

## An Overview of Uttarakhand Tourism – A Case Study of Garhwal Region

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### Abstract

Tourism is an incredible way to showcase a place's rich and magnificent history, culture, and diversity while simultaneously reaping substantial economic benefits. Tourism and travel industry plays a prominent role in Uttarakhand's economy. It is one of the vulnerable sectors of the service industry, any disaster such as natural, economic, epidemic always affect tourism sector as this is one the industries which thrive on people. Tourism, according to some estimates, contributes about 4.4% to the state gross domestic product and employs 2% of the state's population. The present paper tries to analyse the problem as well as prospects of tourism development in the state and to throw light upon trends in tourist visit to Uttarakhand (whether domestic or foreign tourists). However oftentimes the environmental factor is neglected until the adverse effects are seen, so this study has highlighted the interdependence of environment and tourism and how covid-19 pandemic has impacted tourism sector of the state which is mainstay for the residents, offering employment and income to hundreds of thousands of families. To correlate these factors and conditions and to answer these we did statistical analysis and used secondary sources of data (Economic Survey of Uttarakhand, report on Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan 2007-2022), the nature of the research is qualitative as well as quantitative. This study analyzed the relevant tourist related statistics for understanding subtle trends related to visitors (domestic as well as foreign) in the state. Additionally suggested few measures for the revival of tourism sector and highlighted the beneficial outcome on environment post covid. In an interesting observation it was found that tourism in Uttarakhand has grown post covid due to reduced carbon footprint thus indicating the need of sustainable and environmental friendly approaches in tourism industry in the upcoming time along with focus on its revival. Since Uttarakhand as a tourist destination has enormous prospects and can prove to be a pure gold mine, so the study suggested that the state can use its rich cultural heritage and breathtaking natural beauty for its socio-economic development along with focusing on the other environmental factors and adding new concepts in tourism.

**Keywords:** socio economic development, tourism, pilgrimage.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

#### Uttarakhand an Overview:

Uttarakhand, a mystical land of mountains and mythologies, exquisite landscapes, exhilarating adventure and wellness and yoga, has something to offer every traveler. Popularly known as devbhoomi or the land of gods, Uttarakhand is a region of outstanding natural beauty, the beautiful lakes, mountain peaks, mesmerizing scenic landscapes which makes Uttarakhand an attractive tourist destination in India and abroad.

Most of the northern parts of the state are covered by the high Himalayan ranges and glaciers, while the lower reaches are densely forested. The unique Himalayan ecosystem plays host to a large number of animals (including bharal, snow leopards, leopards and tigers), plants and rare herbs. Two of India's mightiest rivers, the Ganga and the Yamuna take birth in the glaciers of Uttaranchal, and are fed by innumerable lakes, glacial melts and streams in the region.

Tourism continues to play an important role as a Foreign Exchange Earner for the country. In 2017, Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism were US \$27.31 billion as compared to US \$ 22.92 billion in 2016, registering a growth of 19.1%. Uttarakhand a northern Himalayan state of Indian sub-continent, tourism is considered to be an important vehicle for economic and social development. The economy of the State has been largely dominated by the services sector including Tourism which contributes over 51% to the total GSDP from 2006-07 to 2016-17. Tourism is already a major driver in the economic growth and livelihood promotion in Uttarakhand. Its contribution to State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) has increased about 5.34 % between FY 2012-18 and its share in employment is 2 % according to estimates worked out by UNWTO (Policy, 2018).

The major themes or forms of tourism it offers are the following.



- Adventure and Water sports
- Pilgrimage and Festivals
- Nature and Wildlife
- Sightseeing
- Health and Rejuvenation
- Rural Tourism

**Tab.1 Theme-wise major destinations in Uttarakhand**

Themes	Major destinations
Adventure & Water sports	Rishikesh, Auli, Trekking at Shri Hemkund Sahib, Jharipani, Maldevta, Tons Valley, Dhanaulti, Tehri
Pilgrimage and Festivals	Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Jageshwar, Baijnath, Pirankaliyar, Hemkund Sahib, Nanda Devi
Nature & Wildlife	Jim Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park, Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary, Nanda Devi National Park, Askot Musk Deer Sanctuary, Neel Dhara Pakshi Vihar, Benog Wildlife Sanctuary, Govind Wildlife Sanctuary
Sightseeing	Mussoorie, Nainital, Valley of Flowers, Almora, Kausani, Auli
Health & Rejuvenation	Rishikesh, Haridwar, Champawat, Pithoragarh and Ramgarh, Jageshwar, Almora, Nainital
Rural Tourism	Mana, Chokhta, Chakrata, Deora, Pallyu, Shaukiyathal, Bageshwar, Chamoli, Almora and Tehri

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part deals with description of methodology and steps undertaken for the study

- To examine the existing tourism trend in the study area
- To identify the potential areas for the development of tourism
- To assess and examine the problem and challenges of the development of state through tourism industry
- To study the impact of covid 19 on tourism

### DATA COLLECTION

The data used for the study is secondary data collected from different government sources, which include the District Statistical Abstract, Economic Survey of Uttarakhand, Ministry of Tourism Annual report, Uttarakhand Tourism Policy (2007-2022) and various journal, and research paper, published and unpublished work and showing the data in the form of graphs, trend analysis.

### STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Treatment of data by applying appropriate statistical measure is must to justify the objectives of the study. The investigator followed the appropriate procedure in applying the proper statistical treatment for the analysis of the data which includes,

- Diagrammatic Representation
- Chi square test
- Fitting of Straight Line by Least Squares Method

### SELECTION OF VISITOR LOCATION

On the basis of secondary research, the following locations were selected for survey in the state, which are as depicted in the Table below.

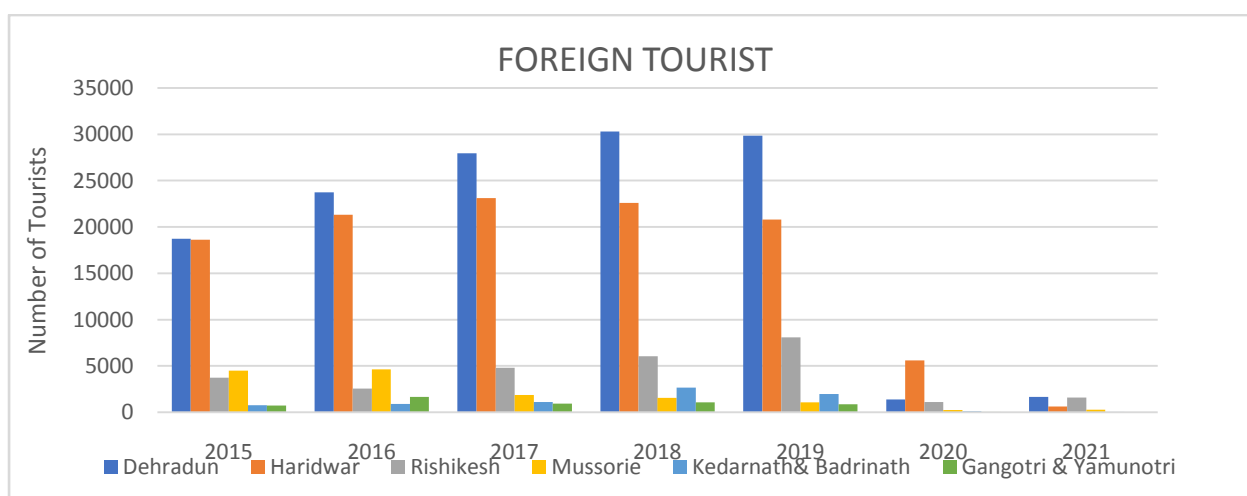
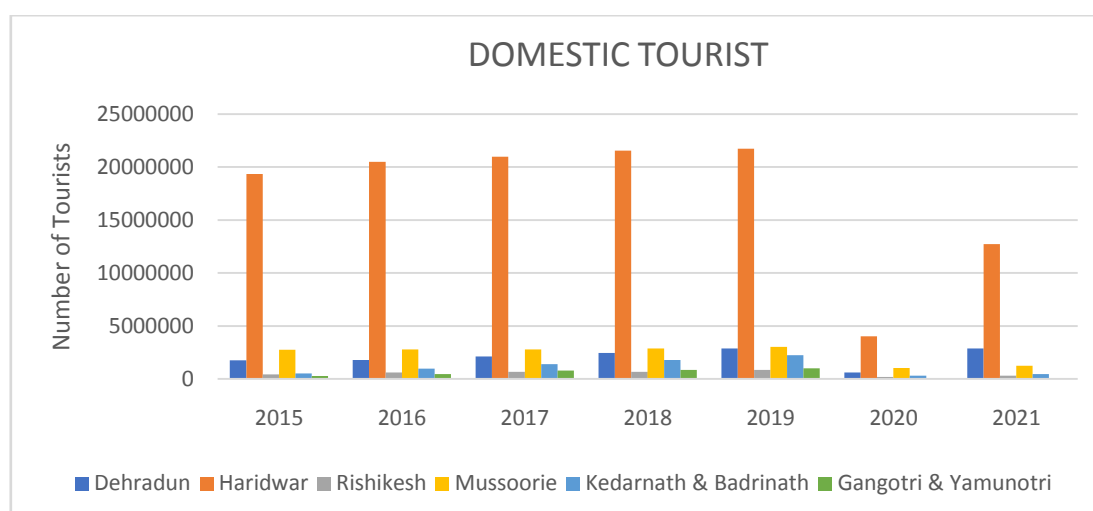
**Tab.2 Tourist Destination Places**

LOCATION	IMPORTANCE	GRADE
DEHRADUN	State Capital, educational hub	A
HARIDWAR	Place of religious importance	A
RISHIKESH	Religious importance, Yoga, adventure sports	A

MUSSORIE	Hill station	A
KEDARNATH	Famous religious Dham	A
BADRINATH	Famous religious Dham	A
YAMUNOTRI	Famous religious Dham	A
GANGOTRI	Famous religious Dham	A

**Tab.3 Domestic Tourist Visits to Uttarakhand**

Location	DOMESTIC TOURIST						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Dehradun	1749930	1783637	2118533	2453998	2875467	592079	2866107
Haridwar	19332025	20486775	20985975	21555000	21749425	4016250	12717825
Rishikesh	434033	589653	673226	656074	855798	170598	291230
Mussoorie	2764773	2790511	2794108	2870475	3022774	1016090	1229528
Kedarnath & Badrinath	520127	963209	1390595	1777374	2243056	290296	442391
Gangotri & Yamunotri	282394	438913	800007	841202	994991	31453	67082



❖ From the above tables it is interesting to note that Haridwar that have the least number of tourist spots witnessed a largest number of domestic tourist and also a good number of foreign tourist, the reason might be that it is the place where the world famous UNESCO cultural heritage ‘Kumbh Mela’ is celebrated after every

three years rotated over four important pilgrimage centres and also the auspicious Ganga Aarti held at Har ki Pauri is a sight to behold divine aura of glittering diyas.

❖ From the above table it is clearly visible that a drop of 90-95% in number of tourists was experienced in 2020 as compared to 2019 due to COVID 19 pandemic . However the experience of the dramatic revival of tourism in the State in the year 2021 is a pointer to the potential of revival, restoration and resurgence of tourism in the State post the ebbing of the second wave. Travel and tourism have emerged as favoured avenues leading to transformation, mainly centred on improving health and well-being.

**Tab.4 Foreign Tourist Visits to Uttarakhand**

Location	FOREIGN TOURIST						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Dehradun	18722	23746	27956	30291	29836	1388	1675
Haridwar	18615	21322	23123	22583	20807	5581	616
Rishikesh	3723	2574	4815	6044	8088	1120	1576
Mussorie	4499	4613	1865	1550	1065	247	280
Kedarnath& Badrinath	763	910	1106	2668	1958	108	30
Gangotri & Yamunotri	724	1675	939	1081	877	49	0

**CHI-SQUARE TEST**

Chi-square test: To test whether the tourism is uniformly distributed over the year 2020.

LOCATION	OBSERVED FREQUENCY	EXPECTED FREQUENCY	d.f	CRITICAL $\chi^2$	CALCULATED $\chi^2$
Dehradun	593467	997618.167	5	11.07	11669848.539
Haridwar	4021831	997618.167			
Rishikesh	171718	997618.167			
Mussorie	1016337	997618.167			
Kedarnath& Badrinath	150854	997618.167			
Gangotri & Yamunotri	31502	997618.167			

Null Hypothesis  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in tourists in uttarakhand with respect to location.

Calculated $\chi^2$	Degree of Freedom	Critical $\chi^2$	Result
11669848.539	05	11.07	rejected

From tabulated value at 5% level of significance is  $\chi^2$  tabulated (0.05) =11.07

Since the calculated value of  $\chi^2$  is much greater than tabulated value. It is highly significant and we reject the null hypothesis.

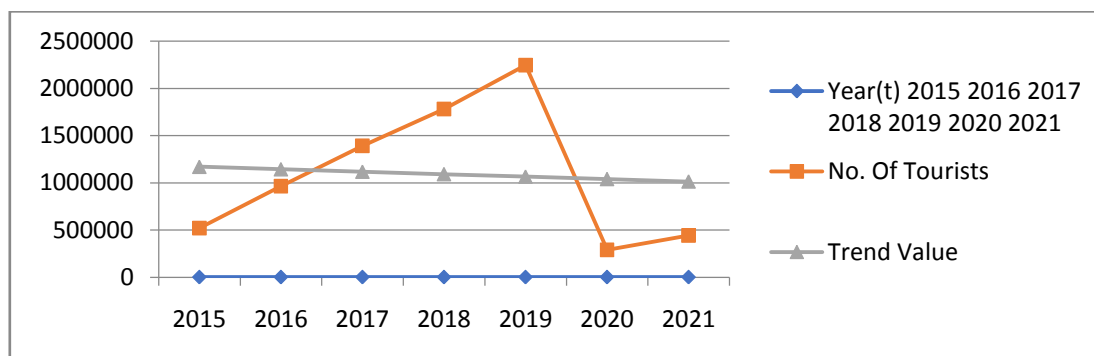
Thus, we conclude that the Tourism in Uttarakhand differs with respect to location.



**TREND VALUE OF BADRINATH AND KEDARNATH:**

**Tab.5 Trend value of Badrinath and Kedarnath**

YEARS	NO. OF TOURIST	TREND VALUES
2015	520890	1168819.497
2016	964119	1142765.426
2017	1391701	1116711.354
2018	1780042	1090657.283
2019	2245024	1064603.211
2020	290404	1038549.14
2021	442421	1012495.069



**INTERPRETATION**

The above shows a decreasing trend in the number of tourist during the period of COVID-19 i.e. year 2019-2020.

**SWOT analysis of Uttarakhand tourism**

**Strengths**

- Unique and outstanding mountainous environment encompassing world famous Himalayas.
- Presence of exceptional geographical features (e.g., glaciers, mountain peaks, waterfalls, rapids).
- Presence of some highly distinctive Himalayan Mountain villages and towns set amidst outstanding scenery (e.g., Dharchula, Munsiyari, Bageshwar).
- Good range of viewpoints of Himalayan Range.
- Existing range of trekking paths and circuits (e.g. Sankri, Gangotri, Dodital and Yamunotri, Hem Kund and Valley of Flowers).
- National parks and Wildlife sanctuaries of International repute (e.g. Corbett, National Park, Nanda Devi Wildlife Sanctuary) with wide range of wildlife, including tiger, Asiatic elephants, leopard, bear etc.

### **Weaknesses**

- Unplanned development in disaster prone zones.
- Almost all urban environment are having poor quality in terms of overall appearance, pollution/waste management, health/safety, urban design/congestion with no concern for natural environment.
- Limited interpretation of the natural environment.
- Little awareness of potential and needs of Ecotourism among many operators and Government agencies.
- Poor design quality in development of tourism facilities as exemplified at many Government Guest Houses.
- Lack of equitable distribution of benefits (tourism revenues) to the local communities

### **Opportunities**

- The Char Dham all-weather road project will give a big boost for planned development along these highways.
- Adventure Tourism activities like camping, Trekking, Bungee Jumping, Bird watching, Paragliding, and Water Sports like rafting, kayaking etc. have a huge potential for surrounding markets.
- Employment opportunities for local communities in rural tourism shall increase with increased impetus from State Government. Cultural distinctiveness, folklore, handicrafts could be tapped for rural and culture-based tourism product development.

### **Threats**

- Prone to Natural Disaster.
- Exceptionally high peaks of Tourist inflows during vacations.
- Unorganized Yatra tourists especially at destinations.
- Continued poor maintenance of roads will make accessibility a key constraint for improving quality and numbers of tourists.

## **III. Conclusion and suggestions**

From the aforesaid analysis regarding the problem and prospects of tourism industry development in the region it may be concluded that there is an immense tourism potential as the place is receiving a large number of tourists every year. This can be attributed to several countless factors like natural scenic landscape, salubrious climate, historical and archaeological sites, cultural and religious sites, some distinct sports activities, cuisines and culinary are some of the major pull factors. Both the domestic and foreign tourists visits the state in a quite good numbers but the international visitors are confined only to some limited place or district the reason might be that many sites are still untapped there is a need for the government should take a step towards its promotion at international level, developing a detailed master plan assuring a good infrastructure facilities provided to each and every destination as it also plays an important role in making a place attractive, make people aware about benefits of tourism towards local communities development. Both Government and Local communities would have to contribute together towards ensuring that it maintains a state of equilibrium between environmental awareness, sustainability, and profitability during development. The revival of tourism post lockdown due to COVID 19 pandemic is quite interesting.

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