

Article

Harnessing community participation tourism development in Himalayan region of Uttarakhand State, India

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Abstract: The article aims to evaluate the participation of below-poverty-line local community in tourism-related business activity in Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. Further, this article addressed for those who work in the tourism sector. The study employs a mix of methods, including survey data from 500 respondents with a random sampling approach, using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tools for analysis, other methods were interviews and observations at six tourism sites in Garhwal and four sites in Kumaun. Our findings showed that there has declined in community participation in tourism development, due to the lack of economic benefits obtained in the tourism sector, many believe that the tourism sector does not provide much income growth for them and does not make a significant contribution to the development of their region. Moreover, lack of understanding is considered the basis for community's inability to play an active role, and lack of stakeholders' involvement in encouraging them to improve their economy and culture through the tourism sector. Ultimately, this research also underlines the existence of some efforts by tourism travel to encourage public trust, which can help reduce poverty and increase community trust in tourism development in their region.

Keywords: community-based tourism; participation; sustainable development; economic factor

1. Introduction

Tourism is a vital industry that plays a significant role in economic development of many different countries (Arefipour et al., 2022; Baiburiev et al., 2018; Kline et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2022; Reddy and Wilkes, 2015; Tafel and Szolnoki, 2020), consequence, many countries are attempting to enhance their tourism sectors as a means of boosting economic expansion and speeding up its beneficial impact on their gross domestic product advancement (Giannoni et al., 2020; Shang et al., 2023). Therefore, local community participation in tourism development is essential for the sustainability of the tourism industry (Priatmoko, Kabil, Purwoko, et al., 2021; Sharma and Bhat, 2023; Thetsane, 2019). The involvement of local communities in tourism development ensures that they are active partners and provides a check and balance

since they have a particular stake in the region (Kowalski and Sowier-Kasprzyk, 2009; Mshenga and Richardson, 2013).

The benefits of local community participation in tourism development are numerous. Tourism can provide sustainable income to local residents, fund local activities, and improve local services such as health and education (World Tourism Organization, 2017). It can also promote employment opportunities, support vulnerable groups, including minorities, youth, and women, and facilitate cultural exchange between tourists and locals (WTTC, n.d.). Moreover, tourism can help preserve and evolve a community's culture, and visitors can learn about the history and traditions that make the town tick (Gao and Wu, 2017).

Local community participation in tourism development faces several challenges. Structural constraints identified include lack of access to planning experts, weak community development, lack of budget, lack of education, and unsuitable infrastructure to support tourism (Priatmoko et al., 2021; Reindrawati, 2023; Setokoe and Ramukumba, 2020). The fundamental motivation for this research is that Uttarakhand has huge potential in tourism related business and local people engagement evolved into a substantial portion of the workforce and a key source of revenue, researcher tried to find ground reality. Thus, the main focus of the study to evaluate the participation of local community specially below poverty line people in tourism related business activity and analyses the nature and scale of the community participation in Himalayan state of Uttarakhand.

In addition, local community participation in tourism development is vital for the sustainability of the tourism industry. The involvement of local communities in tourism development ensures that they are active partners and provides a check and balance since they have a particular stake in the region and a commitment to environmental quality. The benefits of local community participation in tourism development are numerous, and it can help preserve and evolve a community's culture, provide sustainable income, and improve local services. However, challenges to community participation in tourism planning and development exist, and it is essential to address them to create a successful community-based tourism experience.

There are several studies that show local community participation in village-level tourism businesses will encourage innovation. This local community involvement where local communities encourage innovation and unlock regional potential (Luz et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2023). However, sometimes limited infrastructure and social factors can be an obstacle to local community participation in carrying out tourism business planning (Yaja et al., 2023). In addition, climate change poses a threat to the implementation of rural tourism businesses in some areas, requiring adaptation strategies (Dasgupta et al., 2022). In terms of gendered local community engagement, where gender roles are critical, women are increasingly driving the success of rural tourism businesses, positively impacting local community participation and shifting traditional gender roles (Movono and Dahles, 2017; Surangi, 2022; Salahuddin, 2023). Despite the leadership gap (Pato et al., 2024), women often take a more holistic approach to tourism business participation (Schmidt et al., 2024). As such, the elimination of the dominant gender gap is fading, with women often performing better in tourism businesses than men (Wen et al., 2022). As a result, gender issues and stigmatization in the local tourism business chain are related to how economies of

scale and quality of business products are generated and provide success for these gender-based resources (Amoah, 2013).

Although existing research has extensively analyzed how local community participation in business planning in the tourism sector participates in developing tourist destinations, there are still gaps in comprehensively understanding this phenomenon in the specific context of Garhwal and four sites in Kumaun, Himalayas. Interestingly, however, challenges to community participation in tourism planning and development exist, and it is essential to address them to create a successful community-based tourism experience. This study aims to explore how local communities participate in tourism sector business development planning in Garhwal and four sites in Kumaun, Himalaya, by considering the underlying factors that influence their involvement, particularly gender perspectives. By reflecting on findings from other case studies, the article seeks to ensure the comparability of its results with existing knowledge.

As abovementioned, this research paper will focus on presenting the community perspective of local participation in Himalayan region of Uttarakhand state. The article started with an introduction in Section 1, which gives the overall background of tourism and its relationship with the local community's participation. A comprehensive literature review is introduced in Section 2 to highlight the significant research gap, which is the poverty and tourism business for remote or rural area. After that, the data collection and analytical method are explained in Section 3. Then, the results and discussion are presented, followed by the conclusion.

1.1. Community participation

The success of expanding the community limit in tourism development is intricately tied to the active and meaningful participation of the community, as it is widely recognized as one of the fundamental principles and guidelines put forth by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for fostering sustainable and responsible tourism practices (UNEP, 2011; Gallardo Vázquez et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the limited participation of the community in tourism development can be attributed to a dearth of essential organizational capabilities, inadequate dissemination of information, an absence of motivation, an inadequate policy structures that do not incentivize community participation, and insufficient financial means (Anaba et al., 2023).

In the creation of a tourism objective, a lack of community involvement in tourism-related activities would result in a lack of consistency. It is now a commonly acknowledged idea in the democratic world that the public has a right to participate in the planning of activities that have an impact on their everyday life (Simmons, 1994). Therefore, participation is a strengthening strategy that directs in the apparent proof of problems, navigation, and execution that might contribute to long-term development. From passive to active engagement, all neighborhood networks engage in a range of activities.

The World Tourism Code of Ethics highlights the significance of local involvement in tourism-related activities, stating that locals should be involved and should fairly benefit in the financial, social, and social spheres, particularly through

direct and indirect job opportunities (UNWTO, 2017). However, current study compares the direct and indirect effects of residents' perceptions on community participation and support for tourism development in rural and urban WHS destinations. It also examines how residents' perceptions affect residents' support for tourism development indirectly through community participation (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).

Public participation in tourism planning can take many different forms, such as setting up advisory committees or boards for the industry, having open forums, and conducting focus groups and/or surveys (Spencer, 2010). Additionally, as a region develops, it must strike a balance between economic growth, heritage preservation, and environmental protection. Integrating the community in these processes gives them a sense of inherent responsibility and "ownership" over the past of the area (Joukes et al., 2018). Although they are not present equally in all tourist destinations, it can be claimed that there are operational, institutional, and cultural restrictions on community participation in the tourism destination in many developing countries (Tosun, 2000).

The participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process is very important for sustainable tourism development (Sánchez et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). The roles of stakeholders in tourism development include providing feedback, monitoring social and traditional activities, ensuring sustainability, and supporting the tourism sector (Nicolaidis, 2014). It is important to understand the interests and priorities of tourism development stakeholders in order to develop and implement tourism policies and programs that are beneficial to all stakeholders involved (Arlt, 2023). By working together, stakeholders can help to ensure that tourism is a positive force for the economy, environment, and society (Zhang and Smith, 2019).

1.2. Tourism destination planning

Tourism destination planning is an essential process for sustainable and inclusive tourism development that supports economic growth and local livelihoods (Pham, 2020). It involves gathering and evaluating information to identify and prioritize current tourism development issues, imagining a desired future state of tourism in the destination, and choosing from a number of alternatives for achieving them (Priatmoko et al., 2021).

Effective destination management relies on an iterative and continual planning process that integrates tourism into a community's social, economic, and environmental aspirations (Ellery et al., 2021). However, tourism planning is never a one-off effort, and it should reflect a strategic long-term direction (Zapata Campos et al., 2018). The challenges facing tourism planning include climate change, over tourism, COVID-19, poaching, wildlife loss, safety, security, taxations, travel promotions, infrastructure, and cross-border set of laws, among others (Cheng et al., 2023). Therefore, several of these challenges significantly impact human activities and the economy, potentially disrupting tourism demand (Nagy et al., 2023).

Stakeholders play a crucial role in tourism destination planning (Amoako et al., 2022). According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2005), there are four main stakeholders who play roles in tourism development: the tourist, the business providing goods and

services, the government of the host destination area, and the local community (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003). Other stakeholders that tourism planners should consider include institutions engaged in financing tourism projects, trade unions of employees, and professionals working in tourism, tourism educational centres, and other tourism specialist organizations (Amoako et al., 2022).

Involving local communities in tourism destination planning can bring several benefits. Firstly, it guarantees the local community as an active partner and provides a check and balance since it has a vested interest in the success of tourism development (Li et al., 2021). Secondly, it can provide sustainable income and employment opportunities for local residents, which can help to improve the local economy and public services (Sugandini et al., 2018). Thirdly, it can foster entrepreneurship and new business ventures, which can lead to more creative and innovative tourism products and services (Bruyere et al., 2009). Finally, involving local communities in tourism destination planning can help to ensure that tourism development is sustainable, responsible, and beneficial to all stakeholders (Kabil et al., 2021).

Community-based tourism in Uttarakhand is a type of tourism that is community-owned and managed, ensuring that local communities have full ownership and management of the tourism experience (Agrawal et al., 2023). It is a sustainable form of tourism that benefits the local community economically, socially, and environmentally. Community-based tourism in Uttarakhand is managed by the communities themselves, and management decisions are made by the community (Singh, 2018).

Community-based tourism in Uttarakhand is also essential for cultural preservation, as it encourages locals to value and preserve their traditions and culture. Overall, the challenge faced by community-based tourism in Uttarakhand is bringing together the benefits of tourism and participation to boost the economy so that they care more about the community-based tourism (CBT) concept (Chandra and Kumar, 2021; Rana and Bisht, 2023).

Thus, the research question of this article is to examine the participation of local communities in driving the development of business destinations in the tourist sector in six tourism sites in Garhwal and four tourism sites in Kumaun. The significance of this study lies in examining the different perspectives and levels of participation of men and women in these communities regarding the development of tourist villages, thus this article provides valuable value for scholarly contributions in breaking down gender-based participation.

2. Materials and methods

A case study research design was used in this exploratory research in 2023. Further, Respondent will be questioned utilizing quantitative survey data as well as qualitative interview and observation data together as a mix-method approach (Aspers and Corte, 2019). The information evaluates how the local community views businesses connected to the travel sector. The inquiry also looks at the local community's involvement in connection to the resources of the travel industry and how the tourism sector may assist eliminate poverty.

We used the Kumaun and Garhwal region as research locations. As primary data,

we use interviews (structured and semi-structured), observation, and also demographic data associated with gender, age-wise, and area-wise responses regarding participation in tourism business. All of the interviews were mostly based on semi-structured interview protocols that were created to examine the Uttarakhand tourist industry and provide potential approaches for increasing community participation in the sector.

The information acquired from the neighborhood local area of the examined places of Uttarakhand corresponding to the exploration locations is the focus of this research. The results of a survey with 500 respondents are examined in this section (see **Table 1**). Prior to the start of the investigation, the respondents were given information on the importance, reasoning, and motivation for the review. Furthermore, the respondents have been assured that all of the information they have provided will be used for the purpose of the investigation.

Table 1. Concept of sampling for the present study.

S.N.	Sample concepts	For the present study
1	Population/universe for sample selection	The local community at the Tourism places and the total number of residents and entrepreneurs.
2	Sampling element	Single residents make up the population.
3	Sample frame	The local community living in the Particular tourism areas, who are at least 18 years, living at rural location for last one year and whose names is listed in the voter’s list. Entrepreneurs who operated their business in selected places.
4	Sampling Technique	Random Sampling
5	Sample size	500 respondents
7	Selected Areas	10 Tourism places, 6 places from Garhwal (Uttarkashi, Harsil, Kanatal, Joshimath, Gopeswar, Tehri) and 4 places from Kumaun (Almora, Nainital, Ranikhet, Kausani).

Source: compiled by authors.

The interview protocols were first developed, examined, and improved from the beginning to the completion of the data collecting process to gather all the potential data that has contributed to generating useful insights and examining potential plans (Ritchie et al., 2013). Finally, the original facts and information are verified using scholarly literature and trustworthy information sources, like the Ministry of Tourism, the Government of India, and Uttarakhand’s website. We then parse and triangulate the data to discuss the findings and draw conclusions (Gallivan, 1997; Priatmoko, Kabil et al., 2021). Interviews were conducted with a number of local people who have a high level of understanding and are considered to be people involved in tourism-related business development randomly in two areas namely Kumaun and Garhwal areas, the selection was based on the recommendation of some local community participation in the area, so that we have comprehensive information about the research findings.

On the other hand, to generate and analysis the data from quantitative survey, statistical technique of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to assess whether there are significant differences in the means of two or more populations. It is essential tool of statistical hypothesis testing (Kashlak et al., 2023), which helps determine if there are any significant variations between multiple groups or populations, enabling researchers to draw conclusions about the potential differences in means (Kim, 2017).

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The geographical maps of study area

The study encompasses and examines the study areas in two distinct and geographically regions, namely Kumaun and Gwal in Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, both of which possess untapped potential for the development of tourism and its associated resources. These regions, located in the breathtakingly beautiful and culturally diverse state of Uttarakhand in India offer a wealth of natural wonders, rich cultural heritage, and unique experiences that can be leveraged to create sustainable and responsible tourism opportunities for the benefit of both local communities and visitors alike.

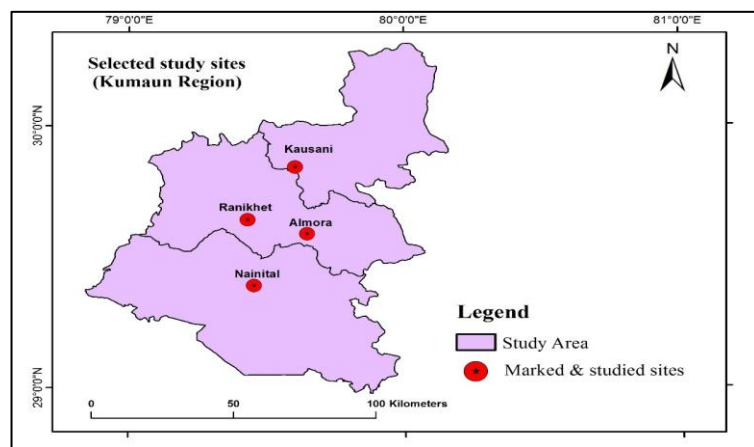


Figure 1. Map of Kumaun region.

Source: Department of Geology, HNB Garhwal University.

Kumaun (see **Figure 1**), one of the regions nestled within the majestic Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, holds a captivating allure that beckons adventurers, nature enthusiasts, and cultural aficionados alike. This region, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, vibrant cultural diversity, and age-old traditions, serves as a compelling and unique case study for delving into the dynamics of community-based tourism. This research is embarked on a journey to unravel the intricate layers that make Kumaun an ideal setting for studying the impact of tourism on local communities. With a keen focus on economic aspects, we delve into understanding how tourism plays a pivotal role in shaping the livelihoods of the residents. Therefore, by examining the various socio-economic factors, this research aims to shed light on the opportunities and challenges that arise from tourism development, such as the creation of employment, income generation, and the redistribution of wealth within the community.

Beyond the economic implications, we recognized the paramount importance of preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage. Kumaun, with its rich tapestry of traditions, rituals, and art forms, serves as a living testament to the resilience and wisdom of its people. Through this research, we strive to highlight the significance of safeguarding these intangible cultural assets, ensuring their transmission to future generations and fostering a sense of pride and identity within the community. Sustainability lies at the heart of our exploration. We investigate the practices and

initiatives that promote responsible tourism, seeking to strike a delicate balance between preserving the natural environment and meeting the demands of visitors. So, in collaborating with local stakeholders, we to identify strategies that minimize the ecological footprint of tourism activities, promote eco-friendly practices, and contribute to the conservation of the region's ecological treasures. In this pursuit, we also delve into the role of government policies and community participation in fostering community-based tourism. By analysing the effectiveness of existing policies, to understand how they facilitate or hinder the growth of sustainable tourism initiatives. Additionally, this research explores the level of community engagement and empowerment, examining the extent to which local residents are involved in decision-making processes and benefit from the tourism industry.

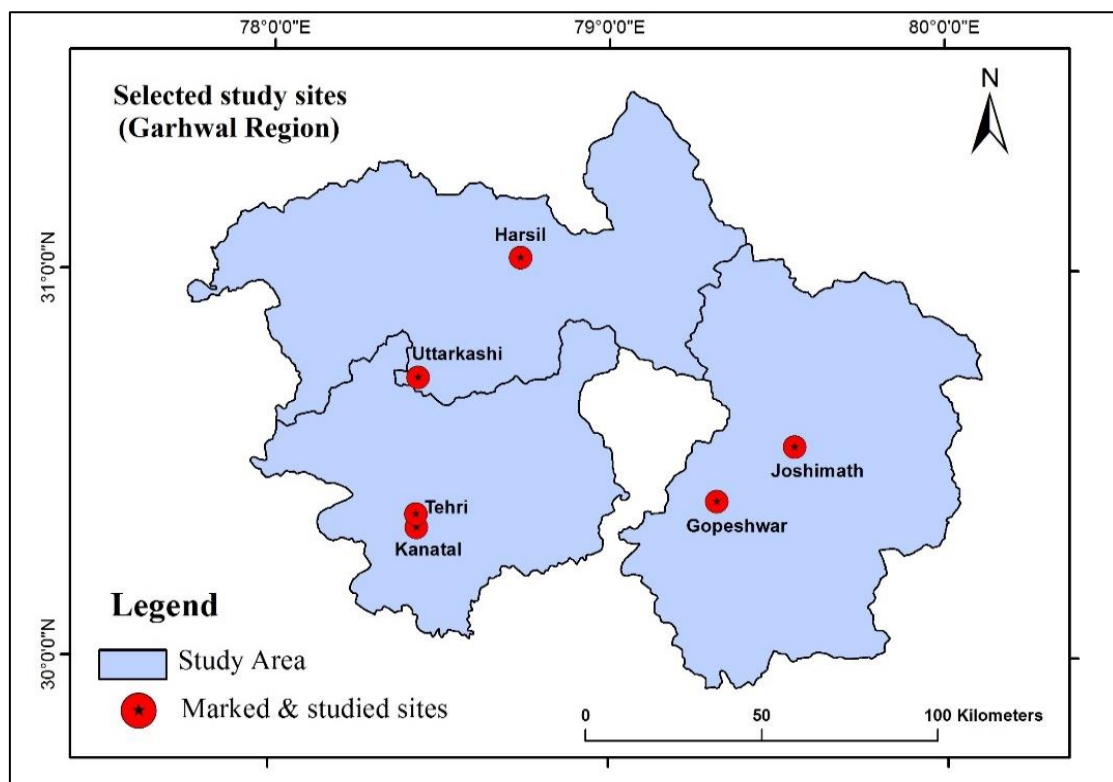


Figure 2. Map of Garhwal region.

Source: Department of Geology, HNB Garhwal University.

Garhwal (see **Figure 2**) is located in the western part of Uttarakhand, the Garhwal region stands as a testament to the awe-inspiring beauty of the Himalayan mountains, with their majestic peaks, sprawling glaciers, and meandering rivers that carve through the rugged terrain. This research is drawn to explore the multifaceted dynamics of this region, delving into topics such as community development, livelihoods, and the profound impact of migration on the socio-economic fabric of Garhwal's vibrant communities. By immersing in the intricacies of community development, we aim to unravel the underlying factors that shape the progress and well-being of the local residents. Through extensive fieldwork and in-depth interviews, I seek to understand the various initiatives and interventions that have been implemented to uplift the communities in Garhwal. From analysing the effectiveness of government programs to examining the role of non-governmental organizations and community-based

initiatives, my research endeavours to shed light on the challenges and opportunities that arise in the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive development.

One crucial aspect that cannot be overlooked is the impact of migration on Garhwal’s communities. As people migrate in search of better opportunities or due to environmental factors, the demographic landscape undergoes significant changes. By studying the causes, patterns, and consequences of migration, we can gain insights into the social, economic, and cultural transformations that occur within these communities. From understanding the remittance economy to exploring the implications for family structures and social cohesion, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between migration and community dynamics in Garhwal. Livelihoods form a cornerstone of investigation into the diverse economic activities that sustain the communities of Garhwal. From traditional agrarian practices to emerging sectors such as tourism and handicrafts, this research aims to comprehend the intricacies of livelihood strategies and their resilience in the face of changing socio-economic and environmental conditions.

3.2. Selection of participants based on age and gender

This study included a sample of 500 participants who selected from ten countryside locations in the Kumaun and Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. The demographic characteristics by age are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Sample size for the respondents in selected places.

Name of the Place	Age 20–30	%	Age 31–40	%	Age 41–50	%	Age 51–60	%	Total
Uttarkashi	30	60	15	30	4	8	1	2	50
Harsil	30	60	16	32	4	8	0	0	50
Kanatal	29	58	16	32	4	8	1	2	50
Joshimath	20	40	24	48	6	12	0	0	50
Gopeswar	7	14	31	62	12	24	0	0	50
Tehri	6	12	28	56	16	32	0	0	50
Almora	23	46	12	24	15	30	0	0	50
Nainital	26	52	14	28	10	20	0	0	50
Ranikhet	30	60	14	28	6	12	0	0	50
Kausani	28	56	11	22	11	22	0	0	50
Total	229	45.8	181	36.2	88	17.6	2	4	500

Source: compiled by authors.

Besides, the distribution of respondents and subsequent analysis of the gender-related respondent in tourism sector in Kumaun and Garhwal region, which this data will provide crucial insights into the dynamics of tourism sector development. By examined the gender composition of respondents and exploring their perspectives and experiences, this research aims to uncover new findings that can inform future strategies and policies in development of the tourism industry in Kumaun and Garhwal.

In **Table 3**, we can observe the distribution of respondents based on their gender in the sampled places. The data reveals that the highest percentage of male respondents is found in Kausani with 84%, followed by Almora with 80% and Tehri with 78%. On

the other hand, the lowest response from male respondents is recorded in Joshimath with 50%. On the other hand, the distribution of female respondents, the data shows that the highest percentage is recorded in Joshimath with 50% and Gopeswar with 36%. This indicates a relatively higher participation of females in these areas when compared to other sampled places. However, the lowest response from female respondents is observed in Kausani with only 16%. This suggests a lower level of female participation in Kausani compared to the other locations.

Table 3. Gender-wise distribution of the respondents.

Name of the Place	Gender				Total
	Male	%	Female	%	
Uttarkashi	33	66	17	34	50
Harsil	33	66	17	34	50
Kanatal	33	66	17	34	50
Joshimath	25	50	25	50	50
Gopeswar	32	64	18	36	50
Tehri	39	78	11	22	50
Almora	40	80	10	20	50
Nainital	33	66	17	34	50
Ranikhet	33	66	17	34	50
Kausani	42	84	8	16	50
Total	343	68.6	157	31.4	500

3.3. Tourism in Kumaun & Garhwal: Age, gender & regional participation

In this section, we present the outcomes of the analysis conducted on the findings of the study, focusing on the extent of local community participation of Kumaun and Garhwal region based on age in tourism development. Additionally, the study also examined the perspective of the local population from a gender perspective to compare and assess their active involvement in promoting and implementing tourism development initiatives within their respective country-side regions. By delving into the data examined the results, we aim to shed light on the level of engagement and contribution of the broader local community-based ages towards the tourism development in the study area. This analysis serves to provide insights into the overall participation patterns, identifying any notable trends or disparities that may exist among different age groups and gender distributions.

The present study employed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to investigate the statistically significant variations observed among several age cohorts in relation to their propensity to engage in or initiate entrepreneurial endeavours within the tourism industry. **Table 4** presents the distribution of participants across different age categories. Specifically, it reveals that there were 229 participants in the 20–30 age group, 181 participants in the 31–40 age group, 88 participants in the 41–50 age group, and 2 participants in the 51–60 age group.

Table 4. Age-wise responses regarding community participation in tourism related business.

Age group	N	Mean ± S.D.	df	F	Sig.
20–30	229	1.20 ± 0.60			
31–40	181	1.40 ± 0.79	3	2.91	0.034
41–50	88	1.34 ± 0.76			
51–60	2	1.00.00			

Source: One-Way ANOVA tested.

Based on the data shown in the aforementioned **Table 4**, it can be observed that respondent falling within the age bracket of 20 to 30 had a greater inclination towards initiating entrepreneurial ventures within the tourism industry as compared to other demographic cohorts. Conversely, marginal disparities were noted in the average values throughout the remaining age categories. The degree of freedom (df) is equal to three. The *F*-statistic is employed to evaluate the null hypothesis, with the obtained *F*-value of 2.91 suggesting the absence of statistically significant differences in community participation scores across different age groups (Herzog et al., 2019; Muthukumar et al., 2003). The *p*-value corresponding to the *F*-statistic provides information on the level of significance of the test. In this case, the *p*-value is 0.034, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05 (Cai et al., 2020; Liao et al., 2015). Consequently, the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA test indicate the rejection of the null hypothesis, so demonstrating the presence of statistically significant disparities in community participation scores among the different age cohorts. Consequently, the local community in the region is prepared to participate in or establish ventures within the tourism sector.

Table 5 shows gender-specific responses to join/start-up a tourism business using an independent sample *t*-test. A total of 500 respondents were surveyed for this study, out of which 343 respondents were male, and 157 respondents were female. Males and females appear to have significantly different levels of interest in joining or starting a tourism business, with males scoring lower on the mean score (1.11) than females (1.68). The *T*-test results showed that there is a significant difference between the two groups, as the *t*-value is higher or equal to 1.96 (Berhanu and Raj, 2020; Saudi et al., 2018), i.e., 8.90, and the very low *p*-value (0.00) i.e., less than 0.05 indicates that this difference is statistically significant (Otoo et al., 2021; Ozdemir et al., 2012). Therefore, this analysis reveals that females in the region are highly interested to join or participate in the tourism industry.

Table 5. Gender-wise response regarding participate/Start-up in tourism business (Independent sample *t*-test).

		N	Mean ± S.D.	T	Sig.
Interested to join/Start-up in Tourism Business	Male	343	1.11 ± 47	8.90	0.00
	Female	157	1.68 ± 94		

Source: One-Way ANOVA tested.

On the other hand, in significant differences among the means of the populations. The current study involved five hundred respondents from ten different countryside

areas around Kumaun and Garhwa, and utilized the statistical data technique by ANOVA. This research allowed to determine if there were any notable variations in community participation in tourism-related businesses across the various regions of Kumaun and Garhwal.

According to the data presented in **Table 6**, the study conducted a One-Way ANOVA test to examine the mean scores of community participation in tourism-related businesses across various regions in Kumaun and Garhwal. The analysis included a total of 500 respondents, with 50 participants from each of the ten selected countryside areas. The mean scores and standard deviations for each region were calculated, providing insights into the level of community participation. The mean scores ranged from 1.2800 to 1.3400, indicating a relatively consistent level of participation across the regions. The standard deviations ranged from 0.70102 to 0.74533, reflecting the degree of variability in the responses within each region. The One-Way ANOVA test revealed that there were no significant differences among the means of the populations ($F = 0.060$, $df = 9$, $p = 1.00$). This suggests that, based on the data collected, there is no substantial variation in community participation in tourism-related businesses across the different countryside areas in Kumaun and Garhwal.

Table 6. Area-wise response regarding community participation in tourism related business.

Places	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	F	Sig.
Uttarkashi	50	1.2800	0.70102			
Harsil	50	1.3400	0.74533			
Kanatal	50	1.3000	0.70711			
Joshimath	50	1.2800	0.70102			
Gopeswar	50	1.2800	0.70102			
Tehri	50	1.2800	0.70102	9	0.060	1.00
Almora	50	1.3400	0.74533			
Nainital	50	1.3000	0.70711			
Ranikhet	50	1.2800	0.70102			
Kausani	50	1.2800	0.70102			
Total	500	1.2960	0.70525			

Sources: One-Way ANOVA tested.

3.4. Qualitative analysis

The study’s findings underscored the importance of local community participation in Kumaun and Garhwal region as a crucial catalyst in tourism-related businesses. This is consistent with the notion of participatory planning, which entails involving local communities through collaborative initiatives, as emphasized by Ani and Dewi (2016). The respondents in this study also demonstrated an understanding of the importance of community participation. The results indicate that a greater level of community input leads to improved cooperation within the community during the decision-making process, as noted by Zikargae et al. (2022).

a) **Harnessing Economic Benefits through Community Participation in Tourism Issues**

One of the key factors contributing to the economic impact of rural tourism on local community development is the economic benefits it brings. Several aspects fall under this category. Firstly, the active participation of the local community has resulted in significant improvements in basic facilities and infrastructure, within the village to better experiences, it is in line with other studies with similar results mentioned by Priatmoko et al. (2021). This has not only enhanced the living conditions for the residents but has also made the destination more attractive for the tourists, it finding is in accordance with another research by Sugandini et al. (2018). Secondly, the growth of tourism businesses has provided a source of motivation for the youth to engage in tourism-related jobs and activities. This has opened up new employment opportunities and empowered the younger generation to contribute to the local economy. It is result is similar to Rana and Bisht (2023), wherein the involvement of young village can boost potential of enhancing Uttarakhand's present tourist sector. Furthermore, the demand for local products, handicrafts, and agricultural goods by tourists has had a positive impact on traditional businesses and the overall local economy. The increased market for these products has provided a boost to the income and livelihoods of local artisans and farmers. Lastly, some members of the local community have been able to generate income by leasing their land and property for tourism purposes. This additional revenue stream has not only improved their financial well-being but has also encouraged them to actively participate in the tourism industry.

b) **Private and government roles play a crucial part in the development of tourism.**

The great scope of tourism has attracted private players to invest in these areas. Private participation, in terms of investment, brings in resources, expertise, and innovation that can contribute to the growth and enhancement of tourism offerings. This involvement can lead to job creation, infrastructure development, and overall economic growth in the local community. Besides, the government's role and control in supporting development is important, as a mentioned by Hegedűs et al. (2020). However, in the given context, it is mentioned that the government is not providing funding or technical assistance to generate economic benefits for the local community. This lack of support can hinder the potential growth and sustainability of tourism in the area. Whereas, in compered by other case research by Sánchez et al. (2021) that the government sector involvement plays an essential role for boosting the availability of tourism sector policies and management association in promoting tourism. It results also contrasted significantly with another tourism village case study outcome by C. Liu et al. (2020) it showed that a cross-government synergy in playing a vital part in success of rural tourism practices, where the central government contributes a leading role in directing rural tourism and regional government handling tourism practices in coordinating with businesses and local community to provide services and solve problems.

c) **Transforming Communities through Feminine Involvement in Legacy Awareness**

Legacy awareness coupled with feminine involvement has had a significant impact on the current state of heritage buildings, rural tourism, traditional houses, and community participation in tourism. Firstly, it is observed that a majority of heritage buildings are still vacant and in a state of neglect. This indicates a lack of awareness

and appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of these structures. However, the involvement of women in tourism activities in rural areas has brought about positive changes. Their participation has not only provided economic opportunities but has also contributed to raising awareness about the importance of preserving heritage buildings. Secondly, the transformation from traditional houses to modern ones is a reflection of changing lifestyles and preferences. While this shift may be seen as a loss of cultural heritage, it is important to recognize that societal changes and development are inevitable. As a result, women's participation in the transformation of lifestyles and housing preferences in Garhwal and Kumaun is a positive and important phenomenon. Women in this area are critical to the preservation of ancestral values and the prevention of civilization's extinction as a result of cultural change. Their participation can result in more comfortable, functional, and sustainable homes, as well as increasing women's empowerment. However, efforts should be made to strike a balance between modernization and the preservation of traditional architectural styles and techniques. Lastly, community participation in tourism has played a crucial role in creating awareness and fostering a sense of responsibility towards protecting culture. By involving local communities in tourism activities, there is a greater understanding of the value of cultural heritage and the need to preserve it for future generations.

d) The challenges of local community participation in tourism-related businesses

Along with the lack of local government support, can hinder the success and sustainability of rural tourism initiatives. Firstly, the involvement of local communities in decision-making processes related to rural tourism initiatives is often limited. Bureaucrats and tourism departments may not actively engage with the local community, resulting in a lack of representation and input from those directly affected by tourism development. This can lead to a disconnect between the needs and aspirations of the community and the tourism activities implemented. Secondly, the continuous financial and technical support from government agencies for tourism development activities in selected areas is often lacking. This can hinder the growth and maintenance of tourism infrastructure, marketing efforts, and overall sustainability of the tourism business. Without consistent support, it becomes challenging for rural tourism stakeholders to attract and cater to a steady stream of visitors. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial for rural tourism stakeholders to seek support from governmental, international, or national tourism bodies. Collaborating with these entities can help in securing financial resources, technical expertise, and marketing assistance. By maintaining a constant demand for visitors, rural tourism businesses can thrive and contribute to the local economy.

4. Discussion

This study underscores the critical role of local community participation in driving tourism-related businesses in the Kumaun and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand. Local communities in Uttarakhand's Kumaun and Garhwal regions are playing a critical role in driving tourism businesses, particularly among the young adults (20–30 years old). This participation highlights the need for strategic support, as economic benefits are crucial for rural tourism's impact on local development. Educational

programs can equip these young minds with the skills to plan and create innovative tourism products and services. This approach aligns with Bruyere et al. (2009), who found that active youth involvement fosters creativity in the tourism industry.

However, despite the growing recognition of tourism's importance, current government support in these regions remains inadequate. This lack of support, including insufficient financial aid and infrastructure, creates challenges for local communities. It makes it difficult to predict visitor flow and prepare accordingly. Consequently, many communities prioritize self-reliance through community-based tourism, utilizing visitor revenue to provide limited support for their businesses. This aligns with Agrawal et al. (2023) and Singh (2018), who found that communities in Uttarakhand's tourism villages prefer self-management to avoid overdependence on external assistance. In essence, while local participation is strong, a strategic approach with improved government support is necessary to maximize the positive impact of tourism on these communities.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of local community participation in tourism-related business activity in the Himalayan Region of Uttarakhand State, India, specifically in Garhwal and Kumaun, reveals valuable insights but also highlights potential areas for improvement in tourism development strategies. While the data indicates a gender disparity in respondents (69% men, 31% women), it is noteworthy that women, despite a lower response rate ($SD = 94$) compared to men ($SD = 47$), demonstrate a strong work ethic, shouldering household responsibilities, and actively participating in agriculture and related activities. Agriculture remains the dominant profession (43.7%), followed by entrepreneurship (22%), private and government services, and homemaking. However, the study also identifies a disconnect between local perceptions and the intended benefits of community-based tourism. The majority of respondents disagree that tourism improves basic facilities, infrastructure, or motivates youth engagement. Similarly, there is skepticism regarding whether tourist demand benefits traditional businesses or generates income through property rentals. Notably, the positive impact of community participation on job creation and per capita income is supported.

Based on these, the following policy recommendations emerge from the local community: a cooperative system; establishing a cooperative structure for tourism development is crucial. This system should involve all stakeholders in Garhwal and Kumaun, ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits. Secondly, local community participation is important, whereas bureaucrats and tourism development stakeholders must actively involve local communities in planning and decision-making processes. Furthermore, rural visitor centers should establish a dedicated visitor or tourism center that provides direct services and information to tourists, as demonstrated in both of the selected tourism case studies. Moreover, the community engagement should identify local products, standardize them for quality control, and enable direct purchases from producers to tourists. This approach will ensure that artisans, farmers, and communities directly benefit from tourism development. Therefore, by addressing these concerns and implementing the suggested strategies, tourism development in

Garhwal and Kumaun can evolve into a truly sustainable and inclusive model that empowers local communities and fosters a sense of shared prosperity.

However, this article has a limitation in that it requires a primary perspective from the government in a qualitative study. Therefore, to understand the disparity in local community participation in business-related tourism development, we need direct confirmation or perspective involvement from the local governments of Garhwal and Kumaun. We must conduct a thorough investigation in the Himalayan state, taking into account the need to explore several other areas beyond the two locations discussed in this article. This will accentuate the importance of local community involvement in the tourism sector in the Himalayan region. This study also uses random sampling techniques in surveys, which raises the possibility of bias if non-respondents' views are consistently different from those of respondents. This implies that future research must conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the results and incorporate the local community into quantitative survey results derived from non-random sampling to enhance community participation. Future research requires the enhancement of quantitative data processing tools like PLS-SEM to boost the precision of the values obtained from the survey.

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