



MOUNTAIN TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY FROM UTTARAKHAND, INDIA

Gurpreet Singh¹ and Joystu Dutta²

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Agriculture, Shri Guru Granth Sahib, World University, Fatehgarhsahib, Punjab.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Sant Gahira Guru University, Sarguja, Ambikapur- Chhattisgarh, joystu.dutta@gmail.com

Tourism is one of the largest industries of Indian economy, though its impacts, either positive or negative on environmental resources cannot be undermined. Major positive impacts are related to employment, increase in social status, and improve in economic conditions and regional developments. On the other hand, negative impacts include pollution from point and non-point sources due to tourism influx, pressure on biodiversity and natural resources, exploitation of local communities due to increasing tourism inflow. India is one the important

destinations of the world due to its mega-biodiversity status, rich multi-cultural heritage and tourist hotspot. Uttarakhand popularly known as Dev-Bhoomi, bears a high tourism potential due to its exquisite natural beauty, pristine biodiversity and mosaics of cultural diversity. A study was undertaken in 'Dhanaulti' (a place for nature tourism) and 'Kunjapuri' (a place for pilgrimage tourism), keeping in mind to qualitatively analyze the vulnerability of local mountain communities to various facets of tourism development such as (adventure, pilgrimage and nature based tourism) in this region. We used questionnaires and Focused Group Discussions to collect perceptions regarding all possible impacts of tourism activities and the local community's expectations from this development. The study provided many useful insights into the various impacts of tourism in Uttarakhand. We found that with advent of

tourism, some opportunities of economic interests have surely been created but along with it an array of negative impacts have also emerged in recent times. Dramatic drift in perceptions were observed while comparing perceptions of community near adventure tourism site and that of near pilgrimage and nature tourism sites.

We found that with advent of tourism, some opportunities of economic interests have surely been created but along with it an array of negative impacts have also emerged in recent times

However the expectations of local community from these developmental initiatives were found to be more or less similar. Sustainable tourism is the need of the hour. We

recommend all stakeholders involved in tourism industry to convert the main soul from 'business-oriented' approach to 'environment-friendly approach' in coming times. This would facilitate us in developing a more people-centric and responsible tourism industry thus contributing in holistic development of the tourist destinations across India and the world.