

7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness

The University, being situated in the lap of Himalayas, has a distinctive feature of catering to the needs of the largely hill population and address the concerns related to the Himalayan region. Moreover, the geographical location and setup of the region offers endless opportunities to discourse the unique natural environment which abounds in rich flora and fauna besides distinct historical, cultural and socioeconomic identity. **“Encouraging mountain specific research”** is an integral part of the vision statement of the University. Ever since its inception, departments like the University has laid emphasis in this direction. The departments of Botany & Microbiology, Zoology, Forestry & Natural Resources, and Environmental Science are well known for their work in field of ecological research, biodiversity studies and conservation of natural resources. The High Altitude Plant Physiology Research Centre (HAPPRC) has been continuously working on promotion of high altitude medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) for their cultivation and creating awareness for conservation of natural resources. Commercially viable models of medicinal plant cultivation have already come up and more are adding to it. Centre has developed a Nature Interpretation Site at Baniyakund (district Rudraprayag) under ‘National Mission on Himalayan Studies’ for creating environmental awareness, field research, demonstration and maintenance of germplasm.

In addition to the above, the University actively engages the local communities in creating opportunities for livelihood generation activities. The Department of Rural Technology is constantly working towards strengthening the socio-economic condition of the hill people by harnessing local resources and identification of potential sector for technology interventions so as to provide income generation activity. The Department of Economics has been working continuously for exploring the major issues of the mountain economy through special focus on socio-economic research. The department aims to serve as a medium for the sustainable development along with enhancing the living standard and attaining prosperity, focussing on the issues like agriculture, women empowerment, tribal study of MSME problem, poverty and self employment, micro finance which are important for the overall development of this region. Similarly, the Department of Commerce has been undertaking research in the area of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development, Horticulture Marketing, Financial inclusion for promoting entrepreneurship visions, rural financial services, motives and skills among the students and young entrepreneurs of the region. It will be an effort to convert the job seekers into the job providers. The socio-political set up of this hill region is the focal theme of majority of doctoral research in the University.

To preserving and promoting the folk arts, folklores, folk music, instruments and culture of Uttarakhand the University has established a ‘Centre for Folk Performing Arts and Culture’. The Department of Drawing and Painting train the students especially in ‘Garhwal School of Painting’. Also, it regularly organizes exhibitions to promote traditional arts and paintings. The Department of History & Archaeology carries out archaeological exploration and excavation to reveal the rich historical heritage of Uttarakhand and showcase the archaeological artefacts in the ‘Museum of Himalayan Archaeology and Ethnography’. Established in 1980, the museum displays the antiquities, excavated finds and other important collection of terracotta art, bronzes, sculptures, manuscripts, coins, paintings, inscriptions and other ethnographic materials. Likewise, the ‘Museum of Himalayan Cultural Heritage’ houses artefacts depicting various dimensions of tribal culture of the region. The ‘Centre for Mountain Tourism and Hospitality studies’ (CMTHS) has been carrying out research work on various areas of the discipline with special emphasis on eco-tourism, pilgrimage, heritage and adventure tourism.

Department of Yoga is taking yoga education and practices to masses for mental and physical well being of the local populace. Also, the department of Physical Education conduct rallies, runs and sports activities for promoting health, sports and fitness among the masses so as to tap the potential of the youths to excel in sports.