CHAPTER - 4

TOURIST CENTRES OF
UTTAR PRADESH
HIMALAYAS : SELECTED
CASE STUDIES
Uttar Pradesh Himalayas provides many places of tourist attraction. Visitors to this grand Himalayan scene enjoy natural environment and satisfy the needs of tourists. It is not possible to describe the characteristic features of each and every place in a small dissertation. Therefore, a few centres have been selected as representative of different types of attractions for detailed study. Badrinath is selected to represent religious centre, Mussoorie, Nainital and Valley of Flowers as places of scenic attraction, Govind Pashu Vihar and Corbett National Park places as wildlife centres. This chapter is based on field survey.

4.1 **Mussoorie: Abode of Ideal Happiness**

Sited on an elongated ridge of the first range of the middle Himalayas, Mussoorie now covers an area of 64.25 km. perched as high as 2,006 m, it looks to the North on the snow-capped Banderpunch, Srinkant and Gangotri Groups, and broods romantically on the Southern low lying Doon Valley which runs parallel to the Siwaliks. Mussoorie as a hill station is roughly 150 years old. Somewhere in the early nineteenth century enthusiastic British engineers, out to explore a range of hills where they could send their families during hot summers, stumbled upon Mussoorie and found it an ideal place with all its endowments of health giving climate, mountain scenery and fascinating natural environment. The first European
construction was a shooting box on Camel's back (1823) and a house in Mullinger (1827) constructed by Captain Young on whose suggestions the British Government Developed it into a Military convalescent home (Singh, T.V., 1975). By 1829 the Park and Phoenix lodge sprang up. In 1832 the old Brewery was started. Soon after in 1841 the Himalayan club was established. By 1880 the Municipal Hall as completed. Thus by the turn of the century, Mussoorie emerged as a beautiful hill resort, competing its counter part Nainital in the Kumaun region, excelling in amenities for visitors and recreation services viz., hotels and restaurants, entertainment centres, skating halls, cinema houses and the like.

It will be important to describe the regions of tourist attractions which include:

(i) The Barlow Ganj (on the bridle path from Rajpur to Mussoorie) a peripheral area.

(ii) Mall Road and the Kurli Bazar- Constitute Mussoorie’s tourist core and forms a cluster of tourist services.

(iii) Library Bazar- Stretches from Library to Municipal Gardens. This is a secondary core with star hotels and fashionable shops.

(iv) Vincent Hill Station- Spreads from Savoy Hotel to Vincent Hill including Kapurthala Palace. A tertiary tourist zone with comparatively cheaper services.

(v) Landour Bazar - (From Clock tower to Ganesh Hotel) a typical Indian Bazar having a chain of colourful shops arrayed on both sides of the road.
Landour Depot- Stretches up to *Lal Tibba* provides vantage points.

The Happy Valley- Another periphery to the north-west descent. Development after 1960, provides views on Tibetan lifestyle, and has avenues for recreation and relaxation.

Mussoorie's other attractions are various vantage points which have developed adequate on-the-spot services. Popular of them is Gun Hill (2142 m). These provide most fascinating views of the Himalayan panorama of peaks in the north, and Doon-Valley views and the Siwalik to the south. Lal Tibba is about 5 km. up from the Uttar Pradesh Tourist Centre. This can be trekked on foot or pony. Banong point (2264 m) can be reached while going to Dhanolti. Nearer to Mussoorie are other tourist resources which have developed moderate facilities such as Kempty Fall, having stay facilities and Dhanolti about 24 km. on Mussoorie- Tehri road. Dhanolti (2258 m) is a quiet week-end resort amidst the beautiful stands of forest with rich rhododendron trees run a riot of colours in spring time. Surkunda Devi (2765 m) is 35 km. from Mussoorie and far off surroundings. It is the foremost Shaktipith of Garhwal region which attracts pilgrims on Ganga Dasehra festival. It is very rich in cultural resources and ethnic life style and folk traditions.

4.1.1. **Popular Trekking Routes**:

Mussoorie itself has all its charm with its centripetal forces which attracts all kinds of tourists. Apart from its magnetic charm and beauty factors, it exercises centrifugal forces which enhances tourist activity in the
neighbourhood through trek and tour activity. These treks are of long and short distances. Many of the tourists do not go out of Mussoorie and stay there enjoying the urbanised environment and move out only for small treks. But some young, adventurous and fun-loving tourists have special interest in the suburban areas of Himalayas. They lose themselves to explore the Himalayan beauty through trekking on the high. Some of the treks designed by the Air India, with Mussoorie as the base, with long distance treks lead into the Himalayan glory. Thirteen hard treks have been opened by the Air India, many of them are too tedious to become popular (Kharkwal, S.C.). They are Mussoorie-Hari-ki-Dun (via Purola, Jarmola, Netwar Osia), Mussoorie- Banderpunch base camp, via Purola, Jarmola, Netwar, Taluka, Osia), Mussoorie-Yamnotri (via Purola, Jarmola, Netwar, Taluka, Osia), Mussoorie-Dodital (via Chamba, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Agora), Mussoorie-Gaumukh (via Uttarkashi, Bhatwari, Gangnami, Harsil, Gangotri, Chirbasa-Bhojbas), Mussoorie- Khatling Glacier (Via Tehri, Malla, Belakh, Budh Kedar, Panwali), Mussoorie-Kedarnath (via Tehri, Ghansali, Panwali, Trjugi Narain), Mussoorie- Sarkunda Devi (via Burhanskhand, Dhanolti, Kaddukhal), Mussoorie- Kempty Fall- (Lakhamandal, Mussoorie- Sahastratal (Via Uttarkashi, Bhatwari, Malla, Balakh), Mussoorie- Rishikesh (via Chamba-Tehri, Devprayag), Mussoorie- Haridwar (via Surkunda Devi, Chamba, Narendranagar, Rishikesh), Mussoorie- Naingaon (Via Chamoli, Gauri Yadher, Batwari).

4.1.2. **Tourist Trends**

The increasing tourist activity in Mussoorie attracted as many as 14.47 Lakhs visitors in the year 1993 whereas 1994 and 1995 saw 12.21
4.1.1 Kempty Fall in Tehri Garhwal
and 13.15 lakhs respectively. Table - 4.1 provides yearwise growth of tourist arrivals. It is observed that there is no continuous increase in the tourist flow but there is fall and rise in numbers. This may be attributed to weather conditions or political disturbances in the adjoining or originating regions. In the year 1995, an attempt was made to study the seasonal variations in tourists visiting the resorts, which revealed that Mussoorie has peak periods viz., May, June and October. The highest turnout is experienced in the month of June. The hill resort of Mussoorie has been experienceing a heavy tourist inflow during recent years and has attained tremendous popularity over a relatively short period. An interesting development in recent years is the emergence of 'Weekenders' which give rise to short spells of intense tourist activity in the town during the weekends and short term holidays, irrespective of the tourist season. As a result of this tourism is steadily coming up a round the year activity though the bulk of it is still experienced during summer and autumn seasons.

Table 4.1

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>12.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>13.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, DEHRADUN.
4.1.3 Development of Tourism in Mussoorie

Problems and Prospects:

It is now certain from the data presented earlier that the tourist activity in Mussoorie has not only crossed the threshold but has apparently crossed the tourist carrying capacity of the town. With careful planning a major portion of this tourist flow to Mussoorie can easily be diverted to the adjoining potential regions, awaiting appropriate development.

Some of the perplexing problems confronted by the developers of tourism are that the essential civic services like water supply and sewage disposal services are subjected to enormous pressure during peak tourist season. Because the tremendous increase in construction activities, the town has now become very congested; shops, stalls, hotels, restaurants and building are coming up on every bit of space available. Government has put a check on double storeyed buildings. The problems of congestion is further compounded by vehicular and traffic jams on the roads. Road jams and parking problems are now a common occurrence during season and even during the off season Vehicular traffic and consequent pollution has now become a menace to the quality of experience.

Problem of pollution is directly related to increased tourism activity. Almost all tourism related services or activities add to the pollution of the town. Since we already have a lake resort in Nainital, there was no reason to build an artificial lake at the entrance of Mussoorie. Construction of a lake has come up as a traffic barrier and has further increased tourist activity. For tourism the quality of environment is the basis for attracting
visitors and needs to be conserved. During peak periods, the available accommodation in the town falls far short of the demand. According to the Department of Tourism, Dehradun, the total number of beds in different hotels of Mussoorie was 6,808 in 1995. This number is far short of the tourists demand, particularly during the peak season.

Apart from the above mentioned problems, there are many other problems. Some of the ecological damages have been caused in Mussoorie landscape because of over concentration of tourists in some vulnerable areas. Due to over construction activity and excessive tourists demand, ecological damage has further accelerated. During personal communication with the residents the author came to know that due to energy crisis some of the trees and patches have been felled and burnt to meet the needs of tourists despite total ban on tree fellings. Over-use of ground water, over burdened sanitary and health facilities, mounting problem of litter, all combined have created serious waste management problem. Vehicular traffic has not only added to unbearable noise but has also accelerated atmospheric pollution. Thus it is felt that tourist overload has reduced the quality of environment which eventually erodes the quality of the product.

4.1.4 Outline for Development of Tourism:

As discussed above, Mussoorie is confronting with many perplexing problems related to tourism and development. These problems can only be solved through proper planning and environment oriented policy framing besides appropriate land use. In the following an attempt has been made to identify some of the problems and possible remedies have been suggested.
4.1.2 Artificial lake at the entrance of Mussoorie Resort
Permission for construction of new hotels in Mussoorie should be banned or severely restricted. Whatever, necessary construction work be allowed in Mussoorie should be properly regulated, particularly with regard to maintenance of roads, sewer lines, drains and disposal of the debris during the phase of construction. It should be ensured that the construction activity does not damage or deform ecological features of the resort. Infact, programmes like greening of the Himalayas should be taken up by the residents, specially in areas of ecological erosion. In Mussoorie, instead of building new hotels, emphasis should shift to improvement of existing facilities. Steps also need to be taken to lengthen the tourist season in Mussoorie to minimise the adverse impact of seasonality. This can be achieved by improving facilities particularly during winters by organising special events and creating decoration and lightening by giving incentives in price of tourist services. Students and senior citizens can be motivated to this end. Snow activities have been quite popular in Alpine mountains in Europe. Mussoorie can also popularise such activities. Suitable parking places should be developed and it is also necessary to regulate the traffic in the congested areas of the town. There is a great pressure of the people for a short duration in the town and it is therefore necessary that steps should be taken to relieve congestion to provide maximum open space in the town. Information system should be improved through well prepared maps, posters, information brochures and other forms of media viz. T.V., films or home and foreign travel magazines.

Mountain Recreation facilities should also be created for resident population in the neighbourhood areas. Places offering a panoramic view of the hills and recreational centres should also be developed for out-door
activities for the local people. This shall avoid conflict between the tourists and residents.

Thus it may be observed that all the side effects ask for redefining of tourism policy framework and setting limits to growth by strong political will and positive support and active participation of resident community. It has become more expedient when terrorism and insecurity in the mountain states push tourist crowds to the peaceful Mussoorie resort. Before Mussoorie turns into another tourist ghetto and losses its tourist appeal, decision makers must see that they save their Himalayan heritage from becoming a prey to predatory tourism developments (Singh, T.V., 1975). They still have choices for Green Tourism and must work for it. Suggested planning will no doubt create extended opportunities for the growing incoming tourists and give the resort a relief from the congestion, environmental pollution, ecological imbalance and further deterioration in future. Mountain tourism development ought to be organic and controlled with sound and effective application of threshold theory. Tourism is not only a hard currency earner it it also a potentially environment friendly industry and resource should be made sustainable for present and future generations. Uncontrolled tourism should not be allowed to grow. The costs and benefits have to be analyzed in pursuit of sustainable development of tourism.

4.2 NAINITAL: The Lake Report:

Few areas in the Himalayas are blessed with such a constellation of lakes as these beautiful lake- basins, spread in a length of 25 kms. Lakes as compared to Alps and other mountain systems, are not very
common features in the Himalayas. Nainital as lake district, is Uttar Pradesh's outstanding outdoor recreation resources centre with developed tourist amenities. The Nainital lake Region stretches across an area approximately 17.5 km. in length and 11 km. in breadth in the mountainous part of Nainital district. It is characterized by the presence of a group of natural fresh water lakes extending over varying areas with diverse mountain settings. This region is endowed within a great variety of lakes situated a midst picturesque settings and it also abounds in other places with a great tourist potential. The Nainital Lake Region roughly lies within 29°19' to 29°25' north latitude and 79°25' to 79°36' east longitudes. The entire region has a mountain topography, with large altitudinal variations within relatively short spatial distances.

Nainital resort is a tribute to the beautiful lake Naini (Tal means lake)- a natural pear shaped lake at an elevation of 1938 m with 3 km. circumference that varies from 28 m to 463 m in depth. The lake is bounded with peaks and ridges on three sides and opens to the South, providing entrance. An extremly picturesque city of the Kumaon Hills, Nainital is located in a depression around a lake of deep blue waters. The lake is divided into two aprts- Mali Tal i.e. the upper lake site and Talli Tal i.e. the lower lake site. Nainital is bounded on the north by China Peak, the highest and the most imposing with Alma and Sher-ka-Danda on the east and Deopata, Ayarpata on the west, both gradually sloping downwards. In the lap of these mountains stretches the lake basin. This is the first view of Nainital a visitor gets as he emerges from the overfloor of bazars extending downwards' to reach journey's end. The lake is the unrivalled queen, though the dominating diety is Naini- a corrupted form of Narayani, one of Parvati's many names.
Rarely it is that the lake greets the visitor with anything but a gracious smile of welcome on its blue green face, the sparkle and beauty of which works wonders on tired limb and low spirits. At all times of the day the lake presents an aspects of bedecked freshness. If no white sails are seen decorating its broad surface with their traingular, greenful lines, a slim streamlined colourful and cheerful boat or tow is hardly ever absent. At night the lake turns into an enchanting, alluring fairy land, reflectors of the row of lights dancing in the water to weave many a mysterious fantasy.

The discovery of Nainital as hill resort is as interesting as that of Mussoorie. Mr. Barrer, man of imagination, and aesthete, happen to visit the lake in 1839 and got enamoured of her. Prior to the year 1839 the place was covered with a dense forest, only resorted by the herdsmen of surrounding villages who brought their cattle during the hot weather and rains for the abounded forage pasturage of the valley. Mr. P. Barron discovered the beauty through an article which was immediately taken notice of by the British Government. Mr. Barron was the first man to build a house which he named 'Pilgrim Cottage' after his pen name 'Pilgrim'. The pilgrim cottage is located near the 'Nainital Club'. Later, Mr. Lushington (then Commissioner) planned the early growth of the city, now known as Tallital. Subsequently, it became the summer- headquarters of Uttar Pradesh Government, adding necessary infrastructure in transport and accommodation sectors. The period from 1869 to 1900 A.D. witnessed hectic building activity and a unique lake resort with varied tourist services springing up in the Himalayas. Most of the hotels and public buildings overlooked the pear- shaped lake, the forms of all attractions. So domineering is the personality of this blue- watered Naini that the entire city
derives its name, outlook and personality from her. Moved by the beauty of
the sparkling lake, Mr. Barron wrote: "It is by far the best site I have witnessed
in the course of a 1,500 miles trek in the Himalayas."

4.2.1 Historical Perspective:

The lake appears to have been known in the ancient mythological
past of India. The modern name of Nainital is however derived from an old
temple of 'Naina Devi', at the upper edge of the lake, but this lake was later
destroyed in 1980 due to land slides. It was subsequently replaced by a
modern structure.

The word 'Naini' means 'Eyes' and 'Tal' means 'Lake'. According
to a legend Parwati the daughter of King Daksha had married Lord Shiva
against the wishes of her father. King Daksha held a great 'Yajna' but did
not invite Parvati and her consort Shiva. Parvati could not bear this direct
insult. In her great fury Parvati, crashed into the 'Yajna' ground and leaped
into the high flames of the 'Yajna' fire to end her life. Later, Lord Shiva,
retrieved her half charred corpse himself. The majority of the local people
believe that the eyes of Sati dropped in the lake while her body was being
carried by Lord Shiva to Kailash Parvat.

Hence, the lake was given the name of 'Naini Tal' or 'Naini Lake'.
Later on the spot became famous by this very name.

There is also a mysterious mythological background which is
shared by majority of the local people. Nainital is mentioned in the Manasa-
Khanda of the Skanda Puran under the name Tririkhi- Sarovara or the lake

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of the three Rishis- Atri, Pulastya and Pulaha. The legend runs that the three Rishis (sages) at their pilgrimage came to the peak of the Gagar range now called Naina Peak formerly known as China Peak. They were thirsty and found no water. At this, they thought of the Mansarovara and dug a large hole, which was at once filled with water from Mana and hence the lake thus formed by them was called the 'lake of the three Rishis'.

4.2.2 Places of tourist interests:

There are numerous places of interest and attraction:

1. HANUMANGARHI: (1951 mts.). It is at a distance of 3.22 km. from Nainital. Here a popular place of worshipping is the temple of Lord Hanuman. It is a religious centre & well known for its sun-set view. Near by, there is Uttar Pradesh Government Astronomical Observatory and a Satellite Centre.

2. NAINA-PEAK: (2,611 mts.) : It is about 6 kms. from Nainital. It is the highest peak around Nainital. From here one can have a captivating view of the Himalayas and the distant plains. One can trek or go on horse-back.

3. SNOW-VIEW (2,270 mts.): It is 8 kms. from Nainital. The most scenic place, one can reach there by Ropeway (Near Mayur Restaurant, The Mall). A powerful telescope is fixed here which enables one to view the Himalayan ranges. The Himalayan ranges viewed from here includes Trishul, Trishul East, nanda Devi, Nanda Ghunti. Nanda Devi which can be viewed from here is the highest mountain peak in India and seventh highest in the world, approximately 7,817 mts. above sea level.
4. **DOROTHY'S SEAT (2,292 mts.):** It is 12 kms. approximately miles from Nainital. Dorothy seat is build in memorial of Mrs. Dorthy's Kellett, an English lady, believed to have been killed in an air crash, was built by her husband. The spot commands a sectional view of the town and the nearby region.

5. **LAND'S END (2,118 mts.):** It is about 4.08 km. from Nainital. As the name suggests, road ending into an abysmal precipice. A magnificent view of *Khurpa Tal* (Soyth Lakes) and the terraced fields on the hillside is available from here.

6. **TIFFIN TOP:** At a height of 6,950 feet and about 12 km. miles from Nainital. It gives beautiful view of the town and the lake.

7. **GOVERNMENT HOUSE:** It is a beautiful building with a small zoo, lawns, gardens, Golf links, and Swimming pool. Apart from Government House there is also a Municipal Board Building.

8. **LARIYA KANTA:** It is 6 km. from Nainital and at an altitude of 2,481 meters above sea level. This is the highest peak of Nainital and commands a glorious view of the lake.

4.2.3. **The Satellites:**

The lake District of Nainital with its complex of secondary and territory resorts (*Bhim Tal, Sat Tal, Naukuchia Tal, Bhowali, Khurpatal*) emerges a giant *Sattal, Bhimtal, Naukuchital* which deserve special treatment for the 'fresh thresholds' for tourism expansion. All categories of tourists visit Nainital like honeymooners, school and college students,
lesiured elite coming from higher income groups. Tourists come to Nainital to escape from the heat of the plains or to watch the scenery all around. Earlier tourists had longer stays at Nainital or had a second home. But now even the common man goes there and to cut down their expenditure they have fewer days stay now. A single visit is for three days or even a days trip as rail head is not far away. Apart from recreation facilities to the tourist, in search of a 'quiet' holiday, these satellite towns offers many attractions.

4.2.4 BHIMTAL: It is 11.26 km. from Bhowali. Bhimtal is the largest water body among the lakes of the region, of which nearly one third portion is shallow and dries up during the summer. The lake has an island in the central portion which enhance the beauty of the lake. It is quite a popular lake town presently and is visited by 80 percent of the tourists visiting Nainital.

4.2.5 NAUKUCHITAL: It's only about 4 km. from Bhimtal. It is the deepest among all the lakes. It derives its name from its peculiar shape. It lies amidst characteristic rural surroundings. Boating and Yatching facilities are available tourist Bangalow exists here.

4.2.6 SATTAL: It is about 8 kms. from Bhowali. This peaceful spot is full of scenic beauty. Sattal once consisted of a group of seven lakes, situated in close proximity to each other. However, presently there are only five water bearing lakes in the group viz Ramtal, Sital, Lakshmantal, Garurat (also called Punatal) and Naldamayantal. All these lakes are located amidst deep wounds within a closed valley. The environment here is least polluted.

4.2.7 KHURPATAL: It is a relatively small and shallowest among the perennial lakes with a surface area of 0.06 Sq.km. and depth of 12 m. It is
a closed water body with a rural setting around the lake which carries a special charm from the touristis point of view. So far, the place has not gained much popularity as a tourist centre.

4.2.8 BHOWALI : It is 11.27 km. from Nainital. A celebrated health resort and known market for its variety of fruits. Bhowali is famous for its King Edwards VII Tuberculosis Sanitorium.

4.2.9 RANIKHET : It is the finest hill station in the world according to Justice William Q. Doughias, Supreme Court, USA. The natural beauty of the place draws the tourist all the year round with its salubrious climate, balmy breeze and the captivating Himalayan panorama. It is 52 km. from Almora and 83 km. from the railhead of Kathgodam.

4.2.10 ALMORA : It used to be the biggest district of the State in area before the bifurcation of the border district of Pithoragarh. The entire district is full of scenic beauty and religious centres. One can have a panoramic view of the Himalayas from a number of places in the district. Whereas most of the other hill stations of India are the creation of the Britishers, Almora had existed even before their arrival. It was the capital of Chand Rajas of Kumaon. It has maintained its old traditional character even today.

4.2.11 RAMGARH : It is famous for its delicious fruits. The entire area is covered with fruit orchards. It is 14.48 km. from Bhowali.

4.2.12 MUKTESHWAR : It is situated at an elevation of 2,286 mts. above sea level. Mukteshwar is a celebrated spot of scenic beauty and is the seat of Indian Veterinary Research Institute.
4.2.13 **Tourist Trends:**

Characteristic of these summer hill resorts shows that Nainital typifies two popular tourist cycles i.e. the summer cycle from May to June and the Autumn cycle from September to October. While the former symbolises the climatic needs of the better provided people of enervating plains, the latter has been a revival of an English tradition (of fun gaiety and love of life) with a view of meeting the non seasonalities of the resort. However, it may be attributed to people's aesthetic tastes, recreational needs and spirit of wanderlust that they sojourn on these hills at a time when these hill sides have put on fresher looks and wonderful greenery after the rains.

As the sun shines brightly and indeed harshly over the plains, Nainital gets all too busy in dressing her 'tourism shop' the hotelier's, the cafe and restaurant owners, the porters and cabmen all look forward for a good business and hey-day. A slow and steady inflow of tourist gradually begins to set in by April which speedily gathers momentum by the second and third week of May. Precisely, the second half of May and the first half of June constitutes the peak periods when more than 10,000 visitors arrive to beguile their insipid summers. Earlier, Nainital had its periods of set-backs, but in the recent years Nainital has been experiencing a heavy tourist inflow without consideration of peak season. An interesting development in recent years is the emergence of "Week-end" tourism which gives rise to short spells of intense tourist activity in the town, during week-ends and short term holidays, irrespective of the tourist season. As a result of this, tourism has emerged as a round the year activity, though most of it still takes place
during summer and autumn months. This is also corroborated by the fact that during the months of January, February and March the coldest months in Nainital, total number of tourists reported to various accommodational units were 11,222, 15, 886 and 16, 298 in the year 1996 respectively (Department of Tourism, Dehradun). It is seen that Nainital normally attracts more visitors than she can host. During the 'season' the floating population of tourists create a problem of seasonality. Hotel occupancy curves go up, the promenade is full with gay and humanity; 'Taliital' and 'Malliital' have hustling and bustling crowds and 'Flats' have over-loads.

**TABLE - 4.2**

**TOURIST ARRIVALS TO NAINITAL**

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**Source:** Department of Tourism, Lucknow.
Table shows the tourists trend in Naintal from 1986 to 1996. It is seen from the above table that the trend is on the increase.

The survey conducted by the author during the month of June 1996 revealed some tourist trends in Nainital. Hundred tourists were questioned by means of various questions in the form of questionnaire. The answers from the questionnaire brought out the fact that average stay of tourists in Nainital is 39.5% to 37.2% i.e. for 2 to 4 days about 9.3% and 13.9% stayed for about a week and above it respectively. It is seen that tourist coming to Nainital were not first time visitors to this beautiful lake resort but they came for pleasure and recreation. About 41.9% came here with self- interest, 6.9% because of their previous visit and 34.9% came here due to relatives and friends. 95.3% arranged their visit independently and 76.7% came here for pleasure. Data collected revealed that 58.14% people had already visited this place earlier and with the previous experience still in their minds they came back to this place. Tourists come from all walks of life but mostly service class people came here and 55.8% tourists had their income level above Rs. 2000. These people had preference for Ranikhet, Almora, Kausani, Ramnagar and very few visited Corbett National Park apart from the lake tour which includes Sattal, Naukuchial, Bhimtal, Bhowali. About 41.9% preferred to visit Ranikhet, 25.6% visited Almora and 13.9% visited Kausani.

People who visited Naintal were satisfied mostly with all spheres of facilities. Some of them felt that things should be cheap so that it is easy for a middle class family to stay here. Water supply is not sufficient and is supplied for fixed time. It should be increased. People were of the view that
Government should build tourist bungalows, hotels, so incoming tourists visits with increasing capacity be accommodated. Transport should be improved and cheaper.

4.2.14 Tourist Facilities:

1. Accommodation Facilities:

The term accommodation is an all-inclusive term used for tourist stay facilities, viz., hotels, motels, private residential accommodation, paying guest accommodation, dormitories, dharamshalas etc. Hotel accommodation is the single most form of accommodation. The accommodation facilities have contributed a lot to the development of tourism in Nainital. In just one decade the number of hotels in the town has increased from 40 in 1980 to 108 in 1991. The bed capacity has also increased to 4,500 in 1991. Apart from the hotels there are two tourist reception centres (Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam), guest houses, lodges and a few dharamshalas in Nainital.

2. Transport and Communication:

The resort is connected by metalled roads to all the major towns of India. The daily bus services of Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation are available from Kathgodam to various places of tourist in the Kumaon region. For sight seeing, the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) organises daily recreational trips to adjoining places of tourists interest. Private tours are conducted to the following places; Bhimtal half day; Sattal, full day; Ranikhet, full day; Observatory, three hours; Kumaon Darshan, three days; Kausani/Corbett, three days; Mukteshwar, full day.
The nearest railhead and airport are at Kathgodam and Pantnagar respectively. Aerial Ropeway is primarily a tourist attraction for Snow view which has proved a major tourist attraction.

3. **Entertainment**:

Nainital has many attractions to offer to the tourists such as trekking, boating, yatching, hunting, swimming, angling, riding, golfing and rock climbing provides healthy and delightful recreation to the visitors. Paddling boats are seen which add extra charm for the attraction of the tourists. Moreover, during the autumn festivals, Kumaoni folk dances, folk songs, folk lores, folk tales and other activities provide entertainment to the tourists.

4. **Souvenir**:

The hill resort of Nainital is well known for its handicrafts, cottage industry horticulture and specially of woollen clothes made in the region. However, tourists can buy from here beautiful candles of different shapes and sizes.

4.2.15 **Damage to Landscape and Lake**:

Thoughtless quarrying which pays no attention to the beauty of the landscape has permanently scarred the face of Nainital. Little or no measures have been taken so far to redress or repair the environmental injury caused by these activities. The condition of the lake is now such that its pea-soup green water is now almost opaque and its surface is generally littered with garbage as polythene bags, empty cans and cartoons, plastic,
shoes, etc. With increasing pollution, the aesthetic value of the lake is fast decreasing. Eutrophication of the lake is a major concern of the population.

i) Pressure on civic amenities:

Essential civic services like water supply and sewage disposal services are subjected to enormous pressure during peak tourist season. During summer, the drinking water supply in Nainital falls to 40 percent of the demand.

ii) Problem of Congestion:

Because of the tremendous increase in construction activities, the town now becomes very congested. Shops, stalls, hotels, restaurants and buildings are coming up on every bit of space available. The problem of congestion is further compounded by vehicular congestion on the roads. Road jams and parking problems are now a common occurrence during tourist season. Vehicular traffic is going to become a major hazard in near future. Deforestation and overgrazing of the pastures have diminished the aesthetic and scenic appeal of the resort besides causing fatal landscape.

iii) Lake Siltation:

Above all this, the greatest damage is being caused to the Lake. On the basis of the existing rate of siltation of the lake, the life span of the lake is likely to be reduced substantially. It is, therefore, essential to take steps to check further silting of the lake. This calls for proper maintenance and improvement of the existing drainage system.
The arrival of almost 1,00,000 tourists per month during the summer season in a town with an installed capacity of nearly 4,500 beds and with very little scope for further construction of accommodation due to lack of availability of space, clearly shows that the present level of tourist activity during peak season is behind the capacity of the town (Pushpa and Joshi, S.C., 1996). This causes a great burden on the civic amenities and creates a number of other problems. On the other hand, the industry experiences a great shortfall in demand during off season. Moreover, the adjoining Lake Region which is economically backward but has a tremendous scope for development of tourism, gets very little advantage of the intense tourist activity taking place in Nainital due to lack of infrastructural facilities. This calls for a diffusion of tourist activity in whole of the Lake Region by creating adequate infrastructural facilities in the resorts of the Lake Region. This will give a boost to the economy of the predominantly rural Lake Region and will also ease the tourist pressure on Nainital during tourist peak season.

4.2.16 Suggestions and Recommendations:

Eco-development of the resort area is the prime need of the hour. Nainital should work on a master plan which has an integrated approach. In Nainital town, the problems, are most acute, many of which should be taken on priority basis.

Need of the hour in Nainital town is the problem of pollution in the Nainita Lake. Steps should be taken to clear the lake by the local authorities. Existing rate of siltation, should be reduced substantially by appropriate measures to increase the life span of the lake. Lake Region

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inspite of being extra ordinarily beautiful is little known to the tourists. A publicity campaign should be launched in this connection and information about it should be made available to the tourists at various tourist information bureaus. The question as to how many tourists Nainital can host at a time has to be answered within the frame of carrying capacity concept. Permission for construction of new hotels in Nainital should be banned or severely restricted. Whatever necessary construction work be allowed in Nainital should be properly regulated particularly with regard to creation and maintenance of roads, sewer lines, drains and disposal of the debris during the phase of construction. It should be ensured that the construction activity does not damage the trees and the vegetative cover of the existing drains.

Beautification of the town is necessary to attract tourists and suitable parking places should be developed and to regulate the traffic in the congested roads of the town. During peak season periods, the available accommodation falls short of demand. If construction is to be done it should be in consideration with the ecology of the area. The real need is for a large number of small units instead of a small number of large units. There are many locations in and around the Lake region which can offer a varied type of recreation to the tourists. It should be taken notice of by the planning authorities. A number of locations are around Nainital which offer excellent natural scenery and the picturesque view of the Himalayan ranges. These neighbourhood places should be developed with adequate tourist facilities to attract tourists for quiet and scenic appeal for which they had left the hot plains.

Thus may be seen that legislation and strict law enforcement process should be used for maintaining Nainital as a pleasant and beautiful
Tourism activities should be diffused in the adjoining regions of Nainital and Lake Region so that tourist traffic would not face the problem of over crowding. It is for the authorities to see that Nainital does not lose its tourist appeal and its sustainability is not endangered.

4.3 BADRINATH: A religious centre:

Badrinath is one of the 'Four Dhamas' of the Hindus, located in the higher Himalayan region of Chamoli (Garhwal Himalayas) at an elevation of 3,133 metres above the sea-level. Badrinath is guarded on either side by the mountain ranges known as Nar and Narayan, with the towering Neelkant Peak, providing a splendid back-drop. This holy shrine of Badrinath has, from the earliest of time, evoked the deepest devotion from the people of India and attracts about 4,60,000 pilgrims/tourists every year from all over the Indian States and territories, despite strenuous hill journey of 301 km. from Rishikesh.

Badrinath is a small township with ribbon settlement along the banks of turbulent Alaknanda, that flows southwards, embracing the Rishi Ganga to the south of the township, located at 30° 44'-56" North longitude, and 79° 31'-20" East Longitude. It runs longitudinally into spacious valley (4½ km. long and 1½ Km. wide) opening up northwards to the Bhotia village of Mana, the last settlement of this region.

Badrinath landscape is undulating, with encircling high black mountains superimosed by snow clad ranges and lofty peaks. The two mountain ranges i.e. Nar and Narayan embody in them Hindu mythological belief and breathe Puranic faith. Badrinath township should not be studied
UTTAR PRADESH HIMALAYAS
BADRINATH: A RELIGIOUS CENTRE

BADRINATH
BASED ON MASTER PLAN T&C
PLANNING U.P.

Fig. 4.3
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in isolation, it is a religious belt spreading from Kanak Ashram to Satopanth-23 km. north of present Badrinath, which is considered highly sacrosanct for religious pursuits where sages and saints devoted major part of their lives. This religious belt has often been called as Badri-ka-Mandal or Badrivan in Puranic literature. Considering out standing religious-cum-scenic resources of this belt, the Hindu expertise seems at its bed in Tirtha planning and placing pilgrim centres, in hierarchical order, climaxing in Badrinath. The post-vedic period beginning from the 6th century B.C. to the coming of the Muslims in the 11th century A.D., witnessed a new upsurge in the sphere of pilgrimage. It was in this period that the Garhwal Himalaya became the sanctum-sanctorum of the Hindus. Of late, there have been remarkable changes in the traditions of 'Tirth-Yatra' by the Hindus in the Garhwal Himalayas. Presently the road system has altered the prescribed pilgrim scheme and has interfered with traditional itinerary. None was, indeed, allowed to visit Badrinath at the first instance. This is not so now. Now, the pilgrimage combines with the tourism in the region. The concept of 'Panch Prayags', 'Panch Kedars', and 'Panch Badrees', in the Garhwal Himalayas is unique, though in practice, it is fading out due to impact of modernisation.

4.3.1 Religion Myth and History:

Badrinath has a hoary past. It dates from the Vedic period. A cradle land of Hindu religion, it breathes the air of sacredness. It is believed that the hectic efforts of Dharmas progeny for the choice of an ideal religious space lead to the establishment of five Badris in the Gandhmadan region, Raj- Badri (present Badrinath), being the crowning glory. Popular belief, ancedotal myths and some oral history makes belief that Puranas were
4.3.1 Badrinath Temple - one of the four dhamas of Hindus
composed in this Gandhamadani environment. Apart from it, Badrinath acquired fame during the Mahabharat times for its environmental values, and for being the hermitage of the perfect sages, saints, priests, *pundits*, scholars and *savants* all flocked to the 'Hindu Elysium' braving the hazards of the journey. There are references to the efforts that many founders of the Hindu School of Philosophy received inspiration in this divine wilderness (Kaur, J., 1985). It also attracted Lord Krishna and Arjuna who performed austertices at the Nar and Narayan peaks. It also inspired the celebrated 'grammanan', 'paniniya', and sages Gautam, Kapil and Kashyap, Kalidas, the great poet and dramatist of Sanskrit, laid the scene of 'Abhigyan Shakuntalam' (near Nand Prayaga), and "Megh Doot" (Alkapuri, North of Badrinath) in this region (Datta, B.N., 1961).

Lord Narain, overtime acquired a big following in the work-a-day people of mundane existence, who found necessary to move to this beautiful Himalayas, both for religious merit and for change from hum drum of life and living. Religious benediction bestowed upon the deity led a movement of pilgrimage a yatra tradition. This movement of people of Garhwal Himalayas suffered a severe set back when Budhism had its way in this region and a queer mix of cults, Tantricism, Shaktisam, Saivaism and magic began to be practiced. This was a period of decadence when the iconollastic activity reached its peak. The image of Lord Vishnu was thrown into the Alaknanda and the temple was demolished.

It was around the eight century that a young Brahmin philosopher, Adi Guru- Shankaracharya, from Kerala, performed penance under a tree here and after getting enlightenment, established a *Math* (religion centre).
This Brahmin philosopher, installed the image in the 'Garur Gufa' (cave), having found it in Narad Kund. Later, tradition has it, it was removed to the present site by the ruler of Garhwal. The gold canopy of the temple is said to be the gift of queen Ahilyabai. This marks the period of renaissance in Badrinath pilgrimage, when the temple was dedicated to Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Shakti and Ganesh to integrate Hinduism and to restrict worship of authorised gods, a practice which had come into vogue.

4.3.2 The Temples:

बहनि सन्ति तीर्थनि दिविः, भूमौरसास च।
बदरी सत्रुणं तीर्थं न भूतो न्यथविष्णु।।

(From Sknad Purana, "Many a place of pilgrimage are on the earth, sky and on the lowest regions but none like Badrinath, neither in the past, nor in the future there is any likelihood of one such existing).

This temple exists from times immemorial. It is mentioned in Atkinson's Gazetter (1886) that the present temple was built by Shri Shankaracharya. The present temple is situated on the right bank of the Alaknanda, standing over 15 m. high from the base built in the form of a cone with small cupola spire. The main body is made of flat blocks of stone and plastered with cement, that belies its antiquity.

Architecturally, the temple has taken after the early Nagar Style with a definite hill stamp, divided into three pars - (i) Garbhgarh, the sanctum sactorum; (ii) Darsan Mandap (Rectangular shaped where puja is performed; (iii) Sabha Mandap- (outer hall where devotees stands for darshan), it has
square plan with number of graduated projections in the middle of each side that lend it a cruciform shape. The colourful entrance gate has put on a Turkish cap, comofaging the traditional exterior. The self- existent statue of Bhagwan Narain engraved in black stone in a sitting 'half paadmasan pose' is found in the main 'Garbhgarh' of the temple. Only the chief preist 'Rawal' and his assistance 'Baduva' has the authority to enter the 'Garbhgarh'. But even 'Baduva' cannot touch the statue of Shri Bhagwan.

The temple stands high on Puri's dense religious core with only a little space around for further development. The temple has been passed from the hands of Rawal (the highest priest of the temple from the South) to a committee of twelve members and Rawal is restricted to his religious duties.

4.3.3 Religious cum Recreation Resources :

Essentially a religious destination Badrinath attracts both religious and secular visitors, the latter are steadily on the increase with the process of modernisation and better facilities in transport and accommodation. Badrinath with multiple outdoor recreation resource endowment, promises an up coming tourist destinations. In fact, the Badri Yatra has been responsible in opening up Garhwal Himalayas for tourism (Singh, T.V., 1975).

In the vicinity of the temple are hot and cold cisterns (Kunds), Ghats, engraved boulders and geologic forms, of them, Tapt Kund, a hot spring having a temperature of 56°C and closely Surya Kund are user based resources, associated with Panch Tirth sacrement. A bath in hot spring is very refreshing to all travellers. For women a seperate tank is available.
Five giant rock formations known as Panch-Shilas are linked up with religious myth and Puranic legends. There are boulders that are worshipped and enjoyed as 'sites' by the visitors.

The Ganga Ghat where Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were consigned to the holy waters of the Alaknanda, is another point of visitor attraction. This is located midway between Brahma Kapal and Taptkund.

Away from the temple (1.6 km.) is Sheshnetra, a boulder having engraving of a legendary snake's eye is a geological phenomenon.

Nilkantha is a pyramidal snowy peak (21,650) which towers about Badrinath and presents a most enchanting sight, best enjoyed from the left bank of the Alaknanda.

Charan Paduka is a beautiful meadow, about three kilometers west of Badrinath, towards the foothills of Nilkantha Peak. In this emerald green environment are found the footprints of the Lord. As July approaches this beautiful meadow is carpeted with annuals and herbal blossoms.

Mana Village- 4 Kms. inhabited by an Indo- Monolian tribe is considered as the last village on Indo- Tibet border. The Mana valley with Bhotia settlement and with their unique life style is itself a source of attraction and has many potential touristic attractions viz., 'Vyas Gufa'- a rock cave, where sage Vyas is said to have compiled Puranas; 'Keshav Prayaga' (the confluences of the Alaknanda and the Saraswati) and the natural bridge, 'Bhimpul'.

Vasudhara is an enchanting site of a waterfall at an elevation of 3658 m, from whence the water jumps from a height of 122 m in a trance-
4.3.2 Uttarakhand's twin famous valleys - the Alaknanda and the Bhagirathi are noted for Hindus pilgrimages.
4.3.3 Mana- The Bhotia Village is the last human settlement along the Alaknanda
inducting manner. It is 5 km from Mana and is the highest waterfall of Garhwal.

Alakapuri: About 8 km. further away from Vasudhra is the source of the Alaknanda, Alakapuri, from where the river gushes out from the glacier snout of Bhagirath Kharak and Satopantha (much like Gaumukh) is the source of Alaknanda. The Satopanth lake, with its serene water, is a potential tourism resource from trekkers and trailors. Kalidas alludes to this point in his famous play 'Megh doot'.

4.3.4. The Hosting Town:

Badrinath faces many constraints in meeting market demands. The major problem is geographical in nature. A town lives only for seven months (May - November) and the rest is the sway of the snows. This hard seasonality of character is further accentuated by a limited land use acumen. Manpower resource is another unifying factor for taking up any enterprise which may benefit locally or regionally.

Badrinath has three Mohallas of Badrinathpuri, Banni Village and Nar Parbat. Badrinathpuri being the oldest settlement forms the core where the shrine has cluster of Panda population and services. Here, practically every inch of ground has been used for religious purposes. In this region there are hotels, eatable and sweets stores, sell clothes, medicine and religious souveniers. Food stuff, eatables and goods for sale are largely imported from the plains.

Badrinath has only two public hospitals - one district (Allopathic) and the other Ayurvedic. Together they can attend to 100 patients, per day.
4.3.4  Slated Shingled roofed hamlet in the higher Himalayas
The town has one Post Office, One Telephone Exchange, One Police Station, One Information Centre, one Public Call Office (P.C.O.) and one Gas Agency of Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam. The only department that has progressed is Department of Telecommunication.

Special Police force stays during winter for the security of Mandir and two or three persons of Mandir (Caretaker) stay during winters. If anybody else wants to stay they have to take permission from the District Magistrate.

These facilities, however, modest, look pretty, impressive for a small population that stay hardly for seven months. But considering the vast floating population of about 10-20,000 persons per day and their heterogenous needs, these services are all too meagre besides very much wanting in standard. The town falls short miserably in accommodation the foremost destination facility and electricity.

4.3.5 Pilgrim Traffic and Patterns:

The Badrinath pilgrimage lasts for seven months, mostly in summers and rains (May- November). May- June being the drier months, the majority of visitors take to pilgrimage during this period, to safeguard against inclemency of weather and road breaches.

On an average, over 10,000 to 20,000 pilgrims visit Badrinath per day. However, peak is touched in June, when 30,000 to 40,000 visitors come on a single day (Chief Incharge of Badrinath Mandir Committee).

During the year 1996 till 13th June, 1996 there were about 2.50
lakhs pilgrims who visited the shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinath (Newspaper Rashtriya Sahara, 13th June, 1996 Lko. Friday). The incharge of Garhwal Vikas Nigam Mr. Vijay Mohan Madhual told UNI that during the month of May, 1996 the arrivals of pilgrims showed low profile due to elections in the month of May but after 5th June there has been a sudden increase in the pilgrims. His report added that during this year there has been an increase of tourists as against the last year. August, normally has a low profile because rain threatens landslides and slope failures. September picks up again when the weather is fairer sky is clearer, hills are greener and the journey is more rewarding. November traffic-flows begin to fade out with the onset of snows. Finally, doors, of Badrinath are closed and the chief priest moves to Joshimath- the winter seat of Badri Narain.

Badrinath attracts visitors from all over the country and a few tourists from overseas. Results of interviews, conducted by the author, showed, that the largest number of visitors came from West Bengal, followed by Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The flow of South Indians continues throughout the season. Very few foreign visitors are recorded, many were expeditionists or field scientists or nature lover.

While the Himalayan pilgrimage have gateway in Kotdwara and Rishikesh, almost 95% visitors prefered entry from Rishikesh, both for transit facilities and enroute attractions, particularly Devprayag (the confluences of Bhaghirithi and Alakananda). The 310 km. long journey is completed in one halt- Joshimath on the onward and Srinagar on the backward journey. Both these stopovers have developed adequate accommodation facility. Visitors influx to Badrinath shot up after 1968 when metalled road reached
Badrinath for the first time. To ascertain the validity of visitors stay in Badrinath the author conducted a sample survey in the month of June of 1996 of 100 visitors. It was established that on an average visitors’ stay in Badrinath is only for a day - but some stay for more period. Above 49.3% stayed at Badrinath only for one day, 43.7% stayed for 2 days, 2.8% stayed for 3-5 days, 1.4 percent again stayed about a week. It is seen that length of stay is directly proportional to recreation resource attraction, facilities, hospitality and travel costs, Badrinath being mainly a religious destination, caters to the tourists needs also. Some interesting socio-economic facts on visitors are worth mentioning.

The visitors income group varies considerably, though the majority falls into middle classes. However, 70.42 percent belonged to above Rs. 2,001 group and 6.3 percent belonged to students category. It is seen that 67.6 percent people were inspired by their religious sanctity, 18.3 percent by relatives and friends, 7.04 percent by magazines/journals/newspapers and 2.82 percent by their previous visit. It is seen that 85.9 percent tourists/pilgrims visited the place for the first time and 14.08 percent had come earlier. 54.9 percent of people belonged to the age group of 41-60 years.

Pilgrims visiting Badrinath came with a religious bent of mind and also visited other three Dhamas of Garhwal Himalayas. By the personal survey the author came to know that about 80 percent people visited Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamnotri and then came to Badrinath. Some of the adventurous tourists visited Valley of flowers, Hemkund Sahib Gurdwara and Auli-ski resort.
4.3.6 Accommodation Facility:

Badrinath can accommodate a large number of visitors in increased accommodational units. A large number of these units came up after 1968,

Table - 4.3

VISITORS TO BADRINATH (FROM 1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>VISITORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2,51,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>2,48,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2,71,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3,72,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,62,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3,55,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4,12,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,76,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3,47,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4,61,465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


When first metalled road reached Badrinath, the author through personal visit discovered that there are 100 Dharamshalas, one of them is under trust. The biggest Dharamshalas is Pramath Lok which provides all
necessary facilities to the tourists. Hotel Devlok is run by the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam. Apart from it two more tourist bungalows are being constructed by the undertaking of Uttar Pradesh Government one by Nirman Nigam and other by Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam, each with 500 beds capacity. Apart from it there are 25-30 good hotels with necessary facilities of life. Hotel Devlok has a total of 84 beds capacity with 10 Delux Rooms with 20 beds capacity, 20 Executive Rooms with 40 beds capacity, 12 ordinary rooms with 24 beds capacity. The rates per one night stay are Rs. 365 for Deluxe Rooms, Rs. 350 for Executive Rooms and Rs. 150 for ordinary Rooms. There are seasonal rates i.e. for the months of May and June, September and October, But there is a fall of 25 percent in the rates during the months of July and August. All the basic and standard facilities are provided that include attached bathrooms, hotwater on payment, laundry, Doctor on call, parking facility, Restaurant and Catering facility. They organize package tours for Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamnotri and Valley of Flowers. 22 Buses are in operation for this purposes from Rishikesh. The average stay of tourists at Devlok is maximum for one night and only few stay for 2 or 3 day and not more than that.

On the contrary there are many 'expensive' stay places with the Pandas who look after their clients on a traditional style and charge exorbitantly, though at the 'sweet pleasure' of their 'clients- the Hindu way of life.

Most agonising feature of the Badrinath pilgrimage is the difficulty in getting a chance to have a look or 'darshan' at the deity. Shri Badrinath Temple Committee has fixed Morning and Evening Pooja Rates (See table 4.4). The premises of the temple are too small to accommodate even 200
Pilgrims at a time. Pilgrims wait in endless queues from the small hours of the morning till afternoon. Another point of annoyance for pilgrims is that they have to wait for hours for 'darshan' but V.I.P.'s are allowed to visit the temple without the problem of standing under the sun.

**TABLE - 4.4**

**SHRI BADRINATHI TEMPLE : MORNING AND EVENING**

**POOJA RATES - 1996**

**MORNING POOJA - 5:30 TO 7:30 A.M. :**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Puja Description</th>
<th>Rates (Rupees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Maha Abhishek Puja</td>
<td>1501.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Abhishek Puja</td>
<td>351.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ved Path</td>
<td>251.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Geeta Path</td>
<td>351.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVENING POOJA - 6:00 TO 9:00 A.M. :**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Puja Description</th>
<th>Rates (Rupees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kapoor Arti</td>
<td>51.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rajat Arti</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Swaran Arti</td>
<td>101.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Astotari Puja</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Vishnu Sahasranampathi</td>
<td>151.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Vishnu Sahasraramawati Path</td>
<td>201.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Shyam Arti with Geeta Path</td>
<td>351.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE : Temple Rateboard.
4.3.7 Problem of Peaking:

This sacred centre, like any other holiday resort in the hills below, goes full to the capacity during the 'season'. There are always too many clamouring for accommodation in the few sub standard outmoded and, in many cases, improvised dharamshalas. Few get satisfactory accommodation in some good hotels and dharamshalas providing basic amenities.

Transport problem is no less challenging then what it is at Rishikesh. Worst conditions prevail when an early outburst of the monsoon causes road breaches and landslides. Pilgrims, sometimes, have to be stranded for weeks; over crowding filth and cholera often become the by product of such a righteous journey. Badrinath, needs a development plan both from religious as well as from strategic point of view.

Pilgrims/ tourists, while conducting survey by the author, came up with suggestions and comments concerning accommodation, water, electricity, food, transport. Most of them were satisfied of the crystal clear water of River Alaknanda. People were dissatisfied with the supply of electricity which is irregular. Basic commodities are very expensive there are no fixed rates. People were of the opinion that Government should fix the rates so the tourists are not cheated. There are no street lights, at night it is absolutely dark on the roads.

At some of the Hotels the food is also very expensive. It becomes difficult for common man to adjust to the expensive environment. Mana Village is 3 kms. from Badrinath, approachable by Taxi by an hour. The
charges are two hundred rupees for an hour and expenses exceed if the stay increased. It is seen that it too difficult for tourists to be back after an hour from tedious heights of Himalayan ranges.

The bus stand needs proper passenger facilities and drivers drink and create fuss at night. Local people were also of the opinion that there should be ban on alcohol to bring down the crime rate. Tourist Information Bureau should be therefore guidance of tourists in an unknown place.

Badrinath, unfortunately is fast losing its character of super-pilgrim resort with the process of modernisation, nearness to the Valley of Flowers and recently established Auli Resort for winter sports scheme have affected Badrinath. It is for the developers to maintain its religious character and does not shed it’s 'place genius' and 'character' altogether. Conscious efforts in this direction have to be commissioned so that Badrinath keeps up its personality of a Dhama.

4.4 THE CORBETT NATIONAL PARK : Wild Life Sanctuary :

The landscape and its fascinating inmates were described by Jim Corbett as "The steel blue of the fern fringed pool where the water rests a little before cascading over rock and shingle to draw breath again in another pool more beautiful than the first- the flash of the gaily- coloured kingfisher as he breaks the surface of the water, shedding a shower of diamonds from his wings as he rises with a chrip of delight, a silver minnow held firmly in his vermination bill. The yelling of the sambur and the clear tuneful call of the chital apprising the jungle folk that the tiger, whose
pugmarks show wet on the sand where a few minutes before he crossed the river, is out in search of his dinner. These are things that will live in my memory, the lodestone to draw me back to that beautiful valley, as yet unspoiled by the hand of man”.

**Man-eaters of Kumaon (1944):**

Vast tracts of thick forests with wildlife have been more dreaded than revered. This is, perhaps, more true of western culture, than orientalists, who perceived nature as a part of their own. Today when the world has grown conscious of the fast vanishing wildlife, the cry for their conservation and protection seems so relevant. India, however, has had a rich tradition for forests and wild life conservation. The theme is found subtly woven in mythology, folk- cultures and the concept of Hindu pantheon. Religious institutions, ashrams and forest universities were established to meet this objective. This spirit pervaded until 400 B.C. 'Kautilya' in his *Arthshastra* observes. In Abhayaranyas (protected games forests) a code of conduct was down for all and laws were enforced by strict supervision. Even the animals (that turned dangerous) were killed only after removing them outside the reserve, so that the inhabitants may be disturbed least." Seen historically, we find emperors like 'Ashoka', 'Harshwardhana' embued with this spirit. Until recently the farmers of North West India, used to aportion a piece of land from their farms, as sanctuary for wild animals.

Such has been the wildlife legacy of India. But the change of time, increase in human population resulting in excessive pressure on land, this spirit seems to have been lost. Major changes occured during Mughal period, when big game hunting became a status symbol of bravery, social...
UTTAR PRADESH HIMALAYAS
THE CORBETT NATIONAL PARK
WILD LIFE SANCTUARY

Fig. 4.4
prestige and a major form of sports and recreation. The wanton and indiscriminate violation lords who killed the poor creatures just for fun, frolic and fur, or for prestige and for drawing - room decorations which resulted in extinction of many animal of rare charm and beauty, many more became endangered species, calling forth attention of the naturalists and conservationists.

It was in the third decade of this century that India once again awakened to her long forgotten cove of the wilds. This time, the inspiration came from the west.

India today hosts, National Parks and more than 421 sanctuaries (by the information of Forest Department Uttar Pradesh, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow) many of which fall under the purview of Project Tiger. Its climatic and geographic diversity makes it the house of over 350 mammal and 1,200 bird species, many of which are unique to the subcontinent.

India is running many wildlife rehabilitation projects in almost every region, which demand a closer look, particularly the famed 'Corbett Park' - the first and foremost in India, which has been, of late, exposed to human intervention and unplanned developmental activities.

4.4.1 History:

Framed within the modern concept of 'National Parks', this first Park of India was established in 1935 in the valley of Patlidun and adjacent hills in Uttar Pradesh, Terai- an area known for its variety of fauna and abundance of wildlife from centuries. Named as "Hailey National Park", 168
after the then governor of United Provinces. After independence the park was renamed "Ramganga National Park", (1948) after the river that flows across the Park. Finally, it was rechristened as "Corbett National Park" to commemorate the memory of famous naturalist, Jim Corbett. The late Jim Corbett, the famous author helped in demarcating the park's boundaries and setting it up. Following international appeal to the world's most magnificent beasts, Project Tiger was launched with the help of World Wildlife Fund on 1st April, 1973, making the Corbett Park a heaven for the tigers. It is one of the eighteen tiger reservers in India, launched under "Project Tiger". The Tiger is the biggest attraction of this park. The star attraction of the park is the Royal Bengal Tiger. As per the latest census (1996) figures, the population of tigers in park is 125 (Singh, N. Rajesh, 1996). This figure incidently is the highest amongst all the national parks. The Corbett National Park celebrated its diamond jubilee on 12th December, 1996.

About two thirds of the park area is in Garhwal, while the rest is in Kumaon Region. Originally the park covered an area of 99.07 sq.km. As the area was considered small for the animals like tigers and elephants, it was extended over to 323.75 sq.km. and at present the area of the park is 520.8 sq.km. Park stretches between 29°13' 30" to 29° 35'15" north latitude and 78° 33' E to 78° 46' east longitude. About ten percent of the total area is now a submerged land.

The forest covers a series of more or less parallel ridges from north to south east, decreasing in height towards the plain. The natural forests is confined to bhabar tract of Shiwalik formation. The altitude varies
between 400 m.-1,100 m, with undulating topography of many temporary marshy depressions, ravines and plateau lands. The Ramganga enters the park from near Gairal Forest Rest House (FRH) and takes a westerly course up to Sarapduli Forest Rest House (FRH), bending in north west direction till its crosses Dhikala Forest Rest House and ultimately changes its course to southwest again to come out of the Park at Kalagarh. The Park is all a riot of colours when nature unfolds herself in new forms and style- shisham trees in foliage, the flame of the forest trees with glowing red-flowers, semal in scarlet and kachnar in mauve blossoms. Along with fishing, the angler can expect to see any of the wildlife along the river. Malani, Gairal, Sarpduli and Dhikala are favourite resorts of the fishermen. The park is wonderfully rich in wild life. Corbett's faunal assemblage includes fifty species of mammals, five ugly species of birds and twenty five species of reptiles.

The Park is generally open to visitors throughout the year, except during the rains, when road- breaches are common and accessibility goes poor. The tourist season is from 15th November to 15th June. The foreign tourists would prefer to visit the Park during the months of November and December, the ideal months both from climatic season and visibility aspects are March and April. During the monsoon season from June to October, the park remains closed to tourists and the animals move to the hilly areas of Corbett at this time.

4.4.2 Park Fauna:

The tiger reserve houses almost all the major group of animals, known to exist in Himalayan Terai i.e. bhabar. In all, 50 species of mammals,
580 species of birds, 25 species of reptiles, 7 species of amphibians and 33 species of termites have been identified. Of particular significance is the presence of some of the depleted species of mammals viz; tiger (pathera, tigris), Hog deer (Axis porcinus), leopard cat (Felis bengalonsia), wild dog (Cuon alpinus) and Indian Pangeleon (Manis craussicaudata). While *swaup* deer (Cervus duvaucelli), once a common animal in the park, has altogether disappeared from the vicinity. Himalayan black deer (Salenarctos thibetanus) visits the park in the winters only, descending from higher ranges. The mountain goat (Nemorhaedus goral), restricts itself to the northern ridges of the Ramganga. Some other bigger mammals in the park are *sambhar* (Cervus unicolor), *Muntjak* (Muntjacus muntijak), wild bear (sus scrofa), red fox (Vulpes Vulpes) and jackal (Canis aurius) are important. Among smaller mammals shrews, hedgehog, squirrel, rats, mice, monkeys, civets and Bats are noticeable.

The park abounds, a good deal, in avi- fauna including the resident as well as the migratory birds (both winder and summer migrants). The River Ramganga plays a significant role in attracting the winter migrants like water- birds, waders etc. Birds of passage indulge in winter/ autumn migration, an added attraction of the Park. About one fifths of the residents indulge in local, altitudinal and seasonal migration. Some common birds of the Park are doves, pigeons, parrots, cuckoo, bee eaters, hornbills, barbets, thrushes, shrikes, drongoes, babblers, bulbuls, finches, buntinggs and the like.

Among the reptiles, the presence of the four larger threatened species viz; Marsh Crocodile (Crocodilus Palustris), Ghariyal (Gavialis
gangeticus) Indian Python (Puxhton Moulrus) and King Cobra (Naja Lunna) is the special feature of the Park. Besides these other important reptiles are poisonous snakes like Krait, Vipers, non-poisonous snakes viz; ornamental grass and water snakes and varnases and a variety of lizards. The Ramganga having many Hill-stream fishes offers promise for game fishes like Indian Mahaseer (Barbus tor) and Indian trout (Rainmus bola). Rohu (Labeo rohita) has lately been introduced in the reservoir of hydel project. The insect fauna is indeed very colourful and includes beautiful butterflies, bees, bugs, beetles, termites and dragon flies.

4.4.3 Park Flora:

The vegetation is a mixed one of deciduous tropical and sub-tropical species. About 110 species of trees, 33 species of bamboo and grass, 51 species of shrubs and 27 species of climbers have been indentified so far.

Among the trees, the dominant Sal (Shorearubusta) is frequently associated with Haldu (Adina cordifolia). Molarrhena antidysentrica also occurs scattered amidst the Sal. Bakhil (Anogeisus latifolia) mostly occur in higher ridges. Other common trees in the Park are Khetwa (Pilostigma malabaricum), Gurial (Bauhunia racemose); Pula (Kydia calycina), Dhauri (Legerstroemia parviflora), Amaltas (Cassia fistula), Bhilwa (Semicarpus anacardium), Amla (Emblica officinalis) and Ber (Zizyphus mauritiana). Less common are Papri (Holopteles integrifolia), Mahwa (Madhuca indica), Kumbhi (Caerya arborea) and the like.

Among the dry nullahs on exposed habitat, occur Prichoniya
(Wendlandia heynie), *Rohni* (Mallotus philippensis) and *Jamun* (Syzygium cuminii). *Sheesum* (Dalbergia sissoo) *Khair* (Acacia catechu) association in the Ramganga river bordering savannah at Dhikola is an interesting feature of the Park landscape. Predominant shrubs are clerodendrum, viscosum, colebrookea oppositi folia, Adhatoda vasica, Helicteres isora and woodfordia fructicosa, while Milletia auriculata, Cryptoshepia buchanani, Porana paniculata, Phanera Vahlic, Valleris solanacea, Aspidopterys neutans, are common climbers. Bamboos occur frequently in several blocks while, among the palms in addition to Phoenix aculies (rare palm) Walliehia densiflora is noticeable. Chir (Pinus roxburghii) is the only indigenous Pinus. In the Chaud (Savannah), along the bank of Ramganga occur grasses like Themeda Arundinacea, Thysanotena maxima and Vetiveria’ zizanioidea in abundance. While in burnt soil, these are associated with herbs viz; Vicoa indica, Trichodesma indicum, Lactuca species, Polygala species, Desmodium species, Crotalaria species and Tajuga species, etc. In the other open areas grasses like eulaliopsis binata, apluda mutica, oplisanus compositus and Eragrostis unioloides are common. Orchids, like Zeuxina species, Eulophia species, Vanda species and Bulbophyllum species are common. Among parasitic plants, Dendrophthoe falcata, Scurrula Cordifolia and cascuta reflexa are noticeable. Most common slender shrubs forming ground cover are Drymaria diandra, Justica procumbens, Borreria articulata, Boerhaavia diffusa and Gynoglossum lancaolatum.

Purely aquantic vegetation does not exist in the Park. Plants occurring in marshy, water logged area are Ammania species, Oenothera species, Hypericum species and polygonum species.
The common weeds which are likely to effect the native herbaceous plants. Lantana species, Acanthospermum hispidium and Xanthium spermerium.

4.4.4 Recreational use and Tourist Amenities:

While nature conservation is central to the concept of National Parks, recreation/tourism and education are the other activities, which ought to go well with it. It has been observed that well planned tourism has its rightful place in National Park System. However, this may not always be the case, when mass tourism, or uninvolved visitors make their in road into these 'Protected Areas'. Studies carried out in 'Parks Canada' and several other forest institutions in the U.S.A. have empirically proved that planning and management in the Parks must be scientific. To achieve this objective, the knowledge of the carrying capacity of the Park is most essential.

Since Park visitors are classed 'special tourists' the Corbett Park attracted attention only of the few. With the growth of tourism-movement in India, the Park began to attract attention both of the foreign visitors and the home. By the information provided from the Tourism Department of Uttar Pradesh in 1990-91, the Park visitation was 39,078 of which 36,161 were Indians and 2,917 were foreigners. The number of visitors increased to 43,464 in the year 1993-94, out of which 37,265 were Indians and 6,199 were overseas visitors. However in the years 1991-92 and 1992-93 the total number of visitors dropped to 33,047 and 31,963 respectively. This drop in the number of visitors can be attributed to bad weather or due to the religious roits of '92 because of Babri Masjid issue.
TABLE 4.5

CORBETT NATIONAL PARK : TOURIST ARRIVALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>39,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>33,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>31,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>3,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>42,230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Tourism, Lucknow.

The Corbett National Park is the only Wildlife preserves in Uttar Pradesh which has developed adequate tourist infrastructure in transport, accommodation and recreation. A number of roads in the Park, motorable during fair weather, enable visitors to move about in the Park and enjoy scenic beauty and glance at Wildlife in its natural habitat. There are eight watch towers at several strategic places similar to 'Treetops' of Africa, from which glimpses of wildlife in their natural haunts can be seen and photographed. Taxies, mini-bus and elephant ride is provided.

Though it is very difficult to assess the recreation resource carrying capacity of the Park, yet the Park authorities believe that upto a hundred and thirty five tourists can be accommodated at a time, without damaging the resource. What matters is not the number of visitors but the type of visitors and the pattern of resource use, e.g. visitors may come with noisy electronic instruments or may annoy sensitive animals by their unusual manners, life style and so on. And such interventions have been observed...
in core area of the Park. The Parkethics include that wild animals should not be fed, fast driving and blowing horn is strictly prohibited. Bicycle, motor cycles, scooters and three wheelers are not allowed in the Park, Flash photography is also not allowed.

Tourist structurings are also important, there location and their architectural style may also matter. It is an accepted principle that tourist accommodation should either be on the periphery of the Park or outside the core zone. Corbett Park however, has not observed this rule. Tourist structure in many cases do not harmonise with the milieu, besides being located in the core zone. This has resulted in making the animals a little panicky. A survey conducted by the Institute of Himalayan studies and Regional Development, Garhwal University, Srinagar (Garhwal), in March, 1980 revealed that most of the mammals do not like to come out of their niches except for drinking water besides the bank of the Ramganga, whereto the environment has been exposed to the Ramganga Hydel Project activities. Things have further worsend since then.

The roads inside the Parks' sanctum- sanctorum disturb the Park's harmony by frequent run of vehicles. One needs more than ordinary patience, sometimes of several days, to view wildlife panorma through the machans (Watch Towers) around the water holes. It is suggested that Corbett Park should have its own centre of motivation, where audiovisual aids, video tapes, brouchures, pamhlets, photographs would help visitors in
### TABLE- 4.6

**ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES AT THE CORBETT NATIONAL PARK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF ACCOMMODATION</th>
<th>NO. OF SUITES</th>
<th>BEDS</th>
<th>RESERVATION AUTHORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhikala Old F.R.H.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chief conservation of Forests (Wildlife), U.P., Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow- 226001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(Chandralok Building, 36, Janpath, New Delhi-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Field Director, Project Tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ramnagar- 244715 (Nainital) U.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Hutment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tourist Office, U.P. Tourism, Nainital. From 15th April to 15th June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green hut</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Hut (24 bunks)</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Field Director, Project Tiger, Ramnagar- 244715, (Nainital) U.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khinanauli F.R.H.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), U.P., 17- Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow- 226 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarpduli F.R.H.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gairal New and Old F.R.H.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultan F.R.H.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijrani F.R.H.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randa F.R.H.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- do -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Wildlife Department, Uttar Pradesh, 17- Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow-226001.

Enjoying the Park life without disturbing the wildlife environment. Literature produced by Park developes or Manager concerning the species, families...
and group of animals and plants is found to be reliable. Wild fauna and flora are nature's renewable resources but many of the species become extinct or rare due to damaged ecological cycles. It is therefore necessary for the Park developers, in this case conservators and wildlife Wardens, to present a taxonomic list which may be checked periodically. During late seventies and early eighties, the development activities of the Ramganga Multipurpose Hydel Project, affected the environment seriously. It is reported that inspite of poaching, lumbering and grazing activities (which could never be stopped altogether), park animals were living in almost complete harmony till the Ramganga Hydel Project threatened their peace. In 1974, Corbett lost about 80 sq. km. of its fine riverine and flood plain habitats to the Ramganga reservoir. While precise data on the habitat damage are not available, it is easily assumed that it has brought change in biosphere directly, effecting the ecosystem. In some of the vertebrates this impact is easy to perceive. The vast expanse of water for the first few years baffled and elephants during their annual migration. Now these intelligent giants have learnt to live with the problem of loss of their migratory routes. Among other mammals, the chital (Axis axis), hog deer (Axis porcinus), Indian procupine (Hystrix indica) have been adversely affected.

As about 80 percent of submerged area is of savannah type; the habitat of chital, a considerable decrease has been noted in their population. However, the most abrupt change was the sharp fall in their birth rate due to stressed condition felt by the animals. Almost similar plight was of Hog deer, whose number first increased in 1978 but later on was reduced, perhaps because of their growing population pressure and threat by dominant Chital herds. Similarly the density index of porcupines (which
4.4.1 The herd of elephants in the Corbett National Park.
lives in deep underground chambers) in the winters of 1977-78 dropped to sixty percent of their 1967-77 index.

For the birds, the reservoir has come up as a mixed fortune. The relative density index of birds like Red Ardvent (Estilide amannova), spotted Munia (Lonchura Punctuate) and Weaver birds (Pleos benghalensis) fell, as the smaller trees, bushes and reed beds on which they roost and breed under water. Similarly, after submergence of south west Dhikala Chaud, no myna roosts were to be observed in the area. However, the presence of water birds like cormorants, darters, herons, egrets, strokes, fishing eagle, king fisher and moor hen was felt in the Park, where as they were rarely to be seen, previously. A crocodile rehabilitation programme is in progress. The gharial has been saved from extinction in the Park through captive breeding. A few species of turtles and tortoises are also found in an around the lake.

The fish fauna seems to have suffered a major loss, as their habitat has been changed greatly due to silttrapping, destruction of spawning grounds and localised climatic changes as well as changes in micro and macro life of water i.e. the food of fishes. Due to the Dam their usual migratory activities (both seasonal and reproductive) has also been impaired. Fishing can be done only in areas outside the National Park and Sonanadi Sanctuary and only from 1st October to 30th June. Fishing permits are issued for one week at rates fixed by the Government. Permits for Kosi River are issued by Divisional Forest Offices (D.F.O.)

Sometime back in 1985 IUCN had recommended some very
useful tips for the park management, the Corbett Park in particular which need be mentioned here by way of conclusion.

Conservation measures which are socially unacceptable to a majority of the population will eventually jail, so there is an urgent need to increase education and interpretation programmes, especially in conflict zones. Negative impacts need to be minimised and conservation benefits need promotion. It is perhaps this aspect of conservation planning—the human dimension which requires the greatest thrust in years to come, especially in the Indomalayan Realm, where dense rural population are still dependent on many living natural resources.

The plan aims to ensure that each nation has strong and effective wildlife conservation authorities at the centre and state or provincial levels so that the network of conservation areas can be adequately managed. Recruit dedicated and highly motivated staff at all professional levels within these departments, and provide opportunities for advancement within the system create a specialized research coordination post at the central level to actively promote much greater research involvement and the provision of adequate funds for research promotion; or develop other means of promoting research, such as publishing an official 'List of Research Priorities in Protested Areas' for the country. To make suitable parts of the protected areas system available to the public for recreation and educational uses. There are some of the guidelines of the action plan.

Corbett brings to life India's rich bio-diversity. It also gives life to its surrounding areas and the inhabitants of this area by providing regular flow of water, mitigating environmental extremes acting as a check on soil
erosion, floods and droughts. It is now also becoming the focal point of ecologically sustainable development in its surrounds.

In Corbett the results of fifty years of successful conservation can be seen and enjoyed in this fullness and glory. The Reserve is proud of its contribution towards India's efforts to conserve her bio-diversity.

4.5 GOVIND PASHU VIHAR : Fascinating Wild Life Reserve:

Govind Pashu Vihar, with all its bewildering scenic contrasts, rich and colourful flora and fauna and unique cultural heritage, is one of the most fascinating wild-life reserves of the country. This high altitude sanctuary is situated in the north-western part of the Garhwal Himalayas, in Uttar Pradesh, lying within the co-ordinates 30°55' and 31°18' N north latitudes 77°49' and 78°37' east longitudes. This sanctuary encompasses about 953.12 sq.km. of superb Himalayan grandeur.

The Govind Pashu Vihar area was discovered for hunting, mountaineering and trekking early in this century by the British climbers and Shikaris. To name of few J.T.M. Gibson, J.A.K. Martin and R.L. Holdsworth, spent several seasons, hunting and climbing during the forties and fifties of this century. Their activities gave a wide publicity to this area. Later, considering the bio-physical excellence of the area, it was designated as Govind Wildlife Sanctuary in 1955. Now it enjoys a permanent legal status. The name of the Sanctuary has been given after Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, the first Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, who himself hailed from the Kumaon Himalayas.
Naitwar, typical Rawain village, spread on either side of the river Tons, serves as the entry point to the Sanctuary. Naitwar can be approached by road from Dehradun, Rishikesh and Chakrata. The most popular, beautiful and convenient trek inside the Sanctuary is that of Naitwar to Har-ki-doon. Har-ki-doon is 45 km. from Naitwar. The first 24 km. distance, from Naitwar to Taluka is a jeepable road. Thereafter, there is a 5 km. distance up to Gangarh. The remaining 16 km. distance up to Har-ki-doon is a gradual ascend. Osia, is the last human settlement enroute the Har-ki-doon trek, which is situated at a distance of 7 km. from Gangarh. Accommodation in the way is available at Naitwar, Shankri, Taluka, Osia, Har-ki-doon, Jakhol, Dooni and Istragad.

4.5.1 **Physical Setting**:

The whole of the sanctuary has a rugged mountainous terrain, where the elevation from sea-level ranges from 493 m (Naitwar) to 6,325 m (Banderpunch). The higher zones are under perpetual snows or occupied by glaciers, black mountains, moraines and lush green Himalayan meadows are the other scenic aspects. Lower reaches are dominated by dense forests.

Geologically, the area is mainly composed of metamorphic rocks, constituted by granites, gneisses and crystalline schists (Khandari, O.P. and Singh, T.V., 1984). A series of fragmented rocks such as slates, conglomerates and limestone are characteristic of some parts. Granite forms a continuous chain of rocks in the higher parts of the eastern side of the sanctuary. Granite is also found in the bed of the Rupin river.

The Tons and its two tributaries, the Rupin and the Supin are
UTTAR PRADESH HIMALAYAS
GOVIND PASHU VIHAR

Fig. 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>Thin line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Small square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Rest House</td>
<td>Circle with line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Road</td>
<td>Double line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeepable Road</td>
<td>Three parallel lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trek</td>
<td>Dashed line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Bound Area</td>
<td>Filled circle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

184
the main rivers in the sanctuary. Numerous streams, nullahs, shrotas and waterfalls add to the beauty of the landscape.

4.5.2 Climatic Conditions:

Because of the abrupt altitudinal gradations, the sanctuary witnesses varying climatic conditions ranging from sub-tropical in the lower-valleys to the Arctic conditions in the higher zones.

Broadly speaking, spring comes to the sanctuary from mid-March to the end of May, characterised by occasional showers, after accompanied by hail or thunder storms. Summers are wet and warm in the lower heights. Monsoon generally reaches the lower areas towards the mid of June, properly set in July and generally remains up to the second week of August. Autumn (mid September to mid November) is generally pleasant with clear skies, though the higher areas begin to witness considerable fall in the barometer. Frost starts approaching from first week of October. Winter (mid November to mid February) is severely cold. Snowfall occurs generally above 2,000 M. which may descend to the lower areas but does not stay longer. Maximum snowfall occurs in January.

4.5.3 The Salient Features

The Sanctuary is specially known for its colourful Himalayan meadows (Bugyals) dense forests and rich faunal wealth, particularly the unique high altitude fauna. Vegetation types change with the altitude and conditions of the soil, adding to a large biodiversity in the protected area. The flower spangled meadows of the sanctuary, particularly, in Har-ki-Doon, presents a most colourful spectrum when in full bloom, during mid July to
mid August. These meadows are mostly undulating with the gentle slopes, potential recreation resources for skiing and other snow activities.

The visitor is enchanted while passing through the dense and extensive forests of the sanctuary. Many of the forested tracts still enjoy a state of primeval glory of the Nature.

The black mountains constitute a special attraction of the sanctuary. These mountains virtually pose a challenge to a rock climber. There are also some snow peaks, viz.- Kedar Kantha, Swargrohini and Banderpunch, where mountaineering expeditions can be organised.

The sanctuary is no less rich in cultural endowments. The lifestyle, dress, dialect folk tradition, settlement pattern, besides religious expression of the local Rawain people are marked typical of Garhwal. So far, there is little, if any, impact of the modernization on the Rawain cultural ethos and thus the socio economic and cultural environment still remains undisturbed. The residents have fair complexion with attractive features but because of the poverty and hardships they shed their grace and charm quite early. The settlements are small and compact. Consisting of the wooden houses, mostly doubled storeyed, these are nicely blended with the natural environment. Every settlement has a centrally placed temple, locally called as Ring Ghar. These temple houses remind of the Pagodas. Strangely enough, unlike other part of the country, Kauravas are worshipped here and not the Pandavas, Shiva, Vishnu or Shakti and the other usual Hindu deities. The society in these pockets is polyandrous and they retain many strange old cultural traditions and moses which appear to be an anachronism in the modern age, the little and internalised tradition of the Himalaya.
4.5.4 The Flora

Chir pien (Pinus roxburghii) is the dominant forest type in the sanctuary, extending up to 2100 m. However, in the colder areas of the upper Tons valley, Chir pine is seldom found above 1800 m. Besides forming pure stands, the chir pine also grows in association with Bar Oak (Quercus leueotic Cophora), Rhododendrons (Rhododendron arboreum) and Kaphal (Myrica esculanta). Sub-tropical scrub type of vegetation is generally found on the dry exposed aspects in the lower chir pine forests. It is, however, absent in the northern aspects above 1,500 m. Dense Ban Oak (Quercus Leucoticophora) forests are found between 1,500 to 2,100 m, generally substituting the pine forests on their upper limits. Moru Oak (quercus himalayans) is normally associated with leucoticophora in the lower reaches and with Q. Semecarpifolia in the higher reaches. The other common associated are, Betula Alnoides, Aesculus indica, cornus macrophylla, Acer Acuminatum, A. caesium and Alnus mepalensis. These types of forests are generally stretched, between 2,100 m to 2,800 m. Moist Deodar Forest (Cedra deodara) forest is generally present between 2,000 m to 2,800 m, though it may ascend to about 3,000 m on the dry exposed aspects. Pure stands of deodar are, however, not common in the sanctuary.

The common trees of Western mixed coniferous forests are Picea morinda, Abies pindrow, pinus excelsa, Q. leucothicophoram, R. alboeur, Pyrus pashia and the like. In moist sites, Aesculus indica and Carpinus viminae, besides Acer acuminatum are also found. Moist Temperate Deciduous forests are found between 2,100 to 2,750 m in the cold moist areas. The dominant trees in these forests are Jugalans region,
Carpinus vinunae, Acer pictum, Betula alnoides, Aesculus indica, Celtis australis, Cornus macrophylla, Corylus colurna, Euonymous tingers, E. hamiltoniaus, Viburnum coinefolium, Pyrus Vestita and the like.

Kharsu Oak (Q. Semecarpifolia) is dominant tree above the deodar forests on the southern slopes as also in some exposed sites, and above. Fir forests on the cooler aspects. Beginning from about 2,500 m these forests extend up to the timber line. In these forests the dominant Kharsu Oak is found with Q. himalayana, Sorbus llanata, R. arboreum and Euonymus tingens. Moist Himalayan Oak fir forest are generally restricted to the protected side on the northern aspect, usually replacing the mixed coniferous forests. Picea morinda, Q. semecarpiforia, Acer pictun and Betula utiles. Besides the above major vegetation types, pure stands of blue pine, alder, silver birch, silver birch- rhododendron association and rhododendron-juniperus associations are also prominent in the sanctuary.

Between the timberline and the permanent snowfall line, there is a vast stretch of the Himalayan meadow lands in the sanctaury, which generally spread over from 2,700 m to 3,500 m. These meadows are floristically rich in high altitude. Har-ki-doon is the astonishing of all the meadows of the sanctuary. Though a lesser known name, Hari-ki-doon can match with the popular Valley of Flowers in regards to the variety and richness of the flowers, while in size it is many times more to the valley. It is surmised that the region would certainly add to the list of species, so far known in Garhwal. Though, little or no information exists on the taxonomy of these meadows. Aconitum, Allium, Anaphalis, Aster, Corydalis, Cyananthus, Dactylis Gentiana, Gentianella, Iris, Leontopodium, Morina,
4.5.1 Govind Pashu Vihar - the remote and extra ordinary beautiful landscape in the wildlife Sanctuary.
Oxyria, Pedicularis, Pleurospermum, Saxirage, Sedum, Primula, Fritillaria, Geranium, Polygonum and the like can be easily identified.

4.5.5 The Fauna:

Faunistically also, the Govind Pashu Vihar is considered remarkable. While there is no check list of the wild animals, but on the basis of reports prepared by the wildlife and forest officers, the experiences of the local people and the field observations of the project team, it can be established that the sanctuary harbours almost all the major groups of the high altitude mammals and the birds known to reside in other parts of the Garhwal Himalayas.

Among the mammals, the feline are represented by leopard (Panthera pardus), Snow leopard (Panthera Unica), Jungle cat (Felis Chaus Affinis), Leopard Cat (Pelis begalensis) and the Fishing Cat (F. Viverrina). The Snow Leopard and fishing, are both rare. Among the beaks (Family Ursidae) the area harbours the two high altitude species, viz.- Himalayan black bear (Selenarctos thibetanus) and the brown bear (Ursus arctos isabellinus). Family canidae is represented by Jackal (Canis aureus), Red fox (Vulpes Vulpes montanus) and the Indian Fox (Vulpes bengalensis). The presence of the Indian wild dog (Cuon alpinus), however, is doubtful. Among the smaller carnivores, presence of common other (Lutra lutra monticola) Yellow throated martin (Martes flavigule flavigula), Himalayan Weasel (Mustela Sibrica), Small Indian Civet (Viverricula India Wellsi), Common Palm Civet (Paradoxurus hermaphroditus bonder) and Himalayan Palm civet (Puguma larwata grayi) has been confirmed from the sanctuary.
The various rodents, viz species of squirrels, marmots, gerbiles, rats and mice are as common in this part as elsewhere, but were difficult to identify except for the Indian porcupine (Hystriindica). The Indian hare (Lepus midriocollis) and mouse hare (Ochtona roylei) represents the Logomorphs in the area; the latter largely confined to the Himalayan meadows. Order Artiodactyla, a varied assemblage of the game animal is represented by the bovine like, Bharal or the blue sheep (Pseudois nayaur), Himalayan Tahr (Hemitragus Jemlahicus) Goral (Nemorhaedus goral), serow (Capricornis sumatraensis) and the cervines like, sambher (cervus unicolor) barking deer (Muntiacus Muntjak) and musk deer (Moschus moschiferus). The Indian wild boar (Sus serofa cristatus) is a widely distributed animal in the sanctuary. The most common mammals in the area, however, are the two primates, i.e. the langur (Presbytis entellus) and the rhesus macaque (Mucaca mulatta Villosa).

The sanctuary is very rich in avifauna, representing some of the rare and unique high altitude birds. Among them phasianidae, which includes some of the fascinating, birds of the family, observed in the area are- Koklas pheasant (Pucrasia Macrolopha), Monal pheasant (Lophophorus impeianus), Kalij pheasant (Lophura leucomelana) cheer pheasant (catreus wellichii), Hill partridge (Arborophila) Chukor partridge (Alectoris graeca chukor). The presence of Himalayan snow cock (Tetraogallus himalayensis), snow partridge (Francolinus francolinus asiae), grey partridge (F. pondicerianus) common quail (Perdicula asiatica) and Jungle bush quail (Coturnix coturnix) could not be confirmed.

Among other birds noticed in the area were - wedge tailed green pigeon (Treron sphenura), blue rock pigeon (Columba livia), Speckled wood
pigeon (C. hodgsonii, C. palmbus), spotted dove (Streptopelia chinensis suratensis), Rugous turtle dove (S. Orientalis meena), Indian ring dove (S. Decaocto decaocto), Emerald dove (Chaleophas indica), Slaty headed parakeet (psittacula himalayana), Pied crested Cuckoo (Clamator jacobinus), large lawk cuckoo (Cucutus sparverioides), Indian cuckoo (C. micropterus), Koel cuckoo (Eudynamys scolspacesa), hoopoe (Hpupa epops), large piea King-fisher (Ceryle lugubris), white breasted kingfisher (Halcyon smyrnensis), blue beared bea eater (Myctornis athertonii), Blue throated barbet (Megalaima asiatica), large golden backed woodpecker (Chrysocolaptes lucidus), Large sealy belled woodpecker (Picus squamatus), Grey crowned pigmy wood-peeker (Dendrocopes canicapillus), ruyous bellied sapsucker (Hypopicus hyperythrus), Alpine swift (Apus melba), rusous backed shrike (Lanius schach) Golden Oriole (Oriolus orilus) Hair crested drongo (Dicrurus hotterntattus), Black drongo (D. adsimilis), common myna (Acridotheres tristis), Red billed blue magpie (Cissa erythorhyncha), yellow billed blue magpie (C. flavirostris), Indian tree pie (Dendroicta Vagabunda), Red billed chough (Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax), Jungle crow (Corvus splendens), Dark cuckoo shrike (Coracina melaschistos) Long tailed minivet (Pericrocotus ethologus), White cheeked bulbul (Pycnonotus leucogenys, Red Vented bulbul (P. Cajer), Streaked lauyling thrush (Garrulax lineatus), streated laughing thrush (G. striatus), Red billed leiotrix (Leiothrix lutca), Red winged shrk babblar (Pteruthius flaviscapis), White throated tit babblar (Alciple vinipectus), Blue throated flycatehe (Musciaca rubeculsides) Paradise flycatcher (Terpsiphone paradise) Grey headed wasbler (Seicereus Xenthoschitos), Himalayan ruby throat (Erithacus pectoralis), Golden bush robin (Erithacus Chrysacus) little
forktail (Enicurus scouleri), spotted forktail (E. maculatus), Chestnut billed rock thrush (Monticola rufiventris), Bled ground thrus (Zoothera wardii), Whistling thrush (Myiophoneus caeruleus), Grey headed thrush (Turdus rubroanus), Grey tit (Parus major) Yellow cheeked tit (P. Xanthogenys), Red Headed tit (Aegithalos concinnus), white tailed nuthatch (Sitta himalayensis) Fire breasted flowerpecker (Dicaeum ignipectus), Red browed fineh (Callacanthis burtoni), White browed rose fineh (Carpodacus thura) and striped throated yuhina (Yuhina gularis). From among the birds of prey identified there were (Singh, T.V., 1986) upland buteo (Buteo Hemilasius), Eastern teppe eagle (Aquila nipalensis), Himalayan golden eagle (A. chrysaetos hodgsonii), Black eagle (Ictinaetus nalayaensis perniger), Lammergeeler (Gypaetus barbatus aureus), Henharrier (Circus cyanneus cyanneus), Central asian hobby (Falco Subbuteo centralasial) and Curasian kestrel (F. tinnunculus).

4.5.6 **State of Natural Environment:**

In most part of the sanctuary the nature, has to retain its primeval grandeur on account of the inaccessibility and remoteness of the habitat, but the natural environment in some areas is threatened with undesirable human activities, such as over grazing, poaching, forest fires, herb gathering, shifting cultivation, green felling and road building.

Despite these set backs the sanctuary is still considerably rich in wildlife. During the field study (Singh, T.V., 1986) conducted by the UGC pilot project team of Garhwal University, villagers of Naitwar, Shankri, Taluka, Dhatmir, Gangarh, Osia, Lewari, Phitari and Jakhol all expressed their serious concern over the losses alone to their crops and to the domestic
live stock by the wild animals- a fact in evidence that wildlife of this area is in abundance- a fact in evidence that wildlife of this area is in abundance. Only musk deer, Bharal, Tahr, Serow, Snow leopard and the fishing cat were reported to be rare. In case of birds, it is difficult to evaluate their status since it needs indepth studies. However, the longer gave birds, viz, pastridges, pheasants and quails (family phasianidae) are decreasing in population.

Unfortunately, some adverse trends had been set in the area which affected the fauna for the worst viz- poaching, habitat shrinkage and increased competition with the domestic livestock. Bulk of the wild animals were killed for protection against crops and livestock, while others were poached for domestic use and for claidestine trade which had of late proved very lucrative. More game killing happens during winters when the animals migrate to lower reaches, encountering villagers near their settlements. Some organized groups of the poaschers from the adjoining area of Himachal Pradesh, and of other parts of Garhwal are also active in the Sanctuary.

4.5.7 Grazing

Over of grazing has always been a major threat to sanctuary's ecology. The local people/ traditional right holders let loose their cattle within the 8 km. diameter of their village boundaries as well as in other areas where they had been grazing traditionally. Besides, during summers the Kunoras from Himachal Pradesh, the Gujjars from Terai and foothills and the shepherds of Pural range are also permitted for grazing there at concessional rates. It was reported by the Deputy Conservator of forests,
in charge of the Govind Pashu Vihar, that there was two much pressure of local residents on the natural environment of the Park.

4.5.8 Forest Fire:

The villagers and the herdsmen some times set fire to improve the grass-cover. Natural fires are also not uncommon. Natural fires severely affect the flora and fauna. The *chir* pine forests in the sanctuary have largely suffered. Deodar forests, specially on the southern aspects had also been badly damaged.

4.5.9 Extraction of the Forest Products:

With the greater demand and higher prices commanded by the plants of medicinal values, the herb gathering activity has already become remunerative occupation to many village families, particularly in the villages closer to meadow zone. The grazers also indulge in herb, gathering. The outside contractors purchase the huge dump of the herbs at a very substantial rate. This unchecked and selected eradication of the plants may result in the total extermination of these plants from the area, besides affecting the delicate ecosystem. Green felling, had been barred in hills but sanctuary faces the menace. Further more, the local population are engaged in collection of the minor forest products, viz.- extraction of resins, collection of ringal, torchwood, fire-wood, and the wood for domestic and agricultural implements. Shifting cultivation, again a detriment to the natural ecosystems, is frequently practised inside the sanctuary. All these activities have their disastrous impacts on the natural environment of the area, unless the local people are not provided some viable alternatives, these activities can hardly be stopped.
Govind Pashu Vihar, since 1988 is being managed by the wildlife division independently (Hummet, John, 1996). Before this the Wildlife division was part of the Forest Department, the Wildlife division has not developed any formal management plan, work-scheme or any other management instrument for the park area. The division uses a certain concept of conservation. Policy-makers from the division hope that with an active preservation strategy the snow leopard will reappear in the Govind Pashu Vihar. They think it is in their interest to declare the uncultivated parts of the sanctuary as National Park. This national park could become a part of 'Project Snow leopard', an international sponsored conservation project to protect the habitat of the snow leopard.

A consequence of this project, according the park authorities, will be the denial of public access of higher altitudinal parts of the wildlife sanctuary local residents, like the Rawains and Gujars will have a shortage of grazing-lands for their herds, the number of possible tourist-treks in the area will be curtailed. The park authorities state that this preservation strategy is an efficient strategy for the protection of the natural environment of the area (Hummel, John, 1991)

By seeing these problems, there seems to be an insufficient 'balance' between the nature conservation strategy of the wildlife division in the park and local socio-economic participation in conservation. Also a 'balance' between tourism development and local socio-economic participation seems absent. A comprehensive management plan for the sanctuary should be chalked out, so as to save the natural environment from further decay. If the department of Tourism wants to develop a sustainable tourism development, they have to communicate and co-
ordinate tourism development of the park with the wild life division. In cooperation with the wildlife division, the department of tourism might explain the possibilities of wars for local residents to open tourist facilities. The department of tourism claims to think about 'appropriate tourism'. The Director General (Hummel, Jonh, 1996) of the Hill Division of the Tourism Department even explained that he would accept that National Parks would be closed for tourists because of environmental reasons. He did not want a development of tourism in Garhwal which would damage the natural environment. Yet, the department of tourism is constructing the hotels in the park. Efforts are being made to protect, preserve and increase the flora and fauna of the area, tourism is not a principal aim, but is only secondary. Thus the sanctuary is still awaiting for an effective tourism development plan which could integrate tourism with the sensitive environment.

4.6 THE VALLEY OF FLOWERS : Himalayas Floral Excellence :

Of the four National Parks in Garhwal, the Valley of Flowers is the smallest though no less fascinating than the other three. The Corbett, National Park, The Nanda Devi National park and the Moti Choor National Park. The last one is the youngest, designated in 1985. The Corbett National Park and Motichoor National Park sprawl over the foothils, while the other two spread into the Greater Himalayan region.

4.6.1. Floral Excellence :

Floral uniqueness and ecological excellence characterise the Park's distinction from other nature preserves of this region. It is nature's rock garden where myriad of flowering plants burst forth in a riot of colours
every midsummer between June and August. It is a virtual paradise on the earth. Other Himalayan meadows and pasture lands (Bugyals) in Chamoli, Uttarkashi abound in flowerful pastures, such as Auli, Gorson, Bedni (Chamoli) Panwali (Tehri) and Kar-ki-Doon (Uttarkashi) but the valley surpasses all of them in its most restrictive and intense distribution of plant growth and mosaic of colour. It represents the Himalayan majesty, serenity, solitude and divine wilderness, which Hindu sages and saints sought for their spiritual pursuits (Singh, T.V. and Kaur, J., 1980).

The Valley was known to the Hindus from the Vedic times. Frank Smythe (1931) made it known to the world; to the tourist, the mountaineer and the mundane. It was beyond the reach of ordinary mortals as it lay in remoter inaccessible region, on the upper reaches of the Alaknanda, tributary, Bhyundar. The Valley was known to Hindu sages and saints who found an ideal environment for solitude and meditation. It is also associated with Pandava-legend. To local people, it is a fairy land. In Hindu mythology, it is named Nandan Kanan. Smythe’s contribution to plant geography is praise worthy as he was ably assisted by famous British botanist and mountaineer- Holdsworth in bringing to light 250 representatives of garden genera, and over 2000 varieties were exposed. Earlier to them, Strachey and Winterbottom who made extensive floristic survey of Kumaun, Garhwal and adjacent Tibet (1846-1849) could not identify the hidden botanical miracle of the Bhyundar Valley. After Symthe, Margaret Legge continued her taxonomic research, but as ill luck would have it, she succumbed to the beauty of the valley in 1939. Sporadic research in the valley phenomenon was carried out by a few botanists (Ghildyal, Duthie, Kapoor and others) but the secrets of the Valley’s ecosystem still eluded the grasp of the
mountain botanists. Not much information is added, after that, neither in plant taxonomy nor in inventory, except some bio-centric cries of Valley's decadence and extinction of many plants species affected by un-natural use of a most natural piece of biosphene. Visitor's trampling of vegetation, grazing of animals, building or artifacts viz broad pathway, building helipads into the Valley core were some of the negative pronounced, causing damage to the sensitive and fragile mountain environment.

4.6.2 Access to Beauty:

The secret of the valley ecosystem ought to be thoroughly studied before providing access to beauty- a beauty as fragile as a flower that too in Nautre's care where each species is suited to its particular environmental niche and each through its life process affects the physical and chemical properties of its immediate environment. These links are bewildering in their intricate details. These details should be worked out with care and expertise by a multidisciplinary team of plant ecologists, biogeographers and soil analyst before the 'pure nature' be exposed to human visitation. Visitors find their access possible ruthless trampling of the tender plants besides a few campers who have started littering the place with non-biodegradeable material. Some of these trends have been held in check, of late but the park does not have adequate manpower and trained guards to curb down such activities. There is an urgent need to plan the Valley's environmental resource scientifically and to open the valley on accepted principles of park visitations and on the basis of carrying capacity.

When Symthe negotiated Garhwal Himalaya (1931) difficult geographic terrain made the access formidable. Only an occassional
UTTAR PRADESH HIMALAYAS
TREK TO THE VALLEY OF FLOWERS

Fig. 4.7
mountain road system, with its ever increasing network to various Hindu-Sikh shrines has made its easier to enjoy the valley vista. Visitors to the valley increased after 1968 when Joshimath Badrinath Road was constructed.

4.6.3 The Valley:

The Valley lies between 30°42' W and 30°48' E and 79°33' E and 79°42' E encompassing an area of 87.5 Sq.Km. and occupies the upper catchment of the Bhyundar Ganga, an eastern tributary of the river Alaknanda. The entire park area falls under Badrinath Forest Division of Chamoli district. The Park boundary is generally demarcated through high ridges with an average height of about 500 m. Elevation inside the park ranges from 3,050 m to 6,590 m the highest point being the top of Nar Parvat (Kandari, O.P., 1985). Most of the Park area is generally above 3,500 m. The topography is rugged, interrupted by deep gorges and glaciers. Lush green alpine slope decorates the scene. The Pushpavati, tributary of the Bhyundar, flows across the park. It emerges from the huge Tipra glacier and joins the Lakshman Ganga (Bhyundar's local name) at Ghangaria, the last human settlement in this area.

The undulating valley is about 8 km. long and 2 km. wide. Major part of the park lies to the right bank of the Pushpavati river. Beginning at an elevation of 3,500 m the Valley slopes rise upto an elevation of 3,900 m, with runnels and glaciers- fed streamlets with white water, interrupted the green meadow and the colourful environment, joining the Pushpavati.

The Valley of Flowers can be approached from Govindghat.
(1,828 m), a transit point enroute Badrinath and at a distance of 22 kms. from Joshimath. One has to trek over 19 km. on rugged landscape, though amidst an extraordinary mountain panorama, on to the Valley. After reaching the small settlement, Govind Ghat, offering Sikh hospitality at the Gurudwara, the trek, about 12.5 km. to Ghangari (Govind Dham) is for the most part along the Lakshman Ganga. The entire passage is punctuated with fascinating Himalayan sights and sounds, viz., waterfalls, roaring rapids, orchards, wild flowers and primitive human settlements having organic simplicity. The first settlement is Phulna, straw roofed and housed in the beautiful surroundings of greens and glades. The next, almost half way, is Bhyundar (2,593 m) named after the river, where one finds high-landers living in harmony with natural environment. The ascent beyond this village goes hardy, though rewarding, as the scenery dramatically improves. Forested mountain walls, often bare and black, rise up to converse with the blue sky. The way begins to show the wild beauty in tiny flowers of many colours of which yellow and pink are the most common. As Ghangaria, the last settlement, comes closer, charming Kharsu and rhododendrons give way to planted stands of Deodar, majestic and beautiful. Ghangaria (3,200 m), bowl shaped, provides destination facilities of accommodation and food, besides a Gurudwara that caters to the needs of Sikh pilgrims to nearby Hemkund. The Sikhs have named it Govind Dham. The Valley of Flowers is about 3.5 km. up north east at an average height of 3,650 m while Hemkund falls north ward up 4,392 m, by the side of a serene Himalayan lake. Gurudwara on the Valley way offers cost free comforts of boarding and lodging, irrespective of caste and creed.

The Valley of Flowers has not been propely delimited. To tourists
4.6.1 The Valley of Flowers has incomparable 2,500 garden genera.
it is an area which comes to their view as they finish up the last cluster of silver birch trees; to botanists its a vast stretch that commences from Bhamini Dhar, closing at the base of Ratbanpeak. To a geographer it should constitute the segment of the biosphere that falls into the catchment area of the Bhyundar Ganga, and should include the entire land mass leading to Hemkund, the Pushpavati Valley and the Valley of Pushpavati's tributary. Lately, (1981) it has been declared as one of the Himalayan National Parks. However, the prescribed limits for preservation of this region are yet to be defined.

The floral aspects of the Valley becomes perceptible as one leave Ghangaria. The 3.5 km. trek from Ghangaria to the actual Valley is most idyllic and inspiring. It is a passage into elysian beauty having enchanting groves of birch, resounding with whistling linets and twitter of birds. It gives one the moments of solitude broken only by the roar of the Pushpavati rapids. One stops at the small wooden bridge over the Pushpavati to look at the mighty Himalayan truncated walls, and beyond lies the fantasy of the flowers. After a strenuous, though sensuous, climbs of a kilometre, the timber line closes with array of silver birches that herald the green expanse of the Valley. The beauty of the Valley lies exposed before the visitor and he has yet to explore the mystery of this 'Eden of Flowers'.

4.6.4 The Spectrum of Flowers:

"Dentiaseta", Valley's most charming plant, opens up its eyes in mid-May, peeping from ledges and crannies. With its androsace, dwarfish rhododendrons, iriscs, pansies, potentilla, fritilleries and many other annuals
burst forth miraculously carpeting the Valley floor. By June and July the flora becomes more and more luscious until one is wading knee-deep through an ocean of flowers, ranging in colour from the sky-blue of the poppies to redwine potentillas (Smythe, 1947). While green is the predominant shade, the July mood of the valley would be so different from June; and September has all its autumnal glory. October is a Swan song when snow begins to cover the entire landscape and the tender floral beauty fades out for a long slumber of days (Singh, T.V., and J. Kaur, 1980).

Floral aspect of the valley can be studied in two parts (Kaur, J. 1985) i.e. along the undulating floor and along the slopes and elevations. The floor aspect is densely rich, often muddy and rock strewn, having flowering plants quite different from the high slopes. The first half of the floor ranges from 3,525 m to 3,962 m which is frequented by the visitors, the second half is a sparse and rock filled, ending up at the base of Bhyundar Kanta Pass (5,450 m) where to only the sturdy trekker can move. The south facing Valley-slopes dressup with flowers of exquisite beauty and colour. Running streamlets formed of melt-snow are the most enchanting sight as most plants love to grow close to them. On the higher slopes rare plants like Himalayan Poppy (Meconopsis) and Brahma Kamal (Sausserea Obvallata) can be seen. This could be the scene of Valley's early flowering of Primula and the anemones which gradually descend to the floor with the coming of rains. The north facing aspect could be reached after crossing the snow-bridged Pushpavati. Only adventurists brave such a challenge of the mountains. Since it is a protected area, it is a safer and secure habitat of many wild-animals such as Black Bear, Musk Deer and Bharal, though rarely to be seen.
4.6.2 The beauty of Ratban Peak amidst the foreground of wonderous greenery and beautous flowers.
Some of the most conspicuous flowers to be seen during the rainy season (July- August) are: purple impomea (Ipomoea purpurea), Stuart's primrose (Primula Stuarti), Musk thistle (Carduus nutans), Himalayan poppies, blue and yellow (Meconopsis aculeata and robusta), Himalayan lily (Lilium oxypetalum), Knot weed (Polygonum affine), Wallich's Poppy (Meconopsis Wallichii), Himalayan rose (Rosa Maerophylla), Jacob's Ladder (Potemonium Caeruleum). Symthe provides a delightful pen-portrait of primula studded valley (Smythe, F.S., 1932). 'In all my mountain wanderings, I had not, seen a more beautiful flower than the primula, the fine raindrops clung to its petals like glaxies of seed pearls and frosted its leaves with silver sometimes as many as thirty to the beautifully proportioned umbel and in colour of the most heavily French blue, sweetly scented.'

The trek of Hemkund (Sikh resort) is no less rewarding. Though the scene is a little different from the Valley but one enjoys hosts of blue Himalayan poppies growing behind the grey boulders and rocks. The Brahm Kamal, with all their heavenly fragrance, abound around the high altitude lake. Here are more flowers of different varieties that love their undisturbed place on sequestered elevation. Yellow and orange potenillas can be easily marked. The Sikh resort at the lake is a challenging trek. One has to negotiate one's arduous way from (3200 m) Ghangaria to Hemkund (4329 m) only in 4 km. space, the last leg of the traverse is exhausting, though flowers with their heavenly hues beguile the trekkers fatigue. Sikh pilgrims do it, so the tourists. Poor Brahm Kamal is every body's prey as they pluck it handful to carry them home as a religious trophy. Wordworth's poetic concept of ecology is well realised in the Valley when one muses with Wordsworth; 'To her fair work did Nature link, the human soul that in me ran'.
Most of the flowering plants found in the Valley are annuals and medicinal herbs, having high commercial value viz. Aconitumbelourii (Mithe-bish), A. heterophyelum (Atis), Viola Canescene (Banafsa), Geranium Wallichisnum (Ratanjot), Potentilla fulgens (Bajradanti), Bergenia Strachevi (Pakhan bedh), Selinum Vaginatum (Bhoot Keshi), Nardostachya jatamansi (Jatamansi), Tanacetum longifloum (Guggal), Gynoglossum Wallichii (Lichura), Picrorhiza Kurrooa (Karui or Katuki), Plantago brachyphyuia (Isabgul), Polygonum macrophyllum (Kukhri), P. rumcifolium (Kanthla), Orchis latifolia (Hathajorhi) and Allium strachevi (Pharan). Saussurea obvallata (Brahm Kamal) is an aromatic herb, largely used in religious ceremonies which normally grows above 4,000 m. All these herbs were known to ancients. The myth of Sanjeevani booti (life giving herb) associated with Shri Lakshmana of epic time was brought by the monkey God Hanuman from this region. Near Hemkund Gurudwara is located 'Lokpal' in the memory of Rama's brother. Before the establishment of the Park (1982) some commercial agencies extracted herb from this area.

4.6.5 The Way to the Valley:

Few treks to Himalayan beauty would be an enchanting as the way to the Valley, which deserves special mention. As one ascends from Govindghat, after crossing the bridge over the Alaknanda, one is touched to the quick by the breath-taking natural sights, and sounds, unearthly ethereal cliffs, soul dissolving odour, captivating waterfall and nature's naked loveliness, all around. At Govindghat the Bhyundar pours down the hues of heaven into the Alaknanda, spraying the entire surroundings. Onwards the trek to the valley is mostly along the roaring and foaming Bhyundar Ganga.
The scenery around, attracts attention and one has to be very careful as the way is trecherous lest, one should have a slip which can be terminal. The gradient of the Bhyundar is very steep, the floor of the water is naturally fast and the fog generated by churned water dashing against the massive boulders is wafted far and wide. Its cool touch is romantically soothing and softens fatigue. The vegetational pattern that one comes across is most engaging, beautiful forests of Maple (Acercaium), Walnut (Juglans regia), Mulberry (Morus alba), Popular elm (Populus ciliata), Ban Oak (Quercus incana), Wild Cherry (Litsea umbrasa), Alder (Alnus nepelensis), Horse chest nut (Aesculus indica), Rhododendron (Rhododendron campanulatum), Tun (Cedrela tuna), and Silver birch (Betula utilis). The vegetation changes gradually till Ghangaria is reached where attractive, tall and elderly trees of Himalayan fir (Abies pindrow) welcome the visitors. Villages like Pulna on the first leg of the traverse and Bhyundar at the second present cultural attraction in this Himalayan wilderness. From Bhyundar village a trail leads to a huge lake known as 'Kag Bhusundi'. The trail is most challenging though full of natural beauty.

4.6.6 Destination Facilities:

The Sikhs are responsible for opening this area, more than tourism promoters. They offer cost-free hospitality to all, irrespective of caste and creed, both at Govind Ghat and Ghangaria. There is a tourist rest house, forest rest house, with two suites at 'Govind Ghat' and a P.W.D. inspection bungalow at nearby Pandukseshwar, They have lodging facilities only on pre-reservation.

At Ghangaria there are two suites in the forest rest house with a
bed capacity of 24 in Tourist Rest House/Hotels. The Tourist Rest House run by Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) during the year 1996 charges Rupees 500 for Deluxe, 350 for Executive and 100 for Dormitory. Tariff for single occupancy is 75% of the double bed room and extra bed will be charged at the rates of rupees 40/- per bed. During the visitor's peak tents are pitched but the camping facility is also limited. The Gurudwara at Ghangaria offers sleeping space for the pilgrims. No beds are provided. Recently, local people have come up with modest sleeping space to meet the peak demand. The doors of Gurudwara are open to all, but one has to sleep on floor with other fellow travellers/pilgrims. Privacy would be a luxury in a place where roofed space is a most desired comfort. The Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (CMVN) has also set up a Canteen for breakfast and meals. Tourist Rest House has restaurant facility. As the valley has been advertised on a big scale during the previous years, visitors to the Valley Hemkund have increased. The Valley destination demands more comfortable lodges of standard than that the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam has offered.

Leaving Dehradun and Mussoorie in the lower and middle Himalayas' "the Valley" has been the foremost tourist point in while of Garhwal region. The unkind fact is that the Valley has been oversold. The gap between the demand and supply causes conflicts. There had been cases, when the survey team of Institute of Himalayan and Regional Development, Garhwal University, Srinagar under the Supervision of T.V. Singh, Director, revisited the valley for monitoring (1981), the benighted
travellers faced severe discomforts in that far flung and remote environment, uncared for and unlooked after.

4.6.7 Visitors Aspects:

The Valley attracts visitors from home and overseas. The Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (Garhwal Development Corporation) in association with Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Air India and India Tourism has made quite good efforts to popularise the valley. The Sikh pilgrim influx to Hemkund, with all their cost free hospitality, is perhaps the major factor of motivation. It is noticed that most of the visitors hail from Bengal, Maharashtra who having performed their sacrament at Badrinath want to enjoy the floral beauty. There are visitors from overseas also. Visitors to the Valley visit during months of July to August, whereas Sikh devotees visit Hemkund in September, and Hindu devotees visit Badrinath in May and June, perhaps to avoid rain disasters and road-blockades. The Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam has introduced conducted tours to the valley in its luxury coaches, right from Delhi and Rishikesh (Muni-ka-Reti).

The increased tourist activity in Valley of Flowers attracted as many as 5,283 persons in the year 1990-91, where as 1991-92 and 1992-93 saw 5510 and 5745 visitors respectively. There were 7191 and 7799 visitors between 1993-94 and 1994-95 respectively. With the available data it is seen that the visitors are on an increase, with the advertisement of the valley on a big scale.
TABLE - 4.7

TOURIST ARRIVALS (FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC) TO VALLEY TO FLOWERS (1990-91 - 1994-95)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>5745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>7191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>7799</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam Office, Dehradun.

Eversince, the valley has been declared as a National Park, there has been a check on unauthorised entries. Tentative carrying capacity has also been fixed. No person can destroy, exploit or remove any wild life from the park or destroy or damage the habitat of any wild animal of the area. The Valley certainly is an economic promise. The managers of the Park have gathered lot of information from management practices of the Canadian Parks, where millions of visitors are allowed to enjoy Canada's Nature Heritage least disturbing the Park eco-system.

Conducted tours have been started by the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN), and there are informative literature on the plant families, their growth cycle and the months or periods associated with certain plants that would not be found in other periods.

With the establishment of a Wild life Institute in Chandrabadni and an attempt to provide basic infrastructure in the region, tourism 'sins' have changed to tourism 'benefits' to a great extent.