

Disappearing the Natural resources Issue in the Nepalese Politics

(Photo)

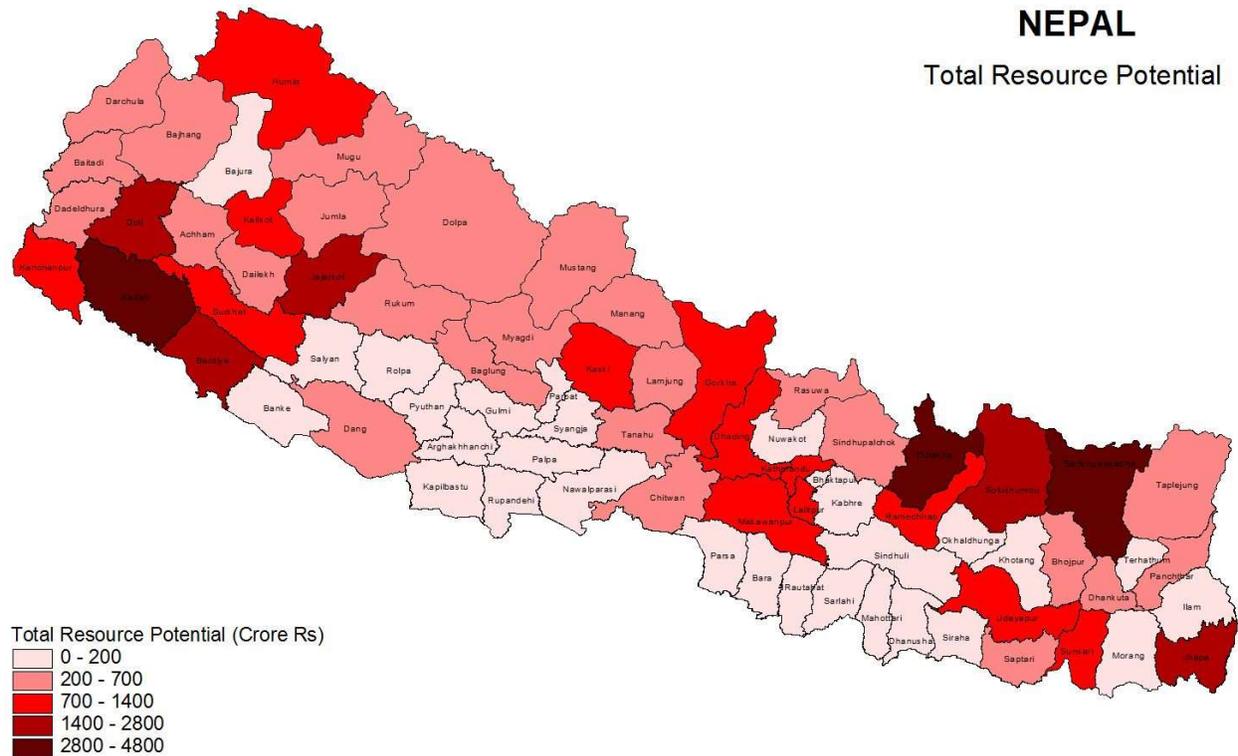
Sunil Kumar Pokhrel

(Multiple Identities with abundant natural resource is must for the successful state)

- Kailali is the richest district in terms of natural resources in the country. Sankhuwasabha, Dolakha, Kaski, Manang, Solukhumbu, Jajarkot, etc. also have enough natural resources.
- Analyzing per person income from natural resources potential, Manang is number one richest district.
- Analyzing natural resources potential Bajura, Rautahat, Siraha, Dhanusha are among poor districts.

There is vast difference between the perception we have made without any study and the above fact prepared after research. We have simply understood that hilly districts of Nepal are poor and Himalayan districts poorer than that of Terai which is rich due to agriculture production. But studying the possibility of natural resources in different districts and counting the tax and royalty income to the districts after the positive exploitation of it, the result is different. Based on the study natural resources potential map is developed. This map covers the tax and royalty income from the natural resources in each district from hydropower, wood, tourism, national park and

conservation area, mountaineering, minerals, sand and boulder, agriculture production (cash crops, fruits, floriculture, vegetables, animal husbandry).



Natural Resource Potential Map developed by: Sunil Kumar Pokhrel

Conservation and promotion of religion, culture and ethnic identity of a person or group is a major issue. But only cultural identity is not enough for the human development. There is no single identity of any individual or community. In fact each individual has multiple identities. If given importance to each identity then there are more than 150 ethnicities and languages found in Nepal. Though population is small or big, if every group starts identity based demand and states is restructured in that way then it will be hard to make Nepal in one signal country.

Therefore, a state can be only successful if it caters available natural resources providing respect to multicultural identities of each person and group.

Nepal is among the countries listed in extreme poverty. So the major basis of development should be income generated from proper management of the natural resources. Nepali production cannot compete with economically giant countries China or India as well as high tech. developed countries like Europe, the US, Japan. Therefore, developing countries like Nepal should move ahead through the proper utilization of the natural resources for her development. Politicians are making speech that Nepal can compete in every sector with China or India as well as Europe and the USA but it is just an impossible dreams.

We should first understand our potential. Other countries do not imagine competing with the US and Japan that are speeding in modern technology. Europe and the US also get afraid from the center of mass production that is China and India. So it is important to understand the strength of the country. No matter how rich Europe is, it cannot build second Mount Everest or Annapurna. India cannot make next Fewa Lake or Machhapuchre Mountain no matter how much they want it or let's say Karnali River cannot return to flow towards China or transferring storage of magnetite of Dolakha in other countries. From this we can draw the conclusion that in the natural resources, Nepal has always better comparative advantages among others.

However, we are in extreme poverty for not being able to make necessary extraction of natural resources. But many believe that the current positive political culture which is evolving in Nepal can extract the natural resources in near future. Many natural resources are getting wasted like hydropower (without production), many are in verse of extinction such as stones and sands in Chure, and herbs like Yarsagumba in Mountain, and many have been unutilized like magnetite,

copper, etc. Remaining natural resources such as wood and wild animals are vanishing because of the illegal activities and smugglers.

While the situation of natural resources in Nepal is very optimistic many Nepalese from other districts who went to extract the costly herbs like Yarsagumba in Manang are dying due to conflicts. The sale of shares to the public of 22MW capacity Chilime Hydropower Project is halted due to the local conflicts. These are small examples of creating conflicts in future due to the exploitation and distribution of natural resources. It indicates that in each natural resource extraction project there will be high possibilities of emergence of conflicts in future.

In this situation, the country has moved ahead for the restructuring of state but still most of the political parties are pleading the unitary cultural identity based restructuring. Unitary caste identity based state is defined as the state that has reserved major political and bureaucratic position in government is decided based on the people's caste and culture. This type of special rights of particular caste/culture is completely undemocratic. However, it is advisable that the special rights on employment and equitable access to natural resources should be given to the downtrodden, Dalit, and left out community. The policy should be made providing the major focus for the poor and left out community. This will, at the end, help in managing and minimizing the cultural conflicts and address the problem of poor and Dalit.

Marx philosophy never prioritizes special rights based on caste/culture and explains every social and economic issues the class concept. Probably due to this concept, many communist leaders in Nepal have crossed the line of ethnicity while getting married. But the principle basis of these intercultural and inter-caste love marriages is effort for transforming society. This type of inter-marriage practice has been attempted by progressive parties and individuals too. Followers of

Nepali Congress Party too have been trying to erase the line of caste. However, the same leaders who cross the line of caste in marriage culture tried to restructure the state on the basis of caste and culture identity and they are still making an effort for it. The demand of caste identity in state restructuring pleads for the caste based purity which at the end drags society in the backward direction. The concept of multicultural society is the basis for the peaceful community. Unitary identity based society has high chance to enter in the communal conflicts in future.

Are we progressing ahead or we are going backward into 200 years? Having huge amount of the natural resources, let's not act to push the Nepalese society into the communal conflicts. Still we have time to rethink. Give up the political parties' interest just for votes and unite for the betterment of the Nepalese people and the nation. The equal distribution of natural resources can prosper both the public and the nation as well. For the pity interest of vote, if the unitary caste identity based restructuring of state implemented then inter-communal conflicts may lead to the separatism movement or disintegration of the country. All concerned people and institutions should carefully take steps in time to avoid the probable future serious conflicts.

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