Tourism And Tourist Influx Evaluation In Rishikesh Town Of Uttarakhand

Abstract:

Tourism is a major engine of economic growth and an important source of employment and foreign exchange in many countries including India. It has great capacity to create large-scale employment of diverse kind– from the most specialized to the unskilled and hence can play a major role in creation of additional employment opportunities. It can also play an important role in achieving growth with equity and sustainability. (MoT Report 2017) Today, Tourism has taken a shape of an industry which is growing and expanding at a very rapid rate all over the world. Several nations, particularly developing nations are having the biggest piece of the profits from this industrial growth. Tourism is one of the most progressive industries in India. Apart from the visitor economy, tourism is also a source of business and its impacts can be seen on almost every other industries. Today tourism is the most vibrant tertiary activity and a multi-billion industry in India.

Keywords: Tourism, economic growth, employment, tourist influx

Introduction:

Uttarakhand is known as ‘Dev Bhoomi’ or the ‘Land of the Gods’. It covers about 53,483sq.km of total area, out of which 86% is occupied by mountains and 70% by forests. It is enriched with natural resources like water and forests. Because of the presence of glaciers, forests and rivers it is now considered as a perfect destination for adventure, leisure and ecotourism. It is endowed with topographic diversity, intact natural beauty and religious shrines. Apart from the natural beauty of Uttarakhand, tourists can also have fun of trekking, skiing, paragliding, camping, angling, mountaineering and rock climbing in the form of adventure tourism. This state attracts a huge amount of tourist every year from India and all over the world and tourism is base of the economy of Uttarakhand.

Study Area:

Rishikesh is a small town, situated in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand in the foothills of Himalayan region. The geographical extent of this town is 29º58'N to 30º19'N latitude and from 78º3'E to 78º18'E longitude. The total area of this town is 11.5 Km².Pauri Garhwal is situated in south east, Haridwar is southwest, Dehradun city is in North West and Tehri Garhwal is in north east direction from Rishikesh. Average density of this town is 372 per km². There are 87 villages in this town. Rishikesh, situated on the right bank of the Ganga and surrounded on three sides by Himalayan ranges, known from medieval time as celestial abode, is a great pilgrimage center of India, attracting a large number of pilgrims. It has since been the abode of saints and sages from where they sojourn before undertaking the arduous pilgrimage that lay ahead on the distant Himalayan peaks.

Rishikesh is unique city in terms of variety of things which it can offer to tourist. Rishikesh is full

of tourist every time. There are also big ashrams; centers for Yoga, Meditation, Ayurvedic Massage and astrology are here. People from the United States, Europe, China and Australia congregate in Rishikesh to enlighten themselves with lessons on yoga in ‘asanas’ and ‘kriyas’ and meditation, to lead a healthy life. Rishikesh is also known as the white water rafting capital of India. Since times immemorial, the state of Uttarakhand has been referred to as 'The Abode of Gods and Goddesses'. Placed near the Himalayas, Rishikesh has been measured as one of the major blessed pilgrimage destinations since very old times. It is a place that is just beyond superiority. The holy destination offers demanding adventurous opportunities, particularly the river rafting. Rishikesh is one of the most significant pilgrimage centers and adventure destinations of India, It is a gateway to the Char Dham - Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri. The place is scenically located with the holy Ganga River flowing down from the Himalayas through it. It is also known as the 'Gateway to the Garhwal Himalayas', being situated in the foothills of the Garhwal Range of Himalaya Mountains and 'Yoga Capital of the World', having a plethora of ashrams and centers of yoga and meditation.

- Yoga and Meditation in Rishikesh: Rishikesh is world famous for yoga. You can experience yoga is small sessions or you can stay here and spend a week or month to learn yoga. So many yoga experts are here who can teach you yoga in unique way which you can’t learn anywhere. Rishikesh is also one of the best places in whole world for meditation. Natural atmosphere, auspicious surroundings, river and mountains what else one can expect to make a strong bond with nature and himself/herself. That’s reason that thousands of famous spiritual personalities selected this place for their meditation.

Table. 2.4 Tourist Attraction in and around Rishikesh

Spiritual Attraction

Health & wellness Tourism

Adventure Tourism

Wildlife Tourism

Natural Tourism

Lakshman Jhula& Ram Jhula

Ayurveda

River Rafting

Raja Ji national park

Neer waterfall

Bharat Mandir & Neelkanth Mandir Trayambakeshw-ar Temple

Yoga

Bunjee jumping & swing

Chilla national park

Patna Waterfall

Parmarth Niketan & Swargashram

Spa & Steam

therapies

Air safari & zip lining

Triveni Ghat& Ganga Aarti

Meditation

flying fox & waterfall rappelling

- Adventures in Rishikesh: Rishikesh becomes an adventure hub since last 10 years. Adventure means challenge for your stamina and strength. Rishikesh has many activities for amazing. Fun that you will remember it for lifetime. Challenging rapids, Mountain sand dense forest is here to test your skills physical and mental strength. Rishikesh has Rafting, camping, trekking, Rock climbing, Rappelling and bungee jumping are famous adventure activities which you can enjoy here. Weekend Adventure tour in Rishikesh can refresh your mind from day to day life.
- Ashram life in Rishikesh: Rishikesh is best option if you want to experience the ashram life. Stay in ashram, eat satwik (organic) food, take part in ashram activities, listen the lecture on Hinduism and how to live peaceful life, help the needful, help in ashram work and spend time with children and locals these are the key activities you can do at the ashram.
- Ayurveda in Rishikesh: Ayurveda is a traditional way or system of medicines native to Indian subcontinent. Ayurveda is type of alternate medicine. Ayurveda is widely used in Rishikesh. Some ashrams and centers provide facilities of Ayurvedic treatment. Panchkarma is very popular therapy. Panchkarma is used to get rid of toxic materials from our body. Ayurveda uses generally plant-based medicines which found in Indian subcontinent.

Best time to visit Rishikesh:

Rishikesh has continental type of climate. The weather is quite pleasing all through to be visited any time of the year. But the best season to visit is from mid-September to May. Winters (October to February) are pleasant with a temperature range of 19°C to 27°C for enjoying sightseeing and rafting. Summers (March to June) have an average temperature of 35°C and the weather is comfortable. Months like May and June are the hottest and are best avoided. Monsoons offer average rainfalls during July to September. Rishikesh is a beautiful city summers and cold winters. Rafting season is from mid-September to April.

Methodology:

The present study has been done based on secondary data. The major sources of information were the various journals, newspaper reports, research articles, market research agencies. Wide range of data was collected through secondary sources mainly from Directorate of Tourism, Dehradun. Similarly, data were also collected from the two regional offices of tourism, Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN), Dehradun, Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB). References from research papers, books, articles and newspapers were taken appropriately for interpretation of data.

Table no. 1 Tourist coming arrival in Rishikesh from 2000 to 2018

Years

Indian tourist

Foreign tourist

Total tourist

% Growth of total tourist

2000

230857

6414

237271

-

2001

224792

6536

231328

-3

2002

268882

4573

273455

15

2003

220097

6047

226144

-21

2004

323734

5918

329652

31

2005

369573

5538

375111

12

2006

329392

5912

335304

-12

2007

558062

5109

563171

40

2008

551495

5052

556547

-1

2009

581869

4550

586419

5

2010

1093164

5548

1098712

47

2011

1181535

4994

1186529

7.4

2012

804578

5160

809738

-46.5

2013

370216

4193

374409

-116.2

2014

328936

4052

332988

-12.4

2015

434033

3723

437756

23.9

2016

589653

2574

592227

26.08

2017

673226

4815

678041

12.65

2018

656074

6044

662118

2.40

Source: UTDB Report 2019

Figure no. 1. Indian and Foreign tourist coming arrival in Rishikesh

Here it is clear from table no.1 in the study region, domestic tourists increased from 2000 to 2018. But fluctuation has been seen in foreign tourist arrival, in starting because of cultural and spiritual attraction but the growth trend is not continuous and the total tourist growth is uncertain. In a particular year it increased while in the very next year it decreased dramatically. Table.3 depicts that the year 2001, 03, 06 and 2008 show a decreased growth pattern while year 2004, 05, 07, 09, and 2010 are showing increasing trends of tourists. The reasons behind these uncertain trends of tourism in Rishikesh are lack of advertisements, unawareness about potentials of tourism of Rishikesh among masses, varied purposes and nature of tourism, etc. other causes may be poor connectivity, underdeveloped infrastructural facilities and poor governmental support. The reason behind the tourist inflow increasing in 2010 was the Kumbh fair in Haridwar. So tourists majority is also seen in Rishikesh and on the other hand it was decreased dramatically in 2013 by -116% because of cloud burst disaster in Kedarnath, due to which heavy flood occurred in Rishikesh. And tourist arrival has decreased till 2014 and from 2015 it is increasing gradually because of some governmental effort to promote tourism in this town and celebration of international yoga festival in 2019 in Rishikesh, renowned with so many ashrams and meditation centers for sages and foreigner devotees. Adventures activities also attracts tourists from Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi and also from abroad. Except for being a major hub for adventure sports and spirituality, the quality that makes Rishikesh one of its kind is the scenic beauty and thick vegetation, adding a feeling or refreshment to this air.

Conclusion and Suggestion:

The above-stated results and discussions evidently depicts that tourism influx is very irregular in the study region. In one year, a very huge tourist influx has shown and in very next year number of tourists decreased suddenly due to prediction of heavy rainfall and natural hazards. The town attracts tourists for pilgrimages, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, and leisure tourism. It is crucial to identify the seasonality of different kinds of tourism. Tourists should be attracted taking this into account so as to create round-the-year tourism-based employability. Uncontrolled and unplanned tourism is not healthy. Thus tourist zones have to be connected by formal and informal links in the form of roads, trails and tracks and

thematic circuits. Implementation of rules and security should be given utmost priority. Facilities on the various trek routes should be improved i.e. for camping, provision for safe drinking water and hygienic food. Create new planned tourist destinations spots from the unexplored regions which must be opened up at least in the peak months. Thus Government should promote domestic tourism through schemes, planning's etc., so that tourism not only may create jobs, reduce poverty, and foster human development and environmental sustainability, but also benefit the town in more number of ways and may bring immense opportunities for all-inclusive growth.

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Tourist influx in Rishikesh

Years 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 0 230857 224792 268882 220097 323734 369573 329392 558062 551495 581869 1093164 1181535 804578 370216 328936 434033 589653 673226 656074 #REF! Years 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 0 6414 6536 4573 6047 5918 5538 5912 5109 5052 4550 5548 4994 5160 4193 4052 3723 2574 4815 6044 #REF! Years 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 0 237271 231328 273455 226144 329652 375111 335304 563171 556547 586419 1098712 1186529 809738 374409 332988 437756 592227 678041 662118 #REF!