

Homestays as Livelihood opportunity and a tool of rural economic/sustainable development in India: A review article

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Abstract

Hospitality industry is growing at a rampant pace throughout the world. It can be easily noticed with the number of jobs this industry offers to the manpower. On an average, it accounts for 266 million jobs in world and has a share of 9.5% in GDP (gross domestic product) of the world. In India also this sector is picking up at a significant rate. As per the report of KPMG (2018) hospitality industry in India accounts for 7.5% of its GDP and is predicted to grow at 16.1 percent CAGR to reach Rs 2,796.9 thousand crores in 2022. Due to this upsurge in this industry, the interest of academic world is also switching towards researching in hospitality. It can be validated from the amp number of growing journals in this field. The researchers are keener to trace the emerging dimensions of this industry, so that the various stakeholders which are indulged in this business can realign their product mix as per the demand of the market. The hospitality industry itself is a big bundle of various segments like home stays, lodging, food and drink service, event planning, theme parks, transportation, cruise line, traveling, airline and additional fields within the tourism industry.

Out of these segments, one segment is of homestays which is of significant importance to hoteliers since, it helps to generates income for the hospitality entrepreneur and generate opportunity for rural development as well. Due to globalization and change in lifestyles of customers, this segment is newly occur and facing a stiff challenge for its role in income generation for hospitality entrepreneur as the preferences. This shifting paradigm of customers for accommodation has led the hoteliers to track the emerging trends of hospitality from customer's side and therefore, the

research in this dimension has started to evolve to give suggestions to its stakeholders to realign their tactics in order to earn profits from homestays and also play a meaning full role in rural economic development and sustainable development. Henceforth, the present study is a review on the researches done on this area and tries to find out the latest trends which are coming up in homestays. For this very purpose, the review has been done in a chronological way starting from the first researches in this field to the latest one. After reviewing all, the commencing trends from beginning to end are put forward to have a better understanding of the whole concept.

Keywords: Homestay, Trends, Accommodation, Sustainable development, rural tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rig Veda, the most ancient of the scriptures says, '**there is no happiness for him who does not travel. The fortune of him who is sitting sits, it rises when he rises, it sleeps when he sleeps, it moves when he moves. Therefore, Wander!**' A major portion of human history has been created by travels – treatises and historical accounts are filled with stories of men who traveled to conquer, to convert, to trade, to plunder, and most importantly to quench their curiosity. Every mountain and ocean stimulated human curiosity to see and know beyond the mundane. This unremitting beckoning upset their sleep and logic but invigorated their fancies. It is all about travelers and traveling and other hands if we are talking about Tourism and Hospitality then, Tourism and Hospitality is the largest and fastest-growing industry in the world. In 2009, the World Travel and Tourism Council released a report revealing that tourism contributes over 13 trillion U.S. dollars to global revenue, and provides nearly 9.2% of the global population with employment. Additionally, tourism is an industry that only continues to grow, and the UNWTO projects international tourism levels to reach 1.25 billion people by 2020. India has benefitted greatly from the rise of tourism, recognized by both the World Economic Forum and the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2011) as receiving nearly 7.33% of the world's total tourists.

1.1 Indian tourism and hospitality

The Indian tourism and hospitality industry has known as one of the essential elements of growth among the services sectors in India. In the present scenario, the Tourism and Hospitality industry faces numerous new challenges. As we know that due to COVID-19 our country has faced an

economic crisis and most of the effects of this pandemic are shown in the travel and hospitality business, according to a reader blog by '**Times of India**' the contribution of the Aviation Sector and Tourism to our GDP stands at about 2.4% and 9.2% respectively. The Tourism sector served approximately 43 million people in FY 18-19. Aviation and Tourism were the first industries that were hit significantly by the pandemic. The common consensus seems to be that COVID will hit these industries harder than 9/11 and the Financial Crisis of 2008. These two industries have been dealing with severe cash flow issues since the start of the pandemic and are staring at a potential 38 million lay-offs, which translates to 70 percent of the total workforce. The impact is going to fall on both, White and blue collar jobs. According to IATO estimates, these industries may incur losses of about 85 billion Rupees due to travel restrictions, and the results of those things are lots of travel, tourism, and hospitality professionals left their jobs. (**Times of India**)

On another hand, if we are talking about good hospitality then a fair level of service quality was one of the main factors which affect the hospitality business. The researchers are keen to trace the emerging dimensions of this industry so that the various stakeholders which are indulged in this business can realign their product mix as per the demand of the market. Many researchers are also identifying that motivation factors of the tourist are change and in this scenario, the homestay program is one of the effective and moderate service quality tools for developing the tourism and as well as the local community of the particular place.

2. CONCEPT OF HOMESTAY

A homestay refers to private homes in which unused rooms are rented to supplement income and meet people. Very often the owner of the home and the guest sleep under the same roof and share common spaces. Hosts carry on with day-to-day household activities while incorporating the guest where appropriate as part of their touristic experience. Guests who prefer to lodge with a family over a hotel can be understood as experiential tourists as they seek out authentic back-of-house knowledge that has not been treated for consumers. The homestay accommodation is located in places of tourist interest, which may be on beaches, hills, near lakes, or houses in the middle of coffee/tea plantations, usual places of scenic beauty. These are usually farmhouses, rural cottages, Havelis, and bungalows where families stay, and where they allocate rooms to guests for monetary consideration, accompanied by fresh home-cooked meals and local produce. The guests get to experience the local way of life, staying with the owners of the house. **Devkota**

(2008) has identified a list of positive impacts of homestay programs on the local economy and society which are:

- It can address to build up the quality of life of indigenous people of the village area.
- It makes rural people capable of accessing the benefits created by the tourism industry, i.e. employment and income generation, etc.
- It helps to expose the rural culture and nature to the outside world.
- It contributes towards protection against environmental degradation.
- It induces the increased use of natural and human resources of the rural areas for rural development.
- It is a way to decentralize the national economy through promoting local agricultural and other industries.

Most authors expressed their positive opinion in favor of the homestay program indicating that it has shown the preliminary positive impact on rural village development, rural women development, local economy, environment, and the entire community and have increased awareness among the local people about the cultural and heritage preservation.

2.1 A brief history of homestays

The roots of the current homestay tourism can be traced back to the Iron Age (1200 - 550 B.C.) when Celts developed their culture throughout central Europe. According to Hope (1987), The Celts were a southern European people of Indo-Aryan origin who first surfaced in Bohemia and traveled west in search of the home of the sun in 1200 BC. The Celtic hosts were not allowed to commit any violence on their guests even they had to protect them from any possible harm (Ubani, 2012). In return, guests had their parts by showing respect to the hosts and refraining from any dispute and hostility during their stay. Regardless of when and where those tribes had come from, hospitality was an important component of Celtic life.

The bed and breakfast concept has existed in one form or another since the beginning of man. Monasteries served as beds and breakfasts for travelers and in some cases still do. Bed and breakfasts have been very popular with the traveling public in Europe for years. It was in England, Scotland, and Ireland that the term "B&B" first came into use. Tourists will see B&B signs in many windows there. The term "bed and breakfast" is not used in many other countries. Terms such as paradors, pensions, Gasthaus, minskukus, shukukos and pousados are used to describe what Americans and English-speaking Europeans think of like a bed and breakfast. The United States also has a history of bed and breakfasts dating back to the time of early settlers. As

the pioneers traveled the trails and roads across this county, they sought safe refuge in homes, inns, and taverns. Some of those historic accommodations now serve as B&Bs. During the Great Depression, many people opened their homes to travelers to bring in some additional money for the family. The term "boarding house" was used at this time. After the Depression, this type of lodging declined and many people had the idea they were just for low-income travelers or drifters. In the early fifties, people may remember the term "tourist home" being used. This too was essentially a form of bed and breakfast. Once motels were built on the new highways, they were soon forgotten.

2.2 Homestays in India

Indian tourism has taken a leap with the concept of homestays becoming the new mantra in the hospitality scenario. This unique way of truly experiencing the pulse of the place is fast catching up with not only tourists but also the hosts. The Indian adage '*atithi devo bhava*' or 'Guest is God' is truly lived up to by homestays in India where the guest is welcomed with delight to the home. Indians consider it a huge honor to have guest in their home, and go out of their way to please them. The visitors staying in homestays get to experience true Indian hospitality. A tourist's visit to India can be made memorable with the Homestay Units offered to them.

According to a study of **Helna 2014**, the state tourism departments in India have introduced the concept of homestays. Kerala, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi, NCR, Goa, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Gujarat are the states to have introduced the concept of homestays. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India initiative in this direction has been the 'Bed And Breakfast' Scheme. Under this scheme comfortable home-like, clean and affordable accommodation facilities are provided to the tourists. The scheme gives the foreign tourists an opportunity to experience the customs and traditions and relish the authentic cuisine of India during their stay with an Indian family.

The Regional Classification Committee inspects and assesses the Bed and Breakfast Establishments on the parameters of the services offered by them.

Karnataka tourism policy emphasizes on developing a network of home stays across the state and brands it as '**Atithi**'. The home stays will be minimally regulated and will be treated as a non-commercial venture. They can be compared with the "Bed & Breakfast" of the western countries.

Rajasthan tourism policy has Paying Guest Scheme. The scheme of paying guest launched by Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan on World Tourism Day (27th September 1991) has been very popular with domestic and international tourists. This scheme is in operation in nine cities of Rajasthan. Care had been taken to ensure that only such houses and families are identified and registered with the Department of Tourism who will serve the purpose and will offer adequate and suitable facilities to the tourist.

The Himachal Pradesh Government has also taken this innovative step by introducing Home Stay Scheme thus providing comfortable homestay facilities of standardized world class services to the tourists, and to supplement the availability of accommodation in the rural tourist destinations. The basic idea is to provide a clean and affordable place for foreigners and domestic tourists alike including an opportunity for foreign tourists to stay with Himachali families to experience Himachali customs and traditions and relish authentic Indian/Himachali cuisine.

The Uttarakhand Government also taken this Scheme named by DeenDayal Upadhyaya Griha Awaas Homestay Policy. There are many tourist spots located in the remote rural areas of Uttarakhand which are abundant with natural beauty and cultural heritage, but due to the absence of proper lodgings and food facilities, tourists are deprived from exploring such beautiful places. ‘DeenDayal Upadhyaya Griha Awaas Homestay regulations,’ has been created to attract tourists to far-flung tourist destinations along with the popular ones, enhance accommodation facilities at local level, generate employment for native people and provide an additional source of income to house owners. The main objective behind starting the DeenDayal Upadhyaya Griha Awaas regulations is to provide clean and affordable homestay facilities to national and international tourists. The facility will also offer travelers a unique opportunity to explore Uttarakhand’s culture and savor the delightful delicacies of the state’s cuisine.

2.3 Types of homestays

There are different types of homestays and it varies with location, facilities, and building types. Different types of homestays are as follows:

- **Heritage homestay**

A surprisingly large number of homes and hence homestays in India are ancestral properties. Many of them going back over 100 years and are filled with artifacts collected over generations. There are great museums of an unknown history.

- **Modern homestay**

Big cities in India have numerous homestays with all these traits like, modern conveniences, international décor, and families with a global outlook. Clubbed together with Indian hospitality, these urban Indian homestays serve as wonderful homes away from home for travelers.

- **Plantation homestay**

A lot of homestays in India are nestled in over 100 acres of lush greens where tea, spices and much more are grown. These homestays allow people an experience where nature comes to them.

- **Rural homestay**

Some of the most memorable homestays in India are located in villages. These homestays are the hub of lost culture and traditions as well as natural beauty.

- **Eco homestay**

Many homestays have adopted the practice of ecotourism to supplement their income while preserving their region's fragile ecosystem.

3. Homestays living atmosphere Guest behavior

(Pizam, Neumann, & Reichel in 1978 defined Tourist destinations, as settings comprising economic, socio cultural and environmental activities, have come to be understood as products on offer. These products consist of many sub-products, including accommodation, food and beverage purchases, excursions, shopping, and participation in recreational & sport activities, entertainment and so emphasized the need to specify satisfaction levels on the basis of the context in which it is evaluated.

Stringer (1981) studied host-guest relationships in bed and breakfasts in the UK. He explored various facets like space, gender, setting that have an influencing role on host-guest relations. For the guests, the life of a host offered an attraction. He also observed that privacy was a major issue when a home space is offered to strangers and could lead to tensions between host and guest. He also highlighted the importance of a 'homely' atmosphere and 'home setting'.

Cohen (1988) has said of rural-based homestays that the real, authentic experience of staying with a family, enjoying their hospitality, activities, and pursuits, learning about different cultures,

can best be found in rural areas, where people still have time and genuine friendship to offer to strangers.

(Warnick and Klar JR, 1991) stated that Although B&B arrangement has virtually boomed more recently in North America, the existence of primary B&B in the United States dates back to early settlers when people traveled across that county and sought safe shelters in homes and inns.

Wall and Long (1996) suggested that since homestays are locally owned and operated, they constitute a suitable tourist accommodation facility for the local community to participate in tourism activities as entrepreneurs.

As put forward by Hinch and Butler (1996), studies have shown that economic considerations have been the primary motivating force for the local people to become involved in tourism development.

According to (Stabler & Goodall 1996) Community-Based Tourism (CBT) originated for sustainable tourism development and aims to build the local communities' capacity by consuming local resources wisely and helps to protect the environment. also said that the concept of sustainable tourism development is "consistent with the tenets of sustainable development". Sustainable development is a development strategy that manages all assets, natural resources, and human resources, as well as financial and physical assets, for increasing long-term wealth and well-being.

In 1998 Cruden conducted a study on Celtic territories and concluded that, all householders either men or women were obliged to provide limitless hospitality to any stranger who knocked their doors by offering the very best they had in terms of food, drink, bed, and entertainment.

Tosun, 2001 stated that sustainable development, as a goal rejects policies and practices that support current living standards by depleting the productive base, including natural resources, and that leaves future generations with poorer prospects and greater risks than our own.

A rural homestay program is kind of accommodation offered and organized by the local community which involves tourists staying with local families where they can interact directly with hosts and learn more about villagers' daily life and culture. (Rea, 2003)

McGehee and Kim, (2004) spoke about farm stay accommodation that is a vital part of agri tourism in which the guests get to experience farm life. At the beginning of the home-stay concept, it was identified as an alternative place where people selected to spend their vacation.

Tosun, (2006) argued that the majority of the local people are usually eager to be involved in tourism activities. In fact, in his study, he found that more than 80% of the local community in a local destination would like to take the leading role as entrepreneurs and workers at all levels.

According to **Wang, (2007)** The homestay which refers to a stay at a residence by a traveler or a visiting foreign student is viewed as a mean of culture and heritage tourism emerging with traditional houses and culture of residents achieving two goals at the same time: increasing the income of the host country families and encouraging them to preserve their cultural heritage by presenting their traditional houses.

Edgell, D. L., Allen, M. D., Smith, G., & Swanson, J. R. (2008) give suggestion that Tourist do search to understand the flavor of a locale people's arts, architecture, cuisine, costume, music, painting, sculpture, celebrations and festivals and their rituals or the authentic cultural attraction may be cuisine, food habit, drink, entertainment or some other form of hospitality.

4. Community Based Tourism

According to **Leila Pakshir and Vikneswaran Nair, December 2011 (Fig.1)** Homestay being the smallest element is also built on three main pillars of sustainability, (i) social aspect - interaction between the host and visitors, education of the involved parties and respecting the local culture, (ii) economic aspect - proportional distribution of financial benefits to all involved and (iii) environmental aspect – conservation of natural resources. From the onset, it must be consciously planned to (i) benefit residents, (ii) respect local culture, (iii) conserve natural resources, and (iv) educate both the tourists and the residents. Tourism organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and local communities that consider these three principles will enhance the conservation of natural resources, maximize revenue for the community and bring appreciation to cultural and social values.

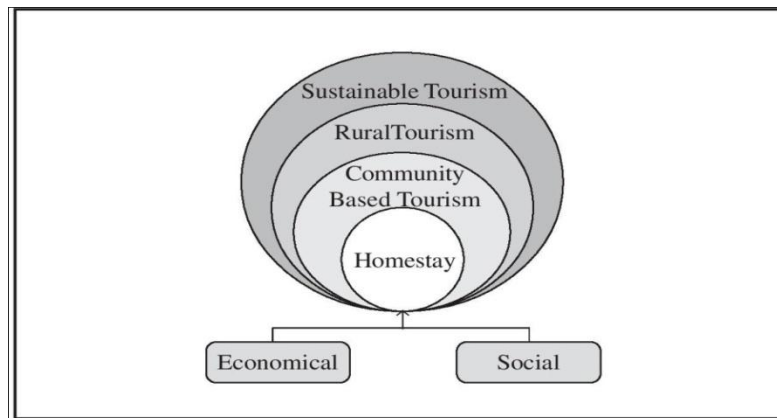


Figure 1: Interlinking the Two Dimensions of Sustainability (Adapted from Leila Pakshir and Vikneswaran Nair December 2011)

Due to the economic burdens of providing meals and shelters, the host's kindness gradually has turned into something that needs a reward and expanded into small businesses then. (Lane & Dupre, 1996), Although there exists a few historical documents that show commercial hospitality has been founded in classical Rome by 405 BC hospitality with business purpose became popular by forming primary inns in 500 AD, thus inn keeping can be considered as the first commercial enterprise and hospitality as one of the first services where money was exchanged in return (Ghosh, 2000).

The 15th century, the custom of bed & breakfast arrangements was recognized by its abbreviation B&B in the British Isles. Thereafter, it became widespread around Europe and accommodated strangers who mostly were traders, soldiers, and pilgrims (Walkers, 2007). The initial B& B arrangements were usually informal and organized based on acquaintance and social ranks similar to charitable hospitality arrangements in ancient Rome as described by Kevin D O'Gorman (2007) in his book. That means every traveler used to choose the host from his/her social class.

Honey, (2008) told that the homestay program has sensitized the tourism sector as an element or tool of community-based tourism (CBT) because it tries to ensure the community's economic empowerment as well as its direct involvement in tourism development.

Iryany, 2010 stated The CBT concept evolving since 1990 has been at the forefront of the promotion of rural development, both in developed and developing countries .The community-based tourism (CBT) concept is a new addition to the tourism industry and it has a close bond with the Homestay concept. The community-based tourism approach (hereafter referred to as CBT) is one of the most prominent tourism projects in rural areas supposed to make an equal

distribution of economic opportunities amongst local communities (**Blockstock, 2005; Tolkach & King, 2015**). Both terms "boarding house" and "tourist home" were used by Americans to define the houses that were located on state routes and opened before and after the Great Depression by their owners to travelers to gain supplementary income for their families (**Paul, 2014**). By implementing the CBT approach, locals experience a greater level of empowerment and ownership in tourism development which easily helps them to reinforce their socio-economic development (**Khlaikaew, Buakwan, & Chaiyakot, 2017; Simpson, Wood & Daws, 2003**).

According to (**Nimmo, 2017**) It is an empowerment for the community as together and offers a platform to learn the new language of the tourist and tourism have chance to discover their host's culture which is usually an eye-opening and transformational experience. In the tourism sector, service quality can be regarded as the tourist's judgment about a product or service's overall excellence or superiority.

(**Jaya 2019**) stated that Homestays have turned out to be a very popular accommodation option, as it enhances the guest experience by making the stay very warm, offering traditional, local, authentic gastronomic delights and providing a home away from home. The proximity with the local culture further enhances the guest satisfaction, helping in sustaining the rich heritage of the country.

Conclusion

Based on the above review papers, the information gathered through the case studies and literature review, developing a homestay program would be a suitable and viable community economic development tool for the India. This paper recommends taking a phased approach to implement wide program. It is also observed that homestays are truly emerging as an alternate travel accommodation in India, with the increasing demand for rooms and the changing mindset of the millennial traveler. The scope of this review is confined to rural tourism destinations of the India. This paper also highlights that how the homestay accommodation can be developed and marketed through the involvement of the local community for sustainable development of these destinations and retains the migration from the sampled region. As per my research, the subservience of homestay is to make a sustainable development and researcher also have some social responsibilities to look forward in this matter. With the help of the homestay program we can help the local community and homestays have a great scope if the concept is promoted well.

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