

Can Uttaranchal Become a Tourist Paradise ?

The Relation between Resources and Infrastructure.

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ABSTRACT

The fruits of economic development fall where educated people live, not where they work. Hence, if we want to enrich villages, we should induce the educated to live there. But for this to happen we need to install reliable means of social services and transport and other systems that are on a par with what is available in the cities. Uttaranchal is blessed with magnificent glaciers, majestic snow-clad mountains, gigantic and ecstatic peaks, valley of flowers, skiing slopes and dense forests, this Abode of Gods includes many shrines and places of pilgrimage. Char-dhams, the four most sacred and revered Hindu temples: Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri are nestled in the Mighty Mountains. A picturesque state, with a breathtaking panoramic view of Himalayas, Uttaranchal promises its tourists a visit full of fun and unforgettable moments. It would appear that the road map for tourism development in Uttaranchal state is after all not that difficult. What we may need is only be a commitment for its development from the local government - which ever political party is mandated to rule the state.

1. INTRODUCTION

One can define tourism as a service where an intangible experience is being sold is a combination of several services and intermediaries. Thus tourism has been identified as an important avenue for employment and income generation, foreign exchange earnings and at the same time having a multiplier effect on the economy. The expenditure of the tourist circulates at all the three levels of the economy - national, regional and local.

The fruits of economic development fall where educated people live, not where they work. Hence, if we want to enrich villages, we should induce the educated to live there. But for this to happen we need to install reliable means of social services and transport and other systems that are on a par with what is available in the cities.

- It must be need that in the
- marketing of a destination (region, city or
- leisure spots) for tourism purposes, we
- should consider the following aspects:
- - Attractions - like promotion of rural
- tourism around a heritage site
- - Infrastructure (accommodation,
- cuisine, hygiene, clean water, basic
- amenities etc.)
- - Accessibility (roads, means of
- transportation) should not be too far from
- railhead or airport
- - Carrying capacity of the destination
- - Environment issues (Pollution, Eco-
- fragility, etc.)
- - Safety, law and order situation (for
- both the local population as well as
- tourists), etc.
- **Potential role of tourism**
- Tourism is consumed at the point
- of production, giving local businesses and
- communities the opportunity to benefit by

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selling goods and services directly to visitors.

Tourism can show case assets such as culture, art, music, natural landscapes and wildlife. Tourism supports other economic activities, providing jobs and income through the supply chain. Being labour intensive, it provides a wide range of employment opportunities, especially for women and young people. It creates openings for many small and micro businesses, and is an industry in which start-up costs and barriers to entry are generally low or can be lowered.

Tourism also helps instill cultural pride and greater awareness of the natural environment, and the infrastructure required by tourism, including transport and communications, water supply and health services, also benefits local communities.

Tourism provides an opportunity

It raises the viability of local village businesses. Tourist spend also indirectly feeds into suppliers and distributors. It supports local employment. A quarter of new jobs over the last ten years have been in tourism. It diversifies or expand existing enterprises, such as farming, to stabilise income levels. It improves the local environment and infrastructure including the maintenance and appearance of buildings, village green of village pond projects by attracting investment and funding.

It helps to maintain or improve the provision of services and facilities with additional demand from tourist customers. It provides the resources and assistance to help a community better manage the visitors attracted. Thus, visitor spend can make the difference between business or service viability - many of which are essential to local communities - and their

: failure and loss from a village. Planning : tourism locally can also provide local : control.

Guidance for Tourism development:

: One should be realistic - don't : expect to achieve too much too quickly. : One should recall and list out the benefits : - one will need to persuade businesses : and his/her community that the tourism : network has something to offer them. : This should be kept as simple as possible. : Any initiative needs to be easy to : implement its early stages, and simple to : describe to those who could become : involved.

: This should be kept achievable - : the initiative needs an early success to : boost confidence and raise interest. Over : time ambitions can be raised. This should : be kept sustainable - the initiative needs to : be developed within resource and : manpower levels that are capable of being : maintained. Required help should be : sought for - there are many organisations : who are able to offer advice and : assistance. It is important to remember : that business developments should be : imaginative and tailored to the local area : as a Tit all 1 approach will not work : everywhere.

Variety of tourism attractions and activities in the countryside

: Some of the attractions and : activities that could facilitate easy flow of : tourists are:

- : - outdoor recreation such as golf or
- : horse-riding;
- : - themed leisure attractions such as rare
- : breed centres, wildlife and farm
- : attractions, arboreta, museums, steam
- : railways;
- : - local food, drink and craft sold at the
- : farm gate, farmers markets, village shop

or tourism outlet;

- activities based on local heritage, such as church trails or visits to nature reserves and forest parks;

- traditional country side pursuits such as hunting, shooting and fishing have gained a wider level of participation to the extent that they can be included as tourism;

- local village fetes and country festivals.

Factors to facilitate country side Tourism

The following are part and parcel of rural tourism by virtue of their location, with each drawing upon the character of their surrounding countryside: its beauty, culture, history, tradition, wildlife and so on.

- accommodation provision

- catering in the form of pubs, restaurants, teashops or cafes;

- attractions, such as vineyards, gardens, stately houses and parks, ancient monuments and castles;

- places where the countryside can be informally enjoyed such as country parks, quiet roads and foot/bridle paths where walking, cycling and horse riding can take place.

Unique selling proposition - rural tourism

An attempt has been made to list out the USPs in rural tourism and these include - Aathiti Devo Bhava is more practiced in rural India than anywhere else

- An experience one cannot have anywhere in the world - equate with west

- Actually living with people

- Diversity of culture, language, food, craft

- Exposure to heritage sites

- Coming back to nature

• - Health - physical and and mental both:
• yoga, exposure to local medicine or
• Indian system of medicine e.g. Ayurveda,
• Unani. Then there is yoga, various types
• of massages; Tranquility - away from
• humdrum, stress less and strain free stay

• - Not necessarily thought promoting
• vegetarianism can also be a USP

• - Environment friendly

• - Freshness in food ingredients when
• procured locally - may be organically
• cultivated

• - Local crafts and cottage industry can
• provide unique shopping experience
• (inexpensive)

• Tourism can mitigate poverty through

• - Employment of the poor in tourism
• enterprises

• - Supply of goods and services to tourism
• enterprises by the poor or by enterprises
• employing the poor

• - Direct sales of goods and services to
• visitors by the poor (informal economy)

• - Establishment and running of tourism-
• enterprises by the poor - e.g. micro, small
• and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs),
• or community based enterprises (formal
• economy)

• - Tax or levy on tourism income or profits
• with proceeds benefiting the poor

• - Voluntary giving/support by tourism
• enterprises and tourists

• - Investment in infrastructure stimulated by
• tourism also benefiting the poor in the
• locality, directly or through support to
• other sectors.

2. WHAT IS HOLDING UP TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA?

• Clogged and cracking airports,
• ageing air traffic control and chronic

shortage of hotels combined with a slow-moving bureaucracy are cramping India's emergence as a tourism powerhouse, a new study has said. Even as international tourist arrivals in India grew last year by 13 per cent to a record level of 4.4 million, the country's tourism was hampered by inadequate airport and road infrastructure and lack of adequate rooms, the report published by the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) published at the International Tourism Exchange (ITB).

3. UTTARANCHAL

Uttaranchal is blessed with magnificent glaciers, majestic snow-clad mountains, gigantic and ecstatic peaks, valley of flowers, skiing slopes and dense forests, this Abode of Gods includes many shrines and places of pilgrimage. Char-dhams, the four most sacred and revered Hindu temples: Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri are nestled in the Mighty Mountains. A picturesque state, with a breathtaking panoramic view of Himalayas, Uttaranchal promises its tourists a visit full of fun and unforgettable moments.

Art & Heritage in Uttaranchal

Himalaya is a Sanskrit word meaning abode of snow. It is the tallest

mountain range, whose spiny ridges spread out halfway across the world's largest continent; The formidable range with at least eighty peaks above 20,000 feet, the snow covered silvery summits spread out beyond the horizon, gigantic glaciers, high plateaux, the magnificent roaring dark gorges, are an awe inspiring spectacle that transcends description. But this great abode of snow is more than ice, snow and rock. Since antiquity it has been home of a great diversity of people, who have developed many magnificent cultures.

With passage of time all these become one with the great wonderland, Hill woman bedecked with Jewellery that is India. Like many other, the culture of Garhwal and Kumaon have their rich and definite contributions to the ocean of great Indian Culture. The traditions folk art of the region was preserved in its original form, since Garhwal and Kumaon were inaccessible in the past, due to the high mountain ranges and rugged topography. Some facts and figures and tourist arrivals in Uttaranchal.

Some important statistical indicators of Uttaranchal as compared to the neighbouring State of Uttar Pradesh and India as a whole are as under

	Area - In Sq. KM	Population in lakhs	Density Lakhs/Sq.km	Literacy in Percentage
India	3,287.673	10,270.15	324	65.38
U.P.	240,927	1,660.53	689	57.36
Uttaranchal	53,485	84.80	159	72.28

Source : India Census 2001

Tourist Arrivals in Uttaranchal

	1998	1999	2000
Badrinath	351000	340000	695000
Kedarnath	82000	81000	300000
Gangotri	238000	122000	208000
Yamunotri	86000	106000	89000

What is holding up tourism development in Uttaranchal?

Uttaranchal is struggling hard to promote its attractions in different cities (other than Nainital) and rural areas and develop its tourism products. If proper questions are not posed and answered, the planned and developers blindly imitate outside concepts and models of development without taking into consideration the local needs, customs, attitudes and constraints. In such a situation the destination may not take off at all or the entire developmental investment may go waste. The questions to be answered and the issues to be resolved would be many but we take a few here for consideration:

- What type of attractions (nature, adventure of cultural, etc.) within the state have to be developed into tourism packages?
- Whether these attractions have to be packaged and promoted as a mix or as separate attractions?
- Do we have a market for them?
- What type of infrastructure is to be created?
- Is the local population receptive to tourism?
- If the destination is highly seasonal, should huge investments be made or we should develop alternate and subsidiary accommodation?
- How to ensure that the ecology and environment at the destination are not damaged by tourism?
- What type of tourists are to be attract?

What needs to be done?

To start with infrastructure development

Establishment of world class

- infrastructure facilities will be the highest
- priority. In order to do this, special efforts
- will be made to mobilize institutional
- resources and private sector investment
- and participation. In this context, the
- following areas will have to receive special
- attention-
- - Rail and Air services
- - Road transport
- - Accommodation facilities for tourists
- of different income groups.
- - Modern telecommunication facilities.
- - Hygienic conditions and clean drinking
- water.
- - Land and buildings for development
- of infrastructure facilities.

To attract international tourists

To attract international tourists, the policy makers in Uttaranchal should pursue Hague declaration on tourism principles

- **Principle 1** Tourism has become a
- phenomenon of every day life for
- hundreds of millions of people today
- **Principle 2** Tourism can be an effective
- instrument for socio economic growth for
- all countries
- **Principle 3** An un spoilt natural, cultural
- and human environment is a fundamental
- condition for the development of tourism
- **Principle 4** In view of the eminently
- human character of tourism, consideration
- should be given to the specific problems
- of tourists themselves, whether they be
- domestic or international
- **Principle 5** The right of every one to rest
- and leisure, including reasonable limitation
- of working hours and periodic holidays
- with pay, and the right to travel freely,
- subject to reasonable restrictions which
- are explicitly provided for by law and
- which do not call into question the

principles of the freedom of movement itself, must be universally recognized

Principle 6 The promotion of tourism requires facilitation of travel.

Principle 7 The safety, security and protection of tourists and respect for their dignity are a precondition to develop tourism

Principle 8 Terrorism constitutes a real threat for tourism and tourist movements. Terrorists must be treated like any other criminals and should be pursued and punished without statutory limitation, no country thus being a safe haven for terrorists

Principle 9 The quality of tourism as a person to person business depends on the quality of personal service provided. Therefore appropriate education for the

- general public starting at the school level,
- education and training of tourism
- professionals and the preparation of new entrants in the profession are essential for the tourist industry and the development of tourism
- **Principle 10** Tourism should be planned on an integrated and coherent basis by public authorities and between them and industry taking into consideration all aspects of this complex phenomenon.

· 4. CONCLUSION

- It would appear that the road map for tourism development in Uttaranchal state is after all not that difficult. What we may need is only be a commitment for its development from the local government which ever political party is mandated to rule the state. *Are we ready?*

