demographic Variable	Category/Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Age (years)	18–25	35	13.0
	26–35	80	29.6
	36–45	60	22.2
	46–55	55	20.4
	56 and above	40	14.8
Marital status	Single	55	20.4
	Married	205	75.9
	Widowed/Divorced	10	3.7
Qualification	Below High School	25	9.3
	High School/Diploma	130	48.1
	Undergraduate	95	35.2
	Postgraduate	20	7.4
Number of children	0	45	16.7
	1–2	140	51.9
	3–4	70	25.9
	5 or more	15	5.6
Type of family	Nuclear	165	61.1
	Joint/Extended	105	38.9
Year of establishment of homestay	Less than 1 year	20	7.4
	1–3 years	60	22.2
	4–6 years	90	33.3
	7 years and above	100	37.0
Annual income (approx.)	Less than ₹2,00,000	100	37.0
	₹2,00,000–₹5,00,000	170	63.0
	₹5,00,001–₹10,00,000	NIL	NIL
	More than ₹10,00,000	NIL	NIL

rural women,  $F = 14.87$ ,  $p = .0003$ . This indicates that women engaged in homestay ventures experience higher economic empowerment compared to those who are not, consistent with findings by Dangi and Jamal (2016), who highlighted the role of rural tourism in enhancing women's livelihoods. Further,  $H_2$  Managerial skills significantly influence the success of women-led homestays,  $F = 15.32$ ,  $p = .0002$ . This suggests that higher managerial competency is associated with better homestay performance, supporting prior research emphasising the relevance of managerial capabilities in small-scale tourism enterprises (Sigala, 2018). Moreover,  $H_3$  Training programmes significantly enhance management performance in women-led homestays,  $F = 11.48$ ,  $p = .001$ , as shown in Table 3.

**Table 2.** Constructs, Sample Items and Reliability.

Construct	Sample Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Managerial skills	I am able to plan and organise the daily operations of my homestay effectively.	0.82
	I can make timely decisions that benefit my homestay business.	
	I monitor and evaluate the performance of my homestay regularly.	
	I can resolve conflicts among staff or guests efficiently.	
	I adapt management practices to improve business outcomes.	
Technical skills	I am proficient in using booking and reservation software for my homestay.	0.79
	I can effectively use digital payment systems to manage transactions.	
	I am able to use social media and online platforms to promote my homestay.	
	I can manage basic IT tasks, such as maintaining records and generating reports.	
	I am confident in using technology to communicate with guests efficiently	
Economic empowerment	I have increased control over the income generated from my homestay business.	0.89
	I can make independent financial decisions for my household.	
	I feel more confident in managing economic resources due to my homestay business.	
	My homestay business has improved my ability to support family needs.	
	I have gained financial independence through my entrepreneurial activities.	
Homestay performance	My homestay maintains high customer satisfaction levels.	0.85
	My homestay business achieves the expected financial targets.	
	I receive positive reviews and repeat bookings from guests.	
	My homestay operates efficiently with minimal operational issues.	
	The overall reputation of my homestay has improved over time.	

**Table 3.** ANOVA Results for Hypothesis Testing.

Hypothesis	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p Value	Result
$H_1$	Between groups	10.52	1	10.52	14.87	.0003	Accepted
	Within groups (error)	187.45	268	0.70			
$H_2$	Between groups	12.48	1	12.48	15.32	.0002	Accepted
	Within groups (error)	95.12	266	0.36			
$H_3$	Between groups	9.36	1	9.36	11.48	.001	Accepted
	Within groups (error)	95.12	266	0.36			

Participation in structured training positively impacts homestay management outcomes, corroborating studies by Li et al. (2021) that found training interventions improve operational efficiency and service quality in rural homestays. The within-group variance was relatively low, indicating consistent responses within groups. Overall, the findings confirm that homestay entrepreneurship, managerial skills, and training programmes are key contributors to both the success and financial empowerment of women in rural areas engaged in homestay businesses. Further, the findings highlight the importance of managerial capabilities and structured training in boosting the effectiveness of homestay businesses in rural Ladakh.

Pearson correlation analysis shows significant positive relationships between managerial skills and homestay performance ( $r = 0.45, p < .01$ ) and between training programmes and performance ( $r = 0.39, p < .01$ ). Economic empowerment was also positively correlated with managerial skills ( $r = 0.42, p < .01$ ) and training programmes ( $r = 0.36, p < .01$ ), supporting the study's initial hypotheses (Hair et al., 2019) (Table 4). Further, the linear regression analysis result shows that managerial skills significantly predicted homestay performance ( $\beta = 0.38, p < .01$ ), while training programmes were also found to significantly influence ( $\beta = 0.31, p < .01$ ) (Table 5). The regression model explained 42% of the variance in performance ( $R^2 = 0.42$ ), indicating a moderate to strong predictive relationship (Cohen et al., 2013). Based on these results, all three hypotheses were supported: homestay entrepreneurship significantly improves economic empowerment, managerial skills significantly influence success, and training programmes enhance management performance. Overall, the findings suggest that rural women with higher managerial skills and access to structured training achieve better business outcomes and higher economic empowerment, highlighting the importance of capacity-building and support initiatives for women-led homestays in Ladakh (Kumar & Sharma, 2021; Singh & Choudhary, 2022). Moreover, the mean score for managerial skills was 3.8 ( $SD = 0.6$ ), indicating a moderate to high level of self-reported skills, while economic empowerment had a mean of 3.6 ( $SD = 0.7$ ), reflecting moderate levels among the participants. Women who had undergone training programmes tended to score higher on performance measures than those who had not, suggesting a positive influence of training on homestay management (Kumar & Sharma, 2021; Sharma & Singh, 2020).

**Table 4.** Pearson Correlation Table.

Variables	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Managerial skills	1				3.85	0.62
2. Training programmes	$r = 0.42^{**}$	1			3.70	0.58
3. Homestay performance	$r = 0.45^{**}$	$r = 0.39^{**}$	1		3.80	0.65
4. Economic empowerment	$r = 0.42^{**}$	$r = 0.36^{**}$	$r = 0.48^{**}$	1	3.65	0.67

**Note:**  $N = 270$ ;  $p < .01$  (two-tailed);  $**r$ -values represent Pearson correlation coefficients.

**Table 5.** Linear Regression Table.

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
(Constant)	–	–	–	–	–
Managerial skills	0.48	0.11	0.38	4.36	<.01
Training programmes	0.39	0.12	0.31	3.25	<.01

$R^2 = 0.42$ ,  $F(2, 267) = 42.3$ ,  $p < .001$

**Note:**  $N = 270$ ; B = unstandardised coefficient, SE B = standard error of B,  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient,  $t$  =  $t$ -value for significance testing.

## Theoretical Implications

The findings derived from this study contribute to the accumulated knowledge about rural women entrepreneurship, tourism-based enterprises, and empowerment. The findings clearly show that managerial skills and training programmes have a key role in boosting business performance, supporting the conclusions of earlier research (Bandura, 1997; Becker, 1993). The results highlight the need to equip women with a set of requisite skills and training, which enhances their entrepreneurial performance. Focusing on homestay businesses in Ladakh, the current study adds to the overall academic discussion about the economic empowerment of women and the role of human capital formation. In addition, the vivid correlations found between managerial competencies and instructional interventions and economic empowerment support the relevance of human capital theory to pragmatic tourism-entrepreneurship paradigms, including a more comprehensive approach to scholars studying rural and women-based businesses.

The roles of managerial skills and organised training programmes are central to the improvement of business performance and the empowerment of entrepreneurial performance amongst women-led homestay businesses in Ladakh. The training programmes also help in equipping the requisite managerial skills in areas like financial management, customer care, marketing skills, online promotion, and operational planning, all of which are important to maintain competitiveness in tourism-oriented micro-enterprises. These skills are extremely essential in geographically remote and seasonally dependent areas such as Ladakh, where entrepreneurs are compelled to adequately manage scarce resources, changing tourist flows and the quality standards of services. The training programmes can

enhance the profitability and the efficiency of the enterprises as well as the confidence and the ability to lead the enterprise by providing the women with the skills of making strategic decisions and obtaining the knowledge that is practical. In this way, the development of managerial skills based on specific training interventions becomes one of the major sources of improved business performance and the sustainability of entrepreneurship in the long term.

## **Managerial Implications**

In terms of the managerial and policy-based approach, the current research paper presents a set of practical implications for policymakers and management practitioners, training institutions, and the tourism sector actors. First, the results support the critical role of managerial competencies in improving the performance of women-led homestays. They highlight the need to impart relevant training to enhance the capacity of rural women in business planning, financial planning, marketing, and customer service. Second, the impact of the training on the business results is positive, which emphasises the significance of long-term capacity-building activities, such as organising workshops, mentorship programmes, and openness to continuous professional development, associated with women and geographically isolated regions. Based on these reflections, government agencies, local NGOs, and tourism authorities can use the evidence presented in the study to create specific intervention programmes such as micro-finance assistance schemes, help link women entrepreneurs with digital marketing tools and applications, and create networking opportunities to improve the presence of such women in rural communities and enhance their economic performance. Lastly, the study also highlights the overall developmental potential of the homestay entrepreneurship as a strategy of women's economic empowerment, which will not only have an impact that is beneficial to the individual entrepreneurs but also play a significant role in enhancing both the social and economic status of rural Ladakh.

In Himalayan areas, structured practice-based training programmes to educate women-led homestays in issues of financial management, digital marketing, service quality, and sustainable tourism should be instituted by policymakers and training institutions. This must be a continuous process and should be aided with mentorship, peer networks, and other performance-based incentives to make sure that there will be quantifiable increases in managerial skills and business results. Enhancing digital infrastructure and increasing diversification policies will further boost enterprise sustainability and female empowerment of the economy in these regions.

## **Conclusion**

This study intends to investigate the extent to which homestay entrepreneurship contributes to the improvement of the economic status of rural women in Ladakh, with a special emphasis on their managerial competence and active involvement in training programmes in Ladakh. The findings show that women who possess

stronger managerial skills and who have taken part in structured training are generally better prepared to manage their homestays, which contributes to greater economic autonomy. The findings further indicate that homestay ventures have emerged as a meaningful pathway for both economic and social advancement among women in remote regions. By clarifying the connections between managerial capacity, training, and entrepreneurial performance, the study contributes to the broader evidence base on women-led tourism initiatives and offers practical guidance for strengthening local capabilities. Overall, the research points to the relevance of purpose-built support systems and continued capacity-building efforts in enhancing sustainable livelihoods and promoting a more inclusive model of tourism development in Ladakh.

This study makes a distinct contribution by empirically demonstrating how homestay entrepreneurship functions as a viable pathway for advancing the economic empowerment of rural women in Ladakh, a geographically remote and underexplored Himalayan context. Unlike prior studies that have investigated tourism or women's entrepreneurship in isolation, this study clearly establishes the direct linkage between managerial competence, participation in structured training programmes, and improved entrepreneurial performance. The findings show that women with stronger managerial skills and formal training are better equipped to manage operations, adapt to seasonal challenges, and achieve greater economic autonomy. By combining developments of human capital and rural tourism entrepreneurship, the study provides a context-specific framework that helps to understand how capacity-building interventions are actualised through measurable improvements in livelihood. Ultimately, it adds to both theoretical development and pragmatic advice for the design of targeted support systems intended for the fortification of women-led homestays and argues for a more inclusive and sustainable paradigm of tourism development for the Ladakh region.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

No study is without limitations, and ours is not an exception. First and foremost is its narrowly limited scope of study on women-based homestays located in the rural area of Ladakh, which limits its applicability to other geographical setups and to businesses of other typologies. Later, the use of self-reported questionnaires only creates a vulnerability of bias in reporting in that individuals can either overstate or understate their experiences, either consciously or subconsciously, thus leading to possible alteration of the empirical record. The investigation is also cross-sectional, further complicating the problem, as it only measures at one time such managerial competencies, training provisions, and empowerment indicators. This type of design limits the ability to trace causal processes and determine time dynamics. Further, despite the research foreshadowing managerial skill sets and training interventions, it fails to consider other salient determinants like the availability of financial capital, the strength of marketing networks, or the sufficiency of local infrastructure, which are essential in the process of influencing business performance and empowerment paths of women entrepreneurs.

Therefore, further academic projects should include a more diverse range of variables, increase geographic and sectoral scope of analysis, and take into account the implementation of qualitative approaches to the problem, that is, in-depth interviews and case studies, to add an additional degree of interpretation. These integrative studies can shed light on socio-cultural processes, gender role expectations and the individual perceptions of empowerment that cannot be easily captured through a strictly quantitatively minded study. Longitudinal qualitative studies can offer deeper insights into how entrepreneurial journeys evolve in Himalayan contexts like Ladakh.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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