

# Exploring the Himalayas: Land and the People

Exploring the Himalayas:



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**Exploring the Himalayas :  
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"Exploring the Himalayas : Land and the People" by Neeraj Ruwali

# TOURISM AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND SANCTUARIES OF UTTARAKHAND

Kamla Bora

## ABSTRACT

Tourism is a dynamic discipline. It creates employment, wealth and business potential to contribute economically, environmentally and socially sustainable development in our country and state. It should ensure an acceptable evolution with regards to its impact on natural resources, biodiversity and the capacity for absorption of any impacts and residues produced. The sustainable nature of tourism requires that it should integrate the natural, cultural and human elements, it must respect the fragile balances that characterize many ecosystems, particularly sanctuary and national parks. The main National parks in Uttarakhand are Corbett National Park, Nainital National Park, Valley of Flowers, Rajaji National Park, Gangotri National Park, Govind National park. The main Sanctuaries are Kedarnath, Mussourie, Ascot, Son-riyer and Binsar. The tourism growth in Uttarakhand during 2001-2010 has been 33.4%. Though National parks and sanctuaries have generated good source of income for Uttarakhand but it is not being managed properly. This poor management is causing the flora and fauna which in the coming years may degrade the tourism. Hence tourism is certainly a highly sensitive activity. Discussions in this paper will highlight the impact of tourism in national parks and sanctuaries of Uttarakhand. Sustainable development should be based on the criteria of sustainability. In other words, the concept of sustainable development could be termed as development without destruction. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), defined sustainable development as improving the quality of human life while improving the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. If an activity is sustainable, for all practical purposes it can continue forever. World Tourism Organization (WTO) defined sustainable

tourism as that which meets the needs of present tourists and host region while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It should lead to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, biological diversity and life support systems. Uttarakhand provides many places of tourist attraction. The core substance of tourism industry is based on people- people relationship. The host must know his guest in some detail, and the guest should also know who would be his host. In the absence of their answers, tourism can be a disaster for both the land and people. National park and sanctuaries have a little difference between them. The state's government declaration says this. Whenever it appears to the State Government that an area, whether within a sanctuary or not, is, by reason of its ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological or zoological association or importance, needed to be constituted as a National Park for the purpose of protecting, propagating or developing wild life therein or its environment, it may, by notification, declare its intention to constitute such area as a National Park". But the declaration of sanctuary states that "The state government may, by notification, declare its intention to constitute any area other than an area comprised within any reserved forest or the territorial waters as a sanctuary if it considers that such area is of adequate ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological, natural or zoological significance, for the purpose of protecting, propagating or developing wildlife or its environment."(Singh R.2003)

#### Objectives

Sustainable tourism involves more than just environmental conservation. National parks and sanctuaries tourism policy needs to highlight the objective of environmentally sustainable tourism because of the scarcity and, frequently also, the fragility of its primary tourism resource base.

The main objectives of their study area are:-

- To study the main national park and sanctuary.
- The assessment carrying capacity and tourism capabilities.
- To assess the pressure due to tourism on national park and sanctuary.
- To assess the actual tourists arrivals of both Indian and foreigners.
- To assess the actual income coming from the national park and sanctuary.

#### Study Area

The region forms a compact geographical entity with Nepal and the east Tibet to the north; Himachal Pradesh in the west and Uttar Pradesh in the south. The eastern part of the Uttarakhand constitutes Kumaun division including six districts, Nainital, Pithoragarh, Almora, Champawat,

Uttarakhand range. On the western part are Pauri Garhwal, Dehra Dun, Uttarakashi, Chamoli, Tehri Garhwal and Nainital. The range of and Uttarakhand range comes under total and the state is divided in the 27<sup>th</sup> state and 18<sup>th</sup> biggest state in India. This range from about 300m to more than 7317m, while the climate is based on the low lying valleys and temperature at higher elevation on the mountain tops.

The main National park and sanctuaries are shown in Table 1.6.

TABLE 1.6 NATIONAL PARK AND SANCTUARIES IN UTTARAKHAND

| Name                           | Established Year | Area in Sq.km | District                   |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Corbett National Park          | 1936             | 520.80        | Pauri Garhwal and Nainital |
| Nanda Devi National Park       | 1982             | 624.60        | Chamoli                    |
| VALLEY OF FLOWER NATIONAL PARK | 1982             | 87.50         | Chamoli                    |
| Rajaji National Park           | 1983             | 820.42        | Haridwar, Dehradun Pauri   |
| Gangotri National Park         | 1989             | 2390.02       | Uttarkashi                 |
| Govind National Park           | 1990             | 472.08        | Uttarkashi                 |
| Mussoorie Sanctuary            | 1983             | 10.82         | Dehradun                   |
| Kedarnath Sanctuary            | 1972             | 976.20        | Chamoli                    |
| Govind Sanctuary               | 1955             | 485.89        | Uttarkashi                 |
| Aaskot Sanctuary               | 1986             | 599.93        | Pithoragarh                |
| Sonnadi Sanctuary              | 1987             | 301.18        | Garhwal                    |
| Binsar Sanctuary               | 1988             | 47.07         | Almora                     |

Sources-Statistical Handbook(2010-2011).

#### Data Base and Methodology

Data pertaining to the land use and income produced from tourists in Uttarakhand have been collected from the statistical records of the Government of Uttarakhand (Anonymous 2010-2011).

#### Results and Discussions

The parks and sanctuaries are at present one of the main tourist destinations in Uttarakhand. They invite a large number of visitors to enjoy and use its recreational resources. Since park visitors are classed as 'special tourists', Corbett, Nanda Devi, Valley of flower, Rajaji, Gangotri and Govind National Park attract the attention of only a few people. With the growth of tourism movement in India the parks beg to attract attention

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both of the foreign and home visitors. According to the census of Uttarakhand in 2009-2010 the park was visited by 67776 tourists of which 63440 were Indians and 4336 were foreigners.

Table no-2.0 TOURISTS ARRIVALS AT NATIONAL PARK AND SANCTUARY

| YEAR      | INDIANS TOURISTS | FOREIGN TOURISTS | TOTAL TOURISTS |
|-----------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 2000-2001 | 63440            | 4336             | 67776          |
| 2001-2002 | 80699            | 5557             | 86256          |
| 2002-2003 | 96056            | 4150             | 100176         |
| 2003-2004 | 120386           | 6975             | 127361         |
| 2004-2005 | 170929           | 11446            | 182375         |
| 2005-2006 | 166211           | 14618            | 180829         |
| 2006-2007 | 183481           | 15562            | 199043         |
| 2007-2008 | 231375           | 16463            | 247838         |
| 2008-2009 | 277487           | 15503            | 292990         |
| 2009-2010 | 285412           | 15829            | 301241         |

Source - (Statistical Handbook 2000-2010)

Number of visitors was 301241 in year 2009-2010 out of which 285412 were Indian and 15829 were overseas visitors. The National Park and Sanctuary are the only wildlife preserves in Uttarakhand which have developed adequate tourist infrastructure in transport, accommodation and recreation. But it is very difficult to assess the recreation resource carrying capacity of the park and sanctuaries. The main aspects in this study are the various types of visitors and their awareness towards the resources. The visitors should be aware to not generate noise and annoy or disturb the animals by their actions. They should also respect and protect the flora and fauna of the parks and sanctuaries.

However, tourism is an established industry and boosts economic activity and employment. Table 3.0 shows the year wise increase in income of Uttarakhand state, inspite of its detrimental effects on the local ecological system.

Table no-3.0 INCOME BY TOURISM IN UTTARAKHAND

| YEAR      | INCOME IN LAKHS Rs. |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 2000-2001 | 85.05               |
| 2001-2002 | 97.61               |
| 2002-2003 | 122.90              |
| 2003-2004 | 1622.60             |

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|           |        |
|-----------|--------|
| 2004-2005 | 201.78 |
| 2005-2006 | 257.66 |
| 2006-2007 | 290.16 |
| 2007-2008 | 341.95 |
| 2008-2009 | 378.31 |
| 2009-2010 | 547.04 |

(Statistical Handbook 2000-2010)  
 Many species of flora and fauna are near extinction or have been. Therefore, tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the term as well as economically viable, and ethically and socially acceptable for local communities. The resource base is under high pressure not only from tourists but also from encroachment, perhaps, being under pressure from non-touristic activities. Tourism development shall be based on the criteria of sustainability, therefore identification of sensitive areas should be carried out where tourism can be more strictly controlled. Environment friendly behavior such as promotion of information material, campaigns and training of the tourism workers, education of tourists and cooperation between governmental agencies should be the way forward for the Tourism industry.

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