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ROLE OF HOMESTAYS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGE TOURISM IN WAYANAD DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The significance of Wayanad is that the entire district has a number of tourism locations which can be developed as Village tourism destinations. The process of liberalization in Kerala tourism policy in 1986 has made tourism as a cottage industry giving a lot of opportunities for the people who are living in tourism destinations. Government of Kerala has declared Wayanad as a tourism destination, and it provides with high economic turn over from this sector. There is great amount of scope for tourism expansion in this beautiful hill station with landscapes and mist clad mountains, exotic locations for Village tourism. Village tourism is sustainable and viable if properly managed by the local community. Wayanad also consists of small time tourism players who are ex- farmers and successful plantation owners and real-time tourism entrepreneurs. Mostly all tourism activities are handled by Individual land owners who were once into plantation, agrarian activities or tea/coffee manufacturers. As far as Wayanad is concerned, the local community is inter-weave into social fabric of the tourism entity. It is an advantage that tourism activities are directly derived by the local village community. It is evident that the tourism activities through Home stays have promoted community development in the villages to ensure their maximum participation in village tourism. Home stays actively involve local village communities for development of infrastructure; improving moderate facilities for the tourists, in return they provide income and employment opportunities on a regular basis to the local village folk. Travel and Tourism is the world's largest industry and national and regional economies. It has great strategic importance for Kerala's economy due to its capacity for wealth-generation and job-creation. According to the World Travel and Tourism Centre (WTTC) statistics, an investment of Rs 12 lakhs in tourism creates 89 jobs, as against 45 in agriculture. It is often seasonal and mainly generates part-time and unskilled jobs for local people. Further, if not planned carefully, tourism can be destructive of culture and local traditions. Effective promotion of Village tourism can be sustainable model for struggling tourism of Wayanad. The research scholar is trying to present in this paper about the host community through home stays participation in the various facades of village tourism in Wayanad. This paper wish to suggest points on the role of home stays and recommend tangible ways on which village tourism can be developed in Wayanad District.

KEYWORDS

home stay, village tourism, sustainable tourism development, benefits to local community.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. Tourism is the world's largest industry with over 10 percent of gross domestic product globally and directly related to tourism activities. Tourism is not an activity for pastime and entertainment but is an enriching and energizing activity. Tourism is the right vehicle for a developing country like India which is on the path of modern economic growth through structural transformation of the economy. The value-added effect of tourism is increasing.

The role of Tourism is essential in the economic development of a country. Tourism is the second largest foreign exchange earner in India. Tourism promotes culture, traditional handicrafts sector. The tourists get an insight into the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India. India is a multifaceted country with a vast potential for tourist attraction. It has a rich architectural legacy dating to ancient past. There are timeless monuments, magnificent temples and breathtaking sites. The delighting backwaters, hill stations and landscapes make India a beautiful country. Historical monuments, forts, beaches, places of religious interests, hill stations, etc. add to the grandeur of the country. India is probably the only country that offers various categories of tourism. These include nature tourism, rural tourism, village tourism, spice tourism, handicrafts tourism, history tourism, adventure tourism, medical tourism, pilgrimage tourism, etc. India has a composite culture.

Tourism has now become a significant industry in India, contributing around 5.9 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing employment to about 41.8 million people. As per the World Travel & Tourism Council, the tourism industry in India is likely to generate US\$ 121.4 billion of economic activity by 2015 and Hospitality sector has the potential to earn US\$ 24 billion in foreign exchange by 2015. Indian Tourism offers an assortment of different cultures, traditions, festivals, and places of interest. There are a lot of options for the tourists. India is a country with rich cultural and traditional diversity. This aspect is even reflected in its tourism. The different parts of the country offer wide variety of interesting places to visit. While the international tourism is experiencing a decelerated growth, the Indian counterpart is not affected.

Kerala has emerged as the most acclaimed tourist destination in India. The back waters, beaches, hill stations, wildlife, waterfalls and the diverse flora and fauna makes the small state a unique destination for tourists. During the last fourteen years the government of Kerala has given immense importance for the growth of tourism sector as this sector plays a vital part in the economy of the state and the country. The small state Kerala, has been branded as one of the sought after destination in the world. The government plays an important role for the marketing and promotional activities to make Kerala a branded destination. Kerala is the first state in India to be accorded the status of partner state of the World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC] in 2002.

Kerala, located on the southernmost tip of India, is hot and trusted tourism brand in India these days. The Satellite Accounting Research conducted by World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], states that Kerala's travel and tourism demand is expected to grow by 11.6% per annum over the coming decade and is recorded as the highest growth rate in the world. The God's Own Country [Kerala], is famous for its attractive destinations and tourism initiatives. The dramatic increase in the number of Indian middle class and global promotion campaigns by the tourism department contributed to the increase in tourist traffic to this small Indian state with 38,863 square km and a population of 32 million.

Responsible tourism is a new initiative promoted by the government of Kerala to ensure the participation of important stakeholders in a responsible way. Home stay tourism is one of the best initiatives to implement responsible tourism by ensuring participation of important stakeholders in a local community. "Responsible tourism is a leisure activity implementing practices that are respectful of natural and cultural environment and which contribute in an ethical manner to the local economic development. It therefore favors the tourist awareness concerning his own impacts on the local territory and makes him an actor of his consumption" The state of Kerala decided to take on responsible tourism initiative at four pilot destinations in 2008. These destinations are Kovalam, the famous beach in south Kerala, Kumarakom, the back water destination in central Kerala, Thekkady, a hill resort in central Kerala and Wayanad, a historic, hill station in Northern Kerala.

WAYANAD TOURISM

Wayanad is a beautiful district located in the northern part of Kerala. Wayanad one of the panoramic hill stations of Kerala situated in an elevated picturesque mountainous plateau in the Western Ghats. To the perspective of economic development, north Wayanad and south Wayanad were carved out and joined together to form the present district of Wayanad. In the year 1980 Wayanad was formed as the twelfth district of Kerala. Majority of the population depend on agriculture for their daily living

The study focuses on the characteristics of Home stays and also attempts to investigate the development of Village tourism in the district of Wayanad. It is also an effort to measure tourism developments in terms of Economic, Environmental and Socio -Cultural challenges and benefits of home stays. The area chosen for this study was Wayanad northern part of Kerala sharing borders with Karnataka and Tamilnadu states.

The significance of Wayanad is that the entire district has a number of tourist destinations and tourism areas. The process of liberalization in Kerala tourism started in 1986, when the state government declared tourism as an industry giving a lot of incentives and subsidies. This district has many beautiful destinations, government of Kerala has declared as tourism destination, and it provides with high economic turn over from this sector.

There is great amount of scope for tourism expansion in this beautiful hill station with landscapes and mist clad mountains, exotic locations, including Edakkal world heritage sites. The foreign tourist arrivals and domestic tourist arrivals since 2004 shows Wayanad has highest turnover when compared with other districts of Kerala. In the fast pace of urban life Wayanad has great value in terms of unexplored beautiful locations. Therefore, Wayanad has great amount of tourism potential as a district, keeping in view of the unique features of Wayanad, especially the natural attractions and the indigenous culture.

2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Village tourism is primarily selling tourism and tourism products to spread its socio economic benefits to the local community and its geographic regions. Village tourism is a new concept which comprise of rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations of the villages. The prospects for development of Village tourism in Wayanad district and the role of home stays could create awareness among local community. Village tourism development can act as an effective mechanism to control environmental issues. It is in this context present study assumes special importance and relevance. Certain significant issues challenges have been discussed and highlighted in this paper which may be of immense worth to policy makers, researchers, academicians and home stay owners, and local community engaged in tourism development.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the presence of home stays in Wayanad district
2. To uncover the opportunities in village tourism
3. To understand the challenges faced by home stays
4. To list out the role of home stays in tourism development
5. Evaluate ways to overcome challenges

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

To analyze the various relevant issues relating to the role of Home stays in the development of Village tourism, this study has used relevant available data have been collected from primary secondary sources of information and interview with the district tourism promotion council officials and experts involved in the home stay at Wayanad district. Research papers published in various journals, books, reports, surveys, interviews and ideas of tourism experts have largely contributed towards construction of this paper.

5. HOME STAYS AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Home stay is essentially a private home with one to four guest rooms that are used to bring in supplemental rather than primary income where guest avail true flavor of staying with the family, (Cheryl Kimbali, 2004). Home stay hosts general feel is that it provides only the authentic bed and breakfast experience. Home stays doesn't provide sign boards on their properties or advertise, rather rely on reservations. Home stay is a specialist term referring to types of accommodation where tourists or guests pay to stay in private homes interaction takes place with the host or with family usually living, upon the premise with whom public space is to be shared, (Lynch 2005). These definitions can therefore be seen as incorporating a number of other terms including bed and breakfast, guest house, and farm stay. Several historical accounts of the use of commercial home for tourist accommodation note that it has long history in many countries.

5.1 - HOME STAY BENEFITS

Home stay is one type of tourism that promotes interaction between host families and visitors. It will function as a guideline for management on natural resources and cultural preservation and distributes income to local residents, preventing leakage of the economy out of the community.

In addition, the framework to develop and promote tourism is concerned about environmental conservation and sustainable tourism principle. Home stay tourism is based on sustainability of tourism; therefore, it is necessary to investigate the overall satisfaction of tourists with home stay services. There are many different patterns in tourist behaviors and lifestyles, depending on their own traditions and cultural backgrounds. This means that there is a wide range of tourist demands in the destinations. Therefore, the result of the study is useful information to improve quality of home stay tourism in the tourism industry.

Hatton (1999) indicated that home stay was one pattern of tourism in which the tourists have to stay with the host in a community, where they will be involved in activities such as cooking, wedding ceremonies and seeing the community's performance. Home stay or participatory rest houses within the community have the following objectives: it is an activity where the community and people in the community are the owner of the project and who receive benefits from these tourism activities. Home stay tourism is an important driver of learning, exchange and strengthening value of community and it is also conservation of environment and cultural preservation.

5.2 - EMERGING VILLAGE TOURISM

Village tourism is primarily selling tourism and tourism products to spread its socio economic benefits to the local community and its geographic regions. The objective is to showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations in villages, which have core competence in art & craft, handloom, and textiles as also an asset base in the natural environment. The intention is to benefit the local community economically and socially as well as enable interaction between tourists and local population for an exchange in culture. For the visitor, whose expenditure creates revenue for host community service providers; rural tourism adds value through packaged programmes in art & craft imparted by skilled local artisans. Village entertainment groups unveil local history and culture, natural and oral treasures.

The population of a given community is not to be disregarded when considering tourist destination system as manifesting itself at three border point consisting of the population, visitors, tourist, professionals. Earlier study indicates strong connection between how much the tourists are pleased with the given tourism destination and how hospitable the host community is. Tourists expect their destinations to welcome them and offer a pleasant stay which makes them feel happy.

There is increasing recognition of the significant shift away from the predominance of the traditional sun, sand and sea holiday towards more experiential vacations. John King (2002), argues that travel is increasingly about 'experiences, fulfillment and rejuvenation' rather than about 'places and things'. Fortunately Kerala is ideally placed for offering the experiential vacations to the visitors by maintaining the unique identity. The vital factors that contributed to this unique identity may be articulated as.

5.3 - COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

Community benefitting through tourism proponents of (CBT) community based tourism argues that the local community could benefit from tourism without having directly involved in it and without having to own or control the business. They further suggested that tourism business in rural area need to be driven by the private sectors to be successful. (Nelson 2000). This view represents a radical departure from the concept of CBT, and a total contrast to the assertion by

Murphy and Murphy (2004) that the communities should build up their capacity to handle community based tourism business around the four essential components of the business models are planning, organization, leadership and control.

In remote isolated communities, leadership required successful person to successfully operate community based tourism projects which are usually non existent. While formal leaders such as village headman are competent in overseeing community's cohesion and welfare based on traditional knowledge, they may not have the capacity to lead a tourism business. Capacity building is therefore a big challenge to help and ensure the initial success of a CBT effort. Longer term success, however requires a transition from a "local champion" to a more diversified management model. (Moeurn et al, 2008)

All the successful models of CBT driven not by formally elected leaders but by such local champions or what Hatton (1999) called a "spark". It is widely acknowledged that the early stages of CBT are important and influential at make or break period (Kelly 2000) during which the role of the champion is crucial.

5.4 TOURISM FRIENDLY VILLAGE

Tourism friendly village can be made by inspiring farmers and plantation owners to open up the rustic village experience for the growing number of travelers seeking to touch the heart of Kerala and unveil its very soul. This scheme is in association of Department of Tourism with the Local Self Government Department presents existing opportunities for the villagers and tourists alike. The scheme aims at promoting new tourist centres, inspiring products and innovative activities like adventure tourism right within the village, enabling the tourists to enjoy the authentic experience of Kerala in its hamlets while providing greater employment opportunities for the villagers. In the villages of Kerala one can enjoy true Indian hospitality, where the guest is God. The colours of the turbans and the saris of the women are in stark contrast to the often parched backdrop of the landscape. One will be amazed by the elegant way these village women carry myriads of pots on their heads, and at their incredible dresses. The women cover the outside of their houses with mud and then paint them with intricate designs, using only their hands and a paste made of lime. Accommodation is so comfortable for the traveller. Many houses previously owned by the local gentry are now being run as small hotels. Even though modern amenities are provided, they have lost nothing of their originality and charm.

5.6 - PLANNING FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

If tourists consume imported goods and products, the local communities do not benefit much. It will be the foreign producers who will benefit because the revenues are shipped out of the country. The tourism activities in the communities generate income and employment and support local communities directly in improving their standard of living. In addition, the local residents are the tourism planners in their communities. This tourism management results in spreading the economic benefits fairly among the communities both revenue and employment, as a multiplier effect on the local communities. Consequently, the sustainable tourism development pays attention to community involvement and environmental conservation. It brings benefits to the community such as improved living standards that strengthen the capacity in the community. This leads to sustainability and to a tendency of a new tourism pattern. This new pattern emphasizes the awareness of environmental conservation and local participation which leads to the emerging of the principle of community based tourism (CBT) in the tourism industry.

5.7. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sustainable tourism is a traditional framework to develop tourism that relates to shareholders in the tourism industry. Tourism supply chain, tourism attractions, local communities, and governments are the main factors involved in the provision of sustainable tourism. Each tourism attraction has to be concerned about the limits of tourism activities. These limits are the carrying capacity of an area, which is the capacity of the area that can be used for tourism activities without degrading the environment, culture, and the interactive harmony among sectors of the economy, group of people, and individuals

Impact assessment and evaluation of the ecosystem must be performed periodically. Tourism attractions should play a big role in tourist education, which may come in forms of environmental education and developing sustainable tourism behavior. In terms of local participation, in principle, the tourism industry creates high levels of income generation and distribution. The local members are major participants in the development of sustainable tourism as community based tourism.

To achieve sustainable tourism, it is essential to determine the maximum number of visitors that a destination can accommodate without destroying the destination image of the tourists. For the development of sustainable tourism, carrying capacity management is a planning and management tool which helps to specify goals and objectives in tourism development. Planning is a multidimensional activity and seeks to be integrative. It embraces social, economic, political, psychological, anthropological and technological factors. It is concerned with the past, present and future". The demand and supply side are the two strong elements of tourism. Tourism plan was prepared in 1991 [UNDP and WTO, 1991] to provide the basis for rectifying existing problems and a logical framework for the expansion of tourism.

6. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 NUMBER OF HOME STAYS PRESENT IN WAYANAD DISTRICT

Wayanad district having a total number of 49 villages spread over three Taluks namely Vythiri, Mananthavadi, Sulthan Bathery. It is difficult to find out the exact number of Home stay operators in Wayanad. There are both registered and classified home stay operators existing in Wayanad. The Kerala tourism department started to register home stay operators in respective districts through district tourism promotion council and support them according to capacity development activities. All authorized home stays are holding license or permission from Panchayath Secretary or from Municipality. The owner of the home stay should also collect No Objection Certificate from the nearest Police Station and from the Divisional Forest Officer. Department of tourism, government of Kerala classifies Home stays in three categories according to the specific criteria and standards facilities provided. As on August 2014 home stays are classified as per Table.1

TABLE 1: LIST OF CLASSIFIED HOME STAYS IN WAYANAD DISTRICT

Home Stays in Wayanad District				
Registered Home Stays	298			
Unregistered	102			
Total Home Stays	400			
Classified by DTPC	Diamond	Gold	Silver	Total Classified
	Nil	10	28	38

This study considers registered home stay operators of the Vythiri tourism area and other tourism regions of Wayanad. As there is no exact number of home stays available this thesis only includes the data available from District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC). According to the DTPC there are more than 400 home stays that have been performing in Wayanad district, it is approximately 298 authorized Home stays exist in the district, but only 38 are classified.

6.2 TOURIST ARRIVALS IN WAYANAD DISTRICT FROM 2004 TO 2013

Home stays gradually attracts more tourist in Wayanad. The significant number can be found in home stay have exact recording system and data of visitors but some of them has well managed database updated with every visitor's information. In this thesis 2 samples village's data have been taken for the analysis. The following graphs give the general overview of home stay visitors in Wayanad in the last 10 years.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF TOURIST ARRIVALS IN WAYANAD DISTRICT FROM THE YEAR 2004 TO 2013

S. No.	Year	Domestic Tourists	International Tourists
1	2004	187701	749
2	2005	191184	942
3	2006	225923	2611
4	2007	256190	4093
5	2008	295465	5638
6	2009	370051	5362
7	2010	408151	6620
8	2011	451184	7567
9	2012	480125	9541
10	2013	519306	10844

Table - 2 shows the number of domestic tourists and international tourists visit Wayanad District from the year 2004 to 2013. Comparatively domestic tourist visit rate is higher than international tourists in each year. 749 international tourists arrived in 2004 which is drastically increased in 2006 with more than 10% of the national tourists. The trend again decreased in 2009 and then gradually increased in 2010 and 2011. The rate was very low between 2004 to 2007 because of global economic slowdown.

6.3 TOURIST INFLOW TO HOME STAYS OF WAYANAD DISTRICT

TABLE 3: TOURIST IN FLOW IN HOME STAYS OF WAYANAD DISTRICT

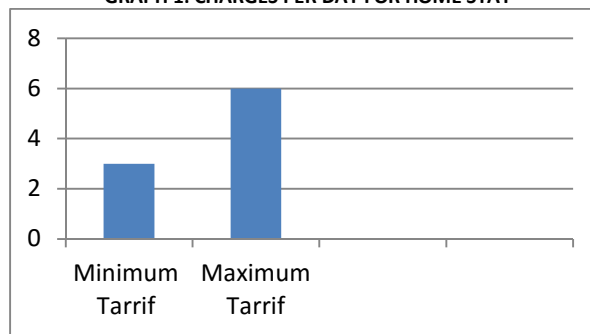
S.No.	Year	Domestic Tourists	International Tourists
1	2004	2064	126
2	2005	2347	246
3	2006	2574	347
4	2007	2893	409
5	2008	3056	565
6	2009	4657	698
7	2010	6709	764
8	2011	7634	887
9	2012	8096	979
10	2013	10326	1276

Source: Department of Tourism - Kerala

As per the table. 3 Domestic tourists gradually preferred to stay with home stays from 2004 to 2013 the percentage of increase is 5%. During 2004 only 126 International tourists preferred to stay with home stays where as in 2013 the percentage has increased to almost 10 times of 2004.

6.4 CHARGES PER DAY FOR HOME STAY

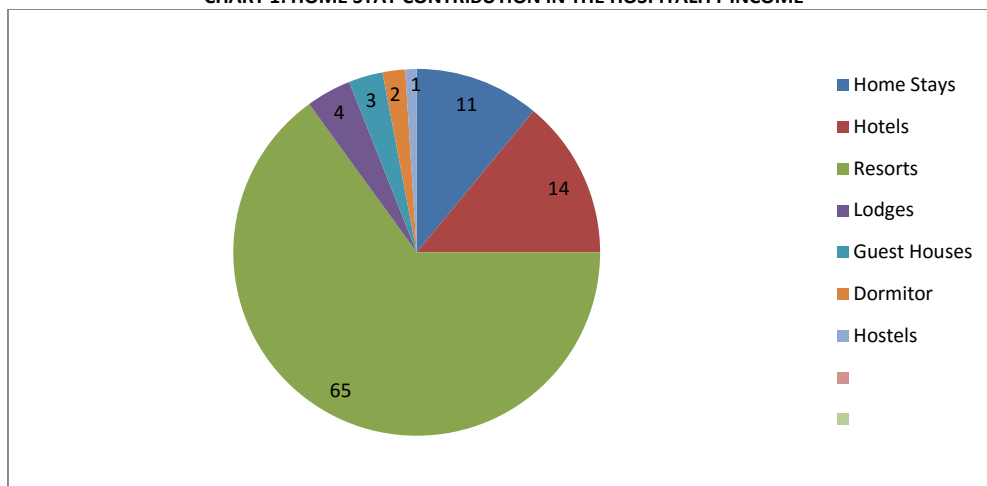
GRAPH 1: CHARGES PER DAY FOR HOME STAY



As per the graph 1, there is no exact tariff and general overall rate for visitors applicable as per number persons. The general perspective about the charge is based on 2 persons. If more than 2 persons, each extra person will be charged extra. Children above the age of 12 are considered as extra person. The minimum charge is Rs. 3000 (\$50) and the maximum is Rs. 6000, (\$100) price is varying according to the location of the home stay and as per demand.

6.5 HOME STAY CONTRIBUTION IN THE HOSPITALITY INCOME

CHART 1: HOME STAY CONTRIBUTION IN THE HOSPITALITY INCOME



As per the chart – I, Home stays contribution in the Hospitality Income is 65% is obvious.

6.6 ANALYSIS OF BASIC DATA ON HOME STAYS SPREAD OVER WAYANAD DISTRICT

TABLE 4: DETAILED INFORMATION AND FINDINGS

	Information's sought	Findings
1	Marketing of the home stay	75% of them having own websites, 25% of them does through non affiliated web sites
2	Nature of booking & Reservations	Nature of booking is through Internet. 81% of reservations are through telephone, and online advance payment for confirmed reservations. Balance 19 % are through Tour operator/Travel agents local agents, Auto drivers.
3	Length of stay by guest	One day - 38 % Two days - 43 % Three days - 13 % Four days - 06 %
4	Type of customers visiting	Families, Groups are not entertained; stay for individuals are denied
5	Repeated Guest	Do not get repeated guest, where as 62.5 % of the home stays get referral guests
6	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction is measured through Comments cards and through online reviews
7	Attitude of tourists towards the local Community	Friendly - 56.25% Interactive - 37.5% Hostile - 06.25%
8	Activity by the guest in the home stay	Visiting tourism areas, gardening, cooking, participating in arts, festivals, farming, sports, Cycling, adventure, trekking etc.
9	Participation by the local community	Participation by Local Community - 18.75% Used as employees - 81.25%
10	Level of communication	37.5 % home stays owners have communication problem with foreign tourists.

6.7 SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS BY HOME STAYS

It is investigated through close observations that 43.75 % of the home stays are practicing Sustainable tourism practices. 43.75% home stays have own waste management system. 37.5% of the home stays purchase supplies locally to support the local community, 50% suggest their clients to purchase local products from the local shops selling traditional local products. 50% of the home stays encourage planting of indigenous species of trees by their guest and interaction with clients of cultural traditional heritage and make efforts in promoting local festivals and cultural events through local community of the Village. Most of the tourists engaged also in traditional fishing methods, farming practices, understanding ayurveda and tribal medicines, also encouraged participation and promotion of local cuisine. 37.5 % used green products in the home stays business (i.e. biodegradable materials, recycled paper etc.) Use of low energy lighting, Grow or raise organic foods. 43.75% Home stay owners usually make their guest aware of the importance of sustainable tourism practices.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, Wayanad tourism has vast potential for generating employment and earning large sums of foreign exchange besides giving a flip to the districts overall economic and social development. Much has been achieved by way of increasing road transport and infrastructure facility in important tourism destinations, availability of accommodation by home stays to the hospitality industry and encouraging paying guest accommodation. Since tourism is a multi-dimensional activity, and basically a service industry, it would be necessary for the district tourism promotional council of tourism department, private sector and voluntary organizations become active partners in the attempt to attain sustainability through Village tourism.

It is the requirement of the day to incorporate sustainable tourism Practices into each and every home stay business. They should approach a partner or supplier to adopt new practices, can be attracted by an incentive programme, Classify or differentiate a particular home stay business from the competition. Involving village tourism can attract potential cost savings, can attract environmentally conscious markets, and can enhance the reputation of the business.

Government should bring in policies and restrictive legislations to protect the resources such as land, culture, and wildlife, etc. The suppliers who sell sustainable products such as organic food, alternative fuels, biodegradable items etc should be appropriately supported. It is obvious that other business priorities leave little time to plan for sustainable development in Village tourism.

The socio- economic impacts have positively affected tourism and environmental impacts have negatively affected. The costs to make sustainable environment pays off in the future through financial gains.

The home stays as a whole is negatively impacting the environment since majority of them not practicing sustainable practices. Sustainability is not a top priority of the home stays. Government to implement stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment, have environmental awareness and education programs for people involved in home stay business. Part of the profit should be spending on Village Tourism to help them to preserve and protect the area where home stay and village tourism takes place.

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