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# **CONTENTS**

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	CAREER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FACULTIES WORKING IN FIRST GRADE COLLEGES: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA STATE Dr. GEETHA M L	1
2.	THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES ON PROMOTING NICHE TOURISM DESTINATIONS: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTTARAKHAND RITISHA SHARMA & Dr. VIJAY KUMAR	8
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	12

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## CAREER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FACULTIES WORKING IN FIRST GRADE COLLEGES: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA STATE

## Dr. GEETHA M L PROFESSOR GOVERNMENT FIRST GRADE COLLEGE KAVOOR MANGALORE

#### ABSTRACT

Education plays an important role in the development of any country. India occupies third place in the higher education system in the world, with United States of America in the first place and China in the second place. With demographic transition, India is assumed to be the youngest country in the world with an average Indian being 29 years old. In this context, the importance of higher education has been acknowledged as a prominent area and efforts are being made to bring qualified and empowered teaching faculties into the education system. Therefore, the higher education sector is a major indicator of human development. In this present study an effort is made to understand the Personal, Socio-Economic and career related aspects of teaching fraternity in Degree Colleges.

#### **KEYWORDS**

socio-economic, career related, teaching faculty.

JEL CODE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

good education system calls for experienced, efficient, and dedicated academicians to train young minds. Good teachers can be attracted and retained only when the best of compensation packages is offered to the teaching community. According to a UNESCO report, "State and Society must perceive higher education not as a burden on federal budget but as a long-term domestic investment, in order to increase economic competitiveness, cultural development and social cohesion. The public support to higher education is still essential in order to ensure its educational, social, and institutional mission". Therefore, education is given importance throughout the world. It not only improves knowledge, but also helps in generating employment, increasing the standard of living, improving culture, attracting foreign income, and helps in advancement in science and technology and government administration. It is the most important aspect in the growth of the country. The higher education system in India is gaining importance as India has more of a young population. According to the AISHE 2020-21 report, there are 16.1 lacks (1.61 million) teachers in higher education institutions in India, of which 68.8 percent are male and 31.2 percent are female. The report states that 60.5 percent of teachers in higher education institutions have a Ph.D. degree, while 24.5 percent have a Master's degree. The report also highlights that the student-teacher ratio in higher education institutions in India is 26:1.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The central purpose of the research is to study and assess the personal, socio-economic, and career related conditions among teaching professionals in First Grade Colleges of Dakshina Kannada district located in the southern coastal belt of Karnataka, India. The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To know the personal, social aspects of the respondents,
- 2) To know the Economic aspects of the respondents,
- 3) To know the career related aspects of the respondents.

#### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on the primary data collected from the respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire for the purpose of the present research and Secondary sources of data such as books, periodicals, and journals as well as internet sources like Proquest, EBSCO, JSTOR, Sage Publications, and Emerald Publications were referred to along with published data from the University Grants Commission, AISHE, Mangalore University, Department of Collegiate Education, and college souvenirs of First Grade Colleges of Dakshina Kannada for the purpose of study. The data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Appropriate statistical tools and techniques such as Arithmetic Mean and Median, standard deviation, Kruskal wall is test and chi-squared test was used.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

#### (A) CAREER PROFILE

The career profile of the respondents focuses on career related data like designation, teaching experience, administrative work experience, nature of institution they are working, and area of teaching specialization

#### **4.1 DESIGNATION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Of the total 520 respondents, on an average 45.6 percent are working as lecturers in different institutions, out of which 6.0 percent are from Government Colleges 45 percent from Private aided colleges, 81.5 percent from private unaided colleges, and 62.5 percent from Autonomous college. These teachers mostly do not hold the necessary NET or SLET qualification. At the same time, about 18.6 percent respondents are working as Assistant Professors in various institutions, with 12% percent from Government Colleges, 27.5 percent from Private aided Colleges, 10 percent from Private unaided Colleges, and 27.5 percent from Autonomous Colleges. Associate Professors comprise of 13.1 percent, out of which Government Colleges have 9.3, 25 percent from Private Aided Colleges, 6.2 percent from Private Unaided Colleges, and 7.5 percent from Autonomous Colleges. Guest Faculty is mainly found in Government Colleges and comprise of 68.7 percent.

## TABLE 4.1: DESIGNATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Designation / Desition	Institution						
Designation/ Position	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	Total		
Principal	6	3	3	2	14		
	4.0%	1.9%	2.3%	2.5%	2.7%		
Associate Professor	14	40	8	6	68		
	9.3%	25.0%	6.2%	7.5%	13.1%		
Assistant Professor	18	44	13	22	97		
	12.0%	27.5%	10.0%	27.5%	18.6%		
Lecturers	9	72	106	50	237		
	6.0%	45.0%	81.5%	62.5%	45.6%		
Guest Faculty	103	1	0	0	104		
	68.7%	0.6%	.0%	.0%	20.0%		
Total	150	160	130	80	520		
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
	Source: Primary data						

#### $x^2 = 246.08, p = 0.000 < 0.01, HS$

There is significant difference between the designation held by the respondents of different institutions as p=0.000<0.01 with Guest faculty being more in Government Colleges and nil in Private Unaided and Autonomous Colleges. Lecturers are more in Private Unaided Colleges and less in Government Colleges. Associate Professors are more in Private Aided Colleges and less in Private Unaided Colleges.

#### (B) PERSONAL, AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The individual characteristics of respondents described in this section includes gender, age, location of the college, educational qualification, monthly income, dwelling and home, health status, marital status, family information of respondents.

#### 4.2 GENDER -WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

A study of the gender- wise distribution of the respondents helps to understand which gender is attracted towards the teaching profession and also the existence or non- existence of women empowerment in the study area. The data collected has been analyzed and interpreted with the help of tables and charts.

Gender		Inst	itution		Total
	Government Private Aided Private Unaided Autonom				
Male	58	71	34	19	182
	38.7%	44.4%	26.2%	23.8%	35.0%
Female	92	89	96	61	338
	61.3%	55.6%	73.8%	76.3%	65.0%
Total	150	160	130	80	520
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Total

Source: Primary data

 $x^2 = 15.990, p = 0.001 < 0.01, H.S.$ 



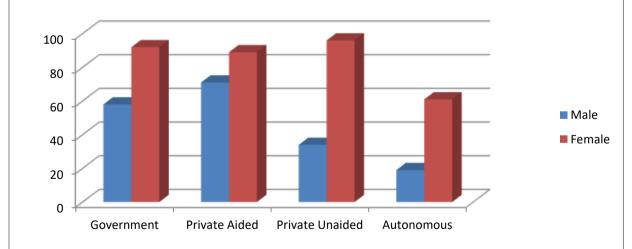


Table 4.2 depicts the gender of the respondents working in different institutions. Out of 520 respondents, 65 percent respondents are female and 35 percent are males. The composition of the female population comprises of 61.3 percent from Government Colleges, 55.6 percent from Private Aided Colleges, 73.8 percent from Private Unaided Colleges, and 76.3 percent from Autonomous Colleges. As per the test results, there is significant difference across the colleges with respect to gender distribution as p=0.001<0.01.

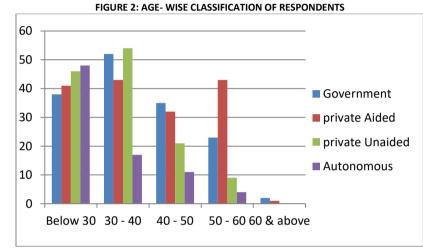
#### 4.3 AGE- WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Higher education needs experienced teachers for their in-depth knowledge, and at the same time, requires young teachers to bring innovations to the system. The following table shows the classification of respondents according to their age.

	Institution					
Age Group	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	Total	
Below 30	38	41	46	48	173	
	25.3%	25.6%	35.4%	60.0%	33.3%	
30 - 40	52	43	54	17	166	
	34.7%	26.9%	41.5%	21.3%	31.9%	
40 - 50	35	32	21	11	99	
	23.3%	20.0%	16.2%	13.8%	19.0%	
50 - 60	23	43	9	4	79	
	15.3%	26.9%	6.9%	5.0%	15.2%	
60 & above	2	1	0	0	3	
	1.3%	.6%	.0%	.0%	.6%	
Total	150	160	130	80	520	
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

TABLE A 2- AGE WISE CLASSIEICATION OF RESPONDENTS

#### $x^2 = 62,935, P = 0.000 < 0.01, H.S.$



With regard to age- wise classification of the respondents as seen in Table 4.3, 33.3 per cent of the total respondents are below 30 years of age, 31.9 per cent are 30 to 40 years of age, 19.0 per cent are in 40 to 50 per cent age group, 15.2 per cent of the respondents are between 50 to 60 years, and 0.6 per cent are above 60 years of age. In Government Colleges, 34.7 per cent are of 30-40 years of age. In Private Aided Colleges, 26.9 per cent respondents are 30-40 years of age. In Private Unaided Colleges, 41.5 per cent of the respondents are 30–40 years of age, and in Autonomous Colleges, 60.0 per cent of the respondents are less than 30 years of age.

There is significant difference among the colleges with respect in respect to age group of the respondents as p=0.000<0.01. Respondents belonging to Autonomous College in the age group of below 30 years are high compared to Government Colleges. At the same time, respondents of 30-40 years are much higher in Private Unaided Colleges than in other colleges.

#### 4.4 LOCATION OF FIRST GRADE COLLEGES

The location of the place of work helps in understanding the institution- wise distribution of colleges in urban, semi- urban, and rural places. The following table explains the institution- wise location of First Grade Colleges of the respondents.

TABLE 4.4. LOCATION OF FIRST GRADE COLLEGES						
Location College	Institution					
Location College	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	Total	
Rural	60	49	44	4	157	
	40.0%	30.6%	33.8%	5.0%	30.2%	
Semi -urban	11	52	35	0	98	
	7.3%	32.5%	26.9%	.0%	18.8%	
Urban	79	59	51	76	265	
	52.7%	36.9%	39.2%	95.0%	51.0%	
Total	150	160	130	80	520	
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

#### TABLE 4.4: LOCATION OF FIRST GRADE COLLEGES

 $x^2 = 108.404, p = 0.000 < 0.01,$  H.S.

Table 4.4 shows the location of the college of the respondents. About 52.7 per cent respondents from Government Colleges, 36.9 per cent from Private Aided Colleges, 39.2 per cent from Private Unaided Colleges and 95 per cent from Autonomous Colleges have their colleges in urban areas. About 18.8 per cent and 30.2 per cent of respondents work in colleges situated in semi- urban and rural places, respectively. This shows that more than half of the respondents covered by this study work in colleges situated in urban areas.

Source: Primary data

 $x^2$ Test shows that there is significant difference among the colleges with respect to college location as p=0.000<0.01. Highest 52.7 per cent of the respondents from Government Colleges reported that their college is situated in the rural area, while at the same time, the lowest 5 per cent of the respondents from Autonomous Colleges come from rural colleges. In case of urban colleges, highest 95 per cent of the respondents from Autonomous Colleges came from urban areas and lowest 36.9% per cent teaching in Private Unaided Colleges come from urban areas.

#### 4.5 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Education is a continuous up gradation of knowledge. Teachers are no exception to this rule. The following table shows the educational qualification of the respondents.

#### TABLE 4.5: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Educational Qualification		Institution					
	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous			
Master's degree	107	101	105	63	376		
	71.3%	63.1%	80.8%	78.8%	72.3%		
MPhil	17	36	13	9	75		
	11.3%	22.5%	10.0%	11.3%	14.4%		
PhD	26	23	12	8	69		
	17.3%	14.4%	9.2%	10.0%	13.3%		
Total	150	160	130	80	520		
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: Primary data

#### $x^2 = 18.440, p = 0.005 < 0.01, H.S.$

Table 4.5 shows that 71.3 per cent of the teachers from Government Colleges are post graduates, 11.3% are M.Phil and 17.3 per cent are doctorates. About 63.1 per cent Private Aided College lectures possess master's degree, 22.5 per cent M.Phil degrees, and 14.4 per cent have PhDs. At the same time, in Private Unaided Colleges, 80.8 per cent lecturers are post graduates, 10 per cent are M.Phil, 9.2 per cent are doctorates. From Autonomous Colleges, 78.8 per cent have master's degree as their highest qualification, 11.3 per cent are M.Phil, and 10 per cent possess doctorates.

There is significant difference among the colleges with respect to the educational qualification of the respondents, as p=0.005<0.01. About 22.5 per cent of the respondent from Private Aided colleges reported that they have M. Phil degree as their highest qualification, but 10 per from Private Unaided colleges claimed that to have M.Phil degree as their highest qualification. On the other hand, 17.7 per cent of the respondents from Government Institutions had PhD as highest qualification, and 9.2 per cent respondents from Private Unaided Colleges had PhD as highest qualification.

**4.6 MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS** 

Good pay package helps in fulfilling the needs and aspirations an employee. At the same time, it attracts able and efficient employees.

				5	
Monthly Income (In ₹)		Inst	itution		Total
	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	
Below 40000	63	59	81	28	231
	42.0%	36.9%	62.3%	35.0%	44.4%
40001-60000	8	37	42	42	129
	5.3%	23.1%	32.3%	52.5%	24.8%
60001-80000	29	11	1	0	41
	19.3%	6.9%	.8%	.0%	7.9%
80001-100000	15	16	3	4	38
	10.0%	10.0%	2.3%	5.0%	7.3%
100001-200000	7	10	1	0	18
	4.7%	6.3%	.8%	.0%	3.5%
above 200001	28	27	2	6	63
	18.7%	16.9%	1.5%	7.5%	12.1%
Total	150	160	130	80	520
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

#### TABLE 4 6. MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

Source: Primary data

#### $x^2 = 143.336, p = 0.000 < 0.01, H.S$

Table 4.6 shows the distribution of the respondents based on total monthly income. The average monthly income of 44.4 per cent of the respondents is below ₹40000 per month. And when we analyze group- wise income, 42 per cent of Government college teachers, 36.9 per cent of Private aided college teachers, 62.3 per cent Private unaided college teachers, and 35 percent of Autonomous college respondents get less than ₹40000 per month, but 52.5 percent of Autonomous college teachers draw a monthly salary ranging from ₹40000-60000. Hence, Autonomous college teachers are in a better position when we take the salary at the lower end. As per the test results, there is significant difference in income level among different institutions. Here, P=0.000<0.01

#### **4.7 DETAILS OF RESIDENCE OF RESPONDENTS**

Owning a house is the dream of every human being. Therefore, a study of the dwelling place of the respondents has been made.

TABLE 4.7: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON THEIR DWELLING PLACE

Dwelling Place	Institution					
Dweiling Place	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	Total	
Quarters	7	6	4	0	17	
	4.7%	3.8%	3.1%	.0%	3.3%	
Rented House	34	22	28	11	95	
	22.7%	13.8%	21.5%	13.8%	18.3%	
Own House	108	128	96	69	401	
	72.0%	80.0%	73.8%	86.3%	77.1%	
Others	1	4	2	0	7	
	.7%	2.5%	1.5%	.0%	1.3%	
Total	150	160	130	80	520	
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	

Source: Primary data

#### $x^2 = 13.607, p = 0.137 > 0.05, NS.$

As per Table 4.7, 77.1 percent of the respondents own their homes. It includes 72 per cent of Government college lecturers, 80 per cent of private aided college lecturers, 73.8 per cent of Private unaided college lecturers, and 86.3 per cent of Autonomous college lecturers. About 3.3 percent live in quarters provided by employers, 18.3 percent live in rented houses, 1.3 percent live in hostels, in relative's houses, and as paying guest. There is no significant difference between the respondents of different institutions as P=0.137>0.05.

#### 4.8 MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO REACH WORKPLACE

Means of transport to the place of work plays an important role in the quality of work- life. The following table analyses the means of transport used to reach the place of work.

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TABLE 4.8: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION USED TO	

Transportation	Institution					
Transportation	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous		
Walking	5	27	9	1	42	
	3.3%	16.9%	6.9%	1.3%	8.1%	
Bus	75	62	68	42	247	
	50.0%	38.8%	52.3%	52.5%	47.5%	
Train	8	0	2	4	14	
	5.3%	.0%	1.5%	5.0%	2.7%	
Two wheeler	42	52	47	23	164	
	28.0%	32.5%	36.2%	28.8%	31.5%	
Four wheeler	15	18	4	8	45	
	10.0%	11.3%	3.1%	10.0%	8.7%	
Other	5	1	0	2	8	
	3.3%	.6%	.0%	2.5%	1.5%	
Total	150	160	130	80	520	
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
		Source: Prim	ary data			

#### $x^2 = 53.200, p = 0.000 < 0.01, H.S.$

Table 4.8 shows the means of transport used by lecturers to reach their colleges. On an average 8.1 per cent of the respondents reach college on foot, 47.5 per cent reach their college by bus, 2.7 per cent teachers reach by train, 31.5 per cent by two wheel vehicle, and 8.7 per cent reach college by four wheeler. About 68 per cent of Private Unaided College respondents use the bus or public transport for their travel and 42 per cent of Autonomous College respondents use the public transport to reach the college. About 36.2 per cent of Private Unaided Colleges use two wheelers and 28.8 per cent of Autonomous College respondents use two wheelers to reach the college. About 10 per cent of respondents working in Autonomous Colleges own four wheel vehicle, followed by 11.3 per cent from private aided colleges, and 10 per cent of respondents in Government institutions, but 3.1 per cent of respondents working in private Unaided Colleges use four wheelers to reach the colleges. Others use Taxi or Auto services to reach the college.

The Chi square test found significant difference among respondents of different institutions regarding different modes of transportation used to reach their respective colleges as p=0.000< 0.01. More number of private unaided College respondents use bus service. More number of Government College respondents use train, and no one from the private aided college respondents uses the train.

#### 4.9 MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

As per the marital status reported by the respondents, 71 per cent were married, 28.8 per cent were unmarried, 2 per cent had lost their spouse, and none of the teachers were divorcees. The table shows that more than 70 per cent of the respondents working in Government, private aided, and private unaided colleges are married. But in case of autonomous colleges, 53.8 per cent are married and 46.3 per cent are unmarried.

TABLE 4.9: MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS						
Marital status		Inst	itution		Tatal	
Warita status	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	Total	
Married	109	125	92	43	369	
	72.7%	78.1%	70.8%	53.8%	71.0%	
Unmarried	41	34	38	37	150	
	27.3%	21.3%	29.2%	46.3%	28.8%	
Widower/Widow	0	1	0	0	1	
	.0%	.6%	.0%	.0%	.2%	
Divorcee	0	0	0	0	0	
	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	
Total	150	160	130	80	520	
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Source: Primary data

#### $x^2 = 18.535, p = 0.005 < 0.01, HS.$

The chi square test shows significant difference among the colleges with respect to marital status as p=0.005<0.05.

#### 4.10 FAMILY INDEBTEDNESS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 4.10 explains the family indebtedness of the respondents. About 65 percent families of respondents from autonomous college did not borrow, while 6.3 percent families of respondents from Autonomous College borrowed more than ₹five lakhs. Among 150 Government College respondents, 54.7 percent of the families have nil debt, 30.7 percent have less than ₹one lakh debt, 12 percent have ₹one lakh to five lakh as debt, and 2.7 percent owe more than ₹five lakhs. Among Private aided College's respondents, 66.3 percent families did not borrow, 18.1 percent have borrowed less than ₹one lakh, 13.1 percent have borrowed between ₹one lakh to five lakh to five lakh, and 2.5 percent of their families have nil borrowing, 29.2 percent have less than ₹one lakh as loan, 6.9 percent between ₹one to five lakh, and 2.3 percent with more than ₹five lakhs as loan.

#### TABLE 4.10: FAMILY INDEBTEDNESS OF THE RESPONDENT

Family Indebtedness (in ₹)	Government	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Autonomous	Total
Nil	82	106	80	52	320
	54.7%	66.3%	61.5%	65.0%	61.5%
Less than 1000000	46	29	38	20	133
	30.7%	18.1%	29.2%	25.0%	25.6%
1000001-5000000	18	21	9	3	51
	12.0%	13.1%	6.9%	3.8%	9.8%
More than 5000001	4	4	3	5	16
	2.7%	2.5%	2.3%	6.3%	3.1%
Total	150	160	130	80	520
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

 $x^2 = 17.315, p = 0.044 < 0.05, Sig$ 

Source: Primary data

As per the results of  $x^2$  test, there is significant difference in the borrowing pattern among the families of respondents with P value of 0.044<0.05.

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#### 4.11 FAMILY POSSESSIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

As per Table 4.11, 94.6 percent own a television, 86.2 percent own a refrigerator and air conditioner, 78.7 percent own two wheelers, 72.1 percent own four wheelers, and 72.1 percent own house or land. About 94.7 percent of respondents from Government Colleges, 93.8 percent from private Aided Colleges, 92.3 percent from Private Unaided College, and 94.6 percent from Autonomous Colleges own a television; 80 percent respondents from Government Colleges, 88.1 percent from Private Aided Colleges, 83.8 percent from Private Unaided Colleges, and 97.5 percent from Autonomous Colleges own a refrigerator or air conditioner; 76.7 percent respondents from Government Colleges, 81.3 percent from private Aided Colleges, 72.3 percent from Private Unaided Colleges, and 87.5 percent from Autonomous Colleges own two wheelers or four wheelers, and 67.3 percent respondents from Government Colleges, 77.5 percent from private Aided Colleges, 69.2 percent from Private Unaided Colleges, and 75 percent from Autonomous Colleges own land or house.

TABLE 4.11: FAMILY POSSESSIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS										
	Government		Private Aided		Private Unaided		Autonomous		Total	
Family Possessions	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%
Television	142	94.7%	150	93.8%	120	92.3%	80	100%	492	94.6%
Refrigerator /AC	120	80%	141	88.1%	109	83.8%	78	97.5%	448	86.2%
Two wheeler/Four wheeler	115	76.7%	130	81.3%	94	72.3%	70	87.5%	409	78.7%
House/Land	101	67.3%	124	77.5%	90	69.2%	60	75%	375	72.1%
Source: primary data										

#### TABLE 4.11: FAMILY POSSESSIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

#### 4.12 SPENDING PATTERN OF RESPONDENTS

The spending pattern respondents will help in analyzing the importance given by the respondents to different avenues of expenditure like food, education, health, loan repayment, saving, investment, and on other expenses.

			TABLE 4	.12: SPENDIN	G PATTE	RN RESPO	NDENT			
Institution		Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D	Median	Kruskal wallis test value	d.f	P value
	Government	150	5	55	24.42	9.597	20.00	5.799	3	0.122
	Private Aided	160	10	75	23.98	9.535	20.00			NS
Food	Private Unaided	130	10	70	23.76	9.048	20.00			
	Autonomous	80	10	50	22.11	8.935	20.00			
	Total	520	5	75	23.57	9.298	20.00			
Education	Government	150	0	40	10.97	7.668	10.00	3.672	3	0.299
	Private Aided	160	0	40	11.62	8.235	10.00			NS
	Private Unaided	130	0	50	11.08	8.039	10.00			
	Autonomous	80	0	30	9.75	7.266	10.00			
	Total	520	0	50	10.85	7.819	10.00			
Health	Government	150	0	40	7.67	6.161	5.00	2.359	3	0.501
	Private Aided	160	0	25	6.63	4.935	5.00			N S
	Private Unaided	130	0	40	7.11	5.422	5.00			
	Autonomous	80	0	25	7.35	5.001	5.00			
	Total	520	0	40	7.19	5.400	5.00			
Loan repaying	Government	150	0	40	16.23	11.944	20.00	9.726	3	0.021
	Private Aided	160	0	50	19.11	14.775	25.00			sig
	Private Unaided	130	0	50	16.46	13.441	20.00			
	Autonomous	80	0	50	21.18	13.905	25.00			
	Total	520	0	50	18.25	13.669	20.00			
Saving	Government	150	0	50	18.77	9.706	20.00	2.790	3	0.425
	Private Aided	160	0	50	17.25	8.244	20.00			NS
	Private Unaided	130	0	50	18.57	8.818	20.00			
	Autonomous	80	0	40	17.60	7.125	20.00			
	Total	520	0	50	18.05	8.524	20.00			
Investing	Government	150	0	30	10.11	7.328	10.00	9.761	3	0.021
	Private Aided	160	0	30	10.96	6.650	10.00			sig
	Private Unaided	130	0	40	12.08	7.870	15.00			
	Autonomous	80	0	60	13.69	9.575	15.00			
	Total	520	0	60	11.71	8.020	15.00			
Others	Government	150	0	60	8.32	8.735	5.00	0.760	3	0.859
	Private Aided	160	0	45	8.15	7.806	5.00			NS
	Private Unaided	130	0	35	6.98	6.010	5.00			
	Autonomous	80	0	35	7.80	7040	5.00			
	Total	520	0	60	7.81	7.461	5.00			

As per table 4,12 showing the spending pattern of respondents on an average, 23.57±9.298% is spent on food, 10.85±7.819% on education, 7.19±5.4 for health expenses, 18.25±8.524% for savings, 11.71±8.02% towards investment, and 7.81±7.461% towards other expenses. There is no significant difference between the respondents of different institutions with respect to spending pattern towards food, education, health, savings, and other expenses with p=0.122>0.05,p= 0.299>0.05, 0.501>0.05, 0.425>0.05, and 0.859> 0.05, respectively. There is significant difference among respondents of different institutions over amount spent on loan repaying where in more portion of total income of Autonomous College respondents is spent on loan repayment on the other hand, proportion of income spent on home loan is less in case of Government College lecturers. And also, there is significant difference in investment pattern of respondents of different educational institution with p=0.021<0.05, where Autonomous college respondents spend 13.69% of their income on investment and respondents from Government College spend 10.11% on investment.

#### 5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Some of the findings of the present study are as follows

The age group of the respondents shows that 33.3 percent are less than 30 years, 31.9 percent between 30 and 40 years of age, 19 percent between 40 to 50 years age, 15.2 percent between 50 to 60 years age, and a small portion of 3 percent were above 60 years.

- About 30.2 percent of the respondents come from rural areas, 18.8 percent from semi- urban areas, and 51 percent from urban areas. About 95 percent of
  the respondents working in Autonomous Colleges come from urban areas and 40 percent from Government Colleges come from rural areas. The respondents
  of private Aided and private Unaided Colleges are proportionately distributed between rural, semi- urban, and urban areas.
- Around 72.3 percent of the respondents had master's degree as the highest qualification, 14.4 percent had M. Phil degree, and 13.3 percent had PhD qualification. Among PhD holders, 17.3 percent belonged to Government Colleges, 14.4 percent from private Aided Colleges, 10.0 percent from Autonomous Colleges, and 9.2 percent from private Unaided Colleges. More and more teachers with higher qualifications showed interest in joining Government Colleges for job security and better pay (as per UGC scale).
- Majority, 77.1 percent of the respondents own houses of their own, 18.3 percent live in rented houses, 3.3 percent live in quarters provided by employers, and 1.3 percent of respondents are living in hostels, in relative's house or as a paying guest, etc.
- About 47.5 percent of the respondents travel to their colleges by bus, 31.5 percent uses two wheelers, 8.7 percent use four wheelers, and 8.1 percent reach
  the college on foot. Majority of the respondents live close to their place of work. The distance between the college and the dwelling place of 34.7 percent of
  respondents working in Government Colleges, 41.9 percent in Private Aided Colleges, 31.5 percent in private Unaided Colleges and 46.3 percent respondents
  in Autonomous Colleges is less than 5 kilometers.
- Around 520 respondents comprising of 71.0 percent married respondents and 28.8 percent unmarried respondents. Of the married respondents, 40.6 percent of the spouses of the respondents are professionals, 9.8 percent are in technical work, 15.7 percent are officials, and 12.7 percent are in business. About 88.1 percent of the spouses work in day shifts and 6 percent in night shifts. Regarding the educational qualification of the spouses of the respondents, 36.6 percent are postgraduates, 33.3 percent spouses are graduates, 11.4 percent are SSLC or PUC qualified, 8.7 percent are diploma holders, 7.0 percent are M.Phil. or Ph.D. holders, and 2.4 percent have professional degrees.
- There is wide gap between the incomes of permanent Faculties and Guest faculties teaching in First Grade Colleges.
- The number of women populations taking up the teaching profession is increasing day- by- day.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

Quality of education by the institutions imparting Higher education decides the prosperity of the nation. Qualified and Experienced Teachers are the need of the hour. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21 report, state universities in India have a total of 543,135 sanctioned faculty positions, out of which 409,711 positions are filled, and 133,424 positions are vacant. This indicates a vacancy rate of approximately 24.5 percent. The report further states that during the academic year 2020-21, 51,891 faculty positions were recruited across all types of higher education institutions in India, including state universities. According to a report by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2020, there were approximately 45,000 guest faculty positions in state universities across India. However, the UGC report also noted that many guest faculty positions remained vacant due to budgetary constraints and administrative delays in recruitment. These statistics shows the urgent need for recruitment of necessary teachers and also importance of providing better financial and non- financial facilities to young Teachers in order to attract skilled and talented teachers to higher education field,

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## THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES ON PROMOTING NICHE TOURISM DESTINATIONS: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTTARAKHAND

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#### ABSTRACT

The tourism industry, particularly in niche destinations like Uttarakhand, faces the challenge of effectively promoting unique experiences amidst a competitive era. This research addresses this challenge by examining the role of digital marketing in enhancing destination promotion, with a specific focus on Uttarakhand's niche tourism offerings. The study begins by highlighting the growing importance of digital platforms in destination marketing and the need for effective strategies to navigate this evolving landscape. Through secondary data analysis gathered from a variety of scholarly articles, reports, and case studies, the paper explores the effectiveness of digital marketing channels such as social media, content marketing, and influencer partnerships in raising destination visibility, engaging with travelers, and driving visitor satisfaction. The findings underscore the significant impact of digital marketing on destination promotion, providing valuable insights for destination marketers seeking to leverage digital platforms for promoting niche tourism destinations like Uttarakhand. In conclusion, the research emphasizes the need for destination marketers to adopt innovative digital marketing strategies to effectively showcase the unique offerings of Uttarakhand and attract niche travelers seeking authentic and immersive experiences.

#### **KEYWORDS**

digital marketing, niche tourism, destination promotion, uttarakhand, visitor engagement

## JEL CODES

Z32, Z33, M31.

#### INTRODUCTION

Join today's highly competitive tourism industry, the emergence of digital marketing has reshaped the way destinations promote themselves and engage with travelers. Digital marketing strategies, ranging from social media campaigns to online content creation, have emerged as powerful tools for destination marketers to reach target audiences and inspire travel decisions. This transformation is particularly significant in the realm of niche tourism, where travelers seek specialized experiences tailored to their interests and preferences.

Niche tourism destinations, such as those centered around ecotourism, adventure travel, or cultural heritage, offer unique and authentic experiences that cater to specific segments of the market. These destinations often boast distinctive natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and immersive activities that appeal to travelers seeking authenticity and meaningful connections with the places they visit. In recent years, niche tourism has gained momentum as travelers increasingly prioritize experiential travel over traditional tourist attractions.

Uttarakhand, a picturesque hilly state nestled amidst the peaks of the Himalayas in northern India, is divided into two regions i.e., Kumaun and Garhwal, and epitomizes the convergence of digital marketing and niche tourism. Blessed with breathtaking scenery, diverse ecosystems, and a rich cultural heritage, Uttarakhand has emerged as a sought-after destination for travelers seeking tranquility, adventure, and spiritual rejuvenation. From the sacred banks of the Ganges River to the pristine wilderness of Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand offers a myriad of niche experiences that appeal to discerning travelers.

Amidst this backdrop, digital marketing plays a pivotal role in promoting Uttarakhand's niche tourism offerings to a global audience. Through targeted digital campaigns, engaging social media content, and immersive online experiences, destination marketers aim to capture the imagination of travelers and inspire them to explore the unique attractions and experiences that Uttarakhand has to offer. By leveraging digital platforms, Uttarakhand can effectively showcase its diverse tourism assets, connect with niche traveler segments, and drive sustainable tourism growth in the region.

This paper seeks to delve into the impact of digital marketing strategies on promoting niche tourism in Uttarakhand. By examining the effectiveness of various digital marketing initiatives employed within the region, we aim to gain insights into how these strategies contribute to raising destination awareness, attracting specific traveler segments, and fostering sustainable tourism development. Through a comprehensive analysis of digital marketing practices in Uttarakhand, this study aims to offer valuable insights for destination marketers, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers seeking to harness the power of digital platforms to promote niche tourism experiences.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

- Knight, A. & Jane (2012) in their paper titled 'The Role of Niche Tourism Products in Destination Development' have summarized three key themes of Niche tourism product development, Niche tourist profiling, and destination development through Niche tourism. Their study focuses on the understanding of challenges, destinations face along the niche tourism life cycle and how they will aid the industry.
- Bruno et al., (2020) in their paper titled 'Movie Tourism and Attracting New Tourists in the Post-Pandemic Period: A Niche Marketing Perspective' have mentioned the significance of film tourism in territory marketing and its crucial role in segmenting markets and attracting new tourists, particularly in the post-pandemic era. Film tourism involves creating destination marketing campaigns to promote locations featured in films. This sector garners the highest tourist expenditure and has thus garnered increased attention from global business leaders, policymakers, and academics. The study provides insights into local development and niche tourism from this perspective.
- Bunghez, CL. (2022) in her paper titled 'The Emerging Trends of Niche Tourism: Impact Analysis' has addressed the current tourism global market shift towards a niche tourism approach. She has analyzed both the current development and future evolution of this tourism trend, keeping in mind the pandemic

situation. The study concluded that the niche sectors analyzed in this paper will fundamentally transform the tourism industry soon and alter the consumer experience into the mainstream tourism sector.

- Bedi, K. & Sharma, N. (2023) in their paper titled 'Digital Marketing: Strategies, Trends, Implementation, and Practices. A Case of Uttarakhand Star Category
  Hotels' have emphasized the significant impact of digital marketing strategies on the advancement and prosperity of star-category (niche) hotels in Uttarakhand. The study also delves into the transition from conventional marketing to digital marketing and the adoption of diverse digital marketing strategies
  within star-category hotels in Uttarakhand. The study employs the case study method, focusing on prominent star hotel chains in Uttarakhand to provide
  comprehensive insights into the utilization and effectiveness of digital marketing strategies within this context.
- Rodrigues et al., (2021) in their paper titled 'Digital Marketing Impact on Rural Destinations Promotion: A Conceptual Model Proposal' have highlighted the
  imperative to introduce a fresh developmental paradigm in rural areas, a key concern within the rural tourism sector as it embarks on its digital transformation journey, embracing digital technologies and tools. They underscore the absence of a comprehensive conceptual framework capable of guiding the
  design and implementation of digital marketing endeavors in rural tourism settings. Their article puts forward a conceptual model aimed at delineating the
  potential impact of digital marketing initiatives, particularly in terms of shaping a favorable image of rural tourism destinations and influencing tourists'
  decisions to visit these locales.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research is strictly based on secondary sources, where the data has been gathered from Journals, Research articles/papers, and various websites.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 1. To analyze the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in promoting niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand.
- 2. To identify key digital marketing practices applicable to niche tourism in Uttarakhand.
- 3. To assess the implications of digital marketing for the future development of niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand.

#### DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING NICHE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN UTTARAKHAND

Content Marketing: Creation and distribution of engaging content such as blog posts, articles, and videos showcasing unique experiences and attractions.

- Example: Publishing blog posts about offbeat hiking trails in Kumaun or creating videos highlighting the traditional culture of the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary.
   Social Media Marketing: Leveraging popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to share visually appealing content, engage with followers, and promote niche tourism experiences.
- Example: Sharing stunning images of the cascading waterfalls in Munsivari on Instagram with relevant hashtags to attract adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Optimizing website content and metadata to improve visibility and ranking in search engine results for relevant keywords related to niche tourism in Uttarakhand.

Example: Ensuring that the website of a wellness retreat in Rishikesh ranks high in search results for keywords like "yoga retreat in Uttarakhand."

- Influencer Partnerships: Collaborating with travel influencers, bloggers, and vloggers who specialize in niche tourism to showcase destinations and experiences to their audiences.
- Example: Partnering with a popular travel vlogger to create a series of vlogs documenting their journey through the quaint villages of Garhwal region.

 Email Marketing: Sending targeted email campaigns to subscribers interested in niche tourism experiences, featuring special offers, exclusive content, and personalized recommendations.

Example: Sending out a monthly newsletter to subscribers interested in spiritual tourism, featuring upcoming events and meditation retreats in the town of Haridwar.

 Online Travel Guides and Directories: Listing niche tourism destinations and experiences on online travel guides and directories to increase visibility and attract potential visitors.

Example: Listing eco-friendly accommodations in the remote valleys of the Almora district on sustainable travel websites like Responsible Travel or Eco Tour Directory.

- Virtual Tours and Experiences: Offering virtual tours, live streams, and 360-degree videos of niche tourism attractions and experiences to engage and inspire
  prospective travelers.
- Example: Hosting a virtual tour of the ancient temples of Uttarkashi to promote cultural tourism in the region.
- User-Generated Content Campaigns: Encouraging visitors to share their experiences on social media using branded hashtags, contests, and challenges to
  generate authentic user-generated content.

Example: Launching a photo contest inviting travelers to share their best wildlife sightings in the Corbett Tiger Reserve, with prizes for the most captivating photos.

#### TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF PROMOTION METHODS FOR NICHE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN UTTARAKHAND: TRADITIONAL Vs. DIGITAL MARKETING

ASPECTS		TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS	DIGITAL MARKETING METHODS		
1-	Reach	Limited geographical reach, primarily local or regional through print media, billboards, and brochures.	Global reach, targeting potential tourists worldwide through websites, social media, and online advertising.		
2-	Cost-effective- ness	High costs associated with printing materials, distributing brochures, and advertising in traditional media outlets.	Generally, more cost-effective, with options for targeted advertising, pay-per-click campaigns, and content marketing.		
3-	Interactivity	Limited interactivity, with one-way communication through advertisements and promotional materials.	High interactivity, enabling real-time engagement with travelers through social media interactions, comments, and inquiries.		
4-	Personalization	Difficult to personalize marketing messages and tailor con- tent to specific target audiences.	Allows for personalized content creation, targeting niche markets with tailored messaging and offers.		
5-	Measurement and Analytics	Limited ability to track and measure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, with few analytics tools available.	Provides comprehensive data analytics, allowing destinations to track campaign performance, visitor demographics, and behavior.		
6-	Flexibility and Adaptability	Less flexible, with longer lead times for campaign develop- ment and limited ability to adapt strategies quickly.	Offers flexibility and agility, allowing destinations to adjust marketing strategies in real-time based on performance metrics and market trends.		
7-	Engagement	Lower levels of engagement, with passive consumption of marketing materials by potential tourists.	Higher levels of engagement, fostering active participation and dia- logue between destinations and travelers through social media plat- forms and online communities.		

(Source: compiled by researcher)

#### ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN PROMOTING NICHE TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Targeted Marketing: Digital marketing allows for precise targeting of niche markets interested in specific activities or attractions, such as trekking, wildlife sanctuaries, or spiritual retreats.

- Global Reach: Through online platforms and social media, destinations in Kumaun and Garhwal can reach potential tourists from around the world, raising awareness of lesser-known attractions like Nanda Devi National Park (Known for its biodiversity and scenic beauty, attracting trekkers and nature enthusiasts) or Valley of Flowers (A UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its vibrant floral diversity, appealing to botanists and photographers)
- Cost-Effectiveness: Compared to traditional advertising methods, digital marketing offers cost-effective strategies such as content marketing and social media campaigns, ideal for destinations with limited marketing budgets.
- Personalized Content: Digital marketing enables the creation of personalized content tailored to the interests and preferences of niche travelers, highlighting unique experiences like the Jim Corbett Jungle Safari (offers wildlife safaris and nature walks in one of India's oldest national parks, attracting wildlife enthusiasts and adventure seekers) or the Auli Ski Resort (popular for skiing and snowboarding during the winter season, drawing adventure sports enthusiasts from across the country)
- Engagement and Interactivity: Interactive digital platforms allow for real-time engagement with travelers, fostering a sense of community and facilitating direct communication to address inquiries or aid with planning trips to places like Kausani (Renowned for its panoramic views of the Himalayas and serene ambiance, ideal for travelers seeking tranquility and scenic beauty) or Chopta (known as Mini Switzerland of Uttarakhand, offering trekking trails and camping opportunities amidst lush green forests and meadows)
- Data Analytics: Digital marketing tools provide valuable insights through data analytics, allowing destinations to track visitor demographics, behavior, and preferences to refine marketing strategies and tailor offerings accordingly for destinations like Mukteshwar (A quaint hill station known for its apple orchards and stunning views of the Himalayas, attracting nature lovers and photography enthusiasts) or Rishikesh (Famous for its spiritual significance and adventure sports like white-water rafting and bungee jumping).
- Storytelling and Brand Building: Platforms like blogs, vlogs, and Instagram stories enable destinations to tell compelling stories and build their brand identity, showcasing the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of places such as Ranikhet (A charming hill station with colonial-era architecture and pine forests, offering opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, and relaxation) or Badrinath Temple (A major pilgrimage site for Hindus, nestled in the Himalayas of Garhwal region and revered as one of the Char Dham pilgrimage destinations)
- User-Generated Content: Encouraging user-generated content through hashtags and social media challenges promotes authenticity and word-of-mouth marketing, encouraging visitors to share their experiences at locations like Nainital (A picturesque hill station in the Kumaun region, surrounding a pristine lake, offering boating, trekking, and stunning views of the Himalayas) or Gangotri (Source of the holy river Ganges, revered by pilgrims and trekkers alike for its spiritual significance and rugged beauty).

#### IMPACTS OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON NICHE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN UTTARAKHAND: CURRENT STATUS AND EXAMPLES

	TABLE 2	
DIGITAL MARKETING	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT STATUS IN UTTARAKHAND
Increased Visibility	Digital marketing strategies such as content marketing, so- cial media marketing, and SEO increase the visibility of niche tourism destinations like Rishikesh, Auli, and Mun- siyari among target audiences locally and globally.	Niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand, such as Rishikesh (known for spiritual tourism), Auli (renowned for skiing and winter sports), and Munsiyari (popular for trekking and adventure), have gained significant visibility through digital marketing efforts.
Audience Engagement	Digital marketing campaigns engage with travelers through social media interactions, website visits, email subscriptions, and other digital channels, fostering a sense of connection and interest in niche tourism offerings in places like Nainital, Jim Corbett National Park, and Valley of Flowers.	Travelers engage with niche tourism offerings in Uttarakhand, such as Nainital (famous for its lake and hill station charm), Jim Corbett National Park (India's oldest national park, known for wildlife safa- ris), and Valley of Flowers (UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its floral diversity), through various digital channels, expressing interest and seeking information.
Awareness and Interest	The increased visibility and engagement generated by dig- ital marketing efforts raise awareness and interest in niche tourism experiences offered in destinations like Haridwar, Pangot, and Chopta, attracting potential visitors and piqu- ing their curiosity.	Digital marketing initiatives have raised awareness and interest in niche tourism experiences in Uttarakhand, such as Haridwar (a sig- nificant pilgrimage site), Pangot (popular for birdwatching), and Chopta (known for its scenic beauty and trekking trails), enticing travelers to explore these unique destinations.
Visitor Inquiries and Book- ings	Digital marketing initiatives lead to inquiries and bookings for niche tourism experiences, accommodations, and ac- tivities in places like Almora, Bhimtal, and Pithoragarh as travelers' express interest in exploring the region's unique offerings.	Travelers show interest in niche tourism experiences in Uttarak- hand, such as Almora (famed for its cultural heritage and handi- crafts), Bhimtal (offering boating and water sports), and Pi- thoragarh (known for its Himalayan vistas and historical signifi- cance), resulting in inquiries and bookings for accommodations and activities.
Positive Experiences	Visitors to Uttarakhand's niche tourism destinations, such as Mukteshwar, Binsar, and Ranikhet, have positive expe- riences and memorable moments during their trips, enjoy- ing the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and authentic ex- periences offered by the region.	Visitors to niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand, such as Muk- teshwar (known for its orchards and panoramic views), Binsar (a wildlife sanctuary offering stunning vistas), and Ranikhet (a serene hill station with colonial charm), have memorable experiences, contributing to positive word-of-mouth and reviews.
Word-of-Mouth and Re- views	Satisfied visitors share their experiences through word-of- mouth recommendations, online reviews, and social me- dia posts, further amplifying the visibility and reputation of Uttarakhand's niche tourism destinations like Kausani, Chakrata, and Tehri Lake.	Satisfied visitors share their experiences at niche tourism destina- tions in Uttarakhand, such as Kausani (offering breathtaking views of the Himalayas), Chakrata (known for its serene environment and trekking trails), and Tehri Lake (a man-made reservoir offering wa- ter sports and adventure activities), contributing to positive word- of-mouth and reviews.
Reputation Building	Positive word-of-mouth and reviews contribute to build- ing the reputation of Uttarakhand's niche tourism destina- tions as desirable and authentic travel destinations, en- hancing their appeal to potential visitors. Destinations like Joshimath, Pauri, and Rudraprayag benefit from their pos- itive reputation.	Positive word-of-mouth and reviews enhance the reputation of niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand, such as Joshimath (a pilgrimage town near Badrinath), Pauri (offering panoramic views of the Himalayas), and Rudraprayag (known for its confluence of rivers), positioning them as desirable and authentic travel destina- tions.
Repeat Visits and Loyalty	A positive reputation and memorable experiences encour- age repeat visits and foster brand loyalty among travelers, who return to Uttarakhand's niche tourism destinations like Lansdowne, Dhanaulti, and Bageshwar for future trips and recommend them to others.	Visitors develop loyalty to niche tourism destinations in Uttarak- hand, such as Lansdowne (a quiet hill station with colonial archi- tecture), Dhanaulti (offering tranquility amidst deodar forests), and Bageshwar (a pilgrimage site on the banks of the Gomti River), leading to repeat visits and recommendations to others.

(source: compiled by researcher)

#### FINDINGS

This paper explores the impact of digital marketing on niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand, emphasizing its role in enhancing visibility, engagement, and visitor satisfaction. Through a thorough investigation, it reveals that digital marketing strategies effectively elevate the profile of destinations such as Rishikesh, Auli, and Nainital, attracting attention from niche travelers globally. Moreover, digital platforms facilitate meaningful interactions between travelers and destinations, fostering a deeper appreciation for Uttarakhand's rich cultural and natural heritage. Beyond visibility, digital marketing streamlines the travel experience, from trip planning to on-site exploration, contributing to heightened visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Notably, emerging trends such as virtual reality experiences and sustainable tourism initiatives present promising avenues for further enhancing Uttarakhand's appeal to niche travelers.

The study also underscores the importance of leveraging digital marketing tools to position Uttarakhand as a premier destination for those seeking authentic and immersive experiences. By embracing these insights, destination marketers can effectively showcase the diverse offerings of Uttarakhand, ultimately driving sustainable tourism growth and economic development in the region.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research illuminates the deep impact of digital marketing on the promotion of niche tourism destinations in Uttarakhand. Through an in-depth analysis, it is evident that digital strategies have revolutionized the way destinations like Rishikesh, Auli, and Nainital are showcased to the world, significantly enhancing their visibility, engagement, and appeal among niche travelers. Looking ahead, the transformative potential of digital marketing remains promising for the future of tourism in Uttarakhand. As technology continues to evolve, digital platforms will play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping the traveler's journey, from inspiration to booking and beyond. Moreover, emerging trends such as virtual reality experiences and sustainable tourism initiatives offer exciting opportunities for further elevating the destination's allure and sustainability.

By embracing digital marketing strategies, destination marketers can harness the power of technology to create immersive and personalized experiences that resonate with travelers seeking authenticity and uniqueness. As a result, Uttarakhand is poised to continue its trajectory as a premier destination for niche tourism, driving economic growth, and fostering meaningful connections between visitors and the region's rich cultural and natural heritage.

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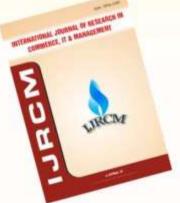
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