

Homestay Tourism and Community Development in Ooty Hill Station, South India

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ABSTRACT

Tourism means travelling to outside places for leisure purposes. The main benefits of the tourism are economic development of the nation and job creation for local communities in the respective destination. The main components of tourism are accommodation, food, transport, attractions and activities. For the tourists, accommodation is available in different forms like hotel, resorts, guest house, service apartment, homestay etc. Homestay is alternative accommodation for the tourist and it is familiarizing at global level. Homestay is a popular form of hospitality and lodging whereby visitors share a residence with a local of the city or town to which they are travelling. The length of the stay varies from one day to one month and in exchange of monetary compensation. Homestays offer several advantages such as exposure to everyday life in another location, opportunities for cultural diplomacy, friendship, intercultural competence and low carbon footprint compared to other types of lodging. And it may not have same level of comfort, amenities and privacy as other type of lodging.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism means travelling to outside places for leisure purposes. The main benefits of the tourism are economic development of the nation and job creation for local communities in the respective destination. The total value of the Homestay accommodation is estimated by Homestay.com as \$15 billion In India, The Homestay was initially started at destinations located in remote places like ecotourism spot, adventure tourism spot etc. Later it is slowly started developing in other tourism destinations and become cheaper accommodation facility. By keeping this trend, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India decided to develop such accommodation facilities to the travelers with clean and affordable homestays in tourism destination across the country. The main objective of Homestay is to make the tourist to understand the local culture of the community and visits the tourist attractions with the help of Homestay operators and to improve the economic status of the local community. Homestay are part of operator's house portion, where in 3 to 5 rooms are available for the tourists on rental basis. In South India, it is estimated that there 15000 homestays are available for the tourists. In Tamil Nadu, the Ooty region in the Western Ghats has few thousands Homestay. The main advantage of the Homestay in Ooty is that the operators in the local community will empower socially and economically and the local people also get employment opportunities through Homestays. This study focuses on how the local community members will be benefitted by the Homestay operations and the study highlights the profile of the homestay operators, facilities available and socio-economic improvement of the local community.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the profile of the Homestay Operators in Ooty.
- To assess the facilities available in the Homestay.
- To find out the perception of social and economic impact of Homestay operations.

SCOPE

Hill tourism is familiarizing in Ooty and the tourists are opting Homestay as an alternative accommodation. The services offered by the Homestay operators to the tourists would be highly helpful to formulate strategy for improving services. The study covers, facilities, cost of facilities and impact on Homestay operators and local community. It tries to give valuable suggestions to improve overall service to tourists.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample size of 100 Homestay operators has chosen for study. Unrestricted, non-probability convenience sampling technique has been applied for conducting research. For the purpose of the study, homestay operators in different places in Ooty region have been selected. The type of questionnaire has been specifically designed for the collection of data from the Homestay operators. Secondary data has been mainly collected from related websites, Newspapers and published articles. Profile of the Homestay Operators: The Homestay operators profile consists of sex, age, their educational qualification, monthly income, number of rooms in the facilities, usage in a year, room rent. These details will help the planners for the development of Homestays.

SEX

Out of 100 operators of Homestay, 78 percent are male and remaining are managed by female. It is inferred that male are interested to operate Homestays.

Marital status: Out of 100 respondents 91 percent of the operators are married and remaining are unmarried.

AGE

The efficiency in operating Homestay depends upon the age of the people. The study reveals that majority of the operators are in the age between 40 and 50 years.

EDUCATION

From the survey it was found that majority of the Homestay operators are graduates and it is inferred that they can able to manage the property in a professional way.

Income of the Homestay Operators: Income from business is one of the motivating factors for all entrepreneurs. It is applicable to Homestay operators also. Out of 100 respondents, 22 percent of the operators are earning Rs.20000 and less, 32 percent earning between Rs.20001 and 30000, 30 percent of the operators are earning between 30001 and 40000 and remaining are earning more than Rs.40000 per month.

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE OPERATORS

MONTHLY INCOME IN RS.	NUMBER OF OPERATORS	PERCENTAGE
Up to Rs.20000	22	22
20001 to 30000	32	32
30001 to 40000	30	30
Above 40000	16	16
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 1

The study shows that majority of the operators are earning between Rs.20000 and Rs.40000. It is inferred that the Homestay operators' income are reasonable. Experience in Homestay operation: Experience will help to take decision at faster rate. Out of 100 respondents, 36 percent are having experience less than 5 years, 59 percent are having experience between 5 to 10 years and remaining are more than 10 years of experience in operating Homestays.

EXPERIENCE IN HOMESTAY OPERATION

EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	NUMBER OF OPERATORS	PERCENTAGE
Less than 5 Years	36	36
5 to 10 years	59	59
More than 5 years	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 2

From the above table it is inferred that majority of the Homestay operators are having experience between 5 to 10 years. Number of Rooms in Homestay facilities: Out of 100 operators, 20 percent are having number of rooms between 1 and 2, 65 percent are having 3 to 4 and remaining are having more than four rooms.

NUMBER OF ROOMS IN HOMESTAY FACILITIES

NUMBER OF ROOMS	NUMBER OF OPERATORS	PERCENTAGE
1-2	20	20
3- 4	65	65
>4	15	15
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 3

From the above table, it is observed that majority of the Homestay operators are having 3 to 4 rooms for the guests. Room rent per day per person: The room rent includes accommodation charges, complimentary breakfast and dinner.

ROOM RENT PERPDAY PERSON

ROOM RENT PER DAY PER PERSON	NUMBER OF HS OPERATORS	PERCENTAGE
Rs.750	22	22
Rs.1000	29	29
Rs.1500	34	34
>Rs.1500	15	15
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 4

From the above table it is inferred that majority of the operators are charging room rent between RS.750 and Rs.1000 per day per person. Food variety available: Out of 100 operators, all of them are offering traditional food to their guests, 34 percent are offering North Indian foods and 15 percent are offering customized food.

FOOD VARIETY AVAILABLE

Food type	Yes	No
Traditional	100	00
North Indian	34	66
Customer choice	15	85

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 5

The above table indicates that majority of the operators are offering local food to their guests.

Number of Employees: To serve the guest in better way, people are employed for cooking and room service and housekeeping. Majority of the operators are having minimum two employees and maximum five employees for food preparation and housekeeping. Perception on social impact of Homestay: Perception on social impact of Homestay includes “Home stay is helpful to focus traditional culture”, Homestay influence employment opportunities for local residents”, “Homestay improve social equity and local people”, “Homestay increases quality of life”, Homestay is helpful for conservation”, “Public private consultation are necessary for Homestay development”, “Home increases the stability of the local people lifestyle”, and “Homestay is helpful for ecosystem”.

PERCEPTION ON SOCIAL IMPACT OF HOMESTAY

STATEMENTS	COMPLETELY AGREE		AGREE		MODERATELY AGREE		DISAGREE		COMPLETELY DISAGREE		TOTAL	RANK
	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE		
Home stay is helpful to focus traditional culture	31	155	52	208	17	51	0	0	0	0	414	1
Homestay influence employment opportunities for local residents	31	155	45	180	24	72	0	0	0	0	407	3
Homestay improve social equity and local people	30	150	48	192	22	66	0	0	0	0	408	2
Homestay increases quality of life	22	110	45	180	33	99	0	0	0	0	389	5
Homestay is helpful for conservation	10	50	55	220	35	105	0	0	0	0	375	6
Public private consultation are necessary for Homestay development	5	25	50	200	45	135	0	0	0	0	360	7
Home increases the stability of the local people lifestyle	25	125	55	220	20	60	0	0	0	0	405	4
Homestay is helpful for ecosystem	10	50	35	140	55	165	0	0	0	0	355	8

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 6

“Homestay focuses traditional culture” scored highest points (414) and stood first rank, followed by “ Homestay is improving social equity of local people” (408 points), “Homestay influence employment opportunities for local residents” (407 points), “Homestay increases the stability of the local people lifestyle scored (405 points),“ Homestay increases quality of life” (389 points), “ Homestay helpful for conservation” scored 375 points, “ Public-private consultation are necessary for Homestay development” (360 points), and Homestay is helpful for eco-system scored 355 points. Facilities in the Room: The facilities in the guest room includes cot with bed, Bathroom with western toilets, water heater, wash basin, Mirror, LED TV with dish connection, Cub board and Wi-Fi with internet facilities. All the Homestay operators are having Cot with bed, water heater, wash basin, mirror and Cub board. 95 percent of the operators have bath room with western toilet, 65 percent of the rooms have bathing shower, 95 percent have health faucet, 45 percent have LED TV with dish connection and 65 percent have Wi-Fi internet facilities.

FACILITIES IN THE ROOM

FACILITIES	YES	NO
Cot with Bed	100	00
Bath Room with Western Toilet	95	05
Water Heater	100	00
Wash basin	100	00
Shower	65	45
Health Faucet	95	05
Mirror	100	00
LED TV with dish connection	45	65
Cub board	100	00
Wi-Fi /internet	65	35

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 7

The above table indicates all facilities are provided in to the tourists in their Homestay facilities. Other Facilities for Tourists: It includes Local transport, Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accompanying tourist during the visit, explaining about importance of destination and culture of the people, accompanying during shopping, arranging meeting with local people, and bonfire. Out of 100 operators, all are arranging Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner to their guests. Local transport is provided by 45 percent of the operators. Only 15 percent of the operators are accompanying tourists during the local visit and shopping. 25 percent of the operators are explaining about importance of destination and local culture and only 5 percent of the operators arrange meeting with local people.

OTHER POLICIES FOR TOURISTS

FACILITIES	YES	NO
Local Transport	45	55
Break fast	100	00
Lunch	100	00
Dinner	100	00
Accompanying Tourist during the visit	15	85
Explaining importance of tourist destination and culture of the people.	25	75
Accompanying during shopping.	15	85
Arranging meeting with local people	5	95
Bonfire	90	10

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 8

From the above table, it is understood that all operators are providing Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. Majority of the operators are arranging Bonfire for the tourists staying in their Rooms. Quality of Life: The quality of life attributes includes income, expenditure, saving, house residence, utilities, land, transport, education health and safety. The Homestay operators ranked the quality of life attributes as follows. The “Savings” scored 369 points and stood first rank followed by “Income” 352 points, “Health” 351 points, “Utilities and Expenditure” 348 points, “ Education” 342 points, “Safety” 341 points, “ House Residence” 339 points, “ Land “ 335 points and “ Transport” 333 points.

QUALITY OF LIFE

FACTORS	HIGHLY SATISFIED		SATISFIED		MODERATELY SATISFIED		DIS-SATISFIED		HIGHLY DIS-SATISFIED		TOTAL	RANK
	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE		
Income	10	50	32	128	58	174	0	0	0	0	352	2
Savings	9	45	31	144	60	180	0	0	0	0	369	1
Expenditure	10	50	28	112	62	186	0	0	0	0	348	4
House residence	6	30	27	108	67	201	0	0	0	0	339	8
Utilities	9	45	30	120	61	183	0	0	0	0	348	4
Land	5	25	25	100	70	210	0	0	0	0	335	9
Transport	4	20	25	100	71	213	0	0	0	0	333	10
Education	8	40	26	104	66	198	0	0	0	0	342	6
Health	10	50	31	124	59	177	0	0	0	0	351	3
Safety	6	30	29	116	65	195	0	0	0	0	341	7

Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 9

From the above table, it is understood that the quality of life of Homestay operators has been improved. Role and responsibility of government: Role and responsibility of government includes Infrastructure, Course and Training, Counselling, Marketing, Research and Development of Homestay and Policies. The operators of Homestay ranked the government role and responsibility as follows: The Course and Training provided to Operators scored 347 points and stood highest points, followed by “Policies” 341 points, “Counselling” 340 points, “Infrastructure” 315 points, “Marketing” 305 points, and “R & D” 285 points.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT

FACTORS	HIGHLY SATISFIED		SATISFIED		MODERATELY SATISFIED		DIS SATISFIED		HIGHLY DIS SATISFIED		TOTAL	RANK
	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE	NO.	SCORE		
Infrastructure	0	0	40	160	35	105	25	50	0	0	315	4
Course & Training	7	35	33	132	60	180	0	0	0	0	347	1
R & D	0	0	25	100	35	105	40	80	0	0	285	6
Counselling	5	25	30	120	65	195	0	0	0	0	340	3
Marketing	0	0	20	80	65	195	15	30	0	0	305	5

Policies	6	30	29	116	65	195	0	0	0	0	341	2
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Source: Primary data

TABLE NO 10

The

above table indicates that the government is offering course and training for Homestay operators at regular interval and they felt it is very useful. The policies framed by government are also useful to run the Homestay operators. The infrastructure needs to be developed for effective implementation. The Marketing and research and development have to be improved.

4. FINDINGS

Majority of the operators are male and it inferred that male are interested to run the Homestay facilities. Majority of the operators are married. The operator's age is between 40 and 50 years. Majority of the homestay operators are graduates and it is inferred that they can manage the facilities in a professional way. 62 percent of the Homestay operator's monthly income is between Rs.20000 and Rs.40000. Majority (59 percent) of the Homestay operators are having experience between 5 to 10 years. Majority (65 percent) of the Homestay operators are having number of rooms between 3 and 4. Regarding the room rent, majority of the operators are charging Rs.750 and Rs.1000 per day per person. The Homestay operators are offering Traditional as well as North Indian food to their guests. The Homestay operators are employing 2 to 5 workers to take care of food preparation, servicing and housekeeping works. Regarding the perception on social impact on Homestay, "Homestay focuses traditional culture" scored highest points (414) and stood first rank, followed by " Homestay is improving social equity of local people" (408 points), "Homestay influence employment opportunities for local residents" (407 points), " Homestay increases the stability of the local people lifestyle scored (405 points)," Homestay increases quality of life" (389 points), " Homestay helpful for conservation" scored 375 points, " Public-private consultation are necessary for Homestay development" (360 points), and Homestay is helpful for eco-system scored 355 points.

Facilities in the Room: The facilities in the guest room includes cot with bed, Bathroom with western toilets, water heater, wash basin, Mirror, LED TV with dish connection, Cub board and Wi-Fi with internet facilities. All the Homestay operators are having Cot with bed, water heater, wash basin, mirror and Cub board. 95 percent of the operators have bath room with western toilet, 65 percent of the rooms have bathing shower, 95 percent have health faucet, 45 percent have LED TV with dish connection and 65 percent have Wi-Fi internet facilities.

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QUALITY OF LIFE

The quality of life attributes includes income, expenditure, saving, house residence, utilities, land, transport, education health and safety. The Homestay operators ranked the quality of life attributes as follows. The “Savings” scored 369 points and stood first rank followed by “Income” 352 points, “Health” 351 points, “Utilities and Expenditure” 348 points, “Education” 342 points, “Safety” 341 points, “House Residence” 339 points, “Land” 335 points and “Transport” 333 points. It is understood that the quality of life of Homestay operators has been improved.

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5. SUGGESTIONS

The government has to organize training programmes to the Homestay operators at regular interval on Homestay house keeping, cleanliness and hygiene and management of facilities and guests in Homestay. To create awareness about the tourist destination, the operators should arrange a video show focusing local traditional culture and importance of destinations. Arrange meeting with local people to have better insight about local traditional culture and history. Steps to take to involve women in managing Homestays and government have to provide subsidy to women to start Homestay business. Make all the Homestay establishments to have western toilets. Bath room should be neat and clean and it has to maintain regularly. Homestay rooms should have attractive interior decoration and each room should have TV instead of keeping in hall. Homestay operators should frequently interact with guests to make them feel ease and comfortable with environment.

Community based Homestay operation has to be introduced to involve community organization to participate in the Homestay operation like Malaysia. Local community organization can open shops to sell local products like honey, chocolate, pepper, Cardamom etc. and sell their products to Homestay guests to build reliability. Maintain lawn, leaking pipes, carpet cleaning on regular basis. This will improve the satisfaction level of tourists. The top amenity every traveler is looking for at this booming age of digital Medias Wi-Fi connection. So provide better internet connectivity at the premise of Homestay. Advertise the Homestay facilities with good photos, in online to attract tourists and accept the online booking and also through travel agents.

Provide better discount for repeat customers and referral customers.

Get feedback from customers during checkout the Homestay and analyze and take decision for improvement.

6. CONCLUSION

Homestay is a good alternative accommodation facility and it is popular at global level and in India it is providing an income to the community residing in Tourist destinations. This research conducted at Ooty a familiar hill tourism destination in South India provides lot of findings and

based on that a set suggestion has been provided for the overall improvement of the business. By implementing the suggestions effectively, the socio-economic condition of local community will develop and thereby the tourist satisfaction level could improve.

7. REFERENCE

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- [9] Senapati, Nilamani; Sahu, N. K. (1955). Gazetteers of India: Nilgiris District. Government Press. pp. 3, 199–201, 866. The location of the Nilgiris is unique that it was in the tri-junction of ancient Tamil kingdoms of Cholas, Cheras and the Pandyas. Hence, it was under Cheras, Cholas or local chieftains at various...