

## Chapter 13:

# Impact of Social Media in Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Uttarakhand

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Social media has emerged as one of the most powerful platform for promotion due to its outreach and huge number of participants. Apart from spreading the information, it acts as a source of income for many individuals irrespective of the educational background, region, caste and creed. With facebook live and other live options, it has become the fastest medium of first hand information. Travel Vlogs has become a source of information for others and a source of income for the owner. People are impressed with such Vlogs or even with pictures shared by other travelers for a particular destination that plays a significant role in finalizing the destination one wants to visit. As the sustainable tourism has a challenge of conservation as well, it can use social media to spread the right information in the right way so as to influence the perception of the potential visitors that could further strengthen the sustainability of that particular desination. This outreach could be quite helpful in promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. The objective of this chapter is to figure out the functions that social media platforms performs in encouraging sustainable tourism in Uttarakhand. The research reveals information about sustainable tourism and related items in the aforementioned locations that should be marketed on social media. It also makes recommendations for ways to boost sustainable tourism in Uttarakhand.

## 1 Introduction

The advent of social media as a platform of communication has ushered in a fundamental change around the globe, allowing people to view, connect, and share information. The growth of social media as new technology has altered the way the tourism industry operates, which has had a substantial impact on the long-term viability of the industry. Numerous international bodies, including the World Wide Fund for Nature, the International Eco-Tourism Society, the Eco-Tourism Society of India, the Rainforest Alliance, Sustainable Travel International, and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, are constantly working to sector and spread knowledge of sustainable tourism through social networking sites, as well as conferences and publications. Tourism organizations can use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest to stay in touch with other stakeholders.

Tourism is a cultural, social, and economic activity in which people travel from their home to other areas and nations to enjoy pleasure, regional foods and specialties, amusement, shopping, relaxation, study, enterprise, spirituality, healthcare, and even seeing friends and family. It includes transportation to and from the selected location as well as lodging. Sports tourism, religious tourism, medical tourism, culture tourism, rural tourism, spiritual tourism, tea-tourism, wine tourism, and so on are all examples of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, with the rapid advancement of globalization, sustainable tourism has gained traction.

Brundtland Report published in 1987 by UN defined Sustainable Development for the first time as the development done to meet the requirement of present, but without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Agenda 21 was created in 1992 and this declaration was signed by 178 Governments at the UN Conference on Environment & Development in Brazil.



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According to UNWTO, Sustainable tourism could be described as the procedure of humans adapting to a changing environment, in which assets, expenditures, scientific advances, and transformation all align with and supplement current and future human needs and ambitions. 2017 was designated as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by the United Nations. The purpose of this proclamation at the United Nations 70th General Assembly was to promote consciousness about the contribution of the tourism and hospitality sector through the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental. Sustainable tourism promotes long-term ecological integrity, the promotion of native cultures, as well as the creation of job possibilities in towns and villages via tourists. For example, visiting guests are provided with a model place in which to chill out and enjoy the lovely views and cuisine prepared organically by local growers. Visitors learn about sustainability and witness how it might be accomplished. It is worth noting as Today's Hospitality sector business is the seventh biggest in the world, accounting for approximately 9.6 percent of the country's revenue. It is expected to grow at a 6.9 percent annual rate over the next ten years, making it the fourth largest in the world. Through infrastructure development, employment generation, and skills enhancement, this is intended to have a compounding impact on India's economic productivity. In India, sustainable tourism entails engaging tourists ethically in rural homestays, textile tourism, cultural tourism, and wildlife eco-tourism.

The Government of India announced the first Tourism Policy in 1982. The aim of this strategy was to promote sustainable tourism for financial sustainability as well as the merging of the socio-cultural fabric to improve India's brand reputation. Kerala, famously regarded as "God's own country" around the world, was possibly the first state in India to develop creative efforts for sustainable tourism. Kerala Tourism was awarded the coveted UNWTO Ulysses Award in 2014 for its Global Leadership in designing unique strategies for sustainable tourism.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of social media networks in encouraging sustainable tourism in Uttarakhand. The research also includes information on sustainable tourism and related items from the aforementioned areas that should be marketed on social media. The research will provide the government, local residents, and sustainable tourism operators with very much knowledge for media planning and developing effective marketing strategies.

## **2 Review of Literature**

Social Media consists of two words. Social represents the activities carried out among people, while media represents the internet enable tools and technologies that helps carrying out such activities and connecting the people. Social Media facilitates the socialization of content (Eric,2015).Social media can provide interactive, targeted, engaging, timely, and a low cost option to market a community. It is a tool where one can share opinions, have conversations & exchanging information. Social media is a great platform for education tourism as well (Irfan,2017). Social media is most powerful online networking tool nowadays and has entered the socio-economic life of people. Technological advancements has made the individuals as co-producer of knowledge. One can share information and can even earn from that information through utilizing various features of different social media platforms (Greenhow et.al,2016).

Social media has changed the dynamics of business, marketing & communications. Not only companies, but also random individuals are now using social media to share their knowledge on products, brands & services. Because of this impact and ease of use and outreach, the usage of Social Media for personal, professional and business purpose is on the rise (Sara,2015). When it comes to tourism, the cultural resource and environment are main factors for the development of any tourism destinations, and hence they should be conserved and developed responsibly through Sustainable Tourism (Swanson,2018). According to the

survey, places can use social media platforms to promote their strong points, such as natural values, conference halls, local attractions, and specials in their shopping streets. Destinations must include the descriptive factors of their visitors while creating and promoting their social media accounts. As a result, social media allows locations to stay in front of their customers at all times and maintain ongoing interaction with them (Buluk,2015). Tourists and excursionists are influenced by various forms of appealing presentation by social media like Facebook, Instagram etc. Social media are gradually establishing a favorable image and picture of tourism in public perceptions, thoughts, psychology, behavior, and in the overall destination selection (inbound and outbound tourist) (Praveen,2014).

The tourist places themselves, as well as its website, blog, Facebook page, Twitter feed, and YouTube channel, are all controlled media that empower marketers to connect consumers in relevant and attractive ways when and where the public wants to know. This relationship-building technique can provide a deeper brand experience while also encouraging consumer support and word-of-mouth suggestions with substantial weight and reliability. Rather than being the focal point of marketing communications, the responsibility of the media is now to build on and sustain the enthusiasm established by customer engagement (Harmain *et al.*,2021). Emerging digital media techniques and social networking attributes provide numerous opportunities for raising the green image and directing visitor connections in a way that can encourage visitors to repeat their intents to visit resorts that practice sustainable tourism. Furthermore, by contributing to the larger good, the destination can profit both environmentally and economically (Imad *et al.*,2021).

Social media has become an important component of online tourism in the context of organizing trips through search engines. From an opportunity perspective, this report presents the key-value determinants for tourist departments and marketers. In order to increase the reliability of information and services provided by the tourist industry (such as marketers and departments), players of the industry (such as marketers and departments) are encouraged to focus their efforts on social media. Using social media, the tourism department can utilize all information, including special events, destinations, and travel stories (written and multimedia) (Rathore *et al.*,2017). Social media, is one of the most important tools in today's internet age, and it has the potential to play a significant role in the growth of the tourism industry if used effectively. Consumers who are willing to travel to a specific location to spend their leisure time are influenced greatly by social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and personal blogs. These platforms have allowed the public to have a deeper understanding and knowledge of the locations, as well as learn about the unique experiences they may have there. Tourist attractions and hotels benefit from the increased visibility provided by these sites, as well as the possibility to expand their business (Tarannum,2020).

If we plan to promote Ecotourism, providing awareness through social media about the Ecotourism Idea is vital although it can reduce pollution in the tourism region caused by visitors. Because understanding the notion of ecotourism allows visitors to understand what they can and cannot do, as well as feel better engaged in the conservation of the environment. The entrance of visitors or tourists to the destination has both positive and negative consequences. The positive result is that it will raise income from stakeholders and community members, which can then be used to preserve tourist places. However, the tourist will have a negative influence because of pollution caused by vehicles, garbage, and other factors (Pramana,2019) . Social media plays a major role in encouraging a sustainable tourist industry as this will make a contribution to tourism development and boost the economy, societal awareness of the environment, social, and cultural issues, and its potential for decision-making, societal virtual discussion, and promotion tool (Azhar,2019). Even the Resorts now have specialized teams who examine social media reviews on a regular schedule

because of their engagement with social media. Quality and responsiveness to guests' complaints can now build or destroy a company or hotel's brand. Guest involvement and satisfaction can be increased with social media, which is a minimum and maximum marketing technique (Sahoo *et al.*,2017).

The researchers focused on the role of social media in promoting tourism. Based on the findings of this study, tourism marketing organizations are advised to split the connection and improve their performance in promoting tourism businesses by using the social media network more effectively in their continuous efforts to promote the region and the country as prime tourist destinations (Rawal *et.al.*,2020).

### **3 Research Objectives**

- Identify crucial socioeconomic elements which contribute in developing sustainable tourism in Uttarakhand.
- To determine cultural variables those are vital for long-term growth.
- To understand the function of social media in raising awareness and encouraging environmentally friendly tourist destinations.
- To find sustainable tourism products in the Uttarakhand.

### **4 Research Methodology**

The study's research approach was dependent on collecting tourist responses from other states of India who were exploring Uttarakhand's major tourism spots. The research consists of two stages to collect responses for the analysis. A pilot study was carried out during the first stage. Because the researchers had accessibility to these locations, a convenient sampling strategy was adopted for data collection. A convenient sample of 25 responders was chosen for this purpose. The primary sample contains interviewees who were ready to involve and dedicate personal time to the interview session with the researchers. The finalized records became received within the 2nd level from 220 traveler respondents who had been traveling Uttarakhand from different states. As a result, a dependent questionnaire became created and despatched thru Google Forms. It is really well worth noting that the survey became pretested and up to date previous to distribution to guarantee its reliability. The questionnaire used a 5-factor Likert scale with one for "Strongly disagree," for "Disagree," 3 for "Undecided," 4 for "Agree," and 5 for "Strongly Agree." An overall of a hundred and eighty usable responses had been obtained from the 220 questionnaires distributed. The responders visiting Uttarakhand were from the following states: Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal and Gujarat.

#### **4.1 Pilot Study**

The purpose of the pilot study was to determine the questionnaire's dependability.

#### **4.2 Reliability**

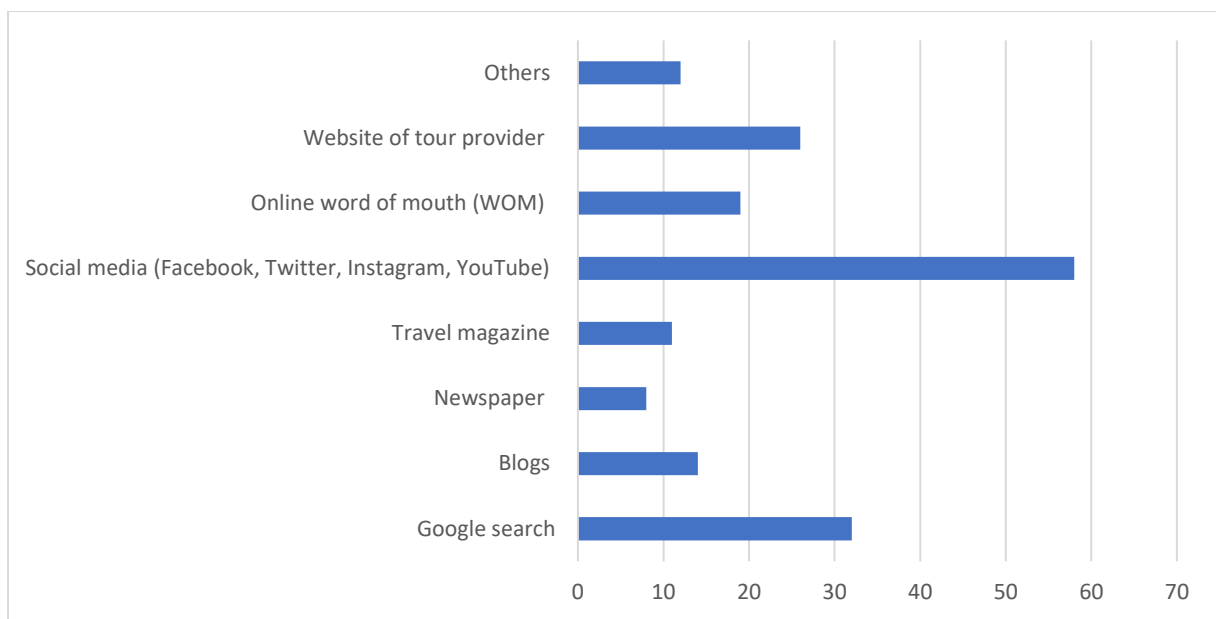
The questionnaire was pre-tested for its reliability in getting responses from the respondents. It was put to the test on 25 samples gathered from tourists. The Cronbach's alpha method was used to test the questionnaire's reliability, and the questionnaire was determined to be reliable with a Cronbach alpha score of 0.890, which is regarded well. As a result, the questionnaire was deemed to be trustworthy. The table no.1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents used for analytical purpose.

**Table 1:** Demographic profile of the respondents

Particular	Variable	N	Particulars (%)
Age	18–28	34	18.8
	29–38	32	17.7
	39–48	49	27.2
	49–58	38	21.1
	Above 58	27	15
Gender	Male	110	61.1
	Female	70	38.8
Marital status	Married	90	50
	Single	80	44.4
	Other	10	5.5
Qualification	Primary	12	6.6
	Secondary	16	8.8
	Intermediate	20	11.1
	Graduate	132	73.3
Occupation	Agriculture	22	12.2
	Govt. job	42	23.3
	Business/Self-employed	52	28.8
	Private job	37	20.5
	Student	27	15
Monthly income	INR 20000-30000	15	8.3
	INR 31000–45000	27	15
	INR 46000–70000	64	35.5
	INR 71000–1,00,000	43	23.8
	Above INR 1,00,000	31	17.2

**Table 2:** Preferred source of information % of respondents

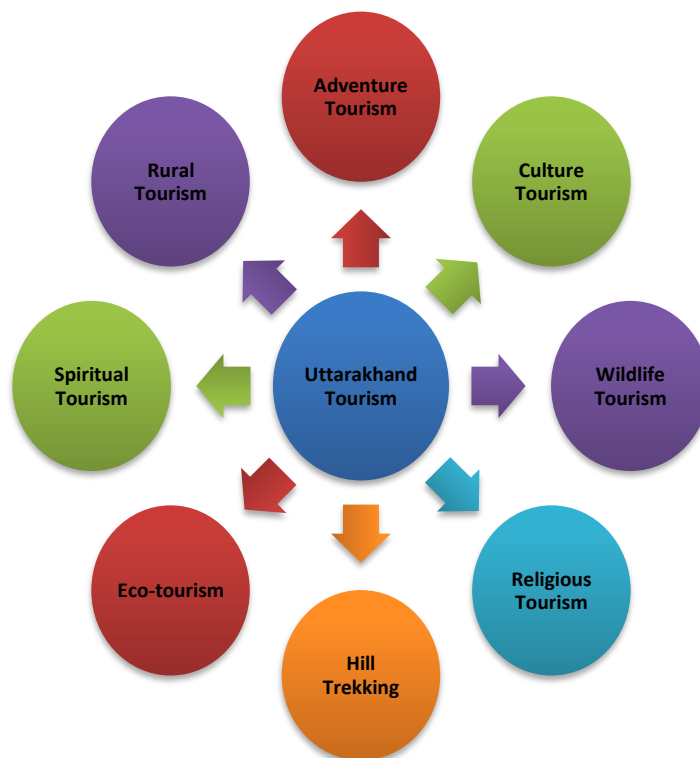
Sources	N	Percentage
Google search	32	17.7
Blogs	14	7.7
Newspaper	08	4.4
Travel magazine	11	6.1
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)	58	32.2
Online word of mouth (WOM)	19	10.5
Website of tour provider	26	14.4
Others	12	6.6



**Figure 1:** Preferred source of information for respondents

## 5 Scope of Sustainable Tourism in Uttarakhand

In this section some of the famous scope of sustainable tourism is mentioned. Uttarakhand has one of the high scope of different tourism. As Uttarakhand is a state in north Indian region of Himalayas that's why the entire hilly region of the Uttarakhand has lot to offer for adventurous, water sports game and activities, natural tourism, sustainable tourism, pilgrim tourism, spiritual tourism, natural areas trekking and etc. as mentioned in figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Scope of Sustainable Tourism in Uttarakhand Author's own

## 6 Data Analysis

Collected data from tourist through questionnaire is analysis in this section

**Table 3: Data Analysis**

S. no	Particular	SD	D	N	A	SA	Ttl	Mean-1	Mean-2	Std. Dev
1	My trips can be planned more efficiently with the help of social media platforms	24	27	32	41	56	180	3.43	13.75	3.21
2	Social media platforms make my travel planning easier.	15	23	36	45	61	180	3.63	14.86	3.35
3	My travel-related decisions are made easier by social media platforms.	8	6	20	64	82	180	4.14	18.25	3.75
4	Travel planning is made easier by social media platforms.	16	24	32	41	67	180	3.66	15.17	3.39
5	Reviews are important for me mentioned in social media	23	25	35	46	51	180	3.42	13.60	3.19
6	When it comes to travel information, I avoid social media platforms.	5	9	21	46	99	180	4.25	19.11	3.85
7	Tourism contributes to the economic improvement.	3	8	26	39	104	180	4.29	19.40	3.88
8	Religious sites have an impact on your experience.	7	16	31	35	91	180	4.03	17.69	3.69
9	Local Handcrafted items are key sustainable tourism products.	4	6	35	45	90	180	4.17	18.40	3.77
10	Tourism encourages local business and self-sufficiency.	9	19	32	45	75	180	3.87	16.48	3.55
11	Social media tourism marketing boosts the government's income.	6	9	14	55	96	180	4.25	19.15	3.86
12	The government should give sufficient information about tourist locations and associated services.	20	23	40	47	50	180	3.46	13.74	3.20
13	Social media helps in increased sales of regional cuisines.	11	18	35	40	76	180	3.84	16.32	3.53
14	Tourism advertising on social media boosts foot traffic to a tourist site	6	7	8	72	87	180	4.26	19.07	3.84
15	Tourist arrivals are a better sign of sales and economic development	4	13	25	60	78	180	4.08	17.72	3.69

16	Social Media helps in boosted local fairs and festivals	9	19	32	45	75	180	3.87	16.48	3.55
17	The development of tourism translates into increased sales of ethnic arts and crafts.	6	7	8	72	87	180	4.26	19.07	3.84
18	Tourists might get important information through social media.	6	7	8	72	87	180	4.26	19.07	3.84
19	Tourists are influenced by events such as trade shows to visit various places.	12	28	30	40	70	180	3.71	15.46	3.42
20	Adventure tourism raises awareness and promotes tourism.	10	12	33	52	73	180	3.92	16.73	3.57
21	Social media give exact information about a particular place?	25	28	30	32	65	180	3.46	14.13	3.26

## 7 Findings

Social media in tourism has received extensive research worldwide and has been recognized internationally as an emerging field. A number of aspects of tourism are being influenced by social media, including information search for and judgment of information as well as promotional strategies that use best practices for communicating with customers through social media. Social media plays an important role in sustainable tourism because through that it can highlight the regional cuisine and give awareness to tourists about local feasts and fairs. The advantages of using social media for marketing sustainable tourism is that it has the capacity to contact huge number of tourists without any efforts. At the same time it can be used to promote concept of Sustainable Tourism and its necessity for the future. Social Media can do awareness and promotion of a destination, concept, region or culture at the same time.

## 8 Conclusion & Recommendations

Uttarakhand is endowed with native flora and fauna that is mostly undiscovered, and as a result, it has high tourist attraction. But to conserve the heritage and traditional values, we need a sustainable approach. Due to globalization and developments, the local culture is shrinking and the natives are moving out of the mountains to settle in better-developed areas. As previously said, both talented men and women artisans are involved in the production of sustainable items such as handicrafts and handlooms. Self-sustaining hotels are now being constructed, with people visiting the hotels participating in activities such as growing crops, making handlooms and so on. In addition, home stays are being promoted in several tourist destinations in Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand is also blessed with many resources such as herbal medicine, organic crops therefore, as much or more work is required to promote the same through fairs. Social media could be a great method of promotion for organizing and publicizing such sustainable events. Individuals will get a forum for discussion, exchanging ideas, keeping in contact, and so on through social media. To some extent, social media seems to have a stronger aspect and also can occasionally dictate policy decisions made by the government. People get better and smarter as a result of social media since they can share their expertise with others. Furthermore, social media is a highly essential tool in managing the attitudes of individuals who visit ecotourism sites, both in terms of content and visibility.

Popular fairs and feasts needs to be promoted through social networking sites. Moreover, rural festivals should also be given due attention, which are celebrated by a particular caste or region. This will ensure



socio-economic development of such regions. With the promotion, we should also be promoting its history and significance with local culture and the need to keeping such traditions alive. Commercialisation have the ability to kill the originality of the culture, however, social media platforms should be used wisely so as to focus on culture and not on commercialisation.

## 9 Declarations

### 9.1 Competing Interests

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### 9.2 Publisher's Note

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### Author's Detail

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