

Conclusion

The major factors in estimating carrying capacity are (a) environmental, (b) social, and (c) managerial. The volume of tourists in Nepal is very small compared to the European Alps or the Japanese Alps. The Tateyama Mountains in Japan, for example, receive 1.6 million people and 600,000 of them climb them (T.C. Pohkarel, mimeographed address notes). These are mind boggling figures compared to Nepal's tourist volume of just over 300,000. Of them, about 40,000 visit the Annapurna area and about 13,000 visit the Khumbu area. Congestion, overcrowding, and high garbage pollution levels are all too common comments on Nepal's mountain tourism. The carrying capacity of these destinations remains low for want of management. Not even the national parks, including the World Heritage Site, Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park, follows a management plan. The ACAP, with management input from KMTNC, attracts and absorbs more visitors without much hue and cry. Thus, it is evident that, with a plan in place and management in order, the carrying capacity of Nepal's mountains will remain at a higher level than that currently prevailing.

