



Hydropower Ambitions of South Asian Nations: Ganges and Brahmaputra River basins

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This paper analyses the current status of hydropower development in two major river basins in South Asia, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. The total drainage area of the basins is about 1660,000 km² shared by China, Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The basins are blessed with ample water resources and huge hydropower potential. Hydropower development is strongly linked with the overall development framework of the region. The abundant hydropower potential of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra can help give riparian countries a safer energy future that is the key driving force behind the prospect of potential cooperation in the field of water. Based on four years research studies (2005-2009), this paper analyse the hydropower development plans and ambitions of riparian nations with special focus on China and India. The finding suggests that it is essential to develop an integrated hydropower development approach involving all riparian nations intended to foster regional development and overcome the prospect of severe conflict because of unilateral hydropower ambitions of China and India. The hydropower development cooperation between China and India could also become the positive turning point in the integration of South and South-East Asia.