

# The nature of tourism and tourists/pilgrims' inflow in Uttarakhand Himalaya

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## ABSTRACT

**Keywords:**  
Nature of tourism,  
Tourists/pilgrims,  
Natural locales,  
Pilgrimages,  
Uttarakhand Himalaya.

The Uttarakhand Himalaya is bestowed with numerous places of tourists/pilgrims' interest. Mainly four types of tourism are practiced – natural, cultural (pilgrimage), wildlife/park, and adventurer tourism. This paper examines the nature of tourism and tourists/pilgrims' inflow in the natural locales, pilgrimages, and administrative towns/cities in the Uttarakhand Himalaya. Data on tourists/pilgrims' inflow in these tourist places and pilgrimages (2000-2018) were gathered from the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, Uttarakhand. The data were analyzed based on three types of places of tourists/pilgrims' interest. The paper is divided into three sub-sections – trends of tourists/pilgrims' inflow (domestic and foreign) in all the places, domestic/foreign tourists' inflow in the natural locales/administrative towns/cities, and pilgrims' inflow (domestic and foreign) in the highland and the valleys pilgrimages. It has been observed that pilgrims' inflow is higher in the pilgrimages than the tourists' inflow in the natural locales and administrative towns/cities. Further, the two pilgrimages of the river valley – Rishikesh and Haridwar received more than 50% pilgrims during the period 2000-2018. The author observed that the trend of tourists/pilgrims' inflow is not uniformed in all the tourists/pilgrims destinations. It has been observed that natural disasters, inaccessibility, and lacking infrastructural facilities have influenced the tourists/pilgrims' in flow in the Uttarakhand Himalaya.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is an activity in which people travel for leisure, business, education, and performing rituals. It is practiced for leisure, recreation, entertainment, education, and culture (Tribe 1997; Smith 1997; Kelman and Doods 2009; Ellis 2003; Kulendran and Witt 2003). Tourism has different types such as nature tourism, pilgrimage tourism, and adventure tourism. It is speedy growing and a smokeless industry and a major source of income and economy of the people, worldwide (Sharpley 2004). India is bestowed with tremendous potential of tourists/pilgrims destinations in the forms of natural locales, pilgrimages, historical monuments, rich culture, and national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Every year, exodus tourists visit these places of tourists/pilgrims' interests. India is the home to 36 world heritage sites where over 8.80 million foreign tourists visited in 2016 (Government of India 2017). World Trade and Tourism Council (WTTC 2017) reported that India generated USD 220 billion from the tourism industry, which is 9.6% of the national GDP. Globally, tourism is a USD 625 billion industry, the single largest non-Government economic sector in the world (WTO 2005).

Uttarakhand, nestled in the lap of the Himalaya has spectacular landscapes – river valleys, middle altitudes, highlands, alpine pastures, and the snow-clad mountain peaks. It has the world-famous highland and valley pilgrimages – Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri, Gangotri, Rishikesh, and Haridwar; natural locales – Dehradun, Mussoorie, Nainital, Ranikhet, Almora, and Kosani; national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, and many other places of tourists and pilgrims' interest (Sati 2013). Because of the diverse nature of tourist places, pilgrimage tourism, natural tourism, and eco-tourism are practiced in the Uttarakhand Himalaya (Sati 2015). Besides, adventure tourism in the form of mountaineering, trekking, skiing, and river rafting are practiced here. The Father of Nation' Mahatma Gandhi' called it the Switzerland of India after his first visit to Uttarakhand. The pilgrims, within and outside India believe Uttarakhand as the 'land of the Gods and Goddesses'. The Ganga, which originates and flows from Uttarakhand is called the mother Ganga, which is one of the most attractions for the pilgrims (Sati 2019).

Pilgrimage to the highland and river valley sacral places in Uttarakhand is the centuries-old practice

Research Paper

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and it is still very popular. Out of the total tourists/pilgrims arrived in Uttarakhand, 80% of them visited these pilgrimages (Sati 2018). Haridwar and Rishikesh pilgrimages received more than 50% of the total tourists/pilgrims arrived in Uttarakhand. The highland pilgrimages are located in the spectacular landscapes, mainly in the alpine pasturelands (locally known as Bugyals) where the terrain is very fragile and highly prone to natural disasters. Badrinath and Gangotri pilgrimages are connected by all-weather roads and for Kedarnath and Yamunotri, the pilgrims have to trek about 16 km. Meanwhile, Rishikesh and Haridwar are located in the Ganga valley in the plain areas, well connected by air, rail and roadways.

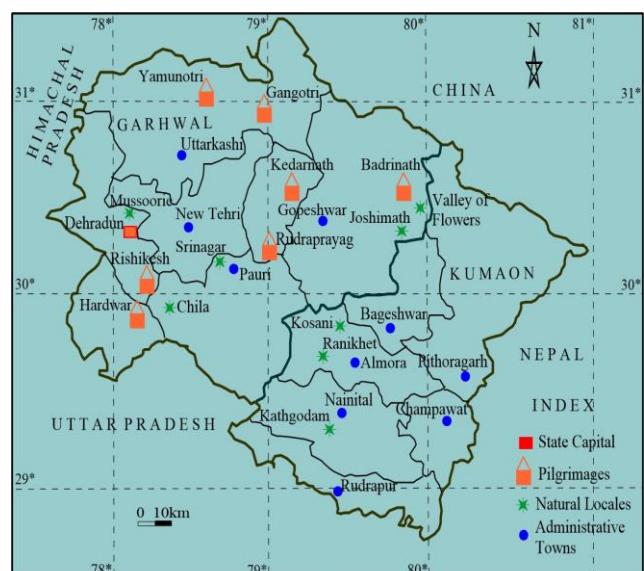
Tourism is a large industry in Uttarakhand as it generates 50% revenues of the state domestic gross products (SDGP). It has tremendous potential for tourism development as tourists/pilgrims' inflow is significantly high. During the last 18 years (2000-2018), total tourists/pilgrims visited Uttarakhand are 434.03 million of which 300 million domestic pilgrims and 0.48 million foreign pilgrims visited the major pilgrimages. In Haridwar itself, about 240 million domestic and 0.32 million foreign pilgrims visited. About 56.1 million domestic tourists and 0.5 million foreigners visited in the natural locales, and 76 million domestic and 0.95 million foreign tourists visited administrative tourist places.

Although, the Uttarakhand Himalaya has plenty of the world-famous tourists' places and pilgrimages yet it did not get an impressive position in tourism development. The entire region is lagging in infrastructural facilities such as transportation, accommodation, and institutional. The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) is the state government agency, which role is to provide basic amenities to tourists/pilgrims however it could not do the remarkable work in this regard. On the other hand, the state of Uttarakhand could not harness the huge potential of tourism. There have been lots of studies conducted by scholars on tourism aspects, however, a detailed study of tourists/pilgrims' inflow for the two decades and specific tourism types and their precise study was not carried out so far. This paper examines the nature and trends of tourism and tourists/pilgrims inflow in the Uttarakhand Himalaya from 2000 to 2018. It studies the types of tourism and inflow of tourists/pilgrims in the tourists' places – natural locales, pilgrimages, and administrative towns/cities. The paper also

analyses the tourists/pilgrims' inflow both domestic and international and illustrates the changing trends of tourists/pilgrims' inflow from year to year during the period 2000-2018. The Uttarakhand Himalaya has numerous tourists' places and pilgrimages however for this study, only 26 tourists' places and pilgrimages are studied.

## 2. Study Area

The Uttarakhand Himalaya, an integral part of the Himalayan Mountain System, is bestowed with the spectacular landscapes – fertile Doon valley, the river valleys, the middle-altitudes, the highlands, the pasturelands, and the perpetual snow-clad mountain peaks. These places are the major attractions for tourists and pilgrims. The total area of the Uttarakhand Himalaya is 53,483 sq km. It is divided into two distinct socio-cultural and geo-environmental realms as the Garhwal Himalaya and the Kumaon Himalaya. The world-famous four highland pilgrimages – Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri are located in the Garhwal Himalaya. Further, the two river valleys pilgrimages – Rishikesh and Haridwar are located in the Garhwal Himalaya. Natural tourists' places are located in the entire Uttarakhand Himalaya. The Uttarakhand Himalaya has two international boundaries – Tibet (China) in the north and Nepal in the east, and from two other sides, it is bordered with Himachal Pradesh from the west and Uttar Pradesh from the south. The pilgrimages, natural locales, and administrative towns/cities, which are studied in this paper, are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Location map of the Uttarakhand Himalaya showing the major tourist places/pilgrimages, which have been described in this paper.

Source: Author

### 3. Methodology

This study was conducted through data gathering from the UTDB, Dehradun on the major places of tourists/pilgrims' interest. Data on tourists/pilgrims' inflow, both domestic and foreign of 26 natural locales and pilgrimages were collected from 2000 to 2018. The tourists' places were divided into three types – natural locales, pilgrimages, and administrative towns/cities. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the minimum, maximum, mean value, and standard deviation of tourists/pilgrims inflow in the major places of tourists' interest. The trend of tourists/pilgrims' inflow was presented using graphs. First, the total tourists/pilgrims' inflow (domestic and foreign separately) in the three different tourist places were presented in graphs. Thereafter, the data were grouped into two types – tourists/pilgrims' inflow (domestic and foreign separately) in the highland and river valleys pilgrimages (total six) and combined natural locales and administrative towns/cities into one group (total five). The data were largely illustrated.

### 4. Trends of Tourism and Tourists/Pilgrims Inflow

In this section, tourist places are classified as natural locales, cultural places (pilgrimages), and administrative towns/cities. Further, tourists/pilgrims' inflow both domestic and foreign is shown from 2000 to 2018. A detailed description of tourists/pilgrims' inflow in these tourists/pilgrims centers are as follows.

#### Domestic Tourists/Pilgrims' Inflow

Domestic tourists/pilgrims' inflow in the natural locales, cultural places, and administrative

towns/cities are shown in Figure 2. Pilgrims' inflow in the cultural places is the highest and it has increasing trends. Tourist/pilgrims' inflow data of eight major pilgrimage centers, 10 major administrative towns/cities, and nine major natural locales were gathered from UTDB, Dehradun from 2000 to 2018. In 2000, domestic pilgrims' inflow in the major pilgrimages was 7.41 million, which increased to 25.26 million (2018). In 2013, the entire Uttarakhand was affected by cloudburst triggered natural calamity therefore, the pilgrims' inflow in the pilgrimages decreases as it was 14.88 million whereas, in 2012, it was 19.32 million. Meanwhile, the growth in the number of pilgrims after 2013 increased continuously. The total domestic pilgrims' visited the pilgrimages were 300 million. Domestic tourists' inflow in administrative towns/cities increased from 1.97 million in 2000 to 6.7 million in 2018, which was less than the pilgrims' inflow. Similarly, after 2012, when tourists' inflow in administrative towns/cities was 5.07 million, it decreased to 3.77 million in 2013 and then it continuously increased. The total domestic tourists' inflow in administrative towns/cities was 76 million. Domestic tourists' inflow in the natural places was the lowest among all three places. In 2000, tourist's inflow was 1.64 million, which increased to 4.48 million in 2018. However, in 2013, it decreased to 2.21 million while it was 3.62 million in 2012. After 2013, the growth in tourists' inflow in natural places was just double. The total domestic tourists visit in the natural locales was 56.09 million during the 18 years.

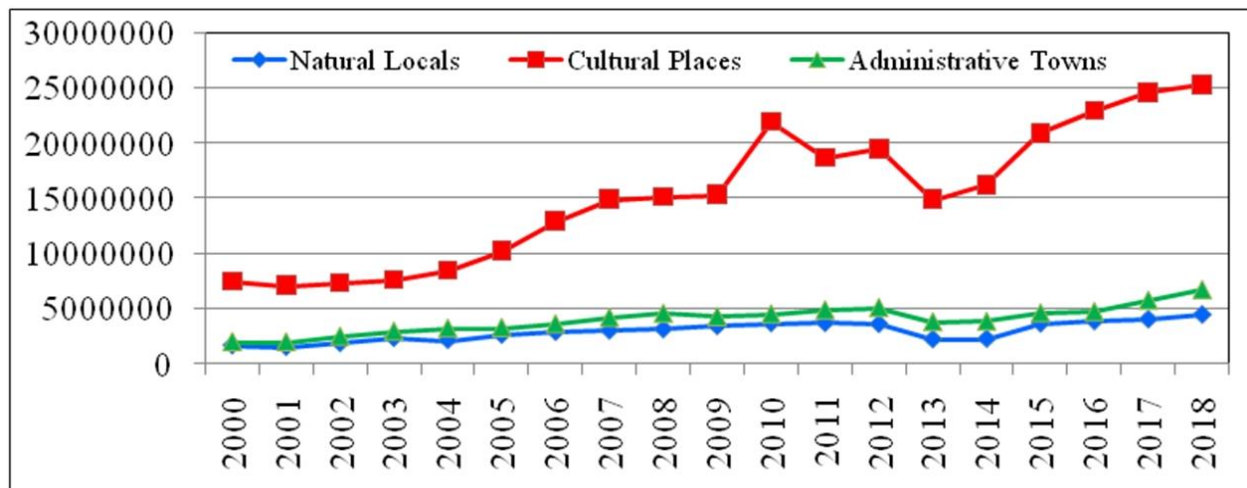


Figure 2. Domestic tourists' inflow

Source: Author

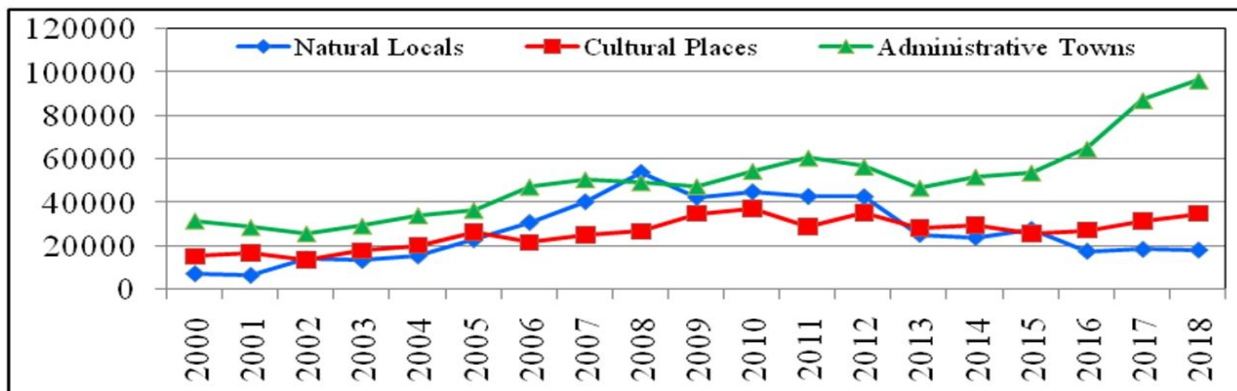


Figure 3: Foreign tourists' inflow

Source: Author

Foreign Tourists/Pilgrims' Inflow

Foreign tourists/pilgrims' inflow was the highest in the administrative towns/cities, which was 0.95 million (Figure 3). It was followed by natural locals (0.5 million) and slightly less (0.48 million) in the pilgrimages. In 2000, tourists visited the administrative towns/cities were 0.32 million, which increased to 0.96 million. In between, there was not a clear cut trend. Foreign tourists' inflow decreases in 2001, 2002, 2008, 2009, and 2013. Pilgrims' inflow for pilgrimage tourism was 0.15 million, which reached 0.35 million in 2018 (just double) with a substantial decrease in 2002, 2006, 2011, 2013, and 2015. In the natural locales, the foreign tourists' inflow was 0.071 million in 2000. It increased to 0.18 million in 2018. The number decreased in 2009, 2013, and 2014. Therefore there was not a straight trend of foreign tourists' inflow.

Domestic Pilgrims' Inflow in the Highland Pilgrimages

The pilgrimages of Uttarakhand are divided into two categories – the highland pilgrimages, and the river valley pilgrimages. Data on individual

pilgrimage centers were gathered and described. Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath (located west to east) are the highland pilgrimages where a large number of pilgrims visit every year. During 2000-2018, the highest number of pilgrims visited Badrinath (13.1 million), followed by Kedarnath (7.03 million), Gangotri (5.07 million), and Yamunotri (4.23 million). In Badrinath, the highest pilgrims visited in the years 2008 (1.1 million), 2012 (1.04 million), and 2018 (1.04 million). The pilgrims' inflow decreased in 2001, 2009, 2013, and 2014. In Kedarnath, the highest pilgrims visited in years – 2018 (0.73 million), 2012 (0.57 million), 2011 (0.56 million), and 2007 (0.55 million). In 2001, 2002, 2013, and 2014, pilgrims' inflow decreased. In Gangotri, the lowest pilgrims' inflow was 0.051 million in 2014 and the highest inflow was 0.48 million in 2011. Similarly, in Yamunotri, the lowest pilgrims' inflow was 0.038 million in 2014 and the highest inflow was 0.44 million in 2011 (Figure 4).

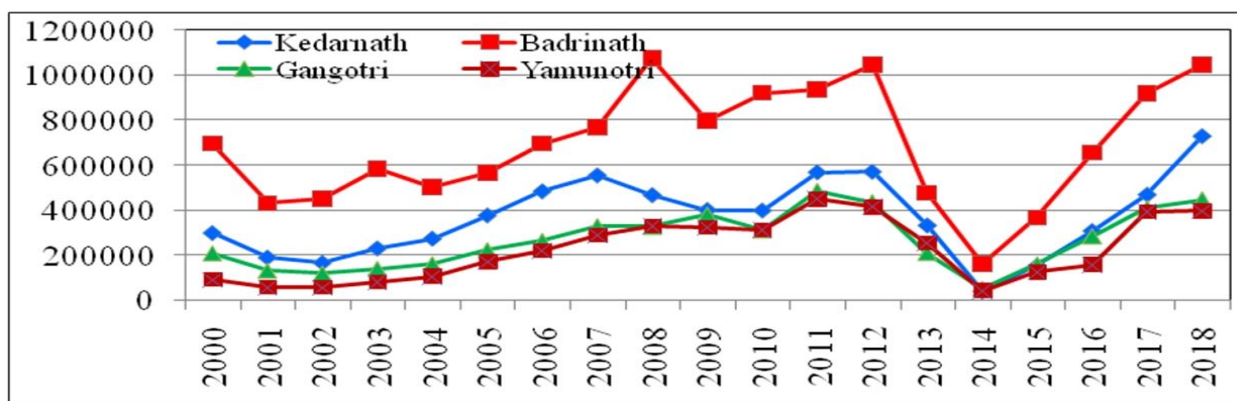


Figure 4: Domestic pilgrims' inflow in the highland pilgrimages

Source: Author

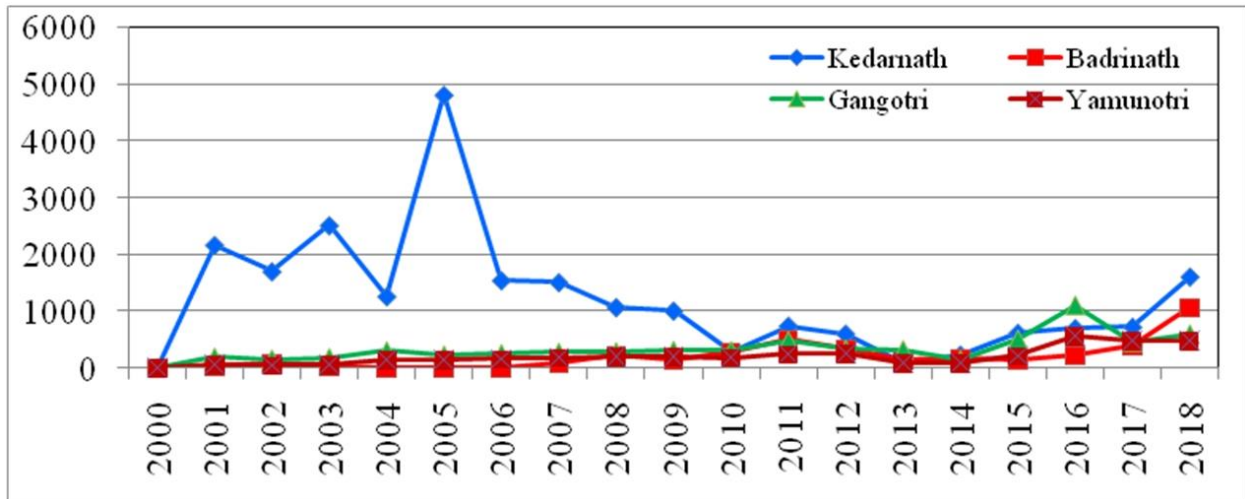


Figure 5: Foreign pilgrims' inflow in highland pilgrimages

Source: Author

Foreign Pilgrims' Inflow in the Highland Pilgrimages

Foreign pilgrims' flow in the highland pilgrimages is comparatively low. The Kedarnath pilgrimage received the highest inflow, which is a total of 23,094 from 2000 to 2018, followed by Gangotri (6429), Badrinath (3805), and Yamunotri (3752). In 2000, foreign pilgrims' flow was zero in all the highland pilgrimages (Figure). In Kedarnath, the highest pilgrims' inflow was 4811 in the year 2005 and the lowest inflow was 81 in the year 2013. The Badrinath pilgrimage received the highest pilgrims inflow in the year 2018 (1064) and the lowest was 12 in 2006 (Figure 5). The highest pilgrims' inflow in the Gangotri pilgrimage was 1109 in 2016 and the lowest was in the year 2014, which was 139. The Yamunotri pilgrimage received the lowest foreign pilgrims' flow in 2002 (47) and the highest inflow in 2018 (482).

Domestic Tourists' Inflow in the Major Natural Locomes/Administrative Towns

A total of five tourist places of natural locales and administrative towns were selected for the detailed description out of a total of 19 places because these are the major centers where tourists' inflow was high. Figure 6 shows five major centers of tourists' interests – Mussoorie, Dehradun, Nainital, Joshimath, and Almora. The total tourists' inflow in Mussoorie was 27.22 million, followed by Dehradun (25.64 million), Nainital (10.54 million), Joshimath (14.25 million), and Almora (3.53 million). The trend of growth in the number of tourists in these centers was stagnant up to 2007 with the highest in flow in Mussoorie, followed by Dehradun, Joshimath, Nainital, and Almora. Both Mussoorie and Dehradun received an increase in tourists' inflow after 2014 and it has continuously increased.

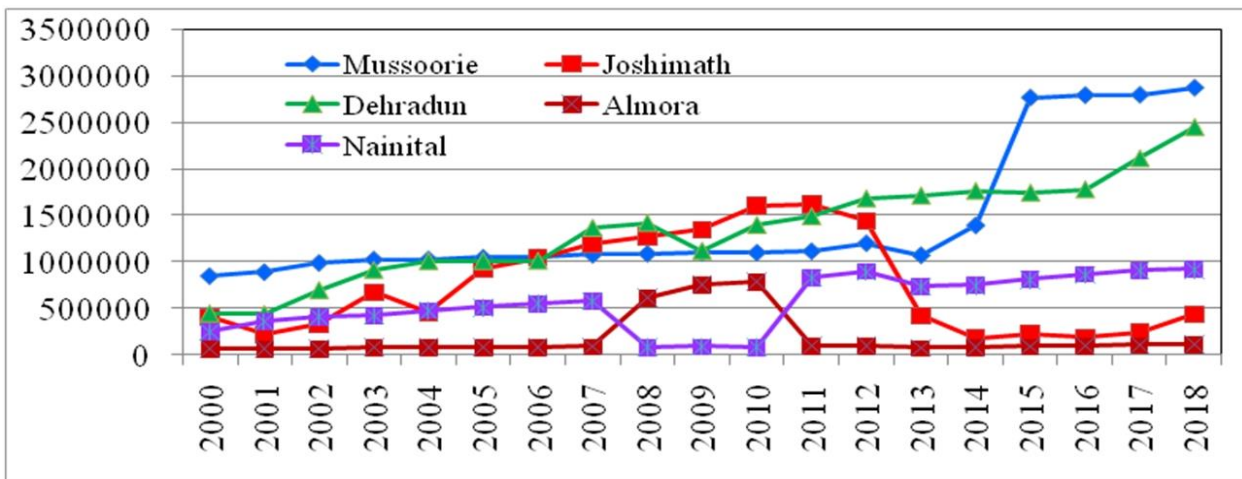


Figure 6: Domestic tourists' inflow in the major natural/administrative centers

Source: Author

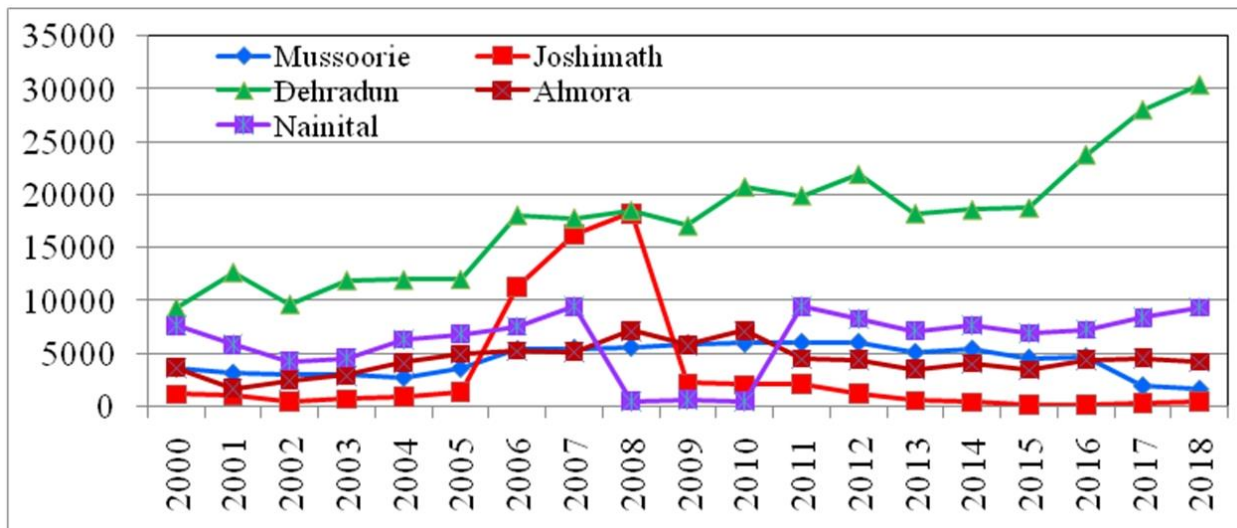


Figure 7: Foreign tourists' inflow in the major natural/administration tourist destination

Source: Author

Foreign Tourists' Inflow in the Major Natural Locomes/Administrative Towns

Foreign tourists' inflow in the major natural locales/administrative towns in the Uttarakhand Himalaya was about 10 times less than the domestic tourists. Further, the trend of tourists' inflow is almost unchanged during the period 2000-2018 except the tourists' inflow in Dehradun city, which has been increasing and the tourists' inflow in Dehradun is the highest. There was an increase in tourists' inflow in Joshimath town between 2005 and 2009 and after 2013, the tourists' inflow decreased continuously. In Nainital, tourists' inflow decreased in 2008, 2009, and 2010. During the period, Dehradun received the highest tourists' inflow (0.34 million), followed by Nainital (0.12 million), and Almora (0.083 million). Mussoorie has

received 0.082 million tourists and Joshimath 0.061 million (Figure 7).

Domestic Pilgrims' Inflow in the River Valleys Pilgrimages

The two river valley pilgrimages – Rishikesh and Haridwar are described. These two pilgrimages are the world-famous where thousands of pilgrims visit every year. Figure 8 shows trends of domestic pilgrims' inflow in these pilgrimages. In Haridwar, the trend is increasing except in the year 2013, when pilgrims' inflow decreased. The Rishikesh pilgrimage has unchanged tourists' inflow during the period. The total domestic pilgrims' inflow in Rishikesh was 91.2 million and in Haridwar, it was 240 million more than half of the Uttarakhand Himalaya.

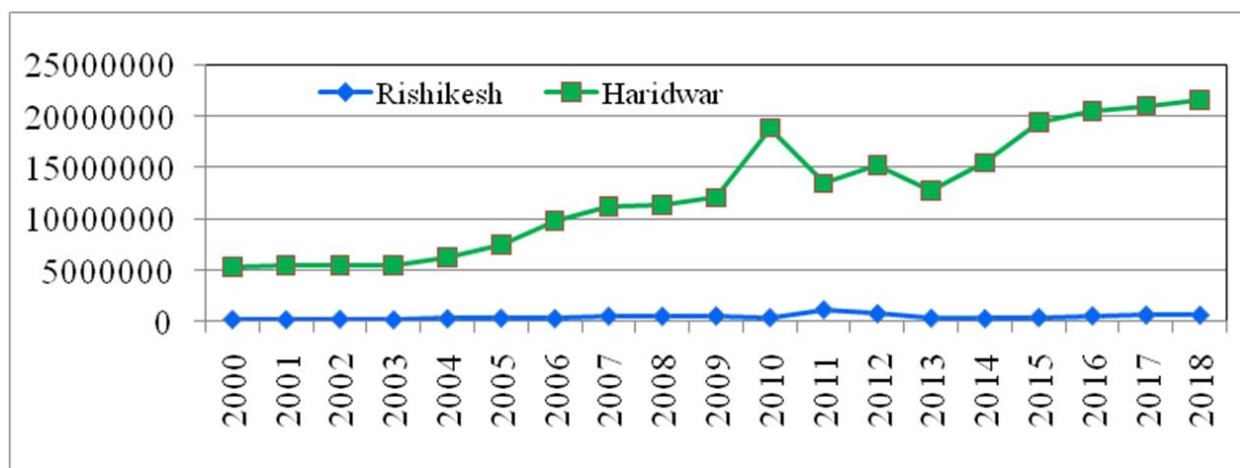


Figure 8: Domestic tourists' inflow in the river valleys pilgrimages

Source: Author

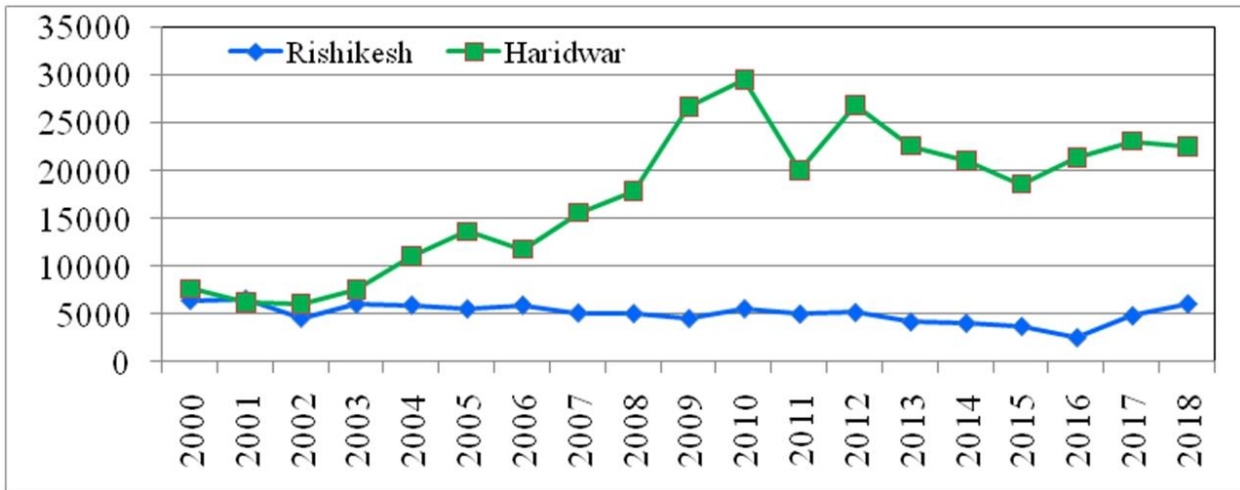


Figure 9: Foreign tourists' inflow in the river valleys pilgrimages

Source: Author

Foreign Pilgrims' Inflow in the River Valleys Pilgrimages

Haridwar has received a total of 0.32 million foreign pilgrims more than three and a half times than Rishikesh (0.097 million). The trend of foreign pilgrims' inflow in Haridwar was increasing till 2010. It has decreased after 2010 and then the trend was irregular. In terms of Rishikesh, the trend was unchanged and straight (Figure 9).

Analysis of Tourists/Pilgrims Inflow Using Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of tourists/pilgrims' inflow in different tourists/pilgrims places of the Uttarakhand Himalaya. The lowest tourists/pilgrims' inflow was in natural locales (1.5 million), while the maximum inflow of tourists/pilgrims was in the cultural places (25.3 million). It shows that the mean of tourists/pilgrims inflow was the highest in the cultural places, followed by inflow in administrative towns, and the lowest inflow was in the natural locales. The minimum, maximum, and mean value of foreign tourists/pilgrims' inflow is given. The maximum inflow was noticed the highest in the administrative towns (96026), followed by inflow in the natural places, which is 53419 and in the pilgrimages, the inflow is the lowest (36777). The lowest minimum inflow was in the natural locales and the highest minimum inflow was in the administrative towns (25448). Therefore, it is observed from the table that foreign tourists/pilgrims' inflow is comparatively low and it is highest in the administrative towns, which are located in the plains and easily accessible areas. The minimum value of domestic pilgrims' inflow was noticed from Yamunotri (38208) followed by

Kedarnath (40718). The Maximum inflow of pilgrims was in Haridwar, which was more than 21.56 million. Likewise, the lowest mean value of tourists' inflow was (266885) in Gangotri and the highest in Haridwar (12.54 million). The mean value of foreign pilgrims inflow in pilgrimages was the highest in Haridwar with 17360 pilgrims while the lowest mean value of pilgrims' inflow was in Yamunotri (197 pilgrims). Likewise, the highest maximum inflow was in Haridwar (29555 pilgrims) and the lowest maximum inflows were in Yamunotri (566 pilgrims). Minimum foreign pilgrims' inflow was zero in all the four high land pilgrimages. The analysis shows that foreign pilgrims mainly visited the river valleys pilgrimages. The mean value of domestic tourists' inflow was the highest in Mussoorie (1.43 million), followed by Joshimath ((0.75 million). The lowest mean value of domestic tourists' inflow was in the valley of flowers (5642 tourists), followed by Auli (33067 tourists). Similarly, the minimum and maximum tourists' inflow was changed. Chila is located in the Raja Ji National Park, where several tourists visit every year. Chila is the tourist place where the highest number of foreign tourists' visited (26914), followed by Joshimath (26914). The lowest foreign tourists' inflow was in Auli (561), followed by in the valley of flowers (763). In terms of the minimum foreign tourists' inflow, the lowest number of tourists visited the Valley of Flowers (5), followed by Auli (93). The highest minimum foreign tourists visited in Mussoorie (1550), followed by Ranikhet (398) and Kausani (303). The mean value of tourists' inflow was changed accordingly.

**Table 1: Domestic/foreign tourists/pilgrims' inflow in different tourists/pilgrims places (n=19)**

Tourism type	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Natural locales	1500187	4478338	2952310	881995
Cultural places	7048942	25262167	15297309	6144652
Administrative towns	1942542	6701955	4004556	1226359
Foreign tourists/pilgrims' inflow in different tourists/pilgrims places (n=19)				
Tourism type	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Natural locales	6324	53419	26488	13934
Cultural places	12955	36777	25609	7136
Administrative towns	25448	96026	49905	18577
Domestic pilgrims' inflow in pilgrimages N=19				
Pilgrimages	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Kedarnath	40718	730387	370423	174270
Badrinath	159405	1075372	688669	259243
Gangotri	51555	484826	266885	125845
Yamunotri	38208	448751	222387	137599
Rishikesh	220097	1181535	480038	240164
Haridwar	5316980	21555000	12536162	5742652
Foreign pilgrims' inflow in pilgrimages N=19				
Pilgrimages	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Kedarnath	0	4811	1215	1112
Badrinath	0	1064	200	252
Gangotri	0	1109	338	235
Yamunotri	0	566	197	155
Rishikesh	2574	6536	5092	1005
Haridwar	6029	29555	17360	7392
Domestic tourists' inflow in natural locales/administrative towns N=19				
Natural locales	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mussoorie	847191	2870475	1432772	736516
Srinagar	38391	324218	175562	74882
Chila	99102	439034	282302	85449
Joshimath	173013	1626275	749901	528555
Auli	6459	151560	33067	34398
Valley of Flower	176	14128	5642	4542
Ranikhet	62487	150423	90830	31601
Kausani	62485	191866	90298	43304
Kathgodam	40642	162087	91934	47614
Foreign tourists' inflow in natural locales/Administrative towns				
Natural locales	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mussoorie	1550	5985	4298	1471
Srinagar	69	5192	1220	1664
Chila	13	26914	14146	7886
Joshimath	155	18252	3233	5516
Auli	93	561	295	131
Valley of Flower	5	763	336	221
Ranikhet	398	1683	749	375
Kausani	303	9001	1834	2955
Kathgodam	19	1360	378	284

Source: Author

## 5. Discussion

It has been noticed from the result of this study that the pilgrims visited in the major pilgrimages are outnumbered mainly the domestic pilgrims. The reason is that the Uttarakhand Himalaya is known as the 'land of gods and goddesses'. It has many highland and the river valley pilgrimages where exodus number of pilgrims visit every year mainly the Hindu pilgrims. The pilgrims believe that visiting these highland pilgrimages once in a lifetime will get rid of them from the cycle of birth and death. Although there are several natural locales and administrative towns/cities of touristic

interests and the tourists visit these tourist places throughout the year yet the inflow of tourists is less than the inflow of pilgrims who visit the pilgrimages both river valleys and the highlands.

On the other hand, the number of foreign pilgrims visiting pilgrimages is quite less. Therefore, it has been observed that foreign tourists' inflow is higher in the administrative cities/towns and natural locales of tourists' interest than in the major pilgrimages. The foreign pilgrims visiting the pilgrimages are mainly from the south and southeastern Asia and few are from the other parts



of the world. However, the foreign tourists visiting the tourists' places are foreign nations almost from all corners of the world.

The largest number of domestic pilgrims visited the Badrinath Pilgrimage. Badrinath pilgrimage is connected by road (all-weather) therefore the number of pilgrims is high. Kedarnath pilgrimage ranks second in pilgrims' inflow because it is well connected by airways where chopper facility is provided to pilgrims from Jolly Grant, Dehradun, and Phata, Guptakashi although there is a 16 km trek to reach Kedarnath. Badrinath is famous for the Vishnu temple while Kedarnath is famous for the Shiva temple and pilgrims of both sects – Shaiva and Vaishnav visit these temples. Gangotri and Yamunotri are the other two highland pilgrimages where Goddess Shakti is worshiped. Gangotri is well connected by road whereas Yamunotri can be reached by trekking about 16 km. It has been noticed that the pilgrimages, which are well connected, pilgrims' inflow was high. In terms of foreign pilgrims' inflow in the highland pilgrimages, it is the highest in Kedarnath because of its connectivity by air. Foreign pilgrims' inflow in other pilgrimages is low.

It has been noticed that pilgrims' inflow in these highland pilgrimages decreased mainly during the catastrophic natural disasters. In 2013, the highland pilgrimages were devastated due to cloudbursts triggered debris flows and flash floods. The entire Uttarakhand Himalaya is highly vulnerable to catastrophic natural disasters and as a result, the pilgrims' inflow decreases when natural disasters occur.

The Uttarakhand Himalaya is endowed with numerous natural locales of touristic interest. Among the major natural locales and administrative towns studied by the author, the highest tourists' inflow was noticed in Mussoorie and Dehradun and the trend was noticed increased. Dehradun is the capital city of Uttarakhand, which lies in the serene valley of Doon. The Ganga River lies in its east part and the Yamuna River lies in the west, enhances its beauty. Further, the city is well connected by air, rail, and roads. These drivers promote tourism in Dehradun. Mussoorie is another important destination where many tourists visit every year. Tourists' inflow in Almora is comparatively less because of its location and inaccessibility although it is a famous tourist destination. Nainital and Joshimath are the other famous tourists' destinations. Joshimath is located on the way to Badrinath and it is the winter home of Lord Vishnu

therefore, tourists' inflow is high. Dehradun is also a hotspot for foreign tourists. The trend of tourists' inflow is increasing. The foreign tourist inflow in other tourists' destination is the same during the period with the highest inflow in Nainital, followed by Mussoorie and Almora. Joshimath has the lowest inflow of tourists whereas from 2005 to 2009, foreign tourists' inflow in Joshimath was the highest.

Haridwar and Rishikesh are the two world-famous river valley pilgrimages where hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit from entire India and the world. Both pilgrimages are accessible by road, rail, and air transports. Haridwar is known as the gateway to Badrinath and Kedarnath. Hari Ki Pauri is the place where the Ganga Aarti is performed. The Ganga River enters in the plain region from Haridwar. The pilgrims believe that taking a holy bath in the Hari Ki Pauri once in a lifetime gets rid of the cycle of birth and death and their forefathers get heaven after death. Rishikesh is the world's 'Yoga Capital' and a place for spiritual tourism. Both Haridwar and Rishikesh have almost become the twin city except a small strip of Raja Ji National Park in Raiwala. In Rishikesh and Haridwar, two-third of the total pilgrims visit every year.

The trend in tourism is not uniformed. The tourists/pilgrims' inflow was quite less mainly in the years when the Uttarakhand Himalaya was affected by natural disasters. This part of the Himalaya receives heavy downpour called cloudbursts. Cloudburst triggered debris flows and flash floods are common and devastating. The pilgrimages/tourist places are located in the fragile/vulnerable landscapes and the river valleys and thus during the devastating atmospheric events, the tourists/pilgrims inflow decreases.

## **6. Conclusions**

The nature of tourism and tourists/pilgrims' inflow was described in this paper. The study revealed that the pilgrims' inflow in the pilgrimages was higher than tourists' inflow in the natural locales. Further, the pilgrims visited the river valleys pilgrimages were higher than the highland pilgrimages. The trend of tourists/pilgrims' inflow was not uniformed in all the pilgrimages and natural locales. The inflow decreased during the occurrence of natural disasters mainly in the highlands pilgrimages and natural locales. However, tourists/pilgrims' inflow has increased from year to year. Infrastructural facilities – transportation, accommodation, and institutional can be developed in all the pilgrimages and natural

locales thus, tourists/pilgrims' inflow may be increased and that can enhance the income, economy, and livelihood of the people and the state.

## 7. References

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