

The Emergence of Sports Tourism in India (With special reference to Uttarakhand state)

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to study the emergence of sports tourism in India with special reference to Uttarakhand state. The study aims to find number of tourist arrival both domestic and foreigners in Uttarakhand state. The study also aims to access the different sports activity done in different regions of the state. The study comprises of secondary data obtained from annual reports, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. As sports tourism has emerged as a multi-dollar industry in recent years globally. The study concludes with that sports tourism industry is showing steady growth and it continues to grow in the years to come. As sports tourism in India completely refers the economic growth of the country through filled hotels and restaurants.

Keywords: Sports, Tourism, Economic, Development, Tourists.

INTRODUCTION:

Sports tourism means to travel for the sake of either viewing or participating in sports events staying a part from their usual environment. All over the world Sports tourism has emerged as a multi-dollar industry in recent years. Around 10 to 12 percent of growth is witnessed every year and is expected to grow further in coming years. The mega sport events such as Olympics, FIFA world cups, ICC cricket world cup are the major reasons for the sports emerging as the primary industry in the recreational sector. After the launch of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in 2008, the economic growth of Indian tourism industry has been reaching new heights. The increase in number of arrival of tourists among cricket fans to witness the match at a particular venue is the primary reason for this massive growth. The growing enthusiasm among the tourists either domestic or international to visit the destination with the main focus of attending a particular sports event is the major reason the economic growth and development.

The major efforts were taken to organize the global sports tourism industry in various regions of the country begins in the early 2000s. During 2011, India emerged as the primary hosting nation of world cup sports tourism which gained major momentum during that year. The cricketing fans from the entire world traveled India to see their favourite stars in action along with Indian fans for all the playing venues which bought a huge boost to sports tourism sector. Likewise, during 2015 World Cup which was held in Australia and New Zealand become the holiday spot for Indian fans as they visit there to witness the Indian team's action as well as toured famous holiday destinations across Australia and New Zealand.

Hockey, football, kabaddi and other sports has gained a lot of interest among the Indians. Like Indian Premier League in India other sporting federations have started organising their own professional leagues. The exciting young talents along with foreign legends including extensive media coverage have increased the popularity of sports among Indians. Due to this tourists want to visit the stadiums and cheer their team's which is an encouraging sign for the players. The increase in the audience at stadiums and the TRP ratings in television also allows the people, investors or sponsors to invest in such type of sports which also generating of revenue for the particular sport or event.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study about the sports tourism industry in India with special reference to Uttarakhand state.
- To find number of tourist arrival from domestic as well as foreign countries in India with special reference to Uttarakhand State.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chavan. Uday (2020), the researcher in his studies on "Benefits of Sports Tourism in Current Scenario", finds that sports have been increasingly opened up through commercial providers. Both the sectors either Sports or Tourism contributes a great deal to the economy worldwide and have become an essential element in the armoury of politicians, economists, and planners those are finding to regenerate local economies.

B.S. Bhasker (2016), the researcher here portrays that tourist is not only the economic activity for national development of the country, but also an important medium of learning change in culture among nations of the world. The medium of cultural changes also helps in establishing affinities among different countries in the world. The study states that in 1951, when UPSRTC was established Bharat Ratna awardee Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant demanded the aid of his company named KMOUL.

Mohite, S. B., & Bhosale (2017), the researcher in his studies portrays that sports and travel mixes with each other and create a new market and employment opportunities for new upcoming entrepreneurs. Sports Tourism can be a vital force for world peace and increasing understanding and interdependence. Throughout the world, sports tourism can contribute to the development of a new international economic order that will help to eliminate the widening economic gap between developed and developing sports tourism countries and insure the steady acceleration of economic and social development and progress in particular of the developing countries.

FEATURES OF SPORTS TOURISM IN UTTARAKHAND STATE

Uttarakhand was also known as 'Uttaranchal' is a state in the northern part of India. It is also called "Land of Gods" as it is found that it is surrounded by temples and pilgrimage

centres. The state is well known for its natural greenery beauty and pious beauty of the white snow covered Himalayas. There are thirteen districts in Uttarakhand which are grouped into two divisions namely, Garhwal and Kumaon. The Garhwal division consist of Dehradun, Haridwar, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Pauri Garhwal, and Rudraprayag, whereas, Kumaon division comprises of Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital, Pithoragarh and Udham Singh Nagar.

Sports tourism is an industry which is developing at a steady pace and it also promotes the cultural regional heritage of the country and works as a source of increasing and generating revenue for the economic development of the nation. Uttarakhand is well known as paradise for sporting and adventure not only in India as well as around the globe. The varieties of sports such as mountaineering, skiing, trekking, paragliding, rafting, bungee jumping and many others were the main attraction of tourists.

Table 1: Showing adventure sports activities in Uttarakhand regions

Sports in Uttarakhand	Regions	Tourist arrival in the months
Trekking	Valley of Flowers Trek, Kedartal Trek, Har Ki Dun Trek, Benog Tibba Trek, Bali Pass, Dayara Bugyal Trek	October-April and July-September
Paragliding	Mukteshwar, Nainital, Pithoragarh, Ranikhet	Throughout the Year
Skiing	Auli	January-February
White water Rafting	Rishikesh	October-April
Camping	Rishikesh, Kanatal, Dhanaulti, Chopta, Deoria Tal, Jim Corbett, Pangot, Mukteshwar	Throughout the year except for monsoons
Elephant Safari	Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park	December - February
Bungee Jumping	Rishikesh	March-April
Zip-Line	Rishikesh, Mussoorie, Nainital	Throughout the year
Canoeing and Kayaking	Rishikesh	March-April
Cable Car Ride	Auli, Nainital, Mussoorie and Haridwar	Round the year

Source: Compiled by researcher from various websites of Uttarakhand tourism.

Table 1 depicts the varieties of sports found in Uttarakhand state with places and number of tourist arrival in which seasons. The table shows that Sports like Trekking is found in regions like Valley of Flowers Trek, Kedartal Trek, Har Ki Dun Trek, Benog Tibba Trek, Bali Pass, Dayara Bugyal Trek which is most attracted to tourists in the month of October to April and July to September, paragliding is famous in hilly regions throughout the year in places like Mukteshwar, Nainital, Pithoragarh and Ranikhet, White water rafting is mostly done in Rishikesh in the months from October to April.

For the promotion of adventure/sports tourism in Uttarakhand the government has appointed adventure sports officers in every district to give a boost to adventure sports. These sports officers were engaged in training the local people or tourists in trekking, skiing, rafting, mountaineering, and other sports. The sports officers also train local villagers who plays vital role at the time of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and many other natural calamities.

Table 2: Showing total number of tourist arrival in Uttarakhand from both domestic and foreign since 2010-11 to 2020-21

YEAR/ DESTINATION	RISHIKESH	MUSSOORIE	PITHORAGARH	HARIDWAR	CORBETT NATIONAL PARK
2010-11	1098712	1104796	101966	18866680	190248
2011-12	1186529	1120287	193732	13481372	136610
2012-13	809738	1205291	195697	15258750	212881
2013-14	374409	1075975	153689	12786261	176802
2014-15	332988	1396702	180287	15477542	252385
2015-16	437756	2769272	191005	19350640	199848
2016-17	592227	2795124	171851	20508097	186719
2017-18	678041	2795973	243688	21009098	254498
2018-19	662118	2872025	154385	21577583	261280
2019-20	863886	3023839	209651	21770232	283281
2020-21	171718	1016337	46332	4021831	168078

Graph 1: Showing trends in total number of tourist arrival both domestic and foreign in Uttarakhand

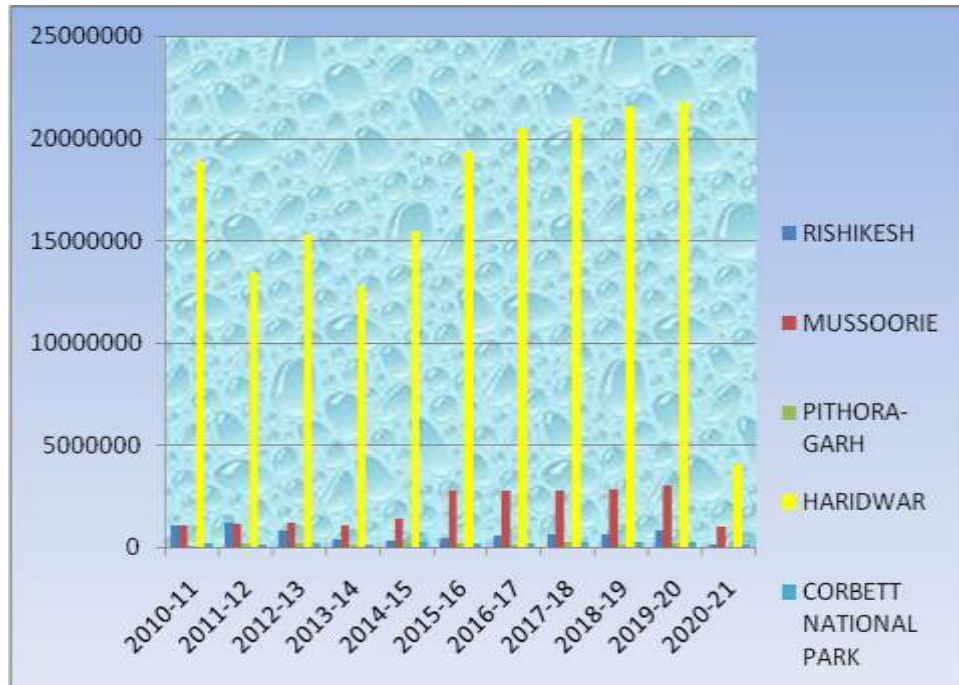


Table 2 and Graph 1 depict the trend in total number of tourist arrival that is both domestic and foreign in regions of Uttarakhand. From Graph 1 it is witnessed that Haridwar is found to be the most visited place in Uttarakhand. As per annual reports published by Uttarakhand tourism it is found that in 2010-11 the number of tourist arrival in Haridwar accounts to 18886680 which further increased to 20508097 in 2016-17. In 2020-21 decrease in trend is found due to Covid-19 pandemic. The number of tourist accounts to 4021831 which shows a negative growth towards economic development. Uttarakhand finds to be one of the fastest growing tourist places all throughout the year.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF SPORTS TOURISM IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

- Capacity building in sports tourism is a niche activity involving a major extent of technical proficiency and knowledge as compared to the other aspects like culture, religion, business, recreation or leisure.
- Since the protection of the tourist is a vital aspect in India, it is crucial that the tour operators and the ground handlers possess the necessary skills and abilities to carry out sports and travel in a safe manner.
- With the formulation of training institutes by the government of India, are intent upon very few sporting activities, such as, rock climbing and mountaineering, the infrastructure needs to be broadened to cater to the requirement of human resources

within the industry.

- Sports tourism, by its very nature, for the economic development of the nation demands travelling to remote and interior regions. There is need to initiate rapid air connectivity options, especially in the north and north-east India mountainous regions.
- Ensuring safety and protection is important as well as challenging in sports tourism. The use of satellite phones and GPS are regarded as the only means of communication on a timely basis in many regions, as per the conditions of the government.
- The sports plus travel in the present existence, experiences multiple taxes in the form of entertainment tax, service tax and forest department taxes. Such taxes lead to discouraging the growth of the industry in high potential areas of India.
- Use of natural resources on large scale also encourages depletion of resources which includes land, water and air. There more focus is required for planting trees, preventing deforestation for keeping the environment neat and clean.
- As compare with leisure activities sports tourism is found to be more costly in basic formats.
- It is essential to generate employment opportunities for the well qualified and experienced individuals.

CONCLUSION

Summing up after assessing lots of research work done by various academicians and researchers it is found that sports culture in India is improving day by day and it reflects in the sports tourism industry. Sports tourism will also open a new way for the new entrepreneurs to start the business in this sector and grow as much as they can. As young athletes will be benefitted more. The sector is beneficial for the improvement of social and economic growth of Indians athletes in the future. Not only entertainment /adventures and recreational industries can also be benefitted through sports tourism in India.

Sports tourism gives an opportunity for India to host many international sporting events like Common wealth games, Asian games, and to extend the Olympic Games in the coming modern world. It also provides an opportunity for many foreigners those who visit India to learn about India's rich culture and glory. It also brings a positive impact on our country in the world which impulse the corporate companies to invest more in this new sector. So there will be a much more chances of creating employment opportunities for Indian youths.

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