

Role Of The Himalayas As The Third Pole For India's Future

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Abstract

To many people, the Himalayas is just like any other ordinary mountain, and to them, it is only an essential scenery on the earth's surface. However, a group of people holds the mountains in high esteem as it is crucial for their survival and way of life. Those residing on the Asian continent are an example of those who rely on the Himalayas for their survival in the present and future (Carol, 2020).

The Himalayas is a mountain range located in Asia that acts as a barrier between the plains found in the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan plateau (Mohita, 2015). The range is one of the essential sceneries on earth as it homes one of the highest peaks, which includes Mount Everest, located at the border between Nepal and China. Furthermore, the range has over fifty mountains, which elevate over 7,200m, and this includes ten of the fourteen 8,000 meter peaks.

The population inhabits the Himalayas consisting of over 52.7 million people, and the population is spanning across five countries Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Thus the mountain serves several purposes to the people that reside within its borders. The ranges are endowed with several hydrological sources, and this includes lakes, glaciers, and rivers. Thus it serves as a source of water for its population (Mohita, 2015). The ranges also influence the weather within its borders and, therefore, very important for the people living in the area. Not only is it home to humans it is also a habitat for different kinds of wild animals.

Above is just a few examples of the importance of the ranges. The following pages detail some of the significance of the Himalayas towards the people of India. The importances are how the ranges impact the people of India socially, economically, how it influences the climate, among other factors (Harvey, 2019).

1. INTRODUCTION

ROLE OF THE HIMALAYAS AS THE THIRD POLE FOR INDIA'S FUTURE

The Hindu Kush Himalayan region is sometimes referred to as the world's Third Pole. This is because it contains a large amount of glacial ice. It also has ten major river basins and several of the world's highest peaks, including Mount Everest, located between Nepal and China.

The first importance of the third pole to India is that it influences the climatic conditions of India. The Himalayas have an important role in determining the climate of India and its environs (Mohita, 2015). This is made possible due to their high altitude, elevation in length, and the direction they slope in. These factors enable them to intercept the summer monsoon winds originating from the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal. The effect of this interception is that it causes different kinds of precipitation in abundance, such as rain and snow.

Apart from causing precipitation, they also avert the cold continental air masses originating from central Asia from entering India. If the Himalayas did not exist, there would be no precipitation in India, resulting in a desert. Also, the absence of the Himalayas would result in severe winters due to the cold air masses entering India originating from central Asia

(Harvey, 2019). According to recent meteorological studies, the Himalayas are responsible for dividing the jet stream into two distinct branches, which play an important role in directing monsoon winds in India.

As the third pole for India, the Himalayas has also provided protection and security from invaders since time immemorial. Thus, it serves as an important defense barrier. However, the Chinese aggression and attack on India in October 1962 has put doubt on the defensive role of the Himalayas and, in turn, minimized its recognition as a source of a defensive barrier. Despite all the factors and the advanced technology in modern warfare, the Himalayas' role as a defensive barrier cannot be ignored.

As the third pole for India, the Himalayas also acts as a source of several rivers in India. Several factors contribute to these rivers: India has its origin in the third pole, and these factors are abundant rainfall, enormous glaciers, and massive snow-fields. They are the major factors acting as feeding grounds for the great rivers in India. The melting snow in summer provides abundant water for the rivers that carter for even the dry season. These rivers originating from the third pole, together with their hundreds of tributaries, have been the basis of life for India since the beginning of time.

The third pole has also contributed to the fertile soil in India. The grounds are fertile as they contain massive alluvium. The rivers originating from the Himalayas and their several tributaries carry large quantities of alluvium as they descend from the Himalayas. The alluvium carried is then deposited in the Great Plain of North India in thus making the soil very fertile (Mohita, 2015). As a result, the plain is regarded as one of the world's most fertile lands. According to a recent study, the Indus and Ganga carry approximately 19 and 10 lakh tonnes of silt per day, respectively, and the Brahmaputra carries more than the two. The great plain of north India has been described as a gift from the Himalayas.

The fertile soils brought about by the Himalayas have promoted agriculture in the plains. Several crops are grown and, in turn, provided food for the farmers. The crops grown are also a source of income, and, in turn, it contributes to India's economy as the government collects taxes from the merchants (Carol, 2020).

Even though the third pole does not provide sufficient flatlands for agriculture, some slopes are terraced for cultivation. In the terraced slopes, rice is the major crop grown. Some of the other crops grown include wheat, ginger, maize, tobacco, and potatoes. Tea is a particular crop that is grown on the slopes of the hill only. In the Himalayan regions, several varieties of crops are grown, such as peaches, pears, walnut, grapes, cherries, mulberry, among many others.

The Himalayan region also provides several sites that can be used for the production of hydroelectricity. With the worldwide increase in energy demand, countries are looking for various energy sources that are not hazardous to the environment. India, as a country, has a huge potential for hydropower as a source of energy (Mohita, 2015). The benefit of hydropower as a source of energy is that it is renewable and has the added benefits of water storage for agriculture and several other uses. The third pole is endowed with natural waterfalls in certain regions, while dams can be constructed across rivers in different areas.

The recent investigations on the status of hydropower in the HKH regions show that it has a hydroelectric potential of over 334 Gigawatts (Carol, 2020). India being a part of the Hindu Kush Himalayan countries (HKH) countries Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, also has a lot of hydroelectric power waiting to be tapped in. With the growing need for power and development in technology, India's hydroelectric power will most likely be one of the significant energy sources. The massive hydropower of the Himalayan Rivers is yet to be utilized appropriately.

The third pole is also richly endowed with forest resources. As per their altitude, the ranges show a vast area of vegetative cover from the tropical to the Alpine (Harvey, 2019).

The forests in the third pole serve several roles, whether in terms of the environment, energy source, and raw materials. Environmentally, the forests play a significant role in ensuring excess carbon dioxide from the burnt fuels and purifying the air with oxygen.

In terms of energy, the forests provide abundant wood used as fuel in industries and homes. The forest is also endowed with different kinds of trees, which act as raw materials for various industries that require timber, tree barks, and leaves as their raw materials. It is also important to note that several medicinal plants grow in the Himalayan regions (Harvey, 2019). Thus the third pole serves as an essential source for herbal medicine, some of which the pharmaceutical industries manufacture cant manufacture. The forests in the third pole play a crucial role in providing shelter to various wild animals; the wild animals are important as they balance the ecosystem. The woods are also of agricultural significance as they offer vast pastures for grazing animals as several patches are covered with grass.

The third pole of the Himalayas offers scenic beauty and a beautiful environment. As a result, spots have been identified as tourist attraction sites. The hilly areas in the third pole provide a calm and soothing climate, unlike the adjacent plains reeling under the scorching sun during the summer season (Mohita, 2015). Tourists from all over the world and those in the country tour the tourists' spots at the third pole to enjoy their aesthetic beauty, break away from the busy artificial city life, and stay away from the summer heat in the plains. Winter sports have become increasingly popular, and in turn, the third pole has been used as a perfect location to enjoy it. Tourists also rush to the third pole to satisfy their craze of enjoying the snowfall during the winter.

The third pole also offers a sanctuary of pilgrimage. The third pole is studded with sanctified shrines which are said to be homes of the gods. Many pilgrims go through tough and rugged terrain to go and worship in the sacred shrines. The worshipers are not the only ones who use the sanctuaries; tourists also see how and where the pilgrims worship and pray to their gods. The third pole also contains a lot of rich minerals. The tertiary rocks are endowed with massive potential mineral oils (Carol, 2020). Coal is abundant in Kashmir. Other minerals such as copper, limestone gold, nickel, silver, among others, are known to be abundant in over a hundred localities in the third pole.

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