



Escorts of Uttarakhand: Exploring the Hidden Gems of India's Northern State

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ABSTRACT -

The roots of a developing country like India lies with the villages as its origin. Unless they are integrated with the developing scenario, we would lose more than land. Thus, in order for them to have more exposure, The solution is to develop software to identify famous destinations as well as local things at particular villages which would result in enhanced Rural Tourism. Our paper aims to explore the design and development of a website that showcases the famous places, foods and handicrafts of various towns and villages of Uttarakhand, India. It also outlines the functional and nonfunctional requirements of the website and highlights its unique features compared to other similar websites, such as the Devbhoomi Uttarakhand, eUttaranchal, Local Alike website etc. The paper also includes a literature review that critically evaluates the existing research and literature on the topic of tourism in Uttarakhand, with a focus on the cultural significance of famous places, foods, and handicrafts, and the impact of tourism on the environment and local communities.

Keywords- *Escorts of Uttarakhand, Weather API, Rural Tourism, Villages.*

I. Introduction

A research paper proposes the development of a website to promote the rich cultural heritage of Uttarakhand, a state located in northern India. The state is renowned for its scenic beauty, cultural heritage, and diverse cuisine, which attracts a significant number of tourists from all over the world. The proposed website will highlight the famous places, foods, and handicrafts of various towns and villages of Uttarakhand, providing a platform for tourists to learn about the cultural significance of these attractions and plan their itineraries. Additionally, the website will promote responsible tourism practices, such as reducing the environmental impact of tourism and supporting local communities.

A term that came across above, "Rural Tourism" can be described as a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling and sightseeing.

The Escorts of Uttarakhand is an online platform that showcases the unique and famous attractions of villages across the state. The website is dedicated to highlighting the rich cultural heritage, stunning natural beauty, historical landmarks, and local food specialties that make each village truly special and unforgettable. With its easy-to-use interface and high-quality photos, The Escorts of Uttarakhand is the perfect resource for travelers and locals alike who are looking to discover.

Also there would additionally be the features for weather updates and crop conditions information for the locals of those villages that can be shown in their regional languages.

The state of Uttarakhand is a land of natural beauty, spirituality, and culture. The tourism industry here has experienced significant growth over the years. To maintain this growth and preserve the cultural heritage of this region, it is important to establish sustainable tourism practices. In this regard, we will conduct extensive research that includes a literature review to evaluate existing research and literature on the topic of tourism in Uttarakhand. Our focus will be on the cultural significance of famous places, foods and handicrafts, and the impact of tourism on the environment and local communities. Through our research, we hope to contribute to the current knowledge on the topic of tourism in Uttarakhand.

Our ultimate goal is to design and develop a website that showcases the rich cultural heritage of Uttarakhand. This website will not only promote rural tourism but also highlight the importance of preserving local traditions and customs. We believe that a well-designed website can serve as a valuable tool to attract tourists to lesser-known villages and pilgrimage sites in Uttarakhand. By promoting these off-beat destinations, we can provide much-needed economic support to these communities while simultaneously encouraging sustainable development.

In conclusion, through our research and website development, we aim to create a comprehensive framework for sustainable tourism in Uttarakhand. We hope to showcase an eye-candy of a website that urges the users to pack their bags to experience the wonders of Uttarakhand.

II. Literature Review

Tourism in Uttarakhand is a topic of growing interest among researchers, with a focus on the cultural significance of famous places, foods, and handicrafts, and the impact of tourism on the environment and local communities. In this literature review, we will critically evaluate the existing research and literature on this topic.

So, what's the current scenario of tourism in Uttarakhand? Well, if you look at the statistics, it's safe to say that tourism is booming. People are flocking to this beautiful state, eager to explore its rich culture and natural beauty. No wonder about the impact of this influx of tourists on the environment and local communities. It's a tricky balance to strike - promoting tourism while also being mindful of sustainability and social responsibility. Thankfully, social media has provided a platform for responsible tourism campaigns and initiatives to gain traction by creating content that showcases the cultural significance of famous places, foods, and handicrafts in Uttarakhand - all while keeping an eye on the bigger picture.

When it comes to tourism in Uttarakhand, the cultural significance of famous places, foods, and handicrafts plays a crucial role in attracting visitors. As per the current scenario, several studies have acknowledged the importance of these cultural assets. In fact, a case study conducted by *Tiwari et al. (2020)* emphasizes that famous cuisines like *bhang ki chutney* and *kachmauli* are an essential aspect of the state's cultural heritage that contributes significantly to the tourism experience. These dishes are not only delicious but also unique and authentic to Uttarakhand. Visitors are often keen to try out local cuisines and explore the local culture, making food an integral part of their travel itinerary. *Joshi & Sharma (2016)* have also highlighted how handicrafts and famous places like Rishikesh and Haridwar attract tourists seeking spiritual experiences. In summary, understanding the cultural significance of Uttarakhand's famous places, foods, and handicrafts is crucial in developing effective tourism strategies that cater to visitors' interests and preferences.

Rural tourism has a high potential to stimulate local economic growth and social change because of its complementarity with other economic activities, its contribution to GDP and job creation, and its capacity to promote the dispersal of demand in time (fight seasonality) and along a wider territory. It brings profit directly to families living in rural, otherwise non touristic, distant locations. It also brings opportunities for development.

Rural tourism in Uttarakhand has gained immense popularity over the years due to its natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure activities. Villages like *Sari*, *Kanatal*, and *Pangot* have become popular tourist destinations, offering visitors a chance to engage in various activities like trekking, bird watching, and farming while experiencing local hospitality and traditional cuisine through homestays and guesthouses. Rural tourism has not only helped generate employment opportunities for locals but also preserved the state's unique heritage.

Let us dive deeper in the vast food culture of Uttarakhand:

Uttarakhand's food culture is as diverse as its people and landscapes. Each region of the state has its unique cuisine, which reflects the local ingredients, traditions, and customs. From the hills of Garhwal comes a wide range of delicacies that will leave you craving for more. *Jhangora ki kheer*, a sweet dish made with barnyard millet, *Chainsoo*, a spicy lentil preparation, and *Kachmauli*, a unique mutton dish cooked in a gravy of yogurt and coconut, are just a few of the must-try dishes that highlight the distinctness of this regional cuisine. Garhwali cuisine also features a variety of chutneys and pickles made with local ingredients like rhododendron flowers and bhang seeds. *Bhang* is a popular ingredient in the cuisine of Uttarakhand, used in a variety of dishes like Bhang Ki Chutney, Bhang Ki Pakodi, and Bhang Ki Thandai. These dishes have a unique taste and aroma and are known to have medicinal properties.

In the Kumaon region, the cuisine is predominantly vegetarian, with dishes like *bhatt ki churkani*, *phaanu*, and *ras* in demand. Bhang ki chutney, a spicy sauce made from hemp seeds, is a famous condiment in the region. Famous for its flavorsome chashni, a sweet and sour curry made with pumpkin, traditional *Singodi*, a sweet made with grated coconut and jaggery, *Bhangjeera*, a spicy chutney made with hemp seeds, and *dubuk*, a hearty lentil and vegetable soup, Kumaoni cuisine is known for being easy to-digest yet highly nutritious. Local herbs and spices like *jakhiya*, a type of wild mustard, and *timur*, a Himalayan pepper, are used to add unique flavors to the dishes. The Garhwal region's cuisine comprises both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, with meat-based preparations like kebabs and kumaoni raita being popular. The region is also known for its sweets, especially *bal mithai*, a fudge-like sweet made with khoya and coated in sugar balls, and ofcourse *Arsa*, a crunchy and sweet rice flour delicacy, and *Gulgula*, a deep-fried doughnut-like sweet...

Apart from these, *Harela* Cuisine of India can be segregated region wise, and one can explore each regional cuisine simultaneously. The state's rural tourism has gained popularity due to its natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure activities. Homestays and guest houses provide tourists with an opportunity to experience local hospitality and relish traditional cuisine. Rural villages like *Sari*, *Kanatal*, and *Pangot* have become popular tourist destinations, generating employment opportunities for locals and preserving the state's unique heritage.

Having showcased overwhelming potential in its natural beauty, religious significance and adventure activities, The state is blessed with a diverse landscape that includes majestic mountains, serene valleys, glistening rivers, and lush forests. Uttarakhand is also home to some of the most revered pilgrimage sites in India, such as Haridwar, Rishikesh, and Badrinath. The state attracts tourists from all over the world who come to explore its natural beauty, experience its spiritual significance, and indulge in adventure activities like trekking, rafting, and skiing.

This study presents a keener aspect towards unlocking the economic potential of Uttarakhand tourism, the state government and the tourism industry need to work together to overcome the challenges faced by the industry.

The hill stations that are famous all over India enjoy a large intake of tourists throughout the year: [1] *Nainital* is known for its serene lakes, lush forests, and beautiful landscapes. Located at an altitude of 2000 meters above sea level. *Nainital* is also known for its vibrant culture and local cuisine, which is a major attraction for tourists. *Mussoorie* is a popular hill station in Uttarakhand that is known for its picturesque landscape, colonial architecture, and vibrant culture, 2000 meters above sea level and pleasant weather throughout the year. *Auli* is known for its snow-capped mountains, skiing opportunities, and breathtaking views. The hill station is located at an altitude of 2800 meters above sea level and is a destination for adventure enthusiasts who come to indulge in skiing and other winter sports. Auli also offers a range of other activities like trekking, camping, and more. These towns have amazing places to visit like *Kempty Falls* (Mussoorie), *Naini Lake* (Nainital), *Gurso Bugyal* (Auli) to name a few.

Not only a home to flora but fauna as well. Uttarakhand is a state with one of the oldest National Parks of India, which is ***Jim Corbett National Park***.

Apart from this, there are the ***Valley of Flowers National Park*** and ***Nanda Devi National Park***. All of them are declared UNESCO World Heritage Site and are home to a wide range of flora and fauna.

However, the greatest number of travelers and tourists arrive in Uttarakhand for a spiritual journey. It is known for its breathtaking natural beauty, but it's also a land of spirituality and devotion. From ancient temples to revered shrines, Uttarakhand is home to some of the most important pilgrimages in India.

1] ***Kedarnath Temple***: Located in the Himalayas, Kedarnath Temple is one of the most revered Hindu temples in India. It's dedicated to Lord Shiva and is said to be one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of India. The temple is only accessible by foot, adding to its spiritual significance.

2] ***Hemkund Sahib***: Hemkund Sahib is a Sikh shrine located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. It's situated at an altitude of 4,632 meters and is known for its pristine beauty and serene atmosphere. The shrine is dedicated

to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru.

3] ***Badrinath Temple***: Badrinath Temple is one of the most important Hindu temples in India. It's dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is one of the four Char Dham pilgrimage sites in India. The temple is located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand and is surrounded by the majestic Himalayas.

4] ***Gangotri-Yamunotri Temple***: Yamunotri Temple is located in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand and is dedicated to the goddess Yamuna. The temple is situated at an altitude of 3,293 meters and is known for its hot springs and stunning mountain views. A temple dedicated to Goddess Ganga is located near a sacred stone where King Bhagiratha worshipped Lord Shiva. Elevation of 3,415 meters and surrounded by mountains.

The state government of Uttarakhand has taken several initiatives to promote tourism in the state. Some of the major initiatives taken by the government include:

- Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board
- Homestay policy
- Adventure tourism policy

To unlock the economic potential of Uttarakhand tourism, the state government and the tourism industry need to work together to overcome the challenges faced by the industry. Some of the solutions that can help unlock the economic potential of Uttarakhand tourism include:

- Infrastructure development

The state government needs to invest in infrastructure development to improve connectivity and accessibility to the remote areas of the state. This will help attract more tourists and create new employment opportunities.

- Diversification of tourism products

The tourism industry in Uttarakhand needs to diversify its tourism products to attract tourists throughout the year. This can be achieved by promoting adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and spiritual tourism.

- Skill development

The tourism industry in Uttarakhand needs to focus on skill development to improve the quality of services provided to tourists. This can be achieved by providing training and education to people involved in the industry

The tourism industry in Uttarakhand is facing several challenges that are hindering its growth and development. Some of the major challenges faced by the Uttarakhand tourism industry include:

i) ***Lack of Infrastructure***: It is a hilly state that is characterized by rugged terrain and difficult topography. The lack of proper infrastructure like roads, bridges, and airports makes it difficult for tourists to access the remote areas of the state.

ii) ***Seasonal Tourism***: Uttarakhand is heavily dependent on seasonal tourism, which means that the industry is active only during certain months of the year. This leads to a lack of employment opportunities and income for people involved in the industry.

iii) *Lack of Manpower*: The tourism industry in Uttarakhand is facing a shortage of trained manpower, which makes it difficult for the industry to provide high-quality services to tourists.

Although these are not the only factors to be worried about: Another theme in the literature on tourism in Uttarakhand is the impact of tourism on the environment and local communities. Several studies have identified the negative effects of tourism on the environment, such as increased pollution, waste generation, and land-use change (Pant & Rai, 2015; Pokhriyal et al., 2017). Additionally, tourism can also have negative social and economic impacts on local communities, such as displacement of local residents and exploitation of local resources (Dhiman & Chauhan, 2020).

III. WEATHER RELATED CONCERNS

The greatest concern regarding Uttarakhand are the natural disasters that the lands are prone to. Extreme weather conditions like landslides, heavy rainfall and extreme snowfall. A very devastating example is:

In June 2013, a mid-day cloudburst centered on the North Indian state of Uttarakhand caused devastating floods and landslides, becoming the country's worst natural disaster since the 2004 tsunami. Such a devastating incident crushed many cities and villages. The death toll increased to approximately 6000 and some 4000 residents went missing.

There are many places in the state that are popular for various travel spots but are extremely dangerous and prone to any type of natural calamity like earthquakes, landslides, flooding, heavy rainfall, extreme snowfalls. Some of them are Chamoli, Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh, Munsiyari, Auli and Valley of Flowers.

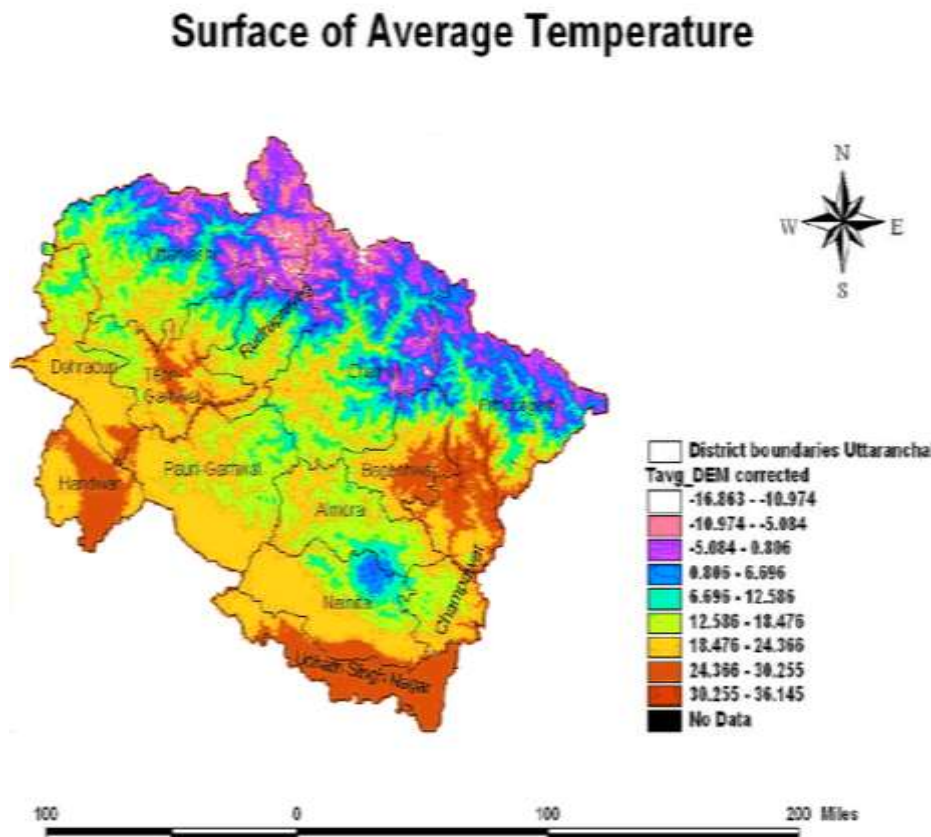


Figure 1: Climate Map of Uttarakhand

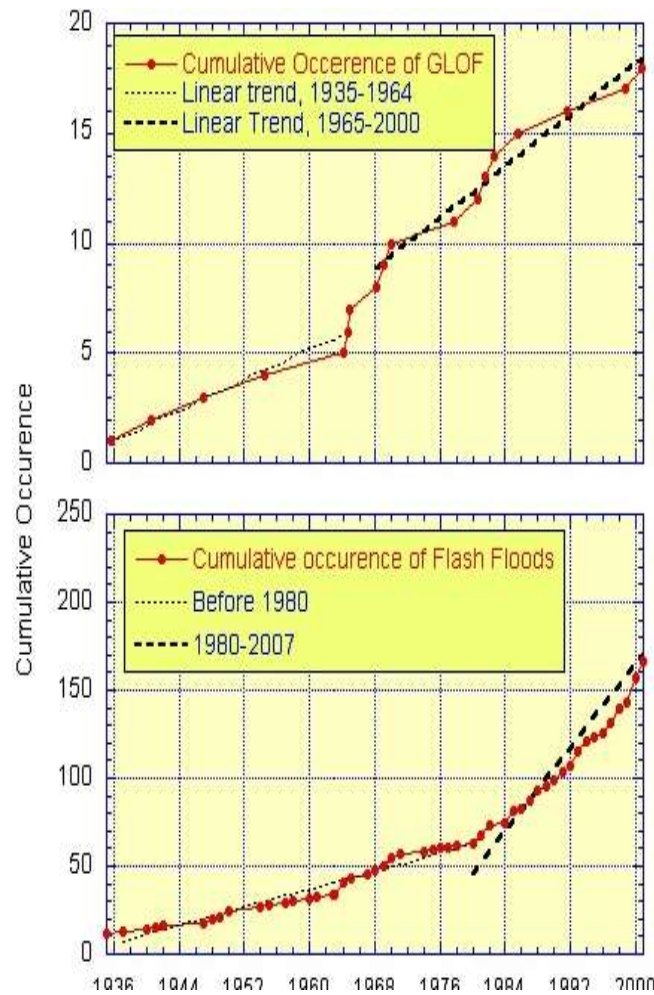


Figure 2: .Cumulative Frequency of Flash Floods and GLOFs in Hindu Kush Himalayan region Courtesy: ICIMOD

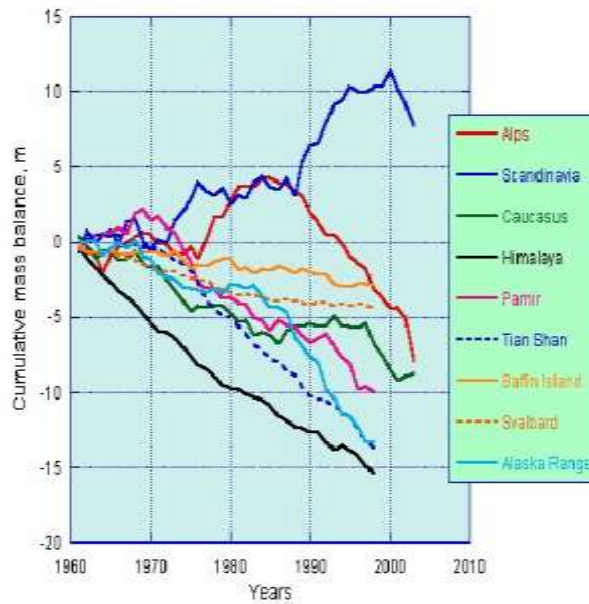
ICIMOD has done research on these abrupt changes in weather patterns:

3.1 Unprecedented Climate Change in Himalayas

According to recent studies, the Himalayas are experiencing warming at a rate that is unlike anything seen before. This warming is significantly greater than the global average of 0.74°C over the past century, and is estimated to be at least 2-3 times higher than the global average. Furthermore, the warming trend appears to increase with altitude, which is a common phenomenon across the entire greater Himalayan region.

Impact on Precipitation: There has been an increase in the amount of rain falling as opposed to snow in many regions, resulting in earlier snowmelt and shorter winters. This has various impacts on river patterns, natural disasters, water supply, and people's livelihoods and infrastructure. The health and extent of high-altitude marshlands, water flows from terrestrial ecosystems, reservoirs, and water flow as well as sediment transport along rivers and in lakes are all affected. In the Himalayas, it is widely recognized and recorded that precipitation is becoming more unpredictable and intense. Consequently, flooding may become a significant development issue. There are projections that more irregular and direct rainfall runoff will result in more downstream flooding.

According to research, a combination of excessive melt waters and liquid precipitation can cause flash floods or debris flows. Evidence indicates that there have been changes in climate patterns leading to more extreme weather events. One of these events is an increase in high intensity rainfall, which has been linked to an increase in flash floods and landslides. It is important to consider these factors when predicting and preparing for natural disasters.

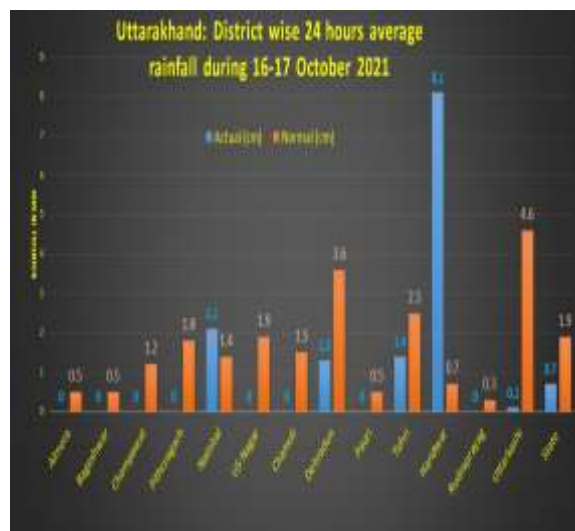


Due to climate change, the eastern and central Himalayas are experiencing an increased number of flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Glacial melting has resulted in the formation of high-altitude lakes behind terminal moraines, many of which pose a significant danger. These moraine dams are relatively weak and can unexpectedly rupture, causing massive amounts of water and debris to be released downstream, resulting in devastating flooding.

3.2 Our Response so far

The ambitious National Action Plan for Climate Change has a separate National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan EcoSystem (NMSHE) under the Ministry of Science of Technology, Government of India. “The mission would attempt to evolve management measures for sustaining and safeguarding the Himalayan glaciers and mountain ecosystem by:

- Enhancing monitoring of Himalayan ecosystem with a focus on the recession of Himalayan glaciers and its impact on river systems and other downstream socio-ecological processes.
- Establishing observational and monitoring networks to assess ecosystem health including freshwater systems.
- Deploying technologies – for hazard mitigation & disaster management, development of ideal human habitats, and agriculture and forest sector innovations



Continuous Monitoring of the Eco-system and Data Generation, Enhanced implementation of guidelines for Priority Action in the National Mission on Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, Sustainable Urbanization in Mountain Habitats, This includes

Town Planning and Adoption and Enforcement of Architectural Norms.

3.3 Uttarakhand State Action Plan for Climate Change:

The amount of rainfall in many areas has increased, resulting in a smaller amount of snowmelt and a shorter winter season. This has had an impact on river systems, natural disasters, water resources, and people's livelihoods and infrastructure. Additionally, high altitude wetlands, green water flows from terrestrial ecosystems, reservoirs, and water flow and sediment transport along rivers and in lakes are all negatively affected. There is a growing awareness of precipitation changes in the Himalayas, where rainfall has become more unpredictable and heavy. This change may cause flooding and an increase in direct rainfall runoff, leading to more downstream flooding.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the website that showcases the famous places, foods, and handicrafts of various towns and villages of Uttarakhand will involve several steps.

Content Creation: The first step will be to gather and create high-quality multimedia content, including photographs, videos, and written descriptions of the famous places, foods, and handicrafts of Uttarakhand. This content will need to be informative, engaging, and optimized for search engines.

Website Design: The second step will be to design the website with a user-friendly interface that is visually appealing and easy to navigate. The website should be responsive to different devices, such as desktops, tablets, and smartphones. A content management system (CMS) such as WordPress can be used to create and manage the website.

Website Development: The third step will be to develop the website using programming languages such as HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. The website should include features such as search functionality, multimedia content, social media integration, and contact forms.

Testing and Quality Assurance: The fourth step will be to test the website thoroughly to ensure that it is functioning correctly and meets the requirements set out in the functional and non-functional requirements. Quality assurance techniques such as user testing, load testing, and security testing should be employed.

Deployment and Maintenance: The final step will be to deploy the website to a hosting service and ensure that it is available to users. The website will require ongoing maintenance, including updates to content, software, and security patches.

To ensure the success of the website, it will be important to involve stakeholders such as tourism boards, local communities, and tourists in the design and development process. Feedback from these stakeholders can help to ensure that the website meets their needs and promotes responsible tourism practices.

Implementation part will also deal with Climate related concerns in our own way. The solutions proposed by our project would provide us with an **API** for Climatic conditions and real time updates about the weather problems. In order to provide real-time weather information on the towns and villages of Uttarakhand, an API (Application Programming Interface) can be integrated into the website. The API would gather information from weather stations located in various towns and villages across Uttarakhand and provide it in a format that can be easily consumed by the website.

One potential API that could be used for this purpose is the OpenWeatherMap API. This API provides real-time weather data for over 200,000 locations worldwide, including several towns and villages in Uttarakhand. The API provides a range of weather data, including temperature, wind speed, humidity, and precipitation, which can be used to provide a comprehensive view of the weather conditions in Uttarakhand. To use the OpenWeatherMap API, the website would need to register for an API key and then use this key to make requests for weather data. The API supports both HTTP and HTTPS requests and can provide weather data in a variety of formats, including JSON, XML, and HTML.

Once the API is integrated into the website, users would be able to view real-time weather information for the towns and villages of Uttarakhand. This information could be presented in a variety of ways, such as a map that shows the weather conditions across the state or a table that lists the weather data for each town and village. In addition to providing real-time weather information, the API could also be used to provide historical weather data. This could be useful for users who are planning a trip to Uttarakhand and want to know what the weather conditions are typically like during a particular season.

V. Results

As this is a literature review, the results are a summary and synthesis of the findings of the studies reviewed. Based on the literature reviewed, the following key results can be highlighted:



The cultural significance of famous places, foods, and handicrafts is an important aspect of tourism in Uttarakhand, and these cultural assets are key factors in attracting tourists to the state. Tourism can have negative impacts on the environment, such as increased pollution and waste generation, and on local communities, such as displacement of local residents and exploitation of local resources. Strategies such as eco-tourism and community-based tourism have been proposed to promote responsible tourism practices in Uttarakhand, which aim to minimize the negative impact of tourism on the environment while maximizing the benefits for local communities.



There is a need for more research on the impact of tourism on the environment and local communities in Uttarakhand, and on the effectiveness of strategies to promote responsible tourism practices.



Integrating an API such as the OpenWeatherMap API into the website would provide users with valuable real-time weather information that could help them plan their trip to Uttarakhand more effectively.



VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, the website showcasing the famous places, foods, and handicrafts of various towns and villages of Uttarakhand would be a valuable resource for tourists and locals alike. Through this website, users can access information about the cultural and natural heritage of the region, as well as details on local cuisine and handicrafts. The website's API, which provides real-time weather updates, enhances the user experience by allowing them to plan their trips accordingly.

The functional and non-functional requirements, as well as the literature review and API implementation, provide a strong foundation for the development of this website. However, it is essential to address the gaps identified when compared to famous travel websites and to ensure that the website is user-friendly and accessible to all. By incorporating feedback from users and continuing to update and maintain the website, it has the potential to become an essential resource for anyone interested in exploring the beauty and diversity of Uttarakhand.

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