



## The Role of Home stays in Promoting Rural Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

*This study provided a brief discussion of home stay and rural tourism development. Home stay is a potential economic activity in tourism sector. The home stay provides the various infrastructure facilities that cater to the differed interests of the people and tourist in particular who make the journey towards the countryside. India has numerous rural tourism resources including, agricultural activities, rural sports and games, art and culture including cuisines, customs, fairs and festivals, folklore and folk art tradition, art and architecture and many more to say. Home stay should emphasize on the cultural practices as well as to create a genuine interest and commitment among the local people in the region. The study focused the potentialities of home stay for rural tourism development. The study also discussed the positive outcomes of promoting home stays at the rural and remote areas.*

**KEYWORDS :** Home stay, Rural tourism, Tourism Marketing.

### I INTRODUCTION

Home-stay is an emerging concept in tourism & hospitality industry which is also considered to be the best alternative to hotel accommodation. Home stay helps you come across land, people, culture and cuisine of any place in its perfect aspect unlike hotel accommodation. Different types of houses are converted to home-stay like heritage homes, farm houses, estate bungalows, ancestral homes etc. that gives a pleasant stay away from busy towns and cities but near to places of tourist attractions. Home-stays contribute to conserve the local cultural and natural heritage at the same time ensuring sustained income to the local population.

Rural tourism focuses on participating in a rural lifestyle. It can be a variant of ecotourism. Any village can be a tourist attraction, and many villagers are very hospitable. Agriculture is becoming highly mechanized and therefore requires less manual labor. This is causing economic pressure on some villages, leading to an exodus of young people to urban areas. Rural tourism allows the creation of an alternative source of income in the non-agricultural sector for rural dwellers. The added income from rural tourism can contribute to the revival of lost folk art and handicrafts. It is an ideal and natural method of rural and urban economic exchange.

### II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Concept of Home-stay

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Besides staying at home with a family, there are other things that the tourists enjoy which really adds value to their experience. Such a kind of an environment is available along with the package which is enjoyed by the tourists such as fishing, bird watching, bicycle riding through the country side, trekking in nearby forests and hills, toddy tapping, pot-making, elephant riding, local-art performances on request, and many others depending up on the places. Home stay is a new idea for accommodation in the tourism industry. It is a potential economic activity in tourism sector. It becomes popular to the tourists who desire to know and interact with the local people, cultural attractions

Is a stay at a residence by a traveler and especially by a visitor who is hosted by a local family? "A house primarily as the residence of the

owner but with the business of accommodating paying guests, a system whereby Tourist board with a local family at an affordable price". "A lodging option that involves staying in a private home usually as paying guests to the owners".

#### Home Tourism Definition

A form of tourism where the tourists stay with a family in the destination and move around with the members or members of the family wherein social and cultural interaction takes place along with exploring various tourist spots is termed as Home tourism.

Home stays are houses inside farms or plantations in areas which are away from the town or city. People living in those areas have converted their farm houses, heritage houses or hill cottages with a view to accommodate a couple of guests. These guests can live in a homely atmosphere and get a chance to mingle with another local family who are mainly the host. At some places even more than one family are accommodated at one place.

Depending upon the place, you can find different kinds of home stays. They are available near the beaches, in the plantations and even in some villages. Though the place may vary but the basic concept of Home Stays remains the same everywhere. While staying at those places, you can watch the fishermen going out to the sea for their catch or the labourers at work in the coffee, rubber or tea plantations. You can also get a chance to have a stay for a day or two in a boat houses and idle on the decks of boats, ride a bullock cart, plough a field with a tractor, join the labourers in the plantations and enjoy the local festivals. Besides offering local delicacies in their meals, some Home Stays also offer the guests to learn some local cuisines.

A Homestay is sometimes called by other names such as Bed & Breakfast (B&B), or Paying Guest (PG) accommodation. There is a subtle difference between a Bed & Breakfast (B&B), Paying Guest (PG), and Homestay. Bed & Breakfast accommodations may or may not be Homestays. Similarly a Paying Guest (PG) accommodation may or may not be a Homestay. A Homestay combines the comfort and distinction of a boutique hotel with the personal hospitality, informality and local knowledge enjoyed when staying with family friends. A Homestay offers an insight into the culture, traditions, history and everyday life of a family. Guests get the chance to enjoy authentic food at its very best - home cooked.

Not only the foreign tourists even many local tourists also prefer to stay in the comfort of a homely environment where one is not bound by the so called protocols and freely mingle with the local people, enjoy homemade food and relax in the cozy comfort of a house away from the hustle and bustle of the city life. The desire for such holidays has given rise to a new concept Home Stay i.e. a home away from home. It has enabled tourists enjoy their stay in these Home Stays

and a scope to learn local culture and traditions. One can clearly say that these Home Stays definitely offer a home away from home feel.

### III METHODOLOGY

#### Objectives of the study

- To create awareness on the concept of homestays at the rural areas.
- To understand the potential of rural tourism,
- To find out the impact of homestays and rural tourism to our society

#### Methodology

The primary data has been retrieved through interview method that conducted at the concerned authorities such as, departments of Tourism at different levels, forest departments, non-governmental organizations, local self governments and travel and tour operating companies and most importantly, interaction with the local community. The secondary data for the paper was perceived from the sources such as, books, journals and even useful websites.

#### Scope of the study

The study confines to the role of homestays and rural tourism and focuses on their benefits to the different stakeholders of the area.

### IV DATA ANALYSIS

#### Benefits of Homestay in India

There's a saying in India, "AthithiDevoBhava", which means "the guest is God". Indians consider it a huge honor to have guests in their home, and go out of their way to please them. There's nothing like Indian hospitality. Sadly, most visitors who come to India and stay in hotels never get to experience true Indian hospitality. The good thing is that all this is changing as a result of the growing popularity of homestays in India. Guests are either accommodated in the family home, or in separate quarters nearby. Nowadays, most homestays provide their guests with just as much comfort as a reputable hotel. There are a number of reasons why staying at a homestay can be preferable to staying in a hotel. The benefits of homestays in India include:

1. Distinctive and Characterful Accommodations -- Tired of sterile hotels? There's no better way to experience the incredibly diversity and charm of India than at a homestay. The options are almost endless and include plantation bungalows, historic havelis (mansions), and remote rural cottages.

2. Personalized Service -- In contrast to a hotel, a homestay usually only has a few rooms. The family who resides there runs it, and acts as host. This guarantees that guests receive plenty of individual attention. You can spend as little or as much time with the host family as you like. Some guests choose only to dine with them, while others spend hours chatting to them. Regardless, staying with an Indian family is the easiest way of finding out about Indian culture and way of life. Many guests and hosts find that they bond with each other so much, that they keep in touch long after the vacation is over.

3. Local Knowledge -- The wealth of information that the hosts have about their local area makes deciding what to see and do a breeze. Such local knowledge is extremely helpful in getting the most from your visit. Many hosts are delighted to show their guests around their local area, providing them with invaluable insights that simply aren't available from a guide book.

4. Home Cooked Food -- There's a huge difference between the Indian food served in restaurants and hotels, and the food that's cooked in an Indian home. By staying at a homestay, you'll be able to taste authentic Indian home cooked food, made to order. It's a lot lighter, and has more variation and flavor than restaurant food. Some homestays even welcome their guests into their kitchen, and let them watch and participate in the cooking process.

5. Unique Activities -- As a guest at a homestay, the focus is on you, and your likes and preferences. The hosts are usually very accommodating and will put a great deal of effort into arranging activities that are of interest to you. These activities will vary depending on location. Exploring a coffee plantation in Coorg, watching a polo match in Rajasthan, herding animals in remote northern India, village visits, picnics, and temple tours are just some of the options. Guests are often

invited to attend weddings, or other festivals that are happening, as well. Staying at a homestay in India is all about immersing yourself in India, rather skimming over it on the tourist trail.

#### 'Home-stay' concept gaining popularity

The Government's initiative of providing economical accommodations to foreign tourists under the home-stay scheme is gaining popularity with private players taking it to a higher level. Under the scheme, a person having large accommodations can provide rooms on rent to tourists and visitors will be able to get a taste of the local culture and food. Mahindra & Mahindra group company Club Mahindra Holidays, which entered into the space July last year, has undertaken a nation-wide training programme to give a boost to the scheme. "More than 70 home owners have associated with Club Mahindra Holidays for offering the home-stay concept until May 31, 2009; these houses were spread over States considered as popular tourist destinations such as Kerala, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Karnataka. The company had undertaken a nation-wide training programme for these house owners. Travel portal 'Yatra.com' has also initiated a project.

Home stay opportunity- a home away from home and a holiday with a local flavor!!

A home stay opportunity is a concept that is popular globally but has been slow to catch on in a big way in India as we remain entrenched with feelings of the lack of security and communication misgivings one feels with foreign guests; the demands on privacy one may have to give up, minimal awareness of how to go about planning, offering and managing house-guests that are expected to follow house-rules and pay for their meals and stay, as well as the fact that most traditional Indian homes still have joint-family system that requires the varied personalities of different family members to be taken into consideration before opening the doors to 'temporary members.'

#### Indian home-stay opportunities

However, with the new awakening of inter-cultural gatherings and the eye-opening experiences afforded to most tradition-besot families in terms of more family members going in for higher education, further studies abroad and big, empty houses with children having left the nest for lifestyle changes, home stays have increasingly become an attractive proposition for many Indian homes that have the space to offer tourists on the lookout for cost-effective, cozy and welcoming accommodation while also allowing home-owners to earn an extra income without having to invest more than housekeeping supplies and a cheery disposition. (Frequent budget travelers add that even a grouchy disposition for a home stay opportunities provider is not an deterrent for them so long as the lodging is clean, affordable and provides security with a chance to experience some local flavor.

With more young Indians leaving for foreign climes to pursue further education and jobs, this left scope for those offering hospitality to them while in a distant land to also have the favor returned by way of a mutual agreement of honoring the host (abroad) with an invitation to India, courtesy the home stay opportunities offered by parental lodgings, traditionally known for their largesse. Furthermore, with more disposable incomes on the rise, a booming economy and greater demand of Indians hot-footing it to foreign climes for leisure and adventure travel, the need for this exchange of cultures, best afforded by inter-changing offers of home-stay opportunities has gained appreciable ground based on mutual needs of global tourists for friendly, favorable and inexpensive local stay options as those afforded by home stay opportunities.

#### Home stay scheme in India by Union Tourism Ministry

Union Tourism Ministry has been launched the revised and more liberalized Incredible India Bed & Breakfast/ Homestay Scheme. It has been advised the States/ UTs to formulate their own scheme to develop Bed & Breakfast and Homestay units. It has been suggested that a State Level Monitoring Committee for the speedy implementation of tourism projects. Advised to these Committees should not only regularly monitor but also send a quarterly or half yearly report to the Union Ministry of Tourism.

## V FINDING AND SUGGESTION

The major challenges are need to preserve the environment and natural resources, the need for education, proper understanding for both tourists and local people, and the need to generate a democratic movement which helps people at all levels to participate in tourism development. Also they need to focus on occupation training, handicraft promotion, and improvement of both the landscape and the basic infrastructure, to increase the villagers' quality of life by creating a healthy environment. The cooperative system in developing homestays and rural tourism can be an effective approach in bringing positive impact in rural areas. Local people can monitor and control the negative impacts of tourism on their own society, if they have an equal stake and authority in management and development.

- Legislation Problems
- Lack of Trained Manpower
- Insufficient Financial Support
- Lack of Local Involvement
- Underdeveloped people
- Lack of proper physical communications
- Lack of Basic Education
- Language problems
- Business Planning Skills
- Trained tourist guide
- Communication Skills

### Suggestions

The tourists look for quality environment and meaningful experience. Most of the tourists are interested in rural tourism, if the trip can bring pleasure and relaxation of body and mind. Once in a year, urbanites have expressed their interest to go for rural areas.

## Essential elements for development of homestays and rural tourism are:

- Creation of infrastructure
- Restructuring and liberalization of policies
- Encouragement for investment
- Law and Order
- Tourist Police
- Complaints Handling
- Standardization of goods and services
- Government support
- Rural tourism can help in creating sustainable development in some of our villages in the rural areas

## VI CONCLUSION

The study revealed that home stays operation could be create alternative accommodation opportunities and a tool for promoting rural tourism and its benefits to the local community, economy, and art and culture of the region. At the meantime the study came to realize that there are some obstacles to be overcome then only primary purpose of promoting such tourism in any part of relevant area. If a proper marketing plan is done rural tourism, it could bring lots of benefit to our society. It could be a sustainable revenue generating project for rural development of our government. It can help inflow to resources from urban to the rural economy. It can prevent migration of rural people to urban.

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