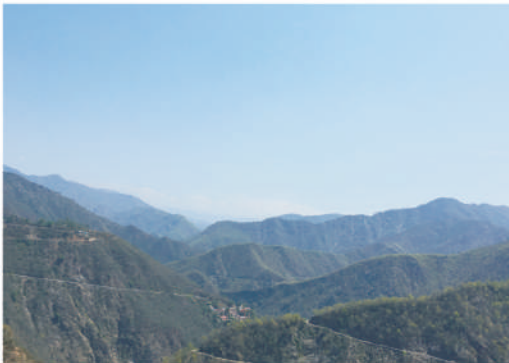




उत्तराखण्ड शासन

# **RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION COMMISSION UTTARAKHAND, PAURI**



**NATURE BASED TOURISM (ECO-TOURISM) IN UTTARAKHAND**  
**Analysis and recommendations**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**



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## **PREFACE**

Uttarakhand, located in the western Himalayan region, is largely mountainous with bulk of its population living in the rural areas. Migration of people from rural to semi-urban or urban areas particularly from the hill districts is a major cause for concern, as it results in depopulated or partially depopulated villages; and a dwindling primary sector (agriculture). Out migration from the rural areas of the state is posing multiple challenges causing economic disparities; declining agriculture; low rural incomes and a stressed rural economy. It is in this background that the Uttarakhand government decided to set up a commission to assess the quantum and extent of out migration from different rural areas of the state; evolve a vision for the focused development of the rural areas, that would help in mitigating out-migration and promote welfare and prosperity of the rural population; advise the government on multi-sectoral development at the grassroots level which would aggregate at the district and state levels; submit recommendations on those sections of the population of the state that is at risk of not adequately benefitting from economic progress and to recommend and monitor focused initiatives in sectors that would help in multi-sectoral development of rural areas and thus help in mitigating the problem of out-migration. The commission chaired by the Chief Minister of the state, presented its first report to the government in the first half of 2018 in which various aspects of out migration have been brought out on the basis of a detailed ground level survey and detailed consultations with various stakeholders.

Detailed analysis of economic data shows two clear trends viz; the per capita income in the hill districts is considerably less than that of the plains districts and a considerable portion of the gross domestic product both at the state and district levels is accounted for by the service sector. It can thus be inferred that strengthening the rural socio-economy by generating livelihoods in the tertiary sector would mitigate out migration.

Nature has endowed the state with beautiful landscapes; snow clad peaks; rich and diverse forests & wildlife and a pristine natural environment. These offer innumerable opportunities in the form of nature based tourism (ecotourism) including wildlife tourism; camping; rafting; trekking-hiking; mountaineering etc. At present most of these activities are restricted to a few destinations like Corbett National Park and Valley of Flowers though there is unlimited scope for its expansion to other areas, particularly in the hill districts, where it would boost socio-economic development and generate livelihoods for the local people, thus helping in mitigating out-migration. Nature based tourism (ecotourism) helps in providing livelihoods for all sections of the society including women and youth in a big way and it is felt that its planned expansion should be a priority sector for the government.

The commission set up an expert group comprising of various members from state government departments and other stakeholders for providing inputs on the status and potential of nature based tourism (eco-tourism) in the mountain districts of the state, with particular reference to livelihood issues and to provide recommendations for strengthening this sector. The present report is based on

inputs provided by this group and also on published/ unpublished literature and consultations with other stakeholders. All aspects of nature based tourism (ecotourism) in Uttarakhand have been analyzed; various initiatives by the central government, other states and neighboring countries have also been taken into account for arriving at detailed recommendations which are being presented to the state government for taking the process forward.

The commission is grateful for the inputs from the members of the group; various other stakeholders and also to Ms Divya Pandey , Young Professional and Coordinator of the group who has worked hard for giving final shape to this document. Thanks are also due to Dr RS Pokhriya, Member Secretary and all other staff of the commission for their help and support. Photo given by Dr. Samir Sinha is duly acknowledged.

September 2018

Dr Sharad Singh Negi

Vice Chairman

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **NATURE BASED TOURISM (ECO-TOURISM)**

Human beings have moved from one place to the other since earliest times for exploring; adventure; leisure; enjoying the bounties of nature, to experience climatic conditions different from their usual place of residence and for fun. Tourists, as they have come to be known as, travel to different destinations of their choice from time to time and this activity is referred to as tourism. Mathieson and Wall (1982) have defined tourism as "the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs."

Tourism can be described as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non- residents) and tourism has to do with their activities. (UNWTO, 2008) It involves a broad range of economic activities, services and industries that combine to deliver a travel experience, including transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses, activity facilities and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups traveling away from home (Tugberk, 2010). Tourism is very diverse in nature and involves an array of stakeholders; generating economic activities in the form of various goods and services thus helping to provide direct as well as indirect livelihoods to millions of people across the globe.

### **THE WORLD SCENARIO**

Tourism has been a major economic activity at the global level since earliest times , being a significant contributor to the economy of many countries and regions . Over the past decades , tourism has experienced continued growth and diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world . Modern tourism is closely linked to socio-economic development and is fast spreading to growing number of new destinations. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio -economic progress, besides providing livelihoods to persons engaged in this sector (UNWTO, 2017). As the global economy grows and the income levels of people increase, so does the desire to travel as tourists to different destinations. This helps in generating livelihoods and socio-economic activity in and around the region of the destinations of the tourists.

It has been estimated that the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 7, 613.3bn (10.2% of GDP) in 2016, and was forecast to rise by 3.6% in 2017, and to rise by 3.9% pa to USD 11,512.9bn (11.4% of GDP) in 2027. (WTTC,2017). In 2016, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, was 9.6%



of total employment (292,220,000 jobs). This was expected to rise by 1.9% in 2017 to 297,896,000 jobs and rise by 2.5% pa to 381,700,000 jobs in 2027 (11.1% of total)(WTTC, 2017)

In 2016, receipts from international tourism increased by 2.6% in real terms as compared to a growth of 3.9% in arrivals, reaching US\$ 1,220 billion. The earnings generated from international passenger transport, total exports from international tourism reached US\$ 1.4 trillion in 2016, representing 7% of international trade (30% of service exports), and positioning tourism as the third export category in the world after chemicals and fuels and ahead of automotive products and food. (UNWTO, 2017)

Domestic tourism represents on average 62% of total tourism consumption worldwide (UNWTO, 2010). The share of tourism in the economy of developing countries is increasing rapidly and this sector has become a major contributor to their growth. In over 150 countries, tourism is one of five top export earners, and in about another 60 of these, it is the number one export. The tourism sector is the main source of foreign exchange for one third of developing countries and one half of LDCs (UNCTAD, 2010). Travel and tourism are among the world's fastest growing industries and are the major source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries.(UNEP, 2002)

International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) in 2016 grew by 3.9% to reach a total of about 1,235 million worldwide, an increase of 46 million over the previous year. It was the seventh consecutive year of above average growth in international tourism sector after the 2009 global economic crisis. A comparable sequence of uninterrupted growth has not been recorded since the 1960s. By UNWTO regions, Asia and the Pacific led growth in 2016 with a 9% increase in international arrivals, followed by Africa (+8%) and the Americas (+3%). The world's most visited region, Europe (+2%) showed mixed results, while available data for the Middle East (-4%) points to a decline in arrivals. (UNWTO Tourism highlights, 2017).

Growth in the tourism sector can help remote communities, artisans, farmers and fisher folk (Bouchart, 2004) It has been estimated that every US dollar spent in the tourism sector generates US\$3.20 in the rest of the economy, benefitting a wide supply chain of artisans and craft people (WTTC, 2014). This multiplier effect can help stem rural-urban migration (UNWTO, 2013), improve infrastructure and contribute to the dynamism of arts and craft in the world market (Hantow, 2009). Tourism is also regarded as one of the few sectors where female parity is above parity in some regions, with women accounting for upto 70% of all workers in the tourism industry ( Baum, 2013)

However, rapid growth in the tourism sector has brought about a pressure on natural resources like water shortages, depletion of the forest cover and haphazard construction even on the flood plains of rivers and along the sea coast & environmental problems like air and water pollution. This has led to the evolution of the approach for “sustainable tourism”. UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and

environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”

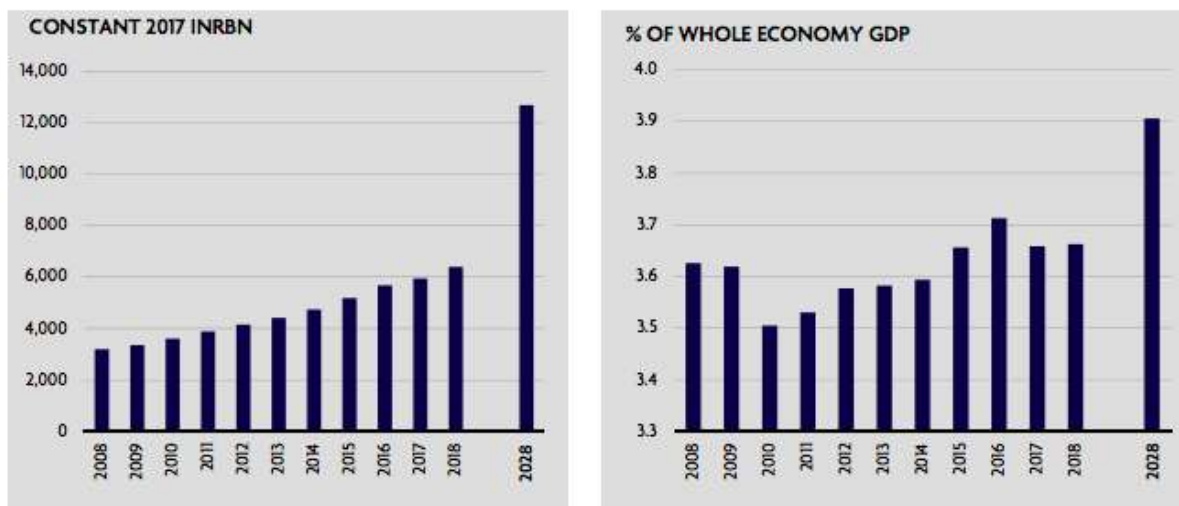
Many countries have evolved policies and approaches for sustainable tourism so that this sector continues to provide destinations to visitors and fuels socio-economic growth.

## INDIAN SCENARIO

Tourism is the largest service sector industry in India. The industry provides heritage, cultural, medical, business, nature based and sports tourism. India’s ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) of World Economic Forum moved from 65<sup>th</sup> position to 52<sup>nd</sup> position in 2015. India has moved up by another 12 positions and ranked at 40<sup>th</sup> position in 2017. In all, in last three years India has moved up by 25 places.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during 2017 were 10.18 million with a growth of 15.6% over same period of the previous year. Foreign Exchange Earnings through Tourism (FEEs) during the period 2017 were Rs.1, 80,379 crore with a growth of 17% over same period of previous year. The FEEs from tourism in rupee terms during 2016 were Rs.1, 54,146 crore with a growth rate of 14.0%.

### INDIA: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL & TOURISM TO GDP



**Figure 1.1 WTTC, 2018**

Travel & Tourism generated 26,148,000 jobs directly in 2017 (5.0% of total employment) and this is forecast to grow by 2.8% in 2018 to 26,883,000 (5.1% of total employment). This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services

(excluding commuter services). It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists. (WTTC, 2018)

<b>INDIA</b>	<b>2017 USDbn</b>	<b>2017 % of total</b>	<b>2018 Growth</b>	<b>USDbn</b>	<b>2028 % of total</b>	<b>Growth</b>
Direct contribution to GDP	91.3	3.7	7.6	194.7	3.9	7.1
Total contribution to GDP	234.0	9.4	7.5	492.2	9.9	6.9
Direct contribution to Employment	26,148	5.0	2.8	33,195	5.3	2.1
Total contribution to employment	41,623	8.0	3.1	52,279	8.4	2.0
Visitor exports	27.3	5.8	8.8	50.9	5.1	5.5
Domestic spending	186.0	7.5	7.3	405.8	8.1	7.4
Leisure spending	201.7	3.5	7.6	432.3	3.7	7.1
Business spending	11.6	0.2	6.7	24.4	0.2	7.0
Capital investment	41.6	6.3	6.7	85.2	6.1	6.7

**Table 1.1: Estimates and forecasts of Indian Tourism Industry (WTTC, 2018)**

#### **TOURISM SCENARIO IN UTTARAKHAND**

Tourism industry in Uttarakhand is one of the most important contributors to the service sector in the state. Tourism in the state has continued to grow over the years. Uttarakhand has moved up 6 ranks from 18<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> state rank with regards to consolidated tourism ranking. (Hotelivate, 2017)

According to the Regional Tourism Satellite Account – Uttarakhand, 2015-16, total employment in the tourism industries in Uttarakhand and India as well as the contribution of tourism in the economy is given below in table 1.2 (given in %):

<b>Item</b>	<b>Uttarakhand</b>	<b>All India</b>
TDGVA- direct	4.07	3.8
GVATI- direct	9.78	7.16
Tourism Employment- direct	3.42	4.37
GVA multipliers	2.3784	1.843
Employment multipliers	5.008	2.3256
TDGVA- direct and indirect	9.68	7
GVATI- direct and indirect	23.26	13.19
Tourism Employment-direct and indirect	17.1	10.17

**Table 1.2: Source: Regional Tourism Satellite Account, 2015-16**

The overall workforce (number of jobs) in Uttarakhand was 46.9 lakh in 2009-10. The number of jobs in tourism characteristic industries in the state stood at 1.60 lakh.

The overall (direct + indirect) share of tourism in the state GDP is 9.68 per cent, which is the share of TDGVA (Tourism Direct Gross Value Added) in overall GVA (Gross Value Added). The overall (direct + indirect) share of tourism employment in total state employment is 17.10 per cent. (NCAER, 2016)

## **NATURE BASED TOURISM (ECOTOURISM)**

Nature-based tourism is any type of tourism that relies on experiences directly related to natural attractions and includes ecotourism, adventure tourism, extractive tourism, wildlife tourism and nature retreats. (PATA, 2004). In the recent years, nature tourism and ecotourism have emerged as principal options pursued by many countries both developed and developing, for integrating national parks, reserves, economic growth and rural development on a sustainable basis (Stiles and Clark, 1989; Place 1991; Rushmann, 1992).

Laarman and Durst (1987) use the term 'nature travel' (or sometimes 'nature-oriented tourism') to refer to a style of tourism which 'combines education, recreation and often adventure'. Boo (1990) in her major study of Latin America uses the title 'eco-tourism' as synonymous with 'nature tourism' which she uses throughout the work and defines it as 'travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations' (adopted from Ceballos-Lascurain). Lucas (1984) defines nature tourism as 'tourism which is based on the enjoyment of natural areas and the observation of nature' and further specifies that such tourism 'has a low impact environmentally, is labour intensive and contributes socially and economically to the nation'. (Valentine, 1992)

In classifying the range of tourists and operations which might be encompassed by the term 'nature tourism' or nature based tourism, it is clear that it includes many dimensions like wildlife tourism, camping, rafting, mountaineering and rural tourism.

### **DIMENSION AND VARIATION**

<b>Experience</b>	Nature-dependency (dependent, enhanced); Intensity of interaction (dedicated, casual) ; Social sensitivity (intra-group dynamics) ; Duration
<b>Style</b>	Level of infrastructure support (field, base) ; Group size and type; Cultural interaction factor; Willingness to pay; Length of visit
<b>Location</b>	Accessibility (remoteness) ; Development contribution (city, village) ; Ownership (private, government) ; Fragility (Sustainable, capacity)

**Table 1.2 Dimensions of NBT (Valentine, 1992)**

Nature tourism or Nature Based Tourism gained importance following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio- De- Geneiro in 1992, and understanding the concept of sustainable development was now felt that tourism development must be accompanied by preservation of natural and cultural resources. (Shodhganga)

International nature- based businesses began to thrive in the 1980s with the growing interest in outdoor travel and the environment, spurred by excellent new outdoor equipment for camping and hiking, and events such as Earth Day. There is an extraordinary level of interest in nature-tourism in developing countries and this seems particularly true throughout the Asian-Pacific region as well as in Central and South America (Valentine, 1992)

The objective of ecotourism is to promote sustainable tourism, which involves overall development of the local community and to provide a better understanding and appreciation of natural and cultural features of the host population leading to international, inter-regional and inter-cultural understanding for sustainable development. The involvement of the local communities and other stakeholders is an important component to achieve the goals of ecotourism. (Shodhganga)

In some countries, tourism depends almost exclusively on natural systems, often with wildlife as the primary attraction. This nature based tourism (NBT) is a powerful tool that countries can leverage to grow and bring jobs to local communities, generate government revenues and foreign exchange, and also create new markets for entrepreneurs to sell their goods and services (World Bank, 2018)

Research on ecotourism has shown that as much as 50% of the total travel market wants to visit a natural area during a trip. This includes hiking, rafting, national parks etc (UNEP, 2002). It has been estimated that in 2015, protected areas across the world received 8 billion visitors (Balmford, 2015). An American Express study of 2015 also showed that 66% of all international travelers are now motivated to travel specifically to experience nature and beautiful scenery (American Express Travel, 2015).

Ecotourism has been defined by different organizations. Few definitions are:

- *The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 1990)* defines ecotourism as: ‘responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people’
- *The World Conservation Union* provides a detailed description which is: ‘environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features-both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations’

- *The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2002)* defines ecotourism as: “All forms of tourism in which the tourists’ main motivation is the observation and appreciation of nature, that contributes to the conservation of, and that generates minimal impacts upon, the natural environment and cultural heritage”.
- A more concise definition was made at the World Ecotourism Summit in Quebec in 2002 organized by the WTO and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). It recognized that ecotourism embraces the principles of sustainable tourism but holds specific characteristics that distinguish it from this wider concept, namely:
  - Active Contribution to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage;
  - Involvement of local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation in turn benefiting from the tourism themselves
  - Helps interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitor
  - Lends itself better to independent travelers, as well as to organized tours for small size groups.

Ecotourists typically look for experiences that provide a sense of closeness to the natural attractions and local communities that first brought them to a destination. Any destination that seeks to attract these tourists must protect its resources while facilitating a sense of integration with the local community. (UNEP, 2002)

## **NATURE BASED TOURISM IN INDIA**

Diverse forest and grassland ecosystems, which vary from alpine pastures to desert thorn forests and tropical rain forests; unique geological landscapes; rivers; valleys; magnificent coast lines and towering mountain peaks offer immense opportunities for nature based tourism in India. These forests are the home to thousands of species of wild animals and plants including the tiger, snow leopard, Asiatic lion, clouded leopard, one horned rhinoceros and Asiatic elephant.

Millions of domestic and foreign tourists visit these areas for recreation; sightseeing; hiking; rafting; cycling; nature awareness or simply leisure. With almost of a quarter of the geographical area of India under forests (ISFR, 2017) some of which form part of national parks and sanctuaries; the potential for nature based tourism in forest and wildlife protected areas is immense and has perhaps not been fully realized. At present nature based tourism in forests of India is dominated by wildlife tourism in many prominent and over-stressed national parks and sanctuaries like Corbett; Kanha; Ranthambore; Tadoba, Kaziranga and Periyar national parks. Data showing the number of visitors to all national parks and sanctuaries of India is not readily available though the NTCA has compiled this for major Tiger reserves. There is also a general dearth of information on various

aspects of NBT and even the impact of nature based tourism in India's national parks and sanctuaries on local livelihoods is also not adequately documented.

<b>Five year average tourist footfall in India's most visited Tiger Reserves</b> <b>Table 1.4 (NTCA,2017)</b>				
Tiger Reserve	Average number of Tourists per year	Average Revenue in INR Million	Foreign tourists	Domestic tourists
Kanha	1,00,000	24	10%	90%
Corbett	1,90,000	45	7%	93%
Tadoba Andhari	75,000	10		
Ranthambhore	2,60,000	62	50%	50%
Bandhavgarh	1,20,000	29	40%	60%
Periyar	4,00,000	40	8%	92%

Other forms of nature based tourism include visits to zoos located in and around forest areas. Beaches along the coast including those of the idyllic Andaman and Nicobar islands are also popular destinations. Rafting on rivers like the Ganga and Beas too has gained popularity in recent decades. This includes camping on the sandy beaches along the river Ganga in Uttarakhand. Hiking, mountaineering and cycling on nature trails also are other examples of nature based tourism. In order to promote Adventure Tourism, the Ministry of Tourism has decided to celebrate 2018 as year of Adventure Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2017).

The existing infrastructure available for nature based tourism in forest/ wildlife areas of India; mainly in the form of places of stay; vehicles; eateries etc. belong to government owned entities where these are located inside forests or to the private sector where these are located outside forests. Many hotels and resorts involving private investment have come up on the periphery of important national parks and sanctuaries. Most of these are attracting guests in large numbers though their contribution to the local community and conservation of nature, on which their business largely depends, is negligible except by way of generating local employment. There are also initiatives for home stays in households in the periphery of some of these national parks. This helps in generating local employment and raising awareness about the need to conserve nature including forests and wildlife. However, there is a general lack of data on such infrastructure and other related information on NBT in and around the forests of India.

Nature based tourism also involves visits to zoos most of which are located either in or on the periphery of forest areas. Millions of visitors throng these zoos to see captive animals of diverse types.

### **EXAMPLES OF NBT IN FOREST/ WILDLIFE AREAS**

- *Jungle Lodges & Resorts Ltd, owned by government of Karnataka has many properties for NBT in forest/ wildlife protected areas*
- *NBT through state government owned entities inside national parks and sanctuaries like Corbett; Kanha; Periyar and Tadoba.*
- *NBT through infrastructure on the periphery of national parks and sanctuaries by private sector initiatives e.g. Ranthambore and Kaziranga*
- *Rafting on the Ganga river along near Rishikesh in Uttarakhand*

The Ministry of Tourism, India has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Eco Tourism Society of India (ESOI) to inform and educate tourism stakeholders about the importance of Sustainable and Responsible Tourism practices and ensuring and promoting Sustainable and Responsible practices in the tourism industry (Ministry of Tourism, 2017-18).

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## **CHAPTER II**

### **NATURE BASED TOURISM (ECO-TOURISM) IN UTTARAKHAND**

Uttarakhand, with a total geographical area of about 53,483 sq kms is located in the western Himalayan region having 87 % of the state's area occupied by mountainous terrain. It is endowed with high mountain peaks, pristine rivers, lakes, beautiful valleys, thick forests which combine to offer unique landscapes with unparalleled beauty. The state has been the destination of sages, pilgrims and other visitors since earliest times. Millions of tourists come to this beautiful Himalayan state for religious purposes, to enjoy its unique ecology, view rare wild animals and birds and also to escape from the summer heat of the plains.

Nature based tourism which includes trekking, mountaineering, rafting, wildlife sighting and enjoying the unparalleled natural beauty of the state attracts millions of visitors each year both from within the country as well as abroad.

Although a key element of ecotourism is to minimize negative impacts on the natural and socio-cultural environment, it is also an important way to protect natural areas.

Numerous such methodologies that are applicable to Uttarakhand include(UTDMP, 2007-2020):

- Generating clear economic benefits that can make people realize that conservation and care of the environment can be financially rewarding: There is seemingly a low awareness among the local population, as well as among many operators, that larger numbers of higher spending tourists would be attracted to Uttarakhand if the environment is better protected, managed and kept clean.
- Providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities: many of the areas of Uttarakhand which are most suited to ecotourism, namely the more isolated mountain areas, are also those where there is the greatest poverty and least job opportunities. The development of ecotourism in these areas would provide greater local opportunities in the mountains for young people and help supplement incomes for the rural poor.
- Increasing awareness towards conservation by both locals and tourists: ecotourism is an excellent conduit for attracting and educating responsible and ethical tourists that seek to make an active contribution to the environmental and social conditions of the localities they visit.
- In a similar manner, operators that are encouraged to implement and manage ecotourism products also become aware of conservation issues in their respective areas.

Tourism statistics for the most important destinations in the state of Uttarakhand in last five years are given below in Table 2.1.

Destination	2017			2016			2015			2014			2013		
	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total
Dehradun	2118533	27956	2146489	1783637	23746	1807383	1749930	18722	1768652	1767197	18549	1785746	1718783	18202	1736985
Rishikesh	673226	4815	678041	589653	2574	592227	434033	3723	437756	328936	4052	332988	370216	4193	374409
Mussoorie	2794108	1865	2795973	2790511	4613	2795124	2764773	4499	2769272	1391355	5347	1396702	1070925	5050	1075975
Pauri	73494	1100	74594	70661	880	71541	65151	702	65853	41715	335	42050	65473	442	65915
Srinagar	196805	256	197061	38391	69	38460	81059	3762	84821	77205	2873	80078	118346	2009	120355
Kotdwar	350111	12796	362897	439034	9642	448676	249672	16698	266370	282799	13476	296275	319529	15561	335090
Rudraprayag	484339	865	485204	308667	108	308775	196716	940	197656	85963	3228	89191	393307	329	393636
Kedarnath	470517	718	471235	309069	695	309764	153821	614	154435	40718	228	40946	333693	81	333774
Bhaikatal	232901	3141	236042	208840	1636	210476	45345	6	45351	35436	25	35461	71901	18	71919
Joshimath	236798	346	237144	186191	155	186346	220301	191	220492	173013	426	173439	418882	559	419441
Badrinath	920078	388	920466	654140	215	654355	366306	149	366455	159405	170	159575	476278	152	476430
Auli	85019	115	85134	42888	93	42981	26126	170	26296	26172	230	26402	29345	248	29593
Hemkund Sahib	213279	122	213401	108646	192	108838	67840	233	68073	37678	0	37678	77785	76	77861
Valley of Flowers	13285	569	13854	11098	763	11861	4956	297	5253	176	5	181	870	68	938
Tehri	1425732	37092	1462824	954927	21907	976834	1141006	19329	1160335	553329	17718	571047	482865	13504	496369
Uttarkashi	335122	2304	337426	332568	2401	334969	284224	2136	286360	206530	929	207459	268573	1268	269841
Gangotri	408275	463	408738	284350	1109	285459	159684	508	160192	51555	139	51694	209919	320	210239
Yamunotri	391732	476	392208	154563	566	155129	122710	216	122926	38208	86	38294	253023	87	253110
Haridwar	20985975	23123	21009098	20486775	21322	20508097	19332025	18615	19350640	15456550	20992	15477542	12763650	22611	12786261
Almora	108178	4524	112702	101648	4358	106006	89850	3440	93920	81345	4020	85365	76958	3499	80457
Ramkhet	145233	1514	146747	137978	1332	139310	103448	738	104186	73825	451	74276	67432	439	67871
Kausani and Bageshwar	77650	376	78026	76807	353	77160	76267	673	76940	75398	824	76222	63740	792	64532
Pitroragarh	243123	565	243688	171381	470	171851	190687	318	191005	179745	542	180287	153127	562	153689
Champawat	148812	259	149071	89241	237	89478	88552	169	88721	877799	208	878007	72494	349	72843

(Table 2.1: Source: Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board)

## ***ECOTOURISM/ WILDLIFE TOURISM***

Wildlife tourism plays an important role in the economy of the state and is helping to provide livelihoods to the local residents. Millions of visitors come to these national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves each year. At the same time it also plays an important role in conservation of such areas and raising the environmental awareness of both the residents and the visitors.

6 national parks, 7 wildlife sanctuaries and 4 wildlife conservation reserves have been constituted in different ecological regions of the state. Three of these have also been declared as tiger reserves under the Project Tiger. These are home to a variety of birds and animals including the tiger, leopard, snow leopard, elephant, different species of deers, crocodiles, snakes and other reptiles & many species of resident as well as migratory birds. These national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and conservation reserves attract millions of visitors each year and are the most important destination for eco-tourists in the state.

### **National Parks**

- 1) **Corbett National Park:** Located in the foothills of Pauri Garhwal and Nainital districts, this national park was established in 1936. Spread over an area of 520.82 sq. km it is home to Tiger, Elephant, Deer, Boar, Crocodile and Python. It also houses about 570 different species of birds.
- 2) **Nanda Devi National park:** It was established in 1982. Located in Chamoli District the park is spread over an area of 624.60 sq km. The important wildlife found here is Himalayan Blue sheep, Himalayan Tahr, Black Bear, Mush Deer, and Snow Leopard etc.
- 3) **Valley Of Flowers:** Established in 1982, it is spread over an area of 87.50 sq. km. in Chamoli district. A world heritage site, the valley is situated at an ecologically sensitive area, which is the transition zone of Himalayan ranges, Zaskar and Western and Central Himalayas.
- 4) **Rajaji National Park:** Spread over 819 sq. kms forming parts of Haridwar and Dehradun districts is unique for its scenic beauty and rich bio-diversity. A paradise for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts, the wildlife of the park is the home to elephants, tigers, leopards and a number of species of deers.
- 5) **Govind National Park:** The Govind National Park in Uttarkashi district is home to a number of endangered species and was established on 1st March, 1955 with a view to protect these species. It is spread over an area of 558 sq kms. It has a beautiful landscape endowed with rich will, dense and diverse forests which are home to many species of wild animals and snow capped mountain peaks. It is an important destination for trekkers.
- 6) **Gangotri National Park:** It was established in the year 1989 and is spread over an area of 2390 sq. km in Uttarkashi district. It provides majestic beauty of coniferous forests and grandeur of glaciers combined with lush green meadows. The forests are Himalayan moist

temperate type. Vegetation consists of chirpine deodar, fir, spruce, oak and rhododendrons. The fauna includes snow leopard, brown bear, black bear, Himalayan thar, serow, musk deer, cheer pheasants, partridges, monal, Himalayan snow cock etc.

### **Wildlife Sanctuaries**

- 1) Govind Wildlife Sanctuary (481 square km ,Uttarkashi district)
- 2) Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (975 square km, Chamoli/Rudraprayag)
- 3) Askot Wildlife Sanctuary (600 square km, Pithoragarh)
- 4) Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary (45 square km, Almora)
- 5) Mussoorie Wildlife Sanctuary (10.8 square km, Dehradun)
- 6) Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary (269 square km, Nainital/ Champawat)
- 7) Sona Nadi Wildlife sanctuary (301 square km, Garhwal)

### **Conservation Reserves**

- 1) Asan Wetland Conservation Reserve (2005) - 444 Hectares
- 2) Jhilmil Tal Conservation Reserve (2005) -3784 Hectares
- 3) Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve (2005) - 5824 Hectares
- 4) Naina Devi Himalayan Bird conservation reserve (2015)- 21244 Hectares

**Tables 2.2 and 2.3 given below lists the location of the National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and their approach.**

<b>National Park</b>	<b>Year of establishment</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Main approach</b>
<b>Corbett National Park</b>	1936	Pauri (Garhwal), Nainital	Connected to both rail and road. About 300 km from Delhi.
<b>Nanda Devi National Park</b>	1982	Chamoli	Haridwar/ Dehradun via Gopeshwar
<b>Valley of Flowers National Park</b>	1982	Chamoli	About 300 kms from Jolly Grant Airport
<b>Rajaji National Park</b>	2013	Haridwar, Dehradun	Near Jolly Grant Airport
<b>Gangotri National Park</b>	1989	Uttarkashi	Haridwar/Dehradun via Gangotri and about 250 kms from Jolly Grant Airport
<b>Govind National Park</b>	2013	Uttarkashi	About 200 kms from Jolly Grant Airport

**Table 2.2: National Parks of Uttarakhand (Forest Department)**

<b>Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Main Connecting road</b>
<b>Mussoorie WLS</b>	1993	Dehradun	Near Mussoorie
<b>Kedarnath WLS</b>	1972	Chamoli	About 250 kms from Jolly Grant Airport
<b>Govind WLS</b>	2013	Uttarkashi	About 200 kms from Jolly Grant Airport
<b>Askot WLS</b>	2013	Pithoragarh	On Delhi-Tanakpur Pithoragarh National Highway, About 500kms from Delhi
<b>Sonanadi WLS</b>	1987	Pauri (Garhwal)	Connected by both rail and road. About 275 km from Delhi.
<b>Binsar WLS</b>	1988	Almora	Connected by both rail and road network. About 375 km from Delhi and about 100km from Kathgodam
<b>Nandhour WLS</b>	2012	Nainital/ Champawat	Connected by both road and rail network. About 300km from Delhi and about 30 km from Kathgodam.

**Table 2.3 Wildlife Sanctuaries of Uttarakhand (Forest Department)**

The state has witnessed an annual increase in the footfall of tourists in these areas. The domestic tourist arrivals have been on a steady rise whereas there has been a fluctuation in the number of international visitors in the region. The table 2.4 below shows the number of tourist arrivals to important national parks. The table also shows the breakup between the domestic and international visitors. (Uttarakhand Forest Statistics, 2016-17)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Foreigner</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Revenue (in Lakhs)</b>
2007-2008	231375	16463	247838	341.95
2008-2009	277487	15503	292990	378.31
2009-2010	285412	15829	301241	547.04
2010-2011	218616	12211	230827	729.33
2011-2012	271579	13329	284908	851.19

2012-2013	281232	11269	292501	790.16
2013-2014	273297	10764	284061	869.84
2014-2015	313652	9284	322936	993.91
2015-2016	328126	12049	340175	1060.73
2016-2017	374575	11685	386260	1168.07

**Table 2.4 Tourist Arrivals in important National Parks. Source: Forest Department Uttarakhand, 2016-17**

In the table 2.5 below the tourist arrival in each national park is given for the year 2016-17:

Protected Area	Indian	Foreigner	Total	Revenue(in Lakhs)
Corbett NP	260232	6268	266500	918.33
Rajaji NP	45361	2206	47567	101.45
Gangotri NP	11457	1186	12643	31.67
Valley of flowers NP	8962	649	9611	17.20
Nanda Devi NP	5387	353	5740	7.85
Govind WLS	9503	168	9671	25.73
Sonanadi WLS	24163	375	24538	50.31
Kedarnath WLS	9510	480	9990	15.53

**Table 2.5: Tourist arrival in National Parks (Uttarakhand Forest Statistics, 2016-17)**

Corbett National Park accounts for highest tourist arrival and revenue followed by Rajaji National Park. The national park alone attracts to Corbett more than 50% of the total tourists that visited the protected areas of Uttarakhand in the year 2016-17.

### ***Accommodation***

Infrastructure for accommodation in national parks and sanctuaries of the state and other wildlife tourism destinations is a combination of government run rest houses and tourist rest houses. The Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam and Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam offer tourist rest houses in Garhwal and Kumaon regions respectively. The state also has a number of private hotels and guest houses for eco-tourism.

In the protected and other forest areas of the state, forest rest houses are available for tourists which are run by the Forest Department. There are a total of 261 such forest rest houses in Uttarakhand both inside and outside protected areas. (Forest Statistics Magazine 2016-17).

The summary of available infrastructure for accommodation and beds in Uttarakhand for wildlife tourism is given below (Table 2.6)

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tourist Rest Houses	176
Night Shelters	32
Beds in Tourist Rest Houses	6164
Hotels and Paying Guest Houses	4813
Beds in Night Shelters	1560
Forest Rest Houses	261

**Table 2.6: Tourist Accommodation available in the state (Source: UTDB)**

### ***Gramin Eco-Tourism Yojana***

Besides being the destination of millions of pilgrims each year, the state is the home to rich flora and fauna and is endowed with scenic beauty that provides immense potential for Nature Based Tourism in the state. A number of tourist destinations are in close proximity to rural areas and this presents endless possibilities of eco-tourism and rural tourism related livelihood opportunities for the economy of the state. “Uttarakhand Rural Tourism development Yojana” was launched in 2014 for the development of ecotourism in the state. The forest department has issued guidelines which include:

- a) **Village selection criteria under Eco-Tourism Yojana:** The selected village should be inhabited. Priority will be given to the villages that have special attraction in context of tourism and are situated in an identified tourism circuit of the state. The village should lie near protected areas and should be abundant in natural beauty (river, lake, waterfall, meadow, flora, and fauna). The process for selection of villages is a dynamic process.
- b) **Resource Development (Infrastructure/Capacity building):** Nearby natural resources for the selected places should be listed. This list will be further developed as “Tourism Products”. Community based skill development programmes will be organised for the natives.
- c) **Marketing (Micro/Macro):** In the list of tourism products social and cultural events should be given place. These events will be marketed. Villagers would be taken to nearby big resorts, guest houses etc. and meetings will be organised so that a relationship can be



established between villagers and big tour operators. Developed areas will be slowly linked to the departmental website and the website will be made mutually interactive so that tourists get the correct information.

- d) **Monitoring/Feedback:** Each selected place will have a feedback/monitoring form/register in which tourists can make entries and based on the suggestions/complaints necessary corrective steps will be taken. Each division will choose a maximum of 1 or 2 such places for development so that the conservation areas are not adversely affected in the process.

### ***Festivals that facilitate Eco-tourism***

#### **1- Bird festivals**

Uttarakhand has a rich diversity of resident and migratory birds in all ecological zones of the state. This is important from the point of view of bird tourism. In past years, apart from organizing bird conservation and nature conservation events, the forest department has taken steps to link these for attracting tourists.

The first spring bird festival was organized in 2014. Since then the state has hosted five Spring Bird Festivals (listed below), each being organised in a different location. These festivals have attracted thousands of bird lovers and eco-tourists.

- a) First Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival (Assan, 5-9 February 2014)
- b) Second Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival (Pawalgarh, 4-8 February 2015)
- c) Third Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival (Assan, FRI, Rajpur, Thano 11-14 February 2016)
- d) Fourth Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival (Nandhour, 3-5 March 2017)
- e) Fifth Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival (Thano and Jhilmil Jheel Wildlife Sanctuary, 9-11 March 2018)

#### **2- Nature festivals**

The state has also hosted four nature festivals since 2014 at Rajpur near Dehradun. The activities in the festival include hiking, bird watching, heritage, exhibition and craft mela. This festival has also served to attract thousands of participants each year. The timelines are given below:

- a) First Rajpur Nature Festival (1-2 November 2014)
- b) Second Rajpur Nature Festival ( 31 October- 2 November 2015)
- c) Third Rajpur Nature Festival (5-7 November 2016)
- d) Fourth Rajpur Nature Festival (4-6 November 2017)

### **3- Other NBT events**

- a- Chhotti Haldwani Centenary** was also organised in the state from 25-27 December, 2015. The activities included hiking and bird watching.
- b-** In the year 2016, **Jim Corbett Heritage Village Celebration (101 years)** was organized from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> December.

### ***ECO-TOURISM CAPACITY BUILDING***

Capacity building plays a very important role in eco-tourism. It empowers the local community with specialized skills and generates livelihood, thus helping in improving the socio-economy of the region. The summary of skill development programs organised for this sector in the state is given below (Source: Ecotourism Wing, Forest Department):

1. House Keeping Program at IHM, Garhi cantt (2weeks)- 4 Participants 127(FRH staff)
2. Cook Training Program(4 weeks)-6 Participants -134 (FRH staff and EDC)
3. Nature Guide training Program (3-4 weeks)- 5 at ecotourism centre Chunakhan Participants-151
4. Nature Guide refresher Course(1 week)- 1 at CRSC, DehradunParticipants-29(Guides from CTR, PCR, Ramnagar, Almora)
5. Nature Guide Course(15 Feb- 13 March 2016)- Ecotourism Centre Chunakhan Nainital Forest Division for local community around Naina devi Bird Conservation Reserve Participants-20
6. Training on cooking and housekeeping – 2 at IHM, Garhi Cantt Participants-47
7. Nature Guide training programme- FTA Haldwani Participants – 30 (19-2-2017 to 1-3-2017)

### ***Other eco-tourism destinations developed by the forest department***

Apart from the national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and conservation reserves which are the major eco-tourism destinations, a few more facilities have been developed and maintained by the state forest department, which are:

- Dhanaulti Eco Park
- Simtola eco- park – Almora
- Lachhiwala Nature park – Dehradun
- Neer Jharna –Rishikesh
- Himalayan Botanical Garden- Nainital
- Sanjay Van- Near Haldwani

- Chaurasi Kutiya- Rajaji Tiger Reserve
- GB Pant High altitude Zoo- Nainital
- Dehradun Zoo
- Herbal Garden and Eco park- Munssiyari
- Corbett Museum – Kaladhungi
- Corbett Fall- near Kaladhungi
- Barati Rao- Nainital
- Virahi- Chamoli
- Kana Taal Kaudia – Tehri
- Ecolodge Dalar Village Binsar –Almora
- Rampur Mandi, Assan Barrage – Dehradun
- Aranyam Eco and Herbal Park – Chamoli
- Chakrata-Kanasar-Devban-Budher Circuit
- G.B. Pant High Altitude Zoo- Nainital
- Vinayak and Kunjakharak – Nainital
- Khirsu- Pauri
- Dodital – Uttarkashi

The tourist footfall and revenue data for important eco-tourism destinations is given below  
(Table 2.7 Source: Ecotourism Wing, FD, Uttarakhand):

<b>Destination</b>		<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
Dehradun Zoo	Tourists	198700	238225	270744	411740	619450
	Revenue (In Rs lakhs)	23.28	25.61	40.77	76.73	198.85
Himalayan Botanical Garden	Tourists	5224	15519	18534	53856	
	Revenue (In Rs lakhs)	1.04	3.10	3.70	10.77	NA
Sariyatal Waterfall	Tourists	82660	146000	214485	232220	
	Revenue (In Rs lakhs)	4.13	7.30	10.72	33.30	NA

G.B. Pant High Altitude Zoo- Nainital	Tourists	177160	226747	278893	301290	
	Revenue (In Rs lakhs)	80.06	103.12	127.57	137.36	NA
Lachiwalla	Tourists	160327	219302	238306	258510	255037
	Revenue (In Rs lakhs)	33.019	40.40	44.98	51.11	81.59

**Table 2.7: Footfall and revenue of important ecotourism destinations (Forest Department)**

### *Eco-tourism outside protected areas*

The eco-tourism activities of the state in outside protected areas (National Parks and Sanctuaries) include:

Camping, Trekking, Mountaineering, Angling, visits to eco Parks, Adventure activities (Rappelling, Burma Bridge, Rafting etc.), visits to zoo and botanical gardens.

Promotional activities include:

- Bird watching camps
- Capacity development (Nature guide training, housekeeping training)
- Bird Festival (Rajpur)
- Local initiatives like burans Mahotsav, Himat Kalasutra etc.
- Publication and maps
- Participation in promotional events

### **Lachiwalla Nature Park**

Lachiwalla is one of the most popular picnic spots near Dehradun. Located along the banks of the Song river, it offers both calm and fun loving environment to visitors. With man-made water pools amidst a sal and riverine forest with a river flowing by it is the perfect summer retreat for tourists. It is known for its lush greenery and many nature lovers flock to this place for swimming, picnics, trekking and bird watching. Forest Rest House is available for accommodation.

The Tourist footfall supports the popularity of the area. The tourist footfall has increased from 160327 in 2013-14 to 255037 in 2017-18. The revenue has also continued to see a rise in the last five years from Rs 3301984 in 2013-14 to Rs 8159492 in 2017-18. (Forest Department)

## **Dehradun Zoo**

Dehradun Zoo was established in 1976, as Malsi deer park which was renamed as Dehradun Zoo in 2015. It situated in the foothills of Mussoorie and is about 10 kms from Dehradun. The Zoo is surrounded by Malsi Reserve Forest and is a major wildlife lover's attraction. The Zoo has a total of 419 birds and animals.

There have been many infrastructural development activities in the facility after it became a zoo. The new infrastructure of the zoo includes a food court building, Aquarium, Aviaries, parks, building of aquatic world and ticket plaza. Leopard rescue centre and enclosure have also been developed. The work on development of Safari road is also ongoing.

The revenue of the zoo almost doubled from 25.61(lakh) in 2014-15(as Malsi Deer Park) to 40.77 (lakh) in 2015-16 (as Dehradun Zoo). The Zoo has already earned a revenue of 62.5 (lakh) in 2018-2019 from April to June.

With a continued increase in the number of tourists the zoo authorities have taken an innovative approach to manage plastic waste generated by the tourists. It works on the principle of 3 Rs i.e. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. For reducing plastic waste, Rs10 is deposited by tourist per plastic bottle at the entry gate and it is returned to them after collecting the waste at the exit. This has reduced plastic waste in zoo premises. For recycling, a plastic bottle crushing machine has been installed at entry gate through which plastic bottles can be crushed into small pieces which is sold in the market at Rs.16/kg. For this purpose tourists are encouraged by giving them two redemption points on each bottle they crush. Efforts are also being made for CSR in this scheme from industries and individuals. In the premises of the zoo, reuse of plastic waste is also being done. More than 40 metre cube construction has been carried out from this waste.

Source : Dehradoon Zoo, 2018

## ***Bird Watching***

The rich diversity of forest habitats in the state supports an enormous variety of bird life. Over 600 species of birds have been recorded in the hill state, which include residents, summer migrants from peninsular India and as far as North Africa, passage and winter migrants from the Palaearctic region and vagrants from adjoining areas. Although forested areas all over the state offer plenty of scope for bird watching, favourite birders' destinations are a number of large protected areas being some of the best places to watch birds in India. (UTDB)

Some of the important areas for bird watching are:

### **1- Assan Barrage Bird Watching area**

The Assan Conservation Reserve in Dehradun district along the banks of river Yamuna is India's first conservation reserve, established in 2005. It covers 4.5 sq.km. area, which is situated at the junction of the Yamuna and Assan More than 250 bird species including 80 water birds have been recorded. It is marked by presence of Brahminy ducks, Rudely Shel duck, Dabbling Duck, Diving Duck. Birds; Herons, Egrets, storks, Ibises are Geese, which are seen during winter season (Nov to Feb). (UTDB)

### **2- Devalsari Bird Watching area**

Devalsari Village is the gateway to the Nag Tibba (3,048 m) trek. It is one of the four villages from where Nag Tibba trek can be initiated. Other villages are Pantwari, Manglori and Aunter.

A large number of birds are found here e.g. Collard Owlet, Hudson's tree creeper, blue throated barbet, common lora, khalij pheasant, wedge tailed pigeon, grey headed canary fly catcher, Golden Bush Robin, Spot-winged Grosbeak, Cinereous vulture, Chukar Partridge, Mountain Scops Owl, Rufous-chinned Laughing thrush, Black-Faced Warbler, Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, Fire-breasted Flower pecker, Fire-fronted Serine, Blue Whistling Thrush, Slaty headed Parakeets, Red-billed blue magpie etc. (UTDB)

### **3- Rajaji National Park Bird Watching destination**

Rajaji National Park is home to 384 bird species belonging to 57 families. Out of the total species, 89 are migrants, 145 resident, 53 altitudinal migrant, 8 local migrants and status of 18 is unknown, which include birds like White-Napped Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Northern Goshawk, etc. A vast variety of winged delights include Peo Fowl, Jungle Fowl, Kaleej Pheasant, Hornbill, Woodpecker, Thrush, Kingfisher, Parakeet, Warbler, Barbet, Finch, Indian Roller and Oriole.

## ***UTTARAKHAND ECO-TOURISM CORPORATION LIMITED***

In order to develop eco-tourism in the state, Eco-tourism Development Corporation of Uttarakhand was established in the state on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016 (Annexure 2). The objectives of the UECL are:

1. To develop and pursue, policies consistent with the promotion of environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially and culturally responsible and sustainable tourism, and to advocate and support key issues related to Nature and Ecotourism, which make a positive contribution to the livelihoods of local communities, leading to their economic development and also stimulating and educating communities including private stakeholders for nature conservation.
2. To promote conceptualization and development of eco-sensitive architecture attuned to the local environment, culture and practices by using indigenous, locally produced and ecologically sustainable materials with minimum carbon emission and environmentally sensitive impacts.
3. To promote policies and practices which facilitate responsible behavior, promote low-impact tourism, promoting energy and water conservation, concept of zero-waste and environmentally and socially acceptable garbage disposal methods and providing scientific inputs and remedies for problems relating to biodiversity loss, environmental pollution controls.

## ***NATURE BASED TOURISM THROUGH ADVENTURE SPORTS***

Uttarakhand also hosts many adventure sports, which are based on its unique natural setting including forests, alpine pastures, high mountains and fast flowing rivers. These sports are facilitating nature-based tourism.

### **Mountaineering**

The Kumaun and Garhwal Himalayas have always drawn the attention of the mountaineers around the world and continue to emerge as one of the popular adventure sports in Uttarakhand. In order to maintain a balance between mountaineering activities in the state and preserving the fragile ecosystem of Himalayas, Guidelines for Mountaineering Expeditions have been formulated. The guidelines have been developed with the objective of promoting mountaineering in a regulated manner with adequate environmental safeguards, so that sustained tourism in high mountain areas of Uttarakhand can take place. A total of 83 peaks in Uttarakhand are open to mountaineers (Guidelines for Mountaineering Expeditions in Uttarakhand, UTDB).

The major points of the guidelines are as follows:

1. **Awareness and Promotion:** Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board will be the nodal agency to promote mountaineering and allied activities in the various mountaineering destinations. Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam and Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam will provide all possible logistical support for such promotional activities.
2. **Measures for Environmental safety:** The Forest Department (FD) will be the nodal agency to monitor and regulate mountaineering as per the existing laws of forest conservation, environment protection and wildlife protection, as well as the allied rules applicable in the area.
3. **Measures for Ensuring Garbage Disposal:** Before the commencement of the expedition, the LO or TL of the team, as the case may be, must compulsorily declare the biodegradable as well as non-biodegradable waste material being carried by the team. On return, the team must give an undertaking to the effect that it has carried back all the non-biodegradable waste material generated by it at various camps, and suitably disposed the biodegradable waste. It shall be the responsibility of the FD to transport the non-biodegradable garbage from ECP/designated site, to the recycling zone.
4. **Number of Core Expedition Team Members and Frequency of Expeditions:** Each expedition will comprise a maximum of 10 core expedition members including a doctor, but excluding the LO. The maximum number of expeditions to a particular peak by any route will be limited to 2 expeditions per calendar month. However, not more than twelve expeditions shall be allowed in a calendar year to any particular peak and satellite peak in its close proximity.
5. **Monitoring the Environmental and Socioeconomic Impact:** After every two years, the environmental and socio-economic impacts will be monitored through ground level surveys in the three mountaineering hubs of Uttarkashi, Chamoli and Pithoragarh Districts to determine the carrying capacity of mountaineering/high mountain trekking activities in Uttarakhand. Local communities shall be integrally involved in various mountaineering activities through appropriate policies.

The Fees and Tariff for mountaineering Expeditions in Uttarakhand include (Guidelines for Mountaineering Expeditions in Uttarakhand, UTDB):

1. Peak Fee payable to Uttarakhand Government for climbing a particular peak.
2. Enroute Camping Site Fee and Trail Management Fee.
3. Service/Handling charge of the State Government.
4. Environmental Levy.
5. National Parks and Sanctuaries Fee, where applicable.
6. Professional Filming Fee in National Parks and Sanctuaries, where applicable.



The fees for Mountaineering Expeditions in Uttarakhand are given below in table 2.7:

For Foreign Expeditions (All amounts in Indian Rupees)

Height of the peak	Peak fee payable to State Govt.	Camping site fee and trail management fee	Environmental levy	Service/ Handling the charge of state Govt.	Total
Above 7001 Mts	40000	10000	20000	10000	80,000
Between 6501-7000 Mts	25000	10000	20000	10000	65,000
Below 6500 Mts	20000	10000	20000	10000	55,000

For Indian Expeditions (all amounts in Indian Rupees)

Height of the peak	Peak fee payable to State Govt.	Camping site fee and trail management fee	Environmental levy	Service/Handling charge of State Govt.	Total
Above 7001 Mts	6000	3000	2000	3000	14,000
Between 6501-7000 Mts	4000	3000	1500	3000	11,500
Below 6500 Mts	3000	3000	1500	3000	10,500

**Table 2.8 Source: Guidelines for mountaineering in Uttarakhand**

### ***Trekking, Hiking and rock climbing***

The mountainous terrain of Uttarakhand provides plenty of opportunities for trekking, hiking and rock climbing. The easternmost hill district Pithoragarh, bordering Nepal and Tibet, often dubbed as ‘Miniature Kashmir’, is abundant in natural beauty, making it the perfect base for many an exciting trek. Several interesting treks interlace the Gori Valley with some of the well-traversed trekking routes running along the Munsiyari – Martoli – Milam – Ralam Glacier. These treks are not just walks of adventure, but are also an interesting way to interact and understand the social and cultural life of the people in the Chaudans, Byans and Darma Valleys. The Bageshwar – Sunderdhunga – Pindari – Kafni Glacier trek is another highly preferred trekking route in the area. (UTDB)

The Garhwal region also offers several thrilling treks, some of them being the Panch Kedar trek, Kedarnath – Vasuki Tal trek, Gangotri – Kedarnath trek and the Gangotri – Gaumukh – Nandanvan – Tapovan trek. The PanchKedar trek passes through the five Kedars represented by Kedarnath, Madmaheshwar, Tungnath, Kalpeshwar and Rudranath. The fascinating routes are profusely intermingled with the widest range of flora and fauna. The Valley of Flowers and

Hemkund trek start from Govindghat and lead to Badrinath. Other treks like the Kalindikhal trek, the Khatling – Sahasratal – Masartal trek, Har Ki Dun trek, Rishikesh – Pauri – Binsar trek and Roopkund trek are equally attractive for both the eager amateur and the veteran mountaineer. (UTDB)

### ***Rafting***

Rafting is amongst the most popular adventure sports in Uttarakhand. Swift-moving rivers are a thrilling experience for white water rafters. These rivers flow through deep forests, rocky terrains, mountains and sometimes even along snowy slopes. Stretches along Alaknanda, Dhauliganga and Kali rivers have several challenging rapids. (UTDB). Trained and qualified guides of Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) conduct rafting courses. These include rafting, river guide services, boarding and lodging. A major market share of rafting trips are organized and managed by privately run adventure clubs. Most camps are usually located between Shivpuri and Kaudiyala. The season for rafting is from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> June (Uttarakhand River Rafting and Kayaking Rules 2014 (amended in 2015)).

#### **River Rafting Stretches in Uttarakhand (Source: UTDB)**

- On river Ganga from Kaudiyala – Rishikesh, a stretch of 36 km.
- On river Yamuna, 20 km. stretch from Nain Bag - Yamuna Bridge - Juddo.
- On river Kali / Sharda - Balwakot - Jauljibi -Pancheswar - Ranakpur, stretch of 95 km.
- On river 30 km. stretch on river Tons, Mori to Tuni.
- On river Gori Ganga - Barhem to Jauljibi rafting stretch of 8 km.
- On river Kosi - Khairna to Mohan, 40 km. rafting and Kumheriya to Ramnagar : 25 Km.
- On river Saryu - Bageshwar to Rameshwar, a stretch of 70 km. and Rameshwar to Pancheswar a rating distance of 20 Km.
- On river Ramganga East - Thal - Nachani – Rameshwar, 80 km. rafting stretch
- On river Ramganga West - Chaukhutia - Bhikiyasain – Marchula, rafting stretch of 90 km.

#### **Uttarakhand River Rafting/Kayaking Rules, 2014 (Amendment, 2015 and 16):**

The state has drafted the rules for river rafting and kayaking in the state. There have been two amendments in the rules ever since they came into existence. According to the rules the current season for rafting is 1<sup>st</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> June on all the rivers. In order to get a river rafting permit the applicant should apply to the C.E.O of UTDB. It is mandatory that every applicant shall have three year experience in adventure activities. Maximum of 10 rafts shall be permitted to one individual operator. Rafting fees should be Rs.500 per day. The technical committee shall examine all rafting/rescue equipment and examine the guide regarding security and rescue. A penalty of Rs. 1.00 Lakh per raft shall be recovered from a person or firm running without permit.

The number of firms and rafts operating in each river in Uttarakhand is given below in table 2.9:

<b>List of Number of river rafting firms and rafts (2017-18)</b>		
<b>Name of the River</b>	<b>Number of Companies</b>	<b>Number of Rafts</b>
Kali River	9	20
Tons River	3	15
Alaknanda River	12	29
Yamuna River	1	2
Kosi River	2	4
Saryu River	6	12
Ramganga West	2	4
Ramganga East	1	2
Ganga River	262	576
Total	298	664

**Table 2.9: Number of firms and rafts operating in each river (UTDB, 2018)**

**Rafting data (Table 2.10 Source UTDB)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Foreigner</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2003-2004</b>	15,145	2615	<b>17,760</b>
<b>2004-2005</b>	18,002	2861	<b>20,863</b>
<b>2005-2006</b>	22,577	3085	<b>25,662</b>
<b>2006-2007</b>	26,798	2720	<b>29,518</b>
<b>2007-2008</b>	28,271	3589	<b>31,860</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	23,499	3179	<b>26,678</b>
<b>2009-2010</b>	23,366	2017	<b>25,383</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	65,320	6911	<b>72,231</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	59,508	4,665	<b>64,173</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	52,190	4,768	<b>56,933</b>
<b>2013-2014</b>	37,965	3,983	<b>41,948</b>
<b>2014-2015</b>	49,620	3,330	<b>53,388</b>
<b>2015-2016</b>	53,682	3,446	<b>57,128</b>
<b>2016-2017</b>	43,715	3,033	<b>46,748</b>

The rafting data shows an average increasing trend from 2003 to 2010. The numbers indicate that the footfall for rafting in the state peaked in 2010-2011 with as many as 72,231 tourists indulging in the activity. Post 2011, an overall decreasing trend can be noticed with slight fluctuations. Over all since 2003 the footfall has increased with 46,748 tourists in 2016-17 as opposed to 17,760 in 2003-04 but has dipped since 2011.

## **Camping**

Camping is one of the finest ways to enjoy the beauty and diversity of nature. It is the best mode to spend quality time in the lap of nature and take a break from the otherwise hectic life. The Uttarakhand Himalayan region is one such state that offers a diverse range of camping opportunities both, in the form of wildlife camping or general camping.

Some of the most attractive camping destinations in the state have been described below:

### **1- Tons Valley, Garhwal**

The Tons valley base is an excellent camping site located at a pleasant 1200 mts above sea level. Rich in a variety of western Himalayan flora and fauna, it is densely forested with deodar, pine, alpine oak, birch, chestnut, rhododendron and jamun. (UTDB)

### **2- Jharipani, Mussoorie**

Jharipani (1700 mts ) located near Mussoorie, is an ideal place for small groups .There are immense opportunities for Eco-Tourism and also adventure sports like Horse riding and outdoors Horse safari, Paragliding, Rafting and Trekking in and around Mussoorie. (UTDB)

### **3- Thangdhar (Dhanaulti)**

Set in the heart of the Indian Himalayas and surrounded by dense Pine and Rhododendron forests, Campsite - Dhanaulti (Thangdhar, Mussoorie Chamba Road) (2000 mts) is an excellent camping destination. Dedicated to the spirit of adventure and eco-tourism, it offers an amazing combination of soul soothing peace and high adrenaline adventure. (UTDB)

## **NATURE BASED TOURISM THROUGH HOMESTAYS**

Home stay is the best way to combine experience of the famed Himalayan hospitality of Uttarakhand and enjoy the unique natural setting. It also provides an opportunity for contributing to the local socio-economy. The Government of Uttarakhand has notified the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Home Stay Development Scheme Rules (2018). This initiative will boost tourism as an industry and encourage entrepreneurship in the state. As per these rules:

1. The entrepreneur does not require land use change for constructing buildings for homestay scheme. The charges of electricity, water and building tax shall be charged at non-

commercial rates. The government will also provide loans to eligible entrepreneurs and for first three years will bear GST on various materials and services. A separate website and mobile app for advertisement of scheme will also be launched. Training for hospitality and other activities required in the industry will be conducted.

2. Government has laid down certain conditions for homestays through these rules. The building should be in residential area and the owner should live in that building with his family. For starting homestay, the registration under the scheme is compulsory. The rooms for tourism should range from 1 to 6. This scheme will cover whole state except those within municipal corporation boundaries. Priority will be given to those buildings which have been constructed in traditional architectural heritage style.
3. The main objective of scheme is to give employment to local people and enhance their economy. Through this scheme the tourists will be attracted to rural areas and new tourist destinations will be developed. The scheme also envisages introducing tourists to state cuisines, heritage, and hilly culture and customs. This will directly and indirectly increase the state GDP and will also be a milestone in mitigating migration from the state. The government has the target to develop 5000 homestays till 2020.

### **Rang Tribal Museum**

The Rang Tribal Museum in Dharchula has been the result of hard work, persistence and cooperation of the people from the Rang tribe of the region. Rang Kalyan Sanstha (R.K.S.) is a leading social organization of the region that has for decades actively worked towards the social-economic and cultural development of people living in harsh natural conditions. This organization has played a pivotal role in bringing the dream of the Rang Tribal Museum into reality. The Rang Tribal Museum offers an extensive view into the lives, customs and culture of the people residing in the region comprising the Vyans, Darma and Chaundas valleys – the region frequented by trekkers, pilgrims and tourists from India and abroad. The KMVN has made provisions that a visit to the Rang Tribal Museum is made mandatory for all the tourists participating in its tour-itineraries. This helps the tourists understand the region more deeply and encourages them to behave as responsible visitors.

(Source: Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board)

## **Homestays in Kumaon**

The Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Ltd. has initiated the novel homestay project in the tourism sector to meet the demands of the rapidly growing hospitality industry. For last three years, the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam has been offering home-stay services to tourists in some of the remote trekking routes of Kumaon. Some of the most charming villages in the remote valleys of Vyans, Darma and Chaundas in the Pithoragarh district of Kumaon were selected for the initial phase of the homestay scheme.

The picturesque Kuti village was taken up by the KMVN as the first location for home-stay. Several old houses were renovated and were handed over to the locals for this purpose. Managed by the local people, these home-stays have proved to be immensely popular among the tourists, pilgrims and trekkers. The tourists were enthralled by this new experience since it opened several new horizons to them including local cuisine and culture.

The Nabi village falls adjacent to Kuti and from the year 2017, the home-stay facility was started in this village too. The Nabi Home-stay scheme turned out to be a super success as the tourists unanimously rated their stay in Nabi as the best during the Adi-Kailash trek. The KMVN provided beddings, utensils, cutlery, toilets, bathrooms and other necessary items to the households taking part in the home-stay scheme.

The KMVN has brought all the accessible villages of these valleys under the home-stay umbrella for a dual objective:

- 1 - The home-stay scheme would open the doors for opening a new Tribal-circuit tourism in the Darma valley.
- 2 - Trekking and mountaineering can be taken to a new level through this scheme by encouraging more and more trekking enthusiasts to visit the Darma valley that hosts the base-camp of the Panchchuli Glacier.

All the homestay-villages undertaken by the KMVN, fall on important trekking trails.

Source: UTDB, 2017

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## **CHAPTER III**

# **NBT AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN / STATE TOURISM POLICY**

At present there are two main documents for guiding the development of tourism in the state and also nature based tourism (eco-tourism). These are the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan (2007-2022) and draft Tourism Policy (2017).

### **UTTARAKHAND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN 2007-2022**

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan(UTDMP) 2007-2022 is an exhaustive plan for the development of tourism in the state of Uttarakhand prepared under the auspices of Government of India, Government of Uttarakhand, United Nations Development Programme and World Tourism Organization with the aim to support the Government of India in promoting sustainable development of high quality sustainable tourism infrastructure, facilities and products in the prime tourism zones of Uttarakhand State. The process of preparation of the master plan involved identification of the deficiencies in tourism, sector by sector and in a coordinated manner involving all tourism stakeholders at the state and local levels. The UTDMP also touches upon nature based tourism / ecotourism and is thus considered to be a guiding document for development of this sector in the state, thereby helping to boost the rural economy. It is a very detailed document encompassing the entire gamut of issues related to the development of tourism including nature-based tourism in Uttarakhand.

The UTDMP has also taken into account the existing policies and plans of this sector:

1. Tourism Policy (GoU): The Tourism Policy of Uttarakhand was formulated in 2001. The policy envisages the following vision:
  - To place Uttarakhand on the tourism map of the world as one of the leading tourist destinations, and to make Uttarakhand synonymous with tourism
  - To develop the manifold tourism related resources of the State in an eco-friendly manner, with the active participation of the private sector and the host communities
  - To develop tourism as a major source of employment and income/revenue generation and as a pivot of the economic and social development in the state. (Tourism Policy of Uttarakhand, 2001)
2. Tourism Master Plan for Pithoragarh – Munsiyari Circuit, March 2005.
3. Master Plan for Trekking Routes in Uttarakhand, January 2003.



4. Master Plan for Dayara Bugyal, 2002.
5. Master Plan for Eco-Tourism in the Valley of Flowers – Hemkund Belt, 2005.
6. Master Plan covering the four Char Dham's (Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badarinath and Kedarnath) 2005 and the routes leading to these.
7. Master Plan for Pauri, Khirsu and Lansdowne, 2003
8. Master Plan for Development of Eco - Tourism Destination at Hampur, 2003.
9. A number of government proposals for tourism development being promoted:
  - (i) Development of Dehradun-Mussoorie Tourism circuit;
  - (ii) Development of Pilgrim circuit at Reetha Sahib and Nanak Matta;
  - (iii) Development of Ghangaria – Valley of Flowers – Hemkund Sahib as a Tourist Circuit;
  - (iv) Development of Corbett National Park as a Tourist Circuit;
  - (v) Development of Dhanolti-Chamba-Narendra Nagar Tourist Circuit; and
  - (vi) Development of Munsiyari as a Destination in Uttarakhand; these projects are all in the pipeline to be implemented on existing and available government land.
10. Tourism Master plan for Tehri Dam Project Area: 2002.
11. A number of cableway connections are proposed in the state in the master plan:
  - (i) Govind Ghat-Ghangaria-Hemkund;
  - (ii) Janki Chatti to Yamunotri;
  - (iii) Dayara Bugyal ropeways;
  - (iv) Dehradun-Mussoorie ropeway;
  - (v) Thuligad-Purnagiri ropeway;
  - (vi) Dhanaulti-Chamba, Ropeway at Surkanda Devi;
  - (vii) Ranikhet-Chaubatiya ropeway, district Almora;
  - (viii) Pauri-Srinagar ropeway, district Pauri Garhwal;
  - (ix) Munsiyari-Khaliyatop ropeway, district Pithoragarh;
  - (x) Kemty-Mussoorie ropeway, district Dehradun;

## ***Natural setting***

The Himalayan mountain chain captures the imagination of people throughout the world. It most usually conjures an image of snow-capped mountains, set in inaccessible highland wilderness where specialist mountaineering teams venture or the foothills where more general trekking activities can take place. It follows therefore that areas offering close access to the high Himalayas and/or have fine views of these majestic and famous mountains possess an important international tourism resource. Uttarakhand in this respect offers immense opportunities both to the general tourism coming for leisure or sightseeing and also to Eco tourist. (UTDMP, 2007-2022)

## **Physiographic Regions**

Uttarakhand can aptly be divided into a number of physiographic zones, based on elevation, physiography and terrain. These are:

- 1) The Greater Himalayas comprising of high peaks, glaciers and mountain ranges;
- 2) The middle Himalayas lying to the south of the great or main Himalayas and comprising of high, densely forested mountains, terraced slopes and deep river valleys.
- 3) The Lesser Himalayas (or sub montane zone) lying between the middle Himalayas and the lower foothills and plains;
- 4) The central lowlands of the Ganges River and its tributaries (part of the Indo-Gangetic Plain).

## ***Flora***

Uttarakhand is the home to 343 species of flora representing 256 genera, which belong to 107 families. The vegetation is classed into a number of distinct zones on the basis of elevation, climatic conditions and soils. Uttarakhand is rich in forests with more than 71% of the total geographic area of the state under forest cover (ISFR, 2017).

The main forest types in the state are:

<b>Vegetation Type</b>	<b>Main Characteristics</b>
Siwalik, Dun, Terai and Bhabar Forest	Found on sandstone or gangetic soils between 900m to 1,000 m in the Bhabar belt and including hardwoods such as Sal
Riverine or Khair Forests	Also found along the lower belt and inner valleys of the Himalayas as either mixed or pure patches and comprising medium sized deciduous trees
Lower and Upper Mixed Scrub	These are usually degraded vegetation impacted by man

Siwalik and Lower Himalayan Chir Pines	These extend on the southern aspects from 1,000 m to 2,150 m and on the northern aspects from 900m to 2,000 m. They are open forests with limited undergrowth.
Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests	These occur near the confluence of the Yamuna and Aglar and on foothills and extend up to the altitudes of 1,200 m.
Blues Pine and Spruce Forests	Blue pine and spruce occur on higher slopes from about 2,400m to 3,200 m
Moist and Dry Deodar forests	These are also very open forests with generally smaller trees lying between 1,520 and 2,150 m
Oak Forests	The predominant types in Uttarakhand are Banj, Moru and Kharsu. Banj is found on slopes of between 800 m and 2,150 m, while Moru is found higher between 1980m and 2450m, Kharsu forests occupy very extensive tracts at heights between 2,350m and 3,500 m and are highly dense , being home to considerable wildlife.
Temperate Mixed Coniferous Forests	These include fir and spruce and occur between the altitudes of 2,150 m and 3,050 m. Silver firs is the dominant species.
Alpine Pastures	At 3,500 m and 5,000 m, which can extend well above the treeline, these areas are usually covered in snow from November to May but are home to a variety of grasses, herbs, shrubs and flowers which can provide pasture for cattle

**Table 3.1 Source: UTDMP**

## **Fauna**

Many different types of wild animals are found in the forests and surrounding tracts of Uttarakhand whose habitat depends on the nature of vegetation, climatic conditions and elevation. At higher elevations, the main animals are snow leopard; black bear and bharal. Tigers and common leopards form the most exotic of the mammals and are seen in the tropical; sub-tropical and even temperate forests Primates, comprising the common black faced Langurs and Rhesus variety, are often seen along forest roads and in human habitation in different parts of the state. (UTDMP,2007-2022). Other important animals found in Uttarakhand include elephants, hog deer, spotted deer and sambhar.

## **Protected Areas**

Protected areas (national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves) account for around 21 per cent of the total recorded forested area in the state and 14 per cent of the total land area. They comprise of six national parks and seven wildlife sanctuaries. Two of the national parks are UNESCO World Heritage sites: Nanda Devi National Park declared in 1988 and the Valley of Flowers National Park in 2004 (in the Bhyundar Valley).

### ***Physical Infrastructure***

This master plan analyses the then existing physical infrastructure, (which is essential for promoting sustainable tourism) and future demand. The salient features of the physical infrastructure given in the master plan are presented in the table below

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Investment Needed</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Transport	medium	PWD is aware of some of the problems, plans are prepared.
Electricity Supply	low	Work is ongoing to improve the situation
Water Supply	low	No comprehensive solutions are being prepared
Solid waste	high	Addressed by ADB for urban areas. Rural areas lacking
Sewage	high	Addressed by ADB for urban areas. Rural areas lacking.
Telecommunications	low	Work is ongoing to improve the situation
Emergency Services	medium	No comprehensive solutions being prepared

**Table 3.2 Source : UTDMP**

The master plan has flagged the main gaps in tourism as lack of infrastructure for communication, accommodation and coordination between various stakeholders.

### ***Proposed Tourism Zones***

The master plan has delineated proposed tourism zones, which are indicative, but outline for each zone is an “envelope of substance and concern” in terms of tourism. Within each of these areas are a wide range of existing tourism destinations, and products; both man-made and natural resources with potential for future tourism development, thus constituting areas of concern to be properly planned before any developments are permitted.

### **ECO-TOURISM (NATURE BASED TOURISM)**

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan has a dedicated section on Ecotourism; its status and prospects for further development. This includes flora and fauna, primarily bird watching and ecologically sensitive safaris. Village Tourism and outdoor/Nature Tourism are also a part of the master plan. Village Tourism includes homestay and experiencing the village life, whereas nature tourism covers sports such as river rafting, trekking and mountaineering.

The locations of outdoors and nature tourism identified in the Master Plan are listed below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
River Rafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Haridwar, Rishikesh, Shivpuri</li> <li>● Lakshwanjhula and Devprayag (Ganga River)</li> <li>● Matli and Dharsu Bend (Bhagirathi River)</li> <li>● Tanakpur, Puniagiri Devi, Tanli (Kali River)</li> <li>● Ghat, Rameshwar, Naini (Saryu)</li> <li>● Dhangiri, Ramnagar and Betal Ghat (Kosi River)</li> <li>● Rudraprayag, Srikot, Maletha, Nagrasu, Maithana, Nagnath, Chamoli (Alaknanda River)</li> <li>● Simli (Pindar River)</li> <li>● Corbett, Marchula (Ramganga River)</li> </ul>
Waterskiing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assan Barrage (Yamuna)</li> <li>● Roorkee (Ganga)</li> <li>● Harpuri (Bouja)</li> </ul>
Rock Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uttarkashi</li> <li>● Bhatwari</li> <li>● Gwaldam</li> <li>● Bageshwar</li> <li>● Almora</li> <li>● Nainital</li> <li>● Munsiyari</li> <li>● Champawat</li> <li>● Pithoragarh</li> </ul>
Paragliding Hang gliding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pauri</li> <li>● Chinyalisaur</li> <li>● Champawat</li> <li>● Pithoragarh</li> <li>● Haldwani</li> <li>● Bimetal</li> </ul>
Major Wildlife Watching /Ecotourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rajaji</li> <li>● Corbett</li> <li>● Binsar</li> <li>● Banari Devi</li> <li>● Gangotri</li> </ul>

**Table 3.3 Source UTDMP**

### ***Eco-tourism Development strategy (UTDMP, 2007-2022)***

The UTDMP states that despite the world renown of the Himalayan Mountains and the huge capacity of the natural environment in Uttarakhand to support tourism based on nature appreciation and interpretation, ecotourism is relatively poorly developed in the state. This may be due to a lack of awareness and failure to tap the immense potential of nature based tourism / ecotourism to attract high quality and responsible tourists that can bring significant environmental, conservation, social and economic benefits to all sectors of the society. Even some of the products observed and/or promoted by stakeholders such as hoteliers are not strictly ecotourism. This suggests that the definition of ecotourism is not widely understood by various stakeholders.

***Hence, the UTDMP further states that, it is necessary to develop an appreciation of ecotourism at all levels, including Government, tourist operators and the public in general, and specifically those local communities in which ecotourism products can be developed.***

### **Potential Eco Tourism Avenues in Uttarakhand**

It has been brought out in the UTDMP that since the state has been endowed with a wide range of geographical landscapes as well as relative degrees of hardships that these present, different types of eco-tourists may be targeted.

These may be divided into the following categories:

- *General Eco tourists:* tourists with a general interest in nature who are attracted by the Himalayas and who would wish to experience the varied landscapes, major fauna and flora, and cultural attributes of the region (often in combination). They can be of different age groups and have varied spending power, according to age and income levels.
- *Eco tourists Interested in Biodiversity:* these tourists are specifically interested in wildlife, both on a general basis and as specialist enthusiasts such as birdwatchers. Tiger or leopard viewing for example would probably attract tourists with no specialist knowledge but who are attracted by the exotic nature and rarity of these mammals. They may exhibit more mainstream characteristics such as in terms of spending or accommodation needs. The specialist segment of this group of Eco tourists would usually have higher disposable incomes and be prepared to experience conditions that are related to their special interests.
- *Trekking Eco tourists:* this segment comprises of tourists whose prime motivation is to experience the mountain environment through trekking. This is already a well- established product in Uttarakhand but the combination of other ecotourism products with trekking can potentially increase the size and viability of this market. The market can consist of budget trekkers as well as higher spending tourists, the latter being potentially major contributors to conservation initiatives.

- *Adventure/Sports Tourists:* these might not be considered as Eco tourists strictly, activities such as rafting and mountaineering can also be combined with ecotourism, where an appreciation and interpretation of the environment is undertaken as part of the activity. The development of camping sites on river beaches is one example of a product that can easily be turned into ecotourism. This is also a potentially important market as ecotourism can easily be combined with other forms of nature tourism. (UTDMP, 2007-2022)

In addition to these, Eco Tourism can be promoted as an add-on attraction for mainstream tourists as well to further improve quality of the product such as rafting, trekking or cultural appreciation.

### **Current Situation of Eco-tourism (Source: UTDMP)**

Despite the potential and abundance of varied natural resources that favor ecotourism in each of the above categories, the sector is still very much in an embryonic state. This is primarily because there is a widespread lack of interpretation and awareness of the natural environment presented to tourists at both international and domestic levels. Except a few outstanding ecotourism destinations such as Corbett National Park, most of the natural resources in Uttarakhand, including the rivers and mountains, are primarily being exploited for adventure or specialist sports tourism. Activities such as river rafting and trekking are products that, whilst successfully being developed as adventure sports, are mostly lacking in any ecotourism elements that could widen their appeal and hence reach the greater market of responsible tourism.

According to the UTDMP, the major ecotourism products are in the national parks (Corbett, Gangotri, Govind, Nanda Devi, Rajaji and Valley of Flowers), which collectively cover nearly 5 million ha, as well as six (now 7) wildlife sanctuaries (Askot, Binsar, Govind, Kedarnath, Mussoorie and Sonanadi). Corbett may probably be regarded as the jewel in the crown of the ecotourism sites, due to its more spectacular wildlife (notably its big cats); it's long history as one of India's prime wildlife reserves and the innovative and forward-thinking initiatives being undertaken by the Forest Department in Corbett. On the other hand, sites such as Binsar, although also offering a potentially good product with rare, if elusive, mammals such as leopards, does not seem to have fully exploited their ecotourism potential, even though many of these parks often command fine views of the Himalayan range. This attribute offers a unique opportunity to combine ecotourism with general nature sightseeing of the high Himalayas for which there is always high demand.

The main constraints as outlined in the UTDMP, for achieving this are:

- a general perceived reluctance of the Forest Department to engage in any other type of activity other than conservation in national parks ;
- a general lack of awareness of how ecotourism could actually help conservation through promoting interest, providing additional revenues and integrating local communities in conservation;

- poor interpretation of the environment in non-protected areas which does not stimulate interest in ecotourism;
- the poor nature of ecotourism facilities in many national parks and the lack of management procedures aimed at combining visitor growth with conservation improvements.

It has also been pointed out that the current policies are responsible for the relatively less numbers of visitors to forest rest houses in Uttarakhand; in 2006-2007 only 201,000 visitors stayed at guesthouses in all of the national park/wildlife sanctuaries (of which about 139,000 stayed in Corbett National Park alone). This when compared to 138,000 in the period 2001 -2002 shows an increase in percentage terms, but the low base of visitors still represents very low numbers. In comparison for example, the English Lake District National Park, which has a total area of 2,292 sq km (only some 61 per cent of the land area of Uttarakhand six national parks combined), attracts 22 million visitors and 2.3 million visitor stays. It also has around 65,000 bed spaces (although this includes hotels in sizeable towns that are within the national park itself). This brings to the fore the need to balance between Conservation vs. Tourism. One of the main constraints towards the future development of ecotourism in Uttarakhand is the stringent conservation law put in place to protect the forests. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 with its amendments made in subsequent years, controls any form of development within forests land. The positive aspects of this act should be seen in the context of the severe degradation of forests that has occurred in the Himalayas, from as far back as colonial times, due to excessive logging and the clearing of vegetation cover for development. (UTDMP, 2007-2022)

However, the strict controls can also restrict tourism access and reduce opportunities for ecotourism.

This is mostly due to:

- lack of flexibility to introduce accommodation in forest areas, including sustainable forms of lodging such as eco-lodges;
- strict limitation on access and other facilities that could be used for ecotourism, such as footpaths, watchtowers, boardwalks etc.
- a general unenthusiastic attitude among Forest Department officials towards developing ecotourism in forested areas, preferring to keep such practices to non-forest areas.

The UTDMP states that these have serious consequences for developing an effective ecotourism strategy. First, as large part of Uttarakhand is under forest cover and under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department, large tracts of potentially interesting and outstanding countryside remain inaccessible to Eco tourists (i.e. because of access difficulties and/or lack of adequate facilities to carry out ecotourism in the forested areas). The temporary closing down of many national parks is another form of restriction that limits the development of ecotourism. Secondly, by restricting ecotourism to non-forested areas, and relegating much of the management



of ecotourism to the private sector, the quality of the product has been jeopardized: the selection of natural areas for display for example may be less interesting or outstanding in non-forestry-controlled areas and the level of skills among operators in organization, interpretation and overall training can be inadequate. There is little doubt that the Forest Department's knowledge and accessibility to the forests and national parks is unsurpassed, yet such resources are not used to tap into a lucrative market that can contribute greatly towards conservation. (UTDMP, 2007-2022)

### **Proposed Ecotourism Strategy (UTDMP, 2007-2022)**

The UTDMP has also proposed an Ecotourism strategy whose key elements are:

- 1- Pursue the ecotourism agenda in the national tourism policy process as well as state tourism/ecotourism policies under preparation;
- 2- Set out priority actions at a spatial level;
- 3- Identify and develop key ecotourism sectors;
- 4- Introduce guidelines for community participation in ecotourism;
- 5- Improve the urban environment
- 6- Revise regulatory mechanisms to facilitate ecotourism;
- 7- Establish an effective implementation framework.

The UTDMP has summarized the following ecotourism circuits

<p><b><i>Bird Watching Circuits</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sonanadi Important Bird Area (IBA) to Corbett IBA with possible base at Khisu or Lansdowne</li> <li>● Binog IBA - Rajaji IBA - Asan Barrage IBA with base at Dehradun</li> <li>● Kedarnath IBA - Valley of Flowers IBA - Nanda Devi IBA</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Other Wildlife Circuits</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High mountain wildlife circuit (Govind- Gangotri- Valley of Flowers- Nanda Devi- Askot sanctuary)</li> <li>● Bhabar Belt wildlife circuit (Rajaji- Corbett)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Eco- Cultural Tourism Circuits</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Source of the Ganga Circuit (Uttarkashi-Gangotri-Gaumukh)</li> <li>● Indo-Tibetan circuit of the Goriganga valley, (Madcot-Darkot-rest of corridor between Munsiyari and Askot Sanctuary)</li> <li>● Colonial Cultural Circuit (Almora- Binsar)</li> <li>● Religious/ ancient culture at Jageshwar (Jageshwar area)</li> </ul>

**Table 3.4: Source: UTDMP**

It has been brought out in the master plan that Ecotourism should be combined with trekking. There is also a need for establishment of interpretation and information centers. These should be introduced at the beginning of treks or in the designated gateways towns or villages. Information signs and look out points also need to be developed.

There is also a need to develop ecotourism infrastructure and facilities like:

- Development of eco-lodges, both luxury and basic;
- Signage made of local materials to inform visitors of natural features and fauna and flora;
- Hides to observe wildlife;
- the development in the long term of special eco-resorts on specially designated conservation areas;
- Where appropriate the development of highly selective kayaking or rafting tours with interpretation through trained guides of the rivers' ecology and natural features;
- Nature camps for students to enhance awareness of environmental protection.

The Master Plan also entails revising regulatory mechanisms to facilitate ecotourism. These are:

- a- **Facilitating Ecotourism Development in selected areas:** Biodiversity conservation and integrity of the ecosystem processes should be researched in detail where ecotourism facilities are planned and site disturbance, should be minimised and where necessary mitigated by landscaping or rehabilitation. Design and construction should prevent impacts upon natural drainage, soils and ensure that storm water management is sustainable. Energy supply should be ecologically sustainable (using where possible renewable energy) and minimize total energy use. Water supply should be ecologically sustainable and minimize total use (and wastewater should be treated and disposed of in a long term sustainable manner, involving removal from sensitive areas). Such zones would also only be designated under special plans, namely Tourism and Environmental and Management Plans (TEMPs)
- b- **Devising Schemes to fund Conservation initiatives through Tourism:** Through consultations with the Forest Department, conservation groups, communities and tourists, strategies should be developed and tested for using tourism as a source of funding for conservation. Entrance fees, wildlife viewing fees, tourism concessions and tourist donation funds are examples of revenue-generating strategies that have proved successful and could be used. An eco-tax could be introduced to help fund improvements to the environment.
- c- **Certification and Accreditation Systems:** A certification system of eco-resorts or mainstream hotels that adhere to sound environmental practices (such as recycling of water, use of solar energy etc.) in natural areas should be set up. The certification scheme to be developed should:
  - contribute to sustainable tourism development of the target areas;

- verify those products with advanced performance indicators;
  - contribute to maintaining and enhancing service quality in tourism;
  - limit energy consumption;
  - limit water consumption;
  - limit the production of waste;
  - favour the use of renewable resources and of substances which are less hazardous to the environment;
  - promote environmental communication and education;
  - recognise community and social support contributions from tourism businesses, such as sponsoring local product association programs.
- d-** A separate accreditation system could be applied to ecolodges where these are permitted in a national park of protected forest environment. This accreditation system could be developed to assure tourists that they are truly staying in a real environmental sustainable facility which has no adverse impact on the national park or wildlife sanctuary and actually contributes towards conservation.
- e-** Setting up a Heritage trust.

#### ***Analysis of Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan 2007-2022***

With only 4 years remaining for the completion of the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan, it is important to analyze what was proposed and what has been achieved till date particularly in the broad landscape of nature based tourism (inclusive of ecotourism). Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan is a very elaborate document, which attempts to address the potential of tourism and the issues in the sector in a holistic way.

It also lays down a short, medium and long-term development strategy. The medium term development strategy time frame was 2013-2017, which ended last year, and the final long-term strategy began in 2018.

The tourist arrivals projection of Uttarakhand according to the plan is:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Projected Domestic Tourist Arrival (Mn)</b>	<b>Projected Foreign Tourist Arrival (Mn)</b>	<b>Projected Total Tourist Arrivals (Mn)</b>
2006	9.13	0.109	9.24
2007	10.45	0.127	10.58
2008	11.97	0.147	12.12
2009	13.71	0.170	13.88
2010	15.69	0.198	15.89
2011	17.97	0.229	18.20
2012	20.30	0.257	20.56
2013	22.94	0.287	23.23
2014	25.93	0.322	26.25
2015	29.30	0.361	29.66
2016	33.11	0.404	33.51
2017	37.41	0.452	37.86
2018	42.27	0.506	42.78
2019	47.77	0.567	48.34
2020	53.98	0.635	54.61
2021	61.00	0.712	61.71
2022	68.93	0.797	69.72

**Table 3.5: Source Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan**

The tourism data for important destinations from year 2013 to 2017 is given below:

Destination	2017			2016			2015			2014			2013		
	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total
Dehradun	2118333	27956	2146489	1783637	23746	1807383	1749930	18722	1768652	1767197	18549	1785746	1718783	18202	1736985
Rishikesh	673226	4815	678041	589653	2574	592227	434033	3723	437756	328936	4052	332988	370216	4193	374409
Mussoorie	2794108	1865	2795973	2790511	4613	2795124	2764773	4499	2769272	1391355	5347	1396702	1070925	5050	1075975
Pauri	73494	1100	74594	70661	880	71541	65151	702	65853	41715	335	42050	65473	442	65915
Srinagar	196805	256	197061	38391	69	38460	81059	3762	84821	77205	2873	80078	118346	2009	120355
Kotdwar	350111	12796	362897	439034	9642	448676	249672	16698	266370	282799	13476	296275	319529	15561	335090
Rudraprayag	484339	865	485204	308667	108	308775	196716	940	197656	85963	3228	89191	393307	329	393636
Kedarnath	470517	718	471235	309069	695	309764	153821	614	154435	40718	228	40946	333693	81	333774
Bhaikallal	232901	3141	236042	208840	1636	210476	45345	6	45351	35436	25	35461	71901	18	71919
Joshimath	236798	346	237144	186191	155	186346	220301	191	220492	173013	426	173439	418882	559	419441
Badrinath	920078	388	920466	654140	215	654355	366306	149	366455	159405	170	159575	476278	152	476430
Auli	85019	115	85134	42888	93	42981	26126	170	26296	26172	230	26402	29345	248	29593
Hemkund Sahib	213279	122	213401	108646	192	108838	67840	233	68073	37678	0	37678	77785	76	77861
Valley of Flowers	13285	569	13854	11098	763	11861	4956	297	5253	176	5	181	870	68	938
Tehri	1425732	37092	1462824	954927	21907	976834	1141006	19329	1160335	553329	17718	571047	482865	13504	496369
Uttarkashi	335122	2304	337426	332568	2401	334969	284224	2136	286360	206530	929	207459	268573	1268	269841
Gangotri	408275	463	408738	284350	1109	285459	159684	508	160192	51555	139	51694	209919	320	210239
Yamunotri	391732	476	392208	154563	566	155129	122710	216	122926	38208	86	38294	253023	87	253110
Haridwar	20985975	23123	21009098	20486775	21322	20508097	19332025	18615	19350640	15456550	20992	15477542	12763650	22611	12786261
Almora	108178	4524	112702	101648	4358	106006	89850	3440	93920	81345	4020	85365	76958	3499	80457
Ranikhet	145233	1514	146747	137978	1332	139310	103448	738	104186	73825	451	74276	67432	439	67871
Kausani and Bageshwar	77650	376	78026	76807	353	77160	76267	673	76940	75398	824	76222	63740	792	64532
Pithoragarh	243123	565	243688	171381	470	171851	190687	318	191005	179745	542	180287	153127	562	153689
Champawat	148812	259	149071	89241	237	89478	88552	169	88721	877799	208	878007	72494	349	72843

(Table 3.1: Source: Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board)

The projected domestic arrival of tourists in the year 2017 was 37.41(million), which currently stands at the value of 34.58 (million) lower than the projected value. The International tourist arrival in the state was projected at 0.452 (million) by 2017. However, international tourist arrival in the state stood at 0.14 (million) much lower than what was projected. Though the actual domestic arrival is lower than the projected, the international arrival is far lower than what was expected in the plan. Uttarakhand still needs to position itself better in the international market.

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan also projected the following number of visitors to National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries (table 3.7):

	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>
<b>At the current growth rate of 7.6%</b>	291,110	451,785	651,618
<b>At a growth rate of 10%</b>	325,570	575,859	927,426
<b>At the growth rate of 13%</b>	371,868	774,211	1,426,434

**Table 3.7 Source: UTDMP 2007-22**

The actual data of the number of tourists and visitors to national parks and sanctuaries is (table 3.8):

<b>Year</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Foreigner</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Revenue (in Lakhs)</b>
2007-2008	231375	16463	247838	341.95
2008-2009	277487	15503	292990	378.31
2009-2010	285412	15829	301241	547.04
2010-2011	218616	12211	230827	729.33
2011-2012	271579	13329	284908	851.19
2012-2013	281232	11269	292501	790.16
2013-2014	273297	10764	284061	869.84
2014-2015	313652	9284	322936	993.91
2015-2016	328126	12049	340175	1060.73
2016-2017	374575	11685	386260	1168.07

**Table 3.8 Source: Forest Department**

In the Year 2017, the total visitors in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries were 386,260. The projected number of tourists even at the then growth rate 7.6% was 451,785. This clearly shows that the growth rate was not even steady at 7.6% but rather declined, hence, the lower value of tourists in protected areas of the state. In accordance to UNWTO estimates, a wildlife watching

market amount to 7% of international travel and is predicted to grow. The Wildlife tourism in the state did not grow as predicted in the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Master Plan.

A few reasons for this can be:

1. The plan mentions establishment of eco lodges and development of ecotourism facilities like viewing towers or hides which still has not been given adequate attention.
2. The Tourism and Environmental Management plans (TEMPs) were to be prepared and adopted for achieving balanced distribution of tourists in an area, to enhance the value of natural areas through eco-tourism and protect and conserve the natural environment. This appears to not have been done
3. The State still lacks Certification and Accreditation systems for eco- resorts, mainstream hotels or tour operators.
4. The green shuttle bus services are not functional.
5. The plan mentions about transforming government rest houses into five star eco lodges/spas which is far from being achieved.

The protected areas i.e. the National Parks, Wildlife sanctuaries and conservation reserves have increased since the master plan was launched:

Naina Devi Himalayan Bird conservation reserve (2015)

Govind National Park (2013)

Nandhour WLS (2012)

*Currently there are a total of 6 national parks and 7 wildlife sanctuaries.*

### **Mountain Bikers and Cyclists**

Some initiatives mentioned in the plan are Annual Mountain Biking Festival in 2008, a Cross Country Mountain Biking Challenge (solo, team) and a Schools' challenge for young bikers from around India. Mountain Biking is mentioned as an excellent market that should be tapped. Uttarakhand organizes Himalayan MTB challenge annually. Some private companies offer Mountain Biking activities in the state. A detailed report on potential of mountain biking in Munsiyari was brought out by internationally renowned experts and submitted to Uttarakhand Forest Development Corporation. It has not been up scaled across the state. It continues to be an unregulated activity with lack of guidelines.

### **Angling**

In the plan angling sites in Uttarakhand have been identified in Chamoli (7 sites), Uttarkashi (2), Tehri (7), Nainital (5) and Dehra Dun (1) on 19 rivers and lakes. The Ramganga Mahaseer Conservation Programme was launched in October 2004, in the buffer zone of Corbett tiger reserve

and Pancheshwar in Champawat. Inspired by the new opportunity, the villagers are poised to set up “homestays” for the anglers.

## **Rafting**

Rafting in particular is becoming important. According to the UTDMP, 60 rafting companies, which were licensed to operate in Uttarakhand with another 21 licenses pending. The plan further states, that the sector was growing at a very fast rate as rafting was becoming a major specialist product in Uttarakhand providing much employment at the local level.

Currently a total of 298 companies are operating in the state. The sport has indeed grown in the state and the state every year witnesses a large inflow of tourists to experience white water rafting. Though the market continues to grow, the sector has seen major problems and there has been a slight decrease in numbers (ref Chapter 2). Despite the existence of the Tourism Master Plan which goes back to 2007 which suggests “It is recommended that a comprehensive study on the future of the sector and the capacity of the rivers for rafting is carried out as soon as possible. It is also important that policies are refined or introduced to allow and favor local communities living close to the rivers to fully participate in the sector, possibly in the form of subsidies or grants to allow them to become established as operators and service providers” there have been continued hiccups in the sector. The policies continue to lack vision of future inflow and need of well-defined regulations in the sector in order to both safeguard the environment and smooth functioning of the sector for continued growth as sustainable tourism.

## **Home stays**

Development of homestays in the state was one of the important components of the plan. The state has since then framed the homestay policy for the state and also offered financial assistance in establishment of homestays. Currently there are 335 (Tourism Department, 2018) homestays in the state. Though the plan, also envisioned it as one of the most important factors for employment generation in the state, its contribution towards livelihood generation remains to take off in a big way.

## **Interpretation Centers**

The plan identified the need to establish interpretation centers at different areas and to improve them wherever available. It has been suggested that not only should the content of the interpretation be improved but the setting and ambience of the facilities should be significantly improved through better landscaping, urban design and traffic management. These principles should also apply to the main road outside the interpretation center, which should be turned into a boulevard with enforced parking, traffic calming measures and attractive landscaping.

There continues to be large deficit in interpretation centers across the state. They are limited to popular destinations like the Corbett National Park. Other destinations continue to lack



infrastructure and human resources. The Draft Tourism Policy of the state (2017) also mentions the need for establishment of nature interpretation centers.

### **Waste Management (Solid and Liquid)**

The Master Plan addresses this as one of the main concerns in the state with lack of suitable processes to manage solid and liquid waste. It considers it a priority area where immediate action is needed. However, even after 10 years of the master plan the state continues to grapple with the issues of solid and liquid waste management.

### **Infrastructure**

The need for improving both the urban and rural infrastructure in the state for better tourist destinations has been clearly brought out in the plan. Proactive steps for are to be taken to address this. State continues to grapple with infrastructure issues even today. The major hotels and restaurants continue to be crowded around mainstream tourist destinations and are almost non-existent in the rural and hilly areas. Spatial distribution and quality of experience still continues to be big issue with regards to infrastructure.

## **UTTARAKHAND TOURISM POLICY (DRAFT)**

Post the Tourism Master Plan; Uttarakhand Tourism Policy (2017) has been drafted. **The vision of Uttarakhand Tourism Policy 2017** is “to create a world class tourist destination which is safe, sustainable and inclusive leaving a mark of peace and tranquility.” The Policy objectives include developing an image as a safe and tourist friendly destination, following sustainable tourism development principles and not exceeding the carrying capacity of the destinations, ensure seamless and regulated provisioning of facilities for tourists, sensitize the tourists and promote responsible tourism.

The broad framework and guiding principles of the policy are:

1. **Sustainable development Goals:** Sustainable tourism is an important part of 2030 Agenda. Achieving it requires a clear implementation framework, enough financing and investment in infrastructure, human resources and technology. Tourism also contributes to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, sustainable consumption and production.
2. **Learning from the best practices like :** Sikkim Himalayan home stay project (UNESCO), Periyar Eco-development Committee (EDC) model, Jungle lodges and resorts, Ecotourism model in Gujarat through tripartite agreement and Tent City ( RannUtsav)

A brief of the strategies outlined in the Uttarakhand Tourism Policy is given below:

- Tourism development will be a focus for lesser developed yet potential areas, so that employment opportunities are created and economic growth is ushered. To actualize this focus, tourism will be promoted through Homestay Policy, Rural Tourism and other inclusive tourism circuit development strategies.
- Cooperation from the Central Government for strengthening of tourism infrastructure and addressing impediments in tourism sector (the state will apply and benefit from tourism centric schemes of Central Govt. like Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD, Hunar Se Rojgar etc.)
- Department of Tourism will work in close coordination with other line departments of Govt. of Uttarakhand to develop tourist infrastructure (PWD, Irrigation, UPSEB, State Forest Dept., Culture, Rural Development Dept., Horticulture, Home Dept., Civil Aviation etc.)
- Land Banks to be developed at high potential and yet un-explored destinations. This will ease out the tourism stress at key destinations. . Suitable land parcels shall be developed with PPP projects for tourism on new theme based criterion e.g.: Business and Leisure, Ecotourism, Budget, Rural, Heritage, Adventure, Wellness, Medical etc.
- A whole section in the tourism policy deals with **Sustainable and Responsible Tourism**. The Department of Tourism to focus on and promote low impact tourism, minimizing carbon footprints and sensitize locals and visitors. The key steps for this are mentioned below:
  1. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle practices to be promoted
  2. Segregation of solid waste and proper solid waste management up to safe disposal shall be ensured at all tourist destinations
  3. Use of local materials and vernacular architecture shall be promoted amongst stakeholders
  4. Do's and Don'ts code for visitors shall be created and strictly implemented
  5. Carrying Capacities at destinations shall be scientifically evaluated and respected especially in terms of visitor management and development of infrastructure. It shall be included in all future tourism planning processes in the state
  6. Department of tourism would like to promote tourism that ensures equitable share of benefits to the local population
  7. Another priority is the need for participation of local communities in tourism development and creation of collaborative community groups.
- Development of Alternate and Niche Products.

- **Ecotourism and Wildlife Tourism find place in the draft policy.** Ecotourism activities shall be developed with the help of Forest Department as per the State's Ecotourism Policy to showcase the rich biodiversity of the state. **However, the ecotourism Policy of the state is yet not formalised.**
- River Rafting/Kayaking: Policy reviews the River Rafting/Kayaking (Amendment) Rules 2015 and identifies the issues in it. The policy also gives additional provisions for the same. One of the issues identified is there is a uniformity in regulations across all rivers/stretches irrespective of the existing traffic and carrying capacities. The additional provision suggests that UTDB shall categorize the rivers/stretches where rafting/kayaking is permitted
- Provisions for Adventure and Mountaineering include UTDB creating a stock of quality equipment needed for such expeditions and adventure activities. These shall be readily available with the DTO of the nearest base stations on a subsidized rental basis.
- Rural Tourism: The focus of homestay development will be in the far flung districts (Category A) of Uttarakhand, as this will solve the issue of room shortages, and also making a tourism property / unit in a traditional manner is not a feasible option due to less tourist Visits and shorter tourist season. In such scenario, a product mix dwelled around homestay and offering tourism products like rural immersion programme, local cuisine, village walks, agro-tourism, folklore, handicrafts etc. will create a win-win situation for the local communities.
- Infrastructure up gradation is a key issue that the Uttarakhand Tourism Policy deals with.
- Tourism Units shall be incentivized to promote usage of renewable energy sources like solar energy, hydel etc. Applicable incentives of Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) and other agencies shall be promoted amongst tourism units.
- Establishment of tourism and exhibition research cell - Tourism Research Cell will be established to collect the data related to tourism and doing research on it. In the same way an exhibition cell will be established for effective participation in the country and abroad for the wide promotion-publicity of tourism places in the state.
- Human Resource Development and Self Employment: UTDB shall pay emphasis on youth, women, under privileged and disadvantaged sections of the society .Skill trainings and Capacity Building workshops shall be organized to make them employable in the tourism sector. UTDB shall periodically identify interested youths, operators, students, entrepreneurs to provide capacity building and training in the hospitality sector – some of such themes are– Naturalist, Heritage Monument Guides, 61 General Etiquettes/Guest Handling, Guest PR, Cooking, House-keeping, F&B, Language Proficiency - English / French etc.

The UTP 2017 has identified the following theme wise major destinations in Uttarakhand:

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Major Destinations</b>
Adventure and Watersports	Rishikesh, Auli, Trekking at Shri Hemkund Sahib, Jharipani, Maldevta, Tons Valley, Dhanaulti, Tehri
Pilgrimage and Festivals	Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Jageshwar, Baijnath, Piran Kaliyar, Hemkund Sahib, Nanda Devi
Nature and Wildlife	Jim Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park, Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary, Nanda Devi National Park, Askot Musk Deer Sanctuary, Neel Dhara Pakshi Vihar, Benog Wildlife Sanctuary, Govind Wildlife Sanctuary
Sightseeing	Mussoorie, Nainital, Valley of Flowers, Almora, Kausani, Auli
Health and Rejuvenation	Rishikesh, Haridwar, Champawat, Pithoragarh and Ramgarh, Jageshwar, Almora, Nainital
Rural Tourism	Mana, Chokhta, Chakrata, Deora, Pallyu, Shaukiyathal, Bageshwar, Chamoli, Almora and Tehri

**Table 3.9: Draft Uttarakhand Tourism Policy, 2017**

The draft policy has outlined the following potential to tap the vast emerging markets in Nature based Tourism/ Ecotourism and responsible tourism:

- Uttarakhand is endowed with more than 550 species of avian fauna and bird watching is a segment that is gaining popularity in the state;
- Adventure Tourism activities like Camping, Trekking, Bungee Jumping etc. have a huge potential for the surrounding markets of NCR etc.;
- Water sports like rafting, kayaking etc. have good potential to be expanded to other rivers in the state, since the demand on the existing streams is very high;
- Rural Tourism has great potential to be developed in the state. Cultural distinctiveness in dress, folklore and local products can promote village development through presentation, interpretation subject to sensitive commercialization (e.g. at Dharchula);
- These will also open up employment opportunities for the locals
- Pharmacopoeia of forests and traditional skills in well-being (e.g. yoga) provide opportunity for health and wellness;

The overall focus of the 2017 Policy (Draft) is on a more comprehensive and has a detailed approach towards tourism. The general tone of the Policy is towards sustainable development of tourism. The policy also deals with mature based (ecotourism) which is to be developed in close association with the Forest department. A clear set of guidelines should be set for tourism activities based on nature. Potential groups related to tourism and environmental policies have also not been given place in the Policy.

Spatial distribution of tourists has been given place in the draft policy by developing lesser known destinations but specific steps need to be outlined to manage this. At the same time impact assessment has not been given place in the policy which should be essential for general tourism and also ecotourism activities. Integration of various schemes for social upliftment like The Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Self-employment scheme, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Kaushal Yojana for skilling and certification programmes with the help of institutes like IHM/IITM etc. has to be focussed on.

Overall the draft policy touches upon all the tourism products but there continues to be a need to develop an Ecotourism Policy of the state for the development of tourism in the state.

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## **CHAPTER IV**

# **NATURE BASED TOURISM (ECOTOURISM) POLICES AND GUIDELINES IN INDIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES**

Nature based tourism (Ecotourism) is being successfully promoted and guided at the national level ; in many states of India and neighbouring countries through polices , guidelines and recommendations. This chapter covers the nature based tourism (Ecotourism) policies, guidelines and initiatives at the national level, in some states and also neighbouring countries, many of which could guide the further development of Nature based tourism (Ecotourism) in Uttarakhand.

### **ECOTOURISM POLICIES/ GUIDELINES AT NATIONAL LEVEL AND STATES**

India is a land of varied and diverse geography offering range of destinations from beaches to mountains, from deserts to thick forests. The Indian subcontinent boasts of abundant flora and fauna and is home to numerous rare and endangered species. The country has immense potential for nature based tourism. Though there were always several places in India which offered ways to enjoy nature in a pristine way; “Thenmala” in Kerala was the first planned ecotourism destination in India created to cater to eco tourists and nature lovers.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has the specific agenda to promote tourism in the country in a responsible and sustainable manner and as per this mandate promotion of ecotourism assumes larger importance. With regards to growing trend of visitors to ecotourism destinations and focus on developing ecotourism in the country, “The Ecotourism in India: Policy and guidelines” were drafted in 1998. Given the geographical and cultural diversity of the country, the policy directed each state to frame their own comprehensive Ecotourism policy. Since then, many have framed an Ecotourism policy for their state for developing ecotourism in line with the natural resources; landscapes; local flora and fauna. (Ministry of Tourism, 2017)

### **NATIONAL FOREST COMMISSION, 2006**

A summary of major observations/ recommendations of NFC (2006) with regard to NBT are:

- i- Tourism was in the past regarded as being in opposition to the goals of conservation, but now it is not only compatible but also facilitative to it. The forest department is the key stakeholder in the activity centered on ecotourism in and around forest and wildlife areas of India.

- ii- There is a need for the people living in the urban area to have access to nature and wilderness.
- iii- Tourism must be in consonance with the long term conservation interests of the protected area, habitat or species it relates to and not the other way around. An assessment of the carrying capacity of a wildlife protected area need to be done with respect to the number of visitors / vehicles and their entry needs to be regulated accordingly.
- iv- Each wildlife protected area should have a designated tourism zone, though other areas can also be opened for nature based tourism on rotational basis; based on the local conditions.
- v- Development of recreational facilities inside protected areas or its buffer should not be permitted.
- vi- Facilities for tourism should merge with the local landscape and local material needs to be used.
- vii- The NFC has also recommended that local residents may be preferred for employment in functions related to Nature Based Tourism in protected areas and the revenue earned in the process may be used for eco-development of the tribal population rather than going to the state exchequer. Members of the tribal communities need to be given training to act as guides for tourists in national parks and sanctuaries.

## **GUIDELINES OF THE NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

In 2012, the NTCA (2012) laid down detailed guidelines for eco-tourism in tiger reserves, most of which are prime forest areas for NBT in India. The basic principles for tourism in and around tiger reserves outlined by the NTCA are:

- i- adoption of low-impact wildlife tourism which protects ecological integrity of forest and wildlife areas, secure wildlife values of the destination and its surrounding areas;
- ii- engage with Gram Sabhas in decision making; provide livelihood opportunities to local communities and promote processes for forest dwellers to control and maintain their resources, culture and rights so as to minimize negative impacts.
- iii- develop mechanisms to generate revenues from wildlife tourism for the welfare and economic upliftment of local communities;
- iv- facilitate the sustainability of tourism enterprises and activities;
- v- promote sustainable use of indigenous materials for tourism activities;
- vi- Other provisions of these guidelines include conformity of tourism infrastructure to the

environment;; design being of reasonable height, having low impact and aesthetic; with provisions for the use of renewable including solar energy, provision for waste recycling, water management, natural cross-ventilation, no use of asbestos, release of only treated sewage, no air pollution, minimal outdoor lighting, and designed in a way that it merges with the surrounding landscape. Steps also need to be taken to encourage the use of battery operated vehicles for minimizing pollution

## **ECOTOURISM GUIDELINES FOR WILDLIFE PROTECTED AREAS (BY MOEFCC, 2018)**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India has prepared a Eco-tourism policy for protected areas in the country (MoEFCC, 2018). Document recognizes that, “Eco-tourism, when practiced appropriately, is an important economic and educational activity. It has the scope of linking the forest sector to a wider constituency of stakeholders, and building up conservation support while raising awareness about the worth and fragility of nature and ecosystems in public at large. It promotes the non-consumptive use of wilderness, thus providing conservation linked economic opportunities for the benefit of local communities living around and dependent on these landscapes.”

These guidelines propose a number of key components which include:

- i- Eco-tourism plan to be part of the wildlife management plan for each national park and sanctuary. Currently, this is a requirement only for national parks and sanctuaries that have been recognized as tiger reserves by the NTCA
- ii- Participation of local communities in eco-tourism including their capacity building and that of other stakeholders.
- iii- Eco-tourism zone to be delineated and specified in each national park and wildlife sanctuary, a provision which is already being followed in tiger reserves recognized by the NTCA.
- iv- There is a need to incorporate provisions for seasonal and night closures of wildlife areas to tourism so that the habitat as well as wild animals get respite from disturbance from tourists.
- v- While developing nature based tourism infrastructure, the natural profile and ecological integrity of forest and wildlife areas, along with their wildlife/ biodiversity values needs to be maintained and not manipulated only to facilitate tourism.
- vi- This draft policy also takes into account the fact that NBT facilities in the vicinity of wildlife protected areas could infringe upon the migratory routes of wild animals, thus such infrastructure needs to be located accordingly.



- vii- NBT facilities need to be environment-friendly, adopt low-impact aesthetic and green architecture, energy efficient design including use of solar energy, rainwater harvesting, proper waste and sewage management so as to minimize the impact on ambient environment in and around wildlife protected areas.

### **PUNJAB ECOTOURISM POLICY (2009)**

The state drafted its Ecotourism Policy in 2009 with the mission to strive to provide excellent ecotourism services to the visitors after following sound principles of eco-tourism, valuing the living community and recognizing the need to integrate the interests of people and nature.

The key principles of the policy for development, management and promotion of ecotourism in the state are:

1. Building environmental and cultural awareness and respect and provide positive experience for both visitors and hosts.
2. Ecotourism would involve a selective approach, scientific planning, effective control and continuous monitoring.
3. It should be planned as a part of the overall area development strategy guided by an integrated land-use plan and associated with commensurate expansion of public services.
4. Emphasis will be given to actively involve the local communities and enhancing their economic conditions.
5. The type and scale of tourism development should be compatible with the environment and socio-cultural characteristics of the local communities and would lead to sustainable development of the area.
6. Only activities and facilities having least impact on the natural resources and the local culture to be permitted. Preference should be given to use the already existing infrastructural facilities available in the area rather than creating a new one.
7. Adhering to the principles of carrying capacity to avoid overuse of natural resources.
8. Capacity building of local communities and other stakeholders will be ensured.
9. State will ensure that certain part of project cost/economic returns of such activities are ploughed back in conservation and development of natural resources of that area.
10. All ecotourism activities are to be in conformity with the spirit of the existing environmental law of the country, including the Wildlife (Protection) Act, the Forest (Conservation) Act,

1980, management/working plan prescriptions and the various directives and guidelines issued by the Government from time to time.

11. Wherever resources harnessed for ecotourism are traditionally in use by the local community, activities and facilities shall be developed in consultation with them and mechanisms to provide benefits to the community will be also identified and implemented as per the provisions of National Forest Policy, 1988.
12. Installation of technologically efficient systems including non-conventional energy sources to be adopted for operation of ecotourism facilities.
13. Multi stakeholder partnership in developing and operating facilities and activities to be encouraged.

The strategy highlights the identification of potential sites and ecotourism activities like nature camps, eco-friendly accommodation, trekking and nature walks, angling, wildlife viewing and adventures sports. Some of the highlights of the policy (PETP, 2009) are:

- Visitor Interpretation Centres and Conservation Education.
- A Sub-Committee will be constituted under Executive Committee (which is headed by Chief Secretary) of the Punjab Heritage Tourism Promotion Board to promote ecotourism in the state. The Sub-Committee will be called Ecotourism Development Committee (EDC). The mandate of the sub-committee (EDC) will be formulation, approval and supervision of ecotourism projects in the state under the operational guidelines issued under this policy framework.
- Site specific Ecotourism Management Plan will be prepared by the project proponents to bring flexibility in approach for diverse eco-sites and to customized facilities for various target groups while meeting the basic principles of eco-tourism.
- Physical planning and design to integrate community services including availability of potable water and transportation.
- Only 20% of the land can be constructed upon. The construction of the structures should not be higher than 30 feet in any case.
- Provide information and interpretive services to visitors especially on attraction and facilities, safety and security, local customs, traditions, prohibitions and regulations and self-conduct and behaviour.
- Involve the local community to the extent possible in various activities and vocations ensuring, at least 10% employment given to local community.
- Guidelines for Private Forest land owners covered under PLPA to develop Ecotourism.

- Guideline for Setting up and operation of Eco-Resorts/Units for promotion of ecotourism where approval of Ministry of Environment and Forests, GOI, have been obtained under Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
- The government would encourage people's participation in ecotourism through Joint Forest Management Committees, Panchayati Raj Institutions, local bodies, co-operatives, NGOs and Forest Development Agencies.
- Guideline for Setting up and Operation of Eco-Resorts/Units for Promotion of Ecotourism in Punjab. Preparation of an Ecotourism Management Plan will be mandatory for setting of any eco resorts on forest/other lands.
- Guideline for Submission of Ecotourism Management Plan.
- The State Govt. will aim to achieve necessary linkages and synergies in the policies and programmes of all concerned departments/agencies by establishing effective coordination mechanism at the state and district levels.

### **RAJASTHAN ECOTOURISM POLICY (2011)**

The desert state Rajasthan is the largest state of India in terms of geographical area with a forest area of about 3.2 million hectares. Due to conditions of aridity and extreme heat in the summer months, the vegetation consists of dry forests and desert dune scrub which are the home of diverse wildlife include the tiger, leopard, nilgai and many species of birds including the rare Great Indian bustard. The national parks and wildlife sanctuaries of the state are destination of millions of tourists each year. Rajasthan also has number places of historical and cultural interest, many located near natural landscapes, and thus providing opportunities for nature based tourism coupled with visits to destinations of historical and cultural importance.

The state has formulated an Ecotourism policy in 2011 whose main objectives, guiding principles and strategies include:

- i- Promote ecotourism in national parks/ sanctuaries/ forests and other areas as a conservation and educational tool.
- ii- Facilitate local communities to manage eco-tourism to strengthen conservation and generate additional livelihood options.
- iii- Develop and operate eco-tourism facilities according to international standards and principles.
- iv- Eco-tourism needs to be developed on a sustainable basis while balancing it with conservation.

- v- Maximum benefit needs to flow to local communities from Eco-tourism. These community based organizations may include Village Forest Development Committees and Eco-development Committees who are engaged in conservation and development of wildlife and forest areas.
- vi- Encouraging multi-stakeholder partnerships in developing and managing Eco-tourism facilities
- vii- Emphasis on capacity building of staff, local communities and tourism entrepreneurs for Eco-tourism on regular basis.

### **SIKKIM ECOTOURISM POLICY (2011)**

Sikkim is endowed with the rich biodiversity of more than 4,500 species of flowering plants, more than 50 species of fish, 690 species of butterflies, 16 species of amphibians, 78 species of reptiles, 550 species of birds, and 154 species of mammals. Nature has endowed Sikkim with great landscapes, forests, streams, rivers, glaciers, lakes, snow-capped mountains and cold deserts. The Ecotourism policy was framed in 2011 to serve as a guiding principle in bringing about unique amalgamation of tourism and conservation.

The main objectives and principles of the policy are:

- a. Bring all stakeholders on a common platform of understanding of ecotourism;
- b. Promote ecotourism in a sustainable manner based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC);
- c. Generate incentives to local communities for nature conservation through alternative income sources and livelihoods, and empower local communities to manage ecotourism with the emphasis on economically disadvantaged people;
- d. Conserve the existing biodiversity, ecosystems and religious monuments of Sikkim as well as Sikkim people's culture and tradition;
- e. Facilitate local children as well as visitors to enjoy and appreciate excellent nature- based activities;
- f. Encourage people in Sikkim to increase their pride and appreciation of local natural and cultural values;
- g. Ensure that local communities have a role in determining the appropriate presentation of their cultural values;

- h. Regulate the high influx of visitors in heavily visited areas, thus reducing negative impacts of tourism
- i. facilitate partnership for planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring ecotourism activities with key stakeholders such as local communities, NGOs, government organizations, tour agents and tour operators

The main highlights of the policy (SETP, 2011) can be summarised as:

1. The Sikkim Ecotourism Council will be an autonomous council and will have an executing arm which is the Ecotourism Directorate (ED) working under the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department (FEWMD).
2. ED will work in coordination with the village level bodies which are led by CBO, TDC, SHG and other local people's representatives engaging in ecotourism activities to implement the activities and monitor the negative impacts of ecotourism.
3. The role and responsibility of both Sikkim Ecotourism Council and Ecotourism Directorate have been defined.
4. Strategies for planning, zoning and modelling for the Ecotourism sites and other general tourism sites have been defined.
5. Train and build the capacity of local communities including home stay owners, youth and women's groups who wish to engage on ecotourism activities.
6. Plan certificate courses for nature interpreters and Eco tour guides for trekking, bird watching, fauna and flora photography and other activities.
7. Strategies for Benefiting the Economically Disadvantaged People include encourage supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the economically disadvantaged people and facilitate direct sales of local goods and services to visitors by the economically disadvantaged people (informal economy)
8. Strategies for Stakeholder Partnership and Departmental Convergence have been defined including annual meetings of ecotourism stakeholders, policy makers, EDC, JFMC, PSS, Panchayat, NGO, CBO, TDC, SHG, private sector on a rational basis in each district.
9. Product development strategies like developing a series of maps of ecotourism sites and activities (sites to visit, distance, required time, geographical features, altitudes, available services, local rules, rules for Eco tour, resources interpretation etc.) in Sikkim in sustainable manner and update it regularly and promote village tourism through micro planning both short and medium term including waste management plan and village conservation plan.

10. Develop ecotourism for different target groups (adults, children, family, experts and hobbyists, etc.)
11. A section for strategies for safety has been included which mentions planning training and issuing certificates system for safety including risk management.
12. Plan to constitute a committee which includes STDC, TAAS, SAATO, TDC, NGO and CBO to work on certification related to the ecotourism activities (e.g. home stay, ecotour operators, environmental friendly lodges)
13. Provide financial support to encourage people to take part in new ecotourism ventures. This will be done through a flexible approach that meets the needs of different clients.
14. Strategies for Awareness and Education on Ecotourism, Environmental Conservation and Waste Management.

The Government of Sikkim addresses ecotourism as a priority sector and therefore, the Sikkim Ecotourism Policy has been developed proactively by State with an aim to not only to ensure sustainable livelihood of the local people but to protect and manage forest, as well.

### **Khanchendzonga Conservation Committee**

The Khanchendzonga landscape, comprising the Himalayas of Sikkim and Darjeeling together with the adjacent neighbouring areas of eastern Nepal and western Bhutan, has been a major tourist attraction due to its exceptionally high biodiversity, coupled with the existence of nine major ethnic communities living within the landscape.

**Village home stays:** With the aim of encouraging sustainable tourism facilities and creating opportunities for the villagers to earn economic benefits, KCC started promoting Village Homestays. Along with offering services which are efficient and environmental friendly services such as fuel-efficient cooking and heating, and hygienic indigenous composting toilets (Chettri et al, 2008), the homestay practice also encourages cultural and environmental conservation by providing an opportunity to strengthen the local culture and tradition in terms of hospitality, use of decor, cuisine, and buildings (Chettri et al, 2008) and enables cultural exchange between the villagers and the outsiders.

Till 2017, KCC has helped train around 400 homestay operators by selecting lower income family members who can benefit from additional income and women for whom financial empowerment would be valuable. KCC handles all of the marketing and booking requirements and also provides a range of hospitality-based training for homestay owners. An important contribution of KCC's work has been the establishment of a minimum room

tariff for homestays. Through KCC's facilitation, all homestay owners now request a nightly tariff of Rs.2500.

**Zero Waste Trekking:** KCC formed a participatory monitoring programme of the trekking trail inside KNP and in the surrounding areas. The goals of the monitoring process were discussed and with consultation of the village member's consensus was arrived at about participating in the proposed programme. Consultation and assistance from external agencies such as the Forest department and Sikkim tourism department were sought to make an effective work plan that would address the issues of monitoring tourism activities and conservation impacts. Having set their targets, several meetings were conducted in the village to make local people and those involved in tourism enterprises aware as to why such an initiative was important and how local people could participate and contribute.

Annually, the monitoring program helps in collection of around 800 kg of waste from the trekking trails and the forests. KCC now operates a functional Waste Segregation Centre and has worked with the Forest Department to create a system by which trekking operators have to declare non bio-degradable waste products through that are being carried through a checklist and upon return account for these products. Defaulters are fined a hefty sum of Rs.5000 if they fail to account for waste that was not brought back.

(Source: ejatlas)

## ECOTOURISM IN KERALA

The state of Kerala, forming part of the Western Ghats, has a protected area network of 3,213sq .km in 5 National Parks, 17 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 1 community reserve. (Kerala Forest and Wildlife department)

The Western Ghats of Kerala, with its tropical forest ecosystem, provides a natural advantage for development of Ecotourism. Kerala enjoys a unique biological diversity in the world : the palm-fringed Arabian Sea in the west, the majestic Western Ghats in the east, with lush green paddy fields, charming backwaters and year-round colourful festivals. (Ecotourism in Kerala, Shodhganga)

Currently there are about 1,000 houseboats in Keralan backwaters from basic to luxury resembling floating mini-palaces. Similarly, Ayurveda, the traditional medicine system in Kerala was promoted among the tourists for rejuvenation of health. The availability of plenty of natural resources, skilled manpower, supportive entrepreneurial community, strong local-self-governments, civil society organizations, multitude of micro enterprises, streams of professionals and academicians, responsible media and responsive tourism industry, provide the state an ideal setting to implement and practice sustainable tourism models in the state. Focusing on the need for

community benefits and participation in tourism, ecotourism models were conceived in the late 90s and the Responsible Tourism initiative was launched in 2007 in four destinations – Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady and Vythiri on a pilot basis. In 2012, the initiative was extended to three more destinations – Kumbalangi, Bekal and Ambalavayal.

### ***Kerala Tourism Policy (2012)***

Some highlights of the tourism policy are:

1. Campaign on ‘Kerala Waste Free Destination (KWFD)’ with the active participation of local bodies, NGOs and Self Help Groups.
2. To disperse houseboat operation and cruise activities to relatively underused stretches and regions.
3. Introduce special incentives for starting houseboat operations in areas other than Vembanad Lake.
4. Approval from Department of Tourism will be made mandatory for obtaining license from local self-governments for the homestays, serviced villas, Houseboats and Ayurveda centres.
5. To showcase the diverse natural and cultural heritage of the state, separate thematic museums will be established in the state.
6. Pollution of backwaters and other water bodies due to tourism activities is a major concern. Department, in association with Kerala State Pollution Control Board, will take stringent measures to see that all the houseboats will have scientific solid and liquid waste management system and use only 4-stroke engines.
7. Plastic waste continues to be a major concern for the local population and the visitors. Department will ban the use of disposable plastics at major destinations such as Kovalam, Ponmudi, Veli, Varkala, Thenmala, Alappuzha Backwaters, Kumarakom, Fort Kochi, Eravikulam, Thekkady, Pookot Lake, Soochipara, Kuruva and Bekal in the first phase in association with tourism industry.
8. Spices of Kerala and its cuisine are widely known and acknowledged. Department will encourage the hoteliers and restaurants to provide local cuisine.
9. The Department will provide Entrepreneurship Development Programme to develop Local Level Entrepreneurs (LLE) in identified areas.
10. The Department will do a mapping of the extinct or near extinct arts, work for their revival and protect the original styles and authenticity. The revived art forms will be promoted by Tourism Department.
11. Assessing the quality of destinations.
12. Green protocol would be implemented in the sector, to make destinations plastic-free.



## **Thenmala Eco-Tourism in Kollam**

Thenmala, which lies at the conjunction of the Kollam-Shencottah road and the Trivandrum-Shencottah Road, boasts of India's first planned Eco-tourism destination. 'Thenmala' translates to 'Honey Hill' and so it is no surprise that high quality honey is exported from this area. Its terrain is dotted by forests, rubber and tree plantations and was selected by the World Tourism Organisation as one of the premier eco-friendly projects in the world.

(Kerala Tourism)

## **Responsible Tourism Initiative in Kumarakom**

Kumarakom has become a very popular tourist destination in a short period. The setting in the backdrop of Vembanad lake, the largest freshwater lake in Kerala, has gifted the destination with panoramic views. Besides the tourism activities in the backwaters, the Kumarakom bird sanctuary which extends over 14 acres is a major tourist attraction. Agriculture, fishing and tourism are the major economic activities of Kumarakom. Kumarakom is declared as a Special Tourism Zone by Government of Kerala in 2005. The efforts to launch RT at Kumarakom started in May 2007.

Achievements of the Kumarakom responsible tourism initiative:

- “Significant increase in local agricultural production
- Creation of a cultivation calendar
- Creation of systems for steady prices to avoid inflation and market fluctuations
- Creation of 10 Karshakasamity (farmers groups), with a total of 460 people
- Creation of 20 Kudumbashree units, with a total of 250 women
- Creation of 5 Micro Enterprises focused on women : 1 women fish processing unit, 1 women chicken processing unit, 1 women Chappathy (local bread) processing unit, 2 coconut supply units”

The responsible tourism initiative has also led to the involvement of 760 women in the cultivation of local produce, 35 in retail activities, 30 in art and cultural groups, and 45 in the village tours, significantly contributing to the overall social agenda for women's empowerment

(Source: Michot, 2010).

## **ECO TOURISM IN KARNATAKA**

Karnataka has a network of National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserve covering 10,238sq. kms. of forest area. (Karnataka Forest Department, 2018). Karnataka has been a forefront of many aspects of tourism promotion and off late there has been a qualitative churn and an intensive focus on Eco tourism. (KTP, 2009)

### ***Wilderness Tourism policy in National Parks, Sanctuaries, Reserve Forests and other forests (2004)***

Objectives of wilderness tourism policy:

1. The Forest Department shall encourage and permit wilderness tourism in specified areas of the National Parks / Sanctuaries / Forests, as a conservation tool. It is necessary that tourists desirous of entering wilderness areas should have interest in the flora and fauna. Casual tourists shall be discouraged.
2. **Activities permissible for wilderness tourists:**
  - a. Safari in vehicles or on elephant-back to observe wildlife along designated paths.
  - b. Trekking/nature walks through designated paths.
  - c. Overnight camping in designated camping sites.
  - d. Bird watching and study of flora & fauna.
  - e. Boating to view wildlife.
  - f. Any other activity as may be specifically permitted.
3. **Facilities for wilderness tourism:**

The following facilities may be created for the purpose:

- a. Interpretation centres and guide facilities-Nature interpretation Centres may be established wherever necessary. Staff and guides may be trained to assist wilderness tourists during safari, trekking, nature education and other permitted activities.
- b. Nature camps-A limited number of nature camps with basic facilities may be established to serve the student community and the general public to enable them to get the feel of the forest.
- c. Forest Rest Houses-Some of the existing forest Rest Houses may be thrown open in a limited manner to wilderness enthusiasts.

4. Restrictions on the tourist capacity-The wilderness areas are sacrosanct, and should continue to sustain themselves in pristine state. Therefore, the entry of the number of tourists permissible shall be kept within limits.
5. Wilderness tourism operators-Wilderness tourism may be operated through the following agencies:
  - a. Jungle Lodges & Resorts Ltd.
  - b. Adventure groups like Youth Hostels Association of India.
  - c. Direct entry where Departmental facilities exist.

6. **Benefits to local community**

Wilderness Tourism should benefit the local community, especially tribals. The department shall work out ways and means by which such benefits are accrued. It is expected that this Wilderness Tourism Policy results in better conservation of forest resources and education to the general public, while benefiting the local community.

On 15th August, 2013 the Karnataka state cabinet approved the proposal to set up the Karnataka eco-tourism development board. The forest minister of Karnataka would serve as the chairman. The initiative would help the government immensely in protecting the wildlife, creating awareness about it, encouraging eco-tourism, forest safaris and also prevent damage to eco-system in the name of tourism.

The objectives of the Karnataka Eco tourism Board would primarily be (KETB, 2013);

1. To create awareness regarding the conservation of forests and wildlife amongst the people in general and children and youth, in particular.
2. To encourage and promote tourism activities in the country in general and the State of Karnataka, in particular.
3. To encourage local community involvement in ecotourism and provide greater employment opportunities and economic benefits to the local people.
4. To assist in formulation of policies, laws and guidelines for organized development of ecotourism activities in the state.
5. To conduct research and impact-studies in ecotourism areas.
6. To promote ecotourism as a front line non consumptive activity of Forest Department.
7. To develop good practices to be followed by ecotourism operators.
8. To standardize and operate certification of ecotourism operators.

9. To train and certify nature guides.
10. To produce literature and electronic media material required for nature education and ecotourism promotion.
11. To facilitate linkages between public and private operators in the cause of conservation of wildlife.
12. To coordinate and liaise with national /international bodies, experts and funding agencies and receive contribution and funds from Government of India, State Government, National and International funding agencies etc.
13. To encourage local community involvement in ecotourism.
14. To maintain and facilitate ecotourism activities inside the parks and forest areas.
15. To develop trekking trails and operate wildlife safaris in the “Protected Areas”.
16. To encourage public-private partnerships (PPP) in the area of ecotourism, wherever the law permits.

### **Jungle Lodges and Resorts: Karnataka**

Government of Karnataka in partnership with Tiger Tops unveiled the Jungle Lodges and Resorts: and India witnessed the birth of what became the country's first-ever foray into ecotourism in 1980. Spread over Karnataka, Jungle Lodges & Resorts Ltd., now operates 16 resorts. Accommodations available vary from tents to rooms to independent cottages. Besides, there are 3 resorts operated on management contract. Barring a couple of properties, all resorts have no restaurants but instead have a group dining area called the Gol Ghar, where lunch and dinner buffets are served at set timings. A large portion of provisions is sourced from local farmers; staff includes reformed poachers – capitalising on their sound knowledge of the forest and wildlife for the greater good; and guests often leave as avid endorsers of conservation. The properties do not have any TVs. JLR is about cultivating dormant sense of wonder.

The activities that can be experienced are Wildlife Safari, Trekking, Coracle ride, Bird Watching, Day Visit, Nature Walk, Elephant Rides, Kayaking, Mountain Biking, Water Rafting and Snorkelling. The vision of the Jungle Lodges and Resorts is Sensitization to diversity in nature, Bring people closer to nature, Create ambassadors for conservation, Bring in ecological sensitivity, Support local communities, Support Forest Department.

(Source: Jungle lodges and resorts, Karnataka)

## UTTAR PRADESH ECOTOURISM POLICY (2014)

Uttar Pradesh with 14,349 sq. kilometre area under forest cover is home to some exquisite, lakes, beautiful landscapes, forest vistas, meandering rivers and waterfalls. The state has National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries as Protected areas. The vision of the UP Ecotourism policy is to strive to establish Uttar Pradesh as national leader in ecotourism by providing meaningful and unique learning experience of nature through conservation of the environment and culture with the empowerment and meaningful involvement of local communities.

Key principles of this policy are (UPETP, 2014)

1. **Legal Framework:** All ecotourism activities are to be in conformity with the spirit of the existing environmental laws of the country like Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, the Environment Protection Act, 1986 and the Environmental Protection Rules, 1986.
2. **Ecotourism-A conservation centric activity:** Ecotourism Plan for forest and adjoining tourism destinations will be conservation centric. For each protected Area an ecotourism plan will be prepared according to guidelines issued by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
3. **Community based Ecotourism:** Active involvement of local communities and enhancing their economic conditions through ecotourism will be emphasized. It would further lead to sustainable development of the area.
4. **Capacity Building:** Need based customised training courses will be conducted for those engaged in community-based ecotourism enterprises; in natural and cultural heritage interpretation, hospitality, business management, communication skills etc.
5. **Infrastructure development:** Creation and development of infrastructure will be eco-friendly and with least impact on natural resources and local culture.
6. **Awareness:** Creation of environmental awareness among all sections and ages at ecotourism destinations. Preference to “quality of experience rather than number of visitors”.
7. **Partnership:** Multi stakeholder partnership in operating facilities and activities will be encouraged including government agency, local community and private enterprises.

The Forest department, Government of Uttar Pradesh is the nodal department to promote ecotourism in the state and Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation will act as the nodal agency. UPFC is to develop necessary standards and methods for the same.

The policy also aims at providing a transparent and objective audit of ecotourism enterprises that indicate the extent to which eco lodges, homestays and other ventures meet a predefined set of best practice criteria. This will not only help visitors make informed choices but also encourage enterprises to adopt and develop best practice. Some highlights are:

- Souvenir shops and signage to be developed
- Linkages with state and national tourism department to be developed.
- Linkages with tour operators, hoteliers regulated and organised corporate media will be developed.
- Technical cooperation with national and international agencies, having expertise in ecotourism, to be encouraged without compromising on local interests.
- Setting standards and quality benchmarks.
- Interpretation centre to be strengthened.
- Wildlife viewing and River cruise to be promoted at appropriate sites.
- Adoption of eco-friendly waste disposal methodologies.
- Attempts will be made to get money from private institutions under social corporate responsibility. Steps to be taken to make revolving fund from the income of ecotourism with the help of forest department.

### **HIMACHAL PRADESH ECOTOURISM POLICY (2017)**

Himachal Pradesh, known for its rich natural heritage, is amongst the top tourist destinations in the country, both for national as well as international visitors. Recent estimates, place the number at about 160 lakh visitors –more than twice the State`s population. (HPETP, 2017)

The Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh framed an Eco-tourism policy during 2005 to enable tourist to experience this national heritage. The policy needed revision mainly due to the procedural requirements of obtaining clearance of Eco-tourism sites under Forest Conservation Act, 1980 as per guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF & CC), Government of India. Some changes in the existing policy document have also been necessitated in the context of the evolving understanding of Eco-Tourism concepts and principles. The Revised Eco-Tourism Policy 2017 aims at bringing the wilderness and virgin ecosystems of Himachal Pradesh closer to visitors and at the same time ensure adequate safeguards and systems for the protection and conservation of these natural resources. By involving local communities, the policy would help in increased livelihood opportunities as well as their involvement in awareness building, protection and conservation. It also envisages generation of financial returns which can be

ploughed back into proper up keep and maintenance of the environment. It shall also promote greater understanding and appreciation for natural and cultural heritage. (HPECOSOC)

The agenda of the ecotourism policy (HPETP, 2017) is to encourage a partnership between civil society (local communities, NGOs, academic institutions) as well as private enterprises and state government departments of Forest, Tourism, Fisheries, Power and PWD. The main principles of the policy are:

1. Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
2. Provide a positive experience for both visitors and hosts.
3. Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
4. Minimize physical, social and behavioural impacts
5. Provide direct financial benefits for conservation and livelihood opportunities to local communities

The strategy of ecotourism development in the state is:

- Forest department has created a special purpose vehicle in the form of 'Himachal Pradesh Ecotourism society' in 2006.
- The society is an autonomous and independent body, with its main aim being to preserve and protect the natural, historical and cultural heritage of Himachal Pradesh; in order that it acts as a preferred destination for visitors and provides opportunities to promote Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) in Himachal Pradesh, particularly using latest approaches of Participatory Forestry Management, for sustainable development of the forests, thereby generating revenue for the State.
- Division level societies shall liaise with community based organizations working in the field of Natural Resource management for providing them training and other material relevant to ecotourism.
- Training workshops, modules and field visits either in house or carefully selected organizations will be provided.
- Extend maximum benefit to the local community either in the form of employment or resource generation.
- Coordination with partner departments- Linkages with other policies /programs of the state government to be established.

- Tie ups to be facilitated with organizations/entities/tour operators/travel agents engages in tourism promotion.
- Important stakeholders and their functions have been listed.
- Decisions with respect to utilization and management of the eco-tourism assets shall be taken by the divisional /circle level societies.
- The state already boasts of a few van vihars and nature awareness centres. There should be brought under a common institutional arrangement.
- Development of new eco-tourism projects in Public Private Partnership mode. The step wise process to be followed is given in the policy which are: project identification, approval of HPIDB to final project proposal, approval of the project under forest conservation act, invitation of bid and bid criteria, eco restoration and finally distribution of revenues generated through ecotourism.
- Impact Assessment studies, research and “do not disturb practices” to be carried out at periodic intervals.
- Carrying Capacity will be determined for various ecotourism products.
- Guidelines for eco-tourists also have been made available. Distribution of revenue: STATE GOV. :20%, HP ECOSOC: 20%,Divisional level ecotourism society:60%

## **Himachal Pradesh – Responsible travel in the highlands through Ecosphere**

Ecosphere is a social enterprise which is a collaborative effort of the local community of Spiti and professionals from diverse backgrounds, with a wide spectrum of skills and experience, effectively spanning the bridge from the general to the niche.

Ecosphere is a member of the Himalayan Homestays network that promotes community based travel in the Himalayas. Ecosphere has won many awards and recognitions. The list of supporters of Ecosphere is long: GTZ – German Development Co-operation, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, UNESCO, Snow Leopard Conservancy, Disney Foundation, Govt of Himachal Pradesh, European Union, GERES, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, The Ford Foundation, Winrock International, Department of Science and Technology, WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature, Sierra Club.

(Source : Spiti Ecosphere)



## **ECOTOURISM IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES (AN OVERVIEW)**

Uttarakhand can gain valuable knowledge from ecotourism in our neighbouring countries. The two countries that have similar topography to the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand and attract a large number of tourists for nature based tourism are Nepal and Bhutan. This section examines the current policies and status of ecotourism in these countries.

### **ECOTOURISM IN NEPAL**

Visitors are drawn to Nepal by its unparalleled natural beauty, the challenge of its terrain, its rich wildlife and unique cultural heritage. Tourism in Nepal varies from less adventurous pleasurable activities such as village visits, home-stays, and half- to full-day walking and hiking circuits for non-trekkers, to adventurous and challenging trekking, mountaineering and white-water rafting. This combination of spectacular and diverse tourism resources and a largely rural based population, coupled with the pressing need to deliver development to the remote rural areas, have necessitated the development of ecotourism in Nepal. (NTB, 2010)

Tourism has grown in Nepal since the first ascent of Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary in 1953, although at a slow pace. For long Nepal's tourism was basically associated with travel to remote areas, mountaineering and trekking. In recent years the sector has also been influenced by new concepts and trends in world. Since ecotourism is related with nature travel in rural, remote and protected areas, tourism in Nepal is often viewed from an ecotourism perspective. (*Source: State of Ecotourism Nepal 2004, NTB and FSD-Nepal*)

The products of tourism in Nepal are:

- Nature: The Himalaya Range, hills, Snow Fed Rivers, National Parks and Wildlife Reserves etc.
- Culture: UNESCO Heritage Sites, Living Goddess, 101 ethnic groups and their distinct cultures and traditions, Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha, Events and festivals etc.
- Adventure: Mountaineering, Trekking, Rafting and Kayaking, jungle safari, paragliding, Bungee Jumping, Canyonning, Mountain Biking etc.
- Others: Mountain Flights, Ultra-light aircrafts, Casinos, Volunteer tourism, Eco-tourism, Green tourism, Sustainable tourism, Bird watching, Sports tourism, Religious Tourism, Yoga and Meditation, Rural Tourism, Community-based tourism, Home-stay etc.

### **Tourism Vision 2020 (Government of Nepal)**

The vision 2020 for tourism is “Tourism is valued as the major contribution to a sustainable Nepal economy, having developed as an attractive, safe exciting and unique destinations through conservation and promotion, leading to equitable distribution of tourism benefits and greater harmony in society.”

The objectives are:

- To improve livelihoods of the people across the country by developing integrated tourism infrastructure, increasing tourism activities and products, generating employment in the rural areas enhancing inclusiveness of women and other deprived communities, and spreading the benefits of tourism to the grassroots level,
- To develop tourism as a broad-based sector by bringing tourism into the mainstream of Nepal's socioeconomic development, supported by a coherent and enabling institutional environment,
- To expand and extend tourism products and services in new and potential areas of Nepal by enhancing community capacity to participate in tourism activities,

The highlights of Tourism policy are:

The top-level goal of the Tourism Policy is 'to improve living standards by contributing to national income while sustainably using national heritages'.

- Leading role of Private Sector in Tourism
- More focus on partnership approach: Public Private Partnership
- Development model: Some suggestions on the type of tourism development are given, with the intention of ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits signalled in the Tourism Policy, which also gives some attention to 'rural tourism'. Emphasis on Rural Tourism, Community based Tourism and Home-stays.
- The need to sustainably use natural resources is also highlighted, as is the role of conservation areas.
- Formation of Tourism Coordination Committee, Crisis Management Committee
- Activation of Tourism Council ( Apex body chaired by the PM)

There are a large number of tourism associations, which are generally seen as proactive in working for their members' interests. Tourism-related associations include:

- The Trekking Agency Association of Nepal (TAAN): approximately 1,000 members;
- The Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA): 800 members approximately, promotes and protects mountain environments, issues climbing permits;
- The National Association of Tour and Travel Agencies (NATTA): 500 members, advisory and arbitration services, promotion;
- The Nepal Association of Tour Operators (NATO);

- The Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal (REBAN): training, events, promotion;
- The Hotel Association Nepal (HAN)
- The Embroidery and Garment Association (EGA);
- The Taxi Drivers' Association;
- The Nepal Association of Rafting Agents (NARA); and
- The Himalayan River Guide Association.

Associations fulfill a number of functions for their members, including product development, training and certification and marketing. They are= generally seen as effective in protecting the interests of their members, while some are seen to have increasing capacity to deliver other services (NMDP, 2013).

### **Corporate Responsibility through Social Tourism**

Social Tourism is the pioneer concept of community-based tourism and its main focus is to build high quality relationships between the hosting country and the visiting tourists by providing an opportunity for tourists to combine travel with contribution to a social cause that is close to their hearts. Social tourism enables guests to discover local habitats and wildlife and to celebrate local traditional cultures and their wisdom while at the same time to contribute to community development and to help create sustainable communities that are economically, environmentally and socially healthy and resilient. (Nepal Tourism Board)

### **Himalayan Rush Triathlon**

Himalayan Rush is a unique off-road triathlon for recreational athletes. Over the years it has become a popular hub for both first time triathletes and off-road pros. Known for the friendly vibe as well as the intense uphill trails-we have been called the friendliest and toughest trail triathlon by many.

Founded by runners and outdoor enthusiasts, the Himalayan Rush Triathlon was borne of twin loves – outdoor sports and Nepal. It is an annual trail triathlon held in Begnas. This triathlon experience combines the thrill of trail running, cycling and fresh water swimming with a breath-taking view of the Himalayas surrounding Pokhara to give each participant a uniquely Nepali experience. In the past participants have come from all over the world seeking a world class destination triathlon experience- UK, USA, Singapore, Malaysia, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Thailand, India and more. Many visit Nepal for the first time for the race and include travel and adventure sports activities around Nepal in their visit.

(Source: Nepal Tourism Board Website)

## **Langtang Ecotourism Project- A case study from Nepal**

LEP works with community organizations in nine communities located along the main trekking routes of Langtang-Helambu, helping to strengthen institutional capacities while building awareness and skills in ecotourism. Women have responded particularly well to project activities, taking on a strong role in keeping the area litter-free, improving lodge and cooking standards, reducing fuelwood use in the kitchen, and initiating cultural attractions for tourists. After participating in LEP programs, women understand the relationship of conservation to sustainable tourism and community benefits.

One effective input by LEP has been the issuance of small matching community grants. Grants of up to \$200 have enabled five communities in Langtang-Helambu region to operate kerosene depots that sell kerosene at affordable but unsubsidized rates, resulting in a reduction of fuelwood use in 50 percent of the trekkers' lodges. A portion of the kerosene sales income goes to the village tourism committee fund to support ecotourism and conservation initiatives. Committees have used the money to plant 17,500 tree seedlings, construct 40 km of trekking trails, erect directional and information signs for tourists, initiate guided village tours, and maintain cultural and religious sites. Craft cooperatives, traditional dancing and singing are now generating income for the women of the community and promoting pride in their local culture.

(Source: Brewer-Lama, Cultural survival Quarterly, 1999)

## **ECOTOURISM IN BHUTAN**

Since the inception of the tourism industry in mid-1974, Bhutan has followed a policy of “high value, low volume” tourism. Hence, it has been a highly regulated industry to ensure that the pursuit of commercial interests do not overwhelm the country by bringing undesirable social, economic and ecological consequences. According to this policy, all tourists to Bhutan are required to do the following:

- 1) Arrange all tours and treks through registered travel agents;
- 2) All visits are guided by licensed guides
- 3) All tourists are required to pay a fixed minimum tariff of US\$ 250 per person per day before their visit to Bhutan. This includes a Royalty payment of US\$ 65 per person per day. This is of course inclusive of accommodation, food, guide services and transport.

The “High Value, Low Volume policy” which is opposite to mass market tourism, has been very successful in developing Bhutan as a niche destination for travellers worldwide especially for cultural and ecological tourism.( Source: National Council of Bhutan, 2016)

The Tourism sector in Bhutan is primarily regulated by:

1. **Bhutan Tourism Rules and Schedules of Tariff for International Tourists 1995-** This covers the fixing of tariffs and payment procedures, visa formalities, specify restricted areas for visitors, baggage rules for visitors and sets out a penal code for tour operators.
2. **Trekking in Bhutan Rules and Regulations 1996-** These regulations spell out the rules relating to the use of trekking equipment and DoT licensed trekking guides and the obligation to travel on approved trekking routes.

**Guides Association of Bhutan-** As all tours are to be led by licensed Bhutanese guides. There are about 2,500 licensed guides in the country. The guides are organized formally through the Guides Association of Bhutan which has about 500 members.

The key programmes in accordance to 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan for tourism sector were:

1. **Sustainable Tourism Development:** The focus of this programme will include product diversification to ensure regional and seasonal spread, improving quality and standards of services including accommodation and tourism attractions, exploring new markets, and decentralization of tourism planning and development. Further, the programme will ensure that local communities are able to reap the benefits from this industry. The thrust area for this industry will continue to be high end sustainable tourism destination.
2. **Strengthening of Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality:** The Institute is expected to enhance the quality of tourism and hospitality professionals by bench marking its training programmes to international standards and working towards its vision of becoming a regional centre of excellence.

The vision of **Tourism Policy of Bhutan** is “To foster a vibrant industry as a positive force in the conservation of environment, promotion of cultural heritage, safeguarding sovereign status of the Nation for significantly contributing to Gross National Happiness.”

The mission is to:

- To develop and promote High value, Low impact tourism
- To create an enabling environment for a vibrant tourism industry; and
- To promote Bhutan as a year round destination and foster regional spread of tourism

The tourism rules and regulations 2017 address all the ecotourism related activities with clear demarcation of responsibilities and requirements for tour operators. In order to increase To increase social and economic benefits and decrease negative impact to the local communities, a Tour Operator shall ensure that:

- i. he/ she has implemented a policy against commercial exploitation, particularly of children and adolescents, including sexual exploitation;
- ii. he/she is unbiased and impartial in hiring women and people from local minorities, for any post including those in managerial positions;
- iii. the international or national legal rights of the employees are respected, and employees are paid their daily wages timely;
- iv. the activities of the Tour Operator does not thwart the provision of necessities to the neighbouring communities such as water, energy, and sanitary facilities (especially during treks); and
- v. A Tour Operator shall: a) support community development ventures such as education, health, and sanitation among others; b) employ local residents in various capacities, including those at managerial levels as well; c) provide training opportunities as and when deemed necessary; d) ensure fair trade and purchase of local goods and services by the business, where available;
- vi. There shall be no charges for the number of days of delay either during arrivals or departures or both, due to weather conditions, communication problems, cancellation or delay in Bhutanese airline flights, sickness or any other legitimate reason as TCB may deem reasonable. However, the Tourist will be charged on the actual expenses on accommodation, food, transport and any other services provided.

Bhutan is one of the pioneers in nature based tourism and annually releases Bhutan Tourism Monitor to assess the state of tourism in the country and also analyse the areas that need improvement to develop tourism in the country. A global leader in environmental protection and sustainability, Bhutan's national conservation policy mandates that at any time, 60% of the nation's landmass must remain forested. Bhutan is currently exceeding that mark, with 72% of the country remaining forested.

**Wangchuck Centennial National Park (WCP)** in northern Bhutan is the country's largest conservation area and a huge draw for tourists, yet many of the region's residents struggle to make a living. Under a new livelihood development programme, WWF and the Royal Government of Bhutan have developed an ecotourism project – 'the homestay programme' – designed to stem the region's rural-urban migration, and distribute tourist-related funds amongst the rural population. So far 21 homes have opened their doors to the tourists – all of them situated within WCP, Bhutan's largest National Park, covering almost 5000km sq.

(Source: Ecotourism in Bhutan: WWF, 2012)

## **The Nomad's Festival**

The Nomad's festival is held in Bumthang Dzongkhag (district) in Central Bhutan. Bumthang is approximately an 8 hour drive from the capital city of Thimphu. To get to Bumthang you must follow the national highway east, past Wangdue and Trongsa Dzongkhags. You cross 3 high mountain passes wreathed in cool mists, offering spectacular views of the Himalayan landscape and through stunning, unspoiled forests rich with a wide array of flora and fauna.

The festival takes place in Bumthang, the sacred heartland of Bhutan. This region is dotted with some of the most beautiful and ancient monasteries and temples in the Himalayas. The two major nomadic tribes of Bhutan, the Brokpas in the east and the Layaps in the west, inhabit some of the most rugged terrain in the kingdom. Sports like Keyshey (traditional Bhutanese wrestling): Marvel at the competition as some of Bhutan's toughest highlanders grapple together in this traditional test of skill and strength, also some traditional Bhutanese sports like Khuru (darts), archery, Soksum (light javelin throwing), Dego (similar to throwing horseshoes but with stones) can be tried.

(source: Tourism Council of Bhutan)

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## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are based on available published and unpublished data/information and consultations with various stakeholders.

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1- **Priority sector:** Nature based Tourism (Eco-tourism) has immense opportunities for livelihood generation and socio-economic development in the rural areas of the hill districts of the state, hence its development should be a priority for the state. **This will also help to reduce the out migration from the rural areas.**
- 2- **Ecotourism Policy and Master plan:** The prime requisite for Nature based tourism (Eco-tourism) is a State Nature Based Tourism (Ecotourism) policy for guiding the development of sustainable eco-tourism in the state. This has still not been finalized and is in a draft stage. The commission recommends that the state government should formulate and adopt its Nature Based Tourism (Ecotourism) policy as early as possible for strengthening and guiding nature based tourism in the state. This policy should incorporate provisions for community participation in sustainable Nature based tourism (Eco-tourism) in the state which maintains a balance between nature conservation and socio-economic development. Involvement of communities would also make them vital stakeholders and help to generate livelihoods, thus helping to arrest the out migration of people from the rural areas of the hill districts of the state. It should cover processes for generating local employment .Wide stakeholder consultation is necessary for formulating the state Nature based tourism (Ecotourism) policy.
- 3- The state should also have a Nature Based Tourism (Ecotourism) development master plan with sub-plans for to be put in place for each area. Each ecotourism destination needs to have a site and focused plan.
- 4- **Uttarakhand Eco-Tourism Corporation Limited:** At present, multiple agencies are involved in Nature based tourism (Ecotourism) in the state. These include the State Forest Department, including its wildlife wing; Ecotourism Development Corporation and State Tourism Department. As a result, there is lack of focus. The UECL which was established in 2016 has been assigned the responsibility of coordinating and developing Ecotourism in the state. However, it is not yet fully functional hence unable to fulfill its mandate. The government needs to immediately provide it with a start up grant so as to enable it to develop the ecotourism sector which will generate livelihoods, boost the socio-economy and

mitigate out migration from the rural areas of the state. This corporation should be the coordinating agency for eco-tourism in the state.

- 5- **Information dissemination:** Even though there are many destinations for nature based tourists or eco-tourists in the state; user friendly information is usually not readily available. Development of an application or a portal or web site where all the information on nature based tourism including eco- tourism in the state is available would facilitate the process. This will help in providing all the information on one platform, thereby making it more user friendly. It should also include all government and private facilities. This will help in providing reliable information about destinations, accommodation, itinerary, events and online booking. The website or web application needs to have space for feedback and suggestions.

Development of Interpretation centers in the destination with joint efforts of related departments like forest and tourism is needed with active participation of the local people. They should also be developed as a gateway to local customs and culture.

One of the issues identified in the UTDMP (2007) was that the regional tourist offices are understaffed particularly in the hill districts. This issue should be addressed and the regional tourist offices should take initiatives to promote eco-tourism in the state. Visitor information and interpretation services covering particularly–(i) what to see, (ii) how to see, and (iii) how to behave should be provided.

- 6- **Water:** The state is home to many rivers of India, but most regions continuously faces acute water shortages particularly in the summer season which is also the peak tourist season. . This leads to considerable pressure on the existing water resources of tourist destinations, creating a conflict between usage of water by households and tourism industry. There is a need to develop more efficient water management and conservation systems. All ecotourism units should make themselves water sustainable. Rainwater harvesting needs to be made mandatory, either on individual or shared basis. Wherever possible, systems may be put in place for reusing water.
- 7- **Energy:** Existing as well as new destinations should be made energy efficient through alternate sources of energy like solar. There needs to be a shift from conventional sources of energy to non conventional sources of energy. Some of the existing Nature Based Tourism destinations are already using renewable sources of energy.
- 8- **Telecommunication:** Telecommunication needs to be strengthened in the state with lack of network connectivity being a major issue of concern, particularly in the hill districts. Different network operators should be encouraged to enhance data and voice connectivity in important ecotourism destinations. Wi-Fi at major destinations should also be provided like is being done in Kedarnath.

- 9- **Audio guides** for a few destinations can also be developed to enhance the interpretation and understanding of the destinations by the tourists.
- 10- **Branding:** Endowed with beautiful landscapes, rich forests and wildlife, the state needs to be branded and positioned in the tourism market as an important destination for nature-based tourism. Media, social media, print etc should be used to create greater awareness of what the state has to offer. The state needs to be branded as a major Eco-tourism destination.
- 11- **Waste management:** Destination cleaning campaigns are important steps that are required to be taken in Uttarakhand. With poor waste management system in destinations as also pointed out in the UTDMP (2007-2022) the state has witnessed degradation of natural environment. Corrective measures need to be taken in synergy with local communities, visitors, government, NGOs and tour operators in the area. The responsibility of cleaning and restoring these destinations should be shared but clarity of who will be overall responsible needs to be inbuilt. Examples of other states like Kerala can be followed.

Strict implementation of plastic ban should be enforced. It not only degrades the environment but can also be fatal if consumed by wildlife. Instead plates made of leaves; reusable bottles etc. can be used.

Public toilets should be made available; these could be permanent structures or portable toilets. Bio toilets can also be constructed for better solid waste management. These toilets can also be constructed in destinations for eco friendly waste management. At the same time poor wastewater management systems can pollute the water sources of the region hence proper septage de-sludging, treatment systems should be put in place.

- 12- **Promotion of tourism oriented handicrafts; cuisines, local culture and festivals:** The state should endeavor to promote local handicrafts; cuisine, local culture and festivals amongst eco-tourists. Kerala is one of the states which have successfully linked tourism and local handicrafts and cuisine resulting in both enhancing the local experience and boosting the local economy. Local festivals and events can be linked with development of nature based destinations. This helps in conserving the local culture as well as the tourists experiencing the local festivities. One of such models has been followed in Bhutan like the Nomad's Festival. This gives the tourists an opportunity to experience local culture in its raw form. Nepal also offers such opportunities like Gai Jagraata and Janai Purnima which involves trek to holy Gosainkunda to observe unique shaman culture. Uttarakhand is also home to culture rich tribal lands which can be developed for cultural tourism amidst the bounties of nature. Many festivals and fairs of mountain regions can also be linked to nature based tourism.

Destination specific souvenirs can be developed by local artisans enhancing the livelihood in the region. Local traditional craft of ringal weaving can be promoted through this.

13- **Data, statistics and research:** There is a general dearth of data/ statistics in the tourism sector of Uttarakhand in general and nature based tourism in particular. Data of the tourism sector needs to be compiled including the tourist footfall and employment generation in the sector for each destination. This will help in analyzing the status of nature based tourism and also formulating policies and programmes for strengthening this sector. It will facilitate decision making and planning by the government and also help the tourism industry. An Ecotourism data and research centre needs to be set up within the auspices of the Uttarakhand Eco-tourism Development Corporation.

14- **Carrying capacity and alternate destinations:** Carrying capacity of various destinations needs to be calculated and adhered to. Many ecotourism destinations in the state are overcrowded and stressed while many others continue to witness sparse footfall. There is need to do spatial planning and dispersion of tourists so that resources in one particular area are not over strained. This will also help in development of sustainable destinations over a longer period of time and create livelihood opportunities in many parts of the state.

The seasonal variability of tourism should be mitigated by identifying year round opportunities and marketing off-season events.

15- **Participation of local communities:** Local communities play an important role in nature based tourism hence; community based tourism management should be promoted by giving ownership and responsibility to the community. Their involvement will help in providing a much needed boost to the local socio-economy and provide additional livelihoods; thus helping to arrest the migration of people from rural areas particularly in the mountain districts of the state. Nature Based tourism involving the participation of communities helps in generating local incomes and socio-economic upliftment. Thus local participation should be the hub of nature based tourism.

Village Ecotourism Committees can be created for the purpose of management and promotion of ecotourism.

Linkages with the hotel industry should be established enhancing demand of local produce. Maximum procurement should be done locally, thereby creating an assured market for the local farmers and also establishing a partnership between the local communities and hotel industry. The jungle lodges in Karnataka source a large portion of their provisions from local farmers.

In accordance to the Quebec declaration on Ecotourism 2002 there is a need for increasing use of local materials and products, as well as local logistical and human resource inputs in their operations, in order to maintain the overall authenticity of the ecotourism product and increase the proportion of financial and other benefits that remain at the destination. To achieve these private operators should invest in the training of the local people. Eco-tourism plays a developmental role in the lives of women and other

disadvantaged groups of the rural community thus an awareness-building programme outlining its potential has to be devised as also mentioned in UTDMP. Entrepreneurship should be promoted amongst them by building on traditional skills or new skill development.

Local communities need to benefit from NBT in order to sustain it in the long run. Non-involvement may lead to disenchantment, hostility and apathy. Their involvement gives them a stake in its success. Example: Involvement of Gond tribal communities living on the fringes of the Pench Tiger Reserve has been involved in wildlife tourism. They had been affected by loss of lands due to relocation and crop destruction by wildlife. Tourism has given them an opportunity of earning livelihood. **The main approach for the state should now be on Community Based Ecotourism**

State forest department has also developed community based tourism in as many as 30 villages in the state. This needs to be marketed and information should be made available in the tourism website about the same.

- 16- **Coordination between stakeholders:** Linkages with other policies should be established to maximize the development and benefits. According to the UTDMP there is a lack of interdepartmental synergy. There is a need for multiple development sectors to work together. One of the main objectives of Himachal Ecotourism Policy is to create partnership between different departments, civil bodies and private sector for effective development of Eco-tourism in the state. This approach can also be adopted in Uttarakhand.

Public and private sector coordination should be nurtured. Innumerable tourism companies are offering nature based activities in the state, hence there is a need to establish linkages between private and public sector for both regulating the activities and promotion which currently is weak (UTDMP).

Destinations should be developed under PPP mode. There is a need to develop Government policies that earmark fees from tourism to generate funds for both conservation of landscapes and sustainable development of local communities and indigenous people.

- 17- **Standards and certification:** A set of standards and norms should be developed and followed for nature based tourism activities. This could include development of state specific norms and accreditation systems or adopting the existing international standards like ISO 50001: for energy management can be used for optimization of energy and ISO 14001: environmental standards can regulate stakeholders in the industry- whether hotels, tour operators and food. ISO 9001 is also used in travel industry as it deals with quality management systems. There are a few ISO certified operators functional in Uttarakhand. Even in remote areas, it is necessary to set development standards that are approved in coordination with local stakeholders, particularly representatives of local communities.

There are also other certifications available like: International Ecotourism Standard (IES) is a Green Globe 21 program for certifying ecotourism activities worldwide. Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria for destinations and GSTC criteria for tour operators can be followed as a guiding document for development of destinations and standards for the tour operators in Nature Based tourism.

- 18- **Safety:** Uttarakhand being a hill state is susceptible to landslides and other natural hazards. Development zones need to be clearly demarcated for Nature Based Tourism. The development should be low density, with less built up area and abundant landscape. Planning guidelines, regulations and policies should be in place that addresses sustainable land use. Design and constructions should be developed with local inputs. There should be an emergency management plan in place. Inspections for food hygiene, electricity and fire safety should be conducted. Roadside amenities enroute destinations should be developed maintaining a certain standard of food and cleanliness.
- 19- **Synergy with existing forest legislation:** Nature Based Tourism often involves use of forest land including national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves. These have to be in tune with the existing forest legislation viz Indian Forest Act 1927; Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and Forest Conservation Act 1980.
- 20- **Capacity building:** Training programs and skill up gradation should be given to the local communities involved in Nature based tourism (ecotourism) activities( nature guides, hospitality). Follow up workshops should be organized to keep them up to date or enhance their ability like soft skills training. Skill development should cover every aspect of nature based tourism from language learning to use of technology.

The data available for training programs in the state also showed a skewed ratio with regard to the participation of men and women. Woman participation should be encouraged.

- 21- **Traffic Management:** This is one of the important aspects in destination management. Most of the destinations in Uttarakhand struggle with traffic issues especially during the peak season. Traffic management plans should be put in place. It should be kept in mind that most of these destinations are also routes to other getaways in the state. Measures such as the provision of parking, access to the base station and traffic restrictions within and to drive passengers to this mode of transport may be introduced. Parking and internal circulation must be improved in Rishikesh (UTDMP). Rishikesh is not only a Tourist destination but also a gateway to the Garhwal Hills. Traffic issues in these destinations not only cause discomfort to tourists visiting them but also tourists visiting other destinations in the state.

## SECTOR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

### WILDLIFE TOURISM

Wild life tourism is the major form of nature based tourism in Uttarakhand. However, the number of visitors is concentrated in a few destinations, mainly Corbett National Park.

- 1- Each national park, sanctuary and conservation reserve should frame a tourism development plan that will take into account the carrying capacity, ecological status and provide detailed guidelines for management of tourists and the tourism zone. There needs to be a designated tourist zone in each protected area. Other areas can be closed for tourists. Designated areas where night stay can be allowed should be considered. State Eco-tourism strategy for national parks and sanctuaries needs to be framed.
- 2- **Conducted tours:** Conducted tours by certified operators can also be considered. . Conducted Tours play an important role in promotion of tourism, education and awareness and also help in generating local livelihoods
- 3- **Transport:** There is also a need to shift to eco friendly transportation for movement inside national parks and sanctuaries. Electric cars can be used for this purpose.
- 4- **Waste management:** Provisions for waste management in wildlife protected areas are also required in order to protect and conserve the pristine environment.
- 5- **Facilities:** Most national parks and sanctuaries other than the Corbett National Park lack basic facilities like huts, green lodges and nature interpretation centers. Some protected areas do not even have web sites of their own. Efforts need to be made for this for facilitating Nature based tourism ( Ecotourism)
- 6- **Festivals:** Nature festivals like bird watching events need to be organized regularly (preferably annually) in all national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves of the state.
- 7- **Foreign and domestic tourists:** Available data indicates that the number of foreign tourists visiting the national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves has not increased; instead it has fallen in some years. Efforts should be made to attract more overseas visitors as wildlife tourists. Even the number of domestic tourists is not growing substantially. More efforts should be to attract foreign and domestic tourists to all national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves.
- 8- **Community involvement:** The local community residing around these protected areas needs to be involved in Nature based tourism (Ecotourism). This will help in livelihood generation and involve them in wildlife protection and conservation.
- 8- **Rajaji National Park:** Rajaji National Park is one of the most well connected National Parks in Uttarakhand by road, rail or air. Yet, the tourist footfall in the National Park is



much less as compared to that in the Corbett National Park. There is a need for branding and promoting this National Park which is near the most important getaways in the state like Haridwar, Rishikesh and capital city Dehradun. It is also one of the important locations for bird watching in the state. Tours and packages could be organized in the National park. There are not too many options available for comfortable stay in Rajaji National Park.

- 9- **Assan Barrage Bird watching area:** There continues to be lack in fully exploiting the tourism potential of the area. It is well connected by road and lies close to Dehradun City. The area can be promoted as a picnic spot or day excursions by creating packages for schools and organizations. There has not been a visible increase in the footfall post the infrastructure development in the area (Tourism Department). There is a need for proactive steps to be taken to harvest full potential of nature based tourism in the area.
- 10- **Wildlife tourism outside protected areas:** There is immense scope for wildlife tourism outside protected areas, especially if this is linked to other forms of tourism like pilgrimage; trekking and hiking.

## **TREKKING AND HIKING**

- 1- Trekking and Hiking continue to remain unregulated activities in the state. There is dearth of data including the exact footfall for these activities in the state; direct and indirect economic benefits to the local population and livelihood generation. Most of the treks are organized by private entities. At the same time there is a lack of liaisoning between the government and the private players. Unlike Mountaineering, which have set guidelines for expeditions and take care of the environmental concerns while Trekking lacks focus. This renders trail management and waste management a huge concern. There is no entry fee levied at present and people continue to explore different areas individually or in small groups. There is a need of regulation and public -private coordination as it is a popular activity in the state.
- 2- Wildlife and bird watching can also be linked to trekking and hiking activities. Locals could be trained for this purpose to give insights on the local wildlife and nature to the tourists. While enhancing the experience of the tourists it will also serve as a tool for conservation of the nature and help in generating local livelihoods.
- 3- Innovative ideas like Green passport in by Karnataka Tourism can be developed. With green passport Karnataka tourism aims to end illegal trekking and promote tourism. A certificate can be issued on completion of a particular trail.

## **HOMESTAYS**

- 1- Though the Home stay scheme comes as a welcome step in development of rural tourism in the state and can serve as a source of livelihood development for the local communities, some gaps are evident. The current registered home stays show a skewed distribution of home stays among different districts with as high as 79 and 69 in Tehri and Almora

respectively to as low as 1 and 2 in Rudraparyag and Chamoli. The distribution is highly uneven. At the same time the details of the home stays present on the website are not complete. **Email id** is missing for most of the home stays and in some cases even the contact numbers are not available.

- 2- There is also a need of details like how to reach, distance from road etc. These need to be added. The website also lacks images of the home stay facility. Since, most tourists select the place of stay by looking at the pictures of the place and the surroundings that need to be available on the website. With Airbnb; Oyo and various other hotel booking websites which provide pictures of the area of stay and details of what to expect in the stay, it is recommended to provide the visitors with the same level of information and ease of taking decision of where to visit.
- 3- **Linkages** of home stay development with other nature based activities like nature walks, hiking, trekking and various other surrounding Nature Based activities should be established. Different packages could be developed and offered to the visitors to enhance their visit and also harness the full potential of Nature Based Tourism in the area. This will also help in more livelihood opportunities for locals in the area.
- 4- Home stays can be developed strategically in villages enroute important trekking and mountaineering routes. This will merge adventure activities with promotion of local culture and cuisine.

## **RAFTING**

Rafting in the state has high potential and has become popular in the past few years. The tourism department lists nine stretches for rafting in the state. Rafting on river Ganga continues to be the most popular. Efforts should be made to promote rafting in the eight other stretches. Development of kayaking or rafting tours with nature interpretation should be done.

There is also a need to increase the number of trained guides and proper certification of guides to conduct rafting in the rivers. Rafting should be promoted by increasing the safety management.

However, the number of persons involved in rafting is showing a decreasing trend which is an issue of concern and needs to be addressed.

The state government has recently approved modified rafting guidelines which will help in the growth of this sector.

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**ANNEXURE 1:**

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION COMMISSION  
UTTARAKHAND, PAURI**

No. 64

Dated 22/5/2018

**Constitution of expert group on nature based tourism (eco-tourism)**

Uttarakhand has immense potential for up scaling nature based tourism (eco-tourism), being of the major one of the drivers for socio-economic change in the mountain areas of the state. Strengthening of this sector will give a boost to rural economy, thus arresting the out-migration from these areas. A task force, with the following composition, is hereby constituted for providing inputs to commission.

- 1- Dr S.S.Negi, RDMC
- 2- Managing Director, Uttarakhand Eco-tourism Corporation
- 3- Chief Wildlife Warden, Govt of Uttarakhand
- 4- Director Tourism Govt of Uttarakhand
- 5- Ms Divya Pandey YP, RDMC Pauri, Coordinator

The task force will provide inputs on the following matters to the commission within 6 months:

- a- To examine the status and potential of nature based tourism (eco-tourism) in the mountain districts of the state, with particular reference to livelihood issues.
- b- To provide recommendations for strengthening this sector in the hill districts of the state.

The taskforce may incorporate views from various other experts in this field.

**(Dr S S Negi)**  
Vice Chairman

Cc

- 1- Dr S.S.Negi, RDMC (Convenor)
- 2- Shri DVS Khatti, IFS (mobile 09412053601) Chief Wildlife Warden, Govt of Uttarakhand. (e-mail : dvskhati@gmail.com)
- 3- Shri Anup Malik, IFS Managing Director, Uttarakhand Eco-tourism Corporation (mobile; 0967575700). (e-mail : malikanup1@gmail.com)
- 4- Director Tourism Govt of Uttarakhand
- 5- Ms Divya Pandey YP, RDMC Pauri, Coordinator

संख्या- 199 / X-3-16-06(03) / 2015

रक्तो रामास्वामी,  
अपर मुख्य सचिव,  
उत्तराखण्ड शासन।

सेवा में

प्रमुख वन संरक्षक,  
उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून।

वन एवं पर्यावरण अनुभाग-3

देहरादून: दिनांक: 10 <sup>पुनः</sup> मार्च, 2016

विषय:- उत्तराखण्ड राज्य में ईको-टूरिज्म को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए "उत्तराखण्ड ईको-टूरिज्म कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड" की स्थापना के सम्बन्ध में।

महोदय,

उपरोक्त विषय के संदर्भ में अवगत कराना है कि राज्य के सम्पूर्ण भौगोलिक क्षेत्र का लगभग दो तिहाई भू-भाग वन भूमि है, जो कि विभिन्न प्रकार की वन्यजीव प्रजातियों तथा दुर्लभ वनस्पतियों से आच्छादित है। इन वनों में प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य से परिपूर्ण नदियाँ, झरने, हिम-चोटियाँ, ग्लेशियर एवं अनेक रमणीक स्थल स्थित हैं। राज्य में अवस्थित वनों की अद्वितीय जैव-विविधता, वन्यजीव विविधता, प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य के स्थलों की उपस्थिति तथा अतिरिक्त रोजगार के सृजन की संभावनाओं के दृष्टिगत ईको-टूरिज्म को व्यवसाय के रूप में अपनाया जाना अत्यावश्यक है, ताकि ईको-टूरिज्म के माध्यम से पर्वतीय आर्थिकी को मजबूत करने के साथ ही राज्य से हो रहे पलायन पर अंकुश लगाया जा सके।

2- अतएव इस संबंध में मुझे यह कहने का निदेश हुआ है कि राज्य में ईको-टूरिज्म को प्रोत्साहित करते हुए इसे व्यवसाय के रूप में अपनाये जाने के दृष्टिगत कम्पनी अधिनियम-2013 के अंतर्गत "उत्तराखण्ड ईको-टूरिज्म कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड" का गठन निम्नानुसार किया जाता है:-

1. उत्तराखण्ड ईकोटूरिज्म कॉर्पोरेशन एक लिमिटेड कम्पनी होगी, जिसके क्रियाकलापों का संचालन कम्पनी अधिनियम-2013 के अनुसार कम्पनी के बोर्ड ऑफ डायरेक्टर्स के माध्यम से किया जायेगा।
2. कम्पनी की सम्पूर्ण पूँजी में राज्य सरकार की हिस्सेदारी किसी भी दशा में 51% से कम नहीं हो सकेगी।
3. कम्पनी में निदेशकों की न्यूनतम संख्या 03 (तीन) तथा अधिकतम 07 (सात) होगी व उनकी नियुक्ति राज्य सरकार द्वारा उस अवधि के लिए, जैसा कि सरकार समय-समय पर विनिश्चय (Determine) करे, की जायेगी।
4. इस कम्पनी के बोर्ड ऑफ डायरेक्टर्स के अध्यक्ष अपर मुख्य सचिव/प्रमुख सचिव, वन एवं पर्यावरण विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड शासन होंगे। कम्पनी का प्रबन्ध निदेशक भारतीय वन सेवा से नियुक्त किया जायेगा।

**कम्पनी के कार्य एवं दायित्व :-**

1. कम्पनी की सभी शाखाओं में प्राकृतिक पर्यटन (Nature Tourism) गतिविधियों को संचालित करना। पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने एवं उसे विकसित करने हेतु अन्य किसी प्रकार के सामन्जस्य (Coordination) स्थापित करना।
  2. पर्वतारोहण, रॉक क्लाइंबिंग, ट्रेकिंग, नदियों एवं झीलों में नौकायन/राफ्टिंग, गेम सफारी, एक्सकूरशन, टूर ऑपरेटर आदि गतिविधियों को संचालित करना तथा लॉग केबिन/वन कुटीर का निर्माण कर कैम्पिंग सुविधाओं को सुलभ करना।
  3. पर्यटकों, ट्रेवल एजेंटों एवं ठेकेदारों की गतिविधि संचालित करना तथा पर्यटकों को टिकट आरक्षण, बैंकिंग एवं विनिमय, स्लीपर कार/बर्थ एवं होटल आरक्षण, स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र, गाईड्स की सुविधा तथा इसी प्रकार की अन्य सुविधाओं को सुगम करना।
  4. रोपवे, बैलून आदि हवाई सैर कराना।
  5. वन, वन्यजीव संरक्षण एवं विकास में मदद करना तथा पर्यावरण सुधार में परोक्ष/अपरोक्ष रूप में सम्मिलित होना।
  6. देश एवं विदेश में साहसिक खेलों को बढ़ावा देने अथवा संरक्षण एवं वन्य-जन्तुओं के वातावरण सुधार में परोक्ष अथवा अपरोक्ष रूप से जुड़ी सभी प्रकार की गतिविधियों में परामर्शी एवं सलाहकार की भूमिका का निर्वहन करना।
- 3- कम्पनी की शुरुआती प्रस्तावित पूँजी ₹5,00,000.00/- (रु० पाँच करोड़) होगी तथा कम्पनी के पंजीकरण तथा विधीक्षण आदि की कार्यवाही के लिए अपर मुख्य सचिव/प्रमुख सचिव, वन एवं पर्यावरण विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड शासन अधिकृत होंगे।
- 4- यह आदेश वित्त विभाग के अशासकीय संख्या-16(NP)/XXVII/4/16 दिनांक 16.05.2016 में प्राप्त सहमति से जारी किया जा रहा है।

भवदीय,  
(एस० रामास्वामी)  
अपर-मुख्य सचिव

संख्या- 199 (1)/X-3-16, तददिनांकित।

प्रतिलिपि:- निम्नलिखित को सूचनार्थ एवं आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु प्रेषित:-

1. महालेखाकार, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून।
2. प्रमुख सचिव, वित्त विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड शासन।
3. प्रबन्ध निदेशक, उत्तराखण्ड वन विकास निगम, देहरादून।
4. निदेशक, कोषागार एवं वित्त सेवाएँ, उत्तराखण्ड।
5. वित्त(वे०आ०-सा०नि०)अनु०-04/10, उत्तराखण्ड शासन।
6. गार्ड फाईल।

आज्ञा से,  
(विवेक कुमार जैन)  
अनु सचिव

