

# Community Based Tourism Development: A Case-study of Eco Village Sari in Kedarnath Sanctuary Region

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**Abstract:** The paradigm shift from conventional mass tourism towards the nature based tourism has provoked world countries to concentrate more on developing sustainable tourism practices especially in nature bound areas. India as part of accomplishing sustainable tourism has developed many strategies and framework which is highly recognized and executed by all states. Uttarakhand being a mountainous state and recognized for its rich untapped natural resources provides right space for developing community based tourism (CBT) as a tool for attaining sustainability in practicing tourism. The present paper attempts to find out the impact of tourism on socio-economic development of community members and review the opportunities and challenges for developing CBT in village Sari in the vicinity of Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary. It is found that there is a positive local community development by having tourism as an important tool. The information was collected through structured questionnaire and direct interaction with the local community members.

**Keywords:** Community based tourism, Sustainability, Kedarnath sanctuary, Village Sari, Deorital.

## Introduction

Tourism is now affecting the lives of rural people and is often seen as a tool for development (Ashley and Roe, 1998; Neto, 2002; Harrison, 2003) and is therefore viewed as a community and economic development tool that serves certain ends (McCool et. al., 2001; Davis and Morais, 2004). The concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT) has come up after ecotourism in particular has come under increasing criticism (Weaver, 2003; Barkin, 2003; and Cater, 2003). CBT is the other popular alternative offered to traditional tourism development style and it can be defined as "Tourism based on negotiation and participation with key stakeholders in the destination (Saarinen 2006). In CBT the hosts play a central role in determining the form and process of tourism development. (Timothy, 2002). Community members being the real custodian of any destination must get the central role in decision making process regarding tourism development in order to better handle the impacts. Community involvement in tourism has been receiving increasing attention because of the success and sustainability of the development, depends on the active support of the local population and higher levels of integration lead to socio-economic benefits for the community (Mitchell and Eagles, 2001). Further, through training it also enhance the skills of community members for better interpretation of local natural and cultural aspects to the tourists.

Rocharungsat, (2008) has summarized the criteria to evaluate the success of CBT in terms of the following factors:

- Benefits gained from CBT should be distributed equally throughout the destination community.
- Good and careful management of tourism is significant.
- CBT should have strong Partnerships and support from within and outside a

community

- Uniqueness of the place should be considered to sustain the destination.
- Environmental conservation should not be neglected.

Thus, the study attempts to identify the potential for Community Based Tourism (CBT) in Sari Village and to study the perception of the community towards tourism development and its impacts on the developed in a sustainable tourism.

### **Research Methodology**

The study used survey design in which structured questionnaire based on five point Likert Scale was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was prepared to understand the perception of the community regarding tourism development and its impact in the area. The respondents were 60 local people of Sari village .Further in-depth interviews were conducted for various Government officials and opinion leaders among local people to achieve the above said objectives during November 2008 and January 2009. Convenient sampling is used for the data collection.

### **Review of Literature**

For communities faced by absence of significant economic alternatives, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) focused on the local environment and culture, appears as a straightforward solution that has the potential to alleviate poverty and environmental stress. CBT encompasses the desire to encourage empowerment, gender equity, capacity building, education and strengthening of cultural identity and traditions (Moscardo, 2008). Wide range of academic research have been done on the various aspects of CBT by various researchers like Taylor(1995), Little (1994), Aramberry (2001), Hall(2000), Timothy(1999), Davis,D, Allen,J, Cosenja, A, (1988), Bagri, S.C.(2004), Gupta(2006), Bansal (2006), Murphy, P,(1985), Moscardo, G,(1998), Stronza, A, (1999), Denman, R,(2001), etc. Many researchers like Maikhuri,R.K., & Nautiyal S.(2000), Bagri S.C. & Mishra J.M.(2004b),Kandari O.P., and Gusain, O.P., (2001), Gupta, S.K.,(2002), Kaur J.,(1985) etc have worked on various aspects of tourism in the region in particular.

### **Study Area**

Uttarakhand State was carved out of the state of Uttar Pradesh on November 9, 2000.It is divided into two broad regions--Garhwal and Kumaon. There is wide and diversified demand for tourism in this state from both the domestic and international markets in terms of content and standard of facilities and utilities. The state attracts tourists for pilgrimages, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, eco-tourism, and amusement and leisure tourism. The approach to tourism development in Uttarakhand has to be based on the strengths of this state. Since Uttarakhand is rich in natural beauty with a unique mountain environment as well as rich historical and cultural assets, diverse products have to be designed for various categories of people who travel to this state for different motives. Along with the development of tourism, the present environment assets must be conserved and the areas where deterioration has taken place should be upgraded and improved.

Situated in the Garhwal region of Himalayas, Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary has been declared as a sanctuary on 21 January, 1972, under IUCN Category IV. The entire

sanctuary lies in the northern catchment of the Alaknanda River in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand State of India. Much of the sanctuary lies within central crystalline that forms the main axis of the great Himalayas, with an altitude ranging from 1,600 mts. (near Phata) to peak of Chaukhamba at 7,068 mts. This sanctuary is bounded in the North by a range of peaks mostly over 6000 mts. and in the South by the Mandal-Ukhimath road. The fauna includes Panther, Musk Deer, Black and Brown Himalayan Bear, Snow Leopard, Shambhar, Bharal, Scrow, Thar Ghoral and Monal Peasant.

**Figure 1**

**Location of Uttarakhand in India**



**figure 2**



**Figure-3**

**A view of village Sari**

**Figure-4**

**Kedarnath Sanctuaries**



The village Sari is situated on the Southern part of the sanctuary between Ukhimath and Chopta. The region is full of natural and cultural resources with potential to attract a large number of tourists. Considering this potential the village has been provided the status of 'EcoVillage' by State Government to promote tourism development in the area. Sari is the base point for trekkers to the Deoriatal, which is 2.5 km away. Inhabitants of this tiny village are mainly farmers. The place is connected by motorable road from Ukhimath (15 km) and Chopta (18 km). Like the most of the mountain region, Sari village also experiences economic backwardness, which has caused various social problems which, locals think, can be overcome through tourism development. Being a sanctuary area, constructions are banned in the upper hills. However, recently forest department has leased out two tents to the locals through *Banpanchayat*. There are two local eateries for the tourists. The forest department along with the locals has set up a *Banpanchayat* headed by the village head to look after the matters related to the forest. Further there is an *Eco-Vikas Samiti (EDC)* which provides loan to entrepreneurs to open and run their units.. This is funded by some international agencies through Forest Department. Its function ranges from providing loan apart from capacity building of the locals and create awareness to protect the forest. The committee is also responsible for providing Guides, Porters and Ponies in and around Deoriatal area. *Samiti* is also keen in promoting tourism through locals' participation. Entrepreneurs are of point of view that the international tourists bring their own bag and tents. Even they cook food by their own. Hence their contribution to the local economy is no more than mere employing porters for their baggage. The demography of the villages is shown in the following table.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Village Sari**

No. of Households	130
Population	1060

Literacy rate	70%
Composition of the community	<i>Negi, Rawat, Bhatt and Harijans</i>
Major Crops	Wheat, Barley, <i>Chaulai</i> , Soabean, <i>Rajma</i> , Potato
Occupation	
a) Tourism related	40%
b) Agriculture	95%
c) Govt. Service	45% (Mostly in Army)
d) Animal Husbandry	70%
Accessibility	Connected to Road
Telephone	N/A (BSNL Mobile Tower is Under Construction)
Hospital	N/A
Eateries	6 in village, 1 in Deoriatal (No specialty)
Accommodation	Appx. 70 Beds in Village, 2 Tents (3 Bedded) at Deoriatal
School (Nos)	1 Primary + 1 Saraswati Shisumandir till 5 <sup>th</sup> class
NGO (Nos)/ Society	Eco Development Committee

Demographic Character	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	75
Female	25
<b>Age Group</b>	
20-35	53
35-50	31
50-60	16
<b>Education</b>	
Illiterate	5
10 <sup>th</sup>	29
12 <sup>th</sup>	45
Graduate	18
Post Graduate	3
<b>Occupation</b>	
Lodge Owners	10
Guides/Porters	41
Eatery operators	12
Government Service	17
Agriculture/Others	20

The above table reveals that only 40% of the villagers are involved in tourism related activities. But due to lack of educational qualification and skill, they are working as porters and guides. There is a dearth of specialist guides and interpreters to deliver quality tourism product. As well as the owners/operators of accommodation and eateries are lacking in entrepreneurial skills, partly because of the lower educational qualifications and partly because of lack of proper training/capacity building programmes. However, it has been observed that those having lower educational qualification are more satisfied with the tourism development in comparison to those having higher educational qualification. Agriculture may be seen as major occupation as those in government jobs are also side by side engaged in agriculture. But due to the poor irrigation facilities and

unfavorable farming conditions it can't be adopted as a sole profession. People are still practicing the traditional methods of farming.

**Table 2: Ecotourism Resources of the Study Area**

Ecotourism Resources		
<b>Natural</b>	Scenic Beauty	Snow peaks of Chaukhamba from Deoriatal
	Forest Type	Thick forest
	Sanctuary/National Park/Biosphere Reserve	Kedarnath Musk deer Sanctuary
	Flora	Rhododendron, Silver and Brown oak
	Fauna	Hill fox ( <i>Vulpus montana</i> ), Black bear ( <i>Selenorctos thibetanus</i> ), Porcupine, Leopard etc.
	Lakes	Deoriatal
	Trek route	Deoriatal, Madmaheshwar-Deoriatal-Bisorital-Nandikund.
	Other attractions	Not significant
<b>Cultural</b>	Temple	Khyaleswar Mahadev
	Festival	Janmastami Mela at Deoriatal
	Handicrafts	Bamboo based handicrafts

The forests of Kedarnath Sanctuary have been notified reserve forest in the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which has devoid the locals from their traditional livelihood and caused a number of social problems. It was a set back for bamboo based handicraft producers who were dependent on the jungle for wood.

**Table 3: Tourist Arrival at Deoriatal**

Year	No. of Tourists			No. of Tents	Income (in INR)
	Indians	Foreigners	Total		
2003-04	529	109	638	300	41870
2004-05	503	194	697	142	38420
2005-06	680	155	835	36	40640
2006-07	713	280	993	94	49300
2007-08	912	348	1260	135	73350

*Source: Kedarnath Forest Division*

Above table shows that Deoriatal has received 638 tourist during the year 2003-04; while the number is gone up to 697 during the year 2004-05 which shows an increase of 9.24% over last year, while during the year 2005-06 it has grown up to 835 with an increase of 19.27% over year 2004-05. 993 tourists have visited the area during the year 2006-07, gaining 18.9% more tourists in comparison to the last year. While the number has reached to 1260 with an increase of 20.84% over previous year. The data depicts that the number of tourists has grown with an average rate of 16.86% annually and it has grown by 97.49% when compared with the arrivals during the year 2003-04.

**Table 4: Available Accommodation Facility at Sari and Deoriatal**

S. No.	Name of the Unit	No. of Rooms	Bed Capacity	Dormitory
1.	Deoria Tourist Lodge	12	35	-
2.	Neelkant Tourist Lodge	02	6	-
3.	Negi Tourist Lodge	07	18	1
4.	Dev Darshan Hotel	02	06	-
5.	EDC Reception House	03	06	
6.	Reflexion Resort (Deoriatal)	02(Tents)	06	n/a

*Source: Primary Data*

There are five accommodation units in the village run by local people as family ventures offering rooms with basic amenities. The tariff ranges from Rs. 100 to Rs. 400. Eco Development Committee in the village is also providing Family home stays. However, it is not allowed to construct permanent structure at Deoriatal, EDC has established two tents here which is being run by the villagers on rotation basis for a period of two years. A forest rest house is also under construction by the forest department. Tourists can also pitch their own tents by paying a nominal fee to the village *Banpanchayat*.

### **SWOT Analysis for CBT Development in Village Sari**

#### **Strengths**

- Unparallel scenic beauty.
- Rich floral and faunal wealth.
- Growing interest and awareness of locals towards Tourism Development.
- Friendly and welcoming attitude of local people.
- Views of Himalayan peaks and serene environment.
- Rich culture and tradition.
- Located amidst Kedarnath sanctuary.
- Trekking base for Deoriatal, Bisorital, Nandikund and Chopta-Tungnath

#### **Weakness**

- Fragile environment
- Lack of efficient public transportation;
- Poor infrastructural facilities
- Seasonality
- Poor marketing strategies

- Lack of proper training and entrepreneurial skills for locals involved in tourism related activities
- Little or no interpretation of the natural environment
- Lack of information centre
- Absence of an efficient system for measurement of tourism demand and supply as well as economic and social impact.
- Lack of communication facilities

#### **Opportunities**

- Huge potential for ecotourism and adventure tourism with opportunities for bird watching, nature tours, mountain biking;
- Potential to tap the vast emerging markets in ecotourism, responsible tourism and specialist niche markets such as trekking and bird watching worldwide;
- Potential to become a midway spot on Kedarnath- Badrinath route via Ukhimath
- Visit to Deoriatal by Ropeway
- Scope for paragliding at Sari village
- Possibilities for Angling at Deoriatal
- Cultural museum and nature interpretation centre at Sari village
- Home stays and local cuisine shall be the add-ons to tourism product.

#### **Threats**

- Poor level of environmental awareness among local population as well as tourist.
- Lack of proper implementation of conservation measures
- Poor understanding of sustainability
- Out migration of youth from the village
- Tourism development can change the whole socio-cultural pattern of the host community, if not planned properly.
- Could create economic inequality.
- Loss of biological diversity

#### **Results and Analysis**

Questionnaire was structured to identify the perceptions of local about tourism development and its impacts on the community. The first section of the questionnaire was related to the general demographic profile of the respondents. 75% and 25% respondents were male and female respectively; while 53% belonged to the age group of 20-35 years, 31% to the age group of 35-50 and 16% of the respondents were of the age group 50-60 years. As far as the education is concerned 5% of the respondents were illiterate, 29% passed tenth standard, 45% passed intermediate, 18% were graduates and only 3% were Post graduate. When it comes to the occupational profile of the sample population 10% of the respondents were lodge/guest house operators, 41% were guides/porters, 12% were eatery operators, 17% were government servants and 20% were farmers or house wives

In response to the first statement 79% respondents agreed that the tourism has the potential for overall development of the area, while merely 13% were disagreed with the

statement. 75% respondents felt that ecotourism can bring prosperity to the host community. 70% respondents believed that Ecotourism increases the awareness towards socio-cultural and environmental conservation, while 50% were agreed that Tourist inflow increases occupational opportunities for host community. In response to the statement if tourism improves infrastructural facilities 70% of respondents were agreed. When asked if Ecotourism improves the living standard of local people 77% respondents were agreed to the statement. 72% respondents believed that it provides the opportunities to local people to learn something new; however, 87% felt that ecotourism provides opportunity for social and cultural interaction among Tourists and hosts. 60% respondents agreed that tourist inflow improved the self image of the community.

When asked if ecotourism increases educational opportunities for children 42% were agreed while 33% were disagreed to the statement. 75% respondents were agreed that local culture and environment has been appreciated by tourists. While asking if Tourist inflow is responsible for changes in moral values of host community 55% and 38% respondents were agreed and disagreed with the statement respectively. 62% felt that the hosts tend to emulate the tourists' life style; however 29% were disagreed with the statement. In response to the statement that if tourism creates scarcity of water & other resources 44% and 46% respondent were agreed and disagreed respectively. 60% respondents believed that Tourism development alienates locals from traditional livelihood practices. Only 48% respondents were agreed that Ecotourism compliments the traditional livelihood practices. 30% believed that essential commodities became costlier due to tourist inflow in the region, while 53% think that it's not because of the tourist inflow. 78% believed that ecotourism has the potential to minimize the negative impacts, if planned carefully. The following table explains the respondents' views on tourism Development and its consequences on community.

Table 5: respondents' views on tourism Development and its consequences on community.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Tourism has a potential for overall development of the area	15 (25)	32 (54)	5 (8)	8 (13)	0 (0)
CBT brings prosperity to the community	10 (17)	35 (58)	4 (7)	8 (13)	3 (5)
CBT increases the awareness towards socio-cultural & environmental conservation	12 (20)	30 (50)	3 (5)	10 (17)	5 (8)
Tourist inflow increases occupational opportunities for host community	15(25)	35(58)	6(10)	3(5)	1(2)
It improves infrastructural facilities	14(23)	28(47)	6(10)	10(17)	2(3)
CBT improves the living standard of local people	12 (20)	34(57)	5(8)	6(10)	3(5)
It provides the opportunities to local people to learn something new	8(13)	35(59)	8(13)	5(8)	4(7)
CBT provides opportunity for social	14(23)	38(64)	5(8)	3(5)	0(0)

and cultural interaction among Tourists and hosts					
Tourist inflow improved the self image of the community members	12(20)	24(40)	10(17)	8(13)	6(10)
CBT increases educational opportunities for children	7(12)	18(30)	15(25)	12(20)	8(13)
Local culture and environment is getting appreciated by tourists	15(25)	30(50)	5(8)	7(12)	3(5)
Tourist inflow responsible for changes in moral values of host community	15(25)	18(30)	4(7)	15(25)	8(13)
Do you feel that the hosts tend to emulate the tourists' life style?	10(17)	27(45)	6(10)	10(17)	7(12)
It creates scarcity of water & other resources	8(13)	18(31)	6(10)	20(33)	8(13)
Tourism development alienate locals from traditional livelihood practices	8(13)	28(47)	12(20)	8(13)	4(7)
CBT compliments the traditional livelihood practices	4(7)	25(41)	10(17)	15(25)	6(10)
Essential commodities became costlier due to tourist inflow	6(10)	12(20)	10(17)	20(33)	12(20)
If planned carefully the negative impacts can be minimized through CBT.	15(25)	32(53)	4(7)	6(10)	3(5)

*Source: Primary Data*

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Situated in the vicinity of Deoriatl amidst immense natural beauty Sari village is an ideal place for nature lovers and trekkers and eventually for ecotourism development. Unfortunately, it has been observed that most of the respondents were not quite familiar to the concepts and philosophy behind ecotourism. But, most of the villagers have opinion that tourism has a potential for the overall development of the area and it is a tool for the community prosperity. It has the potential to create occupational and employment opportunities for the locals. They also believed that ecotourism spreads awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural resources; it promotes socio-cultural integration among tourists and hosts. They have accepted that tourism have some negatives which can be overcome through sound planning of tourism development. In short, most of respondents are in favor of tourism development in the area through community participation. Since the number of tourists is increasing in the area, it is right time to plan the ecotourism in the area in order to efficiently handle the negative impacts. The following should be taken into consideration:

- Community goals and participation of its members should be ensured in the planning and operation of ecotourism
- Local NGOs should be involved in ecotourism awareness programmes.

- Informative signs depicting the natural and cultural aspects of the area should be installed in the village and enroute Deoriatal.
- Local educated people should be trained as guides, interpreters and instructors.
- There should be different programmes for local people for making them aware on different aspects of ecotourism and its success stories.
- Family home-stays should be promoted rather than the cemented guest houses.
- There is a need of a museum depicting local cultural and natural history of the area in order to make the tourist aware of and respect the local culture and natural aspects.
- Locally produced items and local cuisine should be promoted by making them available at the village shops and eateries instead of imported items.
- An effective marketing strategy should be developed to send the right message in the market area.

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