

Role of Homestays in Tourism Development: Case of Homestays in Fort Kochi, Kerala

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Introduction

Tourism is often described as the fastest growing and the second largest industry of the world. Tourism sector is perceived as the second largest industry in the world, after oil industry. Tourism is indeed a challenging multi-sectoral industry and constitutes a multi-disciplinary field of study. It presents an unparalleled challenge to almost all countries of the world.

Kerala, god's own country, offers a multitude of experience to the tourists. It is blessed with unmatched natural diversity that provides immense scope for tourism. This virtual paradise holds almost all the tourist attractions of the world i.e., enhancing backwaters, serene beaches, historic monuments, art forms, traditional food and everything that enthralls a visitor.

Home stays has become a major tourism instrument as it provide a visitor to rent a room from a local family in a homelike setting. Home stays give the tourists an opportunity to get a taste of dialect dishes and beauty of the area around .Hosting a home stay, local family has been able to earn income and thereby becoming a part in the tourism development of the state. One of the many fascinating experience for visitors to Kerala is without doubt the home stays. Home stays allows you to get close with the host family and the community that lives an area . Home stays are classified into 3 based on their performance. They are diamond house, gold house and silver house.

Statement of the Problem

Kerala tourism has been developing over the years and home stays have emerged as a major player in Kerala's tourism sector. Home stays are important tourism instruments as it give local residents a source of income and local people have become fully integrated with the tourism development of the area. But it has to be found that whether home stays provide an alternate career to owners with sufficient income. It would be of interesting to find out the tourists perception on homestays and suggestions for improving the working of homestays. A clear cut strategy has to be developed for improving the conditions of home stays and bringing more local people into this niche area.

Objectives of the study

- To analyse the problems and prospect of home stays in Kerala.
- To suggest ways to improve the functioning of home stays.

Methodology and Data sources

The present study would be undertaken through conducting survey, personal interviews with home stay owners, tourists etc. Fort Kochi is a main tourist areas in Kochi and also home to a large number of home stays. The study uses both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from Economic Review, research publications, bulletins of DTPC (District Tourism Promotion Council), and government publications.

Data Analysis

The survey was carried out among Homestay owners and Tourists. Two sets of structured questionnaires were prepared addressing these two sections.

Survey of Homestay Owners

Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents (%)

Age	Percentage
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25-35	12%
35-45	29%
45-55	35%
Above 55	24%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

We have surveyed 17 homestays. The gender Out of the 17 respondents, 35% belong to the age group 45-55. The least proportion belongs to the age group of 25-35.

Educational qualification of respondents

Education	Percentages
P.G	17%
Degree	35%
+2	24%
S.S.L.C	24%

Below S.S.L.C	0%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

Out of the respondents majority of the respondents have degree and no one has below S.S.L.C

Land area

Land area (cents)	Percentage
5 – 10	47
10 – 15	18
15 – 20	23
Above 20	12
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

47% of the total respondents are having a land area of 5-10 cents. 18% of the respondents have 10-15 cents of land. 23% of the total respondents have 15-20 cents of land. Only 12% of the total respondents have a land area of more than 20 cents.

Source of capital

Capital	Percentage
Own	94%
Bank	6%
Money lenders	0%
Others	0%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

Out of the respondents, the 94% of people found their own capital to invest and rest of the 6% borrowed finance from banks.

Facilities provided in the Homestays

Facilities provided	Percentages
Cultural pogrammes	33%
Boating	30%
Traditional food	9%
Others	28%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

All of the home stay owners provide facilities on the basis of tourist's preference. They provide both cultural program and boating likely.

Main source of income for livelihood

Income for livelihood	Percentage
Yes	59%
No	41%
Total	100%

Survey: primary source 2019

Out of the 17 despondence 59% of people depends income from home stay for their livelihood. And rest of the 41% has another job on off seasonal periods.

Earnings from home stays

Earnings from home stays	Percentage
1000-5000	0%
5000-10000	18%
10000-20000	12%

Above 20000	70%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

Majority of the home stay owners earns above Rupees 20000 from their home stays. There is only 12% of owners gets 10000-20000 .And rest of the people gets 5000-10000.

Ways adopted for attracting tourists

Ways for attract tourist	Percentage
Advertisements	6
Web page	88
References	6
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

Most of the respondents are using web pages to attract tourist to the home stays. Use of advertisement and other ways are in equal percentage of 6%.

Preference of food pattern of tourists

Preference of food	Percentage
Traditional food	68%
Based on their culture	32%
Others	0%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

The table represents the preference of food pattern of the tourist, and it shows that the 68% of tourist prefer traditional food instead of their modern food pattern.

Seasons that tourist prefer home stays more

Seasons that tourist prefer home stays	Percentage
November - march	29
November – January	6
December – march	41

December – January	24
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

Most of the respondents said that the season period is December – march. 29% of the respondents told that November - March is the season. Only 6% of the total respondents have an opinion that November – January is the season.

Details of on-line booking facilities

On-line booking facilities	Percentage
Yes	82%
No	18%
Total	100%

Source: primary survey 2019

Majority of the respondents have online booking facilities.

Getting help from tourism department of Kerala

Help from tourism department of Kerala	Percentage
Yes	41
No	59
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

From the table we can see that more than half of the respondents do not have any help from the tourism department of Kerala. But out off the total respondents, 41% are in the opinion that they are getting help from the tourism department of Kerala.

Major Problems faced by Homestay owners

Problems facing	Percentage
Corporation	29
Lack of support from government	6

Identical problem of tourists	24
Others	41
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

From the table we can understand that lack of support from the corporation and the government is a main problem that the home stay owners are facing. Identity issue of the tourist is also a major problem facing by them.

Whether sufficient government support for promotion of home stays

Government support for promotion home stays	Percentage
Yes	47
No	53
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

More than half of the respondents do not have sufficient government support for the promotion of their home stays. But 47% of the respondents said that they have sufficient government support.

Attitude of local people towards home stay

Attitude of local people towards home stays	Percentage
Satisfactory	71
Average	29
Not satisfactory	0
Total	100

Source: primary survey 2019

From the table we can understand that the attitude of local people towards home stays is satisfactory. Negative publicity from local, disturbance from locals to tourists are also pointed out by some homestay owners.

Findings and Conclusion

It can be understood that homestays are the backbone of tourism development in a state like Kerala where natural beauty provides an opportunity to the tourist to explore the destinations which are hitherto neither accessible nor affordable. The major findings of the study are summarised below.

Out of the 17 respondents, 35% belong to the age group 45-55.

Out of the respondents majority of the respondents have degree and no one has education below S.S.L.C

- 47% of the total respondents are having a land area of 5-10 cents. 18% of the respondents have 10-15 cents of land. 23% of the total respondents have 15-20 cents of land. Only 12% of the total respondents have a land area of more than 20 cents.
- Out of the respondents, the 94% of people found their own capital to invest and rest of the 6% borrowed finance from banks.
- All of the home stay owners provide facilities on the basis of tourist's preference. They provide both cultural program and boating.
- Out of the 17 respondents 59% of people depends income from home stay for their livelihood. And rest of the 41% has another job on off seasonal periods.
- Majority of the home stay owners earns above Rupees 20000 from their home stays. There is only 12% of owners gets 10000-20000 .And rest of the people gets 5000-10000.
- Most of the respondents are using web pages to attract tourist to the home stays. Use of advertisement and other ways are in equal percentage of 6%.
- 68% of tourist prefer traditional food instead of their modern food pattern.
- Most of the respondents said that the season period is December – march. 29% of the respondents told that November - march is the season. Only 6% of the total respondents have an opinion that November – January is the season.
- 41% of homestay owners are in the opinion that they are getting help from the tourism department of Kerala.

- Lack of support from the corporation and the government is a main problem that the home stay owners are facing. Identity issue of the tourist is also a major problem facing by the home stay owners.
- More than half of the respondents do not have sufficient government support for the promotion of their home stays. But 47% of the respondents said that they have sufficient government support in their homestay promotion activities.
- The attitude of local people towards home stays is satisfactory. Negative publicity from local, disturbance from locals to tourists are also pointed out by some homestay owners.

Conclusion

Home stays provide a major source of income for the homestay owners. It helps many in supporting their additional income earned through various sources. Homestays provide affordable and give a real life experience to the tourists on the local living pattern of the residents. Government and local self government support is required in improving infrastructure facilities and in the promotion of homestays. The efforts by the Government in improving the basic requirements would be of great help to the homestay industry.

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