



AN OVERVIEW OF INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH NEPAL AND CHINA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Nepal and China have a deep friendship for a long time. The marriage of 7th century Nepalese princess Burgtidevi and Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo (Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia), 13th century Nepalese craftsman Alanico's visit to China, and visits by Chinese monks and scholars from various times were paved. Road to the history of. A strong foundation for developing relations between Nepal and China Nepal and China formally established diplomatic relations in 1955. Today, Nepal and China maintain a friendly and heartfelt relationship that respects each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The Chinese Embassy in Nepal (2007) stated that the relationship between Nepal and China was based on "trust, equality and integrity." I will add more. Both countries can never intimidate, harm or doubt each other. But always respect, trust and help each other. The Chinese government and its people are firmly committed to the principle that every country, large or small, is on par with others. Over the last 50 years, adhering to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, equal negotiations, communication and coordination, China and Nepal have achieved excellent cooperation and great achievements in bilateral political relations, regional affairs and international forums. .. Well, China considers Nepal to be its closest neighbor and best friend. We thank Nepal for its strong support over the years on Taiwan and Tibet, as well as other important issues related to China's sovereignty and interests. (Embassy of China in Nepal, 2015) Nepal has always shown a firm commitment to "One China Policy" and never allowed its soil to be used for hostile activities against China. China also upheld the proposal of the late King Birendra to declare Nepal a "zone of peace" and praised the development path followed by the Nepalese people without interfering with Nepal's internal affairs (Chinese Ambassador). Hall, 2007). China is a good partner in Nepal's development efforts. Thus, Nepal and China have a good relationship with each other.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship shared by India and Nepal is full of benevolence and compassion on one hand and complications at another and no other two countries in the world share this relation. In the past few years, unfortunately, only the 'complicated' side has come to the light. In these types of situations, Nationalism spirit was on the top priority of Nepali political leaders and then tried to entreat their nationalism spirit high with India and also blamed India for being inconsiderate,

Interference with Nepal's internal affairs. The repetition of this pattern since a few decades has played an essential role in strengthening all the sentiments against India and it has also worked to ruin and distort all the positive perceptions and aspects in the relation between the nations. It has now become a mandate for both the countries to figure out and also resolve the bitterness in their empathetic relation. Giving partial corrections in the outreach is not going to be fruitful for solving the matters; the most requisite step is reviewing policies thoroughly for the sake of employing reconstitution of policies beneficial for both nations in the 21st century.

It was in the year 1950, when Maoist China's takeover over Tibet made Nepali royalist regime nervous and since then the real problem started and that made Nepali regime seek the assistance of the Indian to man up the Nepal-Tibet border. Because of the tacit understanding between King Mahendra and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, except one of eighteen border posts, Nepal demanded from India to remove all the border posts. Though, the situation faced by Nepal was extremely unlikely as King Mahendra had proficiency in balancing relations with India and China. King Mahendra in 1961 started settling the boundaries of Nepal with China and it was given the momentum near Tinker pass after 1959 when India and China relations began crumbling. This point is situated about 10 km further east of Lipulekh pass which reflects perception of India about the alignment of India-Nepal boundary.

The reality of the situation on the ground is that both the nations; Indo- Nepal, allow the travelling of people both side of the nations freely as an advantage of open border sharing. Taking into consideration that there was lack of infrastructure facility, the construction of the road might be able to benefit the people belonging to both sides of the border and as the necessity of construction of these roads were not raised in the decade-long phase of construction but this issue was raised during the time when Nepal was experiencing domestic political instability and it was used as a convenient emotive issue. In 2020, on 8 May, the Defense Minister of India, Rajnath Singh, did the inauguration of the road which worked as a political ready made catalyst.

India-Nepal Relations: Exploring the Impact of China on Future Dynamics

India and Nepal have a long-standing relationship, which is characterized by shared cultural, historical, and religious ties. However, in recent years, this relationship has been marred by various political and economic issues, which have strained their ties. One of the significant factors impacting the future dynamics of India-Nepal relations is the growing influence of China in Nepal. China has been increasingly active in Nepal, with a growing presence in the country's political, economic, and security spheres. China has been investing heavily in Nepal's infrastructure development, including building roads, bridges, and hydroelectric projects. Additionally, China has been providing military aid and training to Nepal, which has raised concerns in India about its security implications.

The growing influence of China in Nepal has led to some friction in India-Nepal relations, with Nepal seeking to balance its ties with both India and China. This has led to a shift in Nepal's foreign policy, with it becoming more independent and pursuing a more multi-faceted approach towards its foreign relations. Against this backdrop, it becomes essential to explore the impact of China on future dynamics of India-Nepal relations. This study will examine the extent of China's influence in Nepal, its implications for India, and the challenges and opportunities it presents for the future of India-Nepal relations. understanding the impact of China on India-Nepal relations is crucial to gaining a comprehensive understanding of regional politics in

South Asia and to develop effective foreign policies that promote stability and cooperation in the region.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The relationship between India, Nepal, and China has been a subject of discussion for decades, and it continues to be so in the 21st century, particularly during the Narendra Modi era. There are several reasons why studying the relationship between India, Nepal, and China is crucial:

Geopolitical Significance: The relationship between India, Nepal, and China has significant geopolitical implications, particularly for South Asia. Understanding the nuances of this relationship is essential to comprehend the current geopolitical dynamics in the region.

Economic Significance: India, Nepal, and China are all emerging economies that are increasingly interconnected. Their economic ties and trade relations are essential to the development of the region and the world economy.

Strategic Significance: India, Nepal, and China are all nuclear powers, and their military strength and strategic interests are closely intertwined. Understanding the dynamics of their strategic relationship is essential to assessing the region's security and stability.

Political Significance: The relationship between India, Nepal, and China is complex, and there are several political factors that influence it. These include historical legacies, cultural ties, and ideological differences. Understanding these factors is essential to comprehend the current political dynamics in the region.

Modi Era Significance: Narendra Modi is one of India's most influential leaders in recent times, and his tenure has witnessed significant developments in India's relationship with Nepal and China. Studying the relationship between these countries during the Modi era is crucial to understanding the current state of India's foreign policy and its impact on the region.

Justification for the Study

India, considering its similarities with Nepal's topography as well as its proximity, finds an extremely strenuous task to institute invulnerable lines of security as Nepal's mountains for the plains of India are completely open. And because of that it doesn't hamper and compromise the security of Nepal, India has prioritized to retain requisite hold on the political, strategic and economic activities of Nepal. India has always been considerate about Nepal by considering it as an integral entity of its northern security system. The statement of India "It, therefore, expects Nepal to remain sensitive to its security concerns." was misconceived by the people of Nepal that India might try to strike the sovereignty and independence of Nepal's. Since then only Nepal has developed a sense of fear for any kind of activities of external powers on Nepalese territory apart from the activities related to the normal diplomatic. On the contrary, "Nepal also understands the fact that India is the only country to be considerate for the economic development as well as security concerns at greater efficiency in comparison to other countries, not even China." Through the Treaty in the 1950 and official visits also Nepal's understanding of the interdependency is echoed.

Historical background of India and Nepal Relations

India - Nepal History or phase from before 1950

Beyond formal treaties, a wide range of circumstances impact inter-state interactions. When cultural and ethnic ties exist between the peoples of two neighboring countries, in addition to political and geostrategic relationships, the importance of that relationship develops.

This describes the relationship between Nepal and India. India and Nepal have a special relationship, evidenced by the centuries-long peace and friendship that have prevailed between them. In the ancient and Middle Ages, they had strong commercial ties. The couple's shared religious beliefs have served as a rock-solid basis for their marriage. Since ancient times, people have been able to freely travel between India and Nepal due to the close cultural and social ties between the two countries as well as their close geographic and political closeness. Kingdoms in the ancient and medieval periods encompassed huge areas, covering territories which now make up sections of India and Nepal, and this freedom of movement had been handed by the people to one other and is not a fiat of the rulers. This explains the introduction of Sanskrit, the Gupta script, and Hindu and Buddhist elements into Nepali literature, art, and architecture.

Nepal has no access to the ocean and is surrounded on all sides by India. While the 1700 kilometers of open and accessible border between these two South Asian neighbors makes free movement of people and goods possible, the two countries also share the magnificent Himalayas, which have served as a barrier to northern influences and military adventures into India for centuries. Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand are the five Indian states with which Nepal has a border. It's an unusual international boundary, with some parallels to the tranquil border between Canada and the United States. Nepalese and Indian nationals are both free to travel over the border between the two countries. Nepal is divided from the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh by the Mahakali River to the west, the Terai (low terrain) that merges into the Gangetic plain of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar along a 600-mile boundary-line to the south, and the Mechi River to the east. The closest seaport to Nepal is in Calcutta, India, which is located 1,127 kilometers distant and requires a land outlet to reach.

Some of Bangladesh's ports may be useful to Nepal, however the two countries are separated by Indian territory. It is separated from Bangladesh by the Indian state of West Bengal, which is about fifteen kilometers wide, and from Bhutan by the Indian state of Sikkim, which is about eighty-eight kilometers wide. Being stuck in such a little area is not a desirable location. Even most of the commodities arriving from China must go through India because of the transit facilities and access to the seathatis the Bay of Bengal. Between the 610 and 2,200 meter range in altitude of the bordering mountains, there are few physical features to separate India and Nepal. There are lower valleys between Nepal and India through which rivers flow into India. Located around 215 meters above sea level, the Terai region of Nepal flows into the Gangetic plains of India. Nepal's 1,414-kilometer-long border with China is not particularly desirable for human settlement because of the harsh climate and mountainous terrain (the average height of the mountains along this border is 6,100 meters) that separates Nepal from India. People from Nepal cannot freely travel to China in light of this. However, with the large population clustered around the Indian border, traveling is simple (and lucrative). The Himalaya Mountains, home to the world's tallest peak, Mt. Everest, and the border between Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region, are a striking visual reminder of this fact. Because of its landlocked and hilly locations, Nepal faces two significant disadvantages. One of the potential important topics of interest in Nepal's relations with India is this.

Phase - 2008 to 2014

When India provided assistance to Nepal in holding elections for its constituent assembly, a new era in bilateral ties began. The two countries' leaders visited each other frequently, which

served as a unifying force in their relationship. The relationship was strengthened by the decision to resume water talks.

In addition, when Nepal's Prime Minister visited New Delhi in September 2008, the two Prime Ministers were pleased with how long India and Nepal had enjoyed close, friendly, and extensive ties. They also stated that they would work together to develop their relationship. This enabled the two countries to maintain their good relations. India provided additional assistance to Nepal in its attempts to achieve peace and growth. As a result, the relationship between India and Nepal has been moved to a smooth plane where there will be no challenges in maintaining peace and friendship. Both sides paid visits, which helped to strengthen their connection. India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, visited Nepal in 2014. It had been 17 years since an Indian prime minister had visited the country on business. In the Constituent Assembly, he addressed the Nepalese people. This was significant in history. He struck a chord when he stated that India will not interfere in Nepal's domestic issues, as it has previously been accused of doing. He also vowed that India would assist Nepal in its growth and transformation. So it appeared that everything were heading in the right direction.

Phase - 2015 till now

The Indian Prime Minister's visit to Nepal and India's assistance following the earthquake appeared to strengthen relations, but things deteriorated when Nepal adopted a new constitution in September 2015. India demonstrated that it does not agree with Nepal's constitution. Nepal said that India was interfering with its sovereignty. The Madhesis erected a border barricade between India and Nepal. Nepal blamed India for the unofficial blockade, notwithstanding India's denial. However, the two countries' relations improved. Nepal viewed the blockade as an example of India using economic pressure to achieve political objectives in Nepal. After Nepalese Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli paid a State visit to India in February 2016, relations between the two countries began to improve. Following that, India and Nepal have been steadily working toward developing partnerships based on democratic values and equal sovereignty.

For hundreds of years, India and Nepal have maintained close, deep, and multifaceted ties. Religion, among other things, has contributed to the strengthening of ties between these two countries. Because of its location, Nepal is considered part of the Indian Subcontinent. It is a narrow band that stretches along India's northern border. Because it is located to the south of the Himalayas, Nepal is virtually totally bordered by India. It requires India to have access to the sea and the international market. There is no doubt that Nepal shares a lengthy border with China's Tibet area, but the topography along the border makes it difficult to cross. Because of these geographical reasons, Nepal relies on India for trade as well as international trade and transit. According to the findings of this study, India and Nepal have tight links, but there is a lot of mistrust, fear, and a sense that India is in charge, which has hindered the rate of understanding and advancement.

In today's interconnected world, no country can safely exist within its own borders. For these reasons, every state works to uphold international law and order in the interest of its own citizens and the progress of humanity as a whole. Geographical, historical, sociocultural, and economic ties between India and Nepal are all significant factors here. The international borders between the two countries are lengthy and open, with no strict regulations on cross-border travel. Both countries share a commitment to religious tolerance, social harmony, and

equality. These differences help set them out as distinctive neighbors, which is why they have a unique bond. That's why it's crucial to grasp the factors that have shaped both countries before getting a handle on their respective growth and character.

Determinants and elements Factors

Geographical factors

The geographical advantages of Nepal have long been recognized. When the rest of Asia was ruled by the British in the 20th century, Nepal was still an independent nation. Nepal was safe under British rule, and its independence was respected. Because of its strategic location in South Asia, Nepal is of great strategic and geopolitical importance. Nepal has land borders with both China and India. The borders between India and Nepal are completely open, and India places great strategic value on Nepal. The Himalayan mountain ranges in northern India are an important strategic barrier for the country. 3 Nepal may be found in the southern section of the Himalayas. These mountains serve as a physical barrier between the arid Tibetan plateau and the lush Gangetic plains of India. These mountains, which take up almost a third of the Himalayas, are crucial to the Indian subcontinent. The Himalayan ranges in the north of Nepal act as a natural climate jammer, cutting off the country and the rest of South Asia from the rest of the subcontinent. As one travels north, they will eventually reach the "Gobi" desert, which is outside Tibet. China's populated regions are located far away from the country's northern border. Although Nepal has always had formal contacts with China, this does not mean that it has never had informal economic relations with any country beyond the Himalayas. As a result of the Himalayan passes to Nepal's left, the two countries can keep up their trade and focus on other issues with relative ease. 5. These borders were traversed by several Buddhist and Christian missionaries. Although this border crossing is impossible for civilians, it has been used numerous times by Nepalese and Chinese forces. The Kirong and Kutti passes are gateways to the trail. These passages were occupied by the Tibetans and the Chinese Army in 1792. Much of the year, transportation is not possible from other passes because they are higher than 17000 feet and are buried in snow for most of the year.

Historical Factors

People consider King Prithivi Narayan Shah to be Nepal's father because he united and established the country. Prior to that, it was not known as a country or state by any other name. According to some academics, Nepal was once a part of India due to religious, cultural, social, and economic similarities, as well as its strong association with India in international affairs and political dependence on India. Despite the fact that Nepal is its own country with its own identity, these myths about it are frequently perpetuated since it is comparable to India. Many researchers have debated the issue, "Was Nepal ever a part of India?" It's a hotly debated topic. Nepalese people have always maintained that this is false. It will be quite contentious if we discuss these issues here. Instead, we might say that when India takes judgments about Nepal's foreign policy, it is critical to remember how the two nations have historically interacted.

Socio-Cultural Factors:

There is a deep cultural connection between India and Nepal. Rather than being a product of a specific era, this solidarity is the product of several centuries. Affection serves as a unifying force beyond religious, social, and cultural boundaries. This fact makes it confusing to refer to India and Nepal by their official names as two separate countries. Three distinct cultural regions may be identified in Nepal:

- i) Himalayan area near Nepal's northern border.
- ii) Kathmandu valley and central hilly area.
- iii) Tarai plains in south.

Mongolians are the people who live in the northern border. The Sherpa, Khampa, and Bhotia are other groups of people who live in the north. The Mongolian race has a lot to do with how these people look, how their bodies are built, and what color they are. Tibet is more important to them in terms of their social and cultural lives. They believe in Buddhism and live by Lord Buddha's rules.

Religious Factors

Both India and Nepal are well-known as Hindu nations in south Asia. India, meanwhile, has become a secular republic, whereas Nepal remains a Hindu state. The two countries share a common historic civilization and religious tradition. Many Hindus in India consider the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu to be a holy site, therefore pilgrims from all across the subcontinent make the journey there. On their pilgrimages to India, Nepalese share this sentiment as they visit holy sites such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Jagannath, Dwarkapuri, Ayodhya, Mathura, etc.

NEW POLICY

India's relations with Nepal and China have undergone significant changes in recent years, particularly under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India's new policy towards Nepal and China has been shaped by several factors, including India's evolving foreign policy priorities, the changing regional dynamics, and the growing influence of China in the region. With Nepal, India has been seeking to address the issues that have strained their relationship in recent years, including the dispute over the Kalapani area, which led to a diplomatic rift between the two countries. India has been working towards improving ties with Nepal through increased economic engagement, infrastructure development, and people-to-people contacts. Additionally, India has been seeking to strengthen security cooperation with Nepal to address common security challenges, such as cross-border terrorism and organized crime. In the case of China, India has been pursuing a more assertive foreign policy, particularly in the context of the border dispute in the Himalayas. India has been taking a firm stance on its territorial claims, and there have been several rounds of talks between the two countries to resolve the issue. India has also been working towards enhancing its military capabilities and infrastructure in the border areas to address security concerns.

CONCLUSION

China's rise has been one of the biggest phenomena of our time. The China growth story has attracted both awe and admiration. While the big powers have eagerly established 'win-win' cooperation, many of China's small neighbours have been suspicious of its so-called 'peaceful rise'. Many are also concerned about their security in the absence of a reliable security guarantor in the region. China's deteriorating relationship with Japan, especially after the former surpassed the latter as the world's second largest economy in 2010, and the tensions in both the East and South China Seas have raised apprehensions about China's possible behaviour in a new emerging regional order in Asia. In this context, the relevance of South Asia is amplified for China as the South China Sea and the East China Sea become restive. Since the 17th Party Congress of the CPC in 2007, China has reinvigorated its focus on South

Asia as a potential market for its cheap goods and to use some of the South Asian states as pivots to help establish a regional balance of power. China has also attempted to render its economic might to serve its security and strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and the South Asian region. To meet these objectives, China is rediscovering the Asian history and proposing ways to re-establish Asian connectivity by reviving the land silk route and the maritime silk route. For instance, during his visit to the Maldives as part of his tour of South Asia (Maldives, Sri Lanka and India) from September 11–17, 2014, President Xi Jinping called for the backing of the Maldives for a '21st century maritime silk road'. Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that President Xi Jinping's visit to Asia and Tajikistan (for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation [SCO] summit) started a new voyage of building 'One Belt One Road'. He also said that 'Central Asia and South Asia, located in the Eurasian heartland, are the safety barrier for China's development and stability, and are also at the development direction of China's opening up to the west'. They are 'important pivotal points' for jointly building the 'Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road'.

The Chinese desire to increase engagement with Nepal can be seen from this perspective. On the contrary, India is an integral part of the South Asian land mass and shares its history and culture; as India grows economically, it is bound to influence not only the economy of the region, but also its culture and people. Therefore, while China, being an outsider, can focus on an interest-based relationship with Nepal, India's relationship with Nepal is likely to be multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, going beyond the issues of economy and security.

The Chinese are practitioners of realpolitik and national security interests are high on their agenda, hence the desire to establish a regional balance of power. Nevertheless, a relationship that builds on similarities in history, culture and social ethos may prove more durable than one based on contractual, economic and strategically beneficial parameters, and therefore a democratic, progressive and economically stronger India may emerge as the winner overshadowing the so-called China factor in India–Nepal relations.

Recommendations

From the preliminary survey, it can be seen that Indian Army ex-servicemen (respondents) of Nepalese origin have always maintained the country they fought for and many (India) and India have given great respect to their lives. Want to help improve - Nepal relations or issues around it. He was satisfied with his service in the Indian Army and the pension provided to him, which gave him the means to meet his financial needs as well as the needs of his family. They share a good opinion of India and favor India over other neighboring countries. However, he also felt that India was interfering in Nepal's domestic politics. Therefore, while dealing with India-Nepal relations, it is important to address such issues keeping in mind all the above aspects covered in the survey. The survey made it clear that the 125,000-strong Nepali-origin Indian Army ex-servicemen community is fully behind India and will certainly help if needed and asked to do so. He also said that neither the Indian Army nor the Indian Embassy contacted him either secretly or openly. There is a need to engage this highly favorable group of opinion makers and their families to ensure consistent favorable opinion. We need to develop some formal engagement mechanisms to engage these very vocal, influential opinion makers working in small, scattered rural communities in Nepal and continue to explain to them the reasons for various Indian actions. A constant shaping and favoring of public opinion towards India is essential today, especially in this connected world. We don't have the luxury of not

doing that.

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