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Chapter 22

Estimating Carrying Capacity in a High Mountainous Tourist Area: A Destination Conservation Strategy



Ravinder Jangra and S. P. Kaushik

Abstract In the sector of tourism, all issues are associated with the “magic number” of tourists that visit certain destination. The assessment of physical carrying capacity is an important component in the planning of spatial development to maintain sustainability for establishing standards in tourism sector. Study area has rich cultural and religious identity of tribal community as well as eco-system of cold desert which make it unlike any other in the world. Estimating tourist’s threshold value of the destinations becomes vital considering the recent tragedies at the pilgrimage destinations in nearby hilly areas in Himalayas. Therefore, the present research assesses the physical carrying capacity of three selected tourist spots in Kinnaur based on the guidelines suggested by International Union of Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). As per calculations, the number of PCC, RCC, and ECC of selected tourist spots in Kinnaur are 64,835, 9595, and 5928, respectively. It is found that ECC is the most acceptable type of carrying capacity and the present status of tourism activity is highly under exploited vis-a-vis its carrying capacity in the study area.

Keywords Land use/land cover (LULC) · Physical carrying capacity (PCC) · Real carrying capacity (RCC) · Effective carrying capacity (ECC)

22.1 Introduction

The natural environment, local culture, and geographically diverse habitats are the major attractions that play an important role to attract mass tourism at any destination (Hasan et al. 2014). Thriving economy of Asia and dirt cheap transportation and

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