



## ‘Navigability study in Koshi, Gandaki’

By A Staff Reporter

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A recent study conducted by the South Asia Watch on Trade Economics and Environment (Sawtee) has recommended undertaking comprehensive feasibility study of the rivers to assess navigability in the Koshi and Gandaki basins.

“The government should identify sites for possibility of upgrading existing traditional boats, keeping in mind its social and ecological impact,” said Dikshya Singh, one of the researchers.

The study suggested

identifying complementary infrastructure such as connecting roads to facilitate multi-model transport services, and also to provide incentives to the private sector so as to increase its participation.

However, experts expressed reservations in implementing the navigation system in the Koshi and Gandaki basins as the rivers lack sufficient water in the dry season and also due to various irrigation projects.

“We don’t have the technical capacity required for manipulation engineering

in the major rivers, which is needed to maintain a certain depth required for the boats’ movement,” said Ajay Dixit, executive director at ISET-Nepal.

Former president of Nepal Freight Forwarders Association Rajan Sharma said that though inland waterways were costly and complex, they could prove useful during times of strikes and blockades when the time and cost of transportation was less important.

He urged the government to hold effective talks with India to facilitate the private sector

for the smooth movement of goods from Kolkata or Bishakhapattanam ports to the Nepal-India border.

Former secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources Dr. Dwarika Nath Dhungel said that detailed feasibility study of the three major river basins was necessary to find out the possibility of water navigation.

Experts said that the country should develop waterways at least to break the landlocked psychology.

They suggested developing the rivers for tourism and recreational purposes.