

# A Study on the Growth and Development of the Tourism Industry in Uttarakhand Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies

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## Abstract:

The travel and tourism industry provides hospitality to visitors to the place as well as services that ensure the customers' demands are met. Tourism provides significant economic support to a country. Tourism has a crucial influence in a country's development, which varies between countries. This industry necessitates extensive oversight and smooth operation because it serves both locals and visitors. This is influenced by a variety of elements, including infrastructure, a country's level of development, culture, safety, and, most significantly, the qualities that render a nation unique enough to make it worth a visit. Additionally, the travel and tourism industry's job is to promote the nation so that as many people as possible visit there and even inspire others to do so. Tourism, in addition to providing to clients or visitors, also caters to persons in need of employment. This industry employs people, hence lowering the country's unemployment rate. Uttarakhand has a thriving and well-established tourism business. It seeks to promote, satisfy, and employ its consumers by offering excellent amenities and recreational opportunities, and so contributes to the country's GDP. Uttarakhand's tourist business is essential and is recognized as one of the primary foundations.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Hospitality, locals, tourists, Economic Support, Infrastructure, Lowering, Employment, GDP

## 1. Introduction

Uttarakhand is a magical place with mountains and myths, breathtaking scenery, thrilling adventures, yoga, and wellness. It has plenty to offer every kind of traveler. The state, which is separated into two main sections, Garhwal and Kumaon, is framed by the Himalayas and is commonly referred to as Devbhoomi, or the land of gods. Discover the 13 lesser-known locations from Uttarakhand's 13 districts. The state is home to various popular tourist attractions including Nainital, Mussoorie, Corbett National Park, and Auli, as well as pilgrimage sites like Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh, and Haridwar. If we talk about the Badri Kedar valley in terms of tourism then we have plenty of resources available in this region.

As to the proposed tourism policy for Uttarakhand, 44.2% of domestic tourists arrived in the state for religious visits and pilgrimages, whilst 43.6% came for vacations and sightseeing. The state's religious attractions, particularly the Char Dham Yatra, which encompasses the four pilgrimage sites of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri, are the main draws. Tourism has contributed approximately 14.57% to SGDP in Uttarakhand. About 5.35 crore tourists visited Uttarakhand in 2022. As per the India

Tourism statistics 2023 Uttarakhand received 54.64 million domestic tourists with the percentage share of 3.16 in India. If we talk about the Kedar valley then in 2021 Kedarnath shrine received 243012 tourists and the Badrinath shrine received 199409 total tourists. These two valleys have the maximum potential of tourism due to the availability of tourism resources here. Over the next ten years; Uttarakhand is predicted to see a more than twofold increase in tourism, with an estimated 67 million visitors by 2026.

The tourist industry in Uttarakhand is the most important industry since it was a part of Uttar Pradesh. Uttarakhand tourism has expanded throughout the years, with many stunning tourist destinations and delectable cuisines. In 2021, Uttarakhand received around 20018115 visitors because of the pleasant weather and moderate market prices; the months of February to October see the highest number of visitors. Uttarakhand is a God's own country with numerous gorgeous destinations. It is a popular destination for seeing the famed Char Dhams, Panch Badris, Panch Kedars, The Ganges, Corbett National Park, and many other attractions.

The tourism commission of Uttarakhand was founded in 2001 with the goal of maintaining and increasing Uttarakhand's potential as a travel destination. Significant employment in the state is also generated by the tourist sector, including jobs as tour guides, in the hotel sector, and with travel agencies.

## 2. Status of Tourism Industry in Uttarakhand at Present

Uttarakhand is a state located in northern India. Due to its religious significance and several Hindu temples and pilgrimage sites scattered throughout the state, it is often referred to as the "Devbhumi" (meaning "Land of the Gods"). As a result, a significant proportion of the state's tourism is generated by religious travel. Uttarakhand is well-known for its natural Himalayan environment. In the year 2022 nearly 46 lakh pilgrims reached the famous char Dham of Uttarakhand and in 2023 it may cross 50 lakh pilgrims. In Uttarakhand, the tourist sector brought in 23,000 crores revenue in 2013–14. In the coming year Uttarakhand aims to receive the tourist inflow to 70 Million by 2030.

Foreign tourist attractions in Uttarakhand according to the poll, 201 travellers reported 753 visits to various tourist destinations in Uttarakhand. It comprised 539 journeys completed as of the survey date and 214 trips planned to be conducted during the current trip. As a result, foreign tourists would visit 3.75 different locations in the state on average during each trip. Rishikesh is Uttarakhand's pride and joy in terms of tourist visits, since it attracts 79.1 percent of all foreign tourists. Haridwar attracts 61.7%, Gangotri received 38.3%, Uttarakashi received 23.9% a little less as compared to the previous destinations while Kedarnath received near about 22.9% visitors, Badrinath (21.4%), Auli (18.9%), Nainital (11.9%), and Gaumukh (11.0%) are also popular tourist destinations.

The tourism sector is regarded as an essential sector of Uttarakhand's economy. With a population of 10,086,292 and 6.9% GDP growth in 2018-19. In their research, Dayand K. C. and Prof. D. S. Leelavati (2016) revealed that tourism is one of the world's rapidly expanding industry sectors. It is an effective tool for economic progress. The expansion of the tourist sector has resulted in job creation, foreign exchange revenues, infrastructure expansion, capital investment, socioeconomic growth, increased GDP contribution, and so on. Because of the rapid rise of the tourism industry in India, the country has witnessed long-term and inclusive economic growth.

A strong tourist industry is dependent on the advancement of all the elements that contribute to its expansion. Important factors include anything from the nation's infrastructure to the security of its departing guests. In order to boost the number of visitors visiting the nation, it is imperative to address

key variables influencing the tourism industry's survival both in isolation and in concert with other aspects of the sector.

**Table 1. Tourist Visits in Uttarakhand.**

YEARS	DOMESTIC TOURIST VISITS (in millions)	FOREIGN TOURIST VISITS (in millions)
2001	9.55	0.44
2002	10.61	0.45
2003	10.84	0.55
2004	11.72	0.63
2005	14.22	0.76
2006	16.67	0.85
2007	19.80	0.96
2008	20.55	1.00
2009	21.93	1.06
2010	30.21	1.27
2011	25.95	1.24
2012	26.83	1.24
2013	19.94	0.98
2014	21.99	1.01
2015	29.50	1.06
2016	31663782	112799
2017	34581097	142102
2018	36697678	154526

Source: Indian Tourism Statistics at a glance

**Table 2. Tourist Statistics Year 2021.**

Sl. No.	Name of Tourist Destination	Year 2021		
		Indian	Foreigner	Total
1	Dehradun	2866107	1675	2867782
2	Rishikesh	291230	1576	292806
3	Mussoorie	1229528	280	1229808
4	Pauri	7350	0	7350
5	Srinagar	209555	0	209555
6	Kotdwar (Swaragasram, Chilla)	108362	638	109000
7	Rudraprayag (without Kedarnath)	46479	36	46515
8	Kedarnath	242985	27	243012
9	Gopeshwar (Nandprayag, Mundoli, Tharali etc.)	10163	53	10216
10	Joshimath (Govindghat, Ghanghariya)	167369	12	167381

Sl. No.	Name of Tourist Destination	Year 2021		
		Indian	Foreigner	Total
11	Badrinath	199406	3	199409
12	Auli	127487	1	127488
13	Hemkund Sahib	19909	0	19909
14	Valley of Flowers	10383	15	10398
15	Tehri	490512	2300	492812
16	Uttarkashi (Harshil, Gangnani etc.)	80593	140	80733
17	Gangotri	33771	0	33771
18	Yamunotri	33311	0	33311
19	Haridwar	12717825	616	12718441
20	Almora	38027	171	38198
21	Ranikheth	54265	0	54265
22	Kausani & Bageshwar	45807	8	45815
23	Pithoragarh	53433	73	53506
24	Champawat	15704	7	15711
25	Nainital	325626	633	326259
26	Kathgodam	107932	177	108109
27	Corbett National Park	287324	6813	294137
28	Udham Singh Nagar	182262	156	182418
	Total	20002705	15410	20018115

Source: Indian Tourism Statistics at a glance

In order to encourage tourism in the state in a controlled way, the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board was established in 2001. In collaboration with other established organizations, it advances the state's development via boosting tourism. The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) is a regulatory organization that is in charge of organizing and developing initiatives that are related to the execution of plans, policies, and strategies for the state's tourism industry.

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board is in charge of ensuring that tourism in the state operates efficiently, marketing and promoting Uttarakhand as a must-visit destination, responding to outsiders' complaints, and improving their travel experience. It always surveys visitors on a periodic basis to monitor their interests and satisfaction level following their visit to Uttarakhand. This aids them in staying in line and fulfilling the needs of the populace.

**Table:3 Tourism Contribution in economy**

CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM IN THE ECONOMY OF UTTARAKHAND AND INDIA	UTTARAKHAND	INDIA
Total Contribution in GDP	9.68%	7.00%
Total Contribution in tourism employment	17.10%	10.17%

### 3. Major Attractions and Facilities

One of the primary drivers of tourism in a nation is curiosity and the desire to discover and experience

something novel that they haven't seen before or that is unique to that nation. Tourists have an amazing experience because of the facilities and attractions offered. Because of this unique encounter, the country's ranking rises and the destination is suggested. As a result, more people are making return trips to the destination. The UTDB, which is in place in the state, is working hard to expand the tourism attractions in order to improve how appealing a trip to Uttarakhand is overall.

Uttarakhand is a diversified and tranquil tourism destination. An unparalleled array of resources, including Single Point of Entry Clearances, Subsidy and Investment Incentives, Low Cost Energy, Clean Water, Highly Skilled Human Resources, Good Law & Order, The closeness to NCR along with its Massive Tourist The arrivals (the greatest percentage in the Mountain States of India), World-Class Education System, Wild-Life Sanctuary, Flora and Fauna, Peaceful & welcoming People, offer an unparalleled quality of life to its residents in addition to committed Relationship Management.

Uttarakhand is defined by its steep mountains, unusual animals, and numerous temples. When it comes to tourism, this state needs no introduction.

Tourism is a huge sector in Uttarakhand. This sector contributes significantly to the state's revenue. With so many beautiful hill stations and pilgrimage sites, Uttarakhand attracts a large audience every year. This state has attracted adventurers, yoga enthusiasts, pilgrims, romantic couples, families, and wacky groups of friends, among others. However, there is always room for advancement in any subject. There are numerous strategies to boost tourism in Uttarakhand.

#### **4. Public Transport & Infrastructure**

For the locals, buses are more practical and well-liked. Nearly every region of Uttarakhand that is accessible by road is included in the bus routes. For getting to the state, buses and taxis are necessary because railways cover very less area of the state in terms of transport, especially the plains. GMVN and KMVN Buses run at a decent frequency from early in the morning till late from their stations. Luxury buses are frequently used in the Dehradun local region for trips with tourists; the majority of these buses have air conditioning, and cash payments are accepted. Although they cost a little more, they are thought to be faster than standard buses.

When it comes to drawing tourists to a location, infrastructure is crucial. Infrastructure covers things like how well airports are constructed, how resources are used to improve cities, and well-functioning flyovers and underpasses to handle traffic. All of these have an impact on Uttarakhand's tourism figures. The government has started initiatives to upgrade the char Dham, highways, trains, and airports.

#### **5. Safety and Health Concerns**

Very high health and safety regulations. The Uttarakhand government is concerned about the overall well-being of its citizens and does not want health issues to arise in the state. Automatic sensors at the Jolly Grant Airport take the traveller's temperature. If the results appear too much the authorities will ask the person to undergo a brief health examination.

Hospitals in Uttarakhand provide top-notch services, contributing to the state's world-class healthcare industry. In the event of an accident, guests can seek care at a public hospital, where they will always receive treatment—regardless of when payment is received. Uttarakhand is extremely safe for all visitors, both day and night. The police patrol most areas on a regular basis, and anyone can seek assistance at any moment. Despite the external support and safety, it is still essential that travelers take care of their things and be wary of any suspicious acts that occur around them.

## 6. Current Plans & Projects in Uttarakhand

The Uttarakhand government is considering unique and "Out of the Box" methods for attracting and promoting visitors from around the world. Some of these proposals, which are currently being considered by the government, are described below and, if adopted, will undoubtedly attract tourists, particularly foreign tourists.

There are plans to construct glass bridges at scenic spots to provide tourists with a 360-degree perspective of natural beauty through transparent glass, as well as to lure adventure and nature enthusiasts to Uttarakhand..

Submerged underwater tourism The old town of Tehri will once again attract adventure seekers and will be unique in India.

1. Promoting places and fairs associated with Uttarakhand's sole female warrior, Talu Rauteli, also known as Maharani Lakshmibai of Garhwal, will entice her devotees.
2. Promoting Shiva Temple at Lakhamandal along with developing the Mahabharata tourism circuit will promote and develop additional tourist destinations for Spiritual tourists.
3. Uttarakhand Govt is Promoting traditional Uttarakhandi food throughout the country and the world would help as well to build enthusiasm and interest for the state.
4. The Uttarakhand government is encouraging the home stay concept, which will not only draw tourists but also aid to preserve the hotel industry.
5. The government has resolved to create one new tourist attraction in each & every district of Uttarakhand, as well as to focus on giving tourism-related jobs to hill youths.
6. The Uttarakhand government intends to host Yoga activities in hitherto undiscovered areas, which could lead to national and worldwide renown.
7. To encourage as many people as possible to practice yoga and promote health tourism, the government has decided to launch a yoga week starting June 15th, which will also be advantageous.
8. The Uttarakhand government intends to build 46 ropeway projects throughout the state, which will enhance tourism.
9. Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary is constructing a five-star ecotourism and health and wellness center.
10. The tourism office is also developing a strategic plan for Auli and a proposal to construct floating houses and promote home stays throughout the state in order to boost tourism and allow visitors to enjoy a variety of tourist destinations on each visit.
11. The tourism department also intends to make the Trijugi Narayan as a wedding destination in the Rudraprayag district.
12. The George Everest House in Mussoorie is presently the starting point of the golf cart trail race. The goal was to make the George Everest House a popular tourist attraction in Mussoorie.
13. Uttarakhand Govt is developing tourism Infrastructure in Kartikeya Swami Circuit
14. Development of a five star Ecotourism and Health and Wellness Centre at Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary is also going on.

To stimulate investment, new tourist destinations will be created in accordance with the state's new tourism policy. The major towns of the state have been divided into three groups under the strategy for tourism investment. For investments made in areas that are not yet well-known to tourists, the government will provide up to a 50% subsidy. In addition, cab operators (electric vehicles), adventure travel, heli tourism, and caravan tourism all received 100% subsidies.



The governing body has authorized a new tourist policy with the aim of increasing investment in the tourism sector. Five crore rupees is the minimum project cost that must be met in order to benefit from incentives for investment in the tourism industry.

By encouraging investment, unexplored places will be developed in the state in terms of tourism. This will also generate additional job opportunities by increasing tourism-related activities. These constitute the classifications of cities. In the new policy; cities have been placed in three categories for investment in the tourism sector.

Category-A: Haridwar, Nainital and Udham Singh Nagar, Dehradun, Ranikhet, Almora Tehsils.

Category-B: Remaining area of district Almora, Kalsi, Chakrata and Tuni tehsils of Dehradun district, Garud of Bageshwar, Kotdwar, Lansdowne, Yamkeshwar and Dhumakot tehsils of Pauri district, Dhanaulti and Narendranagar tehsils of Tehri Garhwal.

Category-C: Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Champawat, Rudraprayag, Pithoragarh, remaining areas of Bageshwar district, Pauri and remaining areas of Tehri district which are not in this.



Source: Uttarakhand Tourism

*Figure 1. Avenues of tourism in Uttarakhand.*

## 7. Effects of Tourism Industry in Uttarakhand Economy

Tourism is an essential sector in Uttarakhand because of its immense contribution in terms of revenue generating and job creation. Tourism is predicted to produce 2.96 percent of the state's Gross Value Added and 11.8 percent of the state's jobs, according to the State TSA. When indirect shares relating to tourism's links with other sectors of the economy are included, these shares amount to 6.59 percent of GVA and 26.8 percent of employment.

The state government has been focusing on the tourist sector because it recognizes the long-term economic impact that increased investment in the sector may have, such as reducing unemployment amongst educated unemployed young people, lowering migration, and maintaining balanced regional growth. The tourism industry also has a favorable impact on other areas of the economy, such as hospitality and transportation. The tourism industry can also help the state generate more money, particularly by luring foreign tourists. It also has the potential to strengthen the hill economy by boosting indigenous strengths of the local economy, such as promoting unknown tourist sites of distant, pristine communities through ecotourism and rural tourism.

## 8. SWOT Analysis of Uttarakhand Tourism

### *Strength*

Unique and remarkable mountainous environment encompassing world famous Himalayas. Presence of

exceptional geographical features (e.g. waterfalls, rapids, mountain tops, and glaciers).

There are numerous very unique Himalayan mountain towns and villages (such as Dharchula, Munsiyari, and Bageshwar) situated amidst breathtaking nature. Good range of perspectives of Himalayan Range.

Existing range of walking pathways and circuits (e.g. Sankri, Gangotri, Dodital and Yamunotri, HemKund and Valley of Flowers).

Reputable national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across the world, such as Corbett National Park and Nanda Devi Wildlife Sanctuary, are home to a diverse array of species, such as bears, tigers, Asiatic elephants, and leopards.

### ***Weaknesses***

Unplanned growth in areas vulnerable to disasters. Almost all metropolitan environments are of low quality in terms of general look, pollution, and trash.

urban planning/congestion, health/safety, and administration without regard for the environment A narrow understanding of the natural world.

Numerous businesses and government organizations have limited knowledge about the possibilities and requirements of ecotourism. In Uttarakhand Poor design quality in creation of tourism facilities as illustrated at several Government Guest Houses. Limited cooperation among Government agencies.

Inadequate public transport system.

Poor traffic control in villages and towns.

In many places, there is a lack of community awareness and participation in tourism.

Lack of equitable distribution of benefits (tourism revenues) to the local communities.

### ***Opportunities***

The construction of the Char Dham all-weather road project will greatly enhance planned development along these highways. Possibility of tapping into emerging markets in the areas of health and wellness, MICE, and rural tourism. Adventure tourism activities such as hiking, camping, and skydiving, bird watching, and paragliding, as well as water sports like kayaking and rafting, have enormous potential for surrounding markets. Increased employment opportunities for local communities in the rural tourism industry shall occur with increased support from the State Government. Cultural distinctiveness, folklore, and handicrafts could be leveraged for the development of rural and culture-based tourism products. Some regions of Uttarakhand are known as preferred retirement destinations for retirees, hence the potential of future market

### ***Threats***

Uttarakhand is highly natural disaster prone state; Carrying capacity is the major issue in Uttarakhand highly tourist inflows during vacations can be a major problem; unorganized Yatra tourists, particularly at destinations; increased traffic and vehicle pollution cause severe congestion and pollution in towns and villages; ongoing poor road maintenance will make accessibility a major barrier to increasing quality and numbers of visitors.

## **9. Conclusion**

About 4.59 percent of all jobs in the economy are directly created by tourism. If one includes the creation of indirect jobs, the percentage rises to 8.27 percent. In Uttarakhand, tourism is one of the



sectors with the fastest growth rates. About 10 lakh people are employed in tourism and its allied businesses, with women making up at least 30% of the workforce. Numerous reasons have contributed to the expansion of tourism in Uttarakhand. The main criteria are the potential for natural beauty, historical and archeological sites, sports and games, food and religious sites, and other factors. But the main obstacles are a lack of infrastructure, notably in Garhwal and Kumaon region; more significantly, the state of the roads, roadside eateries, and adequate public transportation connections. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the tourism potential of Garhwal and Kumaon, the two parts of Uttarakhand, differs. Whereas Kumaon offers leisure, peace, and relaxation, Garhwal caters to pilgrimage and adventure.

On the basis of all the above information we can say that Uttarakhand has maximum opportunities and scope of tourism and if we see the growth rate of tourism in Uttarakhand then we can say that here tourism has flourished very well and just because of this the future of tourism in Uttarakhand will be in a safe and good condition.

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