

IN SEARCH OF EMPLOYABILITY

A case study of the hilly districts of Uttarakhand

Dr Sudeepa Sharma

Associate Professor, Faculty of Management Studies, Amrapali Group of Institutes
Kumaun University, Nainital, UTTARAKHAND
sudieepasharma@gmail.com
9410373873

Abstract- When we talk about economic growth or development, the easiest way is deemed to be taken into consideration. Story for the development of the newly borne hilly state of Uttarakhand was no exception. Since its inception, the state's resources, natural for specific reasons, have been immensely utilized rather over utilized in the names of revenue generation, employment, development, growth and many such related terms. The present case tries to highlight the facts about the future problems which are bound to be there if and only if the localities, government bodies and other related bodies are concentrating only on tourism related activities for the above mentioned purposes. Alternate means, such as agribusiness horticultural exercises to be more precise, are already available in the area and can easily prove to be an excellent source of revenue generation for the hilly regions of the state if proper planning is carried out.

Index Terms- Agribusiness, development, employment horticulture, revenue, resource, tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

The state of Uttarakhand is divided into two regions—Kumaun and Garhwal. The state has 13 districts (four more have been declared recently) which are further split into sub divisions and development blocks. Since its inception, the state has shown growth in all the fields. But, this growth seems to confine only in the plains, the hilly regions being still deprived of development. The major lacuna felt was the prevailing inequality in geographical distribution and settlement. Industries in Uttarakhand have created about 2.8 lakhs jobs but these are in plains and hence, most of the growth due to industrialization is confined to the plains only. More than 3/4th of Uttarakhand's population depends on agriculture specifically mountain agriculture. For physical, geographical and environmental reasons, the scope for agricultural policies based on modern inputs-intensive agriculture is severely constrained in the hilly regions. The state faces the challenges of promoting livelihoods to retain people through local employment and income generation and to enhance their quality of lives. At the same time, the hill districts of Uttarakhand have tremendous potential. The vast natural resources add to the state's attractiveness as an investment destination, especially for tourism and agriculture and forest based industries.

The present study aims at highlighting the needs of proper and optimum use of resources existing in this hilly state. What should be used, how it should be best used and when should it be used are some of the main concern of this study.

Uttarakhand is the first state in the country to have created "Tourist Development Board" by legislation. Also it is the first one to be called an "Organic State".

Uttarakhand formerly **Uttaranchal**, is a state in the northern part of India. It is often referred to as the Land of Gods due to the many holy Hindu temples and cities found throughout the state, some of which are among Hinduism's most spiritual and auspicious places of pilgrimage and worship. Known for its natural beauty and wealth of the Himalayas, the Bhabhar and the Terai, the state was carved out of the Himalayan and adjoining north-western districts of Uttar Pradesh on 9 November 2000, becoming the 27th state of the Republic of India.

Even before its inception as an independent state, Uttarakhand was the point of attraction for the tourists all over the world because of its inbound scenic beauty the state is enriched with. As expected the things gradually took their shape in the same way. Now, after 12 years of its formation, Uttarakhand has been enjoying all the benefits and offers from the state level as well as from the central level. Uttarakhand is the only hilly state in India which make its name in top ten tourist preferred state in India. The state witnessed a large number of tourist influx from all over, be it from neighbouring states or countries. The governments also left no stone unturned so as to make this state more attractive for the recreation lovers.

Tourism is thought to be the principal source of revenue in the state of Uttarakhand.

As per the data major source of earning of the people of Uttarakhand is through tourism. Ministry of Tourism of Uttarakhand is responsible for maintaining and generating revenue from tourism in the state. It is also the responsibility of tourism ministry of Uttarakhand to formulate plans for increasing revenue from tourism industry. The ministry has to decide the rules and regulations for the efficient working of the tourism industry.

Tourism ministry of Uttarakhand has created two tourism corporations for Garhwal and Kumaon region named as **Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited and Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited** so as to offer quality service to the tourists. Moreover, these two regions consist of most of the star tourist attractions. Through these corporations, the ministry of tourism of Uttarakhand is trying to woo more tourists in these regions by offering various tourist packages. These tourist packages range from pilgrimage, adventure sports to wildlife tours, etc. Tourists can book this on line. This is how it is adding up revenue to the state economy.

The ministry of tourism in Uttarakhand runs its own fleet of transport and offers accommodation in its own tourist rest houses. These generate more revenue to the state while to the tourists it gives satisfaction of being secure under the government roof. The functioning of Uttarakhand ministry of tourism is commendable for generating the highest revenue through tourism. Moreover, the ministry has indirectly helped the other industries of Uttarakhand such as small scale industries and *Gramodhyogs*. Tourists come and shop products of these industries thereby generating more revenue to the state. Due to increase in tourism, the hotel industry in Uttarakhand is on the rise. Hence, the hard work of the Tourism Ministry of Uttarakhand is paying off in the form of revenue that is earned by the state.

Leisure, adventure, and religious tourism play a prominent role in Uttarakhand's economy, with the Corbett National Park and Tiger Reserve and the nearby hill-stations of Nainital, Mussoorie, Almora, Kausani, Bhimtal and Ranikhet being amongst the most frequented destinations of India. The state also contains numerous peaks of interest to mountaineers, although Nanda Devi, the highest and best-known of these, has been off-limits since 1982. Other national wonders include the Valley of Flowers, which along with Nanda Devi National Park, form a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

To Uttarakhand, long called "abode of the gods" (*Devbhumi*), belong some of the holiest Hindu shrines, and for more than a thousand years, pilgrims have been visiting the region in the hopes of salvation and purification from sin. Gangotri and Yamunotri, the sources of both the Ganges and Yamuna fall in the upper reaches of the state and together with Badrinath (dedicated to Vishnu) and Kedarnath (dedicated to Shiva) form the Char Dham, one of Hinduism's most spiritual and auspicious pilgrimage circuits. Haridwar, meaning "Gateway to God" is a prime Hindu destination. Haridwar hosts the Kumbh Mela every twelve years, in which millions of pilgrims take part from all parts of the India and the world. Rishikesh near Haridwar is known as the preeminent yoga centre of India. The state has an abundance of temples and shrines, many dedicated to local deities or manifestations of Shiva and Durga, references to many of which can be found in Hindu scriptures and legends. The architecture of most of these temples is typical of the region and slightly different from other parts of India. The ancient temples at Jageshwar (a complex of 124 temples in a [deodar](#) woodland) are historically the most prominent for their distinct architectural features. Uttarakhand is, however, a place of pilgrimage not only for the Hindus. [Hemkund](#) nested in the Himalayas is a prime pilgrimage center for the [Sikhs](#). [Tibetan Buddhism](#) has also made itself felt with the recent reconstruction of [Mindroling Monastery](#) and its Buddha Stupa, touted as the world's highest, southwest of [Dehradun](#).

The state has always been a destination for [mountaineering](#), [hiking](#) and [rock climbing](#) in India. A recent development in [adventure tourism](#) in the region has been white water [rafting](#) and other adventures sports. [Eco tourism](#), [agritourism](#) and [rural tourism](#) have also found new grounds in many villages of the state.

In the same line numbers of **education institutions** were seen to flourish producing a number of trained professionals to cater to this budding industry, the tourism industry.

Below are given names of some of the institutions which took initiatives for producing human resource who could be aptly used in the tourism industry of the state in times to come:

Amrapali Institute of Hotel Management

Centre For Mountain Tourism & Hospitality, Studies Srinagar Garhwal –

Blue Mountains College Of Hotel

Govt. Institute of Hotel Management & Catering [Dehradun](#)

Govt. Institute of Hotel Management & Catering (AICTE Approved) Almora, Uttaranchal

Graphic Era Institute Of Technology (AICTE Approved)

(Hotel Management & Catering Technology)

Institute of Media Management and Tech

National Institute of Hotel Management

RAM Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Tech.

Culinary College of Hotel Management & Catering Technology

IIAS School of Hotel & Tourism Management

Institute of Business & Hotel Management

Institute of Communication & Management

Along with the above mentioned institutes, Kumaun as well as Garhwal Universities are also providing diploma and degree courses in the field of tourism. The State Government has been spending a lot on the **development of infrastructure** and **promotion of the tourism** in the state in the recent years. Railways, roadways and airways are developed to link the state with the rest of the country and reduce travel time. Electrification of the remainder of the Delhi- Dehradun line will make travel faster. Air links are being developed and six airplane strips have been proposed in the hills by the government. Helicopters services should also be introduced; for these services, facilities for refuelling and hangers within the state have been proposed along with the installation of beacons at major helipads to allow operations during bad weather. These services will attract NRIs and wealthy travellers, increasing the number of tourists and resulting in development.

As a result and as expected a **large revenue** is also earned providing **employment opportunities** to the locals of the state particularly those who reside in the remote regions of the hills.

In spite of the fact that tremendous efforts are laid by the government, on the face of it appears that there are many things which are still in pipe line, as far as tapping most from the tourism industry of Uttarakhand, even after more than a decade of the formation of the state

Skill development is highly essential in this sector.

To ensure that the benefits of local tourism actually reach the villagers, it is important to involve **women in restaurant activities, youths as drivers of taxis and guides, and local uneducated men as porters**. The supply of competent managers does not meet the demand for mid- and high-level managers and, even at the policy planning level, they are in short supply. There is a shortage of quality institutions and teachers to impart training to the new generation and to upgrade the skills required for foreign tourism. The level of education is quite good but there are a large number of unemployed educated youth in the hills. There is an immediate need to improve the communication skills of personnel in the hospitality industry. There is a similar requirement for organizing local training of personnel employed at front offices, housekeeping, food production, restaurant services, travel agencies, etc. These training programmes can be organized off-season. To meet the manpower requirements of the accommodation sector alone, the state should set up at least one training institute without any further loss of time. Skills in English and other languages should be given high priority.

In a nut shell it could be concluded that there is a need to develop human resources and hold capacity building training programmes.

It is a fact that tourism stimulates the economy and induces the so called "**multiplier's effect**" i.e. jobs are created, capital is accumulated and local workers are employed. The huge amount of money spent in the tourism industry makes the economy extremely dependent on the revenue out of this sector. *In this array the facts that unorganized tourism practices are harming the ecology in multiple ways, deforestation, waste disposal in improper ways, trail degradation to name a few out of a number of ways. The society is also facing certain severe after effects, by showing locals different "modern" ways of living. It would be appropriate to say here that revenue through tourism activities could be one part of the balanced economy as all the resulting activities should be able to provide long term economic benefits.*

NOW the question arises that with this ever increasing rate of tourists' influx and deteriorating care and concern for misbalance in the ecology (from all sides i.e. tourists, locals as well as government bodies) how long can the economy of Uttarakhand be dependent on this very source of employment and revenue generation?

Alarming situation is round the corner. People have to pay attention towards alternate sources of revenue generation which already exist in the state's economy but are less bothered, rather less discussed about. One such option which is taken care of, though at a very low scale is that of **agribusiness**. Ironically Uttarakhand is referred to as **organic state** but efforts seem to be less in really symbolizing this very name.

Apart from hunting opportunities in the tourism sectors, agribusiness could also prove to be a good option for the entrepreneurs of the hilly regions of Uttarakhand.

II. CHALLENGES FOR THE STATE

The major challenge which is face by Uttarakhand is that most of the region, around 92.57 is covered by hills, hence leaving a very small section i.e. 7.43% for farming practices. The initiations from the government's side could act as motivational factors for the farmers who find it just hopeless cultivating small farmlands with practically no facilities (like irrigation etc) available. Further, calamities in the form of natural disasters (floods, droughts, landslide, hailstorm etc) also dishearten the farmers to a large extent. Effective, well planned strategies are the need of the hour to generate the very essential economic balance in the state of Uttarakhand. The locals either join the army and paramilitary or migrate in large numbers from the mountain areas to the cities and towns all over the country in search of employment. Their families are left behind and are dependent on remittances sent by these members employed outside the region. This phenomenon has earned the region the sobriquet of a 'Money Order Economy'. Male outmigration from the region has occurred on a significant scale and this can be seen from the fact that the overall sex ratio for the state in 2001 was

964 females per 1000 males, while in 8 of the 13 districts (all in the mountain area) it exceeded 1000. Even the men who don't migrate in search of work do not work in the fields. They are constantly in search of work in off-farm occupations. A significant consequence of this pattern of migration and male preference for off-farm employment is the lack of quality manpower in the agricultural sector.

III. PREVAILING OPPORTUNITIES

In order to change this situation of economic and social backwardness in the rural mountainous regions of Uttarakhand, it is important to adopt a **strategy based on long term planning** that will take steps to counter all the problems described above. However, given the fiscal and administrative constraints of the state, it is more sensible to identify a few sectors at a time and attempt vigorous development in these sectors before moving on to other sectors. The first step in such a strategy is to identify those sectors that are impeding the growth process in these areas and those sectors in which this region has a comparative advantage. The current condition of the infrastructure sector is clearly a constraint on the development in this area and must be the focus of the strategy for inclusive growth.

The most important types of infrastructure necessary for the development process in these areas are irrigation, electricity and roads. The potential for developing these sectors in Uttarakhand is significant. Minor irrigation projects based on tanks and reservoirs are possible in those areas that are not covered by canal or stream irrigation as these areas receive normal to heavy rainfall during the year. The Mountain Rivers provide an ideal opportunity to generate large quantities of hydroelectricity. As far as roads are concerned, the current infrastructure is highly inadequate and hence there is both scope and necessity for large investments in this sector.

The horticulture sector is eminently suitable for the hill areas. The climate of these regions allows a variety of fruits and vegetables to grow in this area. Moreover, the hill areas are capable of growing off-season vegetables that have a great demand in the plains. A related advantage for Uttarakhand is its relative proximity to Delhi and other north Indian urban centres that have an increasing demand for fruits and vegetables. The hill areas have a comparative advantage in the production of horticultural products including fruits and vegetables. However, the farmers in these regions will be able to take full advantage of this only when these products are not only produced but also marketed efficiently. In a broad sense, marketing would consist of all post-harvest activities including the collection of farm products from the field, processing and packaging of the product, storing and warehousing of the product, identifying prospective markets where the product can get the highest price and finally, transporting the product to these markets. Unfortunately, the small farmers in the hill areas are incapable of carrying out most of these activities on their own for a number of reasons:

1. The relatively small size of each farmers produce and the distance of their villages from roads and mandis makes the process of marketing their products too costly to be profitable.
2. They do not have easy access to storage and warehousing facilities.
3. Finally, they do not have ready access to information about potential markets for their produce.

As a result of this lack of marketing facility, a large part of the total horticultural crops produced by the state of Uttarakhand is wasted each year.

Clearly, there is a crucial need to develop an efficient marketing infrastructure in order to make it remunerative for the small mountain farmers to grow cash crops including fruits and vegetables.

The farmers in the hilly regions should be encouraged to **shift from the cultivation of cereals to the cultivation of horticultural products** as this sector has vast potential.

- The varied climate of the region makes it an ideal location for growing temperate, subtropical and tropical fruits that fetch a high value in the domestic urban markets and international markets.
- The climate also allows these regions to grow off-season vegetables that get a high price for these in the plains.
- Most importantly, the consumption pattern of the average Indian is shifting toward fruits and vegetables and hence the demand for these products is going to increase over time.

Unfortunately, despite these advantages, the horticultural produce is not providing the farmers with higher incomes, due to the absence of necessary infrastructure, institutions and incentives.

There are three types of institutions that the government needs to create or strengthen for this purpose:

1. A **Horticultural Marketing Board** that will help, particularly the small and marginal farmers, to grow horticultural crops and market them at remunerative prices.
2. Strengthen the **farmers cooperative associations** and encourage them to corporatize themselves so that they can employ professionals to help them market their products.
3. Allow and encourage **contract farming** between farmers and fruit and vegetable retailing firms, so that the role of the middlemen can be minimized.

It must be understood that while the first institution, i.e. the marketing board, should primarily target the poor and marginal farmers, the medium and large farmers can use the second and third type of institution more effectively. It may be useful at this stage to point out, that though the state has declared that it is an "Organic State", it will be useful to the farmer only when the produce can be marketed at a higher price with the help of organic certification. The second set of policy initiatives have to deal with the provision of various types of infrastructure facilities necessary for the development of the sector. An effective network major and minor roads and ropeways need to be built to enable the collection and transport of horticultural produce to markets and make this process less costly. In order to provide irrigation in the rain fed areas, rainwater harvesting has to be developed and small and medium sized

reservoirs for the collection of rainwater have to be built. Electric pumps can be used to lift water to the farms at higher attitudes, while sprinklers and drip irrigation should be encouraged for the efficient use of water. Warehouses and cold storages for the preservation of the fruits and vegetables have to be built in the hill areas as well as in the major markets of the country. Agro processing units need to be encouraged through public-private partnerships both in the hills and in the southern plains of the state.

The problems of inadequate information about best crops and best practices that are faced by farmers are crucial to the development of horticulture. The planning for horticultural development has to include a continuous process of scientific market analysis that will determine the most remunerative crop or group of crops for a particular region. The institutions for the dissemination of knowledge about these crops and the scientific methods of horticulture have to be strengthened. There is the related issue of the supply of appropriate inputs for these best practices to the farmers. These inputs have to be supplied at appropriate times from outlets that are in the nature of one-stop shops that are within a reasonable distance of such villages and farms from where the farmer can get all kinds of agricultural inputs under one roof.

Certain measures are suggested to summarize the whole story keeping into strong consideration the economic development of the hilly districts of Uttarakhand state:

Hill Districts Development Plan(suggestive)

Almora •	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify agricultural products to include fruits (apples), spices (ginger), and herbal/medicinal plants • Develop minor irrigation projects to facilitate agricultural diversification • SSIs based on wool • Impart training in design in the handloom sector • Develop leisure and nature tourism. For example, areas such as Ranikhet and Kausani have not been explored
Bageshwar •	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify agricultural products to include off-season vegetables and fruits (peas, cabbage, beans, tomato and potato). The traditional crop, bhatt, is important. Promote plantation of tea, chillies, turmeric and other herbal plants. • Fodder and grazing land is an asset that can be used to meet demand from neighboring districts. • SSIs and agro-based industries for jams and pickles. Khadia in cosmetic products. • Promote leisure and nature tourism
Chamoli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious tourism to the Valley of the Flowers, Hemkunt Sahib, Badrinath, and Kedarnath. Other types of tourism to Nanda Devi National Park, river rafting, and rock climbing. • Poultry and wool-based industry • Agriculture diversification towards herbal and medicinal plants, pulses, and off-season vegetables • Develop forest resources: Jatropha plantation for bio-fuel, bimal trees for the cosmetics industry, and forest-based handicrafts
Champawat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify agricultural products to include medicinal and aromatic plants, ginger and other spices, and organic fruits and vegetables • Forest products: Ringal-based products by local artists
Pauri Garhwal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poultry and wool-based development: Sheep • Diversify agricultural products to include herbal and medicinal plants, pulses, bee-keeping and mushroom cultivation • SSIs and agro-based industries: Bamboo and fiber development, and jatropha-based bio-diesel. • Start a medicinal plant-based pharmaceutical industry • Bimal and rambans fiber for handicrafts and furniture

<p>Pithoragarh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poultry and wool-based development: Goat-rearing • Diversify agricultural products to include litchi, herbal and medicinal plants, garlic and spices. • SSIs and agro-based industries- Bamboo, ringal and fiber development, and furniture production from forest products Rudraprayag • Religious tourism to Kedarnath; adventure tourism like river rafting, rock climbing • Diversify agricultural products to include herbal and medicinal plants, haldi and coriander. • SSIs and agro-based industries: Bio-fuel, bamboo plantation, and traditionally-grown mandua for bakery products • Forest-based industry
<p>Tehri Garhwal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This district is rich in irrigation facilities; thus, agricultural diversification towards fruits and vegetables, spices, pulses, herbal and aromatic plants using a cluster approach combined with proper market development can be very successful. • SSIs and agro-based industries: Food-processing industry, forest-based industry, fruit- and vegetable-processing industry. • Training and innovation to add value to small enterprises. • Nature tourism and adventure tourism in Devprayag.
<p>Uttarkashi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious tourism to Gangotri, Yumunotri, etc. • Diversify agricultural products to include fruits and vegetables, apple orchards, tea plantations, and aromatic plants • Development of sheep- and goat-rearing, and wool-based industry • Nature and leisure tourism

IV. QUESTIONS BASED ON THE CASE

1. If the entrepreneur of the study area wants to stick to his old profession of tourism , what measures would you suggest for concepts like ecotourism to him?
2. Analyse the conditions of the natural resources, like water source, existing in the region as a result of uncontrolled tourism activities.
3. Suggest alternate means of revenue generation present in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand.
4. What according to you is the best way of economic development for the state-money order economy or self employment? Why? Explain
5. What would be your suggestions for materializing the name “Organic State ”for Uttarakhand?

REFERENCES

- [1] www.euttaranchal.com
- [2] http://www.ecotourism.org/textfiles/eagles.txt , 11/02/03
- [3] Uttaranchal year book,2009, Winsor Publication, Deharadun
- [4] VP Sati and Kamlesh Kumar; Uttaranchal-Dilemma of Plenties and Scarcities; Mittal Publication; New Delhi
- [5] Agricultural Economy of Himalayan region with special reference to GARHWAL HIMALAYAS
- [6] CM Agarwal; “History of Kumaun”;Kaveri Books, 2000. ISBN 81-7479-033-0.
- [7] EAGLES, P. (1995): Understanding the market for sustainable tourism. – In: McCool, S. et al.
- [8] Linking tourism, the environment and sustainability. (1995):
- [9] ECKHOLM, E.P. (1975): The Deterioration of Mountain Environments. – In: Science, vol. 189,September 5, pp. 764-770.

- [10] GRÖTZBACH, E. (1985): Tourismus im Indischen West himalaya –GRÖTZBACH, E. (1996): Tourismus und Umwelt im Himalaya und Karakorum. –□In: HGGJournal, Band 10.
- [11] GURUNG, H. (1998): Mountaineering in Nepal Himalaya: Some Reflections. Himalayan Association of Japan, Tokyo.
- [12] IVES, J.D. & B. MESSERLI (1989): The Himalayan Dilemma: Reconciling development and conservation. Routledge, London.
- [13] JOSHI, S.C. & P. PANT (1990): Environmental Implications of the Recent Growth of Tourism in Nainital, Kumaon Himalaya, U.P., India. – In: Mountain Research and Development 10(4).
- [14] KAUR, J. (1985): Himalayan Pilgrimage and the New Tourism. New Delhi.
- [15] MISHRA, H.R. (1986): Deforestation and environmental degradation through tourism in Nepal.
- [16] TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT DATABASE (TED) (YEAR N/A): Himalaya Case Issue.