



COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM INITIATIVES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract

Apple orchards, terraced terraces, snow-capped high Himalayan mountain ranges, snow-fed lakes, and rushing rivers are just some of the natural beauties that can be found in Himachal Pradesh. Other natural wonders include the state's name, which literally translates to "higher place." The state of Himachal Pradesh is endowed with an abundance of natural beauty that varies from the huge areas of high altitude desert in the Trans-Himalayas to the deep green deodar forests that can be found across the state. As a result of this, the state is an incredible location to spend a holiday. Traveling to the state is recommended for a variety of important and worthwhile reasons. The state is home to a populace that has a deep-seated faith in the philosophy of "Atithi Devo Bhava," which may be loosely translated as "the Guest is a God," and it provides a travel and stay experience that will be remembered for a very long time. In addition to this, there is cuisine that is good for the body, music that may take the spirit to a higher plane, and expansive views that look like they were taken from a dream world. In the year 2013, the state of Himachal Pradesh developed the Sustainable Tourism Development Policy with the objectives of utilising sustainable tourism as a means to provide better employment and greater business opportunities for locals, to contribute to the protection of the state's one-of-a-kind natural and cultural heritage, and to ensure the long-term prosperity and high quality of life of future generations of citizens of Himachal Pradesh. These objectives were established with the intention of utilising sustainable tourism as a means to provide better employment and greater business opportunities for local.

keywords:community, Tourism, Himachal Pradesh

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh, a state in India, has been attracting visitors, artists, pilgrims, and tourists who are searching for an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives since the beginning of recorded history. The natural visual splendour of the region, the architecture, the fairs and festivals, the healthy atmosphere and environment, the snow-capped peaks, the lakes, the rivers, the glaciers, and the adventure sports, as well as the temples, have developed as the key tourist attractions in this region. Among the further attractions are: Those who are hungry for the stunning beauty that this region has to offer will be rewarded with the region's cultural wealth and history as well as a variety of entertainment options and environmental settings to explore. The thriving tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh acts as a primary propellant for economic development in the state's more rural areas. Tourism planners need to find ways to reduce the amount of danger that exists at the destination through risk reduction or enhancement regulations in order to cater to the desires of visitors and meet their motives. This is necessary in order to satisfy the visitors' motives and satisfy their desires. Tourism makes a considerable contribution to the economy of the state of Himachal Pradesh, which results in significant economic advantages.

"The tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh is making a significant contribution to the creation of job opportunities and the earning of foreign cash, and the government of Himachal Pradesh has granted the tourism industry the necessary attention to guarantee that it will continue to develop throughout the years. In order to better promote tourism in the state's primary tourist sites" the state government of Himachal Pradesh has initiated a number of different programmes for the development of infrastructure. These programmes include the construction of railroads, air transport, road transport, and communication networks, among other forms of transportation. In light of the fact that the tourism industry is of the utmost significance to the state of Himachal Pradesh, the current research endeavoured to investigate the pattern of tourist arrivals, make an evaluation of the services and facilities that are accessible to tourists, and investigate the perspectives of both domestic and international travellers with regard to the availability of such services and facilities in a number of different tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh.

This study is an attempt to analyse the success of the "Homestay Scheme" that was established by the government of Himachal Pradesh and is more commonly known as the

"Himachal Pradesh Home Stay, Scheme2008." The government of Himachal Pradesh established the "Homestay Scheme," and this study is an attempt to analyse its success. The study is based on a thorough review of the existing relevant literature as well as previous attempts to perform such a review. Himachal Pradesh, which is endowed with an enormous amount of "natural beauty and a diverse range of tourism products such as pilgrimage, excursion, adventure sports, heritage, culture, cuisines, and festivals, amongst other things, has begun to focus more of its attention on the tourism industry in the past few years". This is because of the state's endowment with such a vast amount of natural beauty. "The effective branding of Himachal as Unforgettable Himachalhas provided many benefits for the industry in the form of income creation, employment generation, etc., and tourism has always inspired the community to participate" in order to gain the greatest profit out of it. The influence that this well-known programme has had on the people of Himachal Pradesh is the primary topic of discussion in this article.

The provision of appropriate or carelessly built tourist infrastructure has long been recognised as one of the most major causes for concern across the board. The most essential component of tourism is housing. The provision of suitable lodging is the single most crucial facet of the tourist industry.

Numerous studies have provided light on the difficulties and risks that are faced by tourism infrastructure. To be more explicit, the development of tourist infrastructure results in both expenses and advantages. But first, let's look at the benefits. These include expenditures by the government, increases in home prices, the disappearance of traditional housing and other local characteristics, problems with transportation and crime, and the depletion of common resources. Additionally, these factors contribute to the deterioration of the environment. In spite of the fact that tourism is supposed to foster general socioeconomic development, there is not a great deal of evidence to suggest that these benefits are actually felt within the regions that it serves. This is because tourism does not directly contribute to general socioeconomic development. As a consequence of this, the moment has come for the planners to create guidelines that are acceptable to the host community and make it possible for them to obtain the maximum amount of advantages feasible from the circumstance.

Objective

- "To understand the benefits of Home stay scheme".
- "To identify the major problems areas in development of the Home Stay scheme".
- "To suggest some alternative strategies for the successful implementation of the scheme".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary data pertaining to the tourism and Home stay scheme have been collected from various reports of the state such as Economic survey of Himachal Pradesh, Reports of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Himachal Pradesh news papers, referring to various websites and magazines etc. in order to meet the objectives of the study. These reports include: Economic survey of Himachal Pradesh; Reports of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department; Himachal Pradesh news papers; etc.

Home Stay Scheme in Himachal Pradesh

The state government of Himachal Pradesh launched the 'Home Stay' Scheme in the year 2008 with the primary goals of broadening the "stake holder base for tourism in the state, filling the gap that existed between the demand for accommodation and the supply of accommodation, and having community participation. In other words, the scheme aimed to promote homestays. This was done in an attempt to bridge the gap that existed between the demand for lodging and the quantity of accommodation that was already available". Bring tourism to the state's rural and interior regions, which will assist lessen the demand on already overcrowded metropolitan areas that are unable to sustain any extra load of tourists. This will be accomplished by bringing tourism to the rural and interior parts of the state. "Give employment and economic values in the interior areas, The activity shall be ecologically sustainable, and to attract visitors from all over the world and provide them with quality lodging at reasonable prices during the peak season has been a smashing success". Give employment and economic values in the interior areas of the country The 'Home Stay' Scheme is an initiative that aims to entice visitors away from upscale and congested metropolitan areas and into the rural hinterland that is abundant with natural surroundings by providing them with hygienic, pleasant, and cost-effective lodging and dining options. More

specifically, the goal of the scheme is to entice visitors away from upscale and congested metropolitan areas and into the rural hinterland that is abundant with natural surroundings. The programme to encourage rural tourism was initiated by the government, and on August 15, 2010, the "Department of Tourism in Himachal Pradesh inaugurated the programme in all 12 districts of the state by selecting one village destination in each district". The program's objective is to promote rural tourism. Heaven, which can be found in the Shimla district; Sangrah, which can be found in Sirmaur; Baniya Devi, which can be found in Solan; Brua, which can be found in Kinnaur; Udaipur, which can be found in Lahaul-Spiti; Shamshar, which can be found in Kullu; Bagiin Mandi; Salassi, which can be found in Bilaspur; Bela, which can be Bed & breakfasts, which are often smaller, quieter, and less expensive than luxury hotels, are becoming an increasingly popular accommodation choice for people on vacation. This has made it possible for the state government to advertise new tourism destinations and has also made it possible for those living in rural regions to have access to other sources of income. The campaign has been effective in attracting people away from tourist destinations that have historically been popular and into new and unknown regions.

"TABLE 1 - REGISTERED HOME STAYS UNITS & OCCUPANCY"

Sr No	District	Regd Units	Rooms	National tourist	Foreign tourists
1	Shimla	51 146	2472	041	
2	Kinnaur	49 140	0065	138	
3	Lahaul-Spiti	28 080	0028	110	
4	Kullu	113 289	4510	856	
5	Mandi	10 024	0759	021	
6	Kangra	34 089	5302	231	
7	Chamba	26 074	1926	072	
8	Solan	15 036	2889	007	
9	Sirmaur	06 013	0205	009	
10	Bilaspur	----			
11	Hamirpur	----			
12	Una	----			
Till 28-02-2011					
Total		332 891	18156	1485	
Source: Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Himachal Pradesh					

"Source: Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Himachal Pradesh, 2006".

Benefits Related To Home Stay

Home Stays provide tourists the opportunity to experience a side of India that can only be reached by staying with a local family. This facet can only be accessed by staying with a local family. Following the "successful implementation of the "Har GharKuchKehta Hai" (everyhouse speaks something) programme, under which the department had compiled a list of historical buildings for tourism" the tourism department of the Himachal Pradesh

Government has come up with another scheme called "Har Gaon Ki Kahani." According to the tourism department of the Himachal Pradesh Government, following the "successful implementation of the "Har GharKuchKehta Hai" (everyhouse speaks something) programme, the department" has come (the story of every village). As part of the programme known as 'Har Gaon Ki Kahani,' the tourist department has requested that the local villages come up with well-known stories that are connected to their towns. These tales will be included in the programme. These stories ought to be able to help in luring tourists to the towns that are in trouble, which would provide a boost to the rural tourism industry. The local villages have been asked by the tourist administration to think of well-known stories that are connected to their towns as part of a programme called "Har Gaon Ki Kahani." These stories ought to be able to aid in the process of drawing tourists to the towns in question and giving a boost to the tourism industry in rural regions. It is hoped that the effort would offer career opportunities for the young people of the area because the towns of "Shimla, Kangra, Kullu, and many other places in Himachal Pradesh are well-known for their folktales and local legends".

Table 2 – Tourist Arrivals in Himachal Pradesh.

Visitor inflow in past 9 years

Year	Total inflow	Foreign tourists
2009	1,14,37,155	4,00,583
2010	1,32,65,602	4,53,616
2011	1,50,89,401	4,84,518
2012	1,61,46,332	5,00,284
2013	1,51,29,835	4,14,249
2014	1,63,14,400	3,89,699
2015	1,75,31,153	4,06,108
2016	1,84,50,520	4,52,770
2017	1,96,01,533	4,70,992

"Source: Department of tourism, Himachal Pradesh"

"The Himachal Pradesh Government had accorded a number of incentives for the Home stay scheme which includes":

- "The homestay tourist concept has taken hold in several parts of the hill state, providing economic opportunities for a significant number of residents of those places".
- "Including providing these units with water and power at concessional rates that are applicable to domestic users, as well as exempting them from paying any taxes that may be relevant".
- "Generate channels of self-employment etc".
- "The majority of women who work as local guides and who are paid cash payments believe that the revenue they get from homestays has made a substantial improvement in their life. They were previously limited in their ability to make decisions at home, but now they have more autonomy thanks to the money".
- "Taking part in homestay programmes bolsters the sense of pride that locals have in their culture, way of life, and surroundings, in addition to providing opportunity to engage in conversation with individuals from different nations".
- "It has been successful in diverting tourists away from old popular tourist spots and toward new destinations, which has helped to promote new destinations and provided an alternative income source for rural enterprises".
- "The Department of Tourism will post, at no cost, on its website the authorized Home Stay units that have been registered as Home Stays by their respective owners. These listings may be found on the Department of Tourism website. On payment of a commission as determined by HPTDC from time to time, they are also included in HPTDC's online Reservation system, which automatically produces customers for the stakeholders. This commission structure is subject to change".

The agency made the decision to launch the programme in order to encourage rural tourism and give those who are interested in participating in the socio-cultural activities, celebrations, and cuisine of the region the option to do so. This initiative "has been quite popular, especially with international tourists who come here deliberately to acquire a feel for the rural and local life, which they get the best sense for when they are staying in the houses of locals". This programme has had a great deal of success with visitors from other countries. Nevertheless, there are a few concerns regarding its efficient execution and the effect it would have on the hotel industry. For instance, the Hoteliers Associations vigorously rejected

a proposal made by the Tourism ministry to increase the limit on the number of rooms from three to five. The Tourism ministry intended to raise the limit. The argument that is presented by hotel owners is that the programme is having a detrimental influence on their company because people would prefer stay in houses since the rates are more inexpensive and one can receive a room that is acceptable while still having complete home comfort. In addition, hotels are unable to provide their visitors home-cooked meals or a glimpse into the local way of life, even though these are two of the most sought-after aspects of vacationing in a new place. The proprietors of hotels assert that the construction of their establishments and the payment of taxes on opulent lodgings represent a considerable investment on their part. In a scenario like this one, the government needs to work toward the goal of establishing conditions that would allow all of the participants to emerge victorious. "In addition to this, the government needs to educate people about the multiple benefits of the scheme with the assistance of volunteers, non-governmental organisations (NGO), and self-help groups (SHG) so that the scheme achieves the maximum popularity amongst the local community and the delicate ecology on the hills can be protected without compromising the benefits that they receive from the tourism industry. This is necessary so that the scheme can achieve the maximum popularity amongst the local community and so that the scheme can achieve the maximum popularity amongst the local community".

Through the organisation of and participation in real and genuine homestays, the host community is striving toward the formation of communities that are better capable of sustaining themselves over time. They are doing this as a part of their attempt to provide for and stimulate the creation of environmentally friendly communities. Tourism needs to support community sustainability in today's world, "when all destinations that have reached a saturation stage are facing the challenges of congestion, pollution, and other issues. India, which is primarily an agricultural society, needs to give a fillip to the tourism industry without compromising much on the ecological fragile nature of the destination. In this respect, the Home Stay Scheme" is an effort that is immensely helpful to the community as a whole and to the destination in particular. It is of the highest significance to nurture expertise on a local level in the areas of designing and marketing community-based tourist programmes. This experience should be gained at the grassroots level. It is necessary for the government to work together with other rural communities in order to develop, promote, and manage tourism based on the practises that are the most successful. The development of the

capacity of community members to conduct out Community Built Research, which makes it possible for the community to uncover prospective tourism goods that are founded upon sustainable business models, need to be the major focus of this endeavour. Members of the community should also receive the required training. Helping the town that will be hosting the event become successful proprietors of the tourism sector that will be based upon its natural and cultural heritage is something that must be done in order to ensure the success of the event. And to take part in the "Homestay Scheme" that is being provided by a number of different venues. You should not only create measurable economic benefits for the residents of the neighbourhood, but you should also provide them with education and training in a wide variety of skills, such as customer service, communication, project management, and business accounting. In addition to this, you should also create jobs for the residents of the neighbourhood. They will be able to pursue self-employment in a manner that is not just feasible but also lucrative as a result of this.

The government of Himachal Pradesh, along with the assistance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), has the potential to play an important role in the development of cultural pride and identity in a number of rural communities throughout the state, as well as in the promotion of awareness of and support for the preservation of natural heritage in these same rural communities. For instance, the home stay programme in Kullu and Manali has rekindled young people's interest in traditional dances, which has contributed to a reduction in the flow of people from the countryside to the cities. This has resulted in a decrease in the population migration from the countryside to the cities. This is something that may very well be replicated in the other part of the state with little effort at all.

SUGGESTIONS

The host community is making an effort to both provide for and stimulate the creation of communities that are becoming increasingly sustainable through the organisation of authentic and genuine house stays, as well as through the participation of the members of the host community in these house stays. In this day and age, when all locations that have reached a saturation level are confronting the issues of things like congestion and pollution, etc., the tourism industry has a responsibility to promote the long-term viability of the communities that it visits. Tourism in India, which is predominantly an agricultural community, requires a boost in order to thrive, but this must be accomplished without causing significant damage to

the ecologically delicate character of the country as a whole. When seen through this lens, the Home Stay Scheme is a very beneficial contribution to society as a whole and to a community in particular. When it comes to the process of establishing and marketing community-based tourism programmes, it is of the utmost value to focus on the growth of experience at the grass-roots level. This is because the experience gained at this level may be invaluable. It is essential for the government to collaborate with other rural communities in order to successfully develop, market, and manage tourism based on the best practises already in use. The primary focus should be on enhancing the capabilities of community members and providing them with training in order for community members to effectively conduct out research based on their community. This will allow community members to successfully carry out research based on their community.

Because of this, the community will now have the ability to recognise prospective tourist products that are based on practical business models. This will allow the community to better capitalise on opportunities. The community that will be hosting the event needs to be assisted in becoming effective owners of, and decision makers within, the tourism sector that will be established around its natural and cultural heritage. This is something that needs to be done in order to guarantee that the event will go off without a hitch. And to participate in the "Home stay Scheme" that is being made available through a variety of various online sites. In addition to the elements that have been listed above, Education and training in a wide variety of skills, such as customer service, communication, project management, and corporate accountancy, may produce actual economic advantages for the community that is being educated and trained. This may be achieved by offering education and training opportunities in the relevant fields to the local populace.

They need to obtain this training in order for them to be able to engage in self-employment in a manner that is not only sustainable for them but also lucrative for them. This training is necessary in order for them to have this capability. It is possible for the government, with the support of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc., to play a crucial role in the process of cultivating cultural pride and a feeling of identity in many rural communities located across the state of Himachali. At the same time, they are able to raise people's awareness about the need of protecting natural heritage and garner support for this cause in rural areas. For instance, the home stay programme in Kullu and Manali has rekindled young people's interest in traditional dances, which has contributed to a reduction in the flow of people from

the countryside to the cities. This has resulted in a decrease in the population migration from the countryside to the cities. As a consequence of this, there has been a reduction in the number of people moving from the rural to the metropolis. It's possible that something similar might be done in another region of the state with very little work at all.

CONCLUSION

The most recent study reaches the conclusion that CBTI is a developing concept in the area, and that people have only recently started associating themselves with such novel endeavours. Local community members are supporting initiatives such as these with a positive attitude and adopting novel ideas in order to further the promotion and development of CBTI in their region. The findings of the study suggested that, on the whole, people's perceptions of the community-based tourism were consistent with the assertions that had been made by the researchers and the government, and that the community was benefiting both economically and socially from the efforts that were being made as a result of the community-based tourism.

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