

Chapter 5

Challenges and Prospects of Homestay in Rural Tourism: A Study of Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the prospects and challenges of homestay accommodation in rural Uttarakhand, India, based on secondary data sources. Homestays are a sort of community-based tourism that provides visitors with an authentic experience of the local culture and way of life by allowing them to stay in the homes of local families. This chapter examines the potential of homestay accommodation to contribute to rural development and tourism promotion in Uttarakhand. The research is based on current literature and studies, as well as government and tourism sector data. The findings indicate that homestay accommodation has significant potential to generate income and provide alternative livelihood options for rural communities in Uttarakhand; but requires greater support and investment from the government and other stakeholders in order to address the challenges facing the homestay sector. The chapter finishes with suggestions for enhancing the viability of homestay accommodations in rural Uttarakhand, including capacity building, infrastructural improvement, and marketing assistance.

INTRODUCTION

Uttarakhand, located in northern India, is known for its natural beauty and is a popular tourist destination. The state is home to several religious and pilgrimage sites such as Haridwar, Rishikesh, Kedarnath and Badrinath, which attract millions of tourists each year. The state also offers adventure and eco-tourism activities such as trekking, skiing, river rafting, and paragliding.

As per the World Bank the global share of rural population was 57% in 1991 which decreased to 53% in 2001 and 48% in 2011. In India also condition is not any more different. The rural share of the Indian population was decrease from 74% in 1991 to 72% in 2001 and 69% in 2011. As the rural population decrease the agriculture contribution to GDP has gradually decline in past two decade. Decrease in farm-

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-2065-5.ch005

ing activities may lead to food insecurity. The main problem of decreasing rural population is migration from rural to urban area. People from rural area migrate to urban area in search of better education and employment opportunity. Activities like Industries, trade and commerce, education centre in the city influence rural people to migrate from rural areas to urban areas. Pankaj, Faculty of Architecture, DIT University, Dehradun, India. Ashish Pant, Faculty of Architecture, DIT University, Dehradun, India. Migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the purposes of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence in the new location. One of the most significant migration patterns has been rural to urban migration in search of opportunities. In the rural areas, sluggish agricultural growth and restricted development of the rural non-farm sector increases the rural poverty, unemployment and underemployment. Due to lack of employment opportunities people migrated from rural to urban areas in search of jobs. Migration results in abandonment of villages and causes congestion in the cities. Migration is not new to Uttarakhand. It reached a peak in the 1980s and fuelled the demand for a separate state, which everyone hoped would lead to economic growth and check migration. But according to census data the rate of migration from the hilly areas of the state has increased after it was formed in 2000, only the destination of migrants has changed. In fact, the migration to cities has been in such great numbers that Uttarakhand has recorded the highest increase in the share of urban population in any of the Himalayan states of the country while its rural decadal growth rate is the lowest. Difficult terrain, lack of transport, the lack of employment along with small landholding sizes and low farm incomes has fuelled large migration from rural areas of the state to the cities across the country. Migration leads to abandonment of villages which causes degradation of land, makes villages unlivable. Rural tourism can be a solution for these abandon villages of Uttarakhand to decrease migration and to generate sustainable employment opportunities in the rural areas of Uttarakhand.

The Uttarakhand state formerly known as Uttaranchal was carved out of the state of Uttar Pradesh in 2000 and became the 27th state in the country of India. Uttarakhand is situated in the central Himalayan zone extending between 77° 34' and 81° 02' E longitude and 28° 43' to 31° 27' N latitude. Uttarakhand share borders with China in the north and Nepal to the east, while its neighboring States is Himachal Pradesh Rural Tourism a Solution for Ghost Villages of Uttarakhand Pankaj, Ashish Pant Figure 1: World & India Rural Population (%) (Source –www.Data.worldbank.org) 53 www.ijntr.org Fig. 3: Rural – Urban proportion of Uttarakhand state (2001 & 2011) to the west and Uttar Pradesh in the south. The high Himalayan ranges and glaciers form most of the northern parts of the state while the lower reaches are densely forested. The state is spread over an area of about 53,483 sq. km. out of which 86% is mountainous. Dehradun is the provisional capital of the state. The state is comprised of 13 districts, of which four districts (Nainital, Haridwar, Dehradun and Udham Singh Nagar) have large areas in the plains, whereas the other nine districts comprise the hill region of the state. Figure 2: Uttarakhand state Map with its Districts (Source – www.mapsofindia.com) The Population of Uttarakhand was 10,086,292 (census 2011), making it the 20th most populated state on 1.69% of land of India. Out of total population 69.44% (7,025,583) of the people living in 16,793 villages. The 30.55% (3,091,169) of urban population is mostly settled in the southern Terai region and the Doon valley. More than 90% of the people in the mountain districts live in rural areas. More than 82.5% of this urbanized population is concentrated in the plains of 4 districts and rests 17.5% also largely belong to the district headquarter towns of the remaining 9 districts. The density of population per sq. Km. is about 189 (census, 2011) which is fairly below than the national average of 382 per sq. Km. The state has a growth rate of about 19.17% which slightly exceeds the national growth rate of about 17.64%, is somewhat lower than the previous (1991-2001) growth rate of 20.41%. Migration in Uttarakhand is both a historical and present phenomenon.

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