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PROMOTING TOURISM DESTINATION & ELEVATING TOURIST INFLOW WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTTARAKHAND

SHIKHA CHANDNA
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
JAIPUR

Dr. J. K. TANDON
PROFESSOR
JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
JAIPUR

ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is composed of those sectors of the economy, which provides services such as accommodation, food and beverages, transportation and recreation, as well as the associated distribution and sales services. Tourism is main source for earning foreign exchange, not only to the developing countries but also to many developed countries in the world. Tourism generates employment opportunities, income and also increases the standard of living. Unfortunately, the boundless generosity bestowed by nature upon this state (Uttarakhand) did not receive the desired human touch and attention it desires to make tourists paradise. The main aim of this paper is to find out the problems faced by the tourists in Uttarakhand and to suggest measures to increase the inflow of foreign and domestic tourists in the state.

KEYWORDS

tourism, foreign exchange, employment opportunities, tourist inflow.

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INTRODUCTION

In the recent world, Tourism and the tourism industry have experienced immense growth, increased diversity, and become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. For countries around the globe it has become an industry which has contributed enormously by creating jobs and is also an important source of income generation. Now a day's tourism is budding service industry in India because 20% of revenue generated from movement of domestic tourist who visit spiritual places. More than 70% of domestic tourist choose spiritual places as a holiday destination every year (Cox & Kings 2008-09). Tourism is considered as one of the largest economic activities in the world, and perhaps the largest in the services sector. It is also one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy.

The present study is about holiday destination with special focus on Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand was carved out of the State of Uttar Pradesh on 9th November 2000 and was the 27th State of India. It is strategically located at the foothills of the Himalayan range. Forming the northern part of the country, it shares its boundary with China, Tibet in the north, Himachal Pradesh in the west and northwest, Gangetic plains of Uttar Pradesh in the south and Nepal in the east. The State of Uttarakhand is a rich repository of natural resources with plenty of water resources, glaciers, and dense forests. Uttarakhand holds immense importance as a religious place and experiences vast inflow of domestic as well as international tourists. Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri and Haridwar attract regular religious tourists which significantly add to the State economy. The State is divided into two regions i.e. Garhwal and Kumaon and comprises 13 Districts out of which four Districts are in the plains and the other nine are in the hills. Tourism sector is the major contributor to the economy of Uttarakhand, with Raj-era hill stations at Mussorie, Almora, Ranikhet and Nainital being some of the most frequented destinations.

Uttarakhand has often been described as Dev Bhumi which means the "Land of the Gods" in the various religious texts. For most of the tourists the name Uttarakhand is often synonym for tourism as the state has many destinations that have the potential to attract visitors. Uttarakhand as a tourism destination has the unique character of offering something to every tourists for any age group which includes pilgrimage, adventures, trekking, recreation, mediation, leisure to name a few. However, its potential has not been tapped sufficiently. There is a huge infrastructural gap and lack of well-coordinated efforts between public and private players in marketing Uttarakhand as a favorite holiday destination.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To ascertain the initiatives taken by the government.
2. To find out the problems faced by the tourists in Uttarakhand.
3. To suggest measures to increase the footfall of foreign and domestic tourists in the state.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The figures in this research paper are mainly based on secondary data collected from the publications and various other means of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, Government of Uttarakhand, United Nations World Trade Organization reports and various other research reports, papers and books. In addition to this, numerous recommendations and suggestions have been proposed in this research paper for the various stakeholders working in the travel and tourism sector in the state of Uttarakhand so that they can identify the factors responsible in developing the tourism sector in the country.

UTTARAKHAND TOURISM

Tourism is a prominent universal recreation movement. Worldwide tourism is striking new achievements year after year. In spite of the confronting circumstances, worldwide tourism is a real paramount exercise because of the fact that it provides roughly five percent of the world's GDP and six percent of the comprehensive exports and engages one out of twelve people in the developed and the developing economics. Over the last few years the state of Uttarakhand has been one of the rapidly flourishing tourism zones in India. If the direction of inbound tourism is noticed it can be observed that in spite of its various tourism destinations Uttarakhand is still not a preferred tourism destination for Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and Domestic Tourist Arrivals (DTAs). Additionally in the line-up of top ten tourism sites and states Uttarakhand does not stand anywhere and not even one percent of domestic or foreign tourist visit the state. Even though Uttarakhand

is such a tourism station, which has rare, diversified and ample tourist allures but still it has not been able to fascinate FTAs and DTAs. Even the flow of DTAs is very less the national average of the country.

Uttarakhand as a state has numerous destinations, which are still not, received the attention of the domestic tourists or the foreign tourists in any aspect of tourism industry. The primary reason behind is the lack of the effort on the part of the various stakeholders related to the travel and tourism industry to promote the various destinations of the state to the tourists.

The state of Uttarakhand does not have much in terms of monuments but still there are a number of natural sites can be converted into spots form the tourism point of view but as of now no concrete steps has been carried out in this direction. The state has not made much of efforts to make it's monuments a priority for the tourists.

STEPS TAKEN TO PROMOTE TOURISM IN UTTARAKHAND

After the creation of the state in the year 2000 the government initiated a number of plans to formulate and promote the various tourist destinations that were spread all over the state. The government is mainly focusing on developing the infrastructure and encouraging private and foreign investment in this sector. The various initiatives taken by the government are:

- The government has started single window system to boost capital in the travel and tourism sector of the state.
- Formulation of policies for conservation of heritage, eco-system and culture at various destinations so that the tourist footfall increase in these stations.
- Improvement and expansion of infrastructure to satisfy the requirements of the visitors.
- Initiated various schemes to draw more visitors especially to those destinations in which the tourist inflow is less when compared to popular destinations.
- Tie up of IRCTC with UTDB for promotion of tourism especially projecting the state as a yoga destination.

HOW TO INCREASE TOURISM IN UTTARAKHAND

Below steps can be taken by the concerned authorities to step up tourism in Uttarakhand:

- The government should act in a proactive manner in regard for the promotion of the various destinations as a tourist brand in various states of the country as well as in overseas locations.
- The accommodation services should be enhanced with better facilities and at moderate prices.
- Tourism must get awareness of potential tourist spot by the help of proper advertisement.
- The sanitation facilities should be provided at tourist stations.
- The banking facilities especially ATMs should be increased in and around the tourist destinations of the state.
- The government should initiate plans for the sustainable tourism development of the state.
- There must be Strict conservation laws that protect and promote ecotourism and other developments, notably also the establishment of facilities that would help to protect the environment such as refuse collection and disposal
- The various stakeholders should bring in effective mechanize for making sure that the safety of the tourists is not at risk.

CONCLUSION

The State of Uttarakhand is a rich repository of natural resources with plenty of water resources, glaciers and dense forests. Uttarakhand - the land of gods, the home of Himalayas and truly a paradise on earth, allures everyone from everywhere. The fresh air, the pure water, the chilling snow, the adverting mountains, the scenic beauty, the small villages, the simpler people and a tougher lifestyle is what that distinguishes Uttarakhand from rest of the world.

The endeavours of the different governmental agencies as well as the private players have been there in increasing the tourist footfall to the various destinations of the state. But there is still tremendous amount of sphere to for increasing the visitors flow to the state. Today tourists across the world are not only attracted by natural beauty but they need a whole lot of facilities for visiting a particular destination. In order to improve the ranking and image of the state great number of efforts should be made in specific directions. In this manner, Uttarakhand will be in a position to use its natural, cultural and heritage resources and this will increase the domestic and foreign tourists to the state.

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