Like the industries discussed in the preceding chapter, tourism too has been on the agenda for industrial development of Garhwal for a long time. However, recently, it has taken a clear lead over all other industries of the region. Tourism perhaps presents the most promising future and the best prospects for providing employment, infrastructure and raising the living conditions of the people. The Government too has been particularly active in promoting this industry across Garhwal. The aggressiveness of the Government in promoting tourism as a major industry in this area is reflected in the fact that the actual expenditure incurred on tourism during the seventh plan for Uttrakhand exceeded the outlay by 100 percent. The outlay for this head during 7th plan was 19.50 Crore rupees whereas the expenditure incurred was about 34 Crore. The outlay for this head under the Eighth Plan has been fixed at 80 Crore rupees. This includes 14.10 Crores for spill over projects; 10.72 Crore for tourist lodges; 4.14 Crores for tourist cottages; 1.80 Crores for providing basic amenities en route; 20 Lakhs for modernization of Dharamshalas; 3.1050 Crores for renovation of old tourist lodges; 10 Crores for giving loan subsidies; 4.35 Crores for adventure tourism; and, Rupees 4 Crores for tourism industry;
Tourism is being viewed and is proving to be a panacea for the market starved woolen and handicraft industry of the region. Workers engaged in trade and commerce, hotels, restaurants and even small vendors earn their yearly income from tourism. A large number of rural folk from the villages of Garhwal migrate in to tourist centers such as Joshimath, Badrinath, Gangotri, Yamnotri, Mussoorie, Lansdowne to be employed in establishments that derive most of their annual income from the inflow of tourists and pilgrims. Shopkeepers and vendors along the Yatra route too derive a substantial portion of their income from tourism. Among industries, tourism has the most promising future in Garhwal. At the moment it is the largest employer and provider of money to many poverty stricken families in the area.

However, its success has also sparked off a couple of controversies. An increasing number of people have begun to argue that growing tourism is not only harming the ecology of this region, but also degrading its cultural ethos. These people stress upon the need for a sustainable tourism policy that strikes a balance between ecological preservation and economic development through regulating and planning tourism. Another controversy is regarding the sharing of benefits accruing from this industry. Most of the benefits have gone to those who were already rich, who could afford to invest in tourist serving occupations. While the poor Garhwali peasant remains far behind them. During field work, both these allegations were found to

contain considerable truth. With a view to providing more and more luxuries to the new tourist, the Government is inviting heavy investments and granting loans too. But these opportunities may only be grasped by those who have the potential to do so. Therefore, the cream of benefits accruing from this industry has not trickled down to the farmer, the weaver, the tribesman or the craftsman whose income has risen but the condition remains more or less the same.

Tourism Policy

Since long, tourism has sustained itself as an integral part of our lives in the form of pilgrimage. It is only recently that its economic significance has been realized at the national and regional levels. Henceforth, efforts have been made to tap the vast potentials latent in tourism for generating employment at the regional level, earning foreign exchange and improving the overall economic infrastructure in a given area. In view of above, the Government of Uttar Pradesh too has declared tourism to be treated as an industry. The economic significance of tourism is apparent from the foreign exchange income of this industry.
Table 7.1
All-India Foreign Exchange Earning
From Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Earning (Crore Rupees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2456.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2444.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2910.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>3915.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1992</td>
<td>18,481.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Tourism.

The economic significance of tourism is also apparent by the increasing number of tourists visiting the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh.
Table 7.2
Number of Tourists Visiting the
Hill Areas of Uttar Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tourists (in Lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991 (Indian)</td>
<td>111.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Tourists</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 Indian</td>
<td>124.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Tourists</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 Indian</td>
<td>138.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Tourists</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Tourism

The percentage of tourists visiting the hill areas is 25.08% of the total tourists visiting the state of Uttar Pradesh. This is a significant chunk and must not be ignored. The exact figures related to the generation of income by tourism is not known. However, going by a modest estimate if every individual spends only 1000 rupees during his stay in the Hills, which is a very low estimate of the cost of tourism by modern standards, the income from tourism must be around 13864000000 rupees. Tourism creates economic opportunity in areas beyond the reach of the
manufacturer.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh envisages a three fold objective of promoting tourism as an industry. These are

1. providing basic facilities of recreation and tourism to the common man;
2. developing tourist spots to encourage and promote tourism; and
3. earning foreign exchange.

It is with this objective in mind that tourism has been awarded with the status of an industry only recently. The new tourism development policy envisages the development of pollution free tourism, increasing the availability of employment, economic development of backward areas and to give a special thrust to the maximum involvement of the private sector in tourism as its cardinal principles. According to the Director, Tourism Development (Uttar Pradesh), the new tourism policy contains measures specifically targeted at creating more entertainment and luxury facilities at tourist centers. These measures include

(A) the provision of land at subsidized rates for the construction of resorts and entertainment facilities;
(B) relaxation in entertainment tax and luxury tax;
(C) exemption from Composite Fee for the first two years to tourist vehicles; and
(D) adopting a flexible attitude in granting of bar licenses.

3. Ibid.
Two sectors have been specifically marked for obtaining the close cooperation of the private sector. These are the development of boarding, lodging and catering services, and expansion and improvement of transport facilities for tourists. The State of Uttar Pradesh has been divided into 6 tourism development zones. The Directorate plans to open a five-star hotel each in every sector. For this purpose, the department has issued directions to provide land at 80 percent less than the market rate to interested hotel builders. This land will be acquired by the District administration from Government departments. The District Magistrate of the concerned area will provide assistance in negotiating the purchase of land in areas where such land is not available. However, this assistance is not available for hotels built on private land. In the Garhwal Mandal, a hotel near Mussoorie has become operational under this category recently. Apart from this, the State Government plans to provide land for the creation of green belts around such hotels at no cost. Provision of basic infrastructure in the earmarked 6 tourism development areas will be a priority of the Government and for this purpose, special attention is being paid for the construction of approach roads and provision of electricity and water to these hotels. The various Urban Development Authorities functional in the State of U.P. have been directed to earmark plots for tourism development. These plots will be made available to aspiring entrepreneurs in accordance with the recommendation of a committee headed by the Chief Secretary.

In keeping with its commitment to improve the existing
facilities for entertainment and luxury, the Department of Tourism has reformed the system of luxury tax and entertainment tax. Until recently, three different rates of luxury tax were levied depending upon the value of the transaction. Under the new policy, only a single rate of luxury tax will be charged at a flat rate of 5 percent. There will be no luxury tax on bills up to the total value of 250 rupees. Apart from this, the department has decided to defer the imposition of luxury tax for a period of five years on newly opened Star Hotels in earmarked areas. This measure will definitely help to popularize these newly opened hotels during the crucial and initial phase of their establishment since every facility will cost less by 5 percent. Similarly, the imposition of entertainment Tax also will be deferred for five years in case of newly opened entertainment houses in earmarked areas. The system of assessing entertainment tax with respect to hotels equipped with dish antennae has also been reformed. The new system provides for the assessment of this tax on the basis of the rate of compound growth in occupancy. In order to end the harassment caused by hotel inspectors, the number of such inspectors has been reduced from 25 to 5 only. The issuing of bar licenses has also been made more flexible. Previously, bar licenses were issued only to hotels belonging to the Tourism Department. This monopoly has now been done away with. Hotels and Restaurants will now be able to operate composite bars permitting the consumption of liquor at many places in the premises.  

In 1997, a new tourism development scheme has been launched

". Ibid. p.56
with much fanfare. The scheme provides that any unemployed person in this area can apply for a loan of up to ten Lakh Rupees for investment in any tourist related venture. It may be a hotel, a restaurant, a shopping complex, a recreational or entertainment facility. The details of the scheme have not yet been made clear and it is not fully operational as yet.

Although tourism has been an integral part of Hindu cultural heritage, its nature has undergone a dramatic transformation in the 20th century. Critics of the present tourism policy strongly argue that this transformation has lead to the degradation of Himalayan ecology together with the deterioration of the moral values associated with pilgrimage. According to Prof. Singh, the institution of the Teertha intertwines the spirit of religion and tourism whereas modern tourism is essentially an economic desirability. Teertha was essentially religious characterized by simplicity, morality and even austerity. Whereas modern tourism is essentially secular and characterized by luxury and comfort apart from being holiday oriented. Moreover, the system of Teertha was well-disciplined and strictly regulated by a code of conduct. Whereas modern tourism is quite unrestricted. A pilgrim's itinerary used to comprise of a circular motion of travel or Parikrama which necessitated their visits to Gangotri, Yamnotri (in District Uttar Kashi) and Kedarnath, Badrinath (in District Chamoli) in that fixed order. Since Badrinath was a major point of concentration, none was permitted to stay their for more than

one night. This restriction solved the problem of congestion and scarcity of essential commodities like water, food in such places. En route, the pilgrims were introduced to the best of scenic landscape comprising of Alakhnanda and Bhagirathi valleys, river confluences, water falls, beds, forests, glacial views and so on. A pilgrim's progress was punctuated by halts after every 5-7 Km at Jattis. The pilgrim zone also known as Badri Ka Mandal or Kedarkhanda comprised of five Badris, five Kedars and five Prayags en route. The whole affair was organized in a manner so as to encourage maximum regionalization and dispersal of economic benefits and environmental pressures so that neither of them concentrates at one point. Maintenance of environmental balance was a major objective of this code of conduct. No pilgrim was permitted to fell trees or kill animals during the journey. Entry was restricted at major concentration points so as to prevent scarcity of essential commodities like food and water.\(^6\)

This variety of tourism was altered in the beginning of this century by the British when they created hill stations by selectively modifying existing cities in the Shivaliks. The normal height of a hill station usually never exceeded 2000 Metres. Thus Mussoorie was developed at 1998 Metres, Darjeeling at 2000 Metres, Simla 1982 Metres and Nainital 1938 Metres. The main considerations behind selecting hill stations by the British were administrative viability, suitability of climate, visual quality, limitations of resource availability and possibility of creating recreational facilities. During the British period the inflow of

tourists was limited to the higher strata of society consisting of high ranking Government officials, Indian princes, Nawvabs and other elite for whom the Shivaliks became a second home to spend their summers. Masses rarely got a chance to visit such hill stations. Entry to key hill places continued to be restricted. Due to these restrictions, tourism continued to be limited and within the thresholds. But the serenity of the Shivaliks was suddenly broken.

After independence, tourism began to be promoted by the public sector as a panacea for the ills of economically backward areas. Elite tourism was replaced by mass tourism as a consequence of the changing social scenario in the post-independence era. Paid holiday schemes were introduced for the common man. Transport networks were geared to meet increasing demands of mass travel. Mechanized roads were constructed and the capacity of existing tourist resorts was enhanced to meet rising demands. The new resource managers however fatally ignored the changing pattern of tourism in the Himalayas. In contrast to the old social elite, the new tourists had a shoe-string budget within which they wanted to see the most. The period of stay in hill stations also declined from a couple of months to a couple of days. But the volume of visitors was simply too much for the Himalayas to bear. In 1961, merely 60000 visited the Badrinath shrine. After the linking of Joshimath and Badrinath with the outside world by mechanized roads, this volume jumped up to 2 Lakhs in 1971. In case of other hill stations too, tourist


8. Ibid.
inflow has risen drastically. In 1960-61, hill stations used to cater to 50000-60000 tourists on an average. In 1981 this number shot up to 6 Lakhs. The figures for the 1990s have been cited in the table on page 2. In 1993, the number of tourists visiting the hill areas of U.P. was a massive 13864000. According to an official in the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam, the quantity of pilgrims in the Garhwal Himalayas in 1994-95 alone was around 40 lakhs. The pattern of travel has also changed. Instead of following the prescribed itinerary of a pilgrim, i.e., going clockwise first to Gangotri, Yamnotri, and then to Kedarnath and finally to Badrinath, visitors now go directly to Badrinath ignoring other places. Consequently, the Joshimath-Badrinath sector is overburdened and congested. It is true that due to this boom, the economy of this area has prospered. Also that hoteliers and vendors are able to earn for the whole year from this short tourist/pilgrim season. However, the ecology of the region has definitely suffered. Owing to traffic congestion, the old jungle road had to be developed into a proper mechanized road which then had to be doubled over the years. This too has failed to overcome the congestion caused by the rising traffic. From Joshimath to Badrinath, it is difficult to see anything apart from rows of vehicles and difficult to smell anything except for the exhaust fumes. Roads, sewage system, water supply, power supply, hotels, eating places, garbage disposal, everything in this area has touched capacity and appears to be heavily overloaded. Each year, efforts are made to enhance capacity but confronted by the rising volumes, the whole efforts seems to be

°. See Table on page 1

265
feeble. This overload has become even more severe with the ongoing disturbance in the Kashmir valley.

Confronted with the problem of frequent capacity overloads, planners began to search for new avenues to diversify tourism. This approach calls for the location of homogenous and suitable spots near the old ones for tourism development as soon as a saturation point in capacity is near at hand. Consequently the economic benefits as well as capacity strains may be diversified and shared with the adjoining suburbia which is starving for such advantage. Thus, new tourist centers were thrown open in the Tal areas adjoining Nainital when it appeared that the lifeline of this hill station, i.e., the Nainital lake, was threatened by excessive tourist inflow and its concomitant environmental impact. Similarly, Hari Ki Doon, Valley of flowers, Nanda Devi, the Gomukh area of Gangotri were thrown open for diversifying tourism in the Garhwal Himalayas. New areas are constantly being searched to diversify tourist traffic. A Skying Resort was developed at Awli, Joshimath; the Cloud’s End area of Mussoorie was thrown open. Other examples are the plans for converting Pauri and Lansdowne into major tourist centers.

According to Singh\textsuperscript{10} it was a tragedy to start tourist traffic in such areas prematurely and abruptly. Till 1974, these areas of high ecological sensitivity and tenderness were untouched by the ill-effects of human intervention. Due to strategic reasons ensuing from the Indochina war, not even an Indian could enter these areas without prior permission. ‘Roads constructed on strategic grounds paved way for tourism that

overwhelmed the eco-culturally preserved Himalayan heritage. Impulsive, unplanned and peace meal tourist development often without basic infrastructure abused the environment which hitherto had been a national heritage. Vandalism, trampling of meadows, burning of Junipers in Nanda Devi and silver Birch in Gangotri,..." are some of the many ill effects of unplanned tourism. Consequently, tourist inflow to both Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers had to be curtailed and regulated by declaring them as National Parks.

**Proposals For A Sustainable Tourism Policy**

In view of the adverse environmental impact of unplanned tourism on the Garhwal Himalayas, attention has been drawn to chalk out a policy of sustainable tourism development that would strike a balance between the need for providing employment and promoting the economic development of backward areas on one hand, and ecological preservation of such areas on the other. In short it should keep track of ecological and economic considerations simultaneously. ‘styles of tourism should be evolved which conserve and not consume the environment establishing tourism-environment compatibility. Such a development must establish an explore on relationship with the visitor community with special regard for its conservation through sensitive planning and management.’

'Sustainable tourism development, in its broad sense, is an exercise in sustainable resource management which seeks to avoid forms of development that may result in irreversible changes in the ecosystem by adopting safe minimum

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11. Ibid. p.9.
It is to be noted that tourism thrives upon natural beauty and landscape which in turn exists on the condition that the natural environment is preserved, maintained and cared for. Simultaneously, basic amenities and infrastructure for the tourists needs to be provided in places of natural landscape. Aggressive tourism based purely upon the market forces tends to degrade the natural character of the environment upon which tourism thrives. Hence a purely market oriented tourism policy has a tendency to cut the root upon which it is sitting. This trend needs to be curbed especially in case of Garhwal Himalayas where the environment is fragile and must be preserved if tourism is to be sustained for long. Therefore, a policy for practicing sustained tourism is necessary which pays proper care to both aspects of economics an environment protection. Such a policy ought to regulate the following aspects of tourism:

1. Regulation of visitor volume: A comprehensive policy for sustained tourism must regulate the number of visitors to key places of concentration and congestion where tourism poses a threat to the natural environment and burdens civic amenities. Often this factor is overlooked in the interest of increasing economic opportunities in the shortest span possible. Visitor volume should be regulated in accordance with the carrying capacity of the place. Excessive visitors may be held back in comfortable locations for a short period. For example, the safety limit of visitation to Badrinath may be decided in advance and excessive visitors may be held back for some time at Joshimath.

or Rishikesh. Similarly, the limit for Mussoorie could be fixed in advance and excessive tourists accommodated at Dehradun. This practice should be stringently exercised in centers in the Upper Himalayas such as Gomukh and Gangotri where the ecology is extremely fragile. Such a practice might spare the environment of overburdening and save the tourists from the agony of being stranded without accommodation in an unfriendly climate.

2. Civic Planning: Most hill stations in Garhwal were not planned from the point of view of modern tourism. It is not possible to ignore this phenomenon any longer. The population of such centers doubles and even triples during peak season. Therefore, areas for providing accommodation, eating places, shopping malls, mall roads, water supply, power supply, sewage system and garbage disposal, recreation centers, residential areas ought to be earmarked and the area planned according. Places of environmental and cultural sensitivity that should be best left alone, must be earmarked in advance too.

3. Choice of Technology: Finally, the choice of development technology for a tourist center becomes critical when it is likely to conflict with the traditional ways of living. The choice of construction material, transport systems and recreation are such examples. In order to meet the expectations and demands of a modern tourist, businessmen often ignore the traditional setting of a mountain suburb while constructing buildings. Gradually, the traditional architecture fades away and is confined to the interior only while it is totally replaced by modern constructions in the prime locations. This casts an adverse effect on the natural character of the place due to which
tourism began to flourish in that area in the first place. It is
difficult to find slate roofs with slants and shingle houses in
modern hill station nowadays as modern construction has replaced
them almost completely. Similarly, a rope way might be selected
as the transport system in areas where vehicular pollution, road
construction poses a threat to the natural environment. This
applies to recreation centers too. Attempts to modify rivulets
and water falls in order to create boating and swimming
facilities are quite common in Garhwal. However, sometimes they
only succeed in creating a muddy pool devoid of any interest
while destroying the natural character forever simultaneously.

To sum up, while the economic significance of tourism is
undeniable in the case of Garhwal, its side effects have made it
that tourism has to be planned and regulated from the point of
view of its sustainability. In an area where there is little hope
for economic development, tourism provides a ray of hope. It
would be suicidal to destroy this opportunity by human
foolishness and lack of farsightedness.