

A Community Response to Tourism, Focusing on the Home-stay Program in K Village in Nainital, Uttarakhand, India

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Abstract The tourism industry in India has grown enormously and is becoming a major source of economic growth in India. This paper focuses on studying the possibilities of home-stay programs and the willingness of the residents in Uttarakhand on such programs. Considering the tourism perspective of India, home-stay programs are rather unusual. Only Munsiyari and Sarmoli in the Johar Valley, and the Ladakh Autonomous Region in Jammu and Kashmir are the two examples. This research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches through household survey, an average treatment effect, community economic development analysis, field observations, interpretative analysis, and ethnographic understanding of K village, Nainital District, Uttarakhand. The results show that the tourism industry has not brought economic benefits for the households involved in the industry; however, this could be owing to the community not being involved in tourism development. In addition, most of the villagers considered that the home-stay program could create opportunities for jobs and improve the income of the local community. In the study area, we found private entrepreneurship, but the home-stay program has not yet been developed. This research paper expects to assist making decisions to initiate an extensive home-stay program under the “Endogenous Tourism” program with some re-evaluations of not only the previously mentioned village of Uttarakhand, but also other remote locations in India, considering the colorful and cultural-rituals of rural living in India.

Key words rural development, community base tourism, home-stay, rural study, India

I. Introduction

For Hindu believers, especially in Haridwar and Rishikesh, *Dev Bhoomi* or the “Land of God” is a synonym for Uttarakhand. Interest in religious tourism is high among Hindu believers. However, the Corbett-Nainital and Nankhatta circuits are famous among fun-loving tourists for their changing weather, mountain trekking, skiing, para-gliding, camping, angling, mountaineering, rock climbing and forests to explore. The driving force of economic growth in Uttarakhand is largely dependent on tourism. Home-stay programs have not been widely considered as a way of expanding the tourism industry in Uttarakhand or India as a whole. In the state of Uttarakhand, Sarmoli Village in the Johar Valley has set up the only home-stay initiative. In the broader context of the Indian subcontinent, Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir provide other examples of home-stay programs. Sarmoli village, in Munsiyari District, Uttarakhand, is the primary example and first experience of a home-stay program for the Ministry of Tourism of Uttarakhand. However, even the villagers of Uttarakhand do not know much about home-stay tourism. In this study, the example of Sarmoli has created enough interest to develop a solid community

base for tourism, and particularly for a home-stay tourism project. This village’s experience can help to project an evaluation matrix as an interpretative tool that other communities can use to determine whether a home-stay project might be worthwhile as a livelihood strategy.

This paper has explored the possibilities of community involvement in tourism and, in particular, the feasibility of developing a home-stay program in K Village, Nainital District, Uttarakhand. It focuses on the potential for developing community-based tourism (CBT) in K Village by looking at the social and economic benefits of tourism for the local community, as well as ways of facilitating interactions between tourists and local people for a mutually enriching experience. Our analysis reveals that most local villagers are interested in community-based tourism and would like to contribute significantly to rural tourism development.

II. An Overview of the Tourism Industry in India

From 2004–2005 to 2013–2014, tourism has contributed 51% of India’s GSDP. According to UNWTO, it contributes about 4.4% of the State Gross Domestic

Product (SGDP) and increases employment opportunities by 2%. In recent years, the GDP of India has risen steeply, but there is still a huge gap between the country's urban centers and rural poverty. The Government of India has therefore figured out a way to erase the poverty gap by promoting tourism industries. In the beginning, the Indian Ministry of Tourism started a campaign with the concept, "Incredible India." It was a huge success story. When this campaign began, around 2006, India hosted around 4.43 million foreign tourists. The campaign was based on the well-known approach of destination-based traditional tourism. According to the Ministry of Tourism India, 3.9 million foreign tourists came to India in 2005, increasing significantly to more than 8 million in 2015 and 8.8 million in 2016. In 2016, the tourism and hospitality sectors directly contributed US\$47 billion to India's GDP.¹

According to the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), the Indian tourism and hospitality industry is considered a key driver of growth within the Indian services sector. India has significant potential, with a rich cultural and historical heritage, ecological variety, and many different terrains and places of natural beauty spread across the country to boost the tourism industry. In addition, the demand from foreign tourists has significantly increased, due to the Visa on Arrival scheme, which started in 2015.

A couple of years ago, the Government of India developed a strategy to diversify tourism products and distribute the socio-economic benefits of tourism to every part of the country. Under this strategy, the Government of India established a program called "Endogenous Tourism," with the support of the UNDP, to promote India's cultural heritage and traditional crafts, as an alternative model for rural tourism. Following this strategy, the tourism department of Uttarakhand introduced a campaign known as "10,000 rooms in 1,000 villages" in 2008 (Government of India et al., 2008). This project has opened up a doorway for community involvement.

According to the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan for 2007–2022, K Village is in Tourism Zone 2 (Government of India et al., 2008); however, no endogenous tourism activities related to the 10,000 rooms in 1,000 villages campaign have taken place here. This was one reason for selecting the village for this study on community responses to tourism.

III. The Conceptual Framework of the Home-stay Program

The principles of CBT (Goodwin, 2006; Kontogeorgopoulos,

2005; Manyara and Jones, 2007; Mitchell and Muckosy, 2008; Rozemeijer, 2001; Tosun, 2000) can empower a community and preserve its social, cultural, and natural resources. Home-stay programs are one strategy to develop community-based tourism. Research on the development of Community-based Ecotourism (CBET) activities in the Mekong region of Asia found that home-stays were among the top activities promoted within communities that could help to reduce the incidence of rural poverty (Leksakundilok, 2004). In fact, CBET is a modified version of CBT. Home-stay programs can easily be implemented because the start-up costs are low, they provide affordable and inexpensive lodging to tourists, they can be implemented in remote areas, the funds directly impact the local economy, and the cultural and natural heritage of the location can be shared with tourists.

Home-stays are distinct from other forms of tourism because they offer travelers a unique experience of the host's culture and lifestyle (including food and shelter). Home-stays directly benefit community members with a vested interest in preserving the surrounding environment.

The existing successful mountain home-stay programs in India are the Ladakh Home-stay Program and the Sarmoli Home-stay Program. These two successful home-stay stories were developed by focusing on programs in rural, remote mountainous regions that relied on a growing CBT industry as their main economic driver. These programs essentialized the local residents for their own economic benefit, while preserving the surrounding cultural, natural, and built environments. The successful programs in Ladakh and Sarmoli were chosen as home-stay models because of their similarities to K Village—the area to which this study has applied its evaluation matrix. The home-stay program in Ladakh offers accommodation in several villages, and provides insight into the development of a multi-village program. Sarmoli is one of the great success stories of the Uttarakhand mountain region—a home-stay program that has been judged to be an ideal home-stay experience. A combination of these two models could be implemented in K village.

IV. Methodology

This research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. During the pre-fieldwork research phase, the main jobs were recognizing data, collecting data from archival sources, and preparing the questionnaires. A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared so that we could conduct in-depth interviews. Interview ques-

tions were developed, based on key themes, including general characteristics of the area, local heritage sites, participation in tourism, and the respondents’ attitudes towards tourism. The questions were open ended to allow researchers to obtain further insights and richer data. The field survey was conducted over a two-week period and the preparatory pre-field work was carried out in one month.

During the field work period, 72 households were surveyed to estimate the influence of the tourism sector on household income. To examine residents’ perceptions of the impact of tourism development in the central hamlet (KT) of K Village, we used a quantitative survey, as well as an in-depth interview with 30 individual residents. The study also surveyed 30 visitors to examine their behavior toward the CBET, and especially their willingness to participate in the home-stay program at K Village. Through in-depth interviews, oral historical data, including epics, myths, rhymes, folksongs, tales, proverbs, and sayings—what has turned out to be an oral history—were observed and collected. Through an opinion survey, the dominant class in the study area were approached for in-depth interviews. These were carried out under a frame of power dynamics and essentialized ideas of community-based tourism, to identify which dominant and established ideas of tourism were essentially interwoven into the enterprises and rationality of the project of sustainability. During this time, the study adopted a reflexive ethnographic method.

In the study area, the following actors were considered for investigative interviews: Government Sector, Tourist, Residence and Private Sector.

Data were analyzed using propensity score matching methods (PSM) to assess the effect of the tourism industry on average household income. In the statistical analysis, PSM was used to estimate the effect of a treatment by accounting for the covariates that received the treatment. In this study, the treatment effect was estimated simply by comparing the average household incomes of people who were and were not involved in the tourism industry. PSM attempts to control for these differences to make the groups receiving and not receiving treatment more comparable.

Here, a home-stay program has been chosen as a possible strategy for community-based tourism in K village. This program has been shaped by eight major features and components: being rural and remote, practicing subsistence agriculture, exhibiting cultural heritage, and promoting community economic development (CED), as well as the opinions of current tourists, private sector tourism entrepreneurs, and village leaders. These components have helped to shape the home-stay program and generate an evaluation matrix.

V. Analysis of the Possibilities for Community Involvement

1. Present tourism scenario of economic benefit to the community

Before scrutinizing the possibility of a home-stay program, this study analyzed the overall economic sharing of villagers in KT Hamlet. The present situation was analyzed using household survey data and an average treatment effects (ATE) model to compare treatments (or interventions) in randomized experiments, policy intervention evaluations, and medical trials. The ATE in this study was used to measure the difference in mean (average) income between units assigned to the treatment (HH involved in the tourism industry) and units assigned to the control (HH not involved in the tourism industry). The equation was as follows:

$$ATE = E[X_{ij} | T_i = 1] - E[X_{ij} | T_i = 0]$$

Where X_{ij} is the average income from household i to j .

Treatment variable $T_i=1$ if a household derives income from the tourism industry and $T_i=0$ otherwise.

The outcome variable is the average income of the household, calculated by the author.

The independent variables are: hhmemberr (total number of household members), hhedu (educational level of household head), and hhage (age of household head).

The negative ATE in this estimate shows that households that receive income from the tourism industry have a significantly lower average income (−26437.4) than do households that do not receive income from the tourism

Table 1. The difference in average income between households that receive income benefit from tourism and those that do not receive income from tourism

Ave_income	Coef	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]
incomebenefit_tourism (1 vs 0)	−26437.4	11511.44	−2.3	0.022	−4.8999.4 −3.875.34

Source: Field survey, Imran and Nguyen, July 2017

industry (Table 1). This suggests that the tourism sector decreases average household income. However, this estimate measures the average effect of the treatment; a positive or negative ATE does not indicate that any particular individual would benefit or be harmed by the treatment.

2. Examine the community response to tourism

Another aim of this research was to identify the response of local residents to the idea of community-based tourism development, especially in relation to the costs and benefits that CBT could bring to individuals and the community as a whole. The result was an estimate drawn from in-depth interviews with 30 residents in the study site.

Most respondents said that they rarely had direct contact with visitors (70%) and had never been involved or asked for their opinions about tourism development (87%).

3. Promoting community economic development (CED)

These field experiences and interviews showed clearly that local people wanted to benefit from tourism and felt it was important to participate in the local community

during this process of community economic development. The CED approach is a combined process of economic and community development. Home-stay programs are a CED process with proven success.

When asked for their attitudes toward tourism, 63.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that they did not feel irritated by tourism in the community. Interestingly, more than 76% of the respondents did not think their community recreational resources were overused by tourists. At the same time, 70% of the respondents agreed that the environment was deteriorating because of tourism, and that tourist activities were the main cause of pollution in K Village. Most respondents did not agree that their quality of life had been changed or caused to deteriorate by tourism (70%). (Table 2)

The above-mentioned analysis illustrates the positive views of villagers towards tourism and their willingness to be a part of the tourism industry. They believe that tourism can diversify their economy and benefit local products, strengthening the community as a result. On the question of communicating with foreign tourists, the village is fortunate to have a good level of education. In almost 99% of houses, at least one or two people have graduated or are studying, and their English proficiency is

Table 2. Attitudes toward tourism among residents in K village

n=30

	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)
Behavior of local villagers toward the tourism industry		
I often feel irritated because of tourism in my community	63.4	36.6
My quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism	73.4	26.6
Behavior toward the tourism industry and related environmental issues		
I believe tourism in my community causes pollution.	30.0	70.0
Community recreational resources are overused by tourists.	76.6	23.4
The environment in my community has deteriorated because of tourism.	50.0	50.0
Behavior toward the tourism industry and related social and cultural issues		
Tourism brings in major revenue to the community.	70.0	30.0
Tourism benefits other industries in my community.	63.4	36.6
Tourism diversifies the local economy.	73.4	26.6
Tourism creates new markets for our local products.	73.4	26.6
I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages.	73.4	26.6
I think that tourism development makes our community stronger.	73.4	26.6
I think that tourism development makes our community dependent on people outside of the community.	66.6	33.4
I think I (could) learn a lot from interacting with tourists.	56.6	43.4
Tourism promotes pride in our culture and way of life among community members.	63.4	36.6
Tourism promotes cultural restoration and conservation.	60.0	40.0
Tourism helps the community become better known to outsiders.	56.6	43.4
Tourism becomes a platform for skill training and learning new ideas for the community.	66.6	33.4
Tourism unites various groups inside the community to work together.	73.4	26.6
Most tourists are respectful of the community.	66.6	33.4
Tourism is another form of education for tourists, enabling them to understand and appreciate the way of life of the host community.	56.6	43.4

Source: Field survey, Imran and Nguyen, July 2017

really good. For a home-stay program, this is a significant advantage for K Village. When deciding whether to stay in K Village or Sarmoli, tourists may consider this advantage of K Village. Young people want to try new ways to earn money, and a home-stay program would be a good opportunity for them to do something different.

4. The opinion of the village head

The head of the village was considered an opinion leader. In his interview, he claimed that government and private sector entrepreneurs didn't ask his views on building any sort of structures for tourist purposes. He welcomed the concept of a home-stay program in his locality, and thought it would be good for the economy and for cultural preservation of the local community. He gave us important information about the tourism department loan system; some community members have benefitted from such loans. However, they didn't talk about the loans during their official meeting. During the survey period, we found that local people were not well informed about the loan system. The Village Head claimed that some people bought taxis for tourism purposes, while others extended their houses. In a forthcoming meeting, he will introduce the home-stay program and the government's loan policy for bettering local communities. He also claimed that K Village was already renowned as a tourist destination, but the local community has ignored opportunities to benefit from this. On the other hand, local people have lost their right to access the lake of Khurpatal and are experiencing environmental pollution, especially water pollution and garbage problems. Sometimes tourists ruin their cultivated land.

The following is a summary of the opinions of the Village Head:

He has never considered discussing the tourism issue with Government Agencies or the Private Sector.

- He hasn't discussed tourism in his community meeting.
- He is very worried about the behavior of tourists in the ongoing process.

From his point of view, the home-stay program is expected to provide additional income and employment for local villagers. The involvement of local people in tourism development will also improve community facilities.

5. Opinion of private sector tourism entrepreneurs

Under the tourism expansion policy of the Government of Uttarakhand, a three-star resort has been established, with the support of the government, in K Village, which is 11 km away from Nainital and a major non-religious tourism destination in Uttarakhand. This is the only tour-

ist resort in K Village; there is one guest house for government officials. Even today, this place has been massively unexplored by private sector entrepreneurs. The local community has a very negative impression of this resort and the tourists who go there. The following photograph (Picture 1) of a notice posted by the hotel authority can be considered evidence of the unfriendly relationship between the community, tourists, and the hotel authority.

In the interview, the manager of this resort acknowledged the unhealthy relationship and the tourists' poor behavior, especially when it came to garbage management. The hotel authorities claimed that they managed their garbage appropriately, but we discovered the opposite during our field work, (Picture 2). The following photograph is example of tourist behavior, in particular, the way they pollute the environment with trash.

He agreed that a home-stay program in the local com-



Picture 1. Notice warning tourists to avoid K village, Nainital District

Source: Imran and Nguyen, July 2017



Picture 2. Garbage beside the Dynasty Resort in K village, Nainital District

Source: Imran and Nguyen, July 2017

munity will be a good opportunity for local people to enter the tourism industry. He also wanted to build a good relationship with them. He was considering buying vegetables from local small-scale farmers, who found it difficult to transport their goods to Nainital Market. He suggested that the hotel could buy their goods—the hotel is a big consumer, especially during the tourism season.

Summary of the opinion of private-sector tourism entrepreneurs:

- They emphasized the importance of developing a good relationship with the local community.
- They wanted to develop a good relationship with the local community by buying vegetables from small-scale farmers.
- Waste should be managed by the institution but also by tourists.
- An overflow of tourists causes pollution in K Village

6. Opinion of present-day tourists

To evaluate the prospects for community-based tourism, and especially the home-stay program, we interviewed 30 randomly selected tourists and received a very significant positive response to the home-stay concept. The result describes the opinions of present-day tourists, especially younger people. 20 visitors (65% of the group) would be very happy to join a home-stay program in K Village. Only 10 visitors said that they would not be willing to try the home-stay program.

7. Interviews with residents, summarized

Participants were asked to agree or disagree with statements measuring their opinions. Out of 30 opinion providers, around 80% strongly agreed with the statements. This means that they view tourism as a positive phenomenon for their area. Through interviews and by summarizing the opinions of members of the local community, we arrived at the following findings:

- Communities want to develop community-based tourism.
- The Tourism Department of the Uttarakhand government offers loans to local people to develop small-scale tourism services.
- People are not properly informed about the loan system for developing home-stay tourism.
- Local people are seeking opportunities to benefit from the tourism industry.
- They have very vibrant Kumao-cultural events, including ritual events, holy festivals, a Nanda Devi Festival, Kumao-food and other attractions.

VI. Analyzing the Advantages of a Home-stay Program in K Village

Home-stay programs essentialize rural lifestyles and livelihoods. In other words, being rural and remote, practicing subsistence agriculture, exhibiting a cultural heritage, promoting community economic development (CED), and the Himalayan landscape are advantages for communities that participate in home-stay programs. The advantages can be analyzed as follows:

Rural Settings: Given its geographical location, communication system, and local economy, K Village must be considered a rural and remote village. According to the literature review, rural and remote locations are the best places for home-stay programs. K Village is an ideal place because it combines basic home structures with a rural environment. However, this village also has a moderately good sanitation system.

Agricultural Practices: The home-stay program in K Village can link to agritourism programs. Visitors will have a chance to experience the rural lifestyle of a community in which farming is an integral part (Picture 3). In the other words, tourists will directly experience this type of subsistence farming.

Cultural Heritage: Preserved local traditions and rituals are attractive phenomena for home-stay tourists. K Village maintains its own cultural heritage. During the field work period, a number of cultural activities take place. K village maintains Kumaon culture, which is a blend of indigenous and immigrant culture. Many people have migrated from other part of India, with their own myths, dialects, languages, folk literature, festivals, fairs, and forms of artistic expression. The influence of all of these cultures have constructed Kumaon culture. Marriage ceremonies (Picture 4) are colorful, vibrant events and a special feature of Kumaon culture. The marriage season would be the best time for tourists to come to K village and be close to these events, while staying in a villager's house.

The researchers held discussions with several residents of K Village and Nainital (e.g. Kamla Devi, Maya Devi and others), during which they showed photographs and described Kumaon rituals. To briefly summarize their explanation, the Kumaon people organize *Jagars* to please a goddess. The most prominent goddess is Naina Devi, an incarnation of the goddess Parvati. The first Katyuri queen, Jiya Rani, established Naina Devi as a goddess among the Kumaon people. The myths of Shiva-Parvati are told about Naina Devi in the Nainital region. In Kumaon culture, another popular goddess is Nanda Devi. According to popular accounts, Nanda Devi is an



Picture 3. Subsistence Agricultural Patterns of K village, Nainital District

Source: Imran and Nguyen, July 2017



Picture 5. Ending Point of the Holly Festival in a Villager's House, Nainital District

Source: Imran and Nguyen, July 2017



Picture 4. Mariage Ceremony in Kumaon Culture

Source: Modified after <http://www.nainital.info/culture-of-kumaon/> (accessed April 14, 2017)

incarnation of the Greek goddess Naina, who came from the Himalaya with the Indo-Greeks and Kushan Kings. In fact, Nanda Devi is a very typical Kumaoni goddess.

Kumaon culture has various kinds of food. The different types of food and their names were provided by a resident of K Village and student of Kumaon University, Deepshikha Panday and her lovely family. The home-stay program could become a top attraction for tourists just for the Kumaon food. Unfortunately, they didn't provide any photographs, but they did write down a detailed list, which included Bal Mithai ("Chocolate" Mithai), Bhatt Ka Joula, Muli ka Thechua, Gathi, Gaderi Ki Sabji, Gauhat ki Daal, Lason Ka Lur, Ras Bhat, Jholi Bhat, Bathue ka Paratha, Madwe Ki Roti, Bhatt Ki Churkani, Bari Bhat, Bhang Ki Chatnee, Kaapa Bhaat, Churkani, Dhai ka Jaula, Papad Ki Sabji, Peenalu Ki Sabji, Allu Gutuk, Chanda Devi aur Saladi ka Raita, and Pinalu Gutuk.

During the field survey, the Holly Festival began. It lasted for thirteen days and all of the women took part.

They started from the local temple singing holly songs in the Kumaon language. In this case, their main instrument was a *hurka* or local drum. The women moved from temple to temple and house to house (Picture 5) narrating folktales and singing in praise of their gods and goddesses.

Photographing the Beautiful Himalayan Landscape of K Village: For anyone who loves serenity, K Village is the perfect place. Most tourists love to experience natural serenity. K Village is close to Nainital Town. In the Kumaon Himalayan region, this place seems like a secret haven hidden in the mountain, echoing with the sounds of nature instead of machine age humans and their boisterousness. A few, simple, helpful village folk can be seen tending their farms. Rejuvenating the spirit, quiet and even more green after the rains, K Village is the welcome change so many people long for. The road to K Village is covered with tall trees. The sheer drop of these trees seem to be standing for the luck.

VII. Concluding Remarks about the Feasibility of a Home-stay Program in K Village

Based on the above interpretative analysis, field observations, and literature review, K Village has not developed any form of community-based tourism. Because the region focuses mainly on agricultural production, the average income of households that have recently become involved in the tourism industry is no higher than that of families who are not involved. This may reflect the fact that the community is not involved in tourism development.

For all of the reasons discussed above, developing a

home-stay program would be a feasible way of providing economic benefits for the K Village community. Most of the villagers interviewed believed that home-stay programs could create opportunities at the local level and raise the income of local communities.

Ladakha and Sarmoli in Uttarakhand are examples of Indian communities where home-stay programs have been successful and earned money from tourism. In the beginning, Sarmoli struggled to install a modern sanitation and bathroom system. K Village has already solved this problem. The village also has English-speaking members of the community. These features will help to ensure that the home-stay program can grow in a managed fashion.

Although communities and hosts have contributed their knowledge of home-stay programs, K Village will face some challenges in implementing the home-stay model. This report has not focused on the implementation of the program. To make it a reality, the villagers will need to decide where to direct their conservation efforts. They will also have to train a workforce. Additional coordination is recommended between the villagers and private sector resorts around conservation efforts. While this survey didn't explore potential conservation efforts in the Khurpatal region, two potential areas surfaced through this survey. The first was the protection of forests and second was water conservation.

The overall conclusions are as follows:

- In K Village, the local community and private sector are working as individual entities. They sometimes behave as rivals.
- Everyone in the sector shares the same opinion about the deteriorating environment.
- However, people would like to invite the tourists to abide by norms and regulations.
- Garbage management must be improved because causes disagreements between stakeholders. With the implementation of home-stay program, the community can work out ways to manage the garbage together.

The home-stay program will be the main feature of the village's community-based tourism program. It will regenerate the local economy and help to preserve the natural and cultural heritage. It will also give tourists a chance to experience local culture.

Notes

1. Please see the following report: World Travel & Tourism Council's Economic Impact. (2015). WTTC Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2015.

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