



## Assessment of home-stays in Velas, Kelshi, and Anjarle

by  
Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra

March, 2016



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42



#### **Disclaimer**

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## Chapter 1

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# Background and objectives of the report

SNM implemented certain aspects of the CMPA project in the Velas-Dabhol coastal stretch in Ratnagiri district. In particular, the project was implemented in three villages; Velas, Kelshi, and Anjarle. One of the project components in these villages was to strengthen home-stays. This report is based on a rapid assessment of existing home-stays in these villages.

Home-stay is a paid tourist facility provided by a resident family of the village. When a tourist avails a home-stay facility, they stay with the host family. Home-stay is different from a hotel and a restaurant as the visitor lives in a local family home.

In Velas, home-stays were initiated by SNM in 2006 and mainly cater to tourists participating in the turtle festival held in February and March. In 2006, six families ventured into this new income

generation scheme and some received financial support from SNM. Over the last ten years, the number of home-stay providers in the village of 200 families has increased to 35.

In Kelshi, there are around 20 home-stay providers. Kelshi is frequented by a mix of religious tourists and weekend beach tourists. Home-stay facilities in Kelshi are comparatively older than those in Anjarle and Velas. In Anjarle, there are 20 home-stay providers, which primarily caters to weekend beach tourists.

### 1.1. Objectives

- To assess facilities provided by home-stay providers
- To recommend changes in existing home-stay facilities, if necessary.

## Chapter 2

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# Assessment methodology

2

The assessment is based on personal interviews of home-stay providers in the study villages and visit to some home-stay facilities with prior permission from the service provider. A checklist of points for discussion during these interactions was prepared beforehand (Annexure I). These interactions were conducted onsite at the home-stay facility. During the visit to the home-stay, observations were made about the facilities

for stay, dining, bedding, toilets, and bath. Opportunistic interviews of tourists attending the turtle festival in Velas were conducted to understand their experience and perspective. Some interviews of tourists were conducted over the telephone. Contact numbers for these tourists were sourced from home-stay providers. A feedback session on the observations was held in Velas (Annexure II).

## Chapter 3

# Overview of tourism in the study villages

The study villages are situated on the coast of the Arabian Sea. They have long, flat, sandy beaches that remain their main tourism attraction. All of them are nesting sites for Olive Ridley sea turtles. In addition, each village has specific locations, places, and peculiarities for tourism.

Anjarle has been a popular beach destination for a long time, especially for visitors from Pune and Mumbai. Home-stay providers in Anjarle shared that more than 80% of their visitors come from these two cities and are primarily interested in the beach. Many of them are repeat visitors. Around 5% of the tourists visiting Anjarle have their ancestral roots in the village. Apart from the beach, 'Kadyawarcha Ganpati'—a Ganpati temple on the rocky hill slope—is a popular tourist attraction in Anjarle. On an average, Anjarle receives around 10,000 tourists each year. Most of them are tourists who visit during weekends: They arrive on Friday evening or Saturday morning and leave on Sunday. The village has one beach resort with 30 beds, four to five 10-bed lodges and around 20 home-stay operators. All of them have lodging, boarding, and dining facilities.

Kelshi has also been a popular tourist destination for a long time. Tourist attractions in Kelshi include its beach, sand dunes, Mahalakshmi temple, and Yakut Baba Dargah. Tourists come to Kelshi to visit the beach and the religious sites. The annual festival of the Mahalakshmi temple attracts around 5,000 to 7,000 people. The total number of tourists visiting Kelshi each year is approximately 12,000. These tourists are served by four to five commercial facilities and 15 to 20 home-stay providers. A majority of the tourists in Kelshi are day-tourists who arrive and depart on the same day and are primarily interested in the religious sites. The beach tourists usually visit over weekends.

Velas has transformed from a remote and sleepy village to a major tourist attraction over the last 10 years. SNM initiated the turtle festival to celebrate the emergence of the turtle hatchlings. This conservation-cum-local livelihood initiative started with eight home-stays in 2006. Initially, villagers were shy and reluctant. SNM convinced eight families to provide home-stay facilities and supported some of them with resources.

The home-stays were advertised with the turtle festival. Over the last decade, the number of home-stays in Velas has gradually increased to 35. So far, Velas is unique as a tourism destination as its tourism is centred on the turtle festival celebrated in February and March. In

2015, around 3,500 tourists visited Velas. Most tourists primarily come from Mumbai and Pune and to a smaller extent from places like Nasik and Aurangabad. A few international tourists also visit Velas each year.

## Chapter 4

# Assessment of home-stay in the study villages

The assessment is based on an appreciative evaluation approach. It is assumed that home-stay service providers in the study villages have invested substantial resources in developing their facilities. The assessment is an effort to understand the return on these investments. For a service sector venture like a home-stay, it is important to have a large client base. This is achieved by reaching out to clients through all possible channels. As the client base starts to develop, it is equally important to provide satisfactory service as many of them will return and also provide word-of-mouth publicity to others.

From a tourist's point of view, public facilities like approach road, public transport, mobile connectivity etc. are as important as private facilities like stay arrangements, food, washrooms etc.

In this section, an overview of public facilities in the study villages is provided. This is followed by an overview and discussion of paid, private facilities such as lodging, boarding, and dining.

### 4.1. Public facilities in the study villages

**1. Road connectivity and public transport** – All the study villages are connected by all-weather roads. Compared to Kelshi and Anjarle, the approach road to Velas is in a bad condition. All the study villages are well connected to Mumbai by daily state transport (MSRTC) buses. The study villages can only be reached by road.

**2. Mobile and land line telephone connectivity** – In Anjarle and Kelshi, mobile and land line connectivity is available throughout the year, except on certain days in the monsoons when connectivity gets disrupted by heavy rains. In Velas, mobile connectivity is almost nonexistent, except in some areas along the shore. In comparison, land line connectivity is better but is often disrupted by road construction activities being carried out for the coastal highway project.

**3. Electricity** – The study villages enjoy reasonably good and regular electricity supply. There is regular load-shedding every week. Electricity supply is erratic in the monsoons. Maintaining

a diesel generator set or a battery-operated UPS for basic devices like a tube light and a fan is beyond the financial means of most home-stay providers in the study villages. Candles or kerosene lamps are the traditional and common lighting means used during load-shedding period. More recently, some service providers have started using solar lanterns. In fact, the Gram Panchayat (village council) has installed some public solar lamp posts in the study villages but many of them are non-functional due to lack of maintenance.

**4. Water** – Almost all home-stay service providers have assured water supply, either through their own independent source or through tap water provided by the government. Many of them have an open well on their premises. In the case of tap water, there are fixed timings for water distribution. In such cases, home-stay providers store water in plastic barrels.

**5. Medical facilities** – Kelshi has a sub centre, while medical facilities for Anjarle and Velas are located about 30 kms away in Dapoli and Mandangad respectively. Nevertheless, each study village has at least one private general medical practitioner.

**6. Public urinals**- None of the study villages have public urinals. It is an inconvenience for tourists, especially women.

## 4.2. Waste management

All study villages suffer from public waste management issue. This is worst in Kelshi, where the main road and market area are often littered with wrappers, bottles etc. All study villages suffer from solid waste washed ashore from the sea. Anjarle and Velas are comparatively cleaner, possibly because they have a relatively smaller population.

## 4.3. Paid facilities provided to tourists by home-stay providers

Paid facilities in home-stay include tangibles like parking space for tourist vehicles, bedding, place for resting, storage of luggage, dining place,

washroom etc. and intangibles like providing appropriate information, personal security for visitors and their belongings etc.

In Kelshi and Anjarle, dining and lodging are charged separately, while in Velas, dining and lodging are included in the stay. In Velas, the rate for home-stay facilities is uniform across the village. The rates are revised and fixed each year by the Kasav Mitra Mandal, an informal body coordinating turtle tourism in Velas. Dormitory-style facilities cost around Rs. 300 per person in Kelshi and Anjarle. In Velas, the rate in 2016 was Rs 550 per person for a 24-hour stay, which included three meals and stay in a shared, common area. If a separate room is provided, the charges in Velas are between Rs. 800 and 1,200 depending on the size of the bed (single or double) and if the washroom is attached (Table 1).

### 4.3.1. Place

There are very few home-stays that offer guests a separate place to stay. Generally, tourists stay with the host family and use the facilities of the house. In Kelshi and Anjarle, most home-stay providers have constructed a room or two in the house for tourists. These rooms are used to change clothes, sleep, and for storage, and the guests join the host family for meals. There are some houses with a courtyard around the main home, which is sometimes used for dining.

### 4.3.2. Bedding

All home-stays provide bedding to tourists. Usually it contains a bed with mattress, bed cover, pillow with cover, and a blanket. Households with less carpet area usually do not provide beds and place the bedding on the floor. Cleanliness and quality of the bedding given to tourists varies in each household. All the service providers we met mentioned that they wash bed covers, pillow covers, and blankets after each use.

### 4.3.3. Toilet and bathroom

In a traditional set up, toilet and washrooms are located outside the house, usually in the backyard. However, a majority of the service



**Table 1**  
**Over view of paid facilities provided by home-stay providers in March 2016**

Particulars	Name of village		
	Velas	Kelshi	Anjarle
Lodging	Around 50% of total home-stay providers share their entire household with tourists. Bedding is arranged on the floor. Washroom and toilets are usually in the backyard and shared. Western-style WCs are provided in some home-stays. A separate room is proved to store luggage or as a changing room. Very few home-stays have separate rooms with an attached washroom. There is no formal regulation on the number of tourists accommodated in a household. The average in take capacity per household is six to eight.	Most home-stays have separate rooms. However the number of separate rooms in each home-stay is limited to one or two. There is no formal regulation on the number of tourists that can be accommodated by a service provider. On an average it is eight to 10. In the rooms, there are double-beds, while in the common areas or dormitory-type of arrangement, bedding is arranged on the floor. The washroom and toilets are usually shared and located in the backyard. Room rates are in the range Rs. 600 to 1,200 depending on the season. For dormitory-style of arrangement, each person is charged between Rs. 150 and 300 depending on the season.	Compared to Velas and Kelshi, home-stays in Anjarle are more commercial. Almost all home-stays provide separate room with attached toilet. Some home-stays provide rooms with AC too. Usually the rooms are for two people and extra persons are charged separately. Rooms are charged in the range of Rs. 600 and 1,500 depending on the season.
Food	Per day per person rate is Rs. 550. It includes breakfast, tea, two meals, and lodging. The quantity of food is not limited. Extra servings are not charged. However extra tea is charged. Home-cooked food is served. Some households do not provide non-vegetarian food.	Rates vary. Each home-stay provider decides the rate for the service being offered. In general for a vegetarian thali, the rate is between Rs. 80 and 120 and for non vegetarian thali, between Rs. 120 and 160 depending on the items provided – chicken or fish and in the case of the latter, if the fish is Pomphret or a more expensive fish species. Menu for the thali is fixed. Extra servings are charged.	

providers have altered the traditional set up to serve tourists. Often tourists from urban places like Mumbai and Pune prefer home-stays with separate rooms with an attached bath and toilet. Alterations in the house include construction of a separation wall to create private rooms. Sometimes when finances are available, a bath and toilet are constructed attached to the room with western-style toilets. Warm water for bathing is provided on demand through the use of fuel-wood.

#### 4.3.4. Food

Home-stays provide breakfast and meals to guests. There are some home-stays that only provide vegetarian food. The food mainly consists

of local delicacies. Food is one of the important tourist attractions in the study villages. All the tourists interviewed praised the food provided by the host family

#### 4.4. Parking space for tourist vehicles

Most home-stay operators do not have space to park their guests' vehicles, which are parked on the road or in empty public spaces. The villages lack parking facilities for tourist vehicles.

#### 4.5. General appearance of house being offered to the tourists

The houses vary greatly and range from small houses with traditional earthen walls and flooring to modern houses with a concrete slab

roof and rooms fitted with air conditioners and glazed tiles flooring. Based on our interaction with service providers, tourists visiting Anjarle and Kelshi seem to prefer a mix of traditional and modern styles. This means the houses should appear traditional but have modern facilities like separate bath and a western-style toilet. In Velas, most houses are traditional in appearance and largely cater to nature tourists. Service providers in Velas report that most tourists prefer staying in a traditional home.

#### 4.6. Registration with the concerned authority

Home-stays serving food to tourists must be registered with FDA. According to the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 of Maharashtra, FDA registration is mandatory for all commercial eateries. The registration certificate is valid for five years and is issued after compliance to necessary requirements and payment of required fees (Photo 1).

Photo 1: FDA registration certificate.



In Velas, SNM organised an awareness camp on FDA registration in 2013 in collaboration with the FDA, Ratnagiri. All home-stays applied for registration and most of them have now completed the process. At the time of writing this report in March 2016, six home-stays (out of 35) had received the registration certificate. In Anjarle, all home-stays have completed the process and received the registration certificate. There are some new home-stays in each study village that operate without FDA registration

## Chapter 5

# Recommendations for further improvements

1. Advance booking for home-stays in the study villages is only done over the phone. There are some home-stays in Anjarla that have started using online systems for bookings. Website booking should be available for all home-stays.

2. Currently, the home-stay provider bears the loss of income when a booking is cancelled. This can be addressed by ensuring that tourists pay a non-refundable advance at the time of booking. This will only be possible if the home-stays provide online payment facilities.

3. Most home-stay providers have altered their traditional homes to cater to the taste of tourists. For example, in a traditional earthen house, rooms with glazed tiles and oil-painted walls have been created. Similarly, western-style toilets are constructed within these rooms. These modern alterations are costly and often become an eyesore. Instead of such drastic alterations, existing toilets can be supplemented with an additional western-style toilet.

4. Home-stay providers do not maintain a register of tourists using their facility. Each home-stay provider should strictly maintain such a register for security reasons. In addition, home-stay providers must also ask for identity and permanent address proof from tourists.

5. Home-stays can improve their income generation opportunity through the sale of memento items such as key chains, handkerchiefs, and coffee mugs with local images.

6. Home-stay providers should register with MTDC. As of now, they can register under the 'Bed and Breakfast' (B&B) scheme. The applicant has to comply with certain requirements to operate as an MTDC registered B&B operator. The registrations cost Rs. 3,000. After one year of operation as a B&B operator, the registration is renewed for five years after an evaluation and payment of Rs. 5,000. Once registered, they are listed on the MTDC website.

SNM is following up with MTDC and Maharashtra

Tourism for a separate scheme for home-stays. In the proposed scheme, registration fee and renewal expenses will be less than the B&B scheme. Also, under the proposed scheme, local organisations like women's SHGs will be able to register as home-stay operators. MTDC has in principle accepted the proposal and approval is awaited from Tourism Ministry, Government of Maharashtra.

7. A centralised information centre is needed in each village. Such a centre will have a dedicated phone and internet connection. Home-stay operators must form a formal organisation and develop such a centre. The centre will facilitate advance bookings and respond to various queries and bookings, while also selling mementos

8. Parking of vehicles in all the villages becomes difficult in the peak tourist season, especially over weekends. Home-stay operators can proactively approach their Gram Panchayat to provide space for a pay-and-park facility.

9. Signage and guide maps for tourists will be useful. As of now, tourists find it difficult to reach the house of the host family in the absence of maps and signs.

10. Home-stay providers should refrain from using Styrofoam plates and glasses and PET bottles. Instead, they should use eco-friendly material such as earthen pots, leaf plates etc.

11. Though tourism in Velas is turtle-centric, home-stay providers are not updated on current status of turtle nesting in terms of the number of hatchlings released, numbers of nests etc. Home-stay providers must make efforts to stay updated.

12. Tourism in Velas is currently limited to the turtle festival and home-stay owners have limited opportunity for income generation to recover their investments. The need to start organising bird watching camps, mango festivals, monsoon trips etc in Velas.

13. Ideally, each Gram Panchayat should develop an information brochure dealing with history, biodiversity, and places of interest of the village. This brochure should be made available to all home-stays to reach tourists. Home-stay owners need to follow up with their Gram Panchayat to get this done.

14. Home-stay providers should proactively organise social events to promote responsible tourism in their village. For example, cleanup of the beach and streets in the village.

15. Home-stay providers in each village should become organised formally. Such an organisation can serve as a platform to operate a booking and information centre, develop and maintain a website and a pay-and-park facility, organise tourism promotion events like turtle festival, mango festival etc, and most importantly, coordinate with government authorities like MTDC, FDA etc.

16. Most home-stays in Velas and Kelshi do not have display boards to indicate the services they offer. They should have display board in English and Marathi at the entrance. Recently SNM has provided such boards to home-stay providers (Annexure III).

## Photos

**Photo 2: A traditional home**



**Photo 3: A modern home being constructed**



**Photo 4: Traditional washroom and toilet in the courtyard**



**Photo 5 Alteration in the traditional set up. Attached toilet and tiles as flooring**



## **Annexure 1: Guide points for interaction with home-stay providers and other stakeholders**

### **Basic**

Year of establishment

Trigger to get into the venture/motivation

Contact with prospective clients – own efforts, facilitators

Number of clients served in each season

### **Facility**

Number of separate rooms, toilet, bathroom,

Rooms with attached toilet and bathroom,

Maximum number of persons accommodated in each room and in the facility

Bedding

Water – drinking and other use

Food – vegetarian, non vegetarian, alcohol, wastage by tourists

Alterations in the traditional set up

Court yards – front, back

Charges – staying, food

Parking facility

### **Village level arrangement for home-stays**

Committee/organisation to coordinate home-stays

Communication with tourists

Coordination with authorities – MTDC, Forest department, FDA

Information provided to tourists

Publicity

### **Tourists**

Objective to visit the place

Feedback on staying arrangement, food, and information provided by the host

## Annexure 2: PowerPoint presentation for feedback of home-stays in Velas

मौजे वेळस येथील होम स्टे अभ्यासाचे निष्कर्ष

रघुनंदन अ. वेलणकर

सहयाद्री निसर्ग मित्र, चिपळूण

१३ फेब्रुवारी २०१६

होम स्टे- २००६ ते २०१५

Slide 1 : महत्वाची लक्षणे (बाहेरून दिसणारी)

- दारुबंदीचा ठराव
- सर्व होम स्टे चालकांकडे एकच ठराविक दर
- कोणतीही विशिष्ट जाहिरात न करता वर्षानुवर्षे नियमित पर्यटक
- दर्जेदार जेवण
- मुख्यत्वे महिलांच्या पाठबळाने चाललेला उपक्रम
- ठराविक काळात उत्पन्नाची मर्यादित संधी
- निसर्ग प्रेमी पर्यटक
- उत्पन्नाचे महत्वाचे साधन
- केवळ फोनवर नोंदणी
- पर्यटक मुख्यत्वे कासव महोत्सवासाठी एक रात्र –दोन दिवस येतात.

Slide 2: महत्वाची लक्षणे (आतून दिसणारी)

- जसे जमेल तसे चालवतो.
- पर्यटकांच्या नोंदणीसाठी केवळ ठराविक व्यक्ती आणि संस्था यांचेवर अवलंबून
- जे सुरुवातीपासून होम स्टे मध्ये आहेत किंवा शहरातून संपर्क राखून आहेत त्यांना ग्राहक मिळतात.
- शहरी सोयी असतील तर पर्यटक अधिक मिळतील हि समजूत, त्यामुळे कर्ज काढून घरात सोयी केल्यात – टाइल्स, कमोडचे संडास, टेबल-खुर्च्या इत्यादी
- केवळ कासव महोत्सवावर अवलंबून असल्याने, कासवे अंझ्याला येण्याची जेवढी अनिश्चितता तेवढीच उत्पन्नाची अनिश्चितता

Slide 3: काय हवे?

- हॉटेल नव्हे तर कोकणातील साधे घर – सारवलेली जमीन, शक्य असेल तर पडवीत झोपाळा
- आपल्या आणि शहरातल्या लोकांच्या स्वच्छतेच्या संकल्पना वेगवेगळ्या असतात
- उदा. कोंबड्यांची शीट अंगणात पडलेली असणे, ओले शेण जवळपास पडलेले असणे इत्यादी
- स्वच्छता
- सारवलेले, साफ, सपाट अंगण
- पर्यटक रहाण्याची जागा, अंधारूण-पांघरूण
- बाथरूम आणि संडास, विशेषतः कमोडचे संडास, साबणाची सोय



Slide 4: काय हवे?

- सुरक्षितता
- पर्यटकांचे ओळखपत्र, पत्ता, फोन;
- गहाळपणा टाळणे, रजिस्टर ठेवणे
- पर्यटकांना त्यांचे सामान ठेवण्यासाठी जागा
- स्त्री पर्यटकांसाठी कपडे बदलण्यासाठी जागा
- माहिती
- वेळोवेळा निसर्ग, समाज, आसपासची पर्यटन स्थळे, कासव आणि किनाऱ्याव्यतिरिक्त गावातील अन्य महत्वाची आकर्षणे
- कासवांची सर्व साधारण माहिती प्रत्येक होम स्टे चालक कुटुंबाना असणे - कासवे कुठून येतात, वर्षभर कुठे राहतात, अंडी साधारण कोणत्या वयात घालतात इत्यादी

Slide 5 : अभ्यासातील निरीक्षणे

- वैयक्तिक होम स्टे
- घरांची विविधता - साधी सारवलेली ते पूर्णपणे शहरी
- अन्न आणि जेवणाबद्दल - चव, दर्जा आणि जिव्हाळा यात कोणतीच तक्रार नाही
- तुरळक उदाहरणे
- सोयी केल्यात पण कधीकधी देखभाल करणे जमत नाही.
- जेवण आणि रहाण्याच्या सोयीव्यतिरिक्त, पर्यटकांनी आठवण म्हणून न्यावे अशी कोणतीही भेटवस्तू पदार्थ सर्वांकडून देण्यात येत नाही.
- काही नाविन्यपूर्ण उपक्रम - संग्रहालय, निसर्ग भ्रमंती

Slide 6: अभ्यासातील निरीक्षणे

- गाव पातळीवर
- रस्त्याची दुरावस्था
- फोनवरून संपर्काची दुरावस्था
- माहिती पत्रके, मार्गदर्शक बोर्ड, नकाशे
- गावाचा इतिहास, पर्यटन स्थळे, निसर्ग पर्यटनाची तत्वे
- कचरा व्यवस्थापन, विशेषतः किनाऱ्यावर वाहून येणारा कचरा

Slide 7: येणाऱ्या काळासाठी कोणत्या संधी आहेत?

- पर्यटन विकास मंडळाकडून वेळोवेळासाठी स्वतंत्र माहिती पत्रक प्रकाशित करून घेणे
- पर्यटन विकास मंडळाकडे होम स्टे ची बेड-ब्रेकफास्ट योजनेप्रमाणेच नोंदणी करणे
- कासव महोत्सवासारखे अन्य निसर्ग पर्यटन उपक्रम सुरू करणे
- पक्षी निरीक्षण, आंबा महोत्सव, नदीमध्ये बोट, भात लावणी महोत्सव, नारळाच्या झाडाची शिडी, खेकडा आणि चिंबोऱ्या महोत्सव, पावसाळी सहल इत्यादी
- बैलगाडीतून किनाऱ्याकडे नेण्याची व्यवस्था करणे/रपेट करवणे.



- निसर्ग पर्यटन मार्गदर्शक म्हणून काम करणे
- पर्यटकांनी आठवण म्हणून न्यावे अशी भेट, वस्तू, पदार्थ तयार करणे आणि विक्री करणे
- पर्यावरण पूरक – 'इको' - होम स्टे साठीची तयारी करणे.

Slide 8: अत्यावश्यक

- एकात्मिक केंद्रीय व्यवस्था
- पर्यटक संपर्क
- इंटरनेटवर वेळोवेळी स्वतंत्र वेबसाईट
- पर्यटक नोंदणी
- वाहनतळ
- कासव संरक्षण निधीचे नियोजन
- गावात एक स्वतंत्र पर्यटन माहिती केंद्र उभारणे.
- कासव महोत्सव दरम्यान किनाऱ्यावर महिला पर्यटकांसाठी तात्पुरते स्वच्छतागृह.
- रस्त्याची दुरावस्था दूर करण्यासाठी प्रयत्न.
- प्लास्टिक आणि थर्मोकोल मुक्त वेळोवेळी ठराव मंजूर करणे.

### Annexure 3: Instructional posters for tourists provided to homestays by SNM





## Assessment of home-stays in Velas, Kelshi, and Anjarle

March 2016

