

**Pindari Glacier, Uttarkhand, India – 3660 Mt (12007 Ft) 15.Oct.2016 to 29.Oct.2016.**

This article explains my experience on first trek to a high altitude in the Himalaya range. My primary objective of this trek was to assess my fitness level and to take a break from my currently busy life and experience how it feels like living in nature and a slow remote village life. As part of this trek I also had to take a step of faith to overcome some of my fears to get to the destination and challenge myself. Trekking at high altitude can put you through to some challenges **“A Unpredictable Nature – A Journey through the Unknown”**.

Let me first explain some terms and belief about this place to begin with.

Himalaya – Him means “Snow” and alaya means “Home”. So we will always (365 days of the year) find snow on the top of all mountains peaks in Himalaya range, they always appear as white mountain, the view of sunrise and sunset on peaks of these mountains will be awesome golden color when the sunrays fall on these peaks, we can see it only there is clear sky (No Clouds), and if we get to see it, we are lucky.

Glacier – an extended mass of ice formed from snow falling and accumulating over the years and moving slowly, either descending from high mountains, as in valley glaciers or moving outward from centers of accumulation as in continental glaciers.

Uttarakhand – It’s also called “DEV BHOOMI” by people of that state, because people of this state believe that these mountains are home for many Gods and Goddess of hindu culture.

Pindari – the word pindari the villagers believe has come because Pandavas (Characters from Mahabharat) gave Pind dan to their father at that place.

Trek to this place is a 7-day trek will share my experience on each of these days.

As I had taken a train to get to the base camp to start the trek, it took 3 days for me to get to the starting point.

Mumbai – (Train) – Delhi – (Train) – Haldwani – (Bus) - Bageshwar – (Jeep) - Loharkhet

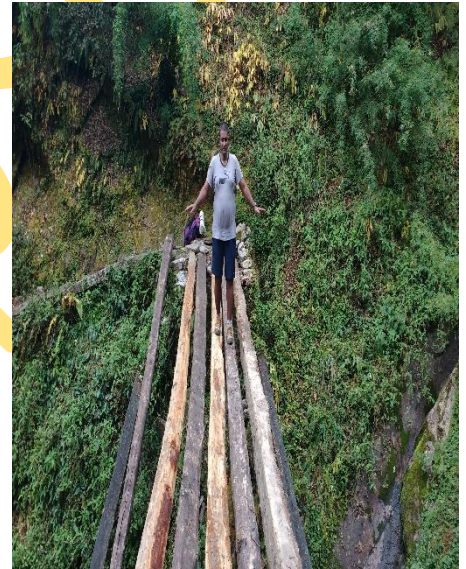
**Day1 – 18.Oct.2016 – Loharkhet - (Trek) – Dhakuri.**

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day1	6:38:08	5:04:21	6.86	5448	2298	0:58:04	0:44:22	11	11:04:49



The first day of trek begins at 1734 mt (5689 fts) and end at 2690 mt (8825 fts). The first day are always the hardest of all the other trek days especially if you are trekking for the first time to such high altitude and with a baggage of 15Kgs + on your back. This day you cover the maximum altitude, the above data explains it. The trek is easy but quite steep and goes through dense forest. This day I encountered my first fear - "To cross a wooden bridge", with no support from the sides and no horizontal support, you just have to cross through two wooden planks and with a baggage of 15kg on your back and as you try to cross, the bridge keep shaking so you have to maintain a slow pace and not rush through, my picture when crossing this bridge shows my tensed expression I was lucky because my trek leader (Birdy Seth) volunteered to carry my baggage. I could have not crossed the bridge if my leader had not encouraged and boosted my self-confidence. Thanks. When walking at such steep terrains you stop and take regular breaks depending on your fitness level, to take long breaths, you also start to feel that your body is trying to acclimate.

After a hard first day you start to think, will I make it to the TOP, people tell you how challenging rest of trek will be and your confidence get shaken up. At this point you have to believe in yourself and trust that you can count on some of your group members, for me I trusted my Trek leader because I and Trek Leader were longtime friends and I decided to challenge myself.



**Day2 – 19.Oct.2016 – Dhakuri - (Trek) – Khati.**

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day2	3:32:30	2:50:07	4.30	1349	2986	0:49:24	0:39:32	5.34	5:17:48



This day begin at 2690 mt (8825 fts) and end at 2190 mt (7187 fts). This is the easiest day of trek, its primarily downhill. If you wake up early in the morning before the sunrise, you will be able to see the first sight of the snowcapped view of southern wall of the Nanda Devi sanctuary the view is awesome. The trail passes through the thick forest of rhododerndron.. Khati is the last and the biggest village you will come across trek to Pindari glaciers, its situated on the banks of pindari river. Only BSNL Mobile Network is available here so other networks does not work here and further from here there is no network. There no electricity in these villages and it get dark at around 6pm also day starts here at 4 am they use solar lights. There is only one school here and has very few teachers to teach kids, but the kids here surely has been taught to greet everyone they meet, 80% of the kids here tell “Namaste” to everyone they meet with a smile on their face, which we rarely find among city kids.



**Day3 – 20.Oct.2016 – Khati - (Trek) – Dwali**

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day3	8:25:28	6:59:21	8.89	5175	3916	0:56:50	0:47:11	14.30	10:39:12



This day begin at 2190 mt (7187 fts) and end at 2602 mt (8537 fts). This is also easy day trek but the longest you will end up trekking from sunrise to sunset, if you are afraid to trek in pitch dark then please start as early as possible so that you can reach the base camp before its dark. This day I had to encounter my second fear "Trekking in Dark". During Jun'13 floods in Uttarakhand this route was heavily damaged, as the result new and longer route was built, so the route was new to my trek leader also, hence he was not able to estimate exactly how long the trek will be to the next base camp, but knew where the location was as has been to this trek earlier also. This trek was through the dense bamboo forest cool climate, lush green and along the Pindari River, hence very scenic. One of the major source of Pindari river is from melting of snow from the Pindari glacier (Our Destination) and through its journey this river gets fed from many other water streams from the mountain and it grows. The water in this river is very clean, fresh and lively looking at its flow you feel the power of water and it energizes you. You have to cross this river at 2-3 place over a wooden bridge, these bridges were stronger than the one I crossed earlier, it did not scare me, but don't be careless, the force of the water is sufficient to take you to some distance with injury as it has lot of rocks in its bed. Take a break on the banks of any of these crossing and enjoy the flow of this river its energies you, and you feel peaceful, see the power of water flowing through with its absolute fluidity making its way through all the rock in its bed, and becoming more and more powerful as it overcome all the rocks in its path. "Life is not easy for anyone; we grow only as we face all the challenges in its path courageously".

As the trail pass was very cool and pleasing, we took couple of long tea breaks and did not realize how soon it became dark and yet not reached the base camp. It's when my second fear set in – I had no clue how much long we still have to trek in dark, the trail was not clearly visible because in the mountains after the sunset it becomes pitch dark there is no lights until moonlight becomes visible so you have to depend on the torch light you have. So when it became dark we reached a path on the trail which was actually the bed of the river Pindari filled with full of small rock, this was a new route built after the flood, so it was new to my trek lead as well, and it scared me more... being dark "I was lost". But my trek leader was not in fear, because he knew the destination was near by its just that he had to find the right trail path to reach there, what were the tools he had to find the path – 1. Torch light, 2. Tracing the foot prints of the people, 3. At some places there were some stone markings made for trekkers to help them navigate, it was for the first I noticed all this. 4. Was his directional instinct of where the destination is. I was just trusting his navigational skills and there was nothing more I could do, and yes occasionally expressed to him how scared I am, and he had to build my confidence also as one more thing to handle. Its only after walking in dark for ½ hours finally when my trek leader flashed his torch to long distance which as per him was the destination and someone from the destination camp also flashed back the torch light back to us communication link was established, I felt safe and confident that yes we were on the right path and my fear started to disappear, it's was not that I didn't trust my trek leader navigational ability, it was just that I didn't see any signs confirming my own trust with him. So finally after further trekking for another ½ hour in the dark we reached the base camp for overnight stay.

But how come a person from the base camp flashed a torch light in response to my trek leaders torch light flashing, was this just a coincidence, or where we lead by the positive energy of this place which the villagers believe is the dwelling place of Gods and Goddess or in other words the grace of the lord to lead us in times when we cannot handle our fears, will always be a matter of belief or faith.



*Pindari River*

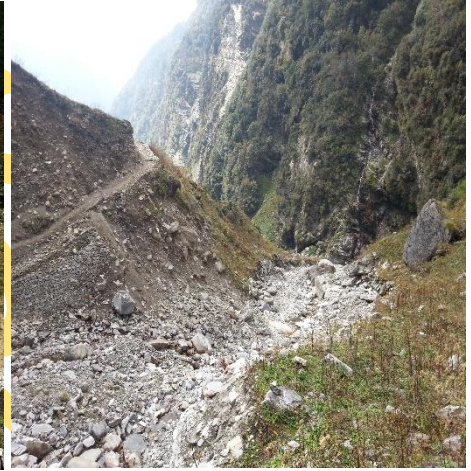
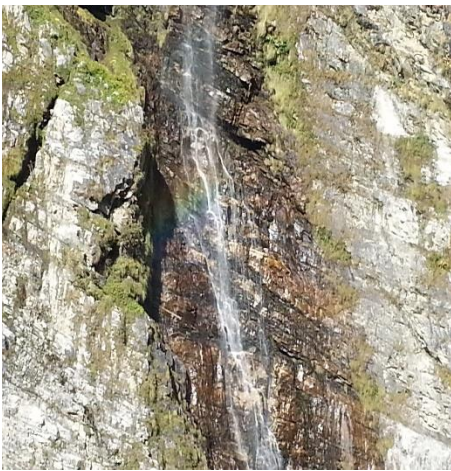
*See the first photo below, do you see a trail path there ? Its all small rocks and you have to pass pindari river 3 times and it was totally dark the below photo was taken early morning after sunrise.*



**Day4 – 21.Oct.2016 – Dwali - (Trek) – Phurkia**

*This day begin at 2602 mt (8537 fts) and end at 3189 mt (10463 fts). This is a little hard trek its steep climb although from distance point of view its only 6 kms remember you are gaining altitude and air starts to becomes thinner and at several places the path is very narrow as you walk pass the curves of the mountain you have to walk very carefully If you slip then you might injure yourself and rescuing might become little challenging, need to hold mountain rock, use of trekking stick is advisable for support at some places, and you are carrying your baggage, take regular breathing breaks and move forward at your pace you are not in a race and don't be scared, you can manage it. There is a beautiful waterfall before Phurkia you can rest for a while there. Phurkia is a picture square place blessed with natural beauteousness.*

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day4	3:53:22	2:56:13	3.51	2836	878	1:06:34	0:50:14	5.65	4:52:51



### Day5.1 – 22.Oct.2016 – Phurkia - (Trek) – Pindari Glacier

The first part of this day begin at 3189 mt (10463 fts) and end at 3667 mt (12031 fts). This is a little hard trek its climb although from distance point of view its only 7 kms . The trek from here to the final destination is visually captivating as it offers spectacular view of the mighty Himalayas range. Start early before sunrise to catch the beautiful sunrise on these peaks, the peaks appear golden, it will be a awesome view from here. We have to cross landslide zones at 5 – 6 places, crossing here can be little risky as the paths will be very narrow and slippery so be careful. One kms before the Zero Point you will see a Babaji's house who serves food to people who make it upto here.

Babaji is living there all alone since 25+ years, don't know why he is living such a life of solitude. This place has no power, no mobile works there and he stock groceries for every 3 months which the villagers all down from Khati village bring up to him. All he does there is meet all the trekkers who make their way to the top, Pooja and cook food. There is no rain it only snows there and in summer its chill there he lives there alone. Winter can be real cold there in negative number. I asked him 3 questions.

1. Are you not scared living alone here – Baba's response "fears God will take care "
2. You need lot of determination to live like that - Baba's response "Yes strong Will Power is required"
3. Are you not afraid of death – Baba's response – "Death can come to anyone anytime".

According to me living a lonely life is a the hardest because we were born to live as social human being.

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day51	4:17:58	3:09:30	4.41	3053	1505	0:58:34	0:43:00	7.10	5:17:13



The first photo is of the Pindari glacier and in the last picture the person in the center is the Baba and the other person is my trek leader. The feeling you get after getting to the top is mind blowing, it's worth the efforts taken for all the 5 days.

**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.**

**Day5.2 – 22.Oct.2016 – Pindari Glacier - (Trek) – Phurkia – (Trek) - Dwali**

The second part of this day begin at 3667 mt (12031 fts) and end at 2602 mt (8537 fts). From here the journey is all the way downhill. Although the distance is 12 kms to dwali its manageable, make sure you don't waste lot of time to avoid trekking in the dark to the end.

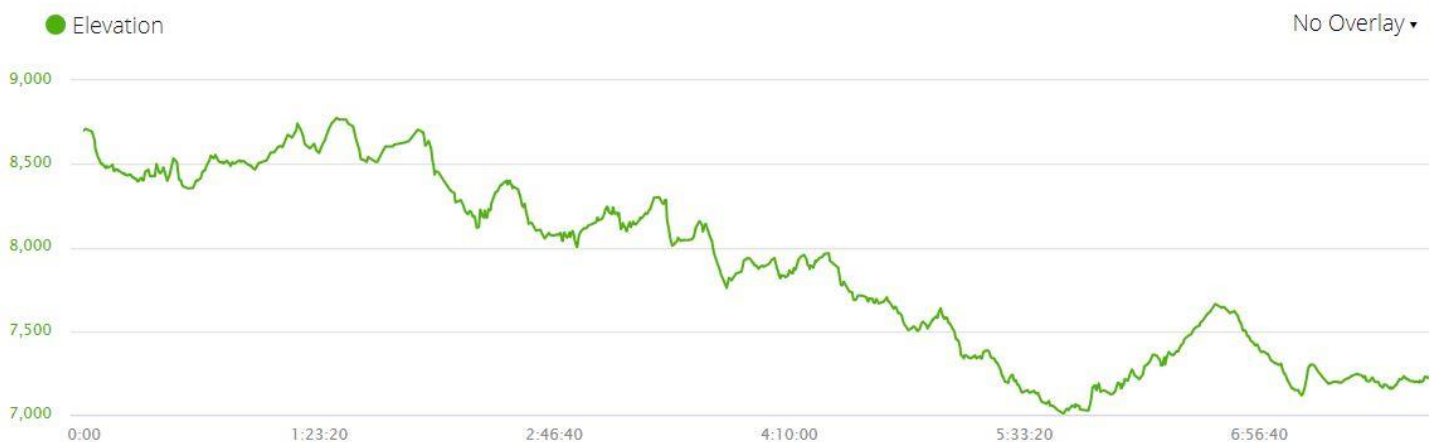
	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day5.2	5:36:27	4:31:45	7.18	2402	5902	0:46:54	0:37:53	11.56	6:46:13



**Day6 – 23.Oct.2016 – Dwali - (Trek) – Khati Village**

This day begin at 2602 mt (8537 fts). and end at 2602 mt (8537 fts). From here the journey is all the way downhill. Although the distance is 15 kms it should not be taking that long time we took to get here on our ascend trek.

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day6	7:56:45	6:53:13	9.58	4049	5521	0:49:46	0:43:08	15.41	9:28:14



**Day7 – 24.Oct.2016 – Trekking in Khati Village**

This day was just a leisure walk in the village enjoying the village life, and recovering from all the muscle pains of the trek.

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day7	2:53:38	2:31:19	4.17	2288	2303	0:41:39	0:36:18	6.71	4:06:12



### Day8 – 25.Oct.2016 – Walk to the Khati Jeep Station

This day was walk to the jeep station to catch jeep to Bhageshwar village.

	Time	Moving Time	Distance Mile	Elev Gain Fts	Elev Loss Fts	Avg Pace	Avg Moving Pace	Distance Kms	Actual Time
Day8	1:22:24	1:17:29	2.44	1413	1316	0:33:44	0:31:45	3.93	1:40:10



After this first trekking experience to high altitude , I was thinking Can I do Everest Base Camp its 19000 Fts... "Thinking BIG" and in how many year I should plan to get there? To plan such a trek requires a Good Cardio Fitness level this will require regular exercise life style., Maintain a weight of 85 kgs, maintain a one trek every month schedule of trekking, trek to Himalaya Valley once 2 years and gradually increase the fts.

*The major challenge with such a GOAL is with the growing age, maintaining the above schedule will require a strong "Will Power" and the person needs to believe in making best of life experience on earth and enjoy the natural wonder in GOD's Creation - US and the World.*

*I am going to give it a TRY, and Let the Lord decide on its deliverance.*

*Happy Reading and will keep you all posted on my next Himalaya Trekking, Thanks for Reading.*

*Jepson Erattuparmbil*

*26.Nov.2016.*

Trek Jepson