

Carrying Capacity Considerations -- II

Delimitation of Hunza Tourism Zone

Maps 4,5, and 6 indicate the broad zone of tourism activity centred on Karimabad. The catchment has been delimited on the basis of the most extensive circular treks out of Karimabad, as follows.

1. To the South-west, up to Nilt (including the trek to Jaglot) and Rakaposhi peak. Chalt and Bar Valley, Naltar and Daintar Pass are excluded, as Gilgit competes with Karimabad as a base station for trekkers (Map 4).
2. To the north, up to Wain, as the main trek up the Lupghar River (Map 5).
3. To the south-east, to Hispar and Malubiting Peak (Map 6).

The main peaks, glaciers, and treks included in this catchment are given below.

Crests

- To the south, Rakaposhi and the Bagrot and Phuparash group of ranges
- To the north, the Atabad, Pasu, Batura, and Lupghar group of ranges

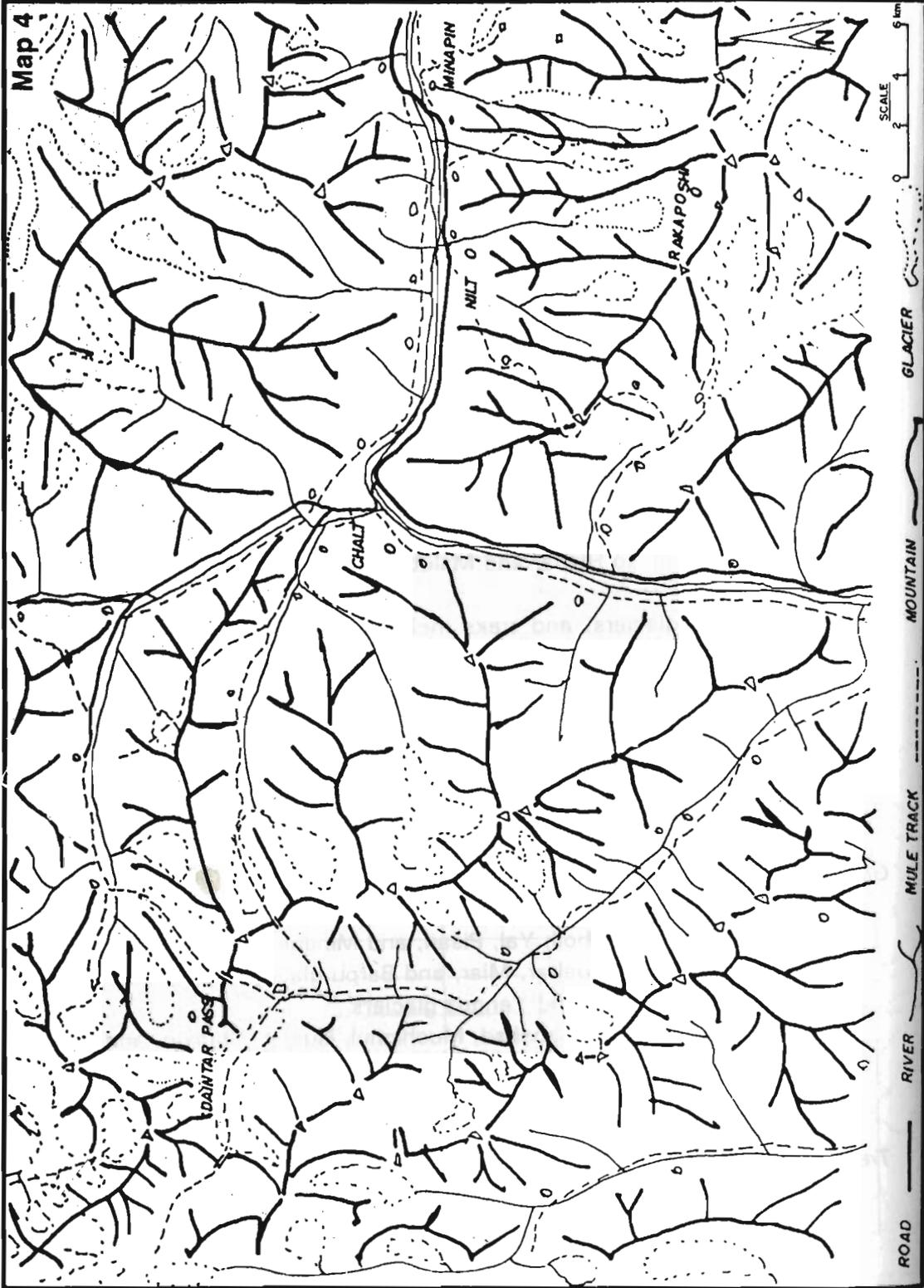
Glaciers

- To the south, Nilt, Thoil, Yal, Pisan, and Minapin glaciers
- To the south-east, Bualtar, Miar, and Barpu glaciers
- To the east, Gharesa and Yenguz glaciers
- To the north, Ultar, Hasanabad, Muchichul, Gulmit, Ghulkin, and Batura glaciers

Treks

- To the south-west, from Nilt to Jaglot via Shaltar Pass
- To the south, from Ghulmet up to Yal Glacier and from Minapin to Kacheli (Chhasuli)

Map 4



Map 5





- To the south-east, from Sumaiyar to Holshal, to Shaltar, to Miar, to Girgindil, to Gutena, to Hispar, to Gharesa
- To the north, from Hasanabad to Gychalin, from Ganesh to Ultar base
- To the far north, from Gulmit to Ultar II base, Ghulkin to Borit Lake, Pasu to Borit Lake, Pasu to Gharhil (2 treks), Sust to Chalapan, and Sust to Wain via Lupghar Pass

Extent of Physical Assets for Trekking and Mountaineering

The lengths and areal extent of common treks in the above defined Hunza tourism catchment are given in Table 8.1, while Table 8.2 provides the areal extent of the main glaciers for ice-climbing.

Quantitative Estimates of Carrying Capacity

Table 8.3 gives the current and potential carrying capacities of the assets for trekking and mountaineering in the Hunza area. The current capacity of the identified main trails is estimated at 32,500 trekkers per peak day. This could rise to 130,000 trekkers per peak day, assuming a management system for ensuring an even distribution of trekkers over the trails.

Current capacity for ice-climbing is estimated at 3,000 mountaineers per peak day; which could rise to 6,000 climbers per peak day, with the development of a support system for ice-climbing.

Attainment of the potential carrying capacities assumes, in addition to physical development, a high degree of orientation towards tourism among the local community, a high standard of organisation within the tourist service industry, and education and discipline among tourists. None of these ingredients are available at present.

Relevance of Carrying Capacity to Hunza

The notion of carrying capacity is of direct interest and relevance to the case study area. As the treks in Hunza are in the open zone of trekking, trekkers go where they choose. There is, therefore, no way of staggering them or directing them to less frequented treks. Thus, there is a heavy load on one or two popular treks. This is already exerting pressure on the resource base, and, unless carrying capacity considerations are kept in mind, no management plan will ever evolve with the desired results for the area.

Again, trekkers are only one of the components of tourist traffic. The overall flow is much heavier and the support system needs monitoring. The notion of carrying capacity will, therefore, have to be built into the total tourism management and planning effort for the area. This does not imply the need to limit tourism. It is simply a reminder that the supply support system and tourism demands will have to balance each other out, and this suggests:

- timely intervention,
- the involvement of the local community, and
- efforts to secure the understanding and cooperation of tourists and tour operators.

Acceptable Limits - Facts from Figures

Since the focus of this report is on trekking, the discussion which follows will compare trekking volumes with capacities.

At first glance, it would appear that the current carrying capacity of 32,500 trekkers per peak day is well above the estimated achieved figure of 1,100 trekkers per peak day (Table 8.1).

The potential carrying capacities of trails (130,000 persons per peak day) exceed by two factors of magnitude the present tourist load in the Hunza area.

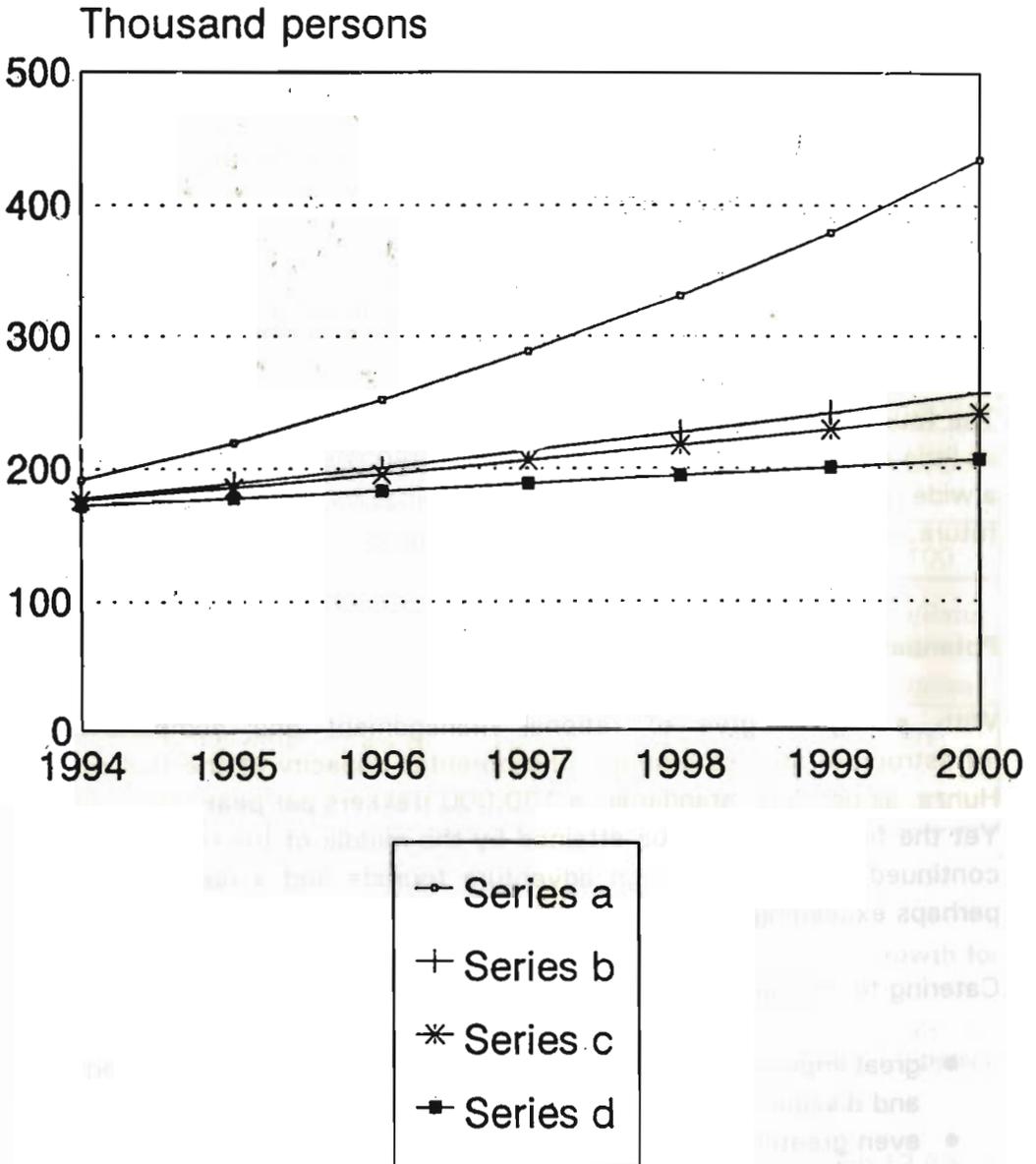
However, closer scrutiny suggests that the apparent excess capacity could be misleading. At present, with undeveloped facilities, many trekkers, especially in the unguided segment of the market, concentrate on the trail to the Patundas Pastures. There is also a secondary concentration of guided trekkers on two trails taking off from Pasu along the Pasu and Batura glaciers.

On the other hand, only a few avid travellers make it to Borit Lake, and even fewer people visit the other spots of magnificent scenic beauty in the area. From this perspective, Hunza is an underexploited destination.

Projected Tourist Flows

Figure 15 shows four projections of tourist flows to Hunza up to the year 2000. The projections have been made under the following assumptions.

Figure 15: Projections of Tourism to Hunza



Source: MoT, R&S Wing; GoP, Economic Survey, 1992-93
based on a: past trends (1986-93); b: growth of service sector (1980-93)
c: growth of GDP (fc)(1990-93); d: national population growth

1. Series a: Assumes that the trend over the past seven years (1986-93) will prevail during the next seven years to 2000.
2. Series b: Assumes that tourism traffic will grow at the rate of the national services sector. Along with Series a, this may be termed a supply-side projection under normal law and order situations.
3. Series c: Assumes that tourism traffic will grow at a rate corresponding to the growth of GDP (fc.). This may be termed a demand-side projection, based on the growing capacity of domestic tourists to enjoy rest and recreation.
4. Series d: Assumes that tourism will only grow at the rate of national population increase.

The four series result in a wide range of projections for the year 2000, from as little as 200,000 persons to as many as 450,000 visitors per annum. Such a wide range of projections creates uncertainties for the near-and medium-term future. What is more, it poses serious problems for a rational tourism policy.

Potential Carrying Capacities

With a high degree of rational management and complete support infrastructure at base stations, the potential capacity of the trail system in Hunza, as per WTO standards, is 130,000 trekkers per peak day (Table 8.4). Yet the figure may well be attained by the middle of the next century with continued growth of foreign adventure tourists and a national population perhaps exceeding 300 million.

Catering to this scale of inflow assumes:

- great improvements in the trekking knowledge, environmental education, and discipline levels of tourists;
- even greater improvements in the systems to control trail litter; and
- truly huge improvements in the management and coping skills of local communities and the tourism service industry.

For the short-term future, concern should focus on the risk of saturation or overload on trails to Patundas, Pasu, and Batura.

Table 8.1: Trekking and Rafting in the Hunza Area

Category/Year	1992	1993	1994
1. Number of foreign trekking tours to Hunza handled by the leading 20% of tour operators (a)	1,088	1,311	1,316
2. Estimated total foreign trekking tours to Hunza handled by all tour operators (b)	1,360	1,639	1,885
3. Estimated foreign trekkers (av. trekking group = 7.5 persons) (c)	10,200	12,300	14,100
4. Estimated domestic trekkers (d)	3,200	3,700	3,800
5. Total trekkers in Hunza	13,400	16,000	17,900
6. Estimate peak month (August) (R5*0.3)	4,020	4,800	5,370
7. Estimated peak day (R6*0.2)	800	1,000	1,100
8. Favourite trails	Pasu/Batur a/ Patundas	Pasu/Batur a/ Patundas	Pasu/Batur/ Patundas
9. Reported white-water rafters to Hunza		130	50

(a) Survey-November 1994

(b) Assuming Pareto (20/80) distribution for 1992 and 1993, and 15% growth for 1994

(c) Average of reported bi-modal distribution of trekking groups, (75% are 7-9 person groups, 25% are 4-6 person groups)

(d) 6.5% of the 35% of tourists coming for rest and recreation (assuming 12.5% of upper income 8%; 10% of middle income 19%, and 5% of lower income 73% go for treks).

Table 8.2: Lengths and Areal Extent of Treks

Trek Name	Length (km)	Area (ha) (a)
1 Nilt to Jaglot via Shaltar Pass (including Dobar spur)		
2 Ghulmet up the Yal Glacier	25.2	82
3 Minapin to Kacheli	8.2	108
4 Sumaiyar to Hopar	11.2	112
5 Hopar to Shaltar	9.2	92
6 Shishkin to Miari	9.4	94
7 Shishkin to Girgindil	17.2	172
8 Hura to Gutena	5.6	56
9 Hopar to Hispar	25.6	256
10 Hopar to Gharesa	6.2	62
11 Hasanabad to Gychalin	17.2	172
12 Ganesh to Ultar base	2.8	28
13 Gulmit to Ultar II base	8.8	88
14 Ghulkin to Borit Lake	12.6	126
15 Pasu toward Kingly peak	12.0	120
16 Pasu to Put Mahal (II)	57.6	576
17 Chalapan-Sust-Wain via Lupghar Pass	27.4	274
	58.2	582
Total:	325.2	3,252

(a) Assuming 10m average width for these mountain trails

Table 8.3: Areal Extent of Main Glaciers in Hunza Tourism Catchment

Name of Glacier	Area (ha)
1 Yal + Rakaposhi 2nd Peak (N/W; N/E)	1,330
2 Pisan	710
3 Minapin	4,720
4 Bualtar	5,520
5 Miari and Barpu	7,530
6 Gharesa	2,440
7 Yenguz	840
8 Ultar	1,250
9 Hasanabad	4,120
10 Muchichul	5,490
11 Gulmit	910
12 Ghulkin	2,150
13 Pasu	3,400
14 Batura	20,940
Total:	61,350

Table 8.4: Current and Potential Carrying Capacities for Trekking and Ice-Climbing in Hunza

Activity	Standards (Persons/d/ha)	Extent (ha)	Current (p/peak day)	Potential (p/peak day)
1. Trekking	10-40	3,252	32,520	130,080
2. Ice-climbing	0.05-0.1	61,350	3,068	6,135