Homestays as Agents for Responsible Tourism:
A Comprehensive Case Study

Veerta Tantia

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8487-5175

Christ University, India

K. B. Rishikesh

Christ University, India

Diya Susan Biju

Christ University, India

ABSTRACT

The significance of implementing sustainable tourism practices has grown in light of the challenges of climate change and the diminishing availability of resources. Responsible tourism practices prioritize proactive engagement over mere adherence to sustainable practices. Therefore, the importance of responsibility cannot be overstated with the recovery and conservation efforts within the tourism sector. Responsibility should extend to the guests and encompass the environment, staff, and residents. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the potential for homestays to implement responsible tourist practices and maintain resilience. To accomplish the study's objective, an interview was conducted with a homestay owner in Shimla and Ratnari. Based on the author's understanding and the available literature on responsible tourism, there appears to be a dearth of studies about applying responsible tourism principles within the context of homestays. Therefore, the present study is of significant importance.

INTRODUCTION

India has consistently been a popular tourist destination for people around the globe. The cultural diversity, distinct geographical features, and varied landscapes of a single nation have been highly appealing (K. Kumar, 2023). Based on the data provided by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTCC), India's tourism sector substantially contributed around INR 16.5 trillion to the country's GDP in 2022 (Chaturvedi, 2023). The increase in the tourism sector's growth can be attributed to various initiatives undertaken by the Indian government, such as "Incredible India," "Make in India (Kakkar & Sapna, 2017)," the tourist on-arrival scheme for 161 countries, the heritage city development and augmentation yojana (HRIDAY), "Atithi Devo Bhava," and the promotion of wellness and ayurveda.

The tourism industry is currently undergoing an expansion and concurrent exploitation of its intrinsic resources. Several popular tourist spots in the country, such as Goa during the New Year and Christmas, the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, and scenic places in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, are prone to experiencing issues related to overcrowding (Barbhuiya, 2021). The increased foot traffic has detrimental environmental consequences. When the influx of tourists surpasses the carrying capacity of a specific destination, it also engenders adverse effects (Gupta & Chomplay, 2021). The rise in tourist numbers during specific periods leads to heightened strain on local resources, resulting in adverse consequences for the local population. Excessive human intervention has adversely impacted the ecology in tourist locations (Dame et al., 2019). Implementing construction and development initiatives aimed at enhancing the tourism sector in the nation has a significant impact on the natural landscapes of diverse locations around the country. Shimla, located in the northern region of India, has experienced a notable rise in visitor arrivals over the past few years.

Consequently, there has been a corresponding increase in the development of hotels and resorts on steep inclines, resulting in landslides and soil erosion (Badar & Bahadure, 2020; Das, 2014). These environmental consequences have had a direct impact on the local population. The waste disposal issue by tourism organizations is an additional matter of concern. Numerous tourism organizations dispose of their waste in rivers without factoring in the associated burdens or repercussions. While organizations that allocate funds towards appropriate waste disposal demonstrate a commitment to sustainability (Obersteiner et al., 2021), organizations that neglect this practice are exempt from incurring such expenses. Consequently, other organizations perceive it as a financial expenditure rather than an effort to preserve the environment (Batra & Kaur, 1996). These various challenges encountered by tourist destinations in India necessitate the adoption of responsible tourism practices. It is a type of tourism that prioritizes the preservation of a destination's natural and cultural surroundings while also considering the interests of all relevant stakeholders. Implementing responsible tourism practices is a shared duty between tourists and hosts (Camilleri, 2016a). In contrast to sustainability tourism, responsible tourism keeps itself close to the environment, fosters local and cultural respect and interaction, and endeavors to enhance the well-being of local communities through tourism activities. Multiple research studies have provided evidence supporting the positive correlation between responsible tourism and the well-being of local communities (Hanafiah et al., 2016; Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017; Mohd Rasdi et al., 2022).

Also, recovering from the pandemic requires a holistic development that involves responsible tourism. Implementing responsible practices can transform a crisis into a favorable circumstance (Orîndaru et al., 2021; Pongsakornrungsilp et al., 2022). The current global state of the tourism industry, especially in India, has created a pressing demand for recovery measures. The tourism industry in India saw significant negative impacts due to travel restrictions, widespread cancellations of bookings, and logistical

Related Content

Literacy in Early Childhood: Multimodal Play and Text Production
Sally Brown (2020). *Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 1-19).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/literacy-in-early-childhood/237410

Order Preserving Data Mining
Ioannis N. Kouris (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1470-1475).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/order-preserving-data-mining/11014

Web Mining in Thematic Search Engines
Massimiliano Caramiaand Giovanni Felici (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 2080-2084).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-mining-thematic-search-engines/11106

Genetic Programming for Automatically Constructing Data Mining Algorithms
Alex A. Freitasand Gisele L. Pappa (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 932-936).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/genetic-programming-automatically-constructing-data/10932

Statistical Models for Operational Risk
Concetto Elvio Bonafede (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1848-1853).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/statistical-models-operational-risk/11070