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## Editorial



### Need to Take Firm Action

Even though there is a potential to transform the Nepalese people to prosperity through effective exploitation of the nation's water resources, Nepal is not pursuing effective measures to this end. Instead, we are wasting our time on unproductive debates about making the nation into a federal state carved out on the basis of caste and ethnicity.

This is the basis for dispute, and the limited resources of the nation cannot bear this extravaganza. Due to small geography and limited resources, federalism may not be the solution to solve all existing problems. Embracing federalism means distributing resources equitably, and optimizing available resources for the fast development, but the current discussions about caste-, ethnicity- and language-based divisions will only marginalize certain regions of the country that do not have access to abundant water resources. If we must go for a federal system, it should be on the basis of the river basin concept that integrates people on a series of north-south axes. This will ensure to get benefits of water resources for districts without much of them.

Recently, *URJA Nepal* (a sister publication of *HYDRO Nepal*) and this journal initiated a long overdue dialogue on the issue of water resources in light of the nation going along the path to federalism.

We are facing long hours of load shedding. From time to time the government of Nepal has discussed intentions to install 100/200 MW diesel plants; whereas the multi fuel/thermal plant has not yet been maintained to run to its full capacity (53.4 MW) even after a lapse of one year. In these difficult times, 'business as usual' will not make any dent. Rather, an all out effort on a "war footing" needs to be made to exploit the water resources of Nepal and develop its hydropower potential.

The Nepal Electrical Authority's (NEA) sister company plans to develop the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi HEP (called UTHEP) in next four years knowing well that NEA took double time and cost overruns to complete 70MW Middle Marshyangdhi HEP.

The message is clear, unless it is implemented on a "war footing", this project will not be completed in its schedule time. To complicate matters, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation has declared the Gaurishanker Conservation Area within which the UTHEP is located. There are also several other major projects licensed to the private sector in this area. This will make the completion of these projects impossible due to various terms and conditions of the conservation area concept that are hydropower-unfriendly. We suggest that the **UTHEP must be monitored on a monthly basis directly under the prime minister and that the hurdles to its development be removed immediately.**

From this issue, we have introduced a new feature in the journal focused on Future Energy. If the all out efforts by developed countries that are being made are successful in finding alternate energy sources, then Nepal's hydropower will have limited value. Furthermore, the nation's trade deficit has crossed 122 billion rupees with India. Hydropower export can be the only way to alleviate this situation.

The government of Nepal has recently announced plans to develop 25,000 MW in the coming 20 years, whereas the reality is that not even 500MW will be developed if the various constraints, hurdles, and lack of interagency coordination are not dealt with. In present day Nepal, developing even a small hydropower project is a herculean task.

Hence, the message is clear: *Create an enabling environment to develop hydropower now or it will never be.* ♦

Jeewan P. Thanju  
Editor-in-Chief