

TOURISM : AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GARHWAL HIMALAYAS

VIJAY KUMAR SISODIA

Today the development of areas in Garhwal Himalayas has become a matter of great concern for social scientists, planners and administrators. The need for developing these areas has been well recognised both at the national and the local level and is being talked about in remote hill villages as well as in the planning commission and the state secretariate. Hill areas form a class by themselves because of their peculiar nature in terms of geographical, economic and ecological conditions. These peculiarities inhibit the process of development of these areas. Any effort aimed towards the development of these areas must take into account the specific problems and characteristics of these areas. Past experiences in the developing of hill areas have shown that all too often plans designed for the country as a whole have been implemented in the hill region too without any regard to their specific requirements. Inevitably the results have fallen short of their goals and the hill areas continue to be in a state of economic backwardness. This slow pace of development and the neglect of the interests and the aspirations of the local people has been causing discontent and a sense of deprivation among them. According to Bahuguna (1985) 'the cold icy mountains have been turning into mountains of warm discontent'. The present paper aims to identify some of the major constraints in the process of development of the hill region of Garhwal and made an attempt to discuss the nature and role of tourism in the socio-economic development of this naturally rich but economically backward region.

Garhwal region forming the north-western corner of the state of Uttar Pradesh consists of five hill districts namely Dehradun, Pauri Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarkashi and Chamoli. It lies between 29° 26' and 31° 28' north latitude and 77° 49' and 86° 06' east longitude with an area of 30090 sq. km. The altitude in the region varies from 1000 feet at the foothills to 25500 feet at Nanda Devi which is the highest peak in the region. The region is composed of vast tracts of bare rocks covered with forests offering very little levelled ground for agricultural purposes.

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The total population of the region according to 1991 census is 2934462 (1478507 males and 1455955 females) with a density of 97.522 persons per sq. km. The whole region is predominantly rural with 83 per cent of the total population inhabiting in 8121 villages. The area is very sparsely populated and the villages are very small and are scattered over various altitudes. Being predominantly a rural area the main axis of economy is agriculture and 76 per cent of the total population depends on it.

Although agriculture is the main axis of economy in the region but unfortunately the situation of agriculture is far from optimistic. The base is very small and relatively less fertile. Though apparently the land men ratio in this region appears to be very favourable due to large areas covered by hills and small population, but if we take into consideration the cultivable land only the density of population is found to be highest in the hills (Bahuguna; 1985). In this region as a whole the net area sown as a percentage to total reported area for land use purposes is only 13.2 percent as compared to 57.9 percent in the state. Not only the quantity but the quality of land is also not up to the mark as most of the land under cultivation is either shallow, poor textured or steep sloped and not really fit for cultivation in terms of land capability criteria (Mathur; 1979).

Most of the farmers in the region are either small or marginal as the land holdings in the area are very small. Average land holding for the whole region is only 1.27 acres per family. This predominance of small land holdings scattered in tiny plots and terraces also inhibits the development of agriculture in the area.

The two major rivers of the country i.e. The Ganga and the Yamuna originate in this region but the irrigation facilities are woefully inadequate and most of the land is cultivated under rainfed conditions. Of the total land under cultivation only 28.6 percent is irrigated as compared to the state figure of 48.5 percent in this respect. Level of technology in agriculture is also very low, for instance the per hectare consumption of chemical fertiliser (NPK) in the region is only 33 Kgs. as against the state average of 47 Kgs. (Singh; 1987). Thus due to the poor quality of land associated with traditional cultivation pattern and lack of irrigation facilities the return from the land does not fully justify the labour invested in the fields. 'Agriculture, in this region, happens to be the main stay of the people not because it is remunerative or developed, but because other sectors of economy are far less developed and cannot absorb the idle manpower which remains normally engaged in the agriculture' (Joshi; 1983).

Another source of economic backwardness in the region is the virtual absence of alternative sources of income and employment as non-agricultural productive activities in the region are rare. The contribution of the manufacturing sector to total income and employment in the hill region is only 4.5 and 3.5 percent respectively. Whatever manufacturing activities

are available in the region are concentrated in and around Dehradun with the result that other districts' share in income is extremely low 0.5 to 1.5 percent only (Papola and Joshi : 1985). The physical characteristics of this area which put a limit on agricultural development also pose the most serious bottleneck in the development of this secondary sector of economy.

The existing pattern of economic activities, technology and production in the hill economy hardly seems capable to productively employing any more persons than are already engaged. Although open employment is not very significant, under-employment is found to prevail to the extent of almost 40 to 45 percent particularly among males. This situation forces the out migration of the educated as well as uneducated youth of this region to plains in search of some gainful employment. This problem of manpower migration has assumed alarming proportions. These migrated people send money regularly to their kins in the region through money-orders. This remitted money plays such an important role in the regional economy that sometimes it is called 'money-order economy'. According to some estimates 11 percent of the total income of the region enters through money-orders (Pandey 1983). These people even after retiring from their jobs, prefer to settle down in the plains because after a long spell in the urban areas the hill life becomes too hard to be born by them. Thus the region is again deprived of the vast experiences and knowledge they might have earned during their stay in urban areas.

These inbuilt structural constraints of hill economy have rendered the region economically backward and poor. The low productivity of agriculture and lack of manufacturing sector have put the region among the poorest and most backward regions not only in the state but in the whole country. In other words, the Garhwal region is one of the poorest part of the Uttar Pradesh State of India. Four of its five districts are included in the 37 industrially backward districts of the state.

The difficult geographical terrain, lack of infrastructure, density of population, pressure on cultivable land, lack of alternative sources of income and employment etc. make it a distinct socio-economic region as compared to other areas of the state. Therefore the general planning policy made for the entire state or country has not born full fruits in this region.

A number of economists and local leaders advocate for the industrialization of the area so that secondary sector of economy may be created to provide employment to the people in the region itself. In this direction some new industries have been deliberately located in the region as a matter of purposive policy. But these units offer very limited direct employment due to the high technology used and their capital intensive nature and very little indirect employment generation due to lack of backward and forward linkages as a result of the insulated nature of activity and lack of infrastructures.

The two industries which are commonly advocated for the development of the region are forest and mineral base industries due to the availability of the raw material in the region itself. But these too have their dangerous ecological consequences. From ecological point of view, it would be dangerous to make any further inroads on the forests, thus rendering the use of the forest resources for industrial purposes locally or elsewhere, undesirable. The implications of forest denudation are very serious indeed both from the long term environmental perspective as well as the short term perspective of meeting the basic needs of the local population.

This ecology v/s economy controversy in the development of areas in Garhwal Himalayas is not amenable to easy solutions. It is not enough to plead for local use of local resources. Nor does opposition to any effort for economic development on the pleas of environmental degradation lead us anywhere. Thus a limited and judicious use of local non-renewable or difficult to renew resources combined with development of material, light and skill (man power) intensive activities with the minimum adverse effect on environment and ecology could alone offer a better living conditions to the local population and prevent damage to ecological balance (Papola and Joshi: 1985). Keeping in view the need of development and the ecological constraints and sensitive nature of environment in the region, the development and promotion of tourism seems to be a viable solution.

Today tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry in terms of earnings and the number of people involved. In this industry there are no problems of packaging, transporting and shipment of the product as in case of other manufacturing industries. The customer brings himself to the point of sale at his own cost and expense and in return takes immediate delivery of the services (Bhatia: 1978). It is a 'smokeless industry' in the sense that it earns large revenues without in any way exporting any tangible product from the region. Tourism is a peculiar type of industry which is viewed as being a 'naturally renewable resource industry' with visitors coming only to admire and not to consume to landscape, customs and the monuments of a certain specific area. Therefore geographers name it as a 'landscape industry'. In the present times tourism has grown from the pursuit of a privileged few to a mass movement of people, with the urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek change and relaxation in the new and peaceful environment and so on.

Tourism is not a single industry but a loose confederation of a number of allied industries. Not being an agriculturally or industrially productive activity it is usually classified as the tertiary sector, which is mainly a service sector. Five broad components of tourism industry have been identified; attraction, transportation, accommodation, supporting facilities and the infrastructures. The attraction induces the tourist to visit the area, transportation enables him to do so, the accommodation and supporting facilities (e.g. hotels, shops and restaurants) cater for his well being there and the

infrastructures ensure the successful functioning of all these (Pearce: 1985). Being a labour intensive service industry it provides employment to a large number of people directly as well as indirectly. Tourism has tremendous employment potential both directly in the tourism plant-the accommodation facilities, the transport operation, travel agencies, shopkeepers, guides and so on and also the indirect employment in the handicrafts and other types of industries that are ancillary to the tourism complex. It provides jobs and employment of all kinds and at all levels for every conceivable length of time which may help in the speedy transformation of the economically backward region.

The problem of manpower drainage can be checked to certain extent with the development of tourism in the region which inevitably creates job opportunities for unemployed and under employed population. Thus the manpower in the region can be engaged in the process of socio-economic development of their own region.

The earnings from tourism play an important role in the development of regional economy. The flow of money generated by tourist's spendings multiplies as it passes through various sections of the economy through the operation of the 'multiplier effect'. Tourism spending is subjected to a multiplier effect in which money spent on travel, accommodation, entertainment, shopping etc. spreads throughout the regional economy and creates additional business. This development of tertiary sector of services through tourism is also directly beneficial to the primary and secondary sectors by reason of the demand stimulated by tourism for the goods and products in these sectors.

Tourism influences and gives incentives to local manufacturers of handicrafts and artistic items. This is due to the fact that for the tourists, owning a piece of handicraft purchased from his place of destination itself is a matter of pride and satisfaction. This serves the purpose of a souvenir or memento of his journey to this particular place. Thus tourism is not to be regarded as an area of peripheral investment but as one of primary investment whose benefits includes the creation of employment opportunities and the regeneration of backward economy.

Garhwal the land of rishies, sages and ashrams is redolent with mythology and includes some of the holiest places of Hindu pilgrimage. Garhwal is called as DEV BHUMI-the land of Gods. The four traditional retreats for the pilgrims in Garhwal have been the dhams or holy places of Yamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath.

Garhwal lying in the great Himalayas is a traveller's delight and naturalist's paradise. As most of tourism experts believe 'most backward regions offer often enough, the most exotic resource base for promotion of tourism'. Garhwal region also offers some of the rarest 'tourism products'

of nature. Himalayan mystique is compelling and beauty lies unveiled and uncovered with vast stretches of virgin and wild land, unspoiled by human interaction. They offer rich pastures for the new nomads who having been saturated with affluence, carve for such destination (Singh: 1983). In totality Garhwal is a heaven both for religious pilgrim and the discerning naturalist.

Tourism as a large scale mass movement and as an instrument of economic development may be a new phenomenon but in Garhwal Himalaya it has been an age old phenomenon in the form of pilgrimage or 'tirathayatra'. In older times it was essentially pilgrimage embodying simplicity, morality, ecological purity and self imposed discipline. Due to its pure religious nature it has continued for centuries without any adverse effect on the ecology and environment of the region.

During last few decades tourism has come to be recognised as an instrument of regional development-par excellence. It can break through the inertia and economic morbidity of a backward region like Garhwal (Kaur: 1985). The unparalleled natural beauty and religious importance of Garhwal have made it a potential area for tourism development. With the realisation of these realities Uttar Pradesh Government started certain serious efforts in this direction with the formation of Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (G.M.V.N.) in 1976. The G.M.V.N. was established with the main purpose of development of this region along with the promotion and development of basic infrastructures and facilities for tourism promotion. This premier organisation has been engaged in the task of promotion of mass tourism in the region by providing reasonable accommodation, transport facilities and development of new tourist spots within the region. Attempts are also being made to do away with the seasonality of tourism and to make it a round the year phenomenon. Government has also made many efforts to promote folk and local products by establishing centres of woodcraft and shawl making. These efforts on the part of Government need further boost by introducing innovative ideas and demand orientation in their products.

Tourism as it exists today in Garhwal region has its own problems which tend to limit the over all economic benefits of tourism to this region. As the tourism in this region is localised only in few centres especially the traditional pilgrim centres, so the benefits from tourism, though considerable, accrue to only a small number of people in handful of places. These economic benefits hardly percolate to reach the general population especially the rural population out side the main tourist centres and routes. Thus the increasing tourism in Garhwal Himalayas has only helped to create pockets of affluence in otherwise economically backward region.

Tourism is not purely an agent of economic development. It has its own sociology, anthropology, ecology and geography which are to be thoroughly understood for the real development of tourism in the region. Economists are

generally positively oriented towards tourism, while sociologists and ecologists have always expressed their reservations about the net socio-economic benefits derived through tourism at the cost of social and ecological disintegration. According to Pizan (1982) in contrast to the economic effects the social and psychological changes as a result of tourism have often been portrayed as unfavourable and negative. But it is difficult to evaluate and quantify the possible negative consequences of tourism in order to include them in economic supra-regional analysis.

The increasing tourist traffic in Garhwal Himalayas has resulted in many adverse effects on the ecology and environment of the region. Environmentalists are concerned about the ecological imbalances and environmental degradation being brought about by the huge number of visitors and their impact on the carrying capacity of this hill region. To facilitate and encourage tourism, new roads have been and are being constructed. This results in loosening and erosion of soil which are considered to be responsible for frequent landslides. With frequent landslides the rate of soil erosion is further speeded up. The erosion not only results in the loss of top soil but also of vegetational cover in the region.

In spite of all its evils and limitations tourism holds the key of socio-economic development of this economically backward hill region. But any policy or plan aimed at developing tourism in this ecologically sensitive region must maintain equilibrium between ecological and economic aspects of tourism and this can be achieved if the environment too is considered from the very beginning of such plans. Attempts should be made to disperse the tourist traffic both in terms of time and space. They should be attracted to wider areas and for a longer part of the year by the development of infrastructure and ancillary facilities. This should not prove too difficult a task as the Garhwal region offers a wide choice of places of religious interest, scenic beauty, adventure and recreation etc. Tourism should not be treated as an instrument of socio-economic regeneration in isolation but it should be made an integral part of any plan or strategy oriented towards the development of Garhwal Himalayas.

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EDUCATION POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE-THE CASE OF SINGAPORE

PRAHLAD MISHRA

The first school opened in Singapore was the 'Free-School (1834) after the foundation of Singapore in 1819 (by Sir Stamford Raffle). The school had the English and Malay as a medium of instruction for school going children. It was viewed that these medium of instruction could internalize the western and oriental socio-cultural norms in the personality of the children of the total societal community. The English was recognized as a tool for the education of science, needed for societal development in the 19th century. For the purpose of oriental education and the production of well skilled teachers, the Teacher's Training was Started in 1878, which took the responsibility of moral, religious and linguistic training of the teachers. It was thought that the trained teachers could safeguard the physical, moral and intellectual responsibility of children in society. It was the time when the societal composition of Singapore was becoming heterogeneous in nature. Christian missionary came in Singapore and established English medium of schools and provided the societal services like medicine and health care for the needed people in Singapore. The societal movement in country was towards the commercialization. This movement required a certain kind of skilled development that rested on the medium of English education. The Singapore was developed as a free trading entrepot in south east Asia. The steamship was under operation and the link of Singapore was widened through the connection of various countries of world. The commercialization demanded the professional skill development that was only possible through the English medium of schools. The upper class of society especially the merchants of Singapore became apathetic towards the education of Malay medium of schools and stopped to donate the money to Malay schools. It resulted into the closing of many Malay Schools in Singapore whereas the Chinese, Tamil medium of schools were not under the sponsorship of British authority. Still the Malay, Chinese and Tamil Schools were running in Singapore by the efforts and responsibility of the community leaders.

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