

HOMESTAYS' ROLE IN MANAGING TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Homestays have become an important part of sustainable tourism because they provide real cultural experiences and help the local economy grow. This article talks about how homestays fit into tourist management and how they affect community-based tourism, destination diversity, and responsible travel. It looks at how homestays make tourists happier by offering personalised services, cultural experiences, and affordable places to stay. The research examines the difficulties encountered by homestay operators, encompassing regulatory hurdles, quality assurance, and capacity development. The paper stresses the strategic integration of homestays into tourism planning and policy to create inclusive and resilient tourism ecosystems. It does this by using case studies and tourism models.

Keywords: Homestays, Tourism Management, Community-Based Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, And Cultural Immersion.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. What are homestays?

When you go on a tour or visit a certain place, a homestay is a place to stay that is given by locals. In recent years, more and more visitors have wanted to stay with locals when they visit new places. This has led to an increase in the demand for homestays. Homestays have many advantages: they are usually cheaper than hotels, they encourage cultural interaction, they give guests a unique place to stay, and they let visitors see how normal people live in the area they are visiting (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Compared to hotels, homestays let tourists meet locals and learn about their customs in a more personal way. So, a homestay is not just a place to stay; it is also a site where tourist products may be made that help travellers learn about and connect with the culture, customs, and way of life of the people who live there. Many hosts throughout the world have gotten involved in homestay activities because they want to make sure they can pay their bills and support themselves.

A homestay is when you stay in someone's house, usually with a local family or community that provides lodging and other amenities (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). Homestays are a cheap and real way for tourists to experience a different country. They let tourists talk to their hosts, learn about rural living, and see local traditions, customs, and culture. Homestays help promote new places to visit, give travellers a wider range of tourism items, increase tourist spending, and provide rural people with other sources of income. Homestays, which include cultural, heritage, eco, agricultural, and island tourism, bring in steady money and help local economies grow in many places throughout the world. The Perahera Homestay in Sri Lanka, the Galapagos Island community-based homestay, the Maekampong Homestay in Thailand, and the Malaysian Homestay Concept are all examples of places that have seen a lot of development in guests and show that there is still a lot of demand.

2. The History of Homestays

Since the 1980s, homestays have been more popular around the world because travellers want to experience different cultures directly. They go along with the trend for sustainable tourism by giving people real experiences, local knowledge, and chances to explore new places (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

The practice involves paying to stay with a local family for short periods of time, which gives you free access to the host's home and community. The host usually gives meals, amenities, advice, and logistical aid, and they also let tourists experience local life by going on different activities with them.

After rural reforms in 1998, China started offering "Minshuku" homestays, which got families involved in tourism and brought in extra money. The first goal was to deal with the effects of financial decentralisation and industrial restructuring (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

India started its International Homestay Tourism in 1991 after the prime minister visited Italy's mediaeval villages. The idea is that tourism is mostly handled by the local people within the existing government systems.

3. Different kinds of homestays

Homestay is a way for tourists to stay in a local resident's house and learn about the culture by talking to the locals. Most people think that ecotourism accommodations are places where guests can stay in homes and see cultural acts to learn about the culture of the area. Home stay tourism is a new idea that gives tourists a real experience by letting them stay with host families and learn about the local culture and customs, like food, ceremonies, and traditions. During the tour, the visitor learns about the hosts' way of life and acquires a better understanding of how indigenous people live. The biggest aspect of sustainable tourism is homestay tourism, which depends on the private sector and the community to create demand for the services and facilities that the tourism business needs to thrive. Homestay tourism uses natural resources and other things that could help with sustainable development to make money and give local communities alternative ways to make money. India has a lot of potential to grow homestay tourism because it has a lot of history, beautiful natural scenery, and many cultures. But the country doesn't have the right infrastructure and services to encourage tourism (Bhan & Singh, 2014). There are four main sorts of homestays, and they can be grouped by where they are located: in a city, town, village, or countryside.

Cultural Home Stay is a program that focusses on a country's culture, traditions, way of life, arts, and crafts. It gives visitors and tourists a chance to see and do things that are part of the local culture, such as eating, making art, and doing crafts. They can also see what it's like to live in a rural village outside of the city. Guests can get to know their hosts better and take part in their daily lives (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). The Kuala Medang area in Pahang, Malaysia, has the Homestay Programme as an example. The program helps villagers make money while also encouraging the community to keep, revive, and promote cultural and heritage activities like learning about the history of the Malan waterfall, visiting Orang Asli settlements, performing traditional dances, playing traditional games, making bread, doing crafts, and other cultural and heritage attractions. Other nations, such India, Kenya, Hungary, Argentina, and Peru, also have Cultural Home Stay programs.

Ecohome Stay is all about going to a clean and mostly untouched natural area while following criteria for ecological, cultural, and other forms of sustainable development. It helps local people and tourists learn about and comprehend ecotourism. It means going to natural places where plants, animals, and cultural history are the main draws. wildlife enthusiasts and wildlife photographers are two groups that Ecohome Stays wants to reach.

Farm Home Stay lets guests appreciate the gorgeous countryside and do things that are typical of rural life. Visitors are welcome to help out with daily tasks at the host house, like farming, gardening, and taking care of animals. Visitors can learn how to farm using organic methods and take part in activities that involve planting and harvesting rice in paddy fields.

City Home Stay lets guests stay in metropolitan locations and experience the culture and way of life there. It is good for tourists who like to do things like view the sights, go to sporting events, shop, do business, or get health treatment. City homestays could grow a lot in many big historical towns and cities. You can choose homestays in the city or close to transport and lifestyle amenities that are easy to get to. Also, tourists with special needs may feel more at ease staying in a homestay than a hotel, especially for extended stays.

3.1. Cultural Homestays

Guests at cultural homestays can fully experience the traditions, customs, unique ways of living, and local culture of a certain area. During these visits, guests learn about important cultural festivals and traditions from the many different communities who live in the area. This project is part of a larger effort to promote tourism that is aware of its social obligations and focusses on preserving and passing on local customs and cultural assets (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

Cultural homestays make it possible for people to have meaningful cultural exchanges by giving travellers access to traditional cultural activities and fostering the sharing of local knowledge. This type of tourism improves regional connections by showing visitors how local people live, what they do, and how they think. In these areas, a wide range of cultural tourist activities arise since the neighbourhoods and nearby communities have a lot of potential for this kind of growth (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). As a result, cultural homestays are an important way for tourism planners and politicians to deal with problems at the local level while promoting conservation, preservation, sustainability, and cultural continuity. Communities can finish the circle of local sustainability projects that have long supported the bigger idea of sustainable development by using their cultural legacy in this way.

3.2. Eco-Homestays

Eco-homestays are places to stay in natural ecotourism areas that are clean, safe, and good for the environment (Septyoari Putranto et al., 2018). These places to stay suit the needs of people who want to stay in places that are good for the environment and last a long time, while also incorporating local traditions and natural landscapes. Building eco-homestays and other ecotourism facilities is one way to get more tourists to come and stay longer. Eco-homestay

operations let people in the area get money from more than just typical jobs. A professional way to run eco-homestays adds value that may be used to market tourism. The growth of these kinds of businesses helps create a new tourism offering that draws in a wide variety of visitors (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). People in communities learn how important it is to keep their neighbourhoods clean and nice-looking so that the accommodation industry may grow and people can take care of their homes. Advocacy also stresses the real benefits that eco-homestay businesses bring to people who live nearby. The overall pattern of growth is a good example of how to make homes that are clean, healthy, and productive.

3.3. Stays on Farms

Farm stays are a sort of homestay that puts travellers on farms, ranches, or orchards (Bhan & Singh, 2014). These places to stay usually include activities associated to farming, such as gardening, taking care of animals, harvesting, and processing crops. Other activities can include horseback riding, hiking, or watching animals in their natural habitat. Farm stays include lodging, farming, and tourism, and they often include agritourism as part of the visit (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

Farm-stay tourism has been able to draw people from many different demographic groups who are interested in travelling and vacationing in rural areas. Many of these visitors bring their children with them because they know that it would be a good learning experience. It creates jobs in rural areas and helps keep small farms going. A farm stay is a way for many farmers to get extra money that helps them keep their family farm and buy new farming tools and technologies. The farm-stay option leads to a lot of activities that are closely related to rural resources and the countryside. This makes it a popular way to mix work and play with farming.

3.4. Homestays in cities

Urban areas are becoming a new place to develop tourism products. Mobility and urban policy change the demographics and suburbs of cities in the Asia-Pacific Region, creating a market for urban homestay programs. Gentrification of districts in the city centre has led to the rise of a new type of homestay that has secret and unresolved interactions with local authorities. Wealthy people who rent out empty rooms to make extra money, mainly using electronic booking platforms, and middle-class people who make money by renting out a residence for a long time are two examples of urban homestays. Urban homestay is also a way to promote private accommodations that meets the needs of tourists and the want for housing that leads to growth. Spatial division discrepancies, which make urban homestays more affordable and accessible, create opportunities for mobile worker spaces and group flights. Urban homestay programs have gained credibility through their interactions with existing social class and urban redevelopment patterns, as well as the influx of urban and demographic contributors. The growth of online platforms since the early 2010s shows that hosts and tourists are changing their behaviour. This is especially true for the global economy and information technology, which are both changing into new forms of accumulation like a service economy and digital capitalism. The advent of Airbnb in San Francisco in 2007 was a major step forward in the development of modern urban homestay programs. It changed the way tourists and cities interact with each other.

4. Homestays vs. Hotels

Homestays are a sort of low-density lodging where guests stay in homes of people who live in the area. They are different from hotels and resorts since they let guests live with their hosts and get to know the local culture and daily life. Hosts are a big part of the guest experience (Farbrother, 2010). Homestays are usually cheaper than regular hotels, which means that guests may either save money on their stay or spend more on other things to do while they are there. Homestays are an important part of the larger framework for community-based tourism. They help with sustainability goals by involving and helping local people and making cultural authenticity and integrity better.

Staying with a local family changes how tourists see a place. Guests who stay with a host family are more likely to go to sites that aren't as popular, are more eager to get to know the host community, and form stronger contacts with locals, which gives them chances to learn about local culture and daily life (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). The exchange of culture between hosts and guests is hence a key reason why people go on homestays. On the other side, traditional hotels don't let people and culture in as easily because their products are already made. Homestays offer ideas, methods, and rewards that are better for the goals of sustainable tourist development than typical hotel stays.

4.1. Cost Comparison

The cost of lodging is a big part of a traveler's budget. Comparing the prices of homestays to those of other types of lodging can help explain why a tourist might choose to stay in a homestay. The association made RM2,200 from 20 guests, or RM110 per person, as shown in Table 3. This is the cost and profit for the association after running with 20 guests (Selvaranee Balasingam & Bojei, 2019). The association made RM300 in profit after paying for the homestay operators, welcome drinks, transportation, cultural events, village excursions and management. The homestay

operators made RM40 per person, but they had to pay RM23 for food, water, and energy, which left them with a profit of RM17. Homestays create jobs for people in rural areas in roles like cooking, cleaning, taking care of people, driving, and guiding, which helps lower unemployment. Tourism is also good for local artisans, farmers, and traditional medicine makers. Most homestays depend on family members to help out, while others hire one or two people. For example, Miso Walai Homestay in Sabah has created more than 200 jobs. The tourism multiplier effect is the way that visitor expenditure moves around a destination, creating economic benefits. Small tourism businesses usually have higher income multipliers, which means that money spent by tourists helps the local economy grow more (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

4.2. The Experience of Guests

The success of homestay experiences relies on the interaction between hosts and guests, who desire genuine emotional connections inside a domestic environment. These kind of exchanges are not for profit; they are based on reciprocity and the idea of being a member of a community. They let people with similar interests connect across cultures (Farbrother, 2010). Guests want hospitality that includes the real sharing of food, drink, and a place to stay, often with strangers or neighbours, in order to make an emotional connection. The host greets guests like friends, which makes the setting feel real and genuine.

The relationship between the host and the guest is based on respect and sharing culture, which is what makes homestays different from other types of hospitality. Homestays thus facilitate tourists' interaction with local traditions and customs in a personal and community-focused setting. The relationship is based on similar values, a desire for genuine experiences, and the host's enjoyment of having visitors, which makes the hospitality experience even more unique. Homestays offer a unique type of tourism where guests may become part of the community instead of just watching.

4.3. Interaction in the area

Homestay housing exemplifies a tourist strategy that fosters significant local engagement, transforming a region and its culture into a hospitable, enlightening experience for guests (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). The concept meets the needs of visitors by improving communication and support between them, the environment, and local residents (Bhan & Singh, 2014). One important part is encouraging guests and locals to communicate and work together, often through cultural influence and community events that everyone can enjoy. In this way, homestay arrangements add a lot of different things to the tourism sector, with a focus on lifestyle.

5. The effect of homestays on the economy

People who stay in homes for vacation make money and find work in the communities where they stay. An association made a profit of RM300 from 20 guests, which means that each operator made about RM17 per person. While guests are there, occupations in caregiving, cooking, cleaning, driving, and guiding add even more to the local economy. Visitors also buy local products, food, and traditional medicine, which helps the economy even more. Most Malaysian homestays are maintained by families with only a few extra employees. The Miso Walai Homestay, on the other hand, was a profitable homestay resort that created over 200 jobs. The tourism multiplier effect looks at how money spent by tourists helps the local economy. Small tourism companies tend to have a bigger income multiplier since spending has a direct effect on economic growth in the area (Selvaranee Balasingam & Bojei, 2019).

5.1. Making Jobs

Homestay services are when a person, family, or group of individuals let tourists stay in their house for a short time in exchange for money (Selvaranee Balasingam & Bojei, 2019). A homestay creates a connection between the tourist and the people who live in the area they are visiting (Bhan & Singh, 2014). This encounter lets the host explain their way of life, habits, customs, food, arts, crafts, music, and other traits, giving the traveler a valuable look into the culture of the area.

The homestay business has also grown a lot as tourism has grown. Properties and residences today can not only hire local craftsmen, provide cooking classes, show off native art, and give tours of factories, but they can also be more environmentally friendly and long-lasting. This is what makes homestays different from regular hotels, stores, and travel agencies.

5.2. Making money for hosts

Income Generation for Hosts Homestays are well-known for giving host families an extra way to make money (Bhan & Singh, 2014). The economic benefits include extra money for homestay operators and jobs for people in the area. The money that hosts and other stakeholders make helps to reduce poverty by giving people in rural areas more ways to make a living. When tourists spend money on food, lodging, and souvenirs, the community gets money right away. Homestays are a small business in the tourism industry, which means they promote entrepreneurship and investment

from both inside and outside the country. At the same time, there are big, direct, and ongoing benefits at the local level, such as capital formation and cash flow (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). Homestays give host families extra money, which makes their lives better.

5.3. Helping the economies of the area

Homestays create jobs and bring money into the local economy, which has good effects on the community as a whole. These sources of income help people in the neighbourhood who work on farms or do other main jobs. They let families in the lower-middle class start businesses in the hospitality industry and make money. Homestay tourism generates both direct and indirect jobs and economic opportunities in rural areas. This helps people get out of poverty and start their own businesses. The model looks more like a way to make a living than just a place to stay.

Employment serves as an indirect economic indicator, demonstrated by job development and equitable opportunities for local communities. Small enterprises can help lower the national unemployment rate. Homestays are modest tourism businesses that were started to give jobs to people in rural areas who depend on agricultural or farm-based industries. Homestay proprietors engage local people to take care of guests, cook, clean, drive them around, and show them around, which creates indirect jobs. When tourists buy local goods, they create more jobs for small-scale producers of handicrafts, food, and traditional remedies. Most of the time, proprietors and family members run Malaysian homestays. In 2012, the Miso Walai Homestay in Sabah created 206 jobs in tourism and 34 jobs for operators in the area. Small tourism businesses have a bigger effect on the economy than big ones. So, tourist spending has good effects on the economy. The multiplier effect shows how much money tourists spend on goods and services at homestays instead of leaving the local economy (Selvaranee Balasingam & Bojei, 2019).

6. The effect of homestays on society

The social impact of homestays includes the cultural and community benefits that both hosts and visitors get from them. Homestay operators in Malaysia view the program as a driver of development, whereas communities in Himachal Pradesh, India that do not participate exhibit diverse perspectives on tourism (Tenzin (M.A. student) et al., 2019). Residents' views on tourism and the personal benefits that come with it affect the way people interact with each other in the area. Similar problems are making it hard for homestays to grow in Sri Lanka.

Homestays provide food, lodging, and souvenirs, which creates immediate economic opportunities and encourages investment in rural areas from both locals and foreigners. The focus on indigenous trade and small businesses helps keep traditional skills alive, including making things by hand. Homestays let people from different cultures get to know each other better, which helps ease racial tensions and gives young people a chance to participate in community-based tourism. Language learning programs boost people's confidence and ability to talk to each other, and the fact that people are becoming more tech-savvy and more independent shows how big of a change these programs can make in society. Infrastructure enhancements—including road access, education, safety, healthcare, and utilities—occur simultaneously with the advancement of homestays (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

6.1. Cultural Exchange

In homestays, guests rent rooms in private family homes, which lets them fully experience the host's home life (Bhan & Singh, 2014). They encourage a lot of cultural exchange and show that shared living areas are still important in society. Hosts can discuss and show off their cultural heritage and traditions in ways that are different from how hotels usually do it. Both sides profit from the exchange. Guests learn about local culture and values through group activities like cooking, eating, and cleaning, while hosts learn about the values and customs of guests from different origins. In Malaysia, participants in the Kuala Medang homestay program reside and engage with local inhabitants while participating in educational or language exchange initiatives (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). Homestay chances thus initiate the cultural exchange process, fostering dialogue and respect among communities, and cultural interaction continues to be a fundamental characteristic of homestay tourism.

6.2. Getting involved in the community

Local citizens are very important to the success of community-based tourism projects like homestays, which help create jobs, boost income, and give authority to ethnic groups that have been pushed to the edges of society. Handicrafts and traditional performances are examples of activities that create jobs. Home-stays are tiny, privately owned places to stay that make use of community resources. Five main categories of people who are interested in tourism include local inhabitants, tourists, the government, tour operators, and the local community. Inhabitants add a particular local flavour to the tourist experience (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

Homestays allow tourists to interact with rural communities by taking part in social, economic, and environmental activities. This promotes cultural exchange and protects traditional arts. Homestays can improve living standards and help communities grow by giving hosts other ways to make money (Amin & Ibrahim, 2015). The exchange-theory

paradigm asserts that community members are more likely to endorse tourism efforts when the perceived advantages surpass the related expenses.

When people in a community are involved in making decisions, it makes tourist development more in line with what the community wants and strengthens social capital, organisational coherence, and infrastructure—things that help programs last.

6.3. Keeping Local Traditions Alive

Homestay tourism strengthens and revitalises local communities in many ways. Cultural exchange can reduce ethnic bias and discrimination, cultivate a renewed appreciation for indigenous traditions and philosophies, and encourage the participation of tourism entities and social institutions in the preservation of culture. So, homestay tourism could help people build a new identity. Communities show off their cultural treasures to visitors by making souvenirs, making local artefacts, and doing native rituals and ceremonies. These activities can make money and boost local pride. The homestay traveler engages directly or indirectly in these activities, experiencing traditional customs, folklore, music, and dance that might otherwise remain inaccessible (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

The Malaysian case provides significant insights. The East Coast Economic Region (ECER) homestay program includes Pahang, Kelantan, and Terengganu. It has a lot of ecotourism resources, like Cameron Highlands, Fraser's Hill, and Gua Musang. Tasik Kenyir, Tasik Bera, and Tasik Chini are lakes and rivers that are popular for ecotourism. Taman Negara is a park that is also popular for ecotourism. Homestay owners are very committed to protecting nature. Miso Walai Homestay in Sabah's ecotourism project is an example of this kind of devotion. It helps protect forests and gives people in the community more authority. Malaysian homestays include traditional Malay ways of living, experiential tourism, cultural activities, and economic activities in rural areas. Tourists live with families in the area, talk to villagers, and see what life is like every day. This involvement fosters the conservation of lifestyle and culture through reciprocal exchange. Still, there are problems, such as not enough local involvement, weak leadership, poor planning, and weak community structures. To keep the program going and make it more valuable in terms of experiences, emotions, and learning, it's important to get more young people involved and offer them fun activities and packages (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

7. Concerns about the environment

One of the most important things for the expansion of homestays in tourism management is to make sure they are environmentally friendly and sustainable. Standardised products and services are common in traditional hotels, which means that guests don't get to experience the local culture as much. A growing trend among consumers is to appreciate and promote the culture, lifestyles, and people of the area (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

If homestays completely embrace their basic values, they can do more to help with sustainable development, protect local resources, and honour social and environmental heritage. The National Geographic Society says that "responsible travel" is what guides tourism development around the world. Their standards say that homestays can be considered truly "responsible," especially when they offer agritourism activities. For example, "Agritourism that provides lodging is one of the best ways to fill the slow season since tourists can come year-round to learn about farm life and rural traditions and crafts."

7.1. Sustainable Ways to Run a Homestay

Different kinds of homestays, such eco-lodges and eco-homestays, take sustainability into account (Bhan & Singh, 2014). These last types are not the same as eco-resorts, which are frequently run by professionals in the same way as resort hotels. Their main goals are to safeguard the environment and provide visitors with affordable places to stay, while also supporting and reinforcing the conservation of nearby reserves and other protected natural areas. Homestays are a comfortable and environmentally friendly way for guests to stay, whether they are tourists, labourers, researchers, or even other environmentalists. They offer services to extremely small groups for a fee, whether they live in a city, a semi-urban area, or a rural area. Most hotels don't allow local people with minimal means and small families to provide lodging, although they might be able to do so while also working on other things. Homestays can also provide relatively affordable options for community or group-based conservation tourism on land where a specific group or community has established tenure, which may not be suitable for a full-scale lodge or camp. They can also be employed in places where commercial activities haven't been tried and tested yet, or where the estimated number of environmentally friendly visitors per day isn't high enough to maintain a lodge or camp. So, a homestay type of business frequently works well with the goal of promoting sustainable tourism growth in villages.

7.2. Effect on Local Ecosystems

It's important to know how homestays affect local ecosystems because they are becoming more popular in tourism management. Homestays have a direct effect on the area around them because they are in existing homes that don't

have much room for growth or extension. Supporting activities that go along with tourism makes the local ecosystem more likely to be disturbed. Managing solid and liquid waste through disposal and recycling, setting limits on the number of visitors in sensitive locations, and encouraging hosts to use eco-friendly items are all ways to stop bad things from happening. Changes to infrastructure to make room for tourists should have as little impact on natural characteristics as possible. Matching the architectural style of buildings that host tourism infrastructure with the surrounding environment helps keep the local character and environment intact. Visitors can enjoy the scenery that drew them to the area in the first place (Septyoari Putranto et al., 2018). Homestays must adhere to these factors; otherwise, the frequent visitation they promote may harm the ecosystem and diminish their distinctive attributes.

8. How to Market Your Homestay

Technology is what makes homestays grow both around the world and in your own area. It helps them get a lot of attention and gives them a lot of ways to promote themselves. Travel websites, blogs, dedicated forums, and videography are all online channels that can help promote homestays. These efforts are strategically designed to attract and engage with potential passengers, as well as build direct relationships with travel agents, tour operators, and agencies around the world (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

8.1. Platforms on the Internet

People use a lot of different web methods to market homestays. Online platforms and websites provide exceptional convenience and accessibility across several business sectors (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Social media has had an effect on marketing in the hospitality and tourism industries since it reaches a wide range of people. Another way is to work with agents. Hotels mostly sell rooms and offer amenities, while homestays offer a full range of services, such as meals and activities (Farbrother, 2010). Agencies that work with homestays handle the services and offer packages that can be changed. These platforms and partners offer a number of ways to advertise homestays.

8.2. Marketing on Social Media

Using social media strategically is a great way to reach the most people with the right information. Firm-based and user-generated social media communication have replaced traditional media channels and created a new way for businesses to work together (Choudhury & Mohanty, 2018). Companies can control content, interact with customers, share content, and change how customers think about their brand in a favourable way using firm-based social media. User-generated content (UGC) is content that users make and share without trying to sell anything. It is very important for branding, keeping customers, and positioning a company or location. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and social review sites are the best places to exchange experiences and suggestions. When arranging travels, more and more people are getting information from social media. Online reviews and user-generated content (UGC) are now key sources of information that have a big impact on what travellers do and how they act.

Tourism marketing on social media has become a way to talk to people that has many benefits, such as being cheap, reaching a lot of people, giving people the most up-to-date information, being easy to access, getting customers involved, getting more visibility, and being able to utilise numerous platforms for free. Tourism businesses who don't use social media miss out on chances and could lag behind their competition. Company awareness, community building, and getting customers to interact with your company are the main goals of social media marketing. To use social media effectively, you need to know a lot about the platforms and their target audiences, how to measure success, and how to combine them with tourism marketing methods.

8.3. Working with travel agencies

Travel agents have been an important part of the marketing plans that homestay operators use. Intermediaries may raise fixed costs, but they also make units easier to find in sites where travellers look for places to stay. They also make it easier to target specific services to the right market segments. To build good relationships with travel agencies, homestay operators need to use smart proactive marketing strategies and get in touch with organisations that plan local or worldwide trips (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

9. Problems that Homestays Have

Homestays encounter numerous problems at both global and national levels, which are not readily mitigated by government action or the establishment of robust market demand. Infrastructure is a big part of how well homestay providers can connect with tourists. Poor infrastructure, like bad roads, transportation, energy, healthcare, communication, and other residential utilities, makes it hard to set up and promote good services for homestay tourists. The lack of relevant educational and training institutions exacerbates these challenges by hindering the cultivation of qualified human resources, including guides, entrepreneurs, and hospitality professionals (Bhan & Singh, 2014). In many places, appropriate legal regulation, such as registration, zoning, and booking policies, is still not enough and is not well developed. A poor marketing and promotion strategy doesn't reach people outside of the area, and the lack of

explicit plans to expand the network of coordinators and service providers makes it even harder to attract more customers. The speed and efficacy of homestay development are greatly slowed by poor coordination between government, tourism actors like homestay businesses and hosts, intermediaries, and non-governmental organisations.

9.1. Problems with regulations

Homestays are not as important as other parts of the hotel industry. They are usually only available to non-commercial companies that are not formally registered (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Because of this, homestay arrangements are usually limited to small, informal places to stay that are less formal than hotels and legally approved lodging companies. It is even harder to figure things out because there are no clear rules that are specific to the way homestays work. The rules that already exist for guest houses don't easily fit the way homestays work, which leads to confusion and problems with enforcement. The lack of regulation makes it hard to keep an eye on sanitary conditions and stops more people in the area from accepting homestays. There are a lot of rules about Malaysian homestay programs, including how they are funded, trained, and marketed (BojeI et al., 2017). From 2006 to 2010, RM50 million was given out to help start and improve projects. However, the widespread reliance on ongoing government support has led to weaker leadership in villages and a stronger reliance on help from outside sources. The management framework includes planning inputs from several government departments, with state-level MOTAC offices in charge of the whole process. Homestay operators must fill up applications at district or state offices, and then inspections are done to make sure that the properties meet the required standards for location, amenities, cleanliness, and insurance coverage.

9.2. Hotels are in competition with

Homestay accommodation is when you rent a room in a local's house. This lets visitors interact with the local people and learn about their culture and way of life. Homestays enhance and sustain the living traditions of local communities, offering diverse chances for grassroots tourist development (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Tradition and real living culture are what make them special, and guests are asked to respect these when they stay with a family. Since the late 1800s, people have been looking for homestays, either on their own or through specific groups or individual hosts. In the 1960s and 1970s, growth sped up as many countries started pushing homestays as alternatives to regular lodging in response to more demand and better welfare. There are different types of homestays: cultural (living like a local), ecosystem-based (living near to nature), agro-tourism (living with a farmer's family), and urban (living in a city).

Homestays can be run for profit or as a volunteer project, but its main purpose is to provide people a real cultural experience and a close connection with the locals. Homestays are culturally unique and affordable, which makes them more likely to get people to come back than other sorts of places to stay. Homestays are now a long-term replacement for traditional hotels. They have a direct effect on community development by creating jobs and giving locals the chance to own and run their own businesses. They also have an indirect effect on local economies by providing jobs, boosting the economy, and providing education. Traditional hotels are often part of a franchise or a multinational chain that has the same design and operation standards in all of its locations. This makes cultures more similar. Homestays, on the other hand, involve the host's family and community, which gives guests more unique and varied experiences. Homestays are popular with budget travellers and members of certain groups who want to learn about other cultures, traditions, and ways of seeing the world because they are cheaper and focus on local interaction and cultural immersion.

9.3. Quality Control

Because homestays are so popular, many new ones have opened up. However, the quality of these places varies a lot, and some Homestays are not very good. This lack of consistency in quality is a big problem for the expansion of home-stay tourism. So, getting good food (inside and out) is a big problem. Different ways of keeping homestays clean can sometimes cause pollution, which can turn guests off and damage the host family's reputation.

So, dealing with quality-related problems is a big problem. Safety, security, hygiene, upkeep of the building, location, cleanliness, availability of necessary visitor amenities, and high-quality interactions amongst guests must all be guaranteed. There are government rules and model quality assurance programs, but they are not always followed or checked on a regular basis (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

The most important factors that affect customers' choices of where to stay are service quality, image, location, and pricing (Tania Kapiki, 2012). To make their services better, hotels focus on comprehensive quality management, passenger feedback, good management, skilled staff, and renovations. It is important to always monitor, analyse, and improve guest satisfaction. Advertising shouldn't set guests' expectations too high, because quality is becoming more and more important for keeping and attracting guests. Quality assurance takes time and money, but it pays off in the long run by saving money on operations, keeping guests happy, and getting good reviews. Quality labels let people

know what to expect and set goals for progress. People that have a stake in the business think that good service means getting good value for their money, having comfortable rooms, nice staff, and good food. So, keeping these standards in homestays is still very important.

10. Successful Homestay Case Studies

Homestays are a different kind of place to stay than a regular hotel. The host lets travellers stay in their home in exchange for money and a chance to learn about the local culture, food, and customs (Bhan & Singh, 2014). In a traditional hotel, guests interact with staff, but in a homestay, guests can get to know their hosts better, which makes for a more personalised and interesting stay. The relationship between the traveler and the host is very important to the idea of homestays (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). The homestay idea is based on authenticity and a personalised experience. Hosts typically form enduring personal relationships with their visitors.

Homestays in different countries show important things that are necessary for success. Miso Walai Homestay in Sabah, Malaysia, is a great example of community-based ecotourism. It gives local people a chance to learn about their culture and make money. The Pahang homestay program helps rural communities grow by giving people money and letting them share their culture. The Analytic Network Process examined the Taiwan Homestay and found that service quality and entrepreneurial spirit were the most important performance variables. The Orang Asli Aborigines homestay project in Pahang shows how small businesses can help keep native cultures alive. Strong local leadership, outside help, and sometimes just luck are also important for projects to work. Homestay tourism in India uses places with natural and cultural appeal to draw people to communities outside of cities. For home stay tourism to grow, the private sector and the community must be involved. The government mostly helps with this.

10.1. Case Study 1: A Homestay in the Countryside of India

Homestays are becoming more popular as a place to stay since they let travellers get close to the local culture and help the community. Rural India, with its varied natural beauty and cultural heritage, has become a top spot for this kind of tourism. The primary aim of this case study is to examine the advantages that a rural homestay business may provide to individuals and communities, utilising a functioning homestay in rural Himachal Pradesh as a case in point.

Rural tourism upholds values like sustainability, community involvement, and genuine experiences. The researched area lies in the foothills of the Himalayas in northern India. It has a unique cultural identity and a pleasant climate all year round, which makes it a popular tourist destination. A homestay business that is run and controlled by locals is still active in many areas, such as promoting culture, protecting the environment, improving infrastructure, and developing agriculture.

10.2. Case Study 2: Japan's Urban Homestay

Urban places are more convenient for getting to services like transit, entertainment, and cultural events, which makes homestays even more appealing. The Japanese government and academia have both paid a lot of attention to homestays as a way to boost local and regional economies (Kenzaka et al., 2022).

Tourists pay to stay in the private home of a local family as part of a homestay. Host families typically provide lodging, meals, and instruction, while affording travellers an authentic cultural experience (Kannegieser, 2015).

A structured homestay program in Japan aims to improve students' medical education while also helping the community and the region come back to life. Medical students can learn more about community medicine while also enjoying the area's beauty and getting hands-on experience by taking part in local events and activities. The community can use the knowledge and skills of college students to make the area better for the health and well-being of the people who live there.

10.3. Case Study 3: Eco-Homestay in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a top ecotourism destination, and many eco-lodges in the area help the local population. This business was started because of the eco-crisis. It includes a creative family rejuvenation effort that connects ecotourism with community-based tourism and a complex design for an eco-lodge where people can stay. Instead of staying in a hotel, homestay tourism lets guests stay with locals and experience their way of life and culture. There are three sorts of homestays in the markets: cultural, environmental, and farm. Costa Rica is known around the world as a leader in ecotourism, which is why it was picked for the case studies. The lodge follows a community-based, eco-homestay model, which means that the community is in charge of and takes part in every step of creating the service. It should expand and improve the use of the natural environment that is already there, draw in and satisfy tourists, help ecotourism grow in a good way, benefit local communities, raise awareness of ecology and culture, and create long-term job opportunities for people in rural areas.

Over the past twenty years, ecotourism has become more and more popular around the world. The United Nations Environment Programme has named Costa Rica as a prominent success story. Costa Rica changed its definition of

ecotourism in 1991 to one that is more limited and focused on protecting natural resources and ensuring the country's long-term health. Ecotourism is a good choice for landowners across the world who want to protect natural areas. Homestay ecotourism is especially appealing because it doesn't need a lot of property, it has social and cultural benefits, and it gives tourists advantages. Homestay tourism allows a tourist to reside in the residence of a local family and to experience their lifestyle (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

The rising number of eco-friendly hotels throughout the world shows that people are becoming more interested in travel that is good for the environment. In this case study, the eco-resort Costa Rica reimagines the ideas behind these green hotels in the context of community-based homestay eco-tourism (Courvisanos & Jain, 2006). The framework is used in a remote part of the Costa Rican countryside that is currently growing ecotourism.

Ecotourism emphasises the importance of sustainable habitats, community participation in governance and benefit sharing, monitoring to make sure loads and rules are followed, and education to promote awareness. Utilising these concepts via a community-oriented approach in an ecotourism homestay lodge underscores the dependence on indigenous or flexible resources (McKeone, 2011).

11. Trends in Homestays for the Future

Homestay tourism is a new type of lodging, and its growth is similar to that of the worldwide tourism industry (Bhan & Singh, 2014). The growth of homestays is still going strong, and more and more people in the tourism sector, local communities, government agencies, social operators, and worldwide social tourism organisations are paying attention to them. People are especially interested in homestays since they offer comfortable, affordable places to stay that are close to nature and local people. Moreover, homestay tourism provides avenues for socio-cultural, educational, spiritual, environmental, and economic growth for both hosts and guests.

Changes in technology and the needs of travellers also affect the future of homestay tourism and how it looks and feels. Lighting, heating, and ventilation systems; Bluetooth-enhanced audio and video; home theatres; security systems; and traditional appliances that are connected to the Internet through the World Wide Web make up a miniaturised, centrally controlled environment that is stylish, futuristic, fun, and, most importantly, sustainable in today's homestay setting. So, a lot of homestay owners stay on top of the tech revolution, giving guests the best modern homestay experience while still delivering the comforts of home and the hospitality that is anticipated in a homestay.

The want for a simple, peaceful life has led to a longing for a real home away from home or a home-from-home experience. Urban, tech-savvy, and sophisticated travellers want to get the most out of their vacations in terms of money and experiences. This is driving the expansion of homestay tourism. Also, a greater appreciation for unique and real experiences makes more people want to try homestay tourism.

11.1. Change in the digital world

Digital transformation has an effect on more than just corporate processes. It has a big effect on the leisure industry as well. Many tourists and travellers use smart gadgets to plan their trips and even book their accommodations while they are on the go (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Digital transformation includes the move from a smart or digital hotel to activity apps that help with the trip. Smart home features like computerised reception, electronic door locks, temperature management, and light control 2 make hotels smarter and safer, more comfortable, and better overall. Activity packages including travel guides, sports activities, cultural activities, adventure sports, and local experience chances also change the way people live and make their free time more personal.

11.2. More people want real experiences

Homestays are a good way to address the growing need for real travel experiences. People are moving away from traditional mass tourism and towards other types of lodging. People often choose popular places because they have special features, including being culturally, religiously, rural, or ecologically important. Homestays let tourists "become part of the community" by giving them a place to live, which hotels can't do (Bhan & Singh, 2014). As more and more people go to Malaysia, they are looking for "something meaningful, real, and original," which makes homestays a lucrative tourism product. "Character and atmosphere" are inherent components that exclusively arise from local communities. The global expansion of the homestay sector confirms its capacity to adapt to this trend (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017).

12. Technology's Part in Homestays

Diver16 defines technology as a mechanism for converting, storing, and transmitting information. Many studies have looked at how information and communication technology (ICT) affects how employees act and makes businesses run better and serve customers better. Hotels are using more ICT in the hospitality industry. They use both hardware and software to manage their operations and build partnerships with clients and suppliers.

Homestays are a unique type of tourism lodging that lets travellers stay in local homes and get to know the community. This has gotten a lot of attention for growing the sector. Tourists are more likely to stay at homestays that use the latest technology since they offer better services than conventional homestays (Bhan & Singh, 2014). For instance, Yanyan16 talks about how smart home technologies can make homestays more comfortable and convenient for guests. Management software programs also help with operations.

12.1. Features of a Smart Home

Smart home technology connects items to the Internet so that you can monitor and control things like temperature and security from anywhere. Smart homestays often have temperature and humidity sensors, smart locks, air conditioners, smart doorbells, TVs, lighting, security cameras, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors. You can control all of these things with smartphone apps.

12.2. Software for Booking and Managing

Many homestays use smart home systems and other technologies to improve the experience of their guests. A booking and management platform is important for making sure that each homestay's business and administrative tasks run smoothly. It helps assign houses, confirms booking dates, and sends out receipts and bills. The software makes it easier to keep track of data after receipts and invoices are automatically sent out.

The booking and administration software needs to link different parts of the system so that it works with the client's settings on both the local and global levels. Because it is available through cloud architecture, different terminals can connect to it from anywhere in the world or locally. The qualified homestay operator or owner checks to see if the house is available on the dates that the reservation is made before confirming it. The booking component sends status requests to a local terminal that talks to the database. When all the information needed is given, the booking request is authorised and verified. This causes printed receipts and bills to be sent to the local terminal. The accounting database automatically gets the recorded revenues through a system integration section.

A hotel reservation management system is the technological way that people book rooms. This kind of software lets you take reservations from anywhere, check availability calendars to see when and where rooms are available, manage different types of rooms and rates that are for sale, and keep track of customer information so that rebooking is easy and there are full records for reporting and analysis. Also, it is possible to connect to services from other companies. A good solution lets you make reservations during or after check-in, supports various payments and booking dates (such date changes), and lets you book more than one room at a time. An organised and optimised booking system is the only way to keep the expected occupancy ratio. Home visitors who show up without a reservation can become stuck because an unreliable booking system can't check availability and expected arrivals correctly (Wiliams & Ajinaja, 2019).

13. Staying in a home and eating local food

Every place where tourists go has its own menu that shows off the area's culture, geography, and native foods. The choice of destination is based on different things about the local food. The local food tastes great and has interesting stories about the ingredients used and the area's history and traditions. A lot of travellers organise their trips around certain foods or meals that are popular in the area they are going to. Homestay gives you the chance to have strong sensory experiences. Local dishes that use seasonal, organic, and sustainable foods grown in the area are a big draw for travellers who want to stay in homestays. Local food is a unique experience, and hosts who farm local ingredients to sell to their guests get money from it, which helps the host economy.

13.1. Food Experiences for Guests

Food is an important part of the service package for tourists who choose to stay in a homestay. A lot of homestay owners cook local food for their guests, who may not be familiar with the country's culinary history. The exposure to different foods that comes from this is interesting in its own way. A lot of the time, the family's cuisine makes someone appreciate indigenous culture more by bringing back a physical memory. The easy access to vital products makes it easier to cook meals, and these ingredients are still important for farming at home. Homestays have a positive effect on the wider countryside by encouraging people to buy locally grown food. They also help the providers' income and diversify the national economy (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

13.2. Encouragement of Local Ingredients

Most of the time, the meals offered at homestays are a big part of the tourism experience for their guests. Visitors can not only taste the real, local delicacies, but they can also learn how to cook and eat in a style that is unique to the area. The hosts often get the fresh, local products they use to make their main dishes from their own stores, farms, or marketplaces nearby. Visitors to a homestay can enjoy local fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, snacks, noodles, meat, seafood, fish, braised foods, steamed dishes, hot pots, broths, salads, appetisers, desserts, and sweets. More visitors

means more exposure for the local food supply, which is also a good way to sell the local foods to people from outside the area (Bhan & Singh, 2014).

14. Homestays and responsible travel

Responsible tourism stresses the importance of making a positive impact on the places, people, and resources that tourists visit. This method doesn't use up non-renewable resources or take advantage of employees or local people, which makes a real difference in the community and the environment (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Including homestays in the responsible tourism framework really helps local communities by creating jobs, giving people new ways to make money, and protecting their culture. The idea of homestays shows that tourism is moving towards being more environmentally friendly. It also gives people in the community a chance to become involved and helps political, social, and economic sustainability (Septyoari Putranto et al., 2018). Incentives from the government can help make sure that homestays provide appropriate services. The homestay sector has grown quickly because ethical service providers have met the needs of the community. Working together with both national and international stakeholders can help improve regional skills and abilities for providing services at a responsible tourism level, which will help sustainable and integrated development.

14.1. Ethical Issues

Figuring out the rights of guests and hosts in homestay situations is a difficult moral problem. Tourists usually don't have any problems, but hosts are always at risk of having their private lives invaded and disturbed. Accommodation is still a part of travel that could cause problems. The main goal of travelling is to make things more comfortable, but sometimes fitting in means putting up with discomfort in new places (Huda Farhana Mohamad et al., 2017). A specific domain devoid of defined ethical principles is the invasion of a host's domicile concerning their rights as homeowners or tenants (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Tourists usually have more freedom to go about and do things than hosts are willing to let them do.

14.2. Effect on Communities in the Area

Homestays offer a unique way to travel because they let tourists stay in local homes, which makes it easier for them to connect with their host family. This system encourages people to learn about and protect their local culture and way of life, and it also creates more jobs and income for people who live there. So, these kinds of businesses help the economy grow in a way that includes everyone, and they also encourage people in the area to save and participate in building up the infrastructure. Community participation is essential for the successful execution of homestay programs; elements such as collective involvement, collaboration, individual characteristics, and motivation profoundly affect engagement levels. Training modules must cover group action, harmony, awareness, and accountability in order to keep these programs going and make them better. Also, for responsible management and long-term growth to happen, community leaders and local governments need to be actively involved and supportive.

The Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh is a great example of a popular tourist site in the mountains (Tenzin (M.A. student) et al., 2019). The Kullu valley along the Beas River has a lot of promise for tourism, but it is still not fully developed. There aren't enough facilities to handle the growing number of visitors. So, starting a village homestay program might boost the local economy and help protect the area's cultural history. But the effectiveness of these kinds of programs depends a lot on how willing people in the community are to take part and run the program well.

2. CONCLUSION

Homestays are an important part of managing tourism because they offer real places to stay that create jobs, make sure that income is shared fairly among local hosts, and let visitors and people engage directly (Bhan & Singh, 2014). Guests learn about different ways of life and take part in daily activities with community residents through cultural exchanges. This helps keep traditions and cultural knowledge alive in rural economies (Tenzin (M.A. student) et al., 2019). This kind of tourism encourages fair use of natural resources and fosters a culture of protecting the environment. Eating local food made with farm-fresh products makes the homestay experience better and supports sustainable gastronomy. Online platforms, social media, travel magazines, and agencies are all important tools for strategic marketing that help homestays play a key role in tourist development and management.

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