IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND DESTINATION ON SPIRITIUAL TOURISM

Infrastructure has been globally recognized as an important factor in shaping the economy of a country. Infrastructure influences the industrial growth of a country to a great extent. The perceived importance of a spiritual destination attracts the potential tourists to the place. However, the actual decision of the tourist, in turn, is influenced by the infrastructural supports he would be getting during the course of his visit. Spiritual tourism, as one of the major service sector industries in the state of Uttarakhand, contributes significantly to the state's economy. Thus, it is apt to analyse the impact of these linked factors on spiritual tourism of Uttarakhand; which is presented in the following sections of the current Chapter. Details of the economic analyses shall be presented in the Chapter 6.

5.1   INTRODUCTION: THE T–T–T MODEL

Tourism is not a basic need or commodity and is therefore highly driven by the discretion, tastes and attitudes of the tourist consumer. Tour planning of an informed tourist is primarily based on three key factors – Time, Taste and Technology (T–T–T). A schematic model depicting the relationship between them is presented in the Figure 5.1. A tourist would prefer to spend minimum time (T) on journey. Advance bookings for the proposed spiritual activity (ies), accommodation, and vehicle also usually figure in his list of preferences. Advance booking of food, though not yet a common practice for a tourist in India, a tourist is always concerned with the availability of food, preferably of his taste (T). Tourists in India, in general, do not book food in advance, while many carry it. It is so, not

because of lack of awareness or interest, rather, it is due to lack of infrastructure. Of late, people have started planning for their journey time food while travelling by air or by trains in the prime routes. A high end technology (T) enabled infrastructure can only make this possible. Collecting information regarding weather, road conditions etc. are considered to be the pre planning activities. Communication technologies including mobile phone and internet services are few technology based infrastructure every tourist considers essential, at least during the tour planning phase. Thus, the tourism marketing strategies and the tourism products should be designed in such a way that a potential tourist can gather maximum data beforehand.

Time   **T**aste
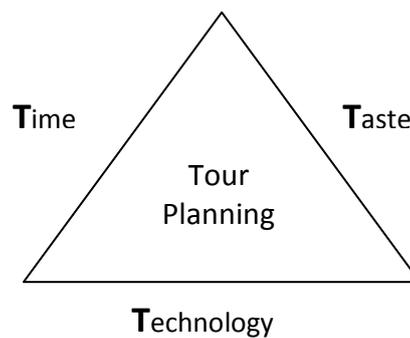
Tour
Planning

Technology

Figure 5.1 The T–T–T Model in tour planning.

Destination marketing has been one of the important thematic issues in the success of tourism industry. Many researchers have studied the importance of destination marketing in the context of tourism marketing. Influence of advertisements on both outbound and inbound tourists in choosing traveling destinations is being increasingly researched. Swain (2006) has investigated the efficacy of the 'Incredible India' campaign to attract tourists to India. Buhalis (2000) has provided a theoretical analysis involving different issues in formulating strategies for destination marketing. Synthesis of different marketing models and relationship between marketing and planning of destinations and their conflicting and symbiotic relationship was presented. Infrastructure, which provides

completeness to a destination, is thus becomes vital in formulating strategies regarding branding of a destination. These two important aspects – infrastructure and destination, in general, and in the context of Uttarakhand state have been discussed in the following sections.

5.2   IMPORTANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Growth of tourism in a geographic region is a synergistic result of a complex web of all the enhancements in many sectors. Many authors (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Crouch and Ritchie, 2000; Khadaroo and Seetanah, 2007; Wilde and Cox, 2008; Seetanah *et al.* 2011) have analysed the need for a holistic approach to infrastructure development and thereby add a brand value of the concerned destination. Seetanah *et al.* (2011) have schematically presented a tourist's expectations as shown in Figure 5.2 with respect to a destination and its associated infrastructure requirements based on the works of Crouch and Ritchie (2000) (Crouch and Ritchie, 2000; Seetanah *et al.* 2011). An important aspect of this summary is that the inclusion of the 'Service Infrastructure Layer' which has been on the rise in the recent years. The figure also depicts different attributes of both the interrelated requirements.

Technology influences tourism tremendously, for, infrastructure of a tourist destination is highly technology dependant. Technology based services like on-line booking facilities and virtual tourism experience forums helps to provide better tourism products and services to the potential tourists. Today, tourists are surrounded by the internet, mobile devices, travel agencies, tour operators, suppliers of transport, hoteliers, guides, local entrepreneurs offering activities, the locals, the things to do and see at the destination such as attractions, typical landmarks, museums, heritage sites, events, natural characteristics, governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as technology that

shape the conditions of their travel, etc. Binkhorst and Dekker (2009) have illustrated these factors in a complex network that ultimately represents the so called 'Tourism Experience Network' (Figure 5.3).
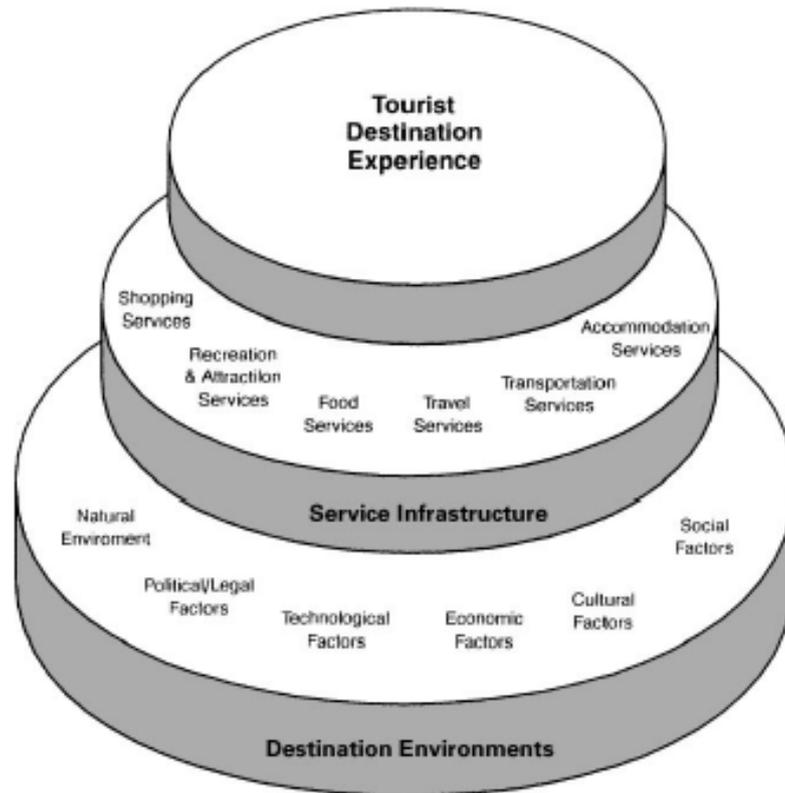

Figure 5.2   A tourists concern about destination and infrastructure (Seetanah *et al.*, 2011).

Khadaroo and Seetanah (2007) carried out an investigation on the significance of transport infrastructure as a factor in destination development, showing it to be part of the classical demand for international tourism functions. The authors have also established from their study that the infrastructure base of a country is a potential determinant of the attractiveness of a destination. In an online survey (Govers *et al.* 2007) has developed a neural network based approach for content analysis which was used to measure destination image phenomenographic post-positivist perspective.
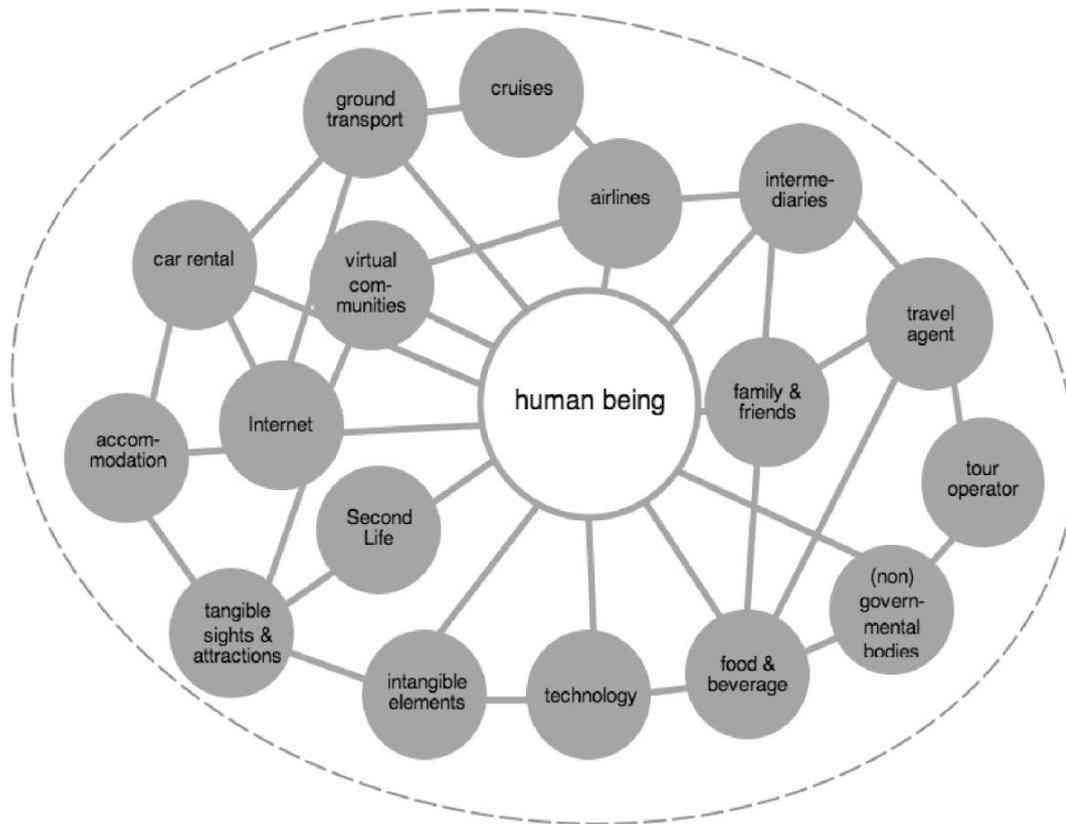
Figure 5.3   The 'Tourism Experience Network' model (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009).

5.3   IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE ON TOURISM

Tourism as an industry has been flourishing and growing since time immemorial, but it has been in the last few decades that specific attention has started to be given to this smokeless industry. Tourism has emerged as an important as well as organized industry which got its benefits scattered over large segments of the population (Husain, 2007). However, infrastructure of the destination and its approach influences the health of the industry.

5.3.1   Tourist-Infrastructure-Economy Model

A tourist needs infrastructure for his movement, so he needs it even during his planning phase as discussed in the section 5.1. The standard of living of people has been raised considerably throughout the world; consequently, they live in a comfortable way

that is affordable to them. Further, in the performance-oriented society, people now-a-days prefer more productive use of time. Moreover, people are exposed to the world owing to the internet revolution; hence enjoy the privilege to compare the things – products/services, hygiene etc. The consequences of these factors have been reflected in the tourism industry as well. The prospective tourists are aware of the facilities available for the kind of travel at the other part of the world. They are used to certain standard of living – that defines their expectations about mode of travel, kind of stay, kind of food etc. Further, they hate avoidable movements arising out of inadequate planning and hence wish to earn time, probably, at the expense of money. The kind of attitude as discussed has given rise to the necessity of better infrastructure at the tourist destinations and their approaches. The situation has put the authorities concerned under pressure to build their infrastructures. However, a positive aspect of this increasing demand for improved infrastructure is that better infrastructure attracts more tourists to the destinations resulting in a better economy. The situation can be modeled as the Tourist-Infrastructure-Economy model as presented in Figure 5.4. The simple model clearly explains that better infrastructures attract more tourists to a given destination, and in turn, they contribute to the exchequer in the form of their expenditures in the destination while consuming/enjoying the facilities. This improved economic condition can then be employed for further enhancement of the infrastructures, and the cycle continues.

An important component for destination tourism for any country is transport infrastructure which may be broadly viewed as the sum of road, seaport, and airport facilitation. This forms an integral part of the tourism package. The Government of Kerala State, Ministry of Tourism has developed a model of 6'S Framework for analysis of Tourism Development in Kerala. The framework is shown in Figure 5.5. The framework

identified 'Infrastructure' and 'Information' as two major planning initiatives for development of tourism in the state.
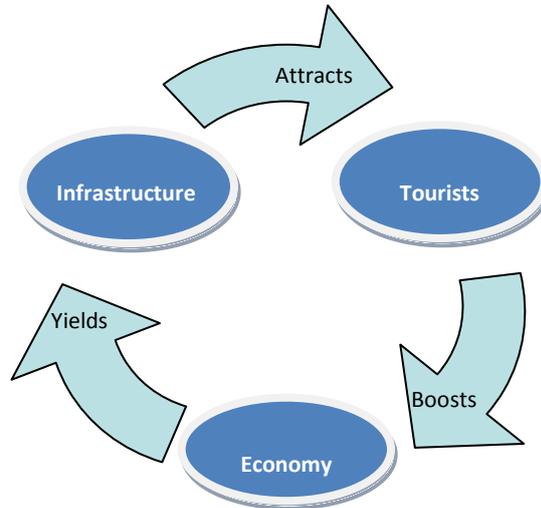

Figure 5.4   The Tourist-Infrastructure-Economy model.

5.3.2   IT Infrastructure

New opportunities came in the travel industry with the development of Information Technologies (ITs) and also with the emergence of the internet facilities. The ease of access, abundance of information, and low transaction costs of the web has motivated the tourism industry to provide online travel services. Tourism websites are becoming increasingly popular as travelers can browse these websites at the convenience of their workplace or homes, compare offerings from multiple websites with the click of a mouse button, and make reservations online for a variety of services such as transportation, lodging, meals, entrance fees to attractions, entertainment, and guide services (Lu *et al.*, 2007).
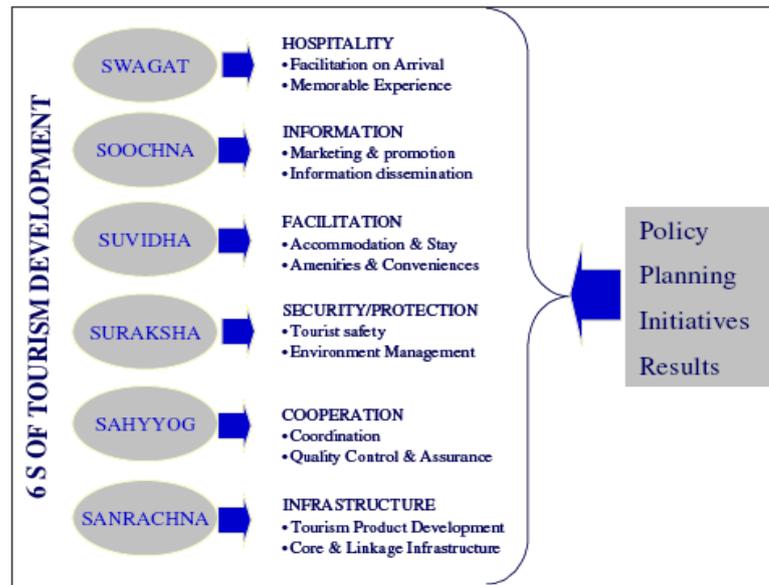
Figure 5.5   'Six S' Framework for analysis of Tourism Development in Kerala (Source: Kerala's Approach to Tourism Development: A Case Study, Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Government of India, 2003).

Tourism, as defined by WTO Business Council, is an unusual product, in that it exists only as information at the point of sale, and cannot be sampled before the purchase decision is made (Doolin *et al.*, 2002). The information-based nature of this product means that the internet, which offers global reach and multimedia capability, is an increasingly important means of promoting and distributing tourism services, the ease of use, interactivity and flexibility of Web-based interfaces suggests an allied and important role for World Wide Web technology in destination marketing, and indications are that tourism Websites are constantly being made more interactive (Doolin *et al.*, 2002).

Internet has become a platform for companies in the travel and tourism industry to bring their products and services to the customers around the world in a direct, efficient, and cost-minimising fashion (Lu *et al.*, 2007). The information-intensive nature of the tourism industry suggests an important role for the internet and Web technology in the promotion and marketing of destinations (Doolin *et al.*, 2002). The use of the internet

radically changes the communication process, from the traditional media of ''the language of tourism'' based on monologues and unilateral communication from Western senders (tour operators) to Western receivers (tourists), to the electronic ''Word-of-Mouth'' (Govers *et al.*, 2007).

5.3.3   Non-IT Infrastructure

Until recently, non-IT infrastructure elements like – Transport, Communication, Accommodation etc. were only considered as the major infrastructural requirements with reference to tourism industry globally. These infrastructural elements, mostly with reference to Uttarakhand state, can be categorized as shown in the Table 5.1. However, this list may not be exhaustive and may include few other elements specific to the geography and culture of the tourist destination. For example, tourism infrastructure in Kashmir, Srinagar in particular, never is complete without considering 'House boats'. Improvements in these elements are certainly conducive to attract tourists. The relative importance of these elements will, however, vary as per the geography, local traditions and cultures of the destination. For example, Rafting facilities are considered one of the most important infrastructures in Rishikesh while, 'Ropeways' to different shrines are very important elements in the tourism in Haridwar.

5.3.4   Strategies to Improve Infrastructure

It has been a global phenomenon and also showed that it is essential to improve infrastructure in order to attract more tourists to a destination (Figure 5.4). The relevant IT based and non-IT based infrastructures have also been identified (Table 5.1). However, adopting the appropriate means for improving the infrastructure is critical to yielding rapid and effective results. The effort of the state government in this aspect has not been satisfactory. According to the data collected during the survey in Haridwar and Rishikesh

(Question No. 15, Annexure 1), it was revealed that even the effort of the government in keeping the spiritual places cleaned was observed to be below average (Figure 5.6). The government, with all access to the financial and administrative resources, can certainly put in more planned effort.

Tourists' views regarding the responsibilities of providing information to the tourists were also collected during the survey through the Question No. 32 (Annexure-I). A substantial number of tourists, 42.5% and 37.1% of international and domestic tourists respectively, also expect the government to provide the information about the potential destinations (Table 5.2). However, a considerable 50% international tourist is also of the opinion that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can also take up the job. Domestic tourists are even not against the participation of private organizations as per the data presented in the Table 5.2. Thus, the involvement of the private players can also be explored in building the infrastructure. Public-private participation model has also several success stories as in case of construction of the giant Viswabharati stadium in Kolkata in the pre economic liberation era. Moreover, many corporate houses should be happy to participate in such activities as part of their Corporate-Social Responsibilities (CSR). Further, a nominal but certain contribution against the use of facilities can be charged even from the tourists for day-to-day maintenance of the infrastructural facilities.

In order to assess the infrastructure of the two prime tourist places considered in the study, few information about the hotels were also collected (Annexure-II). It was found that the hotel sector is mostly controlled by the private concern (54% of the collected data), while the Government and the society/trusts ownership is almost shared equally (22% and 24% respectively) as presented in Figure 5.7 based on the data acquired through Question No. 2 (Annexure-II).

Table 5.1   Typical non-IT infrastructure elements.

Infrastructure Type		Infrastructure Elements
Accommodation		▪ Hotels ▪ Motels ▪ Resorts ▪ Holiday homes ▪ Guest houses ▪ *Dharamsalas*
Communication		▪ Telephone (Mobile, Basic phones) ▪ Fax ▪ Post/Courier services ▪ Tourist Information Centers (TICs)
Transportation	Road	▪ Bus services (Coach services and Public services) ▪ Taxi services ▪ Vehicle rental service
	Railways	▪ Connectivity with other major cities ▪ High frequency connectivity with the nearby tourist destinations in the state
	Air	▪ International services ▪ Domestic services ▪ Helicopter services
Finance		▪ Bank ▪ ATMs ▪ Currency exchange facilities ▪ Money transfer facilities
Attractions and Events	Attractions	▪ National Parks ▪ Museums ▪ Galleries ▪ Zoos
	Sports	▪ Stadiums, sporting venues ▪ Rafting, Hiking facilities ▪ Recreation facilities
Others		▪ Restaurants and *Dhabas* ▪ Shopping facilities ▪ Cultural facilities ▪ Exhibition, entertainment and meeting space ▪ Visitor facilities (swimming pool, gymnasium hall) ▪ Health care facilities

This indicates that there are ample rooms to provide Government initiatives in building the infrastructure too. Further, most of these hotels are budget hotels to suite the requirement of the middle class tourists. This has been indicated clearly by the information presented in the inset of the Figure 5.7. While, the observed trend is according to the preferred business practices in India considering the economic background of the cross sections of the tourists, luxury hotels are definitely required so as to attract international tourists who prefer better hygiene and comfort. This aspect could well be addressed while formulating the marketing strategies. Further, food is another important aspect for the tourists. Food habits of different parts of India differs significantly, apart from the dishes preferred by the international tourists. The availability of continental foods and different Indian variety is also important. In the present study, although most of the tourists were found satisfied with the food in the two places as illustrated in Figure 5.8 (Question No. 26, Annexure-I); a significant international tourist had to manage it with difficulty. Thus, this aspect can be addressed while formulating marketing strategies for spiritual tourists.
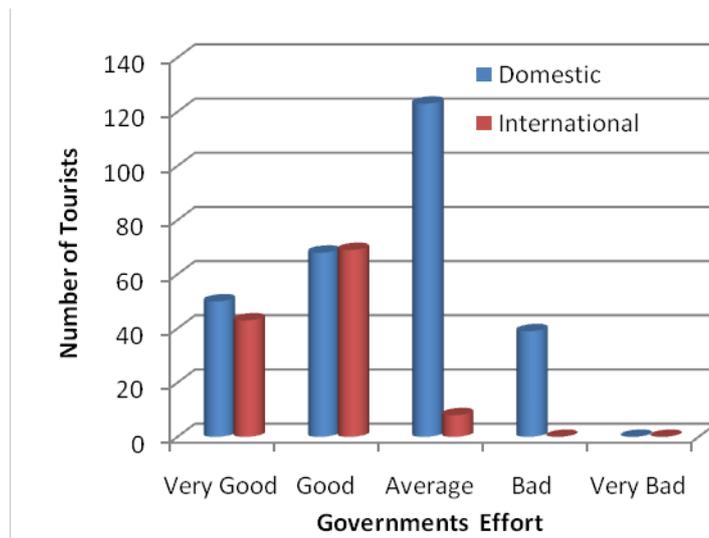
Figure 5.6   Opinion about the effort of the Government in destination cleaning.

Table 5.2 Tourists response on preferred information provider.

Tourists	Potential Information Provider (%)				
	Government	NGO	Local Committee	Private sponsor	Others
International	42.5	50.1	2.5	1.7	2.5
Domestic	37.1	16.8	18.9	11.1	16.1

Figure 5.7 Affiliation of hotels, Inset: classification of hotels interviewed.

Figure 5.8 Tourists' response about getting preferred food.

Communication is another vital infrastructure which directly affects the tourists. People wish to get in touch with various developments through their contacts. Many business activities and family activities keep moving even when people are on move. Therefore, they need to get connected with their normal activities. More importantly, tourists need to manage their travel related affairs through vari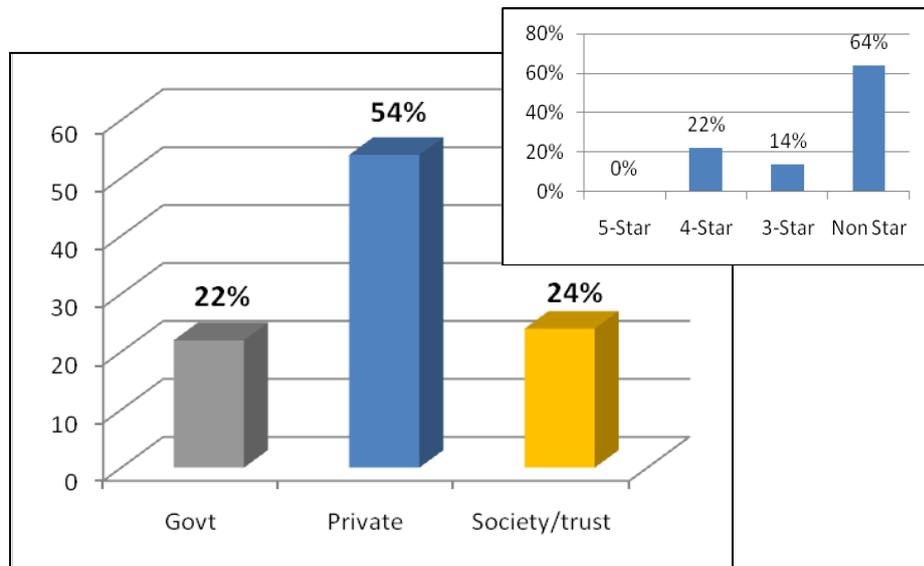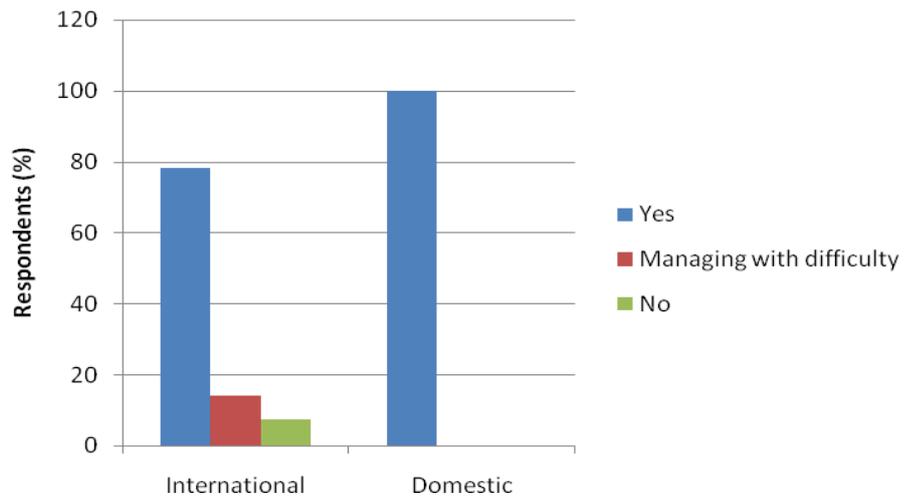ous modes of communication. The present study reveals that mobile phone is the dominating mode of communication followed by the internet as presented in Table 5.3 based on the data acquired through the Question No. 29 of the administered instrument (Annexure-I). While few international tourists use fax and courier services as well, the domestic tourists use land phone to some extent. Thus, the development of internet services and mobile service providers could be an important agenda in formulating marketing strategy for spiritual tourism in the state.

Table 5.3   Communication attributes of the tourists.

Tourist	Mode of External Communication				
	Land Phone	**Mobile phone**	**Internet**	**Fax**	**Courier**
International	0	111	120	69	53
Domestic	24	280	32	0	0

Infrastructure and other facilities in and around and at the shrine/destination spot influence the tourists significantly. Accordingly, tourists' experiences at the target spot/shrine and their overall opinion about other infrastructural facilities were collected through Question No. 35 & 36 of the administered instrument (Annexure-I). The summaries of the data are presented in the Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 respectively.

Table 5.4   Opinion of tourists about the spiritual places.

Parameters	Opinion of tourists									
	Satisfied				Dissatisfied		Cannot say			
	Total No		Percentage (%)		Total No		Total No		Percentage (%)	
	D*	I**	D	I	D	I	D	I	D	I
Lighting	257	120	91.8	100	6	0	17	0	6.1	0
Cleanliness	2	0	0.7	0	278	100	0	20	0	16
Shrine timings, if applicable	187	77	66.8	64.2	5	63	78	0	27.8	0
Drinking water facility	39	120	13.9	100	195	0	46	0	16.4	0
Sitting arrangement	63	48	22.5	40	165	22	52	50	18.6	41.7
Puja material availability	280	100	100	83.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Help desk	119	65	42.5	54.2	95	13	66	42	23.6	35
Approach/entry condition	151	0	53.9	0	107	54	22	66	7.8	55
Crowd control	139	55	49.6	45.8	33	11	108	54	38.6	0
* D – Domestic, **I – International										

Approach to the spot, drinking water, lighting, cleanliness are some of the basic facilities at any place of public interest. While most of the spiritual tourists are satisfied with the lighting arrangements at the places, they were completely dissatisfied with the cleanliness aspect (99% and 84% of the domestic and international respondents, respectively). Interestingly, 100% international tourists are satisfied with the drinking water facility as against only ~14% domestic tourists. This is perhaps, due to the availability of packaged drinking water almost everywhere very easily, which is preferred by the international tourists. The domestic tourists are, on the other hand, not very much habituated with packaged drinking water, owing to traditions and cost. Further, regarding the availability of *Puja* material, shrine timings, and sitting arrangements in the shrine most of the spiritual tourists are, in general, satisfied. However, most of the domestic

tourists were not satisfied with the approach road conditions, while the international tourists were not found interested in commenting as observed from the data presented in Table 5.4. The information dissemination to the tourists is also not found to be upto the mark as nearly 50% of the spiritual tourist were satisfied with the present 'Help' (or Help desk, as appeared in the Questionnaire and hence in the Table 5.4). Thus, more TICs can provide an improved 'Help' system in the most popular spiritual tourist destinations.

Table 5.5   Opinion of tourists about other facilities in the spiritual places.

. Parameter	Opinion of tourists (%)									
	Very Good		Good		Average		Bad		Very Bad	
	D*	I**	D	I	D	I	D	I	D	I
Shopping Centre	39.3	32.5	36.4	67.5	20.0	0	4.3	0	0.0	0
Souvenir shops	34.6	13.3	43.2	53.3	17.5	33.3	4.6	0	0.0	0
Health care fac.	18.2	46.7	28.2	44.2	46.1	9.1	4.3	0	3.2	0
ATM/Card fac.	51.1	0	37.9	120	7.5	0	3.6	0	0.0	0
Restaurant	55.4	0	32.1	65	10.7	35	1.8	0	0.0	0
Toilet facilities	4.3	0	9.6	0	59.6	17.5	24.3	59.2	2.1	23.3
Car parking	25.0	0	49.6	48.3	21.4	15.8	3.9	35.9	0.0	0
Local transport	1.1	0	18.6	0	63.6	100	15.0	0	1.8	0
Recreations	3.9	0	15.0	6.7	60.0	69.2	15.4	24.1	5.7	0
* D – Domestic, **I – International										

It was further noted from responses of the spiritual tourists as presented in Table 5.5 that most of the other vital infrastructural facilities in the two locations Haridwar and Rishikesh are not very good. The basic facilities like local transport (63% domestic and 100% international tourists judged them as 'average', Table 5.5) and toilets (24% domestic and 59% international tourists judged them as 'bad', Table 5.5) are, in fact, in poor

conditions. Similarly, healthcare and recreation facilities in these places were also not rated 'very good' by most of the spiritual tourists (~18% and ~4% domestic and ~47% and 0% international tourists respectively). It is thus obvious from the above discussion that the spiritual destinations Haridwar and Rishikesh in Uttarakhand are yet to satisfy the spiritual tourists with the existing infrastructural facilities. Therefore, improvements in some vital infrastructural facilities (e.g., toilet facilities, local transport facilities, healthcare facilities etc.) need to be addressed on priority basis. The improved infrastructure, in turn, will attract more spiritual tourists to the destinations, and can even be part of marketing the destinations.

5.4   INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENABLED SPIRITUAL TOURISM

Information plays an important role while planning for a tour. Information acquisition is regarded as the initial step in this process. It is seen that the potential tourists engage in information search as a part of their travel plan which assist them in decision making regarding selecting a particular destination. It has been analysed by different researchers that knowledge of information sources may play a significant role in providing better inputs for effective marketing of destinations (Dey and Sarma, 2010). The authors study primarily aimed at investigating the use of information sources among various motivation-based segments of leisure travelers to a newly emerging tourist destination.

In a short span, Uttarakhand has today become a leading state of the country in the field of Information Technology (IT) due to the multipronged efforts of the government. The information revolution of today is necessary to combat the challenges of the 21st century, and Uttarakhand has kept in step by taking IT techniques to different sectors as well as to the remote villages. Before the creation of Uttarakhand, progress in the region in the field of IT was negligible, but now the new state has made IT one of the main pillars of

progress. There has been an exceptional increase in spiritual travelers both domestic and foreign in the recent years in Uttarakhand state owing to generic changes in the people's attitude towards spirituality. As a result, IT has many functions to take part which can help in enhancing the spiritual tourism in Uttarakhand. Since, the spiritual places in Uttarakhand are remotely located, here IT can help immensely.

Information technology has a great role to play by coming up with more Tourist Information Centers (TICs) which can provide the tourist with in-depth information about the importance of the different sites, route information, weather condition, accommodation, kind of food available, health care, adventure, wildlife, environment, yoga and meditation etc. which the tourist like to be alert before visiting a particular place. Spiritual sites like Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamnotri are well connected with roadways. Information regarding route – like route map, route condition, traffic, road block due to natural conditions and best time for visit etc. are very important pre-tour information for a tourist. The IT facilities can also make the tourist convenient by making prior bookings for prayer and yoga which will help them to save ample amount of time in their busy schedule. Tourist will also be exposed to supplementary information like availability of spa, shopping centre, and other site seeing information etc. for which they can plan ahead and make prior arrangements. Moreover, the corresponding tentative costs can be accessed, which again can help the tourist to plan their journey appropriately. The model developed in Figure 5.9 depicts some of the major roles of information technology in enhancing spiritual tourism in Uttarakhand. The spiritual tourism can experience a major boost with an information technology network designed to acquire information regarding the entities shown in the Figure 5.9.

5.5   DESTINATION IDENTIFICATION

Uttarakhand is one of the most beautiful and enchanting regions of northern India. It is located in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas and is bestowed with majestic peaks, magnificent glaciers, valley of flowers and dense forests with their varied flora and fauna. Nature has endowed this land with so much beauty and spiritual bliss that it is also known as "*Dev Bhoomi*", the Land of Gods. Ganga, Yamuna and scores of other rivers originate in Uttarakhand. Among them, Ganga is most holy and prominent as she represents the soul of India because of her rich culture, history and civilization. Uttarakand is divided into thirteen districts and is well known for their spiritual sites. This state has a tremendous tourism potential and Information Technology can help immensely for its growth. Travels to spiritual places at Uttarakhand have recorded a phenomenal increase in the recent years. Information technology can immensely help the potential tourists in identification of the places of spiritual interest and the necessary information regarding the place.
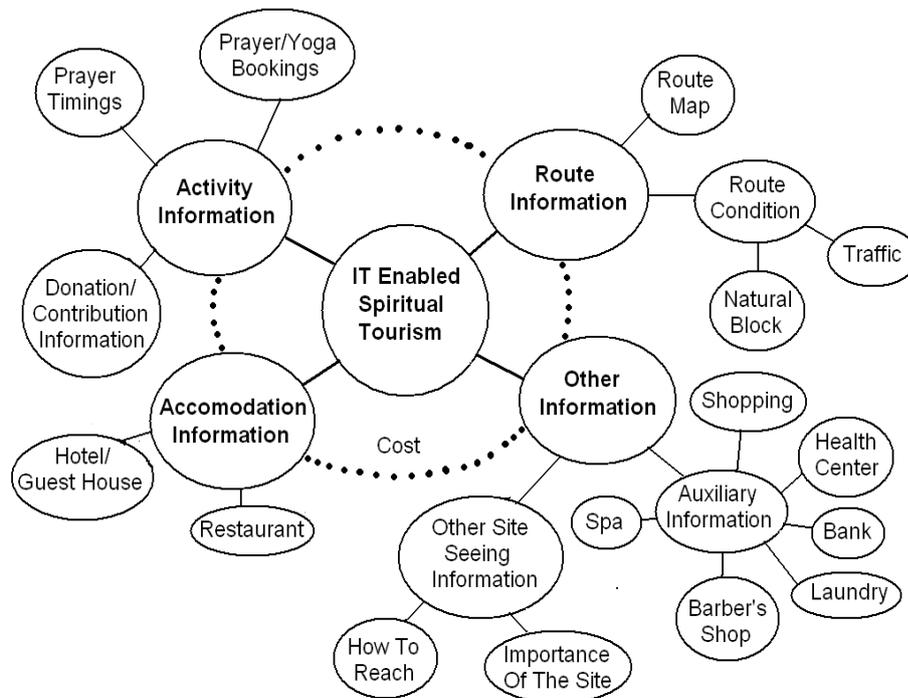

Figure 5.9   Schematic of the possible roles of information technology in spiritual tourism.

5.6   MARKETING OF DESTINATION

Tourism destination marketing has been considered vital in the changing competitive marketing environment. Importance of destination marketing has been analysed at length with the help of domain specific data by Chaudhary (2000). Das *et al.* (2007) have conducted a case study based on the Varanasi city of Uttar Pradesh, India. The holistic impressions of the destination and intention for repeat visit based on tourist expectation, experience and satisfaction have been analyzed. Riege and Perry (2000) have carried out a case study regarding marketing of Australia and New Zeland as a tourist destination for the tourists of Germany and United Kingdom. Dey and Sarma (2007) have employed a factor-cluster segmentation approach for segmentation of tourists based on the study of tourists travelling to the North-eastern states of India. Enright and Newton (2004) have conducted a research work based on the city of Hong Kong and proposed a model on 'Tourism Destination Competitiveness'. Hannam (2004) has discussed at length the role of communication media including internet in marketing tourist destinations. Cracolici and Nijkamp (2008) attempted to assess the relative attractiveness of competing tourist destinations on the basis of individual visitor's perception regarding a holiday destination. The authors have also highlighted the need to use micro and macro data to analyse tourist attractiveness. Wong and Yeh (2009) focused on the relationship among tourist risk perception, tourist knowledge and hesitation.

Rashid and Ismail (2008) focused on the process involved before visitor making a visit, during and after the visit, as well as the next process in making the second visit to the similar destination. The author tried to make a critical analysis on destination image and it's role and purposes. Further work on destination image have been reported by several other authors (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Beerli and Martı´n, 2004; Gupta, 2008; Mammootty and Raveendran, 2008; Hong *et al*, 2009; Govers *et al*., 2007). Camprubı´ *et al.* (2008)

have designed a conceptual model of the destination process by means of which the induced tourism image of a destination is created. The model also tried to focus on the effects of the links with external actors – i.e. tour operators – on the destination's induced image. Exploration of the cognitive and affective psychological processes which an individual goes through during the pre-experience and post experience stages was carried out. A model was developed to find out the satisfaction level of individuals regarding a particular visit based on their behavioral intentions (Bosque and Martı´n, 2008).

Gupta and Gupta (2008) conducted a study based on Agra city of India and proposed a value chain model (Figure 5.10) to give the best experience to all the tourists, whether domestic or inbound (foreign). This value chain model is expected to create awareness and a positive feeling about India in general and Agra in particular. Adoption of communication and information technology inventions can facilitate the tourists with the essential information regarding the pre trip, during trip as well as post trip phases. Similarly, information technology can also be used extensively for marketing of tourism in the state which will further boost spiritual tourism in the state.

5.6.1 Marketing Strategy for Branding Uttarakhand as Spiritual Tourist Destination

Effective destination marketing management requires a detailed understanding of the complex processes involved in the traveler destination decision making process. Infrastructure development is the key to India's persistent growth in the tourism sector. Accordingly, the need of the hour is to develop quality tourism infrastructure at the potential tourist destinations and circuits. The important tourist destinations should be branded with a judicious mix of culture, heritage, spiritual and ecotourism in order to give tourists a holistic perspective. This will result in repositioning and repeat visits to the destinations. India is a land of breathtaking natural beauty, so proper initiative should be

taken to achieve convergence and synergy to invest maximum on these tourist destinations. Table 5.6 depicts different marketing tools and techniques adopted by the Government of Uttarakhand for promoting the state as a tourist destination.
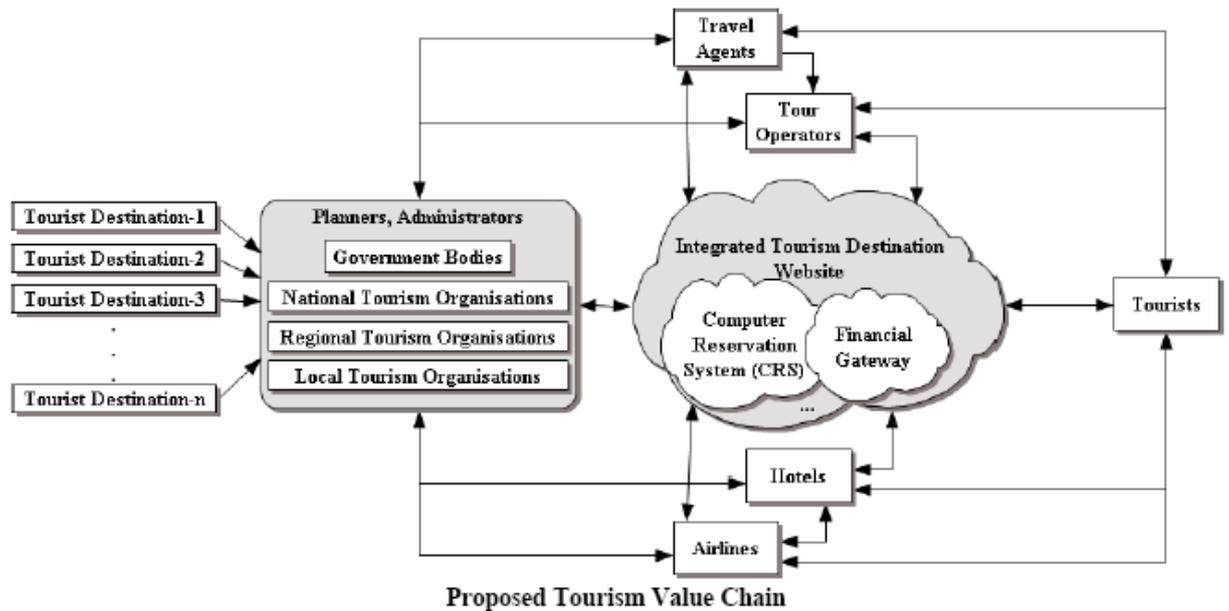

Figure 5.10 A tourism value chain model for Agra, India (Gupta and Gupta, 2008).

The position of a place is conveyed through the brand. Branding a destination is transmitting an experience, a feeling and not just places to look at or things to do. Tourists want experiences not places. The feeling that is experienced by the tourists at the destination is promoted. It is about communicating the values that form the brand. The brand must put forward a promise that the visitor will have a positive experience at the destination and must create an emotional attachment by communicating all its components reinforcing the destination's identity and essence in the potential visitor's mind. This was ascertained with the data obtained during the survey as presented in the Table 5.7 using Question Nos. 9–11 of the administered questionnaire (Annexure-I). A significant ~43% and ~21% domestic and international tourists respectively, visited the places even more

than four times. It was further revealed by the international tourists that, the annual Yoga Festival held at Rishikesh becomes the main driver to bring them to the place again and again. The festival, thus, has the potential to contribute in branding Rishikesh as one of the spiritual destinations in the state.

Table 5.6   Marketing Tools and Techniques (Source: Government of India, 2008).

Marketing Attributes	Tools and Techniques
Media Advertising	TV, Press (magazines and newspapers), Radio, Posters, Outdoor Advertising, Guides, Web Advertising, etc.
Distribution Channels	Brochures, Videos, CDs, DVDs.
Giveaways	Souvenir items for presentation to VIPs
Trade and Consumer Fairs and Exhibitions	Trade Fairs, Consumer Fairs, Workshops
Direct Marketing	Mailings by post and/or email
Special Events	The creation of special events
Marketing Public Relations Activities	Press Release, Video News Release, Radio Tapes, Press Kits, Advertorials, News Conferences, Media Events/Publicity Stunts, Photographic and Slide Libraries, Media Databases, Public speaking, Celebrity Promotions, Photographers, Film Makers and Travel and Travel Guide Publishers
Tourist Information Centers	Convenient locations to provide tourism information to visitors verbally and with Maps, Guides, Informational Leaflets
Trade and Consumer Promotions	Sales Mission, Shopping Centre Promotions
Website and e-marketing	Destination website, e-commerce, electronic direct marketing
Research and Evaluation	Market Research, Product Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Research

In spite of the long distances to be covered, keeping aside the time and expenditures involved, the frequency of the international spiritual tourists to the destinations is certainly encouraging. Further, as revealed in the Table 5.7, the tourists are fully satisfied with their current visit and many wishes to revisit the place (100% and 59%

for domestic and international tourists respectively). Significantly, all the tourists opine overwhelmingly (100%) that both these two places (Haridwar and Rishikesh) are attractive with rich heritages as per the data presented in Table 5.8, although are not well signed (Question No.34, Annexure–I). Thus, a spiritual marketing strategy can very well exploit heritage factor of the two places.

Destination attractiveness depends on many factors of the state like its cultural facilities, physical characteristics, sport facilities, amusement centers, socio-cultural features, good accommodation, transportation, IT Infrastructure, Scenic beauty, Spiritual shrines etc. India is ranked 62nd among the world's most attractive destinations. Uttarakhand state has to adopt proper marketing strategy to claim a unique position in terms of destination in the mind of the consumer. Positioning clearly represents the potential visitors' perception about the destination. Uttarakhand is well-known for its religious destination, especially for Hindus; this is a fundamental attribute for Uttarakhand's identity. It attracts millions of people to the state every year for worshiping at the '*Char Dhams*'. Spirituality, which is a powerful attractor to the area is a strong attribute for attracting spiritual tourists to this place. As the source of the mighty river Ganga is situated in Uttarakhand, this is also a unique attribute of the state. Therefore, associating Uttarakhand with such a powerful symbol would ensure that the destination stands out amongst its competitors. Uttarakhand has outstanding tourism products and has potential to become a major tourism destination. The state has a greater value for domestic tourist because of its spiritual sites. On the other hand, the image of Uttarakhand in the international market is weak and hence proper marketing strategies are to be adopted to place Uttarakhand on the tourism map of the world.

Table 5.7   Tourist's interest for revisiting a destination.

Tourist	Number of times visited (%)				Interest for a revisit (%)	Degree of satisfaction (%)
	First	Second	Third	More		
Domestic	16.5	23.2	17.8	42.5	100	100
International	64.2	7.5	7.5	20.8	59	100

Table 5.8   Tourists' experience at the spiritual places.

Parameters	Opinion of tourists							
	Yes				No		Can not say	
	Total No		Percentage (%)		Total No		Total No	
	D*	I*	D	I	D	I	D	I
Attractive with rich heritage	280	120	100	100	0	0	0	0
Beggars trouble visitors	100	40	35.7	33.3	167	80	13	0
Guides are required	60	81	21.4	67.5	210	6	10	33
Well signed	100	12	35.7	10	157	40	23	68
* D – Domestic, I - International								

A number of issues are impeding the effective marketing of Uttarakhand as a tourist destination. Publicity and marketing of the tourism attractions of Uttarakhand at the national and international level has been inadequate. Although an impressive 78.3% of the international tourists got motivated through the media coverage (Table 5.9), the corresponding number in the case of domestic tourists is undoubtedly poor based on the data obtained through Question No. 7 (Annexure-I). While the influence of other factors like relatives, friends etc. is expectedly absent for the international tourists, it is thus quite natural that the prospective tourists get the information and motivation through media only. There exists scope for an organized marketing to play in motivating the domestic tourists.

Table 5.9   Profile of respondents who got motivated for the tour.

Tourists	Contributions in Motivating for the tour				
	Self	Family members/Relatives	Friends/Colleague	Spiritual leader	Media
Domestic	40.4	41.4	11.8	4.3	2.1
International	17.5	0	0	4.2	78.3

There is a need to promote and encourage private sector participation in the development of modern tourist facilities and infrastructure and management practices in the state. In order to encourage quality, standard and services in the Travel Agents, Tour Operating Agencies and Tourists, transport operating agencies need to be raised substantially so as to promote tourism in India. There are scopes for initiatives and making the existing systems/services more effective for branding the state as a destination of spiritual tourists. Different marketing strategies adopted for branding Uttarakhand as a tourist destination could include:

- It has become a common practice now-a-days that the local travel agents advertise for the tourists spots of other countries. Therefore, more publicity of the tourist spots/shrines through mass and electronic media is carried out in India as well as in other countries.

- Publication of few 'Information Brochure' in major foreign languages.

- Attractive fact sheets, guide maps etc. containing crisp information and facts about the tourism attractions in the state of Uttarakhand should be widely circulated.

- Endowing Uttarakhand with a clear and unique image to ensure that it is differentiated from its competitors and stands out in the global market place.

- Identifying new tourism products to heighten visitor's experience in the state and to attract new markets.

- Enhancing the capacity of Uttarakhand tourism stakeholders in the field of tourism marketing and promotion.

- Supporting a community based tourism initiatives by increasing awareness of tourists about available community products and services and providing a marketing platform for local communities to promote and distribute their tourism products and related goods.

5.7 SUMMARY

There has been an exceptional increase in spiritual travelers, both domestic and foreign, in the recent years owing to generic changes in the people's attitude towards spirituality. Millions of pilgrims flock to Haridwar to pray and to attain *Nirvana*. This picturesque holy state is also a natural destination to the lovers of nature. Tourism being one of the most important sectors, the Uttarakhand state government has developed many significant plans to make tourism a firm base of the state's economy and put the state on the world tourism map. However, there are a lot of scopes to strengthen spiritual tourism in the state. The related IT and non-IT infrastructures should be improved. The IT revolution can be exploited in attracting spiritual tourists to the state in great numbers. The traditional spiritual places have to be given a facelift. The tourism websites of the state can help the tourist in making their journey a fruitful one. Along with the established tourist centres, some new tourist centres have also been developed. The government is improving the infrastructure facilities in the existing tourist areas, and on the other hand, it is developing new places of spiritual tourist interest, simultaneously ensuring that the environment is preserved. Tourist information centers should not only be located at important tourist

destinations of the region but also at national and international gateways; so that, the tourist, particularly foreigners, will get the right information about the places of interest. In order to make correct as well as speedy information, all the information centers should be connected with each other through computerization. All these information centers should be provided with related literature and brochures, booking services for package tours and so on. Tastes, technology and time play important roles in planning tours. A model to this effect has been presented. Importance of infrastructure in attracting tourists has been outlined. A tourist-infrastructure-economy model has been presented in the chapter.