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Impact of Religion, Caste, demographic structure and fooding Habits of Tourist and Host Family on Choice and Preference for Homestay Booking and conformation- 'A Study of North Sikkim'

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Abstract

Homestay, the modern concept of rural tourism to develop of socio-economic condition through providing employment opportunities, supports sustainable development through green concept. This study is carried out in North District of Sikkim to understand the impact of religion, caste, demographic structure and fooding habits of both host and tourist family on their choice and preference on booking and confirmation. To verify these issues researcher used both primary and secondary data, while primary data has been collected via door to door survey methods among the sample (30 host families and 28 tourists) design through lotary method. All necessary information to justify the objectives has been abstract form both the sample with the help of self made structure questioner. After deep understanding and analyse researcher found that the there is no impact of religion, caste, demographic structure and fooding habits of both the sample on booking and confirmation or in other words sample's choice and preference is not specific or peculiar which is based on religion, caste, demographic structure and fooding habits which determines their booking and confirmation for a particular homestay.

Keywords: Homestay, Tourism, Business, Host Family, Tourists, Development, Rural areas and employment.

Introduction

'Homestay' is a particular concept which commercialized the homes to get additional income. All though it is a part of tourism or in macro senses it is an instrument to reduce poverty, unemployment, rural to urban migration of skilled and unskilled labours, support rural development and sustainable development or green concept to fight against climate change. Genuinely, this business or product of tourism called homestay is more effective in rural areas where tradition, culture and religion hold strong gravity in faith of human kind towards God. While as a laymen homestay means private homes in which unused rooms are rented for the purpose of supplementing income and meeting people (Lanier and Berman 1993). It provides basic facilities with normal infrastructure without creating any impact to local environment or artificial penetration to the natural bio-diversity of the particular place especially in rural areas. It also empowers women through their participation via manager of the host stay and workers. As far as terminology or definition of Homesaty is concern different countries have their definition



like in Australia they called farm stay, educational home stay in Japan and South Korea, leisure stay in South Africa, cultural and heritage home stay in Canada, urban home stay in Singapore and agriculture and educational home stay in USA (Hamzah 2010). However the general concept is same for homestay in all countries which means it is different from other types of accommodation such as hotel, motel, lodging camping etc. It supports ecotourism, rural tourism and cultural tourism through sustainable practise. Practically tourism activities are genuinely creates positive impact on country's economy by earning foreign exchange and employment creation (Bhuiyan et al 2011). However tourism industry in India is one of the major segments of the service sector which is a key growth driver and a significant source of foreign exchange earnings. Thus to its potentiality the sector's direct contribution to gross domestic product is expected to grow at 7.8% per annum during 2013 – 2023 (Venkatesh and Raj 2016).

In the age of globalisation the increasing demand of leisure tourism develops new destination in and around the globe. The massive urbanisation in the developed and developing countries confirms that rural areas are in the top priority which can be used to control climate change. Therefore from this prospect as well homestay tourism is the only option to rebuild the green and natural bio-diversity. The developing countries are more interesting to diversify their tourism through homestay to attract more tourists which deliver benefits to the rural people directly and develop their socio-economic condition (Wijesundara and Gnanapala 2016). Practically many countries recognised tourism as a key sector or got its popularity or importance only after the Second World War when financial brake down or economically collapse confirms the need of investment to overcome with the particular situation. In the very first of its investment procedure tourism provides enormous employment opportunities in its supply chain and increase the capacity to earn foreign currencies (Babu 2008).

The homestay stresses direct involvement of local people in tourism activities which empower them in various ways especially in socio-economic condition. While along with direct and indirect benefits there are some challenges based on locality, people's perception, transportation, standard of house mainly for international tourists, social stimulation and so on, which discourage local people and tourist for their involvement in homestay business. In this regards scholars' categories these challenges in two forms, internal and external challenges. However internal challenges can be neutralized by host family itself where as to normalized or external challenges involvement of local people and police is necessary (Bhan and Singh 2014).

Objectives of the study

1. To study the impact of religion, caste, fooding habits and demographic structure of both host and tourist families on their choice and preference for the particular homestay.
2. To examine the factors which discourage and encourage the local people for the homestay tourism in the study area?

Methodology

This study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data is been collected through door to door survey methods with the help of structured questioner (researcher himself made questioner). To fulfil the objectives researcher select 30 homestays from North Sikkim by using lottery method and one tourist from each sample homestay. As far as secondary data is



concern it has been obtained from various department, journals, books and needful sources. Further this research is qualitative in nature thus, simple statistical tools is been used to justify the objectives and draw the conclusion.

(Note: 1. Manager means who look after all the necessary requirements of the homestay or he/she is the only responsible person for homestay related issues).

Result and Discussion

1. Educational details of both the sample (manager and head of the tourist family)

Educational details of the both sample respondents shows (Table no. 1) that out of 58 combine sample respondents 21 samples have higher educational qualification (03 male, 01 female from host families and 17 are from tourist families). The number of female sample tourist is zero because all the female tourists are accompanied by their husband or father as well (46% female have their husband and 54% had their father as a head of the family). In this study researcher found that 90 % of manager of sample homestay belongs to nuclear family where homestay tourism is the only source of their income. Since their education qualification is also support them to involve in such business and up to some extent information and communication technology (ICT) is also helping them to do so. In this study some manger of sample host family are less educated means they have only junior high school level education which is not supposed to support their involvement in homestay business, but they are motivated by others who are developing their socio-economic condition through such business especially from nuclear families. However participation of joint family or popularity of himestay business among them is less because of their family size which curve down the availability of rooms. This study found that participation of female as a manger is less that is out of 30 samples only 9 are female, which is shown in table no. 1. The desire, marriage, other essential work of home and involvement in other sector as a labour force are some common factors which counts the female participation in homestay business as a manger is less. While, genders disparities in this particular business is all most not in practise in society of study area.

**Table No. 1****Educational details of both the sample (manager and head of the tourist family)**

Qualification Level	No of sample manager		No. Of sample tourist		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
illiterate	00	00	00	00	00
primary	00	00	00	00	00
Upper Primary	00	00	00	00	00
Junior high school	02	01	00	00	03
High school	06	02	01	00	09
Secondary School	04	01	06	00	11
Graduate	06	04	04	00	14
Masters and above	03	01	17	00	21
Total	21	09	28	00	58

*Source: Field Survey 2019***2. Demographic structure of the sample respondents (Host and Tourist families)**

The demographic structure of the sample respondents (Host and tourists families) indicates that 80% of the host family belongs to nuclear family structure and 43% of Tourist belongs to same structure. As far as participation of both the sample in homestay from joint family structure is concern it consist 20% host sample and 57% tourist (Table No. 2). In total 38% of combine sample represents from joint family and 62% from nuclear family. The socio-economic condition of sample host family who are belongs to joint family is not allow them to do higher education which further support their involvement in homestay business that is why their number is less in this study.

Table No. 2**Demographic structure of both the sample respondents (Host and Tourist families)**

Family Structure	No. Of Host respondents	No. Of Tourist Respondents	Total
Joint	06 (20%)	16 (57%)	22 (38%)
Nuclear	24 (80%)	12 (43%)	36 (62%)
Total	30 (100%)	28 (100%)	58 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2019

(Note: While doing survey researcher find only 28 number of tourist in 27 sample homestays remaining 3 homestay has no booking on particular survey date that is why sample respondents from tourist side is not match with host family sample.)

One interesting thing which is found by researcher while doing survey is two joint families are comfortably staying in one homestay which is belongs to nuclear family structure. On this regard the perception of host family is positive means demographic structure of tourist makes no



disturbance and does not create any problem in host family business and environment or family bond. Further above table also shows that homestay is popular among the nuclear family where same is the only source of income (Table No. 3). The less available number of labour force in family, less availability of land and unemployment (educated and uneducated) are the most common reason which compels or encourage them to join or participate in homestay tourism. However, data mentioned in table no. 3 confirms that structure of family does not make any impact on choice and preference of both host family and tourist on their booking and confirmation.

3. Source of income of the sample host family

Table No. 3: Source of income of the sample host family

Source of Income	No. Of host family belongs to joint family	No. Of host family belongs to nuclear Family	Total
Homestay	02 (33%)	19 (79%)	21 (70%)
other	04 (77%)	05 (21%)	09 (30%)
Total	06 (100%)	24 (100%)	30 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2019

While the combine source of income generate additional income to both all the samples who are participating in dual business. In particularly for those samples who belongs from joint family. This will allow them to develop their economic condition and fulfil necessary requirement of their children especially in the field of education and health. The data reflects in above table (Table No. 3) confirms that more than 50% joint family samples are involve in dual business as compare to nuclear once. In this study researcher found that with the involvement in normal work in other sector 65% of total host family samples are actively participate in organic farming which further attract more tourist in their homestay. Their engagement in organic farming encourage their children to do so which distract them (children) form various unwanted practises of the society such as addiction of drugs, alcohols, marijuana, and so on. The increasing demands of organic products encourage rural farmers to adopt commercial organic farming or macro level kitchen garden. Further this kind of farming motives farmer to make full utilization of their land to get maximum output and ultimately to get maximum income in particular session.

4. Religion details of both the sample

**Table No. 4
Religion details of both the sample**

No. Of Host Family Samples	Religion	No. Of Tourist Sample
00	Hindu	17
30	Buddhist	01
00	Christian	03
00	Muslim	04
00	Other	03
30	Total	28

Source: Field Survey 2019



According to data mention in above table (Table No. 4) all the host sample families are Buddhist. Since North district is reserve for Tribal people of state (Sikkim) only for the means of residence, temporary and permanent as well. All other people outside of north Sikkim needs inner line permit to visit there, even for government employee same is been applied. Therefore due to their reservation on land their participation is 100%. Whereas on other side only 1 sample tourist is belongs to Buddhist community out of 28 samples. This uneven distribution of sample tourists shows that the impact of religion on booking and confirmation is positive which means choice and preference of both the sample is not based on religion.

5. Details of both the respondents on the basis of their caste

Table No. 5

Details of both the respondents on the basis of their Reservation Category

No. Of Host Family Samples	Caste	No. Of Tourist Sample
30	ST	06
00	SC	08
00	OBC	02
00	MBC	01
00	General	11
30	Total	28

Source: Field Survey 2019

The sample distribution of host and tourist families based on reservation category shows that all the host families belongs to Schedule Tribe. As mentioned earlier the study areas is reserve for Schedule Tribe communities of State (*Bhutia and Lepcha communities of the state*), thus their participation is 100% for this study. However on the sample tourist side maximum samples are from general category that is 11 out of 28 samples followed by Schedule Caste (8 samples), Schedule Tribe (6 samples), Other Backward Class (2 samples) and only 1 sample from Most Backward Class. The participation tourists belongs to different reservation category authenticate that their choice and preference of guest for host family and homestay for tourist is not based on reservation category.

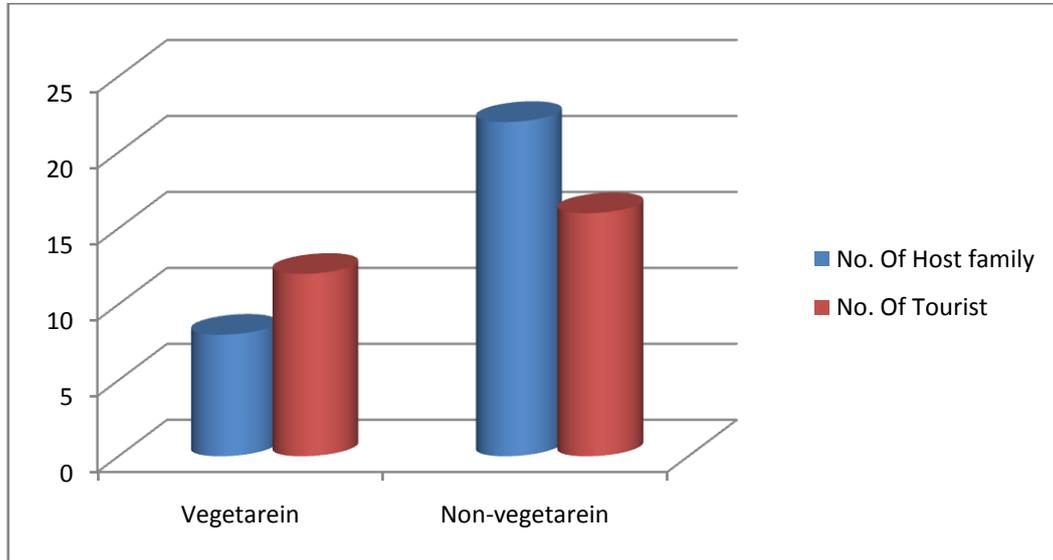
6. Details of both the respondents on the basis of their fooding habits

As far as impact of fooding habits on choice and preference of both host and tourists for their booking and confirmation is concern, below diagram confirms that the impact is positive. The number of nun-vegetarians is maximum in both the samples (22 for the host family out of 30 samples and 16 for tourists sample out of 28 samples). The number of vegetarian from tourist sample is more as compare to host sample (12 for tourist sample and 8 for host sample families) because out of that 12 sample 11 are form general category and one from Schedule Caste category.



Diagram No. 1

Details of both the respondents on the basis of their fooding habits



Source: Field Survey 2019

Conclusion

Homestay is the source of income for many rural people who are living under the financial crisis. The burning issues of rural areas of the present time related to migration, unemployment, poverty force rural habitants to leave the place like in rural areas of Uttarakhnad. In between in serious issues Homestay give a hope to develop concern areas and provide opportunities to earn some money as a nominal income. This study confirms that homestay curve down the rural to urban migration up to some extant especially for educated people who can develop their socio-economic through such business. Homestay is more popular among nuclear family due to various reasons especially availability of vacant room as compare to joint family. This homestay business encourages rural people to engage themselves in organic farming as a micro and macro level kitchen garden. Participation of young people in homestay tourism through organic farming distracts the children of the society form various evil practices such as involvement in drugs, alcohols and so on. This study further authenticates that impact of caste, religion, demographic structure and fooding habits of the host and tourist families is positive or choice and preference of both host and tourist is not based on such factors for the booking and confirmation.



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