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(Saurabh Gupta)
PREFACE

Tourism sector of the Uttarakhand economy should be developed vigorously during the Eleventh Plan period. Tourism is the third largest economic activity in the world, surpassed only by oil and motor vehicles, and forms the largest activity in the services sector. While more than two-thirds of the global tourists arrivals and receipts are accounted for by developed countries, the contribution of tourism to third world economies is by no means insignificant. It is also one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. Moreover, domestic tourism is also on the rise in India. The high growth rate of the Indian economy in the last few years and the accelerating income of the middle class have given a considerable boost to this sector. As a result, the demand for this sector is at an all-time high. The Uttarakhand economy is ideally situated to take advantage of this situation and scale up its tourism sector. The two inputs that are necessary for the development of this sector, i.e., natural and human capital, are abundantly available in the state. Thus, it has the potential to match the rise in tourism demand with an increase in supply of tourism services.

While industrial and most services-related naturally flourish in areas that are already developed in terms of infrastructure, urbanization, etc., tourism can be developed in relatively underdeveloped areas, provided they have something of interest to the tourist. Thus, in comparison to industry and these
other services sectors, the tourism sector is especially suitable for promoting inclusive growth. Uttarakhand is particularly well endowed in this respect and can develop various kinds of tourism activities.

Development of the tourism sector can help the local economy in a number of ways. The most important impact is the creation of employment for the local people. Employment will be created in the hotels, restaurants and other kinds of lodging as well as in the tour operating sectors. More importantly, employment will also be created through indirect channel in a variety of sectors including local handicrafts, etc. Apart from employment creation, the sector can also increase the demand for fruits, vegetables and milk, etc. produced in the villages around tourists spots, for the consumption of the tourists. The development of this sector also provides tax revenues to the government in terms of user charges, etc., and this can be used for the development of the area. More importantly, a thriving tourism industry links up the hill areas with the rest of the country and brings down the social and economic isolation of the people.

There are, of course, some potentially negative effects of tourism as well. The biggest problem with unregulated and unplanned growth in tourism is the environmental degradation that it can cause by the overuse of the natural capital. This will not only have an adverse impact on other productive activities in the mountains, but can destroy the future prospects of the tourism sector as
well. Further, unregulated tourism puts as heavy burden on the urban infrastructure of tourism destinations, choking up roads, civic amenities, etc. This can cause the tourists and the local population severe hardships in the peak tourists season.

It is clear that the tourism sector has to be developed extensively as a part of any policy programme for inclusive growth in Uttarakhand. However, the adverse impact of unregulated growth in this sector, particularly in terms of environmental degradation, cannot be ignored. An optimal tourism policy will have to assess the volume and quality of tourism that will not cause destinations, and hence will be sustainable in the long run. Once this is determined, the development of tourism should be on the basis of a planned approach that maintains this volume and quality of tourism, while trying to maximize the returns to the local economy – in terms of income and employment to the local people. In order to do this, the focus will have to be on high-value tourism, i.e., encouragement to those tourists who are capable of spending substantial amounts of money during their stay in these areas. These would obviously have to include the well-to-do tourists in the domestic sector and foreign tourists.

The main purpose of the proposed study is to analyse the tourism marketing with the help of SWOT analysis in Uttarakhand.