

Chapter 13

Promotion of Homestay for the Sustainable Livelihood of the Local Community in the North Eastern Himalayan Region of India

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ABSTRACT

Northeastern India is a region with unique culture and traditions and a varied landscape offering a greater potential to promote homestays. It is a locally owned and operated family business that provides visitors with a more enriched experience of nature as well as amenities like local cuisine, traditional culture, lifestyle, and local resources. This idea is ideal for the Northeastern Himalayan region of India. This paper will concentrate on understanding the importance of homestay in developing Community-based tourism and comprehending the potential of sustainable Community-based tourism in the Northeastern Himalayan region of India. A review was undertaken and the paper is designed to identify the key areas for the promotion of homestays and their contribution to the growth of sustainable community-based tourism and the benefits it offers in the Northeastern Himalayan Region of India.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism, being the world's largest and fastest expanding industry (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008), is seen as a key industry and a significant source of socioeconomic factors. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a type of sustainable tourism in which the local community engages and is involved in vari-

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ous tourism-related activities for the growth of tourism as well as the conservation of the cultural and natural treasures of their places, which benefits them (Mann, 2000). Northeast India, with its rich natural resources, history, culture, traditions, festivals, delectable cuisines, handloom and handicrafts, and art forms, is a region with magical beauty and bewildering diversities where people of all ages, interests, and levels of experience are drawn to by the breathtaking alpine scenery with its visions of snow-capped mountain peaks and the serenity of its lush, green hills (Ministry of Culture, Government of India). The development of Community-based tourism in the Northeastern Himalayan Region can boost job creation and economic empowerment in local communities by providing sustainable livelihoods (Roy, 2022).

Northeast India has an area of approximately 2,62,379 km² and is located between latitudes 22°N and 29°5'N and longitudes 88°E and 97°30'E, sharing international borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Myanmar (Rodgers and Panwar, 1988). Based on biogeographic zones, the region is separated into Eastern Himalaya (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim) and Northeast India (Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland) (Rao, 1994). According to Conservation International, the Eastern Himalayas encompass the entire state of Northeast India (Myers, 1988).

Northeastern India has a distinct culture and heritage, as well as a diverse geography, making it an ideal location for promoting homestays. The growing tourism trend of community-based homestays would make it possible to provide a sustainable source of income for the residents. Homestay is one of CBT's activities; it is a locally owned and maintained family business that offers guests an enhanced experience of nature as well as amenities like local cuisine, traditional culture, lifestyle, and local resources. A homestay is when tourists stay in someone's home for a short length of time, providing accommodation and several other services to the tourists, ensuring that they are satisfied with the services offered by the homestay owner and the local community (Timlasana, 2012). It gives tourists a wonderful opportunity to learn about the local people, interact with the community, and spend quality time with the homestay owners, as well as giving them a royal experience during their stay (Magar, 2021). It is one of the most important CBT activities that can be promoted in India's Northeastern Himalayan Region to reduce rural poverty (Leksakundilok, 2004).

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the potential of homestay in the Northeastern Himalayan region.
2. To understand how homestay programs can contribute to the sustainable livelihood of local communities.
3. To identify the benefits of homestay for the local communities.
4. To suggest measures to promote homestay as a tool for Community based tourism development in the Northeastern Himachal region.

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN NORTH EASTERN HIMALAYAN REGION OF INDIA

Community-based tourism (CBT) is regarded as a responsible and sustainable tool for the livelihood of rural communities by utilising tourism resources with a high potential for income generation, preserving local culture, and environmental conservation that will help provide long-term benefits to the local

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