

# Chapter 8

## A Policy–Centric Analysis of Strategic Framework for Waste Management in Uttarakhand's Rural Tourist Areas

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Uttarakhand state in the IHR has diverse geographical settings and natural attractions. The tourism-driven state faces significant waste management challenges amplified by the steady increase of tourist activities. This study investigates the varied waste management approaches in Uttarakhand's tourist locales, highlighting distinct operational challenges and infrastructural capacities. This paper categorizes these areas based on their specific waste management responses, aiming to*

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*tailor these classifications to government policies to optimize waste management efficiency. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative stakeholder interviews with quantitative waste management data, the research provides an in-depth evaluation of existing disposal systems and their policy alignment. The results underscore urgent need for policy adaptations that cater to the distinct needs, advocating for community-focused initiatives. This study contributes to the discourse on sustainable tourism by offering insights that can guide similar regions in optimizing waste management practice.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: OVERVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT IN UTTARAKHAND'S TOURIST CITIES AND RURAL TOURISTIC AREAS**

Uttarakhand, a state in the Indian Himalayan Region, attracts millions of tourists annually due to presence of Hindu Pilgrimages Sites of importance and sites of natural-cultural significance. This influx, while economically beneficial, poses substantial challenges in waste management across its diverse tourist cities and rural touristic areas. The region's comprehensive waste management issue is exacerbated by its topographical complexities and seasonal tourist peaks. The state is divided across 13 sub-areas called districts. These districts traverse across the terai (lower Himalayas), middle and higher Himalayas. Specific highland district areas lack adequate infrastructure to handle the surge in waste, leading to environmental degradation through many processes, which contradicts the state's ecotourism ethos (Shyamal et al., 2023). Research shows that tourist cities and rural touristic areas such as Rishikesh, Haridwar, Nainital etc differ significantly in their urban and rural characteristics and consequent waste generation patterns (Rajpal, Kazmi and Tyagi, 2020). Rishikesh, a terai hotspot for spiritual and adventure tourism, faces challenges related to high footfall and resultant waste peaks during specific festivals and holiday seasons. In contrast, rural highland regions like Chopta, which are focused on ecotourism, generate less waste but require meticulous handling to preserve their pristine nature. These differences, when categorized adequately under waste management and planning norms, can become beacons of planning related insights for city and village waste disposal management (Taghipour et al., 2016; Sati, 2013)

Studying rural waste management is crucial due to the unique challenges these areas face, including limited access to infrastructure, fewer resources, and less regulatory oversight compared to urban settings (Wang et al., 2018). Rural areas often lack the sophisticated waste management systems that urban areas might have, leading to practices that can significantly impact both the environment and public health (Mihai et al., 2021; Mihai and Taherzadeh, 2017). When tourism is added

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