

A REVIEW OF HOMESTAY AND HERITAGE AMALGAMATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a theoretical approach towards emergence of homestays in the Indian historical foreground. The select reviews of literature which provide insight to the framework has been purposively considered for the study. The reviews that were considered have thrown light upon the various lost in time heritage homestays of India and homestay tourism at large from the perspective of various researchers and besides that the highlighting of crucial content which were noted by the authors have been considered for future research appropriation in the concerned area.

Keywords: Homestay, Indian hospitality, Heritage Homestay, Homestay Tourism.

Introduction

Homestay is a homely arrangement where tourists are hosted by the host family who are commonly local residents. The tourists are served with the same food the host family normally has on a daily basis, specialized food is also served by the host family upon request, the guests get to experience the daily ways of the host's life.

All over the globe, homestay is another dimension of alternative tourism whereupon tourists are provided with the chance to experience the local life of the host's family. The unique nature of the entire homestay experience which is a form of tourism is becoming popular amongst the foreign tourists. Unlike the concept of mass tourism, a homestay experience has to be of a feasible budget and spontaneous in nature. The homestay should be owned and operated entirely by the host family to justify the meaning of a proper homestay. A homestay if properly implemented can boost the local life quality with a generous flow of income by indirectly supporting the local culture, arts and crafts business, heritage preservation and the enhancement of local historic sites.

The most important factor of a homestay is the experience the tourists receive while living a local aesthetic experience which is not acquired when the guests stay at luxury hotels. The basic concept of a homestay is to provide visitors with the opportunity to rent rooms from the local hosts family, visitors who are enthusiasts of living the local experience and desire to improve their local life skills which include language, food, culture, ethics, heritage, et cetera. The tourist may also get indulged in familial pursuits which may comprise of dining out, visiting amusement parks, setting out for camping and itinerating to various places.

Pre requisites of categorising into heritage homestay category:

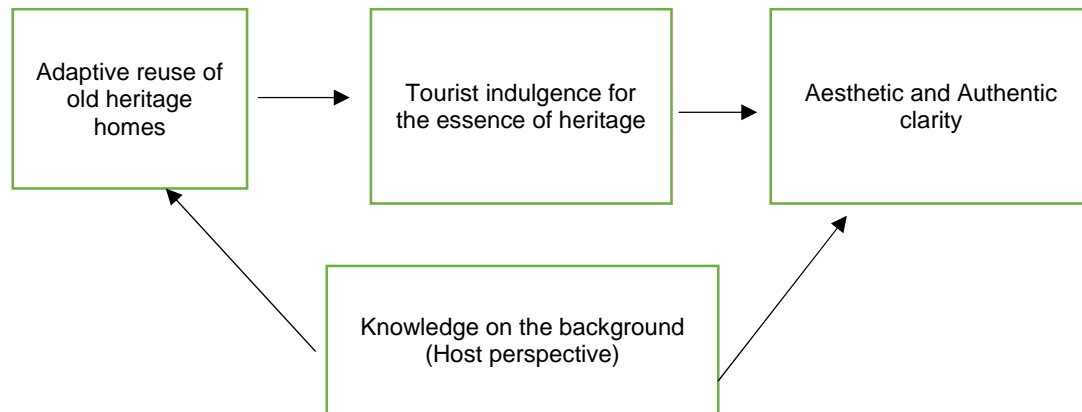
- The homestay should have an appealing history or backstory.
- The Cultural importance must be gauged: why is the homestay meaningful, how is it conserved, what is the impact on how the homestay is perceived.

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- The experience of staying at the homestay must be authentic.
- The aesthetic dimension of the homestay must be pleasing in nature.
- The homestay should be old and lived through the past.
- The hosts must be experienced in the domain.

Conceptual Framework



Literature Review

Homestays have involuntarily acclaimed a certain amount of attention amongst travellers in the post-COVID phase especially after social distancing, hygiene issues and solitude have become the top priorities for travel mongers. More than that, the travellers are searching for authentic experiences. After all, every other homestay owner host's their guests in their unique and specialized ways, so each homestay episode is varied in different dimensions. The occurrence of the very first homestay in India is not very clear, although there are a huge number of homestays rich with heritage and filled with memories of Indian history and culture.

Heritage buildings and monuments in any country are mute testaments of its glorious past. India has a rich historic background which is evident from various buildings, forts, temples, landscapes, Objects of historic era. Many of these were constructed several hundred years ago when the Indian civilization was at its peak. Their architecture, design and construction at the time when computers, code of practice, design guidelines, research institutions and modern construction techniques did not exist makes one to realise the wisdom and expertise of our forefathers. These structures have managed to survive for hundreds of years while most of the modern constructions need repair after couple of years of service (Meli, Roberto, & Ramirez, 2007).

The amalgamation between heritage and homestay is very well defined in the reviewed literature. Because heritage involuntarily provides a physical dimension to the basic perception of a homestay so it is one of the key attributes of tourist indulgence as a whole. As is seen in the domain of history, heritage helps to provide a sense of enhancement to the essence of a homestay. Heritage indirectly provides the sentiment of belongingness and closeness to the aesthetic and authentic clarity.

Every society or community forms a special social space. Thus, space and the discourses linked to it are major keys to maintaining cultural identity and transferring cultural value from one generation to another. A considerable connection is recognizable between places and memory. On an individual level, people can be deeply connected to the places that are that are significant to their well-being. These places, whether preserved, transformed or even destructed, can be a critical issue in maintaining a sense of identity and memories. On a group level, some places are significant because they boost social memory, and these places are seen as a 'storehouse of memory' (Kenworthy & Chow, 2003).

A heritage filled place comprises of everything that has taken place there in the past; it is about a secluded reservoir of memories and events. It is the very essence of a homestay: the heritage attribute. The existence of all the vintage relics, the cultural memoirs, the historical artifacts, the memories of the stories related to the homestay is actually what makes the homestay a special place for people to visit and live the experience of a lifetime.

Methodology

Qualitative research is implemented for this study which is flexible in nature. The select review samples were collected conveniently from the web and accumulated in a systematic way to provide a purposive idea of what India has to offer in the context of diversified experience of Homestays. Here is an accumulated review of **such lesser known lost in time heritage homestays in India**, where the lost voices of time still whisper of an era of grace, poise and elegance all diverged into one. These few places are where the old-world charm still exists, the food speaks highly of Indian authentic cuisine and the host families are laden with stories from the glorious past.

- **Ponnamveli Homestay**

This is a heritage homestay built by Aniyam Ayappan in 1925 and restored in 2015 by his grandson Dilip Vishwanathan. The homestay is a culturally authentic Kerala based house surrounded by nature. Guests can be at ease in the garden, or visit the ocean nearby, indulge in fishing activities and further prepare a meal out of the catch. A library in the premises which shares historical relevance of the area, an ayurvedic spa centre for rejuvenation, yoga centre for health and wellness are some of the aesthetically pleasing factors of the homestay.



Source: <https://blog.savaari.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ponnamvely-Homestay-Cherthala.jpg>

- **Bordi Heritage Homestay**

This homestay is an old 150 years old ancestral home located by the Bordi beach. The place is filled with ancient authentic things and furniture which helps the place to retain the old age vibe. The floors, roof and wall imprints still speak of the classic designs of a lost era. The homestay offers a classic vintage authentic feel to the travellers nonetheless. It is located in Maharashtra.



Source: <https://blog.savaari.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ponnamvely-Homestay-Cherthala.jpg>

- **Temi Heritage Homestay**

This homestay run by Lalit Kumar and his wife is a 200 years old ancestral property and is basically created out of mud and stone which is a classic example of a vintage rural home. The guests get served with authentic Nepali dishes and sweets by the hosts. The entire property is surrounded by lush greenery and mountains. It is located in Sikkim.



Source: <https://blog.savaari.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ponnamvely-Homestay-Cherthala.jpg>

- **Panchkula Heritage Homestay**

This homestay is the ancestral ruins of the Chandel family, who are the descendants of the dynasty of Chandel from 800-1182 AD. The haveli was constructed by Kavar Mohan Singh Chandel and is an exact replica of the beautiful Ramgarh Fort in Lahore. Deiji Sukshma Singh is the current owner of the haveli which speaks highly of the history of their family. The entire experience is a historic one for the travellers who choose to stay in this place. It is located in Haryana.



Source: <https://blog.savaari.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ponnamvely-Homestay-Cherthala.jpg>

- **Gangapole Heritage Gangapole**

This homestay was an ancient haveli constructed by the founder Principal of National Institute of Ayurveda V.P.D. Shastri in 1965. The entire haveli gives an age-old aesthetic experience and is also a yoga wellness retreat which acts as an added benefit for weary travellers. It is located in Rajasthan.



Source: <https://blog.savaari.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ponnamvely-Homestay-Cherthala.jpg>

- **The Simur Heritage Stays**

This place is located in the hilly areas of Nahan and locates back to 1621. Among the many palaces laid down by Raja Karam Prakash of Nahan, the Simur Palce is now run as a heritage homestay. The property adds the authentic factor by having a private forest to its own. It provides the perfect ancient aesthetic atmosphere for guests to relax and leave with a rejuvenated experience. The entire experience gives an old-world experience and is rich with historical heritage.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CC0NtNGpEeY/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=d311d7b0-dc28-4b5d-85a0-b3a8554a817

- **Shri Joravar Vilas Palace**

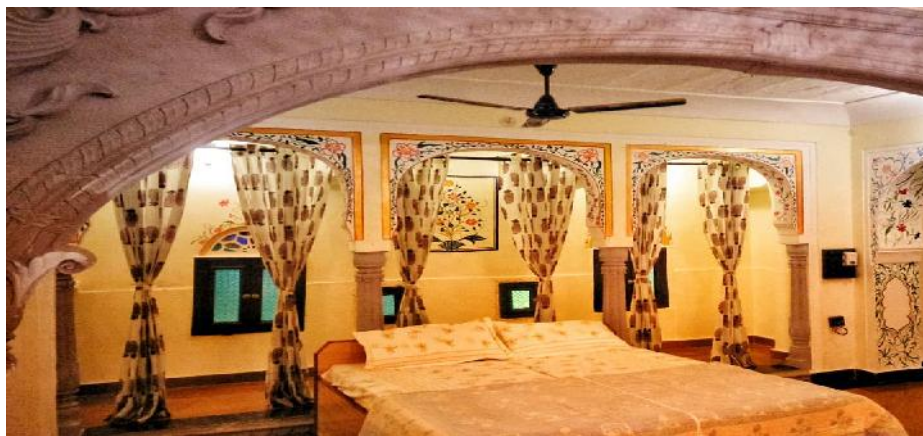
The place was built by Saheb Joravar Singh in 1926 and left as a symbol of retreat for the future generations. The place offers a royal experience which is authentically pleasing in nature. The unique old-world charm that the place is laden with provides travellers with a vintage experience. It's a shame that this place is not known to many. The place is extremely suitable for a getaway retreat if one tends to spend some quality time away from the hustle and bustle.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B24Ewyqh3MY/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=96d2f2df-46a5-4295-b6a8-9a8044f295fa

- **Lotwara Heritage Homestay**

Lotwara garh located in Rajasthan is by the bank of the river Bangana. It was built by Thakur Ganga Singh in the 17th century and presently the descendent family resides there. The place speaks highly of traditional values and ancient history.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BpwuhADgrm/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=2af8c44b-fd9e-4d76-8a9d-6aa77b9efaab

- **Itachuna Rajbari**

This place was built by the ancestors of Safallya Narayan Kundu in 1766 located in Hooghly. It is also known as Bargee Danga. The place is a heritage stay which offers the guests with a royal vintage experience and is a legacy on its own.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_-JUFrBwEW/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=5eec51b1-26df-4812-b398-fdc726b35e3d

- **Varikatt Heritage, Trivandrum**

This homestay is over 150 years old and an Indo-Sarcenic styled home from the Raj era. This house has a legacy of its own and a love story as backdrop. A British woman and an English Tea planter from Munnar who fell in love. She built this home to showcase her love for the man and eventually they left together for England. The house was also later on used as a meeting place during India's freedom struggle. The house is laden rich in history and an ardent history lover will get the experience of a lifetime while staying here.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B7pS2FyJ0iK/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=0e68189c-3f81-4222-b687-0b7d387add50

- **Belgadia Palace**

This homestay is an 18th century Victorian Bungalow in Odisha and is richly laden with the history of Mayurbhanj. The homestay was the ancestral home of the royal family. The place is surrounded by mango orchards, gardens, courtyards which provides a royal experience to the travellers. The place also offers a unique age-old library which is filled with antique type writers and other authentic pieces. This place provides a historic and royal experience.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CDjFdQpNpb/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=0d407911-0859-4627-8263-672bb2afe0a9

- **A Secret Garden**

This place is located at Goa and a 200-year-old ancient home of the Menezes family. The place offers the life of Goa in a vintage way and is quintessentially located near to beaches. The homestay is a perfect serene place to live in Goa with a peaceful yet authentic experience. The host family serves authentic cuisine to weary travellers.



Source:https://www.instagram.com/p/B9L3DijJz1C/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=8eb8642e-5a3f-4b16-b9eb-3785a98d23e4

- **Sheikalmudi Bungalows**

This homestay dates back to 1923 and is a colonial home. Located in Coimbatore this place is a British era Bungalow and is situated in the hilltop and surrounded by mountains and tea estates. The beautiful scenic environment of the bungalow is a retreat for travellers to travel back in time. The homestay once housed as home to tea planters during the Raj era. The beautiful architecture of the place gives the aesthetic British essence.



Source:https://www.instagram.com/p/B8ag12RBli4/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=b032ecd4-b94a-4395-9f9a-9dfd56aa31aa

- **Bharatgarh Fort**

This place was constructed in 1783 and is amongst one of the oldest heritage homestays in India. It is located in Punjab. The fort once acted as a stronghold of a Sovereign Sikh state. It is located by the river Satluj and speaks highly of the historical era, covered a lush forest area.



Source:https://www.instagram.com/p/BzYemmHAq7v/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=2e82b2cc-8c61-4607-b0bd-e9793420762b

- **Shikwa Heritage Homestay**

This Homestay is located near the historic Red Fort. The Shikwa Mehrabon Wali Haveli gives us a majestic view of the Yamuna River. The area had a number of constructions of houses and mansions in between the 13th and 18th centuries, among which the Shikwa Mehrabon Wali Haveli was the largest. The fact that it was the largest, it was served as the main/principal residence of the Qazis or judges of the Delhi Sultanet's justices. The haveli was famous and noticeable during the Mughal era. Shariq Bin Raza who was an Indian civil servant along with his wife Alka who restored the haveli.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BotC9nen7Ui/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=46154553-2f56-4cb5-bb54-b37b032bb3e0

Conclusion and Suggestion

Homestays (B&B); the concept is becoming increasingly popular nowadays, especially in the post covid phase. The business model is seemingly beneficial for homeowners, more so with people who have a distinct heritage to share. Airbnb has approximately 50,000 listings in India as officially cited by co-founder N. Blecharczyk during a summit. The entire concept of homestay is quite simple to implement wherein the unused part of the house is rented out to guests. Sometimes, the house is renovated and modified to create the aesthetic characteristics of the place. The concept of homestay is entirely different from that of a hotel, unlike a hotel, a homestay guest will get to indulge with the host family and participate in all homely activities. What can be deduced from the reviews is that the aspect of heritage makes a homestay all the more pleasing in nature and makes the experience richer. Heritage is the direct involvement of history and culture into a homestay domain. The amalgamation of heritage into homestay is a unique combination which especially attracts tourists to explore more. The century old ruins that have tended to wither away can be rejuvenated by converting it further into a homestay; a place which will speak of the glorious past stories. Listing out the homestay on online platforms like Airbnb, Make my trip, Agoda, Trivago, Goibibo. Booking.com, Trip advisor, etc is the easiest way there is to advertise a homestay, since the owners do not need to pay anything to list the homestays, they charge a commission between 3-6 percent only for each of the bookings later on. The reviews have also clearly made it obvious that there is no sacrosanct in describing the dimensions of heritage upon a homestay; the better the history related to the homestay is, the better audience numbers will be generated. The backdrop of a homestay is very crucial to determine the authenticity of a homestay experience, whether a homestay is attractive or not depends solely on the infrastructure and the stories the hosts tend to share with their guests. A homestay laden with past history, wherein the walls have seen generational occurrences, wherein the atmosphere is imbued with cultural essence, where the hosts can enhance the guest with a whole experience of rejuvenation, where the food speaks of authentic flavours, that is the place one will always be attracted to spend their time and money in. The reviews also suggest that the ambience, convenience and accessibility of the homestay are some of the factors that draw a tourist to experience the place.

The conceptual framework is justified by the reviews of the purposively selected homestays; it has been observed that the homestays which have been considered have high heritage value and rich background histories. The tourist indulgence will be of maximum level in the homestays which are rich in cultural context, whereas the host tends to be knowledgeable on the historical domain of their heritage homes. The adaptive reuse has been clearly depicted by the implementation of homestay attributes on ancestral and old properties. Thus, the conceptual framework can be further used for deeper research purpose.

There are, but, certain drawbacks too on the running of a homestay, where there will be lean periods which will entirely depend on the tourist season and arrival. The heritage homestays need to be restored from time to time irrespective of the fact whether the flow of tourists is running or not. The homestay needs proper care and should be looked after so that it retains its integrity. But, the maintenance of such homestays also comes with a certain cost, if the sole income of the host family is the homestay, then there might be consequences leading to finances. Especially during the post covid phase, when travel restrictions have been implemented. So, to conclude, a heritage homestay experience is one of a kind in nature which most travellers are keen to look forward to and the silver lining during the post pandemic phase will be that most tourist will prefer to live isolated with a family instead of living in a hotel full of people. So, post pandemic the boost of homestay will certainly take place and more so for the heritage homestays where guests will be looking forward to destress and live a couple of day which will be rich in experience.

Thus, the pre requisites are reviewed to be inter related and crucial for heritage amalgamation with homestay. This research will help induce further scope for study in the particular area.

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