



Influence of Unregistered Homestay Establishments on Tourism in Coorg

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the perception of different stakeholders of unregistered homestays on tourism in South Coorg. The target respondents of the study are entrepreneurs running homestays, local community and tourists visiting Coorg who use homestays for the accommodation purposes. Various statistical tools are used to analyse the data collected.

Keywords: Unorganized, Homestay, Tourists, Perceptions

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest service industries in India that has attained tremendous growth in the recent years. Being one of the top tourist destinations, India attracts both domestic as well as international tourists. India plays an important role in the global tourism industry in the aspects of growth and development mainly in terms of attracting foreign tourists and revenue generation.

The people of Coorg who are also known as Kodavas have an ethnic identity that has been safeguarded for many years. They have a unique lifestyle, language, customs and traditions. The culture of Kodavas is different from other local communities in southern India. The cuisine of the Kodavas, which is primarily non-

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vegetarian, is another major attraction to Coorg. The hospitality services provided by the Kodavas are another prime reason for the tourists to choose Coorg over other hillstations in the region. Homestays provide the opportunity for tourists to experience Coorg culture. The various harvest festivals such as Puttari or the new rice festival are celebrated as a part of the conservation of Coorg culture.

Homestays in Coorg are attracting tourists by providing world-class hospitality, unique cuisine, an opportunity to experience Coorg culture and tradition. The green valleys, mountains and forests give a pleasant feeling to the tourists. The presence of a large number of homestays will have positive as well as negative impacts on tourism. The establishment of homestays helps the local community in revenue generation and helps in providing various employment opportunities to the local community. At the same time, a large number of unorganised tourism establishments mainly unregistered homestays are considered to be an unethical tourism practice.

Some of these unorganised tourism establishments may actually tarnish the reputation of Coorg. The natural feeling and sustainability can be lost by the development of a large number of homestays. Coorg being an important tourist destination, homestays play a very important role in the promotion and development of tourism in Coorg.

Homestays should ideally provide an enjoyable atmosphere to tourists without exploiting the authenticity of the destination. Most of the people in Coorg are dependent on tourism for their livelihood. Due to this reason, society is supporting homestay services, and thereby it maintains a good and healthy relationship between the host community and tourists.

2. Literature Review

Homestay accommodation plays a very important role in tourism development and promotion. According to Bhuiyan, Siwar & Ismail (2012), it is essential to understand the important factors

which make a successful homestay; they are cleanliness, safety and security. If the homestay operator is successful in meeting these factors, they may keep the tourists happy. This can also motivate the tourists to revisit the particular destination and increase the goodwill towards the destination.

Richins (2011) addresses on safety and security of homestays wherein an analysis is done on the role of homestays satisfying the needs and wants of tourists. Similarly, it is also the responsibility of the homestays to provide safety and security during the stay. A homestay operator should have planned the construction of homestays well in order to give a feeling of security to the tourists.

In another way, homestays bring a feeling of a holiday. A homestay is considered to be a holiday as it is living with the family away from normal life for a longer period (Karnik, 2010). Homestays are famous particularly in countries like UK and New Zealand etc. The study states that homestays offer high-quality services compared to hotels. In the early stages of the concept of homestays, they flourished in places where it was difficult to develop hotels, which resulted in the emergence of unorganised establishments. Darji (2012) states in his review that homestays are considered as an important tourism product along with the travel packages. The tourism professionals trained the residents to treat guest as God. This results in a healthy relationship between the tourists and the local community. The idea of homestays is more suitable in rural areas, where the tourists will get a calm and peaceful atmosphere to learn the indigenous culture and traditions of the host community.

Tourism has affected local communities in two different ways; primarily, the environment and secondly, socio-economic and cultural aspects. Both have created positive as well as negative impacts on local communities. Avramescu & Ungureanu (2008) discusses that the major aspect of tourism is that it keeps on changing according to the needs and wants of tourists. Tourism works according to the tourists' decisions. On the other hand, Aji (2007) highlights on the trend where registered homestays attract more tourists than unregistered homestays. The registration of

homestays with the Department of Tourism gives them the legitimate right to operate homestays. The support from the government is another positive and beneficial impact that the registered homestays can avail.

The perception of tourists visiting a particular destination and its socio-cultural factors make a destination, particularly the heritage tourist destinations, popular. Yadav, Bandyopadhyay and Rawal (2010) in their article observe that tourists visiting a particular destination will have a narrow perception of the socio-cultural factors of the destination. This actually motivates them to revisit the particular destination. However, the motivation aspect varies from person to person. Tourism plays a significant role in analysing the tourist satisfaction and thereby draws a positive impact on the destination. Richins (2009) also gives a similar insight that various factors such as environmental, cultural, and socio-economic community were based on sustainability with a framework for sustainable tourism in resort destinations.

Klepinger (2010) states that homestay programmes are considered to be affordable in nature whereby students get better opportunities to live independently in a different atmosphere. This results in better development of the individuals by giving them an opportunity to learn new things from the host community. In a way, the homestay programmes contribute to a better understanding of cross-cultural programmes.

2.1 Research Gap

All the reviewed literature focus on the impacts of homestay accommodations and its effect on tourists. The role of unorganised homestay establishments of Coorg can affect the socio-cultural patterning of the destination. This study attempts to analyse the perception of various stakeholders on tourism in Coorg.

2.2 Statement of the problem

Coorg, one of the important tourist destinations of South India, is attracting a large number of tourists. The increasing flow of tourists results in the emergence of various unorganised tourism

establishments, especially in the homestay sector. These unorganised tourism practices change the socio-cultural patterning, and this affects the overall development of Coorg.

2.3 Scope of the study

The study was conducted to understand the stakeholder's perception of unorganised homestay establishments in Coorg. The scope of the study covers South Coorg which includes Madikeri and Kushalnagar, where homestays are more in number.

3. Objectives

1. To examine the perceptions of local community towards unorganised homestays
2. To examine the receptiveness of visitors towards unorganised homestays and their responses towards these establishments

3.1 Sample size and sampling technique

The sample for the study is drawn from tourists, owners of homestays and local residents. A total sample size of 300 respondents consisting of 150 tourists, 50 homestays and 100 local residents were chosen for the study. Sampling technique used for the study was area sampling, and the respondents were consecutively selected from the area of the study.

3.2 Sources of data collection

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data was collected by using three sets of structured questionnaires which were distributed to owners of homestays, tourists and the local community perspectives. Secondary data was collected from various research articles, books, journals, newspaper articles etc. All the questions in the questionnaires were stated in the Likert 5 points scale. Statistical techniques used for the study are descriptive statistics, t-test and correlation.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: One sample t-test to analyse the increasing effect of unregistered homestay on Coorg.

One-Sample Test							
Test Value = 3							
Increasing effect	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Establishment of unregistered home stay affects the goodwill of Coorg	6.861	49	0.000	0.560	0.72	0.40	
Establishment of large number of unregistered homestay exploits the culture of Coorg	4.113	49	0.000	0.340	0.56	0.12	
Establishment of large number of unregistered homestay leads to negative impact on Coorg	5.280	49	0.000	0.180	0.57	0.29	

4.1 Interpretation of the One sample t-test

One sample t-test was conducted to analyse the increasing effect of unregistered homestays. From Table 1, we can see that the p-Value for all the variables is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 i.e. (p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). Hence the establishment of unregistered homestays affects the goodwill of Coorg, it exploits the culture of Coorg, and this also leads to a negative impact on the sustainability of tourism at Coorg.

H1: There is no significant relationship between the unorganized status for homestay and perception of tourists

Table 2: Analysis of hypothesis 1

		Correlations	
		Status of Homestay	Perception of Tourist
Status of Homestay	Pearson Correlation	1	0.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	150	150
Perception of Tourist	Pearson Correlation	0.674**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	150	150

4.2 Interpretation of the Hypothesis 1

From the correlation table, we can observe that values (0.674) in the correlation table are standardised and range from 0 to 1 and the variables are highly correlated to each other. This shows that we have chosen a good set of independent variables to correlate with the dependent variables. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternate hypothesis is accepted, i.e. there is a significant relationship between the unorganised status of homestay and perception of tourists.

H2: There is no significant relationship between the unorganised status of homestay and perception of local community

Table 3: Analysis of hypothesis 2

		Correlations	
		Local Community	Unorganized Status
Local Community	Pearson Correlation	1	0.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	150	150
Unorganized Status	Pearson Correlation	0.620**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	150	150

4.3 Interpretation of Hypothesis 2

From the correlation table, we can observe that values (0.620) in the correlation table are standardised and range from 0 to 1 and the variables are highly correlated to each other. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternate hypothesis is accepted, i.e. there is a significant relationship between the unorganised status of homestay and perception of the local community.

H3: There is no significant relationship between changes in socio-cultural patterning of Coorg and unorganised tourism establishments

Table 4: Analysis of hypothesis 3

		Correlations	
		Socio-cultural patterning	Unorganized
Socio-cultural patterning	Pearson Correlation	1	0.884**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	150	150
Un-organized	Pearson Correlation	0.884**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	150	150

4.4 Interpretation of Hypothesis 3

From the correlation table, we can observe that values (0.884) in the correlation table are standardised and range from 0 to 1 and the variables are highly correlated to each other. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternate hypothesis is accepted. i.e. there is a significant relationship between changes in socio-cultural patterning of Coorg and unorganised tourism establishments.

5. Limitations of the Study

The local communities were reluctant to share their opinions fearing that the study findings may be used by the regulators and

would affect their business. Language constraints prevented the researcher from engaging in in-depth discussions with the respondents, and the research was focused only in South Coorg.

6. Findings of the study

The study revealed that a large number of homestays in Coorg have a diverse impact on tourism. The establishment of homestays helps the local community in revenue generation and in providing various employment opportunities to the local community. At the same time a large number of unorganised tourism establishment, mainly the unregistered homestays are flourishing whose operations may lead to concerns about the quality of tourism experiences of tourists visiting Coorg.

The study proves that various kinds of unorganised tourism establishments can damage the natural resources of Coorg. Hence the aspect of carrying capacity of the region has to be taken into consideration while permissions are granted to run homestays. Homestays should give authentic experience to tourists without exploiting the natural and cultural values of the destination.

The other important aspect of the study is the demonstration effect that focuses on the socio-cultural change in the local community. The local community tends to behave in a way the tourists behave. Thus the authenticity of the culture is lost, affecting the sustainability of tourism.

Tourists are attracted to homestays mainly to experience authentic local culture. Cultural attractiveness is also a main attraction of Coorg. The findings indicate that unregistered homestays can lead to many problems and can lead to change in the inflow of tourists from homestays to resorts and hotels. According to this study, tourists select homestays for accommodation owing to the superior quality of facilities and activities provided by the homestay operators. They do not place much importance on whether they are registered homestays.

Though the study reveals the endorsement of the society to run a large number of unregistered homestays, there are voices raised by

the local community through newspapers, that the establishment of a large number of homestays can damage the natural resources and landscape of Coorg. This may have a negative impact on Coorg, and can affect the promotion of tourism.

The findings from the study also highlighted the increasing employment opportunities to the local community and the empowerment of women that is aided by the homestay business. Tourism is an activity of income generation, and the establishment of a large number of unregistered homestays is considered a source of livelihood by many families. But at the same time majority of the local community were of the opinion that a large number of unregistered establishments could result in exploitation of the natural beauty of Coorg and it can create environmental problems in the near future. The problem with the growth of unregistered homestays can be in the form of safety, discrimination etc.

The analysis also depicts that establishment of a large number of unregistered homestays can affect the socio-cultural pattern of Coorg. The main reasons for the negative image of Coorg among visitors are primarily due to uncontrolled tourist inflow to Coorg and an increase in the establishment of unregistered homestays.

7. Suggestions

The ever-increasing tourist inflow to Coorg is fueling a rise in the number of unregistered homestays operating in Coorg. However, this is going to have a negative impact on the environment, and consequently, on the reputation of Coorg as an attractive hillstation. Therefore, it is essential to regulate the construction of homestays, particularly the unregistered homestays, in order to preserve the natural beauty of Coorg.

The government has to take necessary precautions and set guidelines in granting permission for the operation of homestays to ensure authentic cultural experiences of tourists visiting these accommodation units.

Sustainability of tourism in Coorg can be maintained only when there is a combined effort on the part of tourists and local residents to conserve the socio-cultural uniqueness of Coorg.

7. Conclusion

The growth of unorganised homestay establishments in Coorg affects the sustainable development of the destination negatively. The scenic beauty of Coorg is lost due to the emergence of a large number of homestays. It is also resulting in change in the socio-cultural pattern of Coorg. It is the collective responsibility of the local community, tourists and government to conserve and preserve the natural resources of Coorg and to promote registered homestays for a sustainable development of tourism.

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