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Sanjiv Kumar Sharma
Ph.D., Scholar and Assistant
Professor, Shri Ramasamy
Memorial University, Sikkim,
India

Dr. Praveen Rizal
Associate Professor,
Department of Economics,
Shri Ramasamy Memorial
University Sikkim, India

Dr. Amit Kumar Singh
Assistant Professor,
Department of Tourism,
Sikkim University, Sikkim,
India

Corresponding Author:
Sanjiv Kumar Sharma
Ph.D., Scholar and Assistant
Professor, Shri Ramasamy
Memorial University Sikkim,
India

Guests motives towards selecting homestay accommodation in Sikkim

Sanjiv Kumar Sharma, Dr. Praveen Rizal and Dr. Amit Kumar Singh

Abstract

Sleeping in is not as easy as it used to be. Guests want glass facades, a view of the mountaintops, endless solo time and complete peace. A survey says that around 50% of Indian travelers prefer homestays over the hotel industry (Survey conducted in 2019 by Make My Trip). Accommodation is the most important component of the Hospitality industry, at present, guests are interested in taking accommodation in the homestay but not conventional accommodation.

A homestay is a popular form of the hospitality where guests share a residence with locales of the city or village for the authentic experience. It is one of the quickly developing and taken up as an important financial exercise for several communities in India. It is essential to recognize and consider the desires of the guests to return to the homestay, which will further advantage for several stakeholders in creating more business. This paper is an attempt to recognize the guest's motives selecting homestay and to observe the paradigm shift COVID friendly homestay accommodation.

Keywords: Homestay, accommodation, guest, COVID friendly, CBT

1. Introduction

A homestay is a popular form of the hospitality industry where guests share a residence with a locales of the city or village. Guest commonly stay in hotels, guesthouses, or Dharmshallas according to their needs and money. Several, on the other hand, want to remain in a more homely atmosphere to save money on their accommodation, minimal service expectations and don't expect room service or service 24 hours a day. Homestay is regularly taken up as an important financial exercise for many communities in India mainly in the states of Sikkim, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Assam and many more. A survey says that around 50% of Indian travellers prefer homestay and villa over the hotel industry (survey conducted by make my trip in 2019). Guests choose the accommodation in homestay out of conventional accommodation. It is the most important component of the hospitality and tourism industry, which motivates guest to stay and enjoy the comfort, cleanness, amenities, safety-security and privacy, since room is private place.

Homestay refers to a go-to someone domestic in an overseas which permits site visitors to rent a room from a neighbourhood household to analyse neighbourhood culture, lifestyle, or language. It is a residing arrangement provided through a host or host household that entails staying in their furnished house. The guest of a domestic continue to be would be staying in home-like lodging with shared residing spaces, facilities, and amenities. Utilities and ingredients are generally blanketed and the size of continue to be should be daily, weekly, monthly, or limitless except certain in any other case by using the host (Rivers, 1998).

Apart from lodging Home Stay provide authenticity of things to do and the company with the special opportunity to ride the unique way of life of the area. Activities will vary from domestic to home and rely on the location. For occasion things to do at a domestic continue to be in Thailand can range from giving morning alms to monks, studying how to weave silk or cotton cloth, participating in agricultural activities, to going on nature tours, research and ability practised by way of nearby villagers, such as making nearby handicrafts or cooking Thai food. In Japan, one can examine doll making art.

In India, many Homestays in Kerala provide backwater cruises in houseboats and journeys down the narrow canals in canoes. In Rajasthan some Homestays organize safaris through jeep or horseback into the countryside, to go to tribal villages and spot wildlife. In plantation and hill stations, hosts can take visitors trekking and organize guided walks via spice gardens and forests. Depending on the family, many hosts will provide to take company spherical the points of interest of their city or village, sharing local insights and a trip was eliminated from

the regular traveller trudge.

Homestays aren't simply a base from which to spend a few days exploring the nearby area, they are an excursion vacation spot in themselves. Frederick (2003) additionally described the homestay as remaining through tourists or a journeying overseas scholar who is hosted through a nearby family. Homestay can appear in any destination worldwide;

residents of homestay nations motivate homestays to develop their tourism industry. Also, homestays as a concept, brings humans from assorted backgrounds below a single roof, pretty literally, and provide the best platform for lengthy-lasting friendships.

2. Review of Literature

Table 1: Guest's motives to select Homestay

Study conducted	Motives to Select Homestay
Gunashekharan, Anandkumar (2012)	1. Homely atmosphere 2. Value for Money 3. Local Touch 4. Guest-Host Relationship
Venkatesh, Mukesh (2015)	1. Distinct Accommodations 2. Personalized Services 3. Local Knowledge of the Host 4. Home-cooked food 5. Unique activities
Chaturvedi (2015)	1. Pocket-friendly accommodation 2. Home-cooked Local food 3. Unique Activities 4. Safety & Privacy 5. Help to Host 6. Home is always a better place
Yogendra, Vasupal (2015)	1. Meeting New People 2. Experiencing offbeat place 3. Trying Authentic Native cuisine 4. Homely Feeling 5. Local experiences 6. Learn new language 7. Getting personal attention 8. Value for money 9. Building confidence to try new things
HSU HL and Lin YM (2011)	1. Activities arrangement 2. Service quality 3. Scene attraction 4. Social demands and facilities (making new friends etc.) 5. Price 6. Sanitation and comfort 7. A special attraction 8. Leisure and relaxation 9. Transportation
Tania Tarafadar (2020)	1. Covid friendly 2. Contactless 3. Location 4. Peaceful 5. Cleaner space and more isolated

Compiled from the original sources by Researcher

2.1 Origin of Homestay concept in Sikkim

Tourism in Sikkim is synonymous with homestay, a concept that developed almost organically in the State. Tourism inflows to Sikkim were negligible even after the merger in India, growth was slow till 1980. In 2002, and the South Asian Regional Conference on Ecotourism was organized in Sikkim by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Tourism Government of India.

The 1st set of community-based Ecotourism was set up in four villages of the state way back in 2007. The core component of these CBT initiatives was the village homestay, a new tourism product that ensured the spread of tourism benefits to local communities. A couple of years later, people saw this as an opportunity and they started converting their small village homes into a homestay, and

soon this concept of homestay got recognized, Sikkim Government has taken several initiatives to support village tourism through the Sikkim Registration of Homestay Establishment Rules 2013. Today's homestay has speeded across the Sikkim State. Ministry of Tourism (MoT) government of India and the State government are skilling and transforming many more home (urban, semi urban and rural) in to homestay.

2.2 Guest preferences choose homestay accommodation in Sikkim

With continually evolving travel aims and motives, homestays are a better fit for all guests than any hotel these days. Drive to Sikkim offers a fully arranged variety of varied homestay experiences at each destination, allowing guests to meet local people and develop a better knowledge of the local culture and lifestyle, eat home-cooked organic food-beverage, experience a new way of life, and get off the beaten path and go on adventures.

Table 2: Some selected reasons

Decent Rate	Selected reasons to pick homestay in Sikkim	Local hospitality of the hosts
Choice and uniqueness of the accommodation		Taste the best home-cooked food
Authentic culture		Good location
Away from busy commercial centres		Experience a variety of homes
Safety and hygiene		Authentic experiences
Taste of local culture		Scenic beauty

Compiled from the original sources by Researcher

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the guest's motives towards selecting homestay accommodation in Sikkim
2. To observe the paradigm shift in homestay accommodation of Sikkim due to covid19

4. Research Methodology

There is scanty literature that is available for homestay in Sikkim. To explicit the results, the researcher collected the relevant information through observation and primary survey of the clusters of homestay located in all the districts of Sikkim State. Some of the available relevant pieces of literature were also reviewed and concepts were compiled as per the need of the study. Hence the present paper is a blend of both primary and secondary sources of data and information that were collected and selected through various pieces of literature like books, journals, articles, and websites, while for primary data and information guest and homestay hosts were interviewed.

5. Motivation for the Study

Hospitality and Tourism are developing rapidly in India, and homestay as alternative accommodation, gaining importance more. Many states in India where the homestay is being promoted and become popular too. During the field visit in the month of September-December, 2021 it has been observed by the researcher that very limited homestay hosts are aware of the guest motives to select homestay accommodation in Sikkim. Therefore, the researcher is interested to motivate guests and educating the host to know guest motives before offering homestay accommodation to the guest in Sikkim.

6. Tourist footfall in Sikkim

October 21, 2021, the Sikkim state saw record tourist attendance during the Durga puja holiday. More than 22,000 domestic (Indian) tourists and 651 foreign travellers visited the state. An average of 5,000 tourist’s visited Sikkim daily at present. The rise was recorded after the state government removed all COVID-19 related restrictions and reopened its borders. The government has taken several measures to encourage tourism this holiday season to offset the financial setback it took last year. The two-month lockdown during the peak season last year caused an estimated loss of 500-700 crore. Almost a quarter of the state’s population depends on tourism, which generates an annual income of 4,000 to 5,000 crore. (Tourism department officials said, published on Oct 21, 2021 in Hindustan times).

7. Accommodations Industry reshape (COVID friendly)

The hospitality business has had to redefine its future projections. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a substantial impact on the business because of the interruption of international and local travel as well as the resulting safety measures. From hotels, motels, and resorts

to bed & breakfasts and home-stay services like Airbnb, the whole business has been impacted. Contactless technology, strict hygiene standards, and more domestic travel, or "staycations," are just a few of the current trends stemming from the epidemic. Consumers are more conscious than ever before of the importance of planetary and personal health, and, as a result of a lack of connection, are looking for more real experiences than ever before. As a result of the pandemic, wider trends that were already changing the lodging business have been further solidified. Digitization, sustainability, and the need for real, individualised experiences are just a few of them.

Guest’s demands have shifted dramatically as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Exceptional sanitary standards, contactless service, and sufficient space for social distancing have all of a sudden become mandatory conditions for individuals seeking overnight lodging. To stay afloat, businesses have had to swiftly adapt to shifting trends. Many lodging providers are currently struggling due to travel limitations, but as more people choose for local travel, this may change.

8. Discussion

According to the available research, the most essential factors to consider when choosing a homestay are warmth, affordability, and a real sense of local culture-hospitality, the formation of innovative relationships with hosts, and a unique experience when compared to a typical hotel, motel, and inn accommodations. For a healthy understanding, each of these elements is explored in light of the relevant scientific material.

It has a soothing ambiance. Price, services, cultural participation, safety, and security are all important factors to consider. Local cuisine and wine, as well as a local cooking experience with the host. Contactless technologies, strong hygiene standards, and more staycations are some of the current pandemic-related trends. Guests are more conscious than ever before of the importance of environmental and personal health and are looking for more genuine experiences than ever before (post-COVID-19).

9. Conclusion

In Sikkim Homestay is popular among guests and travelers who want to learn more about the culture, natural beauty, climates, and way of life rather than just enjoying superficial packages. As per the ongoing study, a sense of belonging, customized services, and a local hospitality touch to immerse oneself in the local culture are all important factors to consider while selecting accommodation in a homestay. Guests choose homestay lodging for a variety of reasons, the most important are safety and affordability, superior sanitary standards, COVID friendly, contactless service, adequate space for social distancing have all of a sudden become required conditions for people looking for overnight accommodation. Therefore most of the travelers

are selecting accommodation in homestay over the hotel. In Sikkim, guests are experiencing the novelty of local hospitality through homestay accommodation.

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