

Prospects and problem of tourism industry in valley of flower national park Chamoli, Uttarakhand

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Abstract

Uttarakhand is well blessed by Nature and it lays at the centre of one of the world's richest bio- geographic areas. It is the treasure house of various economic resources. In this area Chamoli District has a rich cultural and ethnic heritage that can easily make it a tourist-spot. Tourism has the greatest potential for generating income and employment opportunities in Chamoli because here Valley of Flower National Park is not only characterized by the blending of flora and fauna it is also exceptionally rich in bio-diversity. Moreover the natural Beauty at various places of Uttarakhand especially world best national park Valley of Flower can attract the tourists all over the world. Further, religious tourism and holiday tourism of this region will attract the tourists. This paper makes an attempt to explore the potentiality from Valley of Flower National Park in Chamoli which will maintain a bright prospect of economic development in terms of tourism industry in near future.

Keywords: tourism industry, infrastructure, economic development, Uttarakhand

Introduction

Tourism is the world's largest industry and it represents the fastest growing segment of this market. The concept of tourism is new with tremendous potentiality for sustainable developments of nature-based tourist resources include beautiful national and mandir and landscapes. But, before going to explore the prospects for economic development in the Chamoli District, Uttarakhand in terms of tourism industry. It is better to have a look into the present socio-economic and political conditions prevailing in Chamoli.

The valley of flower is richly diverse, home to rare and endangered animals and plants. The National park is spread over a vast area and the rich flora and fauna makes it a must visit travel attractions for nature and wild life enthusiast. If words could describe the Valley of Flower National Park in Uttarakhand, then enchanting scintillating and magical would come pretty close to doing justice to its outstanding natural beauty. Spread over 87.5 sq km; the biodiversity hot-spot is known for its scenic beauty comprising alpine shrubs and meadows, milky white, Streams, snow-clad peaks and pristine air, Located in the upper reaches of Bhyunder valley near Joshimath, in Chamoli district of Garhwal region, the rolling landscape of the National Park- Stand in stark contrast to the rugged mountain.

The valley of flowers presents a different look each day when it becomes accessible from May to September. There are no human settlements inside the national park and grazing has been completely banned. The valley is accessible from last week of May after the snow melts. After the snow melts and the monsoon begin, the plants begin to bloom in July and August. In September, the plants prepare for over eight months of hibernation. By the end of September, the valley is again carpeted under snow.

Tourism has emerged as smog free industry and biggest

source of revenue generation worldwide. Similarly, tourism Industry Rs vary important in mountain Region. It is estimated that Mountains account for roughly 15-20% of the global tourism market, generating between 70-90 billion us dollars' per year. River rafting during the winter and summer seasons every year has posed severe threats to the socio-culture and environment of the local people, particularly of women. The Bank of river Alaknanda, has been using as bathing spots by the women of nearby villages but now, they are unable because of the presence of numerous river side camps.

Objectives

- Tourism is preferred by both domestic and foreign tourists that would help to earn total revenue generation.
- Tourism ventures in potential areas can make the local people aware of the objective of conservation and economic gain through job opportunities.
- Tourism can help for improving tourism infrastructure in the areas of transport, communication, power, water supply, etc.
- Tourism can also help to increase higher rate of utilization of natural resources including national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Methodology

The main focus of the methodology to achieve tourism development will be put on environmental planning approach. This approach involves a thorough survey and analysis of the environment to determine the most suitable types and locations of development. In tourist areas, like Meadows, forests, the environment is of significant importance during the planning process. The methodology is a basis and has been somewhat adjusted to this research, the original of in keep is more comprehensive.

Prospects of tourism industry in valley of flower national park

The valley of flower is richly diverse, home to rare and endangered animals and plants. The National park is spread over a vast area and the rich flora and fauna makes it a must visit travel attractions for nature and wild life enthusiast. Himalayan white birch *Betula utilis*, and *Rhododendron campanulatum* with Himalayan yew *Taxus*, *Syringa emodi* and *Sorbus lanata*. Some of the common herbs are *Arisaema jacquemontii*, *Boschniakia himalaica*, *Corydalis cashmeriana*, *Polemonium caeruleum*, *Polygonum polystachyum* (a rampant tall weed), *Impatiens sulcata*, *Geranium wallichianum*, *Galium aparine*, *Morina longifolia*, *Inula grandiflora*, *Nomochoris oxypetala*, *Anemone rivularis*, *Pedicularis pectinata*, *P. bicornuta*, *Primula denticulate* and *Trillidium govanianum*. In areas where past livestock congregated, Himalayan knotweed *Polygonum polystachyum* is a rampant weed.

In the area main fauna is within the West Himalayan Endemic Birds. Species frequently seen in the valley include lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*, Himalayan vulture *Gyps himalayensis*, yellow billed and red billed choughs *Pyrrhocorax graculus* and *P. pyrrhocorax*, koklass pheasant *Pucrasia macrolopha*, the nationally listed Himalayan monal pheasant *Lophophorus impejanus*, found in *rhododendron* thickets, scaly-bellied and yellow-nape woodpeckers *Picus squamatus* and *P. flavinucha*, great and bluetthroated barbets *Megalaima virens* and *M. asiatica*, snow pigeon *Columba leuconota* and spotted dove *Stigmatopelia chinensis*.

The Main places to visit in Valley of Flowers National Park is

Govindghat: Govindghat is the beginning point for trek to Hemkund Sahib and valley of flowers.

Hemkund Sahib: The Sikh pilgrimage, is one of the significant attractions close to the valley of flowers Gurudwara, there is the Hemkund lake. The hilly backdrop provides scintillating scenery for the visitors. Moreover, Laxman temple is also one of the major attractions, located here.

Joshimath: Joshimath is among the sacred temples for Hindus and the abode of Lord Badrinarayan.

These are the main prospects of Tourism:

Pilgrimage Tourism: The whole Himalayan region has an important spiritual meaning for Hindus as a "sacral space". This leads to a different Hindu point of view in the Chamoli district, not only a collection of natural features or a beautiful landscape, but also a representation of the divine.. Joshimath the nearest town, is a popular pilgrimage as it is the winter abode of lord Badrinarayan and also the seat of the math founded by Adi Sankracharya. Dham (pilgrimage) tourism has been practiced in the Chamoli District for the centuries. Badrinath, has the religious importance and Hemkund Sahab and Josimath is also' as well as they are known for their natural and religious beauty. Tourists not only from the Indian sub-continent but also from worldwide visit these dhams every year. The total number of pilgrims arriving in the pilgrimage places of the Garhwal Himalaya.

Natural Tourism

Natural tourism has developed in Uttaranchal after establishment of hill towns. In the late 1830's, the hill stations became more attractive for the civilian residents of India (especially for the colonial middle and upper class), due to the fact that they were an opportunity to escape the hot pre-monsoon months and the summer monsoon, at the same offering a stay in a more pleasant region with a beautiful landscape.

Adventures Tourism

Adventures tourism is getting enormous attraction in the Chamoli District as winter sports skiing is developing in Auli (Chamoli District), river rafting in the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda Rivers, trekking in various natural places and pilgrimages (valley of flower, hemkund sahib and bhuyadar valley).

Wildlife tourism

Chamoli is famous for valley of flower national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, bird sanctuaries and a biosphere reserves. Its 77% geographical land is covered by flora and fauna. Govind Ghat National Park is world famous for conservation for elephant. Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve is declared as world heritage site and known for Kasturi (mirg) deer. There are also many sites, where bird sanctuaries are found. These areas have altogether the potentials of promoting wildlife tourism.

Cultural tourism

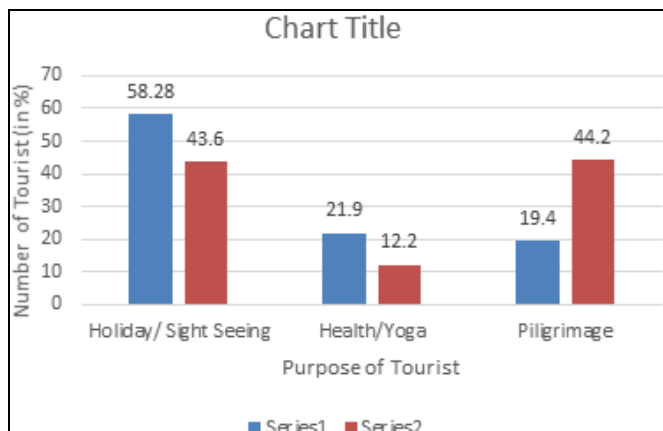
Increase people's control over their lives and is compatible with the culture and values of those affected and strengthen the community identity. Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad based community input. Education and training programs to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established. Conserve cultural diversity and Respect land and property rights of traditional inhabitants. Guarantee the protection of nature, local and the indigenous cultures and especially traditional knowledge.

Local or community tourism

That is designed to benefit local communities and generate income in those communities. The community should maintain control over tourism development and Tourism should provide quality employment to community residents. Encourage businesses to minimize negative effects on local communities and contribute positively to them its Ensure an equitable distribution of financial benefits throughout the entire supply chain. Provide financial incentives for local businesses to enter tourism and improve local human resource capacity.

A short snap survey conducted by UNWTO revealed that about 58.2% of the foreign tourist visits were for holiday/sight seeing, 21.9 % for health/yoga and about 19.4% for pilgrimage/religious functions. About 59% of the holiday tourists were attracted by tourism.gov.in scenic beauty, 51.3% by trekking facilities and 52.1% by spiritual centres. The major source markets of Chamoli are the United States of America, Israel, Australia, Italy, Germany and Nepal. The

most popular destinations for foreign tourists to Uttarakhand were Rishikesh, Haridwar, Gangotri, Uttarkashi, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Auli, Nainital and Gaumukh. For domestic tourists, the main purpose of 44.2% of the tourist visits was pilgrimage/religious while that of 43.6% was holiday/sight seeing. The main sources of attraction for holiday tourists were scenic beauty and trekking even in the case of domestic tourists. The main states of origin of domestic tourists visiting Chamoli were Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra in that order. The most popular destinations for domestic tourists are Haridwar, Rishikesh, Nainital, Badarinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Uttarkashi.



Source: Eco Development Committee

Fig 1

Problems of tourism

The current District of various facilities services and infrastructure along the trek path route starting from Govind Ghat - The last settlement accessible by road at the base, along the motor able route till the valley, the village settlements of Pulna and Ghangharia - the tourist base settlement in the valley.

Accessibility: The ascent to the valley of flowers (16 km) Hemkunt Sahib (19 km) by trek begins from Govind Gaht first

village enroute is Pulna after a distance of nearly 3 km., next village is Bhyunder at nearly 9 km, and the main settlement for tourist stay is at Ghangharia, at nearly 13 km. A little after Ghanghria the trek path bifurcates on the left to valley of flowers to a distance of another 3 km. from where the main valley starts, while the other path continues to Hemkunt Sahib at a distance of another 6 km. from Ghaghara.

Electricity Supply: Electricity supply is available through grid at Govind Ghat and till Pulna. The electricity supply system through grid connectivity continue till Ghangharia. It is in damaged state at avalanches prone area and this supply is not available after Pulna.

Water Supply: The prominent water sources are local strems. Treatment facilities are not available and clear water reservoir for storage is available only at Bhynder and Pulna. Formal water supply system of Jal-Sansthan is not yet complete and it's the temporary system connected to Lakshaman Ganga stream which is laid by local establishment owners on which the Ghagharia settlement is depend.

Sewage Disposal System: The sewerage system is still through open drains using soak pits at all the settlement of Govind Ghat, Pulna and Ghangharia. The stream of a Laxman Ganga and river Alaknanda get polluted to some extant when mixed with sewerage and solid waste components. No system is available for collection or disposal of mule extra enroute the trek path and at Ghangharia.

Solid Waste Management: Bio degradable solid waste including kitchen wash waste is observed to be dumped in rock-pits or open land behind establishment at Ghanghria. Such waste was observed to find its way in to Laxman Ganga at Hemkunt Sahib and in river Alaknanda at Govind Ghat.

Communication Facilities: Local call/STD/PCO booths are available in limited number at Govind Ghat and Ghanghria only. At Ghanghria satellite Telephone Exchange exists. In only emergencies along the trek path wireless facility with nearest Department of Forest staff may be available.

Table 1: Some Major Problem Are

Sr. No.	Types	Impact
1.	Ecology Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spread of dominating species Polygene polystachyum. ▪ Growth of other dominating plant species like, impatiens sulcata, other weeds etc. ▪ Risk of reduction in flora and medicinal plant.
2.	Development Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No proper trek trail after 5 km. ▪ No smaller trails to flowering patches & elevated rock points and no reach the same visitor trample the vegetation. ▪ No safety railing where path trek is very steep. ▪ No rain shelters-cum-rest-sheds.
3.	Tourists Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plucking of flowers ▪ Littering Waste ▪ Dirtying the temporary urinal toilets with human excreta ▪ Damaging whatever waste bins are currently provided

Suggestions

Tourism in the Valley of Flower National Park and Chamoli District has a long tradition. But the dawn of modern tourism,

induced by the extension of modern transportation deep into the region, has serious consequences for the local economy, ecology and society. For sustainable and tourism development

the following suggestions are given:

- A seasonal dispersal and regional diffusion of the trekkers could help in taking pressure off the local ecosystem. This could be achieved by either regulating the number of tourists allowed in a certain area, or, by introducing a more dynamic pricing policy, creating incentives to visit less frequented areas or to visit outside of the peak season.
- Government should make huge investment to break the geographical isolation and remove communication-bottlenecks from Chamoli.
- Planned efforts are to be made by the Government to build up the required infrastructure of the District.
- Proper Tourism development policy is the need of the hour and for this Government should make a thorough survey in the District.
- The use of alternative energy sources such as micro-hydro can help in reducing the use of firewood by locals and tourists and, thereby, reducing the pressure on local forests.
- The management of the environment can involve an enormous amount of money. The revenue from user charges and mountaineering royalties should not only help the governments, but should be shared between the governments and the areas where this revenue is created
- Training programmes can help the local people to develop the skills needed to guide tourists. This, in turn, can give these people the confidence to get involved in the tourism business and start an own enterprise. Additionally, by setting a minimum skill level for porters through training, the service to the tourists is improved and a higher income can be expected.
- The creation of community-based, participation-oriented tourism management committees allows locals to participate in the decision-making process and influence the decisions that have a direct effect on their lives. At the same time, participation increases the support and cooperation of the locals for protection projects. Additionally, the amount of knowledge that the locals have of their environment and the ways to save it should not be underestimated.

Recommendations

However, though the process of economic liberalization could not create any impact on the economy of Chamoli, yet it has widened the scope of the development of tourism industry in Uttarakhand. Chamoli has the potential to emerge as a strategic base for foreign and domestic investors for the reasons- it is argued that the foreign as well as the domestic investors would be encouraged to set up their export-oriented industries in Chamoli to enjoy the vast potential of contiguous markets of ASEAN countries namely Myanmar, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, etc. which are regarded as the fastest growing regions, to utilize its rich and abundant natural as well as human resources. Now it is expected that with the arrival of the region as well as domestic investors in Chamoli, there will be an influx of tourists into the region from various parts of our country as well as from abroad. Thus, it is expected that the influx of these tourists will directly give a big push to the growth and development of the tourists industry in the state. At present 5

million foreign tourists come to India annually and soon it is expected to increase a large percentage of these tourists can be attracted to Chamoli and Valley of Flower by restoring national and international confidence.

Conclusion

Thus, the development of tourism industry in this area largely depends upon the formulation of a proper tourism development policy and people's co-operation and consciousness. The High Powered Shukla Commission has recommended for establishing a North-East Tourist Development Corporation to develop tourism in the region. In 2013 one compressed machine was installed at Govindghat which greatly reduced the overall cost of re-cycling. With active participation of the locals it is much easier to manage the park now. They in turn get employment and are willing partners in protection of the park. Moreover, an honest and strong will of the government coupled with people's hearty co-operation will definitely boost up tourism industry in Chamoli in near future.

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