

Best Practices-02

'SairSalika' An Initiative towards Responsible Tourism

Objectives of the Practice: Aiming to facilitate a paradigm shift in tourism, the initiative champions the concept of 'civic travelers'. Through varied activities, it emphasizes vital aspects like environmental preservation and community engagement. This program not only advocates for environmental conservation but also offers avenues for skill enhancement and research exploration. Information dissemination via booklets and documentaries is key, promoting potential tourist spots globally. Furthermore, it emphasizes cleanliness, sanitation, holistic health, incorporating yogic practices, and local cuisine experiences.

The Context: Sair Salika, an innovative practice of Garhwal University aligned with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, promotes responsible tourism. The campaign, led by the School of Management and Tourism, focuses on popularizing tourist spots, fairs, and events with the '*Clean Environment - Responsible Tourism*' message. University students actively engage in dissemination. This awareness drive encourages tourists, families, and groups to incorporate cleanliness and environmental protection during their travels, promoting a mindful approach. *Sair Salika* creates harmony among tourists, local businesses, educational institutions, and administrative units.

The Practice: Students of Garhwal University, particularly those from the Centre for Mountain Tourism and Hospitality Studies, are actively engaged in cleanliness campaigns during their educational tours to tourist destinations. This initiative, inspired by the concept of SairSalika, emphasizes not just exploring diverse places, but also fostering a sense of responsibility toward environmental conservation. The university also incorporated *SairSalika* into its curriculum, launching the campaign at Jaipur's Albert Hall in 2016. Since then, annual cleanliness drives have been organized at various tourist spots nationwide. It focuses on positive activities to mitigate tourism's adverse environmental impact. Taglines like '*Decorate nature, not tease it*' promote harmony between nature and tourism, encouraging activities such as *polythene eradication, Ganga sanitation, and water conservation*. Commercial establishments in cities like Dehradun use SairSalika and Swachh Bharat logos on their bags. This initiative, championing community involvement and academic contributions, has led to impactful programs like '*Uttarakhand Utpaad, Uttarkhand Uphaar*' and '*Mahatma Gandhi Paryatan Paripath*,' generating significant public awareness and participation.

Evidence of Success: The campaign, endorsed by renowned figures like Ruskin Bond and Chandi Prasad Bhatt, featured discussions with mountaineer Bachendri Pal and Lieutenant Commander Vartika Singh, promoting responsible behavior towards mountains. The university introduced *Ganga Guide* and *tourist destination courses*, educating guides along the Ganga River about its sanctity and cleanliness. In collaboration with the Uttarakhand Tourism Department, 26

guides received identity cards for conducting tours. During Sair Salika, 229 unemployed youth from various districts of Uttarakhand were trained under the *Tourist Destination Guide program*, contributing to tourism and environmental awareness in the region.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: The SairSalikaProgramme, a flagship initiative by the University since 2016, faces significant challenges. Firstly, as an awareness program, it requires substantial financial resources for successful publicity. Secondly, despite appreciation, ensuring the program's longevity is a hurdle. Lastly, the program's effectiveness relies on collaboration among tourism professionals, tourists, hotel and travel industries, locals, and administration, posing coordination challenges. Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for the initiative's sustained impact and success.