

Kerala Homestay and Tourism Society (Kerala Hats)

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Kerala Homestay & Tourism Society

To

Shri V. D. Satheesan

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala

Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

Subject:

Memorandum requesting the establishment of a “Kerala Rural Tourism Mission” under the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, to bring Homestays, Serviced Villas, Grihasthali, Green Farm Kerala, Farmstays, Camping, Tent Tourism, Village Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Activity-Based Tourism, Experiential Tourism and other small-scale tourism enterprises under an integrated system, and to establish two Model Tourism Villages in each district to ensure employment and income opportunities for local communities.

1. Introduction

In the context of the Government of Kerala recognizing tourism as an industry, the next phase of tourism development in Kerala should move beyond a model focused primarily on large hotels and resorts, towards a new tourism development model that directly involves rural communities, small-scale entrepreneurs and local people.

The real tourism wealth of Kerala lies in its villages, homes, agricultural lands, backwaters, hill regions, coastal areas, local cuisine, culture, arts, traditional lifestyles, nature and the hospitality of its people.

The Kerala Homestay & Tourism Society (Kerala HATS) proposes the establishment of a “Kerala Rural Tourism Mission” to bring these diverse tourism potentials under an integrated system.

2. Why Kerala Rural Tourism Mission?

Kerala has a large number of small-scale entrepreneurs engaged in Homestays, Serviced Villas, Grihasthali, Farm Tourism, Camping, Village Tourism, Activity Tourism and other related sectors.

However, there is currently no sufficiently integrated state-level mechanism to bring these entrepreneurs under one umbrella and effectively coordinate training, financial assistance, marketing, digital platforms, destination development and activity development.

As a result, the full potential of these small-scale tourism enterprises is not being effectively utilized.

Therefore, as a solution, a dedicated **“Kerala Rural Tourism Mission”** should be established under the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

The Mission should be constituted as a new government initiative and various rural tourism-related programmes should be coordinated under its umbrella.

3. Major Sectors to be Brought Under the Mission

The following sectors should be coordinated under the Kerala Rural Tourism Mission:

Classified Homestays

Serviced Villas

Grihasthali

Farmstays

Green Farm Kerala

Camping

Tent Tourism

Rural Tourism

Village Tourism

Community-Based Tourism

Activity-Based Tourism

Experiential Tourism

Agri Tourism

Backwater Tourism

Nature Tourism

Adventure Activities

Local Food & Culinary Tourism

Art & Cultural Experiences

Handicrafts & Local Products

Village Walks

Farm Experiences

Fishing & Traditional Livelihood Experiences

These sectors should not be treated separately. Instead, the objective should be to develop them under an integrated model of:

“Stay + Activity + Experience + Community”

4. Two Model Tourism Villages in Each District

As the first phase of the project, two Model Tourism Villages should be established in each of Kerala's 14 districts.

Thus:

14 Districts × 2 Villages = 28 Model Tourism Villages

Each selected village should be developed as an Integrated Rural Tourism Destination.

Two of the best existing tourism destinations in each district may be identified and developed as Model Tourism Villages.

If the project proves successful, it can subsequently be expanded to more villages across the State.

5. Kumbalangi – A Model for Kerala

The experience of Kumbalangi, recognized as India's first model tourism village, provides an important example for Kerala.

Using the lessons and experience gained from Kumbalangi, Model Tourism Villages can be developed in different districts according to the unique characteristics and tourism potential of each locality.

The objective is not merely to make a village a place for accommodation, but to develop it as a complete tourism experience destination.

6. "Stay Longer – Experience Kerala"

One of the key objectives of the project is to encourage tourists visiting Kerala to stay for a longer period.

Each Model Tourism Village should offer a combination of accommodation facilities along with various **Activity & Experience Packages**.

For example:

Homestay + Local Food + Farm Experience + Village Walk + Backwater Experience + Cultural Programme + Nature Activity

Such integrated packages can increase the length of stay of tourists as well as the average expenditure per tourist in Kerala.

7. Bringing Unused Houses into Tourism

In many parts of Kerala, beautiful houses and additional rooms remain unused.

Many houses belonging to families working abroad or in other States, large houses in rural areas, houses in hill regions and houses located near backwaters remain vacant for substantial periods of the year.

A special programme under the Rural Tourism Mission should be introduced to facilitate the lawful conversion of such additional accommodation facilities into:

Homestays

Grihasthali

Serviced Villas

Farmstays

and other eligible tourism accommodation categories.

This can create additional income for thousands of families without requiring large-scale capital investment.

8. Making Ordinary Citizens Tourism Entrepreneurs

Establishing large hotels and resorts requires substantial investment.

However, enterprises such as Homestays, Grihasthali, Farmstays, Green Farms and Camping can be started by ordinary families with relatively modest investment.

Therefore, the Rural Tourism Mission can implement the concept:

“Every Family – A Tourism Partner”

This should provide opportunities for:

Farmers

Homemakers

Youth

Local artists

Fisherfolk

Small-scale entrepreneurs

to directly participate in tourism.

9. Employment Opportunities for Youth and Women

The project can create new employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, for:

Youth

Unemployed persons

Homemakers

Farmers

Fisherfolk

Local artists

Tour guides

Drivers

Food entrepreneurs

Adventure Activity Operators

Nature Guides

Therefore, this should not be considered merely a Tourism Project, but also an Employment & Rural Income Generation Project.

10. Financial Assistance and Entrepreneurship Development

Through the Rural Tourism Mission, recognized small-scale tourism entrepreneurs should be provided with:

Low-interest loans

Interest subsidies

Infrastructure development assistance

Renovation assistance

Digital marketing support

Entrepreneurship training

Hospitality training

Language training

Food Safety & Hygiene training

Online Booking training

OTA training

Photography & Digital Content training

11. Integrated Digital Rural Tourism Platform

A State-level Digital Rural Tourism Platform should be established under the Rural Tourism Mission.

The platform should bring together:

Homestays + Serviced Villas + Grihasthali + Farms + Camping + Activities + Experiences + Local Food + Destinations

Each Model Tourism Village should have:

Digital Tourism Map

QR Code

Accommodation Directory

Activity Directory

Local Experience Directory

Online Booking Facility

12. Destination Management System

A Destination Management Committee should be constituted in each Model Tourism Village with the participation of:

Local Government + Tourism Department + Local Community + Tourism Entrepreneurs + Community Organisations

This will enable the development and management of each village with the active participation of the local community.

13. Administrative Structure of the Kerala Rural Tourism Mission

A dedicated Kerala Rural Tourism Mission Directorate/Cell should be established under the Department of Tourism.

A Mission Directorate should function at the State level.

A four-tier operational structure may subsequently be established:

State → District → Destination → Village

This structure will facilitate effective monitoring of the project and enable development programmes to be implemented according to the specific requirements and tourism potential of each locality.

14. Strengthening Kerala's Tourism Economy

Increasing tourism revenue in Kerala requires not only attracting more tourists, but also ensuring that tourists:

Stay longer

Experience more

Use more local services

Purchase more local products

Spend more money within the rural economy

The objective should therefore be to ensure that tourism revenue does not remain concentrated only in large establishments, but reaches villages, families and local economies directly.

15. Major Requests to the Government

01. In view of the above, the Kerala Homestay & Tourism Society respectfully submits the following requests to the Hon'ble Chief Minister:

02. Establish a dedicated "Kerala Rural Tourism Mission" under the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, at the earliest.

03. Bring Homestays, Serviced Villas, Grihasthali, Green Farm Kerala, Farmstays, Camping, Tent Tourism, Village Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Activity-Based Tourism, Experiential Tourism and related initiatives under the integrated framework of the Mission.

04. Establish two Model Tourism Villages in each of Kerala's 14 districts, making a total of 28 Model Tourism Villages in the first phase.

05. Identify two of the best existing tourism destinations in each district and develop them as Model Tourism Villages.

06. Introduce a special programme to facilitate the lawful conversion of unused houses and additional rooms into eligible tourism accommodation facilities.
07. Launch a State-wide “Stay Longer – Experience Kerala” programme.
08. Provide specialized training and financial assistance to youth, women and local communities for Activity & Experience Tourism.
09. Establish a Destination Management Committee in every Model Tourism Village.
10. Launch an integrated Digital Rural Tourism Platform under the Rural Tourism Mission.
11. Make a dedicated budgetary allocation in the State Budget for the implementation of the Mission and its programmes.

16. Conclusion

The next generation of tourism development in Kerala should not be limited to the model of **“Large Investment – Large Hotel – Large Resort.”**

The real strength of Kerala lies in its villages, homes, agricultural lands, backwaters, hill regions, coastal areas, culture, cuisine, nature and the hospitality of its people.

Therefore, establishing the Kerala Rural Tourism Mission based on the following vision:

“Every Village – A Tourism Destination”

“Every Family – A Partner in Tourism”

“Every Youth – A Tourism Opportunity”

and bringing all these activities under an integrated government programme would represent a major step forward in the next phase of Kerala’s tourism development.

The Mission can generate employment, income and entrepreneurship opportunities for ordinary people, strengthen the rural economy of Kerala, and significantly increase tourism revenue across the State.

Therefore, the Kerala Homestay & Tourism Society humbly requests the Hon'ble Chief Minister to personally intervene in this matter and issue necessary directions to the Department of Tourism to initiate urgent steps for establishing **the Kerala Rural Tourism Mission and launching the Model Tourism Village Programme under its framework.**

Date: 10.09.2026

Place: Kochi

Yours faithfully,

M. P. Sivadathan



Chairman

Kerala Homestay & Tourism Society (Kerala HATS)

Member, State Tourism Advisory Committee

Mob : 9349253124