Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research Inventory of Glaciers, Glacial Lakes and the Identification of Potential Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) Affected by Global Warming in the Mountains of India, Pakistan and China/Tibet Autonomous Region

Final report for APN project 2004-03-CMY-Campbell

J. Gabriel Campbell (Ph.D.), Director General International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development G. P. O. Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal, gcampbell@icimod.org

The following collaborators worked on this project:

Prof. Xin Li (Ph. D.), Cold and Arid Regions Environmental and Engineering Research Institute, (CAREERI), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Lanzhou, P. R. China, lixin@ns.lzb.ac.cn

Mr. Gong Tongliang, Bureau of Hydrology Tibet Autonomous Region, Lhasa, P. R. China, Gongtl@xzwater.gov.cn

Dr. Tej Partap. CSK Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India, vc@cskkv.hp.nic.in

Prof. Dr. B. R. Arora, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, Dehra Dun, Uttaranchal, India, wihg@sancharnet.in

Dr. Badaruddin Soomro, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Islamabad, Pakistan, chair@comsat.net.pk



Inventory of Glaciers and Glacial Lakes and the Identification of Potential Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) Affected by Global Warming in the Mountains of India, Pakistan and China/Tibet Autonomous Region

2004-03-CMY-Campbell Final Report submitted to APN

J. Gabriel Campbell (Ph.D.) Director General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) G. P. O. Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal, gcampbell@icimod.org

2005 July

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and

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Overview of project work and outcomes

Non-technical summary

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) undertook the project "Inventory of Glaciers and Glacial Lakes and the Identification of Potential Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) Affected by Global Warming in the Mountains of India, Pakistan and China/Tibet Autonomous Region". ICIMOD signed the contract with the Asia - Pacific Network for Global Change" (APN) in May 2002 and with "global change SysTem for Analysis, Research, and Training" (START) in July 2002 to carryout the APN Project 2002-15. In continuation of this, ICIMOD implemented project APN 2003-5 in the year 2003/04, and project APN 2004-03-CMY in the year 2004/05. There are co-funding from ICIMOD, UNEP/RRC-AP and the national collaborating institutions / organizations.

The main purpose of the study was to assess the threat from glacial lakes and to highlight those where GLOF events are likely to occur and cause serous damage to human life and property of India, Pakistan and China.

In the APN 2002-15 first year phase of the project, Tista Basin in Sikkim Himalaya of India, Pumqu basin in Tibet Autonomous region of PR China and Astor sub-basin in Indus basin of Pakistan were studied. In the APN 2003-05 second year phase of the project, Himachal Pradesh Himalaya of India, Poiqu and Rongxer basins in Tibet Autonomous Region of PR China, and five sub-basins (Upper Indus, Jhelum, Shingo, Shyok and Shigar) in Indus basin of Pakistan were studied. In the third year phase, APN 2004-03-CMY in the year 2004/05, Jilongcangbu, Zangbuqin, Majiacangbu, Daoliqu and Jiazhangangge basins of Tibet Autonomous Region of PR China; Uttaranchal Himalaya of India; Gilgit, Chitral, Hunza and Swat River basins of Indus Basin in Pakistan were studied in the third year phase.

This project had enabled the capacity building of the affiliated partner institutions and strengthened the collaboration between APN, START, UNEP/RRC-AP, ICIMOD, CAREERI, BHT, PARC, CSKHPAU and WIHG to continue to assist in developing regional capacity and co-operation.

Objectives

The main objectives of the project were:

- 1. To understand the GLOF phenomenon by creating an inventory of existing glaciers, glacial lakes and monitoring the GLOF events on a regular basis
- 2. To establish an effective early warning mechanism to monitor GLOF hazards using RS and GIS in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region
- 3. To develop the capacity building of national institutions to assess and monitor the GLOF phenomenon
- 4. To disseminate the results and outputs to the relevant organizations in the region that could make use of this information for GLOF hazard prevention and mitigation planning

Amount received for each year supported and number of years supported

APN Project 2002-15		US \$77,340
APN Project 2003-05		US\$ 75,000
APN Project 2004-03-CMY	Year 3	US\$ 67,000

Participating Countries

India, Pakistan and China

Work undertaken

- 1. Acquisition of satellite images of Landsat TM and ETM+, IRS 1C LISS3, CBERS and ASTER.
- 2. Acquisition of topographic maps.
- 3. Acquisition of other necessary data (e.g. meteorological and hydrological data).
- 4. Development of training materials for the inventory and study of glaciers and glacial lakes using Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS).
- 5. Institutional capacities strengthened by training the participants of collaborating institutions and agencies.
- 6. Provided GIS & RS software and other technical supports to the participating institutions and agencies.
- 7. On-the-job trainings to the professionals of the participating countries in their own institutions and agencies for the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes using RS & GIS.
- Preparation of digital database of glaciers, glacial lakes and potential dangerous glacial lakes (GLOFs) of Ganges basin in Tibet Autonomous Region of PR China; Sikkim Himalaya, Himachal Pradesh Himalaya and Uttaranchal Himalaya of India; Indus Basin in Pakistan, using RS & GIS technologies.
- 9. Documentation of glacial lake outburst floods hazard risks and potential impacts.
- 10. Reports preparation in collaboration with the participating institutions and agencies.
- 11. Preparation of interactive multi-media CD-ROMs with the comprehensive technical reports with digital database, maps and other information.
- 12. Presentation of the project activities and finding of the study in the various workshops/seminars/conferences to help to create wider awareness among governments, development agencies and the public of GLOF phenomena and hazards, locally/ regionally/ internationally.
- 13. GLOF workshops in each of the participating countries for the presentation of the studies to disseminate/discuss/interact with the related institutions / organizations

Results

- 1. Digital satellite images of Landsat7ETM+, IRS 1C LISS3, CBERS and ASTER of the project areas.
- 2. Digital topographic maps at the scale of 1:500,000 of the study areas.
- 3. Upgraded/established the RS & GIS facilities to the institutions and agencies.
- 4. Training manual and materials for the inventory and study of glaciers and glacial lakes using GIS and RS.
- 5. Strengthened institutional capacities by giving training cum workshop at ICIMOD to the collaborating institutions and agencies of China, India and Pakistan in RS & GIS technology for the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes
- 6. Trained six professionals of Bureau of Hydrology Tibet (BHT), TAR PR China on-the-job trainings at ICIMOD from 9th August to 23rd August 2003.
- 7. Trained professionals of the participating countries through on-the-job trainings in their own institutions and agencies for the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes using RS & GIS.
- 8. Digital database of glaciers and glacial lakes of Himachal Pradesh Himalaya of India, sub-basins of Ganges of Tibet Autonomous Region of PR China and Indus basin of Pakistan.

9. Documentation of glaciers, glacial lakes and potential GLOFs and associated hazards.

Relevance to APN scientific research framework and objectives

As a result of global climate change many of dangerous glacial lakes formed in the region, with direct impacts on terrestrial change and human vulnerability and adaptation. By the study of GLOFs, three of APN's priority topics are addressed: (1) Changes in Terrestrial Ecosystems, (2) Human Dimensions of Global Change and (3) Climate Change and Variability. These are high priority areas for research and documentation, especially in the HKH region. Advanced scientific knowledge of potential GLOF hazards, capacity building among local institutions and agencies, and the linking of this knowledge to policy makers and planners is, therefore, of immense importance to the lives of millions of mountain dwellers and their downstream neighbors.

Self evaluation

In the period of three years, a systematic study on the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes of this part was completed using Remote sensing satellite and topographic data and a comprehensive database was developed. A semi-automatic methodology for inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes was developed for future glacial monitoring. One of the major objectives of this study was to identify areas where GLOF events could pose a potential threat in the near future. Based on the detailed criteria the potentially dangerous lakes were identified which needs to be monitored in future. These results thus provide the basis for the development of a monitoring and early warning system and for the planning and prioritization of disaster mitigation efforts that could save many lives and properties situated downstream as well as guide line for infrastructure planning.

The series of reports with information on the glaciers, glacial lakes and GLOFs of the HKH region in compatible and comparable format begin as the filling up this pressing need. Taken together, the database will greatly enhance the ability of global and regional climate researchers, national policy makers, land-use planner and water resource planners, as well as the general public, to understand and mitigate GLOF-associated hazards, thus linking science to policy. The project provided an opportunity for professionals and institutions among partners / collaborators / of the region and beyond to learn more about the methodology and related activities to build up their confidence for the future work for further cooperation.

Distributions of the reports and database in the interactive CD-ROMs and posting those also in WebPages and the workshops disseminated to wider audiences and also created much awareness.

Potential for further work

- 1. Further institutional capacity strengthening by advanced on-the-job training to the participants of the collaborating institutions and agencies.
- 2. Acquisition of necessary materials (e.g. satellite images, maps, data, etc.) of higher resolutions / details.
- 3. Preparation of digital database of glaciers and glacial lakes at higher resolutions / details and also for other basins in India, China (Tibet region), Pakistan using RS & GIS technologies.
- 4. Establish detailed analytical protocols and systems to identify 'hot-spots' (existing and potentially dangerous glacial lake hazards), and to regularize GLOF hazard studies.
- 5. Analyse and synthesise the database to locate hot-spots and potential GLOF circumstances, and dissemination of the results to the concerned agencies.
- 6. Conduct rapid environmental change assessment (RECA) studies on GLOF hazard

risks and potential impacts in detail.

- 7. Prepare analytical studies and briefing papers for policy-makers/planners, to be presented in regional/international workshops, conferences and publications potential GLOF hazards and risks and their potential impacts and mitigation, through the participating country organizations.
- 8. Comprehensive communication and dissemination plan developed and implemented based on the results and outputs of database analysis, to strengthen policy and planning within relevant agencies, and to inform research institutions and the public, nationally and regionally.

Publications

Reports:

Inventory of Glaciers and Glacial Lakes and the Identification of Potential Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) Affected by Global Warming in the Mountains of Himalayan Region:

- 1. Pumqu Basin
- 2. Astor Basin
- 3. Tista Basin
- 4. Himachal Pradesh Himalaya: India
- 5. Poiqu and Rongxer basins: Tibet Autonomous Region, PR China
- 6. Upper Indus, Jhelum, Shingo, Shyok and Shigar basins: Pakistan Himalaya
- Pumqu (Arun), Rongxer (Tama Koshi), Poiqu (Bhote-Sun Koshi), Jilongcangbu (Trisuli), Zangbuqin (Budhigandaki), Majiacangbu (Humla Karnali), Daoliqu and Jiazhangangge Basins: Tibet Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China
- 8. Indus Basin: Pakistan Himalaya
- 9. Uttaranchal Himalaya: India

Inter-active CD-ROMS:

Inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes and the identification of potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) affected by global warming in the mountains of Himalayan region:

- 1. Pumqu Basin
- 2. Astor Basin
- 3. Tista Basin
- 4. Himachal Pradesh Himalaya: India
- 5. Poiqu and Rongxer basins: Tibet Autonomous Region, PR China
- 6. Upper Indus, Jhelum, Shingo, Shyok and Shigar basins: Pakistan Himalaya
- Pumqu (Arun), Rongxer (Tama Koshi), Poiqu (Bhote-Sun Koshi), Jilongcangbu (Trisuli), Zangbuqin (Budhigandaki), Majiacangbu (Humla Karnali), Daoliqu and Jiazhangangge Basins: Tibet Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China
- 8. Indus Basin: Pakistan Himalaya
- 9. Uttaranchal Himalaya: India

Training Manual:

Spatial Data Input, Attribute Data Handling and Image Processing for the Inventory of Glaciers and Glacial Lakes and Identification of Potential Glacial Lake Outburst Floods.

Websites:

- 1. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Pumqu Basin China (2003) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/china/pumqu_basin/start.htm
- 2. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Astor Basin Pakistan (2003) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/pakistan/astor_basin/start.htm
- 3. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Sikkim Himalaya (2003) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/india/sikkim_glof/start.htm
- 4. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Himachal Pradesh India (2004) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/india/hp_glof/start.htm
- 5. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Poiqu and Rongxer Basin China (2004) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/china/china_2004/start.htm
- http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Upper Indus, Jhelum, Shingo and Shigar Basins - Pakistan (2004) OR
 - http://www.icimod-gis.net/pakistan/pakistan_2004/start.htm
- http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Pumqu, poiqu, Rongxer, Jilongcanbu, Zangbuqin, Majiacangbu, Daoliqu and Jiazhagangge Basins - China (2005) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/china/china_2005/start.htm
- 8. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Indus Basin Pakistan (2005) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/pakistan/indus_glof/start.htm
- 9. http://www.icimod-gis.net/glof/glof.php Uttaranchal Himalaya India (2005) OR http://www.icimod-gis.net/india/ua_glof/start.htm

References

Inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes and the identification of potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) affected by global warming in the mountains of Himalayan region: - Pumqu Basin; Astor Basin; Tista Basin; Himachal Pradesh Himalaya: India; Poiqu and Rongxer basins: Tibet Autonomous Region, PR China; Upper Indus, Jhelum, Shingo, Shyok and Shigar basins: Pakistan Himalaya; Pumqu (Arun), Rongxer (Tama Koshi), Poiqu (Bhote-Sun Koshi), Jilongcangbu (Trisuli), Zangbuqin (Budhigandaki), Majiacangbu (Humla Karnali), Daoliqu and Jiazhangangge Basins: Tibet Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China; Indus Basin: Pakistan Himalaya; Uttaranchal Himalaya: India.

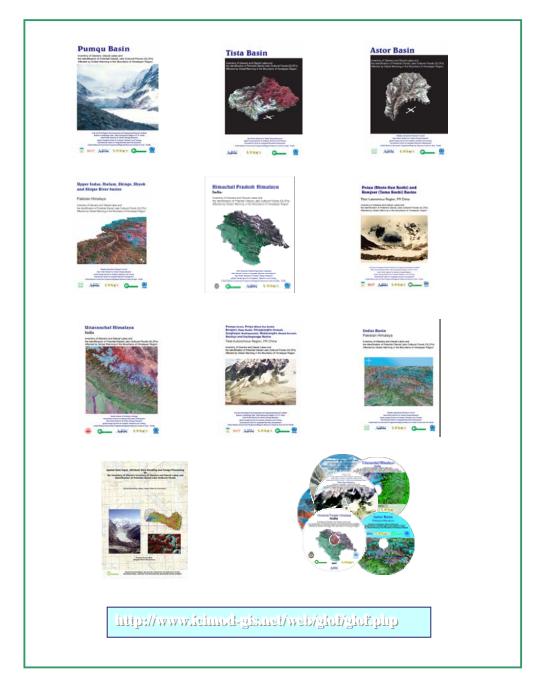
Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Mr. Sombo T. Yamamura, Director, Mr. Yukihiro Imanari, Executive Manager, Ms. Jody Chambers, Programme Manager, Mr. Martin Rice, former Programme Manager, Communications and Development, Dr. Linda Anne Stevenson, Programme Manager, Ms. Sirijit Sangunurai, Programme Fellow, Mr. Tomoya Motoda, Technical Assistant, Mr. Toshiaki Mitani, Administrative Manager, Ms. Kanako Taguchi, Administrative Assistant, of Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) for their continuous support in the implementation of the project.

I would like to express sincere thanks to Prof. Roland Fuchs, Director, Dr. Hassan Virji, Deputy Director, Ms. Kathleen Landauer, Programme Associate Ms. Alix Cotumaccio, Programme Associate and Dr. Yna Calimon, former Programme Associate of International global change SysTem for Analysis, Research, and Training (START) Secretariat for providing grant and their timely and strong support and advice while implementing the project.

I would also like to express sincere thanks to: Prof. Xin Li, CAREERI; Mr. Gong Tongliang, BHT; Dr. Tej Partap, CSKHPAU; Dr. B. R. Arora, WIHG; Dr. Badaruddin Soomro, PARC; and all the professionals / personals from CAREERI, BHT, PARC, CSKHPAU, WIHG and ICIMOD involved in the project activities. We would also like to thank UNEP/ RRC-AP, GLIMS for their support.

I would like to thank my colleagues Mr. Basanta Shrestha and others at ICIMOD specially Mr. Pradeep Mool for all the technical and administrative coordination of project and also to his team members at ICIMOD, Mr. Samjwal Bajracharya and from participating institutes, Dr. Rakhshan Roohi, Dr. Rajiv Mohan Bhagat, Dr. Madho Prasad Sah, Dr. George Philip, Ms. Xie Yuhong, Mr. Tao Che, Mr. WuLizong.



Technical Report of APN Project 2004-03-CMY

Preface

The glaciers are nature's valuable source of fresh water for drinking water supply, agricultural, industrial and hydropower developments for present and future needs of millions of people living in the down stream. These frozen reservoirs release large amounts of ice melt water to many of the major rivers of this region. The glaciers, many of which consist of a huge amount of perpetual snow and ice, are found to create many glacial lakes. However, these glaciers are retreating due to accelerated global warming. Rapid accumulation of water in these glacial lakes, particularly in those adjacent to receding glaciers, can lead to a sudden breach of their unstable moraine 'dams'. The resultant discharges of huge amounts of water and debris – a *Glacial Lake Outburst Flood or GLOF* – often have catastrophic effects downstream. Knowledge of this resource seems an outstanding requirement for future planning for water resources and flood hazards.

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1.0 Introduction

The glaciers are the frozen water reserves in the high altitude Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) and are one of the most important natural resources in the region. They act as a source of life by providing fresh water to hundreds of millions of people living in the mountainous region as well as in the adjoining plains. Melt water released by the glaciers as well serves as the perennial source for most of the Himalayan river systems. The streams originating from these glaciers are also the source of energy for hydroelectric power plants, which in turn irrigates agricultural lands in the command area especially during the summer period when it is most needed, and also provide water for various other uses. In this way to a major extent these glaciers determine the socio-economic activity in this part of the Indian subcontinent. While the total number of glaciers in the region is still unknown, this study has revealed the existence of glaciers and glacial lakes in a large scale.

The glaciers are also the repositories of information for exploring Quaternary climate changes, as they remain sensitive to global temperature conditions as indicated by their continuous retreat. For example global warming influences the glacier retreat as recorded from many parts of the world including the Himalaya. The fast melting of glaciers and their retreating trend particularly after the industrial revolution is a major concern to scientists and planners in the region. The fast retreat of glaciers is not only decreasing the channel discharge in long term but also brings about large sediment loads and cause flashfloods downstream and has direct bearing on the life of hydropower projects and socio-economic implications for the population living in valleys and downstream area.

Therefore, proper understanding of the status and health of these glaciers is very important for long-term planning in the area. Surging, retreating and fast melting of glaciers in these high mountains expose terminal moraines and create glacial lakes at the terminus of end moraines. Rapid accumulation of water in glacial lakes particularly those adjacent to receding valley glaciers can lead to a sudden breaching of the unstable debris dam which shall ultimately cause glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF) and is a matter of concern for economic and life losses in the river valleys.

In the HKH region many glacial lakes are known to have formed in the last half a century and a number of GLOFs have been reported in the region in the last few decades, particularly from the eastern sector of the region. These GLOFs have resulted in many deaths as well as the destruction of property and infrastructures. It is most likely that the lakes at risk are situated in remote inaccessible and uninhabited areas and their impact in the event of an outburst influences the larger region of downstream.

Knowledge of glacier storage and transfer of ice down slope and area altitude relations of ice cover are integral parts of the water balance. Knowledge of glacier activity is also required, in relation to glacier hazards such as ice dams and surges. To systematically identify and make an inventory of different types of glaciers and to estimate the ice reserves in the HKH region, a detail inventory of glaciers in the basin wise at the larger scale is necessary.

The main objectives of the present study is to assure that mountain inhabitants in the HKH region enjoy safe and sustainable livelihoods through a better understanding of environmental hazards associated with Mountain Glaciers and glacial lakes, with which to address environmental policy, planning and impact/risk mitigation:

- by understanding the GLOF phenomenon by creating an inventory of existing glacial lakes and monitoring the GLOF events on a regular basis using geography information system and remote sensing technology
- by establishing an effective early warning mechanism to monitor GLOF hazards using RS and GIS in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region
- by developing the capacity building of national institutions to assess and monitor the GLOF phenomenon
- by disseminating the results and outputs to the relevant organizations in the region that could make use of this information for GLOF hazard prevention and mitigation planning.

As a result of global climate change many of dangerous glacial lakes formed in the region, with direct impacts on terrestrial change and human vulnerability and adaptation. By the study of GLOFs, three of APN's priority topics are addressed: (1) Changes in Terrestrial Ecosystems, (2) Human Dimensions of Global Change and (3) Climate Change and Variability. These are high priority areas for research and documentation, especially in the HKH region. Advanced scientific knowledge of potential GLOF hazards, capacity building among local institutions and agencies, and the linking of this knowledge to policy makers and planners is, therefore, of immense importance to the lives of millions of mountain dwellers and their downstream neighbors.

2.0 Methodology

The present study of glaciers and glacial lakes of Hindu Kush – Himalayan region at medium to large scale in uniform and comparable format is first of its kind. A beginning has been made to document glaciers, glacial lakes and potentially dangerous glacial lakes in the HKH region. To accomplish the study the steps taken to the methodology for database development to dissemination of the results are shown in the Flowchart. The flowchart can be divided into different steps as of collection of material (literature, topographic maps, aerial photographs, satellite images etc.); processing and data capturing; Analysis and report writing; and dissemination of results in the form of report, CDs, and workshops.

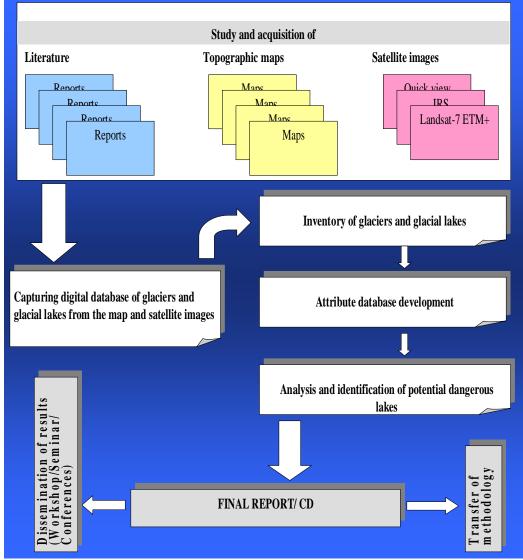


Figure: The flow diagram of methodology used for inventory.

Materials:

The basic materials used for the compilation of an inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes are different type of satellite images, topographic maps and published maps, field report and available literatures. Medium to high resolution satellite images of different dates are more useful in the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes. The combination of satellite remote sensing data and the digital elevation model (DEM) were also used for better interpretations and more accurate results for the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes in the three dimension geographic information system platform.

The topographic maps at better/larger scales (scale, 1:50,000) are mostly difficult to acquire and to be used. The projection parameter are used from the maps at the regional scales (1:250,000) and the digital topographic map (ARC digitized Raster Graphics (ADRG)), in the orientation of UTM zones and WGS84 datum published in late 90's by the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) and Defense Mapping Agency (DMA) of the U.S. Government at the scale of 1:500,000. DEM were also prepared based on NIMA maps data

Aerial photographs of the region were not available for the use.

Satellite images were obtained for the latest dates with no or minimum cloud cover and also least snow cover. For the present study Landsat 7 ETM+, IIRS LISS3 images, ASTER images were used.

The projection parameters of the topographic maps were identified and used as references in the geo-referencing of the satellite images.

Digital elevation data generated by Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) were used for the 3D applications. The SRTM digital elevation models are being developed from the SRTM C-band radar observations for selected regions to satisfy the needs of NASA related projects and to speed the evaluation of acquisition and processing and applications algorithms.

Integrated Land and Water Information System (ILWIS) ver.3.2 for Windows was used for the spatial and attribute database development and analysis. ILWIS for Windows is an object oriented image processing and Geographic Information System. Analysis and modeling in a GIS requires input of relevant data sets. Delineation of all the glaciers and glacial lakes was done on the Geo-referenced satellite images. All the glaciers and glacial lakes were numbered and their attributes were marked.

The satellite images were geo-referenced on the coordinate system of Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM). For an example, coordinate system parameters for the satellite images used are as follows:

• Projection:	Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)
• Ellipsoid:	WGS 84
• Datum:	WGS 1984
 Ellipsoid Parameters 	
a =	6378137.000

1/f =	298.257223563
 Northern Hemisphere 	Yes
• Minimum X	221473.969
• Minimum Y	3300590.500
• Maximum X	513943.969
• Maximum Y	3488960.500
• Zone	44, 45 and so on

The extent of minimum and maximum of X and Y may varies according to the area.

Inventory Methodology and Criteria for Hot-spot Identification:

The methodology for the mapping and development of inventory database of the glaciers are similar to the inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes carried out in Nepal and Bhutan by Mool et. al, 2001 and based on instructions for compilation and assemblage of data for the World Glacier Inventory (WGI), developed by the Temporary Technical Secretary (TTS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich (Muller et al. 1977). And the methodology for the inventory of glacial lakes is based on that developed by the Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology, the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat, and the Nepal Electricity Authority (LIGG/WECS/NEA 1988). The same methodology of inventory of glacial lakes were adopted for the whole Hindu Kush - Himalayan region under the present studies.

The inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes has been systematically carried out on the basis of drainage basins identified in the satellite images and verified on the topographic maps. The satellite images were geo-referenced which can be used around the scale of 1:50,000. The inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes were carried out and verified in the published Topographic maps of different scales (mostly 1:50,000).

The following sections described the process of compilation of the inventories for both the glaciers and glacial lakes have been carried out.

Brief description of glacier inventory

The inventory of glaciers is based on topographic maps and satellite images. All the satellite images area geo-referenced incorporating all the projection parameters of the topographic maps to make the image compatible with the topographic maps. Digital topographic maps published by NIMA and DMA of the US Government in January 1996 were used in the areas where the topographic maps are unavailable.

For the inventory of glaciers, the areas are divided into major river basins. The aerial extension of the glaciers is determined by using remote sensing satellite image and Geographic Information System (GIS). To estimate the ice reserves, it is of an utmost necessity to have the mean thickness of the glaciers. Since the mean glacier thickness data are not available, it has been estimated using the equation developed for the Tianshan Mountains (Chaohai Liu and Liangfu Ding 1986) and applied in Nepal and Bhutan (Mool et al., 2001).

H = -11.32 + 53.21F 0.3Where,

H = mean ice thickness in meter and F = area of glacier in square kilometer The ice reserves were estimated by multiplying the mean thickness by the area of the glacier.

For convenient the glaciers are classified morphologically on the basis of the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS) defined by Muller et al. 1977. The glaciers are divided into different classes, combining Digit 1 of 'primary classification' and Digit 2 of 'form'. Generally, six types of glacier are observed in HKH region namely Mountain, Valley, Cirque, Niche, Ice caps, and Ice aprons. Mountain glaciers are the dominant ones and by profile due to steepness of the slope, they are of hanging nature. Other glaciers, except for Valley glaciers, generally fall into the category of Mountain glaciers but the thickness of ice is comparatively low. The number of Valley glaciers is comparatively low but the corresponding area and ice reserves are higher than those of Mountain glaciers. The area and ice reserves of the Valley glaciers are generally large owing to the fact that the ice thickness increases with increase in the area of the glacier.

The Mountain glaciers are uncertain or miscellaneous, compound basins, compound basin, or simple basin in the form of a hanging glacier. The Mountain glaciers sometimes join with the Valley glaciers and make a big mass of ice. The major source of nourishment is snow and/or drift snow. Ice caps, Cirque, Niche, and Ice apron type glaciers are other types of hanging Mountain glaciers, but they are considered to be of a different type due to their significance in size, shape, form, and ice thickness.

The Valley type glaciers are characterized by compound basins, compound basin, and simple basin. They are mainly nourished by snow and drift snow at the headwater and by snow and ice avalanches at the lower valley. The adjoining part of the Valley glacier at the headwater is characteristically a Mountain glacier, but due to its continuation into a Valley glacier, the whole ice mass will be considered as a Valley glacier. This is the reason for higher area of Valley glacier sthan that of the Mountain glaciers. The longitudinal profile of the Valley glacier from crown to toe shows an even or regular shape. As the headwater is steeper and has a gentle slope in the lower reaches, the profile makes the curve concave upward. Due to the gentle slope at the lower reaches and the accumulation of debris derived from the headwater, the glacial lakes develop in the form of supra glacial or moraine dammed. Generally, the stability of glacial lakes is poor and there is always the chance of avalanches from Mountain glaciers, which may break the damming material and cause GLOFs.

Brief description of glacial lake inventory

In the Himalayan region, major rivers are originating from glaciers and larger portion of the freshwater resources are locked up in ice and snow. As mentioned earlier, during the last few decades there has been a rapid retreat of glaciers which has created many precarious glacial lakes in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. A glacial lake is defined as water mass existing in a sufficient amount and extending with a free surface in, under, beside, and/or in front of a glacier and originating from glacier activities and/or retreating processes of a glacier. The isolated lakes found in the mountains and valleys far from the glaciers may not have a glacial origin. Due to the rapid rate of ice and snow melt, possibly caused by global warming, accumulation of water in these lakes has been increasing rapidly in Himalaya. The isolated lakes above 3,500 masl are considered to be the remnants of the glacial lakes left due to the retreat of the glaciers.

The lakes located at the snout of the glacier are mainly dammed by the lateral or end moraine, where there is high tendency of breaching. Such lakes could be dangerous as they may hold a large quantity of water. Breaching and the instantaneous discharge of water from of such lakes can cause flash floods enough to create enormous damage in the downstream areas. In order to assess the possible hazards from such lakes it is therefore essential to have a systematic inventory of all such lakes formed at the high altitudes. This is feasible by identifying them initially through satellite images (and aerial photographs, if available) and to assess their field setting subsequently. Besides making a temporal inventory, a regular monitoring of these lakes is also required to assess the change in their nature and aerial extent.

The lakes are classified into Erosion, Valley trough, Cirque, Blocked, Moraine Dammed (Lateral Moraine and End Moraine Dammed lakes), and Supraglacial lakes.

Erosion lakes

Glacial Erosion lakes are the water bodies formed in a depression after the glacier has retreated. They may be Cirque type and trough Valley type lakes and are stable lakes. These Erosion lakes might be isolated and far away from the present glaciated area.

Supraglacial lakes

The Supraglacial lakes develop within the ice mass away from the moraine with dimensions of 50 to 100 meters. These lakes may develop in any position of the glacier but the extension of the lake is less than half the diameter of the Valley glacier. Shifting, merging, and draining of the lakes are the characteristics of the Supraglacial lakes. The merging of lakes results in expansion of the lake area and storage of a huge volume of water with a high level of potential energy. The tendency of a glacial lake towards merging and expanding indicates the danger level of the GLOF.

Moraine Dammed lakes

In the retreating process of a glacier, glacier ice tends to melt in the lowest part of the glacier surrounded by Lateral Moraine and End Moraines. As a result, many supraglacial ponds are formed on the glacier tongue. These ponds sometimes enlarge to become a large lake by interconnecting with each other and have a tendency to deepen further. A Moraine Dammed lake is thus born. The lake is filled with melt water and rainwater from the drainage area behind the lake and starts flowing from the outlet of the lake even in the winter season when there is minimum flow.

There are two kinds of moraine: an ice-cored moraine and an ice-free moraine. Before the ice body of the glacier completely melts away, glacier ice exists in the moraine and beneath the lake bottom. The ice bodies cored in the moraine and beneath the lake are sometimes called dead ice or fossil ice. As glacier ice continues to melt, the lake becomes deeper and wider. Finally, when ice contained in the moraines and beneath the lake completely melts away, the container of lake water consists of only the bedrock and the moraines.

Blocking lakes

Blocking lakes are formed through glacier and other factors, including the main glacier blocking the branch valley, the glacier branch blocking the main valley, and the lakes through snow avalanche, collapse and debris flow blockade.

Ice-dammed lakes

An Ice-dammed lake is produced on the side(s) of a glacier, when an advancing glacier happens to intercept a tributary/tributaries pouring into a main glacier valley. As such, an Ice core-dammed lake is usually small in size and does not come into contact with glacier ice. This type of lake is less susceptible to GLOF than a moraine dammed lake. A glacial lake is formed and maintained only up to a certain stage of glacier fluctuation. If one follows the lifespan of an individual glacier, it is found that the Moraine Dammed glacial lakes build up and disappear with a lapse of time. The moraine dammed lakes disappear once they are fully destroyed or when debris fills the lakes completely or the mother glacier advances again to lower altitudes beyond the moraine-dam position. Such glacial lakes are essentially ephemeral and are not stable from the point of view of the life of glaciers. Generally, moraine dammed lakes pose a threat in the basin.

Criteria for the identification of potential glacial lake outburst floods

In general, based on geo-morphological characteristics, glacial lakes can be grouped into three types: glacial Erosion lakes, glacial Cirque lakes, and Moraine Dammed lakes. The former two types of glacial lakes occupy the lowlands or emptying cirques eroded by ancient glaciers. These glacial lakes are more or less located away from present-day glaciers and the downstream banks are usually made of bedrock or covered with a thinner layer of loose sediment. Both of these glacial lakes do not generally pose an outburst danger. On the other hand, the Moraine Dammed glacial lakes have the potential for bursting. A standard index to define a lake that is a source of potential danger because of possible bursting does not exist.

Moraine Dammed glacial lakes, which are still in contact or very near to the glaciers, are usually dangerous. The present study defines all the lakes formed by the activity of glaciers including in the past as 'glacial lakes'. Moraine Dammed glacial lakes are usually dangerous. These glacial lakes were partly formed between present-day glaciers and Little Ice Age moraine. The depositions of Little Ice Age moraines are usually about 300 years old, form high and narrow arch-shaped ridges usually with a height of 20–150 m, and often contain dead glacier ice layers beneath them. These End Moraines are loose and unstable in nature. The advance and retreat of the glacier affect the hydrology between the present-day glacier and the lake dammed by the moraines. Sudden natural phenomena with a direct effect on a lake, like ice avalanches or rock and Lateral Moraine material collapsing on a lake, cause moraine breaches with subsequent lake outburst events. Such phenomena have been well known in the past in several cases of Moraine Dammed lakes, although the mechanisms at play are not fully understood.

Criteria for Identification

The criteria for identifying the potentially dangerous glacial lakes (hot-spots) are based on field observations, processes and records of past events, geo-morphological and geo-technical characteristics of the lake and surroundings, and other physical conditions.

Rise in Lake Water Level

In general, the lakes, which have a volume of more than 0.01 km³ are found to have past events. A lake, which has a larger volume than this, is deeper, with the deeper part near the dam (lower part of lake) rather than near the glacier tongue, and has rapid increase in lake water volume is an indication that a lake is potentially dangerous.

Activity of Supraglacial lakes

As time passes, groups of closely spaced Supraglacial lakes of smaller size at glacier tongues merge and form bigger lakes. Using temporal satellite images, one can identify the successive merging of Supraglacial lakes and the formation of a bigger lake. These activities of Supraglacial lakes are indications that the lakes are becoming potentially dangerous.

Position of Lakes

The potentially dangerous lakes are generally at the lower part of the ablation area of the glacier near to the End Moraine, and the mother glacier should be sufficiently large to create a potentially dangerous lake environment. Regular monitoring needs to be carried out for such lakes with the help of multi-temporal satellite images, aerial photographs, and field observations.

In general, the potentially dangerous status of Moraine Dammed lakes can be defined by the conditions of the damming material and the nature of the mother glacier. The valley lakes with an area bigger than 0.1 km2 and a distance less than 0.5 km from the mother glacier of considerable size are considered to be potentially dangerous. Cirque lakes even smaller than 0.1 km2 associated (in contact or distance less than 0.5 km) with steep hanging glaciers are considered to be potentially dangerous. Even the smaller size steep hanging glacier may pose a danger to the lake.

Dam Conditions

The natural conditions of the moraine damming the lake determine the lake stability. The lake stability will be less if the moraine dam has a combination of the following characteristics:

- narrower in the crest area
- no drainage outflow or outlet not well defined
- steeper slope of the moraine walls
- ice cored
- very tall (from toe to crest)
- mass movement or potential mass movement in the inner slope and/or outer slope
- breached and closed in the past and refilled again with water
- seepage flow at moraine walls

Conditions of Associated Mother Glacier

Generally, the bigger Valley glaciers with tongues reaching an elevation of below 5,000 masl have well-developed glacial lakes. Even the actively retreating and steep hanging glaciers on the banks of lakes may be a potential cause of danger. The following general characteristics of associated mother glaciers can create danger to Moraine Dammed lakes:

- hanging glacier in contact with the lake,
- bigger glacier area,
- fast retreating,
- debris cover at glacier tongue area,
- steep gradient at glacier tongue area,
- presence of crevasses and ponds at glacier tongue area,
- toppling/collapses of glacier masses at the glacier tongue, and
- ice blocks draining to lake.

Physical Conditions of the Surrounding Area

Besides moraines, mother glaciers, and lake conditions, and other physical conditions of the surrounding area as given below may also cause the lake to be potentially dangerous:

- potential rockfall/slide (mass movements) site around the lake which can fall into the lake suddenly,
- snow avalanches of large size around the lake which can fall into the lake suddenly,
- neo-tectonic and earthquake activities around or near the lake area,
- climatic conditions of successive years being a relatively wet and cold year followed by a hot and wet or hot and dry year,
- very recent moraines damming the lake at the tributary glaciers that used to be just a part of a former complex of Valley Glacier, middle moraines as a result of the fast retreat of a complex mother Valley Glacier, and
- sudden advance of a glacier towards the lower tributary or the mother glacier having a well-developed lake at its tongue

Use of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System

One of the main objectives of the present study is to develop a digital database of glaciers and glacial lakes using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). A digital database is essential for the monitoring of glaciers and glacial lakes and to identify the potentially dangerous lakes. GIS is the most appropriate tool for spatial data input and attributes data handling. Basin-wise spatial database of glaciers and glacial lakes are presented in the results together with their attribute information. The spatial and attribute information generated and also provided in web-pages can be visualized and utilized in any GIS platforms, eg. ArcView or through free ware software like ArcExplorer.

Creating inventories and monitoring of the glaciers, glacial lakes, and extent of GLOF impact downstream can be accomplished quickly with reasonable accuracy using remote sensing techniques. The multistage-approach using remotely sensed data and limited field investigation increase the ability and accuracy of the work. Visual and digital image analysis techniques integrated with techniques of GIS are very useful for the study of glaciers, glacial lakes, and GLOFs. For the present inventory, satellite images mostly of Landsat-7 ETM+ and supplemented with limited relevant ground maps and reports were used to identify and distinguish the glaciers and glacial lakes.

A scene of a Landsat-7 data gives a synoptic view of an area of 183 km by 170 km of the earth's surface sensed by the American Landsat satellite from an altitude of 705 km, sunsynchronous orbit at an inclination of 98.2 degrees, imaging the same 183 km swath of the earth's surface every 16 days. The Landsat-7 ETM+ sensor is a nadir-viewing, sevenband plus multi-spectral scanning radiometer that detects spectrally filtered radiation from several portions of the electromagnetic spectrum. Nominal ground sample distances or pixel sizes include 30 meters each for the six visible, near-infrared, and short-wave infrared bands, 60 meters for the thermal infrared band, and 15 meters for the panchromatic band. The individual bands are Band 1 (0.45–0.52µm), Band 2 (0.53– 0.60µm), Band 3 (0.62 -0.69µm), Band 4 (0.78-0.90µm), Band 5 (1.57-1.78µm), and Band 7 (2.10–2.35 μ m) with the spatial resolution of 30m in the visible, near infrared and middle infrared bands, and Band 6 (10.45–11.66 µm) in the far infrared with low gain and high gain bands with 60m resolution. Band 1, 3, 5, and 6 are same in TM and ETM+. Band 2, 4, and 7 are slightly different and the visible panchromatic mode is only available in ETM+. The TM and ETM+ sensors greatly facilitate the multi-temporal data availability (repeated coverage of 16 days) for studying the temporal changes of glaciers, lakes, and other features.

The spatial resolution of LISS3 of the IRS satellite series and XS of the SPOT satellite series are greater than that of LANDSAT TM. With a greater number of spectral bands and spatial resolution of 30 by 30m close to the former two data types, cloud free LANDSAT TM or ETM+ data are equally good for the inventory and evaluation of glaciers, glacial lakes, and GLOFs in the medium scale (1:100,000 to 1:25,000).

Table : Wavelength ranges of the optical sensor system of Earth resources satellites used in the study.					
Satellite system Optical	LANDSAT 4/5	LANDSAT 4/5	SPOT	IRS-1C/1D	
sensor	MSS	ТМ	XS	LISS-III	
system					
Blue		0.45–0.52 µm (B1)			
Green	0.50–0.60 μm (Ch1 or B4)	0.53–0.61 µm (B2)	0.50–0.59 m (XS1)	0.52–0.59 µm (B2)	
Red	0.60–0.70 µm (Ch2 or B5)	0.62–0.69 µm (B3)	0.62–0.68 µm (XS3)	0.62–0.68 µm (B3)	
NIR	0.70–0.80 μm (Ch3 or B6)	0.78–0.90 µm (B4)	0.78–0.88 µm (XS3)	0.77–0.86 µm (B4)	
NIR	0.80–1.10 μm (Ch4 or B7)				
IIR		1.57–1.78 µm (B5)		1.55–1.75 µm (B5)	
IIR		2.10–2.35 µm (B7)			
IIR (MIR)		• • •			
ThIR		10.45–11.66 µm (B6)			
FIR					

To identify the individual glaciers and glacial lakes, different image enhancement techniques are useful. With different spectral band combinations in false colour composites (FCCs) and in individual spectral bands, glaciers and glacial lakes can be identified and studied using the knowledge of image interpretation keys: colour, tone,

texture, pattern, association, shape, shadow, etc. The technique of digital image analysis facilitates image enhancement and spectral classification of the ground features and, hence, greatly helps in the study of glaciers and lakes.

-	pectral band ranges	s (μ m) used onboard Landsat-7 ETM+ sensor system and their
Band	Band range (µm)	Potential applications
number		
1	0.45–0.52	Coastal water mapping; soil/vegetation differentiation; deciduous/coniferous differentiation (sensitive to chlorophyll
		concentration), etc
2	0.53–0.61	Green reflectance by healthy vegetation, etc
3	0.63-0.69	Chlorophyll absorption for plant species' differentiation
4	0.78-0.90	Biomass surveys; water body delineation
5	1.55–1.75	Vegetation moisture measurement; snow/cloud differentiation; snow/ice quality study
6	10.4–12.5	Plant heat stress management; other thermal mapping; soil moisture discrimination
7	2.09–2.35	Hydro-thermal mapping; discrimination of mineral and rock types; snow/cloud differentiation; snow/ice quality study
Pan	0.52 - 0.90	General picture in gray scale

The technique of integrating remote sensing data with GIS does help a lot with identification and monitoring of lakes and glaciers. The DEM of an area generated either using stereo satellite images, aerial photographs, SRTM, or digitization of topographic map data can play a big role in deciding the rules for discrimination of features and land

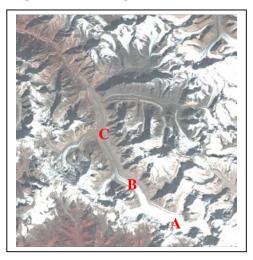


Figure : False Colour Composite (FCC) of Red (4) Green (3) Blue (2) indicating; Fresh Snow (A), Glacier Ice (B), and Glacier Ice Covered with Debris (C) in the Gangotri Glacier, Subset of Landsat-7 ETM+ Image

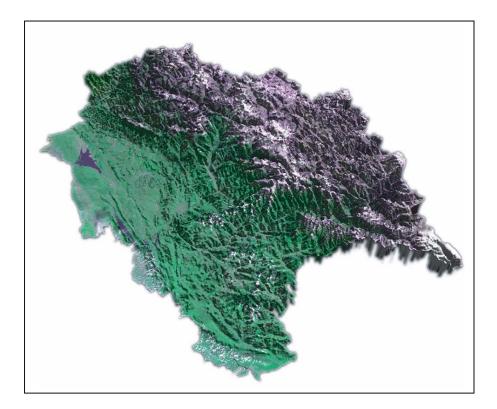


Figure: IRS 1D LISS 3 R5G4B3 draped over the DEM of Himachal Pradesh

3.0 Results & Discussion

In this three years project, the area covered for the study of glaciers and glacial lakes are all the ten sub-basins of Indus River in Pakistan, all sub basins of Ganges in Tibet Autonomous Region of the Peoples' Republic of China, and Tista River basin, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal Himalaya of India.

In Pakistan 5218 glaciers with the glacier area coverage of around 15040 sq km and 2420 lakes were identified and mapped. Among the identified lakes 52 lakes are classified from which the potential threat of glacial lake outburst floods.

In India Himalaya, the study area covers only the Tista River basin (Sikkim Himalaya), Himachal Pradesh (HP) and Uttaranchal (UA) Himalayas. The Tista River basin covers only 285 glaciers with the glacier area about 576 sq km and the glacial lakes 266 and 14 potentially dangerous glacial lakes. Though the area is comparatively very small but the number of lakes and potential GLOF is very high compared to other study region. The Himachal Pradesh region holds 2554 glaciers with the glacier area of about 4160 sq km and 229 lakes including 22 potential GLOF. The Uttaranchal Himalayan region holds 1439 glaciers with the glacier area of about 4060 sq km, though in Uttaranchal Himalayan region 127 lakes are identified from the satellite images but it need further detailed study at larger scale images to identify lakes to be categorize for potential GLOF.

In Tibet Autonomous Region of the Peoples' Republic of China altogether 8 sub-basins of Ganges is identified. A total of 1578 glaciers with a glacier area of about 2864 sq km were mapped which was about 2906 sq km in 1990's. Altogether 824 lakes were identified and among that 77 lakes are categorized in the potential GLOF.

The number of glaciers, glacier area, ice-reserve, number of glacial lakes, total lake area and potential GLOF in sub-basin wise is summarized in the Table.

These glaciers and glacial lakes are the major source of water supply for agricultural, industrial, and hydropower development in the mountainous region. On the other hand the GLOFs often have catastrophic effect that resulted in heavy loss of human lives and their property, destruction of infrastructure, and damage to crop fields and forests. These valuable resources and hazards have never been systematically studied and harnessed in the past. Knowledge of this resources and hazards seems to be an outstanding requirement for future planning of water resources and flood hazard monitoring system.

~		Glaciers			Glacial Lakes			
S. No	S. River Basins No	Nr.	Area (km ²)	Ice Reserve (km ³)	Nr.	Area (km ²)	Potential danger	
Pak	istan	1	l		•	l		
1	Indus River Basin							
	Swat	233	223.55	12.221	255	15.86	2	
	Chitral	542	1903.67	258.817	187	9.36	1	
	Gilgit	585	968.1	83.345	614	39.17	8	
	Hunza	1050	4677.34	808.794	110	3.21	1	
	Shigar	194	2240.08	581.27	54	1.09	0	
	Shyok	372	3547.84	891.8	66	2.68	6	
	Indus	1098	688	46.38	574	26.06	15	
	Shingo	172	36.91	1.009	238	11.59	5	
	Astor	588	607.03	47.931	126	5.52	9	
	Jhelum	384	148.18	6.943	196	11.78	5	
	Total	5218	15040.7	2738.51	2420	126.35	52	
Indi	ia							
	Tista River	285	576.51	64.78	266	20.20	14	
	Himachal Pradesh							
1	Beas	358	758.18	76.4	74	237.70	10	
2	Ravi	198	235.21	16.88	45	1.32	1	
3	Chenab	681	1704.70	187.66	53	3.90	6	
4	Satluj	945	1217.70	94.45	50	136.62	3	
5	Sub-basins	372	244.79	11.96	7	0.18	2	
	Total	2554	4160.58	387.35	229	379.72	22	
	Uttaranchal							
1	Yamuna	124	172.98	17.88	20	0.17	0	
2	Bhagirathi	393	1034.30	143.41	32	0.44	0	
3	Alaknanda	540	1675.24	191.36	54	1.37	0	
4	Kali	382	1177.52	122.78	21	0.51	0	
<u> </u>	Total	1439	4060.04	475.43	127	2.49	0	
Chi	na						<u> </u>	
	Ganges Basin							
1	Pumqu	900	1330.60	130.95	383	52.01	38	
2	Poiqu	151	231.58	19.02	91	15.66	9	
23	Rongxer	206	224.09	30.44	183	8.40	16	
	Jilongcangbu	180	418.61		72	3.32	2	
1					5	0.18	0	
4		64	85.75		5	0.10		
5	Zangbuqin	64 43	85.75 60.60		7	0.38	0	
5 6	Zangbuqin Daoliqu							
5	Zangbuqin	43	60.60		7	0.38	0	

Table: Summary of glaciers, glacial lakes and potentially dangerous glacial lakes of the studied areas in the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region

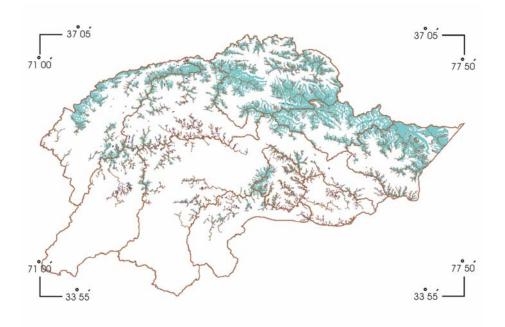
In the three years period, the results and the database of glaciers and glacial lakes generated provided the baseline data and information of the region. These results and database provide the basis for the development of monitoring and early warning system, planning and prioritization of disaster mitigation efforts that could save many lives and properties situated downstream, and a guideline for infrastructure planning and development. In addition, it is anticipated that the present study provide useful information for many of those concerned with water resources and land-use planning. Coupled with the information on climate change and future monitoring of glaciers, glacial lakes and GLOFs this database can provide the basis for estimation of future available water resources and their planning and management.

In addition methodology for inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes is developed for future glacial monitoring using GIS and RS technology. One of the major objectives of this study was to identify potential dangerous glacial lakes as source of GLOFs and down-stream areas where GLOF events could pose a potential threat in the near future. Based on the detailed criteria the potentially dangerous lakes were identified which needs to be monitored in future.

The comprehensive reports and digital database generated will be of service to scientists, planners, and decision-makers in many areas. We further hope that their informed actions, will contribute to improve the lives of those living in the mountains as well as downstream and help safeguard future investments.

There are limitation on the availability and use of the topographic maps and aerial photographs. The inventory was generally based on RS and GIS and it is recommended for the field validation for the hot spot areas around the potential dangerous glacial lakes.

To covering the parts of HKH region the database of glaciers and glacial lakes using the present methodology, Nepal and Bhutan is already carried out with the support of UNEP. From present project with the support of APN and START, the area covered are subbasins of Ganges within Tibet Autonomous Region of Peoples' Republic of China, all sub-basins of Indus River within Pakistan, and Tista River basin, Himachal Pradesh, and Utttaranchal Himalayas in India. There is still need to continue similar activity for the areas of Arunanchal Pradesh and Jammu & Kasmir Himalayas to covers the all of HKH region. Furthermore, the methods developed to capture and analysis of glaciers and glacial lakes can be used for the monitoring of glaciers and glacial lakes in future.



Sub-basins of Indus Basin in Northern Pakistan Himalaya

Figure: Glaciers and lakes in the sub-basins of Indus River in Pakistan

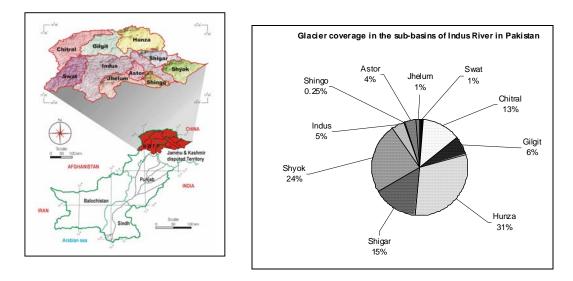
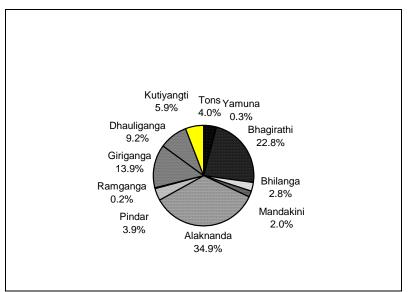


Figure: Glacier area distribution in the sub-basins of Indus River in Pakistan



Sub-basins in Uttaranchal Himalaya

Figure: Glacier area distribution in the sub-basins of Uttaranchal Himalaya

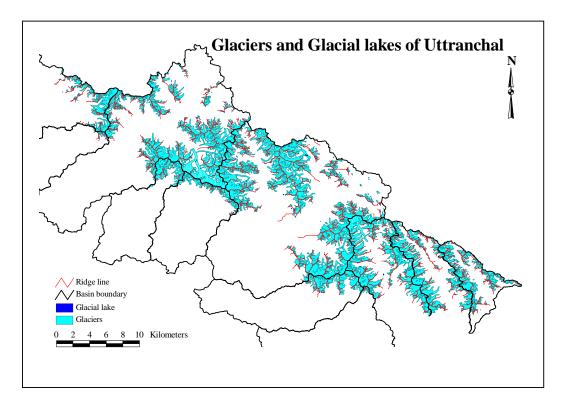
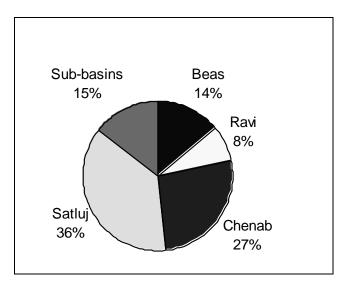


Figure: Glacier area in the sub-basins of Uttaranchal Himalaya



Sub-basins in Himachal Himalaya

Figure: Glaciers area distribution in Himachal Pradesh.

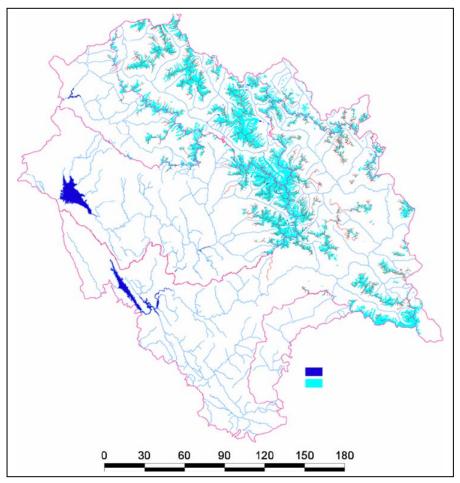


Figure: Glaciers and Glacial lakes in Himachal Pradesh.

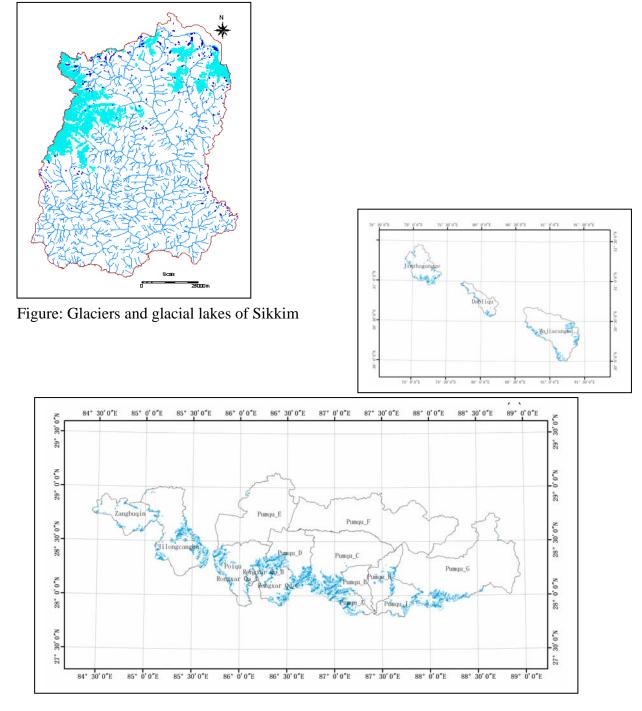


Figure: The Distribution of Glaciers in the Himalaya-China regions

4.0 Conclusions

The main purpose of the study was the digital repository of glaciers and glacial lakes as the major source of water supply for agricultural, industrial, and hydropower development and to assess the threat from glacial lakes and to highlight those where GLOF events area likely to occur and cause serious damage to human life and property of HKH region. These valuable resources and hazards over head have never been systematically harnessed in the past. Knowledge of this resources and hazards seems to be an outstanding requirement for future planning of water resources and flood hazard monitoring system.

The study revealed overall 5218 glaciers with the glacier area coverage of 15040 sq km and 2420 lakes and among it 52 lakes were identified as potentially dangerous glacial lakes in Pakistan.

In India Himalaya, the Tista River basin covers only 285 glaciers with the glacier area 576sq km, 266 glacial lakes and 14 potentially dangerous glacial lakes. The Himachal Pradesh region holds 2554 glaciers with the glacier area of 4160 sq km and 229 lakes including 22 potential GLOF. The Uttaranchal Himalayan region holds 1439 glaciers with the glacier area of 4060 sq km, though in UA 127 lakes are identified from the satellite images but not a single lake is classified in the category of potential GLOF.

Though the area of Tista River basin is comparatively very small but the number of lakes and potential glof is very high compared to other study region.

In Tibet Autonomous Region a total of 1578 glaciers with a glacier area of 2864sq km were mapped in the sub-basins of Ganges River. Altogether 824 lakes were identified and among that 77 lakes are categorized in the potential GLOF.

Creating inventories and monitoring of glaciers and glacial lakes can be done quickly and correctly using a combination of satellite images supplemented by reference topographic information. The multi-stage approach of using remotely sensed data and field data will increases the accuracy of the work. The integration of visual and digital image analysis with a geographic information system (GIS) can provide very useful tools for the study of glaciers, glacial lakes, and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).

The reports with information on the glaciers, glacial lakes and GLOFs of the HKH region in compatible and comparable format begin as the filling up this pressing need. Taken together, the database will greatly enhance the ability of global and regional climate researchers, national policy makers, land-use planner and water resource planners, as well as the general public, to understand and mitigate GLOF-associated hazards, thus linking science to policy. The project activities provided an opportunity for professionals and institutions among partners / collaborators / of the region and beyond to learn more about the methodology and related activities to build up their confidence for the future work for further cooperation.

Circulation of the reports and database in the interactive CD-ROMs and posting those also in WebPages and the workshops disseminated to wider audiences and also created much awareness.

5.0 Future Directions

Except the area of Arunanchal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir mountains of India, the digital database of glaciers and glacial lakes of the entire region of HKH has been prepared in the comparable scale. The digital repository of glaciers and glacial lakes can be used for the various applications such as water supply for agricultural, industrial, and hydropower development. In addition, special attention should be given to the reported potentially dangerous glacial lakes on the watershed while planning and implementing the new urban area, infrastructure, hydropower etc. Continued institutional capacity strengthening by advanced on-the-job training to the participants of the collaborating institutions and agencies is necessary. Analysis and synthesis of the database to locate hot-spots and potential GLOF circumstances, and dissemination of the results to the concerned agencies to conduct rapid environmental change assessment (RECA) studies on GLOF hazard risks and potential impacts in detail is required. Comprehensive communication and dissemination plan need to be developed and implemented based on the results and outputs of database analysis, to strengthen policy and planning within relevant agencies, and to inform research institutions and the public, nationally and regionally.

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