

Eco-Tourism: An Option For Sustainable Livelihood And Biodiversity Conservation In Himalayan Region

Dr. Ashok Ku. Sahani^{1*}

^{1*}Scientist- E, G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora, Uttarakhand-243643
mail-aks.gbpihed@rediffmail.com

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Ashok Ku. Sahani

*Scientist- E, G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora, Uttarakhand-243643
mail-aks.gbpihed@rediffmail.com

Tourism is one of the world's most durable and dynamic sectors, but according to Mowforth and Munt (1998), there is always a dark side. Natural and Protected areas (National Park, Sanctuary) have been in touristic demand since the 1970's. Uttarakhand is rich in natural resources especially water (through snow-clad and forest recharged) and forests with many glaciers, rivers, dense forests and snow-clad mountain peaks. The state has a vast tourism potential in adventure, leisure, and after all pilgrimage which may link to eco-tourism. The importance of Sustainable Tourism worldwide has increased significantly due to the impact of increased human activity on climate and natural areas (Protected and Un-protected). Nevertheless, it is necessary that the negative impact of the Tourism industry is not enlarged unrealistically. Full advantage can then be drawn from the potential of tourism for inclusive growth, with livelihood support to the poor, most disadvantaged, women and youth. Mass tourism is generally perceived as problematic, destructive to the environment and insensitive. Therefore, as tourism and its environmental impact grows, so does criticism. Growing environmental concern, combined with a general dissatisfaction with such forms of tourism, led to increased demand for sustainable tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998).

The tourism is already developed in this region but tourists facing lot of problems (like proper road network and social infrastructure) by which the eco-tourism is not developed as par with the other regions of India like South region. In Uttarakhand there is potentiality to develop the tourism industry and it is playing a major role for generate revenue and employment at local level of certain areas. Tourists wish to see new places which are close to nature and away from hustle and bustle of city. So the new concepts in tourism have been emerged like ecotourism, new age tourism, village tourism, rural tourism, health tourism, medical tourism after all community based tourism. In Uttarakhand the pollution is least as par with other states in India, so that is why there is enough potential and have a future development of eco-tourism in this region. To achieve the heights in the development of tourism in Uttarakhand sustainable eco-tourism development through integrated planning is needed.

The condition and direction of tourism should not only focus for generate revenue but also create job opportunity to the local communities and for environmental protection and conservation has to be motivated.

It may be possible only when local communities advance the socio-economic and adding us aside from tourism that tourist will enjoy local arts, music, handlooms, traditional housing and they will understand their living conditions and daily routine life for livelihood and on the other hand local community to environmental protection will benefit financially as well as create more livelihoods opportunity and will continue to rise. At the community level, many such attempts are being made and being given such a boost to tourism. Home Stay, Village tours and trekking from village tourism can thus understand the circumstances in which tourist will be able to learn to be in tune with Nature and will become a source of livelihood for the local people and the local people will also promote tourism with environmental and natural conservation.

Scope in Tourism for livelihood

Tourism is one of the biggest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the global economy and also world's largest growing industry and has significant environmental, cultural, social, and economic effects, both positive and negative. The main objectives of our study are formation of tourist circuits, promotion of eco-tourism, village tourism and find out the problems and suggest a suitable plan for sustainable tourism development in Uttarakhand. And promote and initiate such a local custom and traditional foods, dishes, culture, folklore, handicrafts, architecture heritage and etc which have high value at local communities but yet to set proper recommendation. Sustainable tourism can be taken in four different interpretations that include socio-economic sustainability of tourism, the ecologically sustainable tourism, sustainable tourism development with both focus of environment as well as long term practicability of the industry and finally tourism as a part of a strategy for sustainable development. Therefore, the purpose of this research or study is to adopt integrated approach and establishment of new plans for the sustainable development of tourism in Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand has one high scope of tourism destination in the field of pilgrimage, nature tourist, adventure tourism, honeymoon destination, cultural tourism & after all community based tourism. The state share and contribute almost half (49.6%) of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and as income from tourism. Though the state has the immense

potential of various type of tourism, but the state is famous of spiritual/religion tourism and in some extent adventures tourism. But the community based tourism is yet to explore. Ecotourism can offer a viable combination of ecological and cultural protection, increase local awareness of the value of preserving the natural and cultural environments and aid in economic development. As the International Ecotourism Society (TIES), the definition of ecotourism is “Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.”

Status of Tourism in Uttarakhand and its socio-economic benefits

In Uttarakhand or Uttaranchal tourism is the most significant segment of the state's economy. About 50% of the state is associated with at least some part of the Uttarakhand tourism industry. Lakhs of tourist visit Uttarakhand every year to enjoy the celestial beauty of the land. Uttarakhand has a rich and exotic flora and fauna and is an ideal location for eco and wildlife tourism. The lush green forests here are abundant with pine, oak, rhododendron, juniper and birch trees. Ever since the formation of the new State in the beginning of the last decade, tourism, hospitality and trade sector has shown an upward trend in its contribution to the State GDP. As per our estimates, the total human resource requirement for tourism, hospitality and trade sector in 2012 is approximately 0.30 million, which is expected to grow to 0.45 million in 2017, and 0.69 million in 2022. Incremental manpower requirement for Tourism, Hospitality and Trade sector during next 10 years will be 0.39 million (growth of 18.9 percent or second highest). Sector's share in total human resource requirement is currently 7.9 percent and is expected to grow to 9.7 percent and 11.7 percent in 2017 and 2022 respectively. Dehradun, Haridwar and Nainital will generate majority of the demand whereas other hill Districts will also contribute significantly provided the State Government continues to support infrastructure development activities and maintain a sustained focus on growth of tourism and trade in these Districts.

Parameters of Ecotourism:

It is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people (TIES).

- Goal conservation
- Authentic natural and cultural experience
- Demands Knowledge
- Participation and local benefits

Ecotourism is a potentially effective strategy for biodiversity conservation.

- Jobs and increased income
- Awareness understanding and public support
- Skills
- Revenues for PAs & Govt.

Existing problems related to ecotourism in IHR

There are lots of possibilities for tourism and more scope for every type of Tourism in IHR. Mostly at the community level, such as home stay, village tour tourism, trekking, paragliding, white river rafting, skating, boating, camping on natural areas, birds watching and so on, can be promoted and the local people to be aware for conservation and protection of the environment through generate livelihood resources at local level.

Major affecting factors of tourism in Hills:

As per our observation and the view of tourists and locals, there are plenty of factors which can affect tourism in Himalayas wherein land slide, heavy rain during rainy season, cloudburst, and well infrastructure facilities are the major affecting factors of tourism in IHR. Besides of it some more factors can effects tourism in hilly regions which is given below:-

- Transportation (old condition buses, bad and zig-zag roads)
- Accommodation facilities
- Accessibility
- Shopping and mall facilities
- Service and safety (like: catering, entertainment, safety)
- Cost related factors (due to import from outside of state)
- Well and experienced tour operator
- Overall satisfaction in natural and scenic beauty

Suggestion on the basis of observation and from tourist:

- Improve roads and transportation facilities
- Proper management of garbage disposal and maintain the environment in certain place.
- More parking spaces where tourism activity are going on and enjoying.
- Clinics and hospitality must be provided

- Non-exploitation by local and stakeholders
- Play ground and walking lane should be developed
- Entertainment (either traditional or global) facilities for tourist
- Emphasize to promote and initiate to add local dishes in menu
- Publicize local tradition and handicraft
- Emphasize to promote community base tourism for reduce tourist pressure from other tourism destination and create job opportunity for the local people.
- Priority to be accorded to local initiatives, especially institutional creation of Village Tourism Development Committee (VTDC), SHGs, Community Base Tourism (CBT), home-stays etc.

Scope of ecotourism in IHR with biodiversity conservation

There are innumerable tourist destinations in Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) that have potential to attract the tourist and become a potential source of the income to the local people. Some tourist destination famous for all over year travelling, the list of tourist destination in the Himalayan states is the given:

Name of the state	Activities/ Station	Destination
Uttarakhand	Hill Station	Almora, Auli, Bhimtaal, Mussorie, Chakrata, Chamba, Chopta, Dhanaulti, Dwarhat, Kausani, Khirsu, Dodital, Dayara Bugyal, Harsil, Pauri, New Tehri, Ranikhet, Sattal, Ramgarh, Uttarkashi, Narendranagar, Nainital, Pithoragarh and more
	Wild life (sanctuaries and National Parks)	Corbett National Park, Gangotri National Park, Rajaji, Binsar, Ascot, Nanda Devi, Valley of Flower and more
	Pilgrim Station	Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamnotri, Devprayag, Tungnath, Aadibadri, Kailas Mansarover, Surkanda, Chandrabadni, Rishikesh, Haridwar Joshimath, Karnprayag, Hemkund Sahib Gaurikund, Gangolihat, Gangnani and more
	Adventurous station	Rishikesh, Kaudiyala, Shivpuri, Devprayag, New Tehri, Tehri Dam, Auli, Bedni Bugyal, Govind Ghat, Hanuman Chatti, Har ki Doon, Deoria Tal, Pindari Glacier and more
Himachal Pradesh	Adventurous, tracking	Kufri, Shimla, Manali
Meghalaya	Rich biodiversity, forest	Mawlynnong, Umden
Assam	Rich biodiversity, Riverine ecosystem	Majuli (riverine island), Nameri (bird watching), Nampakhe
Nagaland	Natural beauty, forest	ToupHEMA (Hill top hamlet)
Manipur	Floating swamp	Loktak Lake
Arunachal Pradesh	Rich traditional and cultural diversity	Thembang
Jammu	Rich cultural and ethnical diversity, nature beauty	Kashmir Valley, Chenab Valley, Sindh Valley and Lidder Valley
Sikkim	Rich cultural and traditional society	Dzongu area, Kanchanjanga, Yuksom, Aritar, Kewzing and Darap

Role of ecotourism in biodiversity conservation

Biodiversity Conservation through Ecotourism Common approaches to protecting biodiversity include creation of parks and protected areas, establishment of natural reserves, and implementation of integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP), Establishment of Butterfly Parks, Sparrow Parks, Vulture safe zones, Vulture Restaurants etc. They vary in strictness of conservation in terms of human consumptive uses. Protected areas (PAs) play critical roles in safeguarding biodiversity and maintaining the crucial services provided by the natural systems. They have an important role in the evolving challenge of maintaining a sustainable world (Borrie et al., 1998; Groombridge, 1992). Currently, more than 161,991 areas have been reported as PAs in the World Database of Protected Areas and the number continues to increase (Kolahi et al., 2013). PAs have long been the only way to conserve ecological regions from the other forms of land. These areas are therefore the cornerstone of most national strategies to protect Biodiversity and Natural resources (Hockings et al., 2005; Leverington et al., 2010) playing a key role in the sustainable utilization and attainment of natural resources. The success of the Ecotourism initiatives reflects the concern for achieving a balance between conservation of the sanctuary and livelihood of people living in and around it.

To maintain the major proportion of the world's biodiversity at present only appears feasible by maintaining organisms in their wild state and within their existing range. With protected areas being at the forefront of efforts to conserve biodiversity, the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) proposed to preserve 12% of the terrestrial surface, representing all kinds of biomes. This figure possibly represents a minimum, because most protected areas today face moderate to high human use and are exposed to the influences of, for example, trans-border acid rain, troposphere nitrogen deposition, or changes in atmospheric composition and climate. Moreover, some protected areas

are only small remnants of habitats, not big enough to sustain all occurring species, while others are not sufficiently well managed to achieve the conservation objectives. Overall, the concept of protected areas may be a necessary response in times of rampant habitat loss, but it does not address the fundamental economic and social causes of the threats to biodiversity. Boundaries that go with protection may even suggest that surrounding areas are free for exploitation. Protection of biodiversity 'hot spots' are therefore necessary but not sufficient condition for biodiversity conservation under a strong sustainability policy objective.

Ecotourism has great potential to attain objectives of environmental conservation and sustainable development. The earning from tourism activities should be beneficial in such a way to bring changes in their consumption pattern. Also, tourist destination should be attractive enough to produce adequate financial support and provide incentives for poor people to reduce the use of their environmental resources and support in conservation activities. It is helpful if the tourism business is developed properly with the presence of attractive faunal species. Also, there should be investment on infrastructure and training to enhance local people involvement and make tourism business profitable. The main themes that relate enhancement of tourism, conservation of biological diversity, and enhancement of livelihood were economic incentives, conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem services, infrastructural development, building of capacity and empowerment. Local people empowerment can be generated from development of tourism and conservation of biological diversity. As the tourists prefer conservation of floral and faunal diversity and other environmental resources, increase in use values of resources, good health and sanitation facilities, and proper solid waste management practices. Tourists want to pay a high price for the improvements of basic recreational facilities and the information and knowledge provided to them about different facet of the environment, biodiversity and community based conservation initiatives. It will support them to get idea about importance of ecosystem of these areas, manage the interrelationships between floral and faunal species of the nature, sustain the views of tourists, enlighten them about observing and feeling, support them in reducing adverse environmental impacts, and enhance activities for the management of environment. In this way, active involvement of tourists for maintaining the ecosystem and ecological resources will not only support tourist facilities but also maintain the quality of environment, biological diversity, ecosystem functioning and other ecological aspects.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

This paper has indicated the potential of sustainable tourism as well as community base tourism to generate financial and socio-economical benefits for community and achieve objective and aim of development and conservation of natural resources. Tourism should be categorize and develop in small scale and with minimum negative impact of environment. That's for government, non-government, and local authorities should be develop small scale of spiritual circuits in which includes natural areas, religious and spiritual destination and emphasize to manage and operate by local community of certain areas.

Local communities are also sufficient to make a switch from agriculture to tourism attractive in prime tourism areas and make tourism a useful complement to agriculture income in other areas. Local people, hoteliers, restaurateurs, and other should emphasize to promote their traditional food dishes and add these items in food menu. According to statistics of tourist report in Uttarakhand many lakhs of tourist visit here all over year but mostly we see in Uttarakhand food menu, Chinese and south Indian dishes available but in context of Uttarakhand, traditional food items are not add in food menu even single traditional dishes. due to this, local farmers doesn't get more benefits from production of traditional food items and result is decreases productivity of traditional food items, people migrate from Uttarakhand to other state for searching job and other sources for livelihood, lack of interest of youth in agriculture field.

Now the question arises why the Uttarakhand people are migrating, because of which are becoming empty village to village. According to Financial Express that the Uttarakhand government said there are over six lakh people registered with employment exchanges in the state and many of them are professionally trained. As many as 6, 66,677 people are registered till March with employment centers in different districts of Uttarakhand. The unemployment rate for rural & urban (combined) in Uttarakhand stands at 5.2% (2012-13), which is considerably higher as compared to the national average of 3.8%. Unemployment rate among males stands at 3.2% while for females it is 11.3% for rural & urban (combined). And the statistics show that unemployment, poor education system in remote/rural areas, less living facilities, natural disaster may cause to be migrated from rural areas to urban areas in Uttarakhand and also other states.

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