

Chapter 3


Assessment of Factors Responsible for Promoting Religious Tourism in the Himalayan Region: Special Reference to Dev Bhoomi, Uttarakhand

Dillip Kumar Kumar Das

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6032-9348>

University of Burdwan, India

Susanta Ranjan Chaini

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8509-5306>

SOA University, India

ABSTRACT

Religious tourism activities are now the emerging trends in the Himalayan region along with adventure tourism. The Himalayan region is the abode of many Goddesses. Factors responsible towards exploiting and promoting religious tourism in Himalayan region have been carefully analyzed with reference to Dev Bhoomi, Uttarakhand, but many issues still need more attention. This research chapter uses surveying of 150 stakeholders in relation towards assessment of factors responsible towards development of religious tourism in Himalayan region with special reference to Uttarakhand. Research results are analyzed on the basis of six factors influencing the growth and development of religious tourism in Himalayan region: transportation, accommodation, safety and security, environment, economy, and attitude of the local people. The result analysis depicts factors responsible for promoting religious tourism in Uttarakhand as only quite average. This chapter has proposed some important solutions towards promoting religious tourism in the Himalayan region with special reference to Uttarakhand.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-0823-3.ch003

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is one of the most prominent sectors in the state of Uttarakhand providing huge economic benefits including better employment opportunity, improving the standard of living and better infrastructure development. Religious tourism is one the oldest type of tourism that prevails in Himalayan region. Dev Bhoomi, Uttarakhand in the Himalayas is very much popular in the world for religious tourism. Uttarakhand is situated in the low Himalayan Mountain range. Uttarakhand state borders Tibet (China) in the North, Nepal in the East, Himachal Pradesh in the North West and West and Uttar Pradesh in the South. Uttarakhand is one of the fastest developing states of India. Religious tourists visit shrines, attends religious fairs and festivals and attends various rituals which is a very common practice among all. Religious tourism provides employment opportunities and also livelihood to several local people. In today's arena travel business is contributing generously to a country's GDP particularly for developing countries like India. Religious tourism destinations operate as a dynamic complex system along with independent element and many factors that are responsible for promotion and development of tourism particularly in Uttarakhand. Religious tourism is considered as powerful tool for socio-economic development. Uttarakhand is very much popular and famous for Char-Dham Yatra among religious tourists. Badrinath, Yamunatri, Kedarnath and Gangotri are major four pilgrimage sites of Uttarakhand which are most sought-after destinations among religious tourists. Badrinath is the abode of Lord Vishnu and is one of the best destinations not only among religious tourists but also among all the tourists. Kedarnath is the abode of Lord Shiva and is one of the twelve Jyotirlinga and only one in Uttarakhand. Yamunatri is the place from where sacred river Yamuna originates. Gangotri is the origin point from where the sacred river Ganga flows. Every religious tourist visit Uttarakhand never misses the Char Dham Yatra. To encourage, attract and promote more religious tourism in the state, Government of Uttarakhand has taken several important steps in terms of financial assistance or aid and subsidies. The state is having a strong infrastructure network which is helping to attract more and more religious tourists. It has been observed that more religious tourists are visiting Uttarakhand comparable to any other form of tourism like eco-tourism, agri-tourism and adventure tourism. The state of Uttarakhand is having extensive road and rail network along with two airports to support various kinds of tourism in the state. Foreign direct investment (FDI) to the state of Uttarakhand is steadily increasing from year to year. Mainly the common Annul Yatra time generally starts from the month of April and completes in the month of October when a large number of religious tourists visit the state of Uttarakhand. Especially during winter season, major tourists visit the Garhwal Himalaya for river-rafting, trekking and mountaineering. This is the main reason of blooming of hotels, eateries, Dhabas and way side amenity centers along the highways. It has been found out that there are ample services delivery centres, located within 280 km between Rishikesh and Badrinath. Religious tourism manifests ownership or belongingness and also generates employment as well as income and the same goes well with the local people of the Garhwal Himalaya.

Religious tourism has multiple impacts on local economy as it increases employment opportunities and living standard of the people and thus, there is an increase in the national income (Sati & Kumar 2004). Tourism is a major source of income in the Uttarakhand region as it earns between 15 - 20 per cent of its revenue from taxes and levies imposed on pilgrims each year. Presently in India, tourism industry is the second-largest source of foreign currency behind the gem and jewelry sector. It has been observed that the villages that are located on the major routes to the high shrine pilgrimage centers are now fully dependent on the income from the religious tourists.

8 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/assessment-of-factors-responsible-for-promoting-religious-tourism-in-the-himalayan-region/343130

Related Content

Convergence of Energy Efficiency in OECD Countries: Consideration of Sharp and Smooth Breaks

Muhammed Sehid Gorusand Erdal Tanas Karagol (2023). *Perspectives on Ecological Degradation and Technological Progress* (pp. 15-41).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/convergence-of-energy-efficiency-in-oecd-countries/327101

Re-Defining Tree Worship as Artistic Becoming for Environmental Education

Shruti Jain (2024). *Fostering an Ecological Shift Through Effective Environmental Education* (pp. 65-79).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/re-defining-tree-worship-as-artistic-becoming-for-environmental-education/349088

Evaluating the Environmental and Health Impacts of 6G Deployment in India: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Digital Infrastructure

Vishal Jain, Archan Mitraand Sanchita Paul (2025). *6G Impacts on Natural Habitats and Human Life* (pp. 227-254).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluating-the-environmental-and-health-impacts-of-6g-deployment-in-india/378231

Enhancing Ecological Awareness as Distance Awareness

Rico Sneller (2024). *Fostering an Ecological Shift Through Effective Environmental Education* (pp. 23-36).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/enhancing-ecological-awareness-as-distance-awareness/349084

Expanding Environmental Education in Honduras: A Holistic Approach for Sustainable Development

Anny Gabriela Molina Ochoa, Pranjal Khareand Sunidhi Setia (2024). *Fostering an Ecological Shift Through Effective Environmental Education* (pp. 153-170).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/expanding-environmental-education-in-honduras/349094