

# WATER USES IN NEPAL - IMPACTS AND EFFECTS ON THE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT

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Water is a very important gift to mankind by Nature. Its proper use in any form is very important not only for the purpose of drinking but also to raise the economic standard of the country. This is the right time when Nepal, with rich water resources in the form of rivers, should think of preserving its water quality. The construction of majestic temples, for instance, along the banks of the river is clear evidence of the early Nepalese spiritual relationship with rivers. Remarkable religious importance is given to rivers. Every year thousands of pilgrims visit the Bagmati River with the hope of gaining purity by sprinkling its holy water over themselves. Almost all cremation grounds in Kathmandu lie along the bank of this river. Nepalese have always believed in the spiritual nature of the rivers in past and will continue to do so in future irrespective of the quality of the water, thereby giving rise to the danger of contracting serious diseases. Owing to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation in Kathmandu Valley, the Bagmati River is used to drain away the city's wastes. The increasing use of this river for hydropower, irrigation, water mills, drinking water, cattle, car and wool washing, and the removal of tones of sand and gravel to be used as building materials, has added to the seriousness of the problem. All these activities are carried but regardless of their impact on the aquatic environment. All these human impacts and the problems faced by the aquatic environment are briefly discussed. In addition, the need for proper authorities to stop such activities is also expressed.