

## Eco-tourism through Promoting Sports Activities in Garhwal Region

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### Abstract

The Uttarakhand state is the unique place for experiencing the natural beauty of Himalaya in Garhwal region. Garwal Himalaya is known as 'Dev-bhoomi' due to its location in Central Himalaya. Due to presence of holy shrines, mountainous peaks, glaciers, wide snow-clad ground and high flowing rivers. The nature has endowed Garwal Region with rich wealth of flora, fauna and vast water resources, since last decades, Garwal Region has attracted a large number of tourists from India as well as from abroad and significantly contributed to enhance the economy for the welfare of their citizens and their development. In might rivers as Ganga and Alakhnanda have developed the river sports, in Tehri reservoir and Roorkee Yachting and Canoeing have developed.

The Auli snow-clad grounds near Joshimath in district Chamoli, is world famous for Snow winter games *i.e.* snow skiing, Ice hockey, snow

golf etc. The mountaineering activities have been developed in high altitude mountains peaks and mountaineering courses has been developed by high altitude "Nehru Institute of Mountaineering College" at Uttarkashi in Garwal Region. In a very short period, the Garwal Region has developed a lot of water, Ice and adventurous games and sports and developed the basic infrastructure under the tourism promoting scheme "Incredible India".

The Sustainable environmental awareness programme also jointed with tourism and launched a campaign programme in deferent tourism zones to develop a healthy, holistic and sustainable eco development of Garwal region of Uttarakhand

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### Introduction

In the present day so many terms you often hear these days are "Eco-Tourism" and "Adventure

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Travel". To further confuse the issue there is also "Sustainable Tourism", "Responsible Tourism", "Nature Based Travel", "Green Travel", "Multi-Sport Adventures" and "Cultural Tourism". The following are Untamed Path's definitions based on common usage.

### **Eco-tourism**

Perhaps the most over-used and misused word in the travel industry. But what does it mean? The Ecotourism Society defines it as "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people". A walk through the rainforest is not eco-tourism unless that particular walk somehow benefits that environment and the people who live there. A rafting trip is only eco-tourism if it raises awareness and funds to help protect the watershed. A loose interpretation of this definition allows many companies to promote themselves as something that they are not. If true eco-tourism is important to you, ask plenty of questions to determine if your trip will help "conserve and improve" the places you visit.

### **Adventure Travel**

Another term which is heavily used by marketing departments. While travel to another country is often adventurous it is not necessarily "Adventure Travel". Most dictionaries define adventure similarly: "an unusual experience including some level of risk and uncertainty". "Adventure Travel" includes this idea of risk and oftentimes some unconventional means of transport. A dugout canoe journey deep into the Amazon basin with its attendant difficulties meets this definition. While a city tour of Paris might have some level of uncertainty it is not by

definition "Adventure Travel". If you love true adventure you probably already know this and can see through the hype to find the real thing for yourself.

Uttarakhand which is well known as the land of multicultural and multi adventurous sports and located in the northwestern part of the country. It is bordered to the northwest by the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, to the northeast by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, to the southeast by Nepal, to the south and southwest by the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, and to the west by a tiny segment of the Indian state of Haryana. Its capital is the northwestern city of Dehradun. On Nov. 9, 2000, the state of Uttaranchal—the 27th state of India—was carved out of Uttar Pradesh; In January 2007 the new state changed its name to Uttarakhand, meaning "northern region," which was the traditional name for the area. Area 19,739 square miles (51,125 square km).

### **Biographical importance of Land**

Uttarakhand has a highly varied topography, with snow-covered peaks, glaciers, deep canyons, roaring streams, beautiful lakes, and a few patches of dusty plains in the south. Some of the highest mountains in the world are found in Uttarakhand. Most notably, these include Nanda Devi (25,646 feet [7,817 metres]), which is the second highest peak in India, Kamet (25,446 feet [7,756 metres]), and Badrinath (23,420 feet [7,138 metres]).

Uttarakhand can be divided into several physiographic zones, all running parallel to each other from northwest to southeast. The northern zone, popularly known as the Himadri, contains segments of the Zaskar and the Great Himalaya

ranges, with elevations ranging roughly from 10,000 to 25,000 feet (3,000 to 7,600 metres). Most of the major peaks are located in this zone. Adjacent to and south of the Great Himalayas is a zone containing the Lesser Himalayas, known popularly as the Himachal, with elevations between about 6,500 and 10,000 feet (2,000 to 3,000 metres); the zone has two linear ranges—the Mussoorie and the Nag Tibba. To the south of the Himachal is a stretch of the Siwalik Range. The entire area containing the Himadri, the Himachal, and the Siwaliks is broadly known as the Kumaun Himalayas. The southern edge of the Siwalik Range merges with a narrow bed of gravel and alluvium known as the Bhabar, which interfaces to the southeast with the marshy terrain known as the Tarai. The combined Siwalik-Bhabar-Tarai area ranges in elevation from 1,000 to 10,000 feet (300 to 3,000 metres). South of the Siwaliks are found flat-floored depressions, known locally as duns, such as the Dehra Dun.

### **Popular sports in Uttarakhand**

The various types of the sports concerning to the eco tourism are as Aero sports, Cycling, Eco - Tourism, Fishing, Golf, Hiking & Trekking, Motor - Cycling Mountaineering, Rafting, Skiing etc.

Garhwal is a Paraglider's and Parasailor's paradise. In the north you have the huge ramparts of the Great Himalayas and in the south are the plains of the Terai. The unique geographical position of Garhwal provides excellent conditions for all grades of paragliding and parasailing, from beginners to intermediate and advance. The hot air from the Gangetic plains

and the cold air from the hills create excellent flying conditions. The climate of the region is also well suited for the purpose. The flying season spans September to December and then March to June.

### **Paragliding**



Para-gliding uses 'thermals' as the driving force, and is the closest one can get to being a bird. In perfect weather conditions you can stay aloft for over three hours and can soar to heights more than 3000 metres. Gliding is one of the most exciting activities that lets you experience the freedom of unstinted flight and a bird's eye view of the world. Once in the air, you experience the ethereal serenity of the sport. Para gliding is another form of aero-adventure that requires some basic training. Parachutes are used to glide in the glorious heights here, and this sport can be great fun. The thrill of it can be best experienced on the slopes at Auli and in the Doon valley.

### **Parasailing**



Another form of aero sport that is popular with adventure sport lovers in India is Parasailing. In this sport, you are attached to a parachute that

takes to the air with as few as three or four steps. You soar to several feet above the ground level. It is easy to learn how to parasail and can be experienced with the entire family during an adventure sport vacation.

**Biking and Motorcycling in Uttarakhand:**



Biking and motor cycling are two of the adventure activities that many people enjoy on adventure tours in India. The Himalayan region in India with its varied geographical landscape provides some great trails for cycling and motor biking. As you trudge up the Himalayan roads to reach some of the highest towns and villages, you see a different India unfold. An India which is rustic, 'pollution free', serene and charming. In fact there is no better way to discover a tiny hamlet or a non-descript town in the foothills of the Himalayas than on a mountain bike or cycle.

**Trekking**

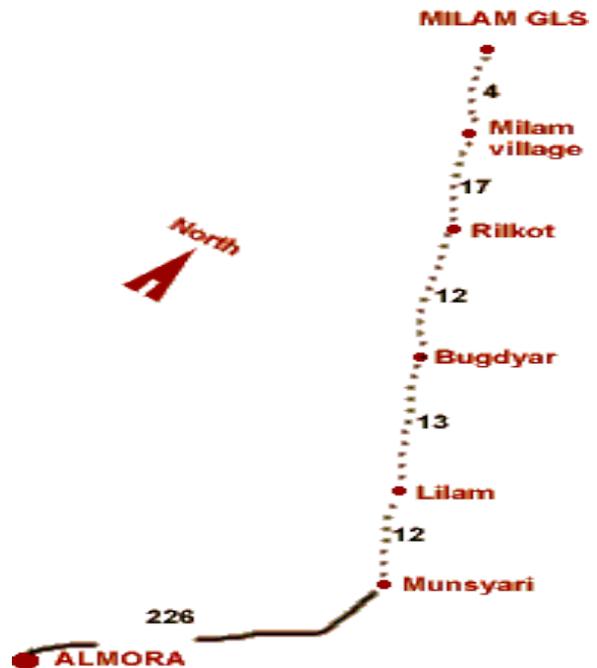
Uttaranchal Himalayas has the major chunk of Indian Himalayas. Remained under developed for a long time the area is still in its primitive form and has vast areas of pure wilderness. Uttaranchal ( Garhwal & Kumaon ), harboring many snow covered peaks above 6,500 meters, is an excellent destination for trekkers and mountaineers. Trekking in the different valleys of pure wilderness , harboring different cultures offer a chance to have a close encounter without standing views of greater Himalayan range, alpine meadows, rare high altitude flora and fauna, the lifestyle of the mountain people,

their settlement patterns, dress, dialect, Jewellery and others.

**Mountaineering in Uttarakhand**

Kumaon: Kumaon consists of three different valleys. They lie to the west of Nepal. Kumaon is generally confused with Garhwal. In fact Garhwal was once a part of Kumaon till the British separated it and gave it a different name.

The first valley, in the east, is the Darma Ganga valley. At its head are several peaks above 6000 m, technically difficult to climb. Peaks like Sangthang and Lalla We can be approached from



here.

The Central valley in the Kumaon is the valley of the Milam glacier. Beside its eastern branch is an excellent climbing area of Kalabaland glacier. The peak Chiring We (6559 m) rises from the Kalabaland glacier and was climbed only once in 1979 by the Indian team led by Harish Kapadia. To its south, is Suitilla (6373 m) a most

formidable and difficult goal. At the head of the Milam glacier are the enticing peaks Hardeol (7151 m) and Tirsuli (7074 m). Nanda Devi East has been climbed from this valley. Panch Chuli is the south eastern valley of this section in the Kumaon. It has five different peaks which were conquered with great difficulty, both from the East and the West.

### **Garhwal**

The Garhwal is a tract in the center of the Indian Himalaya. For many years mountaineers have visited and climbed in this area. North Garhwal consists of peaks like Kamet (7756 m) and Mukut Parbat (7242 m). Many high peaks here have not been climbed. The famous Hindu temple of Badrinath attracts many Hindu pilgrims.

### **Western Garhwal**

The valleys to the extreme west of the Garhwal region house some very easy, gentle peaks. Many students and early mountaineers have trained in these areas. The Swargarohini group can prove a bit troublesome though. Bandarpuch West and Bandarpuch (6316 m) have been climbed a couple of times. For a quick trip from Delhi this area is the most convenient.

### **Nanda Devi Sanctuary**

The area from where the Rishi Ganga starts is the famous Nanda Devi Sanctuary, the centre piece of the Garhwal region. Until 1934 the gorge of the Rishi Ganga was the least known part of the Himalaya. The Nanda Devi range is a long one, about 75 miles in circumference, about 6000 m high, sheltering approximately 380 sq. km. of ice and snow. The Nanda Devi peak (7816 m) is the most beautiful peak in the Indian Himalaya. It

was climbed in 1936 by Tilman and Odell and the shoulders of both its peaks were traversed by Japanese mountaineers in 1976.

### **Ecotourism in Uttarakhand**

Uttarakhand has a rare diversity of flora and fauna. This makes it an ideal area for developing eco-tourism, projects and activities like jungle safaris, trekking on mountain and forest trails, nature walks, catch and release angling for Mahaseer and other fish species. All these activities have to be conducted in a manner that promotes awareness of environment and helps maintain the fragile ecological balance.

### **Golf in Uttarakhand**

India is the first country outside Britain, which



took up the game of Golf. What makes golfing in India exciting is the diversity of its golf courses. Spread wide through the mountains, plains, deserts and at beach resorts, the environment of each golf course is unique in its culture and history. This is what has made India an ideal destination for golf and hence started the idea of a golf-tour in India. So, if you have not played golf in India, you are missing out on a wonderful adventure. Indian golf courses can well compete

with some of the leading golf courses in Asia. Varying environments, club houses, caddies and proshops. You can experience this all in India from our golf tours in India.

### **Golf tour in India**

India not only has the oldest golfclubs in the world outside England. In India is also the highest golfcourse in the world, located at Gulmarg in Kashmir. Golftours in India are convenient for tourists as most of the golf courses are well connected by road, rail and air and have excellent facilities. The Indian Golf Union is affiliated to the World Amateur Golf Council.

### **Dehradun**

Also located on the Kumaon - Garhwal range of mountains is Dehradun, most famous for its Forest Research Institute, and as a gateway to the hill resort of Mussoorie, Dehradun is also the training ground for the Indian Army and the Indian Military Academy initiates its cadets into the sport on a lush nine hole course, playable 18.

### **Nainital**

Raj Bhawan Golf Club, Nainital,

### **Ranikhet**

In the Kumaon hill is a small town called Ranikhet. Close to the more popular hill town of Nainital, Ranikhet is a resort for those who prefer the quiet environs of a country town. Located amidst a thick grove of pine trees, the Uppat Golf Course has nine holes with browns.

### **Skiing in Uttarakhand**

The premier skiing resort now is in Auli near Joshimath. You can contact local tour operators who offer excellent packages.

### **Skiing at Auli**

Auli is a 8-9 hrs drive from Rishikesh. The scenic drive along the Ganga takes us to Devprayag, the ancient town at the beginning of the holy Ganga. We drive further along the Alaknanda to Joshimath and Auli passing through the famous confluence towns of Rudraprayag and Karanprayag. Auli is one of the best ski slopes in Asia with many high peaks such as Nanda Devi surrounding the slopes.

A treat for the avid skier, these breath-taking hills provide a run of 10-12 km stretch and have an added advantage of fresh powder snow. The vast open spaces of these hills are an ideal spot for skiing long distances, all round the year. Professional winter skiing in Garhwal is now conducted on the slopes of Auli.

The slopes of Auli which are kept perfect by Garwhal Mandal Vikash Nigam (GMVN) with snow beaters, provide excellent skiing conditions. The 10-20 km of absolutely unspoilt and divine slopes provide an excellent opportunity to try, for seasonal skiers as well as cross country, slalom and downhill skiing events. Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN), which is a Government under taking, provides state-of-the-art facilities which are amongst the best in the world.

### **Skiing at Pithoragarh in the Kumaon hills**

Pithoragarh, famous for its natural scenic beauty and its spectacular temples serves as an excellent skiing spot. Set amidst the enchanting Kumaon hills it is often called 'miniature Kashmir'. Located at a height of 5412 m above sea level, in a very tiny valley it was a strategic place of the Chand Kings of Kumaon.



### **Other Skiing places in Garhwal**

- Dayara Bugyal & Kush Kalyan in district Uttarkashi.
- Panwali & Matya in district Tehri Garhwal
- Mundali in district Dehradun

### **White Water River Rafting**

Rafting against the rushes of the gushing Ganges is an exciting and hair-raising experience for all who wish to get carried by the raft on rising rapids. Our rafting can be combined with different jumping, kayaking, Body surfing, Beach volley ball, swimming, Trekking and fun obstacles.

The equipments used are of international standards and the most popular are- Hyside Rafts and imported helmets and life jackets. The rafts are always accompanied by kayaks for extra protection. The Best time & season of rafting on Ganges at shivpuri near rishikesh is from September to June, Rafting continues throughout the year. Major sites for River Rafting: Rishikesh for rafting in the Ganges. Rafting camp in Tons river near har ki- dun valley (May to July). Dehradun via Mussoorie.

### **Water Rafting**

#### **Water Rafting in Rishikesh**

In Garhwal region, Ganga river offers the professional as well as the amateur the exhilaration of white water rafting. The Alaknanda and Bhagirathi, are the main tributaries of the Ganga and meet at Devprayag, frothing from their racy descent. Their waters are of Grade IV to V, challenging the expert to savour the thrill.

#### **Rafting in Uttaranchal**

##### **Rishikesh and Kodyala**

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Down river from Devprayag, the Ganga changes into a pool drop river. This stretch of almost 70 km is perfect for amateur and the novice, for here the river offers some fine Grade III rapids and two Grade IV 'GOLF COURSE', 4 km below Shivpuri village; each followed by rapids, the 'WALL' at Byasi and the deep and placid pools. Sandy beaches line the river at intervals, allowing river rafters to pull up alongside. The slopes on either side are covered with oak, pine, spruce and fir, with the occasional village and its terraced fields dotting the landscape. Wildlife is visible at a distance, comprising mainly of spotted deer, monkey, leopard, while multi-hued butterflies fit among flowering bushes. Spiritual

retreats and ashrams overlook the river and add to the spiritual experience.

#### **River Alaknanda**

- Kaliasaur to Srinagar - 16 km, tourist stretch.
- Srinagar to Bagwan - 20 km, tourist stretch.
- Kaliasaur to Rishikesh.

#### **River Bhagirathi**

- Matli to Dunda - 12 km. Both professional and tourist stretch.
- Harsil to Uttarkashi
- Dharasu to Chham - 12 km. Both professional and tourist stretch.
- Jangla to Jhala - 20 km. Both professional and tourist stretch.
- Bhaldyana to Tehri - Both professional and tourist stretch.

#### **Bhilangana River**

- Ghansali to Gadolia 32 km. Professional stretch.

#### **River Mandakani**

- Chandrapuri to Rudraprayag 26 km. Professional stretch.

On behalf of the above discussion and facts available for eco-tourism and promoting sports activity, Uttarakhand is one of the state of India which is going to develop state economical growth by using natural resources and promoting water sports activity by doing excess attention, remarkable and tremendous job to earn the revenue by using own natural resources (not influencing their natural condition). To develop new parameter for the prevention of natural resources and to maintain their natural quality some essential step and necessary task force was

formed which look after the natural climatic condition and give suggestion to Govt. for taking the essential caution and alertness. Weather forecast department and state NDRF team also keeping their watch for any kind of rapid action. The Garhwal region is best and rich in natural biodiversity, eco-tourism, adventurous sports and water sports activity.

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