



# **INDIA'S QUEST FOR REGIONAL DOMINANCE: CONVEGENCE AND DIVERGENCE OF INTERESTS IN INDO-NEPAL RELATIONS**

**(2015-2020)**



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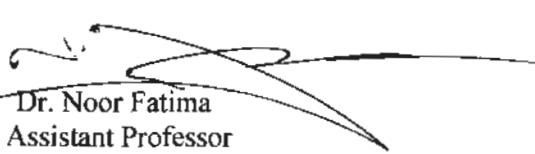
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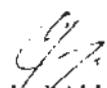
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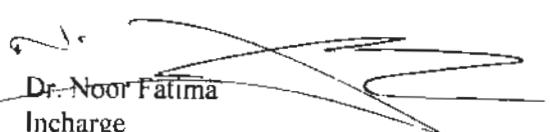


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## **Dedication**

*I dedicated this to my beloved mother and father. Their invaluable emotional and financial support make me able to get education and write this piece of paper.*

## **Declaration**

**I Misbah Jabeen D/o Ijaz Ahmed hereby stated that my thesis titled India's quest for regional dominance: Convergence and Divergence of Interests in Indo-Nepal Relations (2015-2020) is my own work. It has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree in country or the world.**

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**Misbah Jabeen**

## **Abstract**

Nepal is a land-locked country located in South Asia. The state shares three sides of border with India and one border with China. India is the largest state in terms of geography, economy, population and technological development in the region. It shares borders with most of the states in the region. India and Nepal have historical economic, security and religious relations. Both states signed treaties to draft a framework which guides their bilateral relations. Kathmandu is highly dependent on New Delhi for trade and transit facilities. India viewed Nepal through prism of realism and wants to keep the state under its security umbrella. Despite New Delhi's policy of neighborhood-first, bilateral relations between the two countries hit their lowest points in recent years. This study focused on India's policy to guide political process in Kathmandu and how Nepalese reacted to it. It also discussed how trade embargos on Kathmandu by India impacted relations of the two states. In addition, security and territorial relations between the two states are analyzed. It focused on how India's policies are perceived in Kathmandu. The study critically analyzed India's policies and approaches to establish its dominance in South Asia. New Delhi has unprecedented resources in terms of economy, active diplomacy, military and media to build image at global level as compared to other regional states. The state is not in favor of any external power to develop close relations with its neighbors. How much India's policies are successful in maintain states' dominance in the region.

## **List of Abbreviations**

BBIN	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IMTAG	Indian Military Training and Advisory Group
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty of Organization
POL	Petroleum Oil Lubricants
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association of regional Corporation
TPP	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

Nepal is a Himalayan landlocked country, situated between India and China. The country shares South, West and East border with India and North with China. It is separated from China through natural barrier, high mountains. Due to its unique geographical location; the state is significant for India's security and economic interests. India's prime interest in Nepal is to secure its Northern border. In words of Jawaharlal Nehru India's strategic interests in Nepal are articulated, "From time immemorial, the Himalayas have provided us with a magnificent frontier. We cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated because it is also the principal barrier to India" (Jawaharlal Nehru, speech in Parliament, December 1950 (Nayak N. , 2009, p. 44).

States compete to maximize their power (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 34) and influence generally in the world and particularly in the region. In case of India and China, this competition has implications for South Asia and East Asia in general and the Himalayan states in particular because they are situated at the meeting point of the two regions. Historically Nepal and Bhutan have been treated as natural frontier between two Asian giants: China and India. The Himalayas were considered as natural protector against any attack. However, Sino-India war has proved that Himalayas are not natural frontier between the two states. Innovation in technology, weapon industry and economy has transformed the methods of war fare. Globalization has changed concept of security and economic cooperation between Nepal and India (Nayak N. , 2009). India has two hostile frontiers: to the North China and to the North-West Pakistan. India has antagonistic relations with Pakistan and China due to historical territorial claims. Therefore, it keeps heavy military presence on these borders, and in Kashmir to curb freedom movement and to ensure law and order. On the other hand, Nepal is surrounded by India from three sides and has no access to international water bodies. Therefore, the state is heavily dependent on India for trade and transit routes. India is deeply involved in Nepal's politics, economy and military to influence its domestic and foreign policy. India also used coercive methods to dominate Nepal's foreign policy (Behera, 2019). India imposed unofficial

blockade which remained functional for more than three months in 2015. The primary reason behind the blockade was promulgation of constitution by authorities of Nepal. Later on, Nepal published its map that showed ownership of the state over the territories of Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura which are disputed territories between India and Nepal. It degraded bilateral relations of both states. In addition, India unilaterally inaugurated 80 km long motorway that passes through Lipu-Lekh, a disputed area that lies at a strategic three-way junction with Tibet and China. The road links India with Tibet and it is considered one of the shortest routes that link both states. India did not consult Nepal's government on construction of the road through disputed territory. Inauguration of the road starts a new round of diplomatic spat between two neighbors. Government of Nepal protested India's unilateral movement and anti-India public opinion prevails in streets of Kathmandu. The government issued new political map of Nepal that showed the disputed territory including the areas of Kalapani, Lipu-Lekh and Limpiyadhura within its borders. Nepal claimed these areas based on historical Suguali treaty signed in 1816 at the end of Anglo-Nepalese war (Nayak S. , 2020).

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

Nepal has been depending on India for trade and transit and imports of ammunition. Both states have divergence and convergence of interests in terms of security, politics, economy, water and territory. However, Nepal is not content to be part of India's security umbrella. New Delhi's unofficial economic blockade imprinted in minds of Nepalese that India is a bullying dominant neighbor. It compels Kathmandu to give weightage to desires of India in any political and security framework. Nepal desires for independent foreign policy and balance India's dominance in the state. However, Kathmandu is unable to eradicate India's dominance on Nepal's economy and politics. On the other side, India cannot afford China's active presence in economy and development of Nepal. Nepal is a small state which also shares border with China through Tibet. India and Nepal have open border. If India's influence fades away from Nepal it will make India's border with Nepal a new security concern for India. India's quest for regional dominance in South Asia does not permit dominant China in Nepal, but India's bullying attitude towards

its smaller neighbor push Nepal to develop closer relations with China to balance India.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

- To analyze major interests and challenges between India and Nepal.
- To examine how India's policies are pushing Nepal closer to China.
- To scrutinize India's neighborhood-first policy in case of Nepal
- To understand India's quest for regional dominance and approaches towards it

## **1.3 Research Questions**

- Q1.** How India is struggling to secure its dominance in the region?
- Q2.** What are major areas of convergence and divergence between India and Nepal?
- Q3.** Why India perceives threat with the changing political scenario in Nepal.
- Q4.** How India's security center approach towards Nepal leads to anti-India rhetoric in Nepal.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant because India is utilizing her diplomatic, economic and military resources to become a global power India is not ready to resolve disputes through dialogue. Smaller states of south Asia feel insecure about her coercive and dominating policies. In the era of globalization, India still looks at Nepal through prism of realism. India believes that its national interest is to limit Nepal's sovereignty by political engineering and foreign policy domination. Despite the close political, economic and religious links, Kathmandu wants greater political space from New Delhi. On the other hand, India considers Nepal as its backyard. However, India and Nepal are dependent on each other for security and economic reasons. Therefore, it is need of hour to address divergence of interests to counter the influence of third party. This study focused on convergence and divergence of interests and significant for foreign policy options of both states. Otherwise, India will lose its influence and harm its strategic interests in the state and the United States (U.S) policy to pivot the Asia through India will be backfired.

## **1.5 Delimitation of the Study**

Indo-Nepal has multidimensional bilateral relations. It is not possible to study all dimensions of relationship between the states. Bilateral relations are also determined by involvement of super powers, cultural ties, water issues and multilateral organizations. All these factors are not discussed in this study.

## **1.6 operational definition**

Regional dominance: agreements, political and security institutions of a regional state that hinder other states of the region from determination of their policy choices and actions independently. The dominant state enforces its will on other states without reciprocity.

Convergence of interest: States would not differ in terms of security, border management, economic and geopolitical interests.

Divergence of interest: States have different security and economic interests in the region.

## **1.7 Theoretical framework**

The security dilemma is one of the most debated theoretical concepts in international relations. At first, Herbert Butterfield, John Herz, and Robert Jervis articulated the approach in international relations (Butterfield., 1951). Multiple conflicts of security strategies and global politics have been analyzed and studied through this approach (Glaser, 1997). This particular approach of theories of international relations is linked with defensive realism. According to defensive realists, the security dilemma is a driving force which pushes states for alliances against common enemy. States agreed in anarchic world to cooperate with each other to increase their security. Herbert Butterfield argued that the security dilemma can initiate war between the two states even though they do not have any warmongering ambitions. Wars in history were not fought because of criminals who want to kill people. On the other wars fought between states who want to avoid conflict and to secure itself in regional and global political system. The term “security dilemma,” was coined by John Herz.

He explained the concept as follows, “Groups and individuals who live alongside each other without being organized into a higher unity must be concerned about their security from being attacked,

subjected, dominated, or annihilated by other groups and individuals. Striving to attain security from such attacks, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the effects of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Because no state can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on" (Herz, 1951, p. 157).

John Herz has elaborated the concept that only human nature, either it is selfish or generous, is not most important aspect of security dilemma. Determining factor in the theory is uncertainty and fear of intentions of other states. This fear of intentions produces security dilemma among states. It is human instinct to protect itself. In protection of states, a cycle of security dilemma begins. Therefore, states compete (Tang, 2009). In light of Herzs definition of "Security Dilemma" India always desires to control internal politics and external affairs of Nepal to retain it as buffer zone between India and China. India desires to guide politicians of Nepal and keep the state under its dominance in terms of economy, security and politics. India's interference in East Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh and annexation of Sikkim in 1971 and 1975 respectively created security dilemma among policy makers in Kathmandu. Since 1950, India has unprecedeted influence in Nepal and imposed trade embargoes many times to punish Nepal for policies which were not aligned with India's interests for example 1989 blockade. India imposed the economic blockade on Kathmandu to punish the state for arms import from Beijing.

India's interference in democratization of Nepal and demands to amend constitution created security dilemma in Nepal. Policy makers in Kathmandu are concerned that the state will meet the same fate of Sikkim. Therefore, it should minimize its dependence on India and must develop close link with Beijing and other states in the region and outside the region. Economic cooperation of Nepal generally with other states and particularly with China has become a huge concern for India and amounted its security dilemma.

Butterfield explained six propositions about security dilemma: the first one is fear of selfish human nature; the second proposition is uncertainty of other's intentions and policies. The third is that fear and uncertainty of other intentions should be unintentional. The fourth is that it produces unexpected and tragic

results for the state. The fifth is that psychology must play its part in exacerbation of the fear and threat. It is the fundamental of all human conflicts, is the sixth one (Butterfield, 1951, pp. 19-22).

## 1.8 Literature Review

The book written by Sanjay Upadhyaya, *The Backfire in Nepal: How India Lost Plot to China*, relations between New Delhi and Kathmandu deteriorated and hit the lowest point, despite economic and security dependence of both states. India sent foreign secretary to Kathmandu to give advice to the leaders there on formulation of constitution. The step of India backfired in Nepal and people considered it infringement in sovereignty. The book explained Sino-Nepal collaboration in economic and security domains and how India lost its influence during this period. Nepal also helped China to take strict measures against the people who are considered as insurgents in Tibet. Through this step Nepal emerged as a new Nepal in Beijing's foreign policy (Upadhyaya S. , The Backfire In Nepal: How India Lost Plot To China, 2021).

Ranjit Rae an ambassador of India to Nepal wrote in his book, *Kathmandu Dilemma: Resetting India-Nepal Ties* provides a historical overview of Indo-Nepal relations and how India protected borders of Nepal, provided economic aid and sold arms to the state. In addition, he answered the question of Indian Prime Minister Modi's that why Nepalese don't like India. People in Nepal dislike New Delhi's suggestions and advice on political, security and economic matters. They consider India does not respect sovereignty of Nepal and gains unparalleled privileges and benefits from bilateral agreements. India forced politicians in Kathmandu to take particular decisions regarding foreign and domestic policies. (Rae, 2021)

Dr. DB Subedi and Bikram Timilsina in their article, *Border Disputes between India and Nepal: Will India Act as a Responsible Rising Power?* Stated that, New Delhi is an emerging global power. Though, its approach to deal with neighboring states is based on dominance. The state focused on consolidation of power at core and periphery to be a great power at global level. The state desires to be a predominant power in South Asia and tries to balance external powers in the region. India followed

coercive and hegemonic policies in South Asia to exert its own influence in the region. Practically, the state prioritizes Indira doctrine to build relations with neighbor states. New Delhi failed to operationalize its so called neighborhood-first policy (Timilsina, Border Disputes Between India and Nepal: Will India Act as a Responsible Rising Power?, 2020).

Anshuman Behera in his article '*New Nepal and Its Threat Perception towards India*'; elaborate that since 1951, there is political turmoil in Nepal. It is common perception in masses and political elite that India has been directly involved in political engineering in the state. As S.D. Muni, who is expert in Nepal affairs, rightly mentioned, "any problem that arises between two close neighbors like India and Nepal or any other smaller South Asian country, is usually explained away in terms of India's bigness and its over bearing and big brotherly behavior" (Muni, 1996). Indo-Nepal relations are unequal in terms of economic progress, technological development, population explosion, and diplomatic activism. India and Nepal are parting on construction of road from Kodari to Kathmandu because the road connects Nepal with China. India considered it a security threat because she presumes its northern border is prone to China's attack through Nepal (Behera, 2019).

Gaana User in his article "*the Relationship Gone Wrong: An Insight into India-Nepal Relations*", India has opted coercive policy towards Nepal, and Nepal felt humiliated by India's big brother attitude. Nepal accused India for unofficial blockade of trade and transit routes in 2015, but New Delhi denied Kathmandu's claims and said it was Madhesis a marginalized community which blocked 1770 km boundary. The blockade had serious social and economic implications for Nepal. Policy makers in Kathmandu responded that they can protect their sovereignty and boundary and their neighbors must realize the fact. The blockade leads to anti- India sentiments in Nepal. China took the event as an opportunity and invested large capital in health and infrastructural projects in the country. China has diplomatic relations with Nepal but India has enjoyed more influence in the state. The undeclared blockade has shifted opinion of pro- Indian forces in Nepal and they are now more tilted towards China for economic linkages and investment. Nepali stakeholders always preferred to keep cooperative relations with India and Nepal's foreign and economic policies were dominated by India's. However, her

aggressive dealing with Nepal on economic and defense issues are pushing Nepal more close to China (User, 2020).

Lekhanath Pandey in his article '*Why are India and Nepal clashing over Disputed Himalayan Territory*' explains that India unilaterally inaugurated 80 km long motorway that passes through Lipu-Lekh, a disputed area that lies at a strategic three-way junction with Tibet and China. The road links India with Tibet and it is considered one of the shortest routes that link both states. India did not consult Nepal's government on construction of the road through disputed territory. Inauguration of the road starts a new round of diplomatic spat between two neighbors. Government of Nepal protested India's unilateral movement and anti-India public opinion prevails in streets of Kathmandu. The government issued new political map of Nepal that showed the disputed territory including the areas of Kalapani, Lipu-Lekh and Limpiyadhura within its borders. Nepal claimed these areas based on historical Sugauli treaty signed in 1816 at the end of Anglo-Nepalese war. According to the treaty Kali River recognized as Nepal's boundary with India and the area lying east of the river is Nepal's territory. In general elections of 1959, people inhabiting this disputed territory voted for Nepal, but India took control of these areas during Indo-China war in 1962 (*Why are India and Nepal clashing over disputed Himalayan territory.*, 2020).

Dushpita Das in his article "*towards a Regulated Indo-Nepal Border*", articulates that open borders lead to various sorts of cooperation and contention among states. As India and Nepal shares open borders. One the one hand, they have been great source of strong and unique relations between both nations. On the other hand, they become a reason of misunderstanding and trust deficit in bilateral relations. An open border between India and Nepal raises conflict of land and encroachment, illegal smuggling of drugs and humans; and spillover of domestic conditions. India is concerned that the open border allows easy access to Kashmiri insurgents, United Liberation Front of Assam, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, and the Kamtapur Liberation Organization. These groups have shifted their bases to Nepal and established links with Maoists in the country. Their basic objective is to establish a safe haven in territory of Nepal and extend support to numerous insurgent groups in the supply of arms and ammunitions to various insurgent groups operating in north-east India (Das, 2008).

Sohini Nayak in his article explains '*India and Nepal's Kalapani Border Dispute: An Explainer*' articulates that one of the prime factors of misunderstanding between two states is turbulent Himalayan rivers. These rivers gradually change their courses by submerging older territory and throwing up newer land. The submergence, destruction, and removal of border demarcations and encroachment into 'no-man's land' (Nayak S. , 2020) by people from either side add to the problem. Government of Nepal estimates that there are more than fifty disputed patches of land. These disputed spots are making of an area of approximately 60,000 hectares. However, Prominent among these are the ones relating to Kalapani (37,840 ha), Susta (14,860 ha), Mechi (1,600 ha), Tanakpur (222 ha), and Pashupatinagar, with both India and Nepal laying claim to some parts of these areas. However, officially, only Kalapani and Susta are regarded as disputed (Nayak S. , 2020).

Rushali Saha in article '*Exploring the Structural Challenges in India-Nepal Relations*' articulated cooperation and challenges between India and Nepal. India is largest investor and trade partner of Nepal. Manufacturing companies of India are major partners in banking, dry port, energy sector, and insurance department. India facilitates Nepal through open border and transit routes as the country surrounded by India from three sides. Both states have undertaken various connectivity linkages and promote people to people connection and economic development. Both states also signed Memorandum of Understanding to link Nepal with India through electrical rail track. Government in India planned to connect Kathmandu with Indian Ocean through inland waterways. India has contributed in development of infrastructure, health, water and community development. Moreover, government of India provides equipment and training to army of Nepal. Armies of both states performed joint military exercises. Nepal is India's biggest recipient of humanitarian assistance as it is prone to earthquakes. They have direct impact on livelihood of people in Nepal. A large number of Indians has been lived in Nepal as businessmen, traders, doctors and engineers. India is concerned about security and rights of these people. The above mentioned states are also part of several multilateral institutions such as SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal). Therefore, they are engaged in multilateral forums. Security of India is major concern for the state as its border is porous. India claims

that insurgents easily cross the border and cause a security threat for India. Nepal blames India for delaying development projects, political instability, and its economic blockade. Therefore, their relationships are governed by trust deficit. There is growing anti-India sentiments in public of Nepal that Indian government heavily involved in manipulation of their internal politics (Saha, 2020).

Rushali Saha in the Article “*Exploring the Structural Challenges in India-Nepal Relations*”, claims India’s unofficial blockade of Nepal in 2015 forced policy makers of Nepal to reconsider their dependence on India. India itself creates opportunity for China to fill power vacuum in Nepal created by her. Trade and economic activities of people were severely affected by Indian unofficial blockade. It created unfavorable opinion among people of Nepal about India. It creates an opportunity for China to address Nepalese concerns about China’s intentions. Later on, unilaterally India published a map which showed Kalapani as an Indian territory. Moreover, India inaugurated a road which passed through disputed territory. Government of Nepal protested the move through diplomatic channels. However, New Delhi dismissed Kathmandu’s concerns and refused to meet its delegation which visited India to discuss border issues.

Hindutva ideology is also contributing to deteriorate Indo-Nepal relations. Maoist government of Nepal is concerned about Hindu nationalist groups who have support of incumbent government to extend Hindu ideology beyond India’s borders. Hindu nationalist organization named as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), has strong links with the Hindu monarchy and has supported a Hindu state in Nepal. Pro-Hindu parties in Nepal had demanded to remove secular world from constitution in 2015. Government of Nepal fears that may Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh support a return of the Hindu royalist forces they long struggled to remove. Indian media promotes anti- Nepal sentiments which created opportunity for political parties of Nepal to forge public opinion against India to divert attention from domestic issues. Conflicting relations of both states have created intolerance towards six million Nepalese working and living in India. It has raised questions on common culture shared by both countries (Saha, 2020).

Nepal has formulated seven different constitutions in history which shows constitutional uncertainty

in the state. The constitutional assembly was failed to draft constitution and dissolved in 2012. The main reason to dissolve constitutional assembly in 2012 was that the major leaders of political parties failed to reach consensus on structure of federalism and they played identity as a political card. As first assembly dissolved, second assembly was held to draft constitution. Nepali politician was under pressure to formulate constitution on time. At the eleventh hour, foreign secretary of India S. Jayshankar, made visit to Nepal. His prime objective was to postpone constitution for broader consensus among various ethnic groups. Politicians of Nepal refused to accept Jayshankar's plan and constitution was promulgated on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015. It was serious blow to Indo-Nepal relations. India considered it Indo-Madhesi exclusive constitution. Indian government conveyed constitutional amendments to Nepali leaders that supported demands of Madhesi political leaders. Madhesi, a marginalized community of Nepal, considered that their basic rights were ignored in the constitution because they shared social, political and cultural links with India. They called out strike against the constitution to pressurize government. Supporters of Madhesi group seal Indo-Nepal border and Indian government did not intervene to control the situation. Though, they cut down exports to Nepal. With the passage of time the border sealing converted into unofficial blockade. The blockade hit Indo-Nepal relation severely. The blockade remained functional for more than three months. It led to severe humanitarian crisis (Aryal, 2019).

Nihar R Nayak in book "*Strategic Himalayas Republican Nepal and External Powers*", it is perceived in Nepal that India is supporting demand for Federalism in the country. Hilly people believe India is supporting "One Madhesh One Pradesh" and many suppose India is trying to balkanize the state. India initiated developmental projects in Terai region to undermine Maoists to take advantage of underdevelopment. Nepalese concerns regarding land encroachment by India. They accused India for illegal encroachment of almost 60,000 hectares. The people other than Madhesis accuse New Delhi supported the ethnic group and the state will intervene and occupy the area as Sikkim in 1974. Nationalist sentiments in Nepal highlight these issues in Indo-Nepal relations. Policy makers in Kathmandu are not happy with 1950 treaty of Peace and Friendship and desire to amend it. New Delhi is concerned about involvement of any other power in Himalayas. Security strategist in New Delhi considered India

understand batter security dynamics of the region and external powers should not be allowed to challenge India's predominance in the region. Democratic and stable Nepal favors India's security interests in the region; therefore, India facilitates political process there.

India used Terai people to protect its interest there. She also supported Madhesi politicians to keep the Maoists out of power. Shyam Saran visited Nepal in 2010 to make sure that Madhesis should not support any Maoist-led coalition government. Former Prime Minister of Nepal G.P. Koirala, indicated India's involvement in the Terai crisis, and stated if India and Nepal work jointly to resolve Madhesi crisis it would take minutes to end the crisis. It is evident that this perception promoted anti-Indian opinion in Nepal and created opportunity for China to replace India's influence. Although Madhesi links with India are more cultural than political. The hilly people look at Madhesi with suspicion because of their affinity towards India. It makes the situation more difficult. It is obvious that until Madhesi keep their connections with India they India will be viewed with suspicion by Nepalese (Nayak N. , 2009).

Vijay Gokhale in his article *India's Fog of Misunderstanding Surrounding Nepal–China Relations* explains that India has played its role in democratization process of Nepal. The state actively played its part to draft Delhi agreement which had paved the way for Maoists to join power corridor in Kathmandu. Maoists gained reasonable place in political system of the state. On one hand, India actively remained involved in political process of Nepal and mainly focused short-term interests in the state. On the other hand, China remained reluctant and focused on its long term interests in the region. In 2009, when Nepalese leaders outreach Beijing, India withdrew its political support to politicians in Kathmandu. India did not understand new approach in Kathmandu towards China. India was unwilling to realize the changing scenario of politics and tried to protect short term interests in the state at the cost of long term interests.

New Delhi has shifted its support from one political party in Nepal to the other. Through this whole process the state lost its allies but China developed new political relations and made friends in Kathmandu. The relations between New Delhi and Kathmandu suffered heavily during constitution crisis. The major cause of strained relations was India's bullying attitude towards its much smaller neighbor. Controversy

regarding unofficial blockade highlighted New Delhi's interference in political matters of Nepal. It created resentment in Nepal against India (Gokhale, 2021).

### **1.9 Research Methodology**

The basic characteristic of any empirical research document is its methodology selected by the researcher to answer the research questions and conclude it on the basis of these scientific methods (Michael, 1994). The core objective of research methodology is to demonstrate that the outcome is correct and the research has considered all the potential variables. Methodology differentiates between research and non-research document. The segment of research document establishes a link between the research problem and the methods selected to analyze the problem.

The research on India's quest for regional dominance: convergence and divergence of interests between the two states since 2015 used qualitative methods of research. Both primary and secondary data have been used to investigate and elaborate different aspects of the study. Research methodology for the study comprises of interviews of academia specialized in India, Nepal, South Asia and International Relations. Interview of Professor Feroz Hassan Khan, who is appointed in Department of National Security Affairs in Naval Postgraduate School in America, and Michael Kugelman, Deputy Director and Senior Associate for South Asia at Wilson Center, have contributed to understand India's quest for regional dominance and Indo-Nepal relations. The U.S based journalist, Sanjay Upadhyaya, enlightened me through interview with multiple domains of relations between the two states.

The secondary data included the official documents on treaties and other published work including books, research articles and reports etc. Research articles and books on the topic contributed in an understanding underlying bilateral relations between the two states.

## **1.10 Population**

In order to target the more relevant and reliable population, primary data has been obtained by holding interviews of academicians of International Relations specialized in South Asian politics and renowned journalists.

## **1.11 Data Collection**

Data collection is a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem and test the hypothesis. In this study, both types of data: primary and secondary data has been collected. Primary is collected through interviews of academicians of International Relations and members from think tanks. On the other hand, secondary data has been from collected relevant books, newspapers, magazines, and journals.

## **1.12 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical or logical techniques to describe, illustrate and evaluate data.

## Chapter Two

### Historical Background of Indo-Nepal Relations

#### 2.1 Suguali Treaty

Indo-Nepal relations are dated back to ancient times, long before independence of India, in 1947, and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Gurkha war had been fought between Nepal and British east India company from 1814-1816. The peace treaty named Suguali in 1816 had ended the war and the two warring parties established peaceful relations (Kumari & Kushwaha, 2019). The treaty had not only ended the war but also established a new course of Indo-Nepal bilateral conflicts and cooperation. The terms of the Suguali treaty were: friendly and peaceful relations between the East India Company and the king of Nepal; Kathmandu ceded its claims on one third of its territory, in the east Sikkim, in the west Kumaon and Garhwal kingdom, and in the south the Terai region (James, p. 73). However Nepal's sovereignty restored on much of Tarai territory to acknowledge its support to suppress so called Indian mutiny in 1857. In 1923, British government and Nepal signed the treaty of Friendship and peace. Independent status of the later state had been declared. Nepal was permitted to import military hardware from British India.

According to the treaty, the government of Nepal and all its successors have no claim on the territory that is located on west of the River Kali. The ruler in Nepal will never raise its concerns regarding who ever rule the territory. Ruler of Nepal will not be allowed to interfere in any matter of Sikkim. If Sikkim and Nepal have issues they should report to East India Company. Nepal was not permitted to take any step against Sikkim rulers. King of Nepal was not permitted to appoint any European, American or British citizen in his state without permission of Great Britain. East India Company suggested that ministries of each country should participate in the court of the other state. In this way both states would be able to develop peaceful relations. It helps in trust building measures taken by British India Company regarding the King of Nepal (Kumari & Kushwaha, 2019).

East India Company compelled Nepal to not claim its sovereignty on one third of its land. Gorkhas

were not satisfied with these terms of treaty. The company decided to pay money annually to compensate Nepalese loss. The people whose interests suffered because of territorial control of East India Company, they would get two lakh rupees annually from the company. However, the land was covered by forests and British labors get infected by malaria. Nepal helped East India Company to crush Spay Mutiny in India and received Tarai land from River Koshi to Rapti as a reward (Kumari & Kushwaha, 2019). After returning the land to the King of Nepal, British government suspended annual grant to Kathmandu.

## **2.2 An Overview of Indo-Nepal Relations prior to 2015**

As India got independence from British rule, the former state requested Nepal for military assistance to ensure law and order in the newly independent state. Kathmandu sent forces which were deployed in various locations to help in normalization of internal security situation. The assistance acted as a new step to strengthen bilateral relations. In 1949, communist China came into power. India entered into a treaty with Nepal to secure its Himalayan frontier. India wants to maintain Tibet as a buffer state between India and China, but China merged Tibet in its territory and introduced One China policy. India was not happy with this movement of China.

### **2.2.1 Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950**

The agreement between India and Kathmandu was named as Treaty of Peace and Friendship. The above-mentioned treaty consisted of ten articles. The first article was about friendly relations and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. The second was to inform each other about any conflict with neighbors which have impact on bilateral relations of the two states. The third article talked about granting diplomatic immunities to envoys as described in international law. The fourth article was about the appointment of consuls, Consuls-General and other consular agents who would be posted in various places as towns and ports. These agents should have valid authorization of appointments and they should enjoy reciprocal immunities in the host state. The fifth explained Nepal's freedom to import necessary security and

military equipment through India, but procedure to import military hardware should be designed through consultation of the two governments. The sixth article of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship was about providing a friendly token to citizens of both states in territory of India and Nepal. The citizens with token would be granted with concessions in industrial, economical and developmental projects in the host state. The seventh article was about agreement of both governments to grant reciprocal privileges to each other's nationals in terms of right to live, own property, and movement. The eighth article declared that all previous agreements and treaties should be null and void in which British government entered on behalf of India with Nepal before the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950. The ninth and tenth article explained about enforcement and denunciation of the treaty (India, 1950). However policy makers and intelligentsia of India and Nepal viewed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship through different prisms.

The process to formulate agreement raises many questions on intentions of government of India. Most of the objectionable provisions to Nepal were not written in the content of the treaty. They were included in secret letters. These letters were exchanged between authorities in India and Nepal. The content and objectives of the letters kept secret and they were not even attached to the treaty when it was registered with the United Nations. In 1951, a program called The Nepal-India Economic Cooperation was inaugurated to support developmental projects inside Nepal. In addition, in 1954, government of India introduced Indian Aid Mission (Embassy). India heavily invested in economics and developmental projects in Nepal. India owned largest share, around forty percent, of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nepal. India enjoyed monopoly in manufacturing, banking, power, education, insurance, and tourism sectors. Almost more than one hundred and fifty joint ventures were working in Kathmandu. As Nepal is India-locked country, almost two-thirds of its total exports and imports destined to New Delhi. The state is entirely dependent on Indian for trade and transit routes. Therefore, both states signed multiple treaties to settle disputes related to trade and transit routes.

#### **2.2.2 Trade and Transit**

The first treaty for commerce and trade was signed by two states in 1950. This treaty exposed India's

objectives to control economic development of Nepal. The trade and transit treaty paid little attention to transit because Nepal had just one per cent trade with rest of the whole world. The first article of the treaty articulated that the government in Delhi permitted unrestricted right of commercial transit for all goods through India. However, the right was completely restricted to commercial transit and was not extended to persons. More restrictions were included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> article of this treaty. Article number five of the treaty dictated Nepal to levy taxes on same goods of other countries more than India. It was evident from this article that Nepal did not enjoy independent trade policy with any third country. On the other hand Nepal's export to India was subject to duties to raise its price in comparison with India's products. India followed protectionist policy against Kathmandu in Trade and Transit treaty. India passed laws regarding truck licensing, labor employment and levy imposition exclusively discriminate transit traffic of Nepal (Glassner, 2003, p. 43).

The agreement between India and Nepal regarding transit became inefficient after United Nations passed law for rights of land-locked countries. In 1960, India and Nepal reviewed their trade and transit agreement and signed a new agreement. India granted few concessions to Nepal in agreement of trade and transit. However, Nepal wanted to get freedom in transit and to separate the trade and transit treaties with India. India promised to ease transit policies for Nepal. However, it remained a serious issue between the two states. Government of India introduced a bond for third countries exports to Nepal. The value of this bond was six hundred times the price of imports. Imports of luxury goods increased in Nepal. These luxury goods also made their way in Indian market. India sought to curtail entry of foreign commodities in Indian market. Political leaders in India accused Nepal for illegal smuggling of foreign commodities in the market of the state. Illegal smuggling of Nepalese imports in Indian markets negatively impacted relations of both states. India's policy to demand bond on imports of Nepal was one of the major hurdles in transit facilities for the later state (Glassner, 2003, pp. 43-44). Therefore, leaders in Nepal were not satisfied with India's concessions.

The agreement had to expire in 1970. Both states started negotiation to review existing treaty. India and

Nepal signed another trade and transit treaty in 1971. This treaty gave birth of different issues in trade and transit relations of the states. Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India in 1971. However, government of India agreed to provide more than one transit facility to Nepal. King Birendra was successful in bargaining with Indira Gandhi for increase in railway transport for trade and warehouse space in Calcutta port. Resultantly leaders of both states tried to improve economic relations of the states. In 1974, relations between the two states deteriorated again and PM Indira Gandhi took tough measures on its smaller neighbor. The treaty expired in 1976 and Kathmandu requested United Nations Developmental Program to help the former state in designing a new trade agreement with India (Glassner, 2003, p. 46).

Imposition of heavy duties by government of India and complicated procedures for transit resulted in long delays and high costs for Nepal's trade (glassner, 2003). Unnecessary checking of documents to stop smuggling of goods in Indian market, affected negatively the transit traffic of Nepal. Inspection processes were not proved effective to curb smuggling of goods in India. However Delhi continued discrimination policies to influence Nepal's economic relations with India and the rest of the world.

Nepal demanded for two separate trade and transit treaties because these two are related but completely different fields. The subjects under trade were exclusively bilateral nature between India and Nepal; however, transit entailed minimum three countries (Glassner, 2003, p. 49) . India promoted its economic influence in Nepal in bargaining because of transit. It acted as an irritant in Kathmandu and anti-India sentiments started to develop in the country. Two rounds of negotiations, one in New Delhi and the other in Kathmandu failed to resolve issues. India was not ready for delinking (trade and transit). In these circumstances, Nepal internationalized the issue to gain global sympathy and the king Birendra of Nepal visited Soviet Russia and China. Habitually India considered this issue as a bilateral and reacted fiercely to Nepal's efforts to create sympathy for its interests at international level. Resultantly, both states restricted free movement of people along the border area.

Kathmandu and New Delhi came to negotiation table when Bhartiya Janta Party came into power in

India. Newly elected Prime Minister Moraji Desai visited Nepal in 1977. The government of India finally agreed for two separate trade and transit treaties on the condition that commodities of Kathmandu should not en route to Indian market (Subedi, 2007). Although these treaties encountered with complex transit procedures, inefficient infrastructure and security interests of India. The treaty was enforced until 1989.

### 2.2.3 1989 Crisis

In 1989, the agreements regarding anti-smuggling, trade and imported Petroleum Oil Lubricants (POL) goods all were supposed to be expired. Therefore, India manipulated the situation to put maximum pressure on Nepal. Resultantly, 1989 crisis emerged. Nepal wanted to re-sign separate trade and transit treaties but India refused to negotiate. Then, Foreign Minister Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya stated in an interview for *The New York Times* that “Kathmandu wanted to end its special relationship with India, which had become one of economic dependence,” as well as that, “it is in our interest to let interdependence grow” and “it is in our interest to see that our dependence on one country does not grow (Crossette, 1989).”

Both neighbors took support from public opinion to protect their national interests. New Delhi closed all bilateral trade crossing points (except two) and fifteen transit routes, it lead to economic lockdown in Kathmandu. It had created extreme shortage of basic commodities, raw materials and fuel. Most of the industries had closed due to this blocked. There were huge gas lines of men and women at gas stations, but gas and oil were not available for transport and domestic use. Transport industry was almost shut down in capital. There was extreme shortage of petroleum products and people were unable to move in between rural and urban areas to get access to basic commodities. For domestic fuel forests were stripped off, even protected trees had been cut to meet the demands of cooking. Cutting of protected trees in Nepal had negative impact on climate change which affected eighteen million people in the country (Crossette, 1989).

Lockdown remained valid for months. National parliament of Nepal criticized its own government for inefficiency, corruption and mismanagement of the issue. Government in Kathmandu declared that if the state compelled to accept one treaty it would be the transit treaty. Lastly, Congress party was defeated in December

1989 elections in India and New Front came into power.

Security interests of New Delhi and opposition to monarchy system of Nepal dominated the trade and transit treaties. In the beginning of 1990, democratic forces came into surface and they gathered people for democratic cause. In April 1990, democratic government in Nepal established and it promulgated new constitution to restrict power of the king. The newly elected prime minister of Nepal visited India in June 1990 and made many concessions to New Delhi. In return, India enforced trade and transit treaty of 1987 and started negotiations for formulation of a new treaty and relations between two countries normalized after India's backed government came into power.

In December 1991, new trade and transit treaty was signed with little modification in 1978 treaty. However, the treaty did not fulfill international standards for transit of land-locked states as mentioned in 1982 International Convention on the Law of Seas (glassner, 2003). However, through this new treaty, New Delhi and Kathmandu came closer to cooperate and resolve transit differences peacefully. This treaty remained enforced till 1998 and renewed for next seven years. It eased several documentation hurdles for trade and transit of Nepal and only sensitive commodities were subject to heavy duties.

India also granted permit to use Mumbai and Kandla ports on the Arabian Sea for transit. In addition, New Delhi agreed to provide facilities at Raxaul border post for Kathmandu to export goods to America and Europe. Both neighbors were agreed to implement developmental projects related to Rail-link. In this project, they inaugurated a twelve kilometers long rail line. It connected the border post of India which was used to export in United States of America and Europe through a port in Nepal.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, New Delhi and Kathmandu took several measures to settle longstanding issues related to transit facilities. In 2002 and 2009 the trade and transit treaties were re-signed. Though, there were number of impediments in the way of smooth transit (Nisha Tneja, 2015). Cargos reached Kolkata port were subjected to inspection, insurance and clearance from Indian agencies till 2014. This procedure was costly and time consuming.

## **2.3 overview of political relations between india and nepal prior to 2015**

Nepal was ruled by Rana family. The family had cooperative relations with British in India and in return the later supported family's rule in the country. When British left India, exiled groups of people of Nepal started anti-Rana movement in India. India exerted pressure on Rana dynasty to bring political changes in the country. Nepal was considered as a second frontier to safeguard India from any political or military intervention. To protect this second frontier, Indian leaders took not only economic but also political measures. For New Delhi's China dilemma, policy makers in former capital made efforts to keep Kathmandu under India's influence. For this reason, India signed Peace and Friendship treaty of 1950 with Rana regime. Most of the economic, security and strategic provisions of this treaty were aligned to India's interests. This treaty put compulsion on both signatory countries "to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighboring state likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two governments ( The text of the 1950 treaty and letters are in Raj Kumar Jha, The Himalayan Kingdoms In Indian foreign policy, 1986)."

Written documents were exchanged between Nehru and Rana's government. Content of these documents kept secret between governments and it was significant part of Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950. According to these documents both governments were agreed to not tolerate any action of a third country which undermine security of the other state. If any of two states was under threat, both states should consult each other and took counter measures. All these terms favored India's dominance in Nepal in terms of its economic and defense foreign policy. In return, India supported Rana's rule in Kathmandu. In Nepal, there was a movement against Rana dynasty which ruled the state for 104 years. Then the hereditary Prime Minister of the state put his opponents in jail or in exile. The king of the state named Tribhuvan, was a firm supporter of anti-Rana movement. With the support of other forces, he tried to overthrow hereditary rule but failed. He along with his family took refuge in Indian embassy at Kathmandu.

The Prime Minister, Mohan Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana, reacted fiercely and called cabinet meeting

and crowned three-year-old grandson of King Tribhuvan as a King of Nepal. Three days later, two Indian airplanes landed in Nepal and the king and his family flew to India. New Delhi formally welcomed the exiled king. Indian Prime Minister Nehru, suggested reforms to Nepal's Darbar to overt political crisis. However, Prime Minister of Nepal resisted proposed reforms to overcome crisis. Resultantly, it augmented internal and external resentment against Rana's regime. Nehru announced that India would not recognize as a legitimate leader to the new crowned King (Leo E. Rose, 1971).

The government of India pressurized Mohan Shamsher Rana through Nepali congress for reforms. On one hand, Nepali congress was psychologically and materially incapable of launching successful campaign against the regime. On the other hand, the congress did not possess enough military equipment to launch an effective armed revolution (Leo E. Rose, 1971).

In this situation, New Delhi proposed an Indian Memorandum on December 8, 1950. According to the memorandum, there should be an elected constituent assembly which drafted a new constitution for the country and the Rana would remain prime minister. The King Tribhuvan should restore as a King and Nepali Congress would form an interim government. Consequently, in New Delhi negotiations had been commenced between Prime minister of Nepal and the congress. Both warring parties signed a pact named "Delhi compromise" (Leo E. Rose, 1971).

India remained involved in internal political matters of Nepal during rule of Tribhuvan through Delhi compromise. Prime Minister Nehru claimed that the state preferred a middle way for strengthening of democratic forces in Kathmandu. He ensured that the policy to draft Delhi compromise was necessary because any foreign invasion in Kathmandu posed a dire threat to survival of India and New Delhi would not tolerate external power in Indian sub-continent (Dharmadasani, 1976). India's heavily-handed interference in Nepal's internal matters gave birth to anti-India rhetoric in various sections of the country.

Indian ambassador C.P.N Singh was most prominent figure to intervene in internal matters of Nepal in post Delhi compromise era. He was regarded as most influential single person in Kathmandu (Leo E. Rose, 1971).

Usually, he intervened in functions of Nepal's government; even he was used to dominate administration at district level. To manipulate internal politics of the country, he used political leaders against each other. He was the main adviser of King Tribhuvan to control internal politics of the country. Even, an adviser-cum-secretary of the King was an Indian administrator. Due to Ambassador C.P.N Singh political role, he became an irritant for most of the people of Nepal. Ambassador C.P.N Singh must be replaced if India wanted to keep friendly relation with Nepal, became a slogan in Kathmandu. B. P. Koirala, the prime minister of Nepal, described behavior and interference of advisers and military personals of New Delhi: "The Indian advisers and military personnel in Nepal have become arrogant and are behaving just as the American conquerors behaved in Japan (Parmanand, 1982)."

In 1951, Rana's era of rule ended but he remained prime minister of the country. Democratic process had been started in the country through revolutionary Nepali Congress, though; India extended its influence in political matters of Nepal. It increased anti-India sentiments in large parts of the country. What is claimed by India a middle way to establish democracy in Kathmandu was practically India's advice to handle foreign policy, security, administrative and political matters of the state. King Tribhuvan was completely dependent on India's advice to run affairs of the state. An Indian military team advised Nepal's government to reduce its armed persons from 25000 to 6000. Added to this, Indian soldiers were given access to Northern borders of Nepal. Their check-posts were established in northern region (Thapa, 2019). They completely control northern border of the country. Communication between northern border and the capital was controlled by India. It created extreme resentment among local people, military personnel, business men and politicians against role of India's military in northern region of Nepal. King Mahendra, after death of the King Tribhuvan, took cautious measures to lessen country's dependence on New Delhi. In 1959, Nepali congress won the general elections of the country. The government of Nepal also endorsed the king's policy (1955-1972) to manage good relations with all countries including China. B.P Koirala signed joint communiqué in 1959 with Prime Minister Nehru. Prime Minister of Nepal came under fierce criticism because people in the

country viewed this joint communiqué favored national interests of India (Leo E. Rose, 1971).

King Mahendra tried to develop good relations with China and it was warmly welcomed by the later. In September 1956, both states signed a pact to establish not only friendly relations but also to increase trade between the two countries. This treaty was ratified in 1958. In 1960, king Mahendra overthrew the government of B.P Koirala and arrested him because of India's role in drafting of Nepal's foreign policy (Leo E. Rose, 1971, pp. 219-231). Leaders in New Delhi were angry with the King and considered his action as illegitimate because he overthrew the government which gave free hand to Indian nationals in the country. Convergence of interests between Nepal and China developed because of India's policies to control political and economic affairs of Nepal. China and Nepal agreed to open a road link between Tibet and Kathmandu. On this occasion, in 1964, China's president Mao Zedong stated to Nepal's delegation, "Once these roads are open India may be a bit more respectful towards you (Long Live Mao Tse-tung's Thoughts , 1969)."

In response of this statement of China's president, the members of delegation nodded in agreement. The words of President Mao indicated the strategic importance of Kathmandu's link with Tibet through road. Nepal and China opened this road link when Indo-Nepal relations were critically low.

King Berindra the successor of king Mahendra, also tried hard to reduce India's influence on Nepal and developed friendly relations with other states. During King Berindra's era, India extended support to members of Nepali Congress to challenge the rule of the king. However, his regime ended in 1990 because of he did not introduce policies in his country advised by India under the treaty of trade and transit (Mishra, 2004). In January 1990, a resolution passed at the national conference of the Nepalese Congress which was attended by delegates from India and the members of the United Left Front. A strategy was drafted to launch revolutionary campaign. Nepalese establish democratic government and powers of the King was restricted to ceremonial head of the state. One of the most active parties to establish democratic rule in Nepal was the Nepali Congress Party. It was established in Calcutta (janjua, 2007). Most of its founding members had closed links with Indian politicians because they also took part in India's independence movement. The party

launched its revolutionary armed campaign against rulers in Nepal from its bases in India. When this party came into power in 1951, it depends heavily on New Delhi's advice to run affairs of the state and it ignored India's interference in Kathmandu's domestic and foreign policy.

Maoist insurgency had been started in Nepal in 1955. They started an armed struggle against the government. Nepal always claimed that New Delhi provided shelter to Maoists leaders. In 1998, politicians in Nepal used nationalism as a tool to force India to withdraw its forces from Nepal which was stationed since 1962. Maoists did not participate in anti-India protests and they held secret meetings with Indian Maoists leaders in Kolkata in the same year. Political leaders and media of Nepal became very suspicious about India's role in Maoist insurgency (janjua, 2007). Activists of the insurgent group pressurized the government to end presence of soldiers of United States in the state because India wanted to keep its dominance in Nepal.

India was also involved in post 2005 political crisis of Nepal. King Gyanendra enforced emergency in Kathmandu. India supported Nepali Congress and Maoist communist party to establish democratic system in the country. Indian leaders played active role in culminating the role of monarchy in Nepal. They favored political leaders in the government of Nepal which prioritized India's interest in the state. Intelligence reports in New Delhi mentioned that there was a huge smuggling of weapons from Indian bordered states to the Maoist insurgent groups to launch offensive campaign against the King. Indian leaders made sure that Maoist insurgents must be part of political democratic process in Nepal because it would inspire India's Maoist groups to be part of main-streaming political process of New Delhi. The later state supported a 12-point agreement between National Political Parties of Nepal and the Maoist Communist Party in 2004. The agreement proved a complete process how to formulate democratic political system. Through this agreement, again India became a most dominant player in internal politics of Nepal. Diplomatic envoys of India hardly pay attention to principals of diplomacy and interfere in political and administrative procedures of the country (Adhikari, 2012).

After 2008 elections in Nepal, there was widely spread claims that India did not accept Maoist party as the largest political party in the country because of the former ideological differences. When Communist party came into power, it also accused India for its interference in political affairs of the state India involved in maneuvering practices in Nepal just to keep instability in country and pursued its own interests. Madhav Kumar came into power in 2009 because of India's support to him (Adhikari, 2012). Madhesis also support Madhav Kumar's political party which opposition in Nepal believed New Delhi wanted to replace the previous government. In 2011, Maoists assumed power again in the country. During this period both states revived cooperative relations and high level exchanges.

#### **2.4 Overview of Defense Relation between Indo-Nepal Prior to 2015**

Security has always been a core aspect of Indo-Nepal relations. India followed British India policy in Nepal in terms of defense relations. Policy makers in New Delhi viewed Nepal through lens of security. In 1950, there was convergence of interests in terms of security in both states. Nepal and India was concerned about China's policy to control Tibet and integrate it as its integral part in 1949. Nepal was concerned about its territorial independence and India wanted to secure its northern border with Nepal. To promote India's interest in the state, the former state signed a Peace and Friendship treaty in 1950 with Nepal.

According to one of the clause of Peace and Friendship treaty both states should not employ any foreigner which would be a security threat to other state (Garver, 1991). Moreover, if Nepal wanted to buy weapons from other states, it should be consulted with India. In 1951, India employed its wireless operators along Sino-Nepal border. In this way New Delhi was able to get direct intelligence access across the border. In 1952, India employed an India Military Mission in Nepal to train Nepalese army. A statement issued by the government of Nepal, the military mission should stay for only one or less year. However, Indian military personnel stayed 18 years in Nepal (Thapa, 2019). The purpose of military mission was not only to modernize Nepal's army but also to maximize India's influence in the state. The Indians in Nepal convinced the decision makers in the state that K.I. Singh could mount an armed attack from China and the government in

Kathmandu would be replaced by Chinese communist revolutionary government. To protect Nepal and India from communist China, India established 18 check-posts along Nepal-China border which were operated by Indian army. During King Mahendra regime, this mission was criticized because of its interference in defense policy of Nepal. This military mission in 1958 was named as the Indian Military Training and Advisory Group (IMTAG).

In 1965, India signed an agreement with Nepal regarding supply of weapons to the country. The agreement gave India a complete monopoly to export arms to Nepal. In 1970, issues emerged between two states when Nepal demanded from India to withdraw its military persons from the state. In 1988, relations between New Delhi and Kathmandu were deteriorated because of Nepal's import of military weapons from China. New Delhi was the only arms exporter; however the state could not meet the demands of Nepal. In 1972, 1976 and 1980s, Nepal requested India for aircrafts and anti-aircraft guns but New Delhi denied the demand. India wanted to keep special security relations with Nepal but Kathmandu insisted for establishment of peaceful zone and neutrality of Nepal. India imposed economic blockade on Nepal to bring it to accept India's demands. Indian government spokesman said: "Be prepared to reciprocate if you want special privileges (News, 1989)."

In 1988, Rajiv Gandhi's special envoy flew to Nepal. He asked to King Birendra for assurance that Kathmandu would not import arms from Beijing and already imported arms should not be used against India. The king assured the envoy that the imported arms were to maintain internal security of the state and they would not be used against India. He also mentioned that Nepal is a sovereign state and could purchase ammunitions from any country to maintain internal security of the state. Nepal's military personnel went to India for training. Both states have dated back military relations.

Army officials of India and Nepal have been paid visits in each other's countries to build strong defense relations since 1950. Each army chief of Kathmandu is supposed to visit India after its appointment as early as possible. Historically defense relations are more significant between the two states. In 1965, both

India and Nepal signed defense agreement. Since then both states established a tradition to honor each other's Chief of Army as 'honorary general'. Army persons of Nepal get training in India under multiple defense training and counter-terrorism courses. Military persons of Nepal have closed links with Gorkha regiments in India. Due to Gorkha soldiers in Indian army both states have enjoyed personnel and family relations between armies of the states. India accepted the request of Kathmandu to help modernization of state army and provision of armaments. New Delhi granted defense stores to the army of Nepal in 2007 to modernize the institution (Chauhan L. G., 2021). However, officials were not happy with India's support in modernization because Kathmandu requested in 1991, and New Delhi helped in 2007.

In 2011, both states agreed to conduct bilateral military exercise to strengthen defense relations. First joint military exercise in which 30 men from each side participated. At primary level the main focus of exercise was jungle and counter-insurgency. However, annually this military exercise updates skills and different aspects of war are under-observation. Two countries mainly focused on jungle, terrain warfare and counter-terrorism approaches. Army personals are also given lectures on different war fare tactics, selection of weapons and techniques. In addition, both sides share experiences in strategies to counter-insurgency in different conditions.

In 2013, New Delhi and Kathmandu conducted major military exercise in which almost 400 military persons participated. This exercise was unique in its nature because it mainly focused on disaster management and how military respond to any disaster in the state (Chauhan L. G., 2020). Joint military exercises played central role in understanding and developing cooperative military relations between the two states. New Delhi wants to establish its monopoly in military training and export of arms for defense of Nepal.

## Chapter Three

### **India's Quest for Regional Dominance through Hegemony: An Analysis of Approaches**

The term hegemony defined by Jeroen Warner as, “the leadership by a single stronger partner over other less strong, but still autonomous partners, undertaken for the mutual benefit of all parties concerned” and adds it is a struggle for authority always having some relationship with power (Warner, 2006). According to definition of hegemony India is the strongest state in South Asia in terms of military, economy and technology. Other states in South Asia are relatively smaller in geography, population and gross domestic product. India as a stronger state seeks to establish leadership on its autonomous neighbors. Powerful states establish leadership on other states for development and progress of all partners. To gain legitimacy for this sort of leadership always linked with power. Through different elements of power states get legitimacy of its leadership in global and regional level. However, in case of South Asia, smaller states in the region consider India's leadership is not in their interests because the state prioritizes its security interests over regional cooperation and economic development.

The concept ‘hegemony’ in international relations has been classified into four different approaches: the conventional approach, the neoliberal approach, the Gramscian approach and the radical approach in accordance with theories of International Relations.

#### **3.1 Conventional Approach**

According to Conventional approach, hegemony is a state in which one state is more powerful than the other to dominate regional or international political and security structure. In this case, two states are not equally powerful to control affairs at international or regional stage (Giplin, 1981). The state which has relative advantage of natural resources, technology, military might, economic development, human resources, effective diplomacy and cultural or religious influence, has the capability to influence other states. This relatively more powerful state is called hegemon. Therefore, the hegemon collectively has to dominate

international market and global resources and defensive capabilities (Ikenberry, 1990).

### **3.2 Neo-liberal approach**

The other approach which defined hegemony referred as the neoliberal approach. This approach emerged from the neoliberal theory of International Relations. The core concept of this approach is entirely different from conventional hegemonic approach. It criticized the conventional approach. According to this approach open borders and free markets are more important than military might (Lewis, 1973). Development of new institutions, in 1980s, as international and regional organizations emerged a challenge to the neoliberal theorists. Neoliberal hegemonic theorists claimed that global regimes have independent influence at global political affairs. In international arena hegemonic powers have established global regimes but these regimes work independently to promote open borders and free market. Proponents of neoliberal approach argued that if hegemonic power which established the system collapsed, still international system would continue to function. Certainly, a hegemon at first place creates a particular international system; gradually the system itself controls power of the hegemon. Therefore, neoliberals focused on the subject how hegemony operates in international arena (Keohane, 1984).

### **3.3 Gramscian approach**

The third approach to conceptualize hegemony is Gramscian approach. It has roots in Antonio Gramsci's notion of Hegemony. According to Gramsci control has been classified into two groups. Power has been classified into two types: one the one hand exercise of military and coercion. On the other hand hegemony and dominance. In case of hegemony, ruling elite do not focus on their personal interests, however; they diffuse their interests with others, to whom they rule in society, and protect wider interests of all people. In this manner, it creates consensus (Gramsci, 1993). If academia and politicians are interested in operation of hegemony in global arena, it should be viewed through lens of totality.

In conventional approach operationalization of hegemony is viewed through state-centric paradigm of international politics which is completely based on nationalism of that particular state. Hence, neo-Gramscian

raised questions on the conventional approach to hegemony. Antonio analyzed the subject through social relation. According to him, asocial class which seeks to establish a new order, it drafts universal norms. With the help of these norms, it creates common interests of those who are ruled and those who rule. In this way, hegemon make sure that its interests must align with others in the society. If hegemon prefers consensus of those who are ruled then hegemonic order would be stable at international level. States also used coercive measures to acquire or maintain its status quo as a hegemon.

Robert Cox defined the term, at global stage; hegemony is not only a hierarchy of power among states, but also political, economic and social principles which shaped behavior of states and non-state actors across the borders to strengthen the dominant mode of production. These principles are integral part of international, regional organizations and institutions to shape behavior of actors at different political stages (Cox, 1993, pp. 42-46). Domination is second type of control which based on coercion. This approach placed concept of hegemony in transnational forces which are supposed to control mode of production in global production chain. In terms of control over markets and production, the Gramscian regarded this hegemony as consent not coercion. Hegemony is a combination of consent over common interests which shadow coercion. Coercion is a dormant part of hegemony (Cox, 1993, p. 52).

### **3.4 Radical approach**

The fourth approach to discuss hegemony is called radical approach. Its proponents were inclined towards post-structuralism theory. Prominent philosophers of this approach are E. Laclau, C. Mouffe, M. Hardt and A. Negri. Their work is inspired by Michel Foucault, philosopher of post-structuralism. However, these scholars have divergent opinion about concept of hegemony. Hegemony as a concept must be accepted as an important global project. It consists of a set of rules which are emerged from social actors in the beginning but work independently from those forces (Localau, 2000). However, hegemony is completely dependent on powers which produce it. Its survival is completely dependent on capability of those actors to protect it from any anti-hegemony practices.

The project of hegemony is an integral part of rules and practices that are established by an individual. According to M. Hardt and Negri, hegemony is not only to control political, economic and markets dimensions of states. However, it also shapes social life at an individual level (Negri, 2000, p. 25). These philosophers placed hegemony at an individual level not among powerful actors in politics.

### **3.5 Approaches to Establish Hegemony**

Characteristics of hegemonic power in global politics are classified in two groups by scholars. One type of hegemony is established on material motives and the other group based on objective ideas. Consequently, it combines two approaches, conventional and Gramsican, together.

Ikenberry and Kupchan argues that a hegemonic state influence and dominate over other states through two approaches. One of them is to manipulate economic and political motives of other states through soft (negotiations or economic incentives) and hard power (threat to attack). The other is to change concrete ideas and values of ruling elite of other societies. A hegemonic power exercises its control on other states through socialization of its own cultural beliefs in other societies (Kupchan, 1990).

The two approaches to exercise hegemony on other states are interlinked with each other. Each approach has its own pros and cons. To establish hegemony on the basis of threats and incentives is entirely dependent on control of the hegemon on global material resources and gradually it proves costly. The hegemonic order which is built on socialization of values and norms makes the order stable and less costly (Ikenberry, 1990, p. 287) for the hegemon.

### **3.6 Hegemony as Movement of Power**

To understand hegemony as movement of power, “As a movement of power between various actors in the system, there is a dire need to construct relationship between power and those who exercised it, objected it or make it possible” (Antoniades, 2008, p. 8). The power which is outside of the subject is related to arms and ammunition. On other hand, the power which influence interior composition of the subject; it is related to ideas and beliefs and is called “inside to it” (Antoniades, 2008, p. 8).

If the objective of hegemon is to influence external behavior of its object, it attacks on their external attributes. If objective of hegemon is to manipulate their internal identity, it attacks on internal attributes of its object. Under the domain of International Relations, there are four movements of power which lead to four different types of hegemony in international system. In an international order two categories, one is “in/out” and “inside/outside” (Antoniades, 2008, p. 8), determines the movement of power.

In	Out
<b>Inside</b>  Hegemony is explained as a scattered concept. It is a tool of power and its core objective is to dominate and rule masses from inside.	 Hegemony is described as social phenomenon. The core objective of it is to create social harmony within international politics. It promotes harmony despite presence of multiple distinctive cultures and systems.
<b>Outside</b>  Hegemony is a specific apparatus to create shared beliefs. Through these common beliefs secure dominant position in global politics through consensus.	 Hegemony is defined as having capabilities to exercise power to dominate world politics

Table to describe four types of hegemony (Antoniades, 2008, p. 8)

In first category of the table, **inside/in** hegemony is conceptualized as a diffused strategy of power

which influence individual from inside. In this case movement of power is in upward trajectory to secure dominance over societies. The next category is ‘**inside/out**’. In this category, hegemon does not target any subject to influence through values. In this strategy, hegemon attract others to accept its values but it does not use power to socialize its beliefs. It favors co-existence with diverse groups. It dominates international relations through consensus with competitors (Antoniades, 2008, p. 10).

The next movement of power is **outside/in**. In this movement, power moves in downward trajectory. The hegemon exercised its power to influence masses of its target. The main objective of this approach is to influence belief of other actors in hegemonic order. If they support these values and norms of the hegemon, it makes hegemonic order stable and enduring. If other actors in hegemonic order don’t support values of the hegemon, the hegemonic order is supposed to be collapsed (lukes, 1974, pp. 21-25). The fourth approach is **outside-out**. In this category movement of power is from hegemon to other states or actors in international politics. It is not concerned about values or norms but to compel other actors to do, what they otherwise are not supposed to do on their own (Dahl, 1957, pp. 202-203).

### **3.7 Regional Hegemony in International Relations**

Regional great powers or regional hegemon has emerged an important topic of discussion in international relations. Regional hegemon is defined as a ‘regional leading power’ (Nolte, 2006). The regional great power is part of that specific region, have power capabilities more than any other state in the region and exert influence on other states in the region. It also convinces other regional and global powers through its capacity and capabilities to accept its most dominant position in the region. According to John Mearsheimer, when states acquire status of regional hegemony, they try to prevent other internal and external actors to exert influence in that region. To extend their area of influence, they seek to divide other regions in competing regional powers. In this way they become capable to exert influence in other regions too (Mearsheimer J. J., 2001, p. 42).

### **3.7.1 The United States as Regional Hegemon and Its Approaches to Hegemony**

In nineteenth century the U.S emerged as a regional power in 'Western Hemisphere' (Mearsheimer J. J., 2001, p. 42). At first stage, they purchased or conquered surrounding states and merged them as its units. The states that opposed their merging with the U.S, the later punished them through military means. After independence the U.S adopted policy of expansion in the region. Its population growth was tremendous. At second stage, they pushed European powers out of North America. President James Monroe in his message to congress that the U.S would not interfere in European wars and did not accept any interference of European powers in American continent to establish colonies over independent states. To ensure its position as a hegemon in the region, during period of 1897 to 1934 the U.S had used military power more than thirty times in West Indies to control their domestic policies (Smith, 1996, pp. 52-53).

In 1904, due to worst economic situation the President Theodore Roosevelt claimed that the U.S held a great authority on internal and external affairs of the states in its neighbor. It was a clear message to Europe to stay away from the regional power structure which was dominated by the U.S. The state intervened in political and economic affairs of its southern neighbors since nineteenth century. Even in globalized world, despite the U.S claims to establish relations based on equality, its neighbor states are not independent to pursue policies which minimize the U.S influence in these countries. The state militarily intervened in Panama, Haiti and many other states in the region to promote its interests and maintain its dominance on them (Lake, 2006, pp. 25-26). The doctrine was drafted by the Great Britain to stop Continental powers and Russia to establish colonies in America. The U.S maintained hegemony in the region and exploit multi-polar order at global level to acquire power. Geography of the U.S kept great powers out of the region to question regional dominance of the state. Other states in Western Hemisphere were not materially and militarily strong enough to challenge the U.S regional hegemony.

### **3.7.2 Russia as a Regional Hegemon in CISN and Its Approaches in Post-Cold-War Era**

In post-cold war, Russia established its 'regional hegemony in Commonwealth of Independent States.

The whole central Asian region was conquered by Russia before gaining status of super power in 1945, through its expansionist policies. The state directly or indirectly ruled Eastern Europe and kept the region under its influence. During cold war, interference of other Western powers was not permitted in the region. The state maintained its dominance through consensus and coercive means. In post-cold war, the Soviet Russia lost its territory, population, economic and military infrastructure. There was a hot debate in Russia how to gain status of a great power in competing international politics, after its collapse. President Vladimir Putin increased economic and military capabilities of Russian federation. To acquire a status of great power and to establish hegemony on Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia signed security and economic pacts with the states. In addition, the state intervened militarily in Georgia (2008) and in Ukraine (2014) to ensure its hegemony in the region.

### **3.7.2.1 Georgia**

In 2008, Russian army intervened in Georgia and separated two parts of the country. Russia viewed Georgia as a state under the complete influence of Russia. However, clash of interests emerged between Kremlin and Tbilisi. Policy makers in Tbilisi favored western democratic form of government and sought to join NATO alliance. If Russia let it happen, it would raise question on legitimacy of Russian hegemony in the region. Russia viewed Georgia's policy as a security threat and encirclement of the U.S and West through NATO in Russian near-abroad region (Seskuria, 2021). Therefore, it punished Tbilisi through military, fought five-day war and deprived Georgia from its two parts. Resultantly, Georgia was not awarded with 'Membership Action Plan' (Seskuria, 2021) by NATO countries and left without any security commitment by the NATO. Through Georgia crisis, Russia gave a strong message to the West that do not interfere in Russia's near-abroad. Moreover, if a state tries to replace Russian influence in the region with external powers, it would be punished through coercive means.

### **3.7.2.2 Ukraine crisis**

Ukraine is considered by Russia as one of the most important neighbor because of cultural, economic

and defense infrastructure of Soviet Russia in the country. Divergence of interests has been created when Ukraine seeks to establish close economic and defense relations with Europe, the U.S and NATO. President Yanukovych of Ukraine postponed these policies because of Russia's concerns about encirclement of the West-led alliances (Welt, 2021, p. 14). He established closer economic and political relations with Kremlin instead of the West. It provoked democratic protests in the state and it overthrew the Russian backed government. Kremlin considered it a dire security concern.

Russia declared that the West supported this transition of government (Welt, 2021, p. 15). It posed a great threat to Russian hegemony in the region. Kremlin intervened militarily in the neighboring state. It conquered Crimea and separated it from rest of the Ukraine. Moscow also supported separatist in Donbas region. During this civil conflict, Ukraine suffered heavily. Russia manipulated Ukraine internal crisis in the way that any measure to resolve conflict in the state, will give dominance to the hegemon (Bowen, 2019). Through military means, Russia established its hegemony on those states which opposed conciliatory measures to enforce hegemony.

### **3.8 India's Quest for Regional Hegemony and Its Approaches towards the Region**

Since India's independence, the state seeks to establish a political and security order which creates unity at regional level in South Asia. Through this political and security structure it wants minimize interference of external powers in the region and wants to act independently at regional and global level to pursue its national interests and maximize its power. A strategic framework which is inspired by India formulates and regulates foreign policies of South Asian states with external powers (Ayoob, 1991, p. 421). "India has hegemonic designs in the region" (Khan, India's hegemonic designs in South Asia, 2022). India considers the region as its backyard and violated sovereignty of its neighbors on multiple occasions. Therefore, its relations with all members in the region are based on distress.

#### **3.8.1 Indira Doctrine of Hegemony**

Indira Gandhi took charge as a Prime Minister of India in 1966. She opted realist and expansionist

point of view to deal with Indian foreign policy. She regarded power as most crucial determinant of foreign policy to pursue national interests in regional and international political order (Surjit Mansingh, 1984, p. 34). She drafted a strategy to gain power. Her strategy was influenced by 'hard realism' in which she paid more attention to maximization of military power (Mansingh, 2015, p. 8). Though she never announced the doctrine, but her actions and policies to resolve internal and external conflicts are regarded as Indira Doctrine. She used military power at home and at regional level to settle conflicts. She adopted a strategy to consolidate power at center of its "strategic sphere of influence" (Puri, 1985, p. 48). To consolidate power in center, India needs to maximize its influence on its neighboring states in the region. She used nationalism as a tool at home to acquire power and deal heavy handedly with minorities inside the state (Puri, 1985, p. 149). A Naxalite movement gained momentum in West Bengal due to their concerns about redistribution of land in the state. They opposed Indira's policies. To consolidate the power at core, she sent military troops to crush the movement (West, 2010).

She also used military to control Sikh separatist movement. Shiromani Akali Dal supported democratic rights of Sikhs. His party was supported by the Sikhs to gain autonomy from oppressive Indian policies against the minority group. Mrs. Gandhi dismissed political party chosen by people. She did not consider political sentiments of the ethnic group. In 1984, she ordered Operation Blue Star in Golden Temple. The military secure temple from Sikhs and the operation ended with hundreds of causalities of the group. However, Sikhs claimed that one thousand Sikhs killed by Indian forces and more than 3000 sikhs murdered in anti-Sikh riots in India (India Sikh groups clash at Golden Temple, 2014).

To increase power of the state at domestic level by adopting military means that was backfired later on. Indira Gandhi drafted a grand strategy to increase India's dominance on neighboring states at regional level. She preferred hard power to deal with her neighbors. India intervened in political and domestic conflicts of other regional states militarily. The state supported proxies and terrorist organizations to establish its hegemonic status in the region.

### 3.8.2 Gujral Doctrine for Regional Integrity in 1996

Another important doctrine, which shapes India's foreign policy in the region and at global level, is Gujral Doctrine. I.K Gujral served in the ministry of Broadcasting during emergency in the state and later on as the Minister of external affairs under different governments (Inder Kumar Gujral, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). He became Prime Minister of India in 1997 and his tenure did not last more than a year. He did not view security situation only through prism of defensive realism. He introduced a strategy based on soft-power, cultural commonalities and liberal policies to pursue India's interests in the region.

He declared basic tenants to guide India's foreign affairs during his appointment in ministry of foreign affairs: In first principle, he claimed India is not supposed to build relations with his neighbors on reciprocity except Pakistan. On the other hand, India is supposed to cooperate with its smaller neighbors to increase cooperation and trust building measures. In the second principle, he ensured that territory of any state should not be subjected to harm interests of the other states. The third principle stated about respect sovereignty of all states in their affairs. The fourth one was about resolution of regional conflicts through negotiations (Gupta, 1997, pp. 308-309). However, this doctrine also favored competitive relations with Pakistan. Even in liberal doctrine, India was not ready to give any concession to Pakistan and to resolve outstanding issues to consolidate power in core and periphery. However, during Gujral's period, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and his counterpart, Prime Minister Gujral initiated Composite Dialogue Process (Padder, 2012). Both states agreed to improve people to people contact and initiated a step for confidence building measures. It would help to resolve conflicts. Both leaders agreed to negotiate on different areas including disputed territory 'Jammu and Kashmir' (Padder, 2012) to settle disputes.

One of the major reasons was that Indira Doctrine and hard power policies were backfired inside and outside of the India for example Sikh separatist movement Naxalite movement and more security oriented policies of the neighboring states against India (Hariharan, 2014, p. 27). To improve India's image at global level he adopted cooperation based policies in the region. He inspired India's strategy to adopt conciliatory

approaches to establish dominance in the region. He was the first Indian leader who sought to consolidate power at core and periphery through democratic and liberal policies. His doctrine was inspired by liberal school of thought to pursue national interests and to strengthen its security interests. He regarded security dilemma of neighboring states is because of India's hard power and interference in their internal matters. It pushed regional states to draft security strategies highly influenced by security dilemma (Shaumian, 1988, p. 1162). Therefore, they wanted to counter India's influence in the region with the help of external powers. If external powers become more active in the region, it will definitely check India's power at the regional level. In addition, they would manipulate India's conflicts in region.

He guided policymakers in New Delhi that for upward power trajectory, it is necessary to have relations with neighbors based on development and cooperation. It is prerequisite to respect sovereignty of neighbors (Sharma R. K., 2016, p. 63) to improve India's outlook in the region and to integrate region in developmental projects. In this way, India will be able to focus on great power status at the global order. Otherwise, India is only entangled with domestic and regional conflicts. In this way, power maximization and security dilemma in region undermine and challenge New Delhi's position in the region. In Gujral doctrine focused was shifted from hard power and coercive measures towards neighbor to regional cooperation and respect for sovereignty towards Nepal. According to this doctrine "all South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty" (Kumar A. ) it means India should respect sovereignty of the state and did not intervene in political and domestic affairs of the state. India is not supposed to guide domestic and foreign policy of the state. "Neighbors like Nepal, India does not ask for reciprocity but gives all that it can in good faith and trust" (Kumar A. ), according to this assumption, India is more developed in terms of military, economy and technology than Nepal, it will not demand from Nepal for reciprocation in economic assistance. "All their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations" (Kumar A. ) it means India and Nepal should resolve their territorial, economic and water disputes through negotiations.

### **3.9 India's Policies towards South Asia for Dominance**

India's policies towards its neighboring states are analyzed through statements of its leaders and strategic doctrines of the state. India's quest for regional dominance is proclaimed by its leaders.

#### **3.9.1 A brief Over-view of India's policies towards Pakistan**

Since independence of India, it did not give military and defense shares of Pakistan. After partition of British India, they were hoping for reunification of two states. M. Gandhi stated, "even if the whole of India burns, we shall not concede Pakistan" (Choudhury, 1968, p. 84). However, Pakistan came into being and Gandhi ensures members of Indian Congress that Pakistan has to reunite with India (Choudhury, 1968, p. 84). Nehru believed that week Pakistan would re-unite with India in months or years (Lawrence Burke, 1991, p. 315). Therefore, they adopted policies to weaken Pakistan materially and economically. India as an upper riparian state, used water as a tool to influence internal and external matters of the state. After partition, Pakistan was facing many challenges in domains of economy, defense, administration and migration of people from India. The country was an agricultural state and its economy was heavily dependent on water. In 1948, India stopped flow of water to Pakistan's Punjab province (Pakistan: End of the water dispute, 1960, p. 72).

India opted offensive realism as a strategy to maintain its dominance in the region. In 1971, New Delhi sent troops in East Pakistan giving excuse for migration of people in India. India glorified the episode and they pushed Pakistan military for surrender. Resultantly, Bangladesh came on to world map, as an independent state. It was the first conflict in the region in which India got sense of victory. India took full credit of creation of Bangladesh as it dismembered Pakistan into two parts. The incident is also remembered in India as revenge against Pakistan for Partition of India in 1947. Defeat of Pakistan played huge role in accumulation of power in India as a regional dominant (Zakaria, 2019). Nuclearization of Pakistan has created sufficient deterrence to the extent that India is 'never again' (Khan, Going Tactical:Pakistan's Nuclear Posture and Implications for Stability, 2015, p. 20) dare to change Pakistan's territorial borders again. However,

strategists in New Delhi are occupied with limited war as to materialize Cold-Start Doctrine in 2009 and Land Warfare Doctrine in 2018. Due to insufficient advanced military equipment, the state is unable to test these doctrines against Pakistan. Since Indo-US strategic partnership, military modernization of India raises security fear in security strategists in Pakistan (Bracken, 2012). India also manipulates economic instability of Pakistan at global level in form of FATF grey list and surgical strike strategy to influence Pakistan's security policies and ensure its dominance in the region. India's Minister for External Affairs stated to the young officers of foreign policy, "Due to us, Pakistan is under the lens of FATF and it was kept in the grey list. We have been successful in pressurizing Pakistan and the fact that Pakistan's behaviour has changed is because of pressure put by India by various measures," (Gaurav, 2021)

Pakistan military and government always accuse India for its financial and material support to insurgent and terrorist groups in Pakistan. India trained and militarized Baluchistan and TTP members to use them as Indian proxy to influence any political settlement in Pakistan and gain leverage in negotiations (Syed, 2021). Ehsanullah Ehsan was a senior commander for the Pakistani Taliban, and later for a Taliban breakaway faction, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar. He surrendered in front of Pakistan armed forces. Pakistan military had released his video statement. He stated that India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) provided financial and training assistance to members of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. He also mentioned that India's support to the organization has increased. India's intelligence agency sets targets for terrorist attacks in Pakistan and also paid charges for these attacks (Hassan S. R., 2017). Security agencies of Pakistan arrested Kalbushan Yadav from Baluchistan. Military of Pakistan released his video statement in which he has declared that he is naval officer of India and he was appointed on a project to destabilize Pakistan. He also accepted that India's intelligence agency RAW is involved in attacks in Baluchistan and Karachi. At first, India has denied his any links with India military, navy or air-force (Transcript of RAW agent Kulbhushan's confessional statement, 2016). Arrest of India's naval officer from Baluchistan raises many questions regarding India's direct involvement in supporting and funding insurgency within the province.

### **3.9.2 India's Intervention in Sri-Lanka**

Sri-Lanka got independence from Great Britain in 1948. After Independence there was internal conflict on marginalization of Tamil and Muslims in government jobs and education institutes (Jenne, 2003, p. 227). At that moment, India was also confronted with Tamil Nadu's separatist movement. Marginalization of Tamil minorities in Sri-Lanka favored India in its own counterinsurgency policy against Tamil Nadu. In 1983, anti-Tamil protests erupted in Colombo. The incident provided India an opportunity to support terrorist group in the neighbor to influence foreign and domestic policy choices of Sri-Lankan government. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sought to bring Sri Lanka under dominance of India and to project India as a regional predominant power. She also wanted to reshape Colombo's close relations with Pakistan and to follow a political settlement in the state which favored Indian stance in the region (Elias, 2020, p. 191). To achieve these objectives, India established 'Safe Havens' (Elias, 2020, p. 191) for Tamil terrorists on its soil. Security agencies of India armed, trained and provided offices and equipment to almost 20,000 Tamil terrorists.

Intelligence agency of India established 32 training camps for Tamil youth (Gunaratna, 1993). Terrorist outfit not only receive military training and weapons but prominent figures of the outfit lived in the houses of politician which were provided by Indian government to political leaders (Gunaratna, 1993). In 1987, Sri Lankan forces launched an offensive operation to remove insurgents from Jaffna city and to take control of it. Jaffna city was populated by Tamil ethnic group. Prime Minister of India reacted fiercely to the Sri Lankan military campaign in the city and New Delhi gave a clear stance on the campaign, "India will not allow Jaffna to be taken ... India will arm the LTTE with Surface to Air Missiles (SAM-7 and 8)" (Gunaratna, 1993).

Due to mounting pressure of retaliation from India, Sri-Lanka did not take over to the city. India's bullying did not stop at the end of military campaign. 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1987, High Commissioner of India stated that the state wanted to send aid in the city of Jaffna. Therefore, Colombo should permit India's boats to enter in Jaffna. Sri Lanka reacted India's commissioner public statement that situation in Colombo is not as

deteriorated to accept any humanitarian aid from any other country. The official reply of Sri Lanka pointed out India that Colombo is in position to meet all needs of its people (Bhasin, Reply Message of the Sri Lankan Government to the Indian Government,”, 2001). 3<sup>rd</sup> June of 1987, nineteen Indian boats arrived in Sri Lanka but the state did not give entrance permission to provide humanitarian aid. Sri Lanka’s resilience to not let India provide aid to a ruthless terrorist organization irritated India and policy makers in New Delhi believed Colombo undermined their dominance in the region. On the very next day, Indian Air Force crossed air boundary of Sri Lanka, undermined sovereignty of the state. The force sent aid in Jaffna city. India’s action was seemed inspired by the US air force provision of humanitarian aid in West Berlin during Cold War.

However, West Berlin was part of the US and Allied forces and it was not part of Soviet Russia. On other hand, India violated International air boundary of a neighbor and sent a clear message in the region that India could do what it wanted in Sri Lanka (Gunaratna, 1993) or any other state. The action guaranteed New Delhi’s dominance in the region. Interference of India in Sri Lankan internal insurgency created deep security concerns in Colombo. In a month, India allied to Sri Lankan government in counterinsurgency campaign. This policy choice of India was driven by the fact that India was losing its influence on Tamil Tigers and stability of its own Tamil Nadu state that called ‘Kashmir of South’ (Gunaratna, 1993).

India signed Indo-Sri Lanka accord with Colombo and 10,000 Indian military personnel were deployed in Sri Lanka. The accord raised many questions about Colombo’s independence and India’s interests to support the government rather than insurgents. A politician in Colombo described happenings that the accord raised concerns in Colombo because the state lost her sovereignty....Masses are bored to take lectures on how we are sovereign, unfolding of incidents forecasted that Sri-Lankans are no more sovereign (Statement of the Leader of the Opposition in the Sri Lanka Parliament Anura Bandaranaike Regarding Statements Made by the Commander of the IPKF, 2001). Government in Colombo agreed to demands made by India.

The government granted amnesty to insurgents, declared their language as a state language and granted many more rights. Security Adviser of Colombo stated about Sri Lanka’s acceptance of India’s demand “If

we did not sign [the] Accord we would have had to fight with India. India would not have come forward [to help the Sri Lankan government], but would have given arms [to the Tamil separatists] to shoot down helicopters" (Gunewardene, 1991, p. 224). Statement of security adviser of Colombo presented a picture of India's dominance to manipulate and influence internal matters of Sri-Lanka. India put forward request for 79 reforms in military, police, economy, provincial management, elections, form of government and development and many more domains during the period of 1986-1989 (Elias, 2020, pp. 196-198). India silently sent message in political corridors of Sri Lanka, if the later state did not accept consensus based approach, India would opt coercive measures to maintain its dominance over neighboring state. LTTE turned against India and targeted Indian security forces in Colombo. Number of Indian security personnel increased from initial 10,000 to 100,000 in 1988 (Ghosh, 2000, p. 108).

However, India's approaches to gain dominance through conciliatory and coercive measures backfired. Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi was killed by Tamil insurgents, and then India declared LTTE as a terrorist organization (Elias, 2020, p. 194). In 2009, Colombo defeated LTTE and announced state victory (Chakravarty, 2016, p. 256) over terrorist organization. In post-2009 period, due to changing geo-politics in South Asia, India opted consensus based approaches to re-exert its influence in the state. India's policy to support LTTE and then start operation against them in Srilanka deteriorated the state's relation with Colombo. Now India is developing economic and political relations with Srilanka to improve its image (Kugelman, 2022) and gain enough influence in the state.

### **3.9.3 Brief Over-view of India's Influence on Bhutan**

In 1949, India signed a treaty of Peace and Friendship with Bhutan. In article 2 of the treaty, it was mentioned that India would not interfere in internal matters of the state. However, Thimphu did not get rid of India's dominance in internal and external affairs of the state. India has been influencing Bhutan's ideas and determinants of external relations and military domains and electoral process of the state. Bhutan supported Indian forces to crush insurgency in Assam in 1947. The state also supported India in 1962 Sino-India war and

1971 Indo-Pak war. However, New Delhi treated its small and friendly state as a “pawn” and manipulating the Bhutanese like “lambs in a pen to slaughter whenever India desires a dish of lamb stew (Stobdan, 2017).” Bhutan is the only last state who join the group of other south Asian states that India use coercive measures to meddle their political and security matters. In 2007, Bhutan and India revised Peace and Friendship treaty. Its Article 2 was rewritten and the era of New Delhi to advise external affairs of the state win the treaty. After 1962 Sino-India war and expansionist policies of New Delhi in Sikkim, Bhutan believed that India is not able to protect the state from China and might the state would meet same fate as Sikkim.

In 2007, Bhutan political transition started from royal monarch to royal democratic parties. The King of the state pursued India’s advised policies at domestic and global level. However, J. Y. Thinley from the party named Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) became prime minister of the state. His government took practical steps to develop diplomatic ties with other states. In 2011, Bhutan had diplomatic relation with 25 nations but in 2015, the state had embassies in almost 53 states (Stobdan, 2017). The government also pursued policy at United Nations Security Council, to be member of the non-permanent seat. It was not in India’s interest that Bhutan established diplomatic ties with other states.

India decided to punish DPT for its active foreign policy. The state manipulated general elections in Bhutan. India used economic tool against party and cut subsidies on its exports. Policy makers in Thimphu considered it a clear message from Indian government that New Delhi imposed economic sanctions, if DPT came into power again (Stobdan, 2017). India’s intelligence agencies made ensure that DPT should not return in corridors of power in its second term. The whole episode of election campaign and economic sanctions increased anti-India sentiments in the state and masses viewed as a Hegemon and arm-twister (Stobdan, 2017). It led to a strong debate in Bhutan to balance India’s dominance through China card in the region. It was a crucial shift in Bhutan foreign policy since 1947.

### **3.9.4 India in Bangladesh and Maldives**

India and Bangladesh shared close ties because of India’s military support to Bengalis’ cause in 1971.

India and Bhutan has territorial dispute on enclaves. However, government of Awami League and government of India try to manage relation based on consensus and cooperation. In 2015, both states signed an agreement named as Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) to resolve territorial conflict (Sreeparna Banerjee, 2017). It is not in India's favor to push Bangladesh in circle of other regional states through its coercive measures. People in Bangladesh have serious apprehensions against treatment of Muslims and particularly Bengalis by Indian government. Masses in Bangladesh put pressure on their government to condemn India's anti-Muslim policies. There was a huge protest in different parts of Bangladesh against visit of Prime Minister of India. Almost 12 people were dead because of clash between security forces and anti-Modi protesters in Bangladesh (Ethirajan, 2021).

India and Maldives have cooperative bilateral relations since the state got independence in 1965. The major role India played in politics of Maldives, was to crush 1988 coup. In 1988, a military coup tried to overthrow government in Male. Indian Prime Minister sent paratroopers and warships to quell coup and support Maldives government (Operation Cactus: How Indian troops went to Maldives and hel .., 2018). Maldives is smallest but significant archipelago in Indian Ocean Region due to significant sea lanes. After 2018 elections, hundreds of protestors took street in Male. They accused government for signing secret treaty with India that allowed Indian military personnel stay in the state. In addition, India funded a construction of dockyard near Male. Leaks of secret documents claimed that President Ibrahim Solih signed an agreement in which Indian military persons and war ships would use the dockyard (Hassan S., 2021). People protested for expulsion of Indian military from Male. However, the government in Maldives promoted "India first" policy (Brewster, 2021).

India is facing strain in its bilateral relations with all its neighbors except Maldives. Since 2015, the state does not only have troubled relations with its traditional rival Pakistan in the region but also Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Rajagopalan, 2020). India does not have cordial and cooperative relations with most of its neighbors. Despite its efforts to use Bollywood to improve image of the state and spread cultural values of

the state, it has not achieved its objectives. Its smaller neighbors do not consider it a soft power. India's economic, social and cultural links with other states are highly politicized. Territorial conflicts always deteriorate economic and cultural relations among the states in the region. For example, artist from Pakistan are not allowed to work in India and cricket teams are not allowed by Indian Sports Ministry to play any bilateral series with Pakistan.

## Chapter Four

### **Divergence and Convergence of Interests between India and Nepal**

Chapter Four is divided into two parts: First part describes divergence of interests between India and Nepal in terms of politics, economics and defense. It discusses major conflicts between the two states 2015. It discusses conflict on formulation of new constitution, unofficial blockade and its impacts, border issue, territorial disputes and border issues.

#### **4.1 Indo-Nepal Relations Divergence of Interests**

##### **4.1.1 Promulgation of New Constitution and India's Interests in New Political Set-up**

Impact of political and economic issues is multidimensional in nature because of complex economic interdependence among states. In fact India lost good will in Kathmandu (Upadhyay S., *The Backfire In Nepal: How India Lost Plot To China*, 2021). It is in India's vital interests to be part of any political set-up of Nepal because of its geopolitical significance. Politicians of the Madhesi region pressurized the government to not divide Terai province. Madhesi population constitute major portion of population in the province. They campaigned for more autonomy at provincial level and "Ek Madesh, Ek Pradesh" (Khadka, 2017, p. 197). The primary interest of India was to secure proportionate representation of Madhesi in constitution and the province dominated by people who have birth and family links with India.

In 2015, government of Nepal promulgated new constitution. Resultantly India and Nepal hit a wall in their bilateral relations. Indian media launched a campaign against Kathmandu's constitution. India sent message to Kathmandu that the big neighbor is not satisfied with the new constitution. Indian Prime Minister Modi talked with Sushil Koirala and suggested him to amend new constitution of the state (Roy, 2015). There was a huge cry against Indian ambassador to Nepal. Nepalese claimed the ambassador behaved as a viceroy of a colonizer, take commands from that colonizer and exercise the powers in colony.

India's firm support to Madhesis and inclusive laws at all state level was driven by its ambitions to

influence internal affairs of Nepal in future. It gives dominance to New Delhi to manipulate political process to promote its interests in domains of defense and foreign policy of the state. As world's largest democracy is facing serious crisis to its so called secularism and there is a huge cry in India for Hinduism. Therefore, elite Hindu leaders were not in favor of secular posture of Kathmandu. They viewed secular Nepal as a threat to India's religious links to Nepal. Maoist insurgents for the long past demanded to declare Nepal as a secular state. India wants to keep Nepal as a Hindu majority state. Through religious links, it is easy for India to influence public opinion in Kathmandu.

However, along with Maoist organization other political parties and leaders were in favor of secular constitution. India has direct links with major leaders in Nepal. The state used diplomatic pressure on Kathmandu to consider India's wishes in new constitution. Despite massive influence, policy of India to be an important actor in constitution drafting was failed. Its demands were not part of the new constitution. Political leaders in Kathmandu did not pay enough attention to India's wishes. The constitution was adopted with maximum votes in favor of it. Then New Delhi became assertive to amend the constitution of Nepal according to India's demand. High level meetings between Indian envoys and political leaders of Nepal failed to bring amendments in the constitution, India opted economic blockade to compel Kathmandu to accept India's demands in its constitution (Upadhyay S. , 2022).

#### **4.1.2 Economic Blockade a Tool in Foreign Policy**

Since integration of economy has become a significant force in global economy, economic sanctions are used as a tool to punish and influence behavior of other states. Economic sanctions were imposed by Athens on Megara in history of International Relations. These sanctions were one of the causes of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides, 1972, pp. 72-73). After First World War, economic sanctions have received significant place in coercive measures adopted by powers to punish other states.

The states which impose economic sanctions seek to achieve five primary objectives (Wallensteen, 1983). The first objective is to gain 'compliance' which means compel the state B to accept demands of state

A. Great Britain in post WW1 imposed sanction on Italy to get compliance from its leaders to put their forces out of Abyssinia. The second objective of these sanctions belonged to ‘subversion’ (Lindsay, 1986, p. 152). It means state A took economic initiative to replace an overall government or political system in state B. The US attempt to replace communist government in Cuba with democratic government is considered as subversion. The third objective of state A might be creation of ‘deterrence (Lindsay, 1986, p. 152)’. In this case state A use economic options to compel state B not to take specific actions or initiate policies, otherwise it may overweight cost than benefit of state B. the second last objective is ‘international symbolism’, which means state A impose economic sanctions to send global message for disapproval of action of state A. Imposition of economic sanction on Libya by America is a an example of American disapproval of Libyan policies. The last one is to gain domestic legitimacy for any government from its people (Lindsay, 1986, pp. 152-155). India imposed economic blockade for compliance from Nepalese government to respect India’s wishes in the constitution. The other objective was to deter the state from taking any action which endangers New Delhi’s interests in the region. Economic sanctions halt production of growth of the country which directly impacts on balance of payment. If the state is unable to manage blockade it will lead to trade deficit and shortage of basic necessities at home. The blockade not only impact on economy of the state but also health and human lives are directly affected by it.

#### **4.1.3 Impacts of India’s unofficial Blockade to Nepal**

Imposition of unofficial blockade for four months led to humanitarian crisis in Kathmandu. It was impacted on Nepal’s trade with other countries too because India was the transit state.

##### **4.1.3.1 Political Impacts of the Blockade**

Bullying attitude of India pushed Nepal to consider other policy options to counter India’s excessive control on economy of the state. D. K Upadhyay, Nepalese ambassador to India said, “India should stop pushing Nepal to the wall. If pushed to the wall and India did not make an effective effort to lift the blockade,

though difficult, Nepal would have no option to approach other countries including China" (Nepal asks India not to push it to the wall, 2015).

In October 2015, during unofficial blockade, Nepal approached another neighbor and an Indian competitor for importation of fuel. China signed an agreement with Nepal and provided "1.4 and 1.3 million liters of fuel" (Sodhi, 2015) during blockade. PM Oli used the unofficial blockade to mobilize public opinion against New Delhi. He became successful in his strategy. India lost its influence among common people of Nepal. It helps the government of Nepal to establish close relations with China as compared to India. China gained the most from imposition of unofficial blockade by India (Upadhyay S. , The Backfire In Nepal: How India Lost Plot To China, 2021).

#### **4.1.3.2 Social Impacts of Blockade**

Oil exporting companies of New Delhi stopped supply of fuel to Kathmandu. Masses were badly affected by blockade of essential food items, fuel products and medicines. These commodities have nothing with politics, but they directly impacted life of common people. Fuel tanks were stopped on Indian side of border and waited for months to cross it. Due to severe shortage of oil and gas, government of Nepal imposed restrictions on movement and public transport. Students and workers were unable to reach their education institutes and work places because of restriction on transport industry. Masses directly suffered from the blockade because hospitals did not have enough doses for patients. Hospitals in Nepal were unable to operate on regular basis because of shortage of imported commodities related to health. Health institutes were unable to manage blood and oxygen for patients (Caprara, 2015).

The blockade also influenced education activities in the state. Due to shortage of fuel, millions of students were out of schools. Lachhe Bahadur KC, President of Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal stated that almost 80% private schools were closed in Kathmandu alone (Pant, 2018). The hospital authorities have made it clear that they are not in a position to run hospitals without those vital supplies. People, who were living in urban setting, were unable to prepare food without LPG. Most of the food

restaurants were subjected to shut their businesses. Relief supplies to earth-quake affected people were hampered by shortage of fuel. The poor were mostly affected by the shortage of food. Food prices were rocketing high. People with limited economic resources were unable to buy expensive and rare food items from market. There was a huge energy crisis in Nepal because most of the electricity is generated by generators. There was huge shortage of imported seeds and fertilizers in the country. Farmers were unable to get access to fertilizers for their crop. Resultantly, crop yield reduced in the country. In 2015, economic growth of the country was projected 6% by growth indicators. Blockade severely affected economic progress of the country and growth was projected 2%. The government of PM Sharma Oli stated that unofficial blockade was a bigger threat to the country than the earth-quake in which thousands of people lost their lives a (Nepal blockade: Six ways it affects the country, 2015).

Sufferings of common people led them to raise voice against India's dominance over economic relations between the two states. People protested outside of Indian embassy in Kathmandu. Internal minister of Kathmandu declared fuel 'emergency' (Lakshmi, 2015) in the country. There were huge rows of women and men in front of gas station in winter. Y. Sangraula said chocking of fuel supply by India is an 'act of aggression' (Lakshmi, 2015). Protests erupted in Kathmandu against New Delhi and the blockade revived bitter memories of 1989 blockade by India (Plesch, 2015).

Due to economic blockade, India's image and polices came under severe criticism in Kathmandu. For the first time common people raised voice against bullying and so called big brother attitude of India towards a sovereign country in its neighbor. The blockade not only hurts New Delhi's image in Kathmandu but also its geo-political interests of the state. For the first time in history, Nepal signed an agreement with China to import fuel. Import of fuel from China was a big blow to India's dominance in Nepal. Prime Minister Sharma Oli thanked China for its oil exports to the country during blockade by India and suggested to increase trade volume with the state. On the other hand, he criticized New Delhi for its aggressive policies and imposition of economic blockade (Ghimire, 2015).

Constitution making process was completely an internal matter of Nepal. India was not supposed to support '30-32% of Indian origin' people to total 'fifteen million' people in Tarai region (Kumar R. , 2015). The non-Madhesi people, who visited Indian side of border to buy food products, they were treated differently by Indian security officers. They were allowed to take limited supply in Nepal. On the other hand, Madhesi people were free to buy anything in a large quantity. India sought to promote Madhesi people who have dual nationality of India and Nepal on executive positions. In this way, India without opposition pursues its own national interests in Kathmandu (Aryal, 2019, p. 38). Such policies of India harmed its long term interests in the state (Bhattarai, 2015). Policy makers in Nepal took practical measures to diversify their relations generally with other states and particularly with China. Their policies also gain support from public because they believe India inflicted suffering through blockade.

Convergence of leader's interests with the interests of public in society (Gramsci, 1993) is a tool to exercise hegemony in a society. India opted this approach in Nepal and converge its interests with Madhesis. The last tool to establish dominance is coercive strategy (Gramsci, 1993). New Delhi established its dominance on the group on basis of consensus because interests of Madhesis got India's support only if they have same interests. When New Delhi failed to pursue its small neighbor to accept its demands, India used coercive measure as economic blockade on Nepal to compel state to adopt amendments in the constitution.

India considered the new constitution as a threat to its interests and took practical step, however officially denied, to ensure that its wishes should be respected in any political structure of Kathmandu. Resultantly, Nepal amended its new constitution and introduced changes in it. In the short term, Nepal fulfilled demands of India and its supported ethnic group in Trai region. Bullying attitude towards Nepal to protect its interests in the state backfired due to sufferings of common people and media coverage of the event. Leaders of Nepal also manipulated the incident to gain legitimacy at home. It proved in favor of political parties in Kathmandu who wanted China to play greater role. Nepalese viewed India a coercive dominant neighbor who did not respect decisions of the friendly neighbor. It was a huge set back to India's

leadership strategy in Nepal (Kumar R. , 2015).

Information technology and social media played central role in highlighting India's imposed blockade. On social media, there was a campaign against India's bullying policies to compel Kathmandu to amend the constitution. In the beginning, mainstream media in Nepal did not report the issue (Upadhyay S. , Role of Social Media during economic blockade, 2022). Later on, people used social media apps to raise their voice against New Delhi. People uploaded videos that how India's border security guards discriminated among Madhesis and non-Madhesis people who went to India's market to buy goods. When social media put pressure on the government, mainstream media also reported about the embargo. Therefore, perception regarding India has changed drastically in Nepal.

#### **4.1.4 Border Issue between India and Nepal**

India has territorial disputes with all its regional neighbors. Border issue between Nepal and India has emerged as another hot issue in bilateral relations. Both neighbors managed 1800 km long border. The Peace and Friendship treaty of 1950 has guided the border management between the two states. Territorial dispute between the two neighbors has roots in rule of Britain in India. British India fought war with Nepal from 1814 to 1816. In Sugauli treaty, British India took control of territory from south, east and west sides of Nepal: Chure range to plain Tarai ,Mechi to Tista and , and Mahakali to Satalaj respectively (Rabi Shrestha, 2020, p.



2).

BBC (Saqib, 2020)

Map shows India-Nepal Disputed Territory

Later on, the company returned western part of Trai as a reward for helping against so-called War of Mutiny in 1857. After, India's independence both states shared open and unfenced border.

#### 4.1.5 India's New Political Map and Nepal's Response

In 2019, India and Nepal relations are subjected to territorial dispute. In November 2019, India released a map which not only included territory claimed by Nepal but also disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhra are disputed territories between India and Nepal and claimed by both states. The two states formed a commission in 1981 to resolve border issues but both sides failed to make consensus on the mentioned territory. It is the shortest route for India to get access to Tibet. The new map of

New Delhi included these territories in Indian state Uttarakhand. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal reacted to the map and realeased statement that:

“The Nepal government firmly believes that the Kalapani is a part of Nepal.” (Budhathoki, 2019)

Nepal claimed its sovereignty on the territory through Suguali Treaty of 1816. The Article five of the treaty stated: Nepal “renounces for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claim to or connection with the countries lying to the west of the River Kali” (Timilsina, Border Disputes Between India and Nepal: Will India Act as a Responsible Rising Power?, 2021). According to this article of the treaty Kalapani and Limpiyadhura are part of Kathmandu because these territories reside in east of Kali river. Director General of Survey Department in Kathmandu claimed historical maps of 19<sup>th</sup> century represented Kalapani a territory belongs to Kathmandu (Bhasin, Nepal-India, Nepal China Relations: Documents 1947-June 2005, 2005, p. 1058). On the other hand, India claimed administrative procedures and tax records of 19<sup>th</sup> century (Budhathoki, 2019) under British India represented Kalapani a territory belongs to New Delhi.

#### **4.1.6 India’s Inauguration of Road through Disputed Territory**

In 2015, India and China agreed to enhance trade through Lipu-Lekh pass. Nepalese officials raised issue with Indian authorities but the later did not pay attention to Nepal’s concerns. In 2020, Defense Minister of India inaugurated a road which connected Indian state Uttarakhand with Tibet. It passed through disputed territory Lipulekh. India did not consult Nepal before inauguration. Kathmandu reacted fiercely to the step by New Delhi. The government issued a statement that India violated bilateral agreement which guided two states resolve disputes through dialogue. Kathmandu stated that New Delhi should stop activities inside the Nepalese territory (Pokharel, 2020).



Map Represents Road-Link (A Geographical view of Uttarakhand, 2020)

Government of India responded that the link-road pass through India's own territory. Resultantly, hundreds of Nepalese took streets and protested against New Delhi's action. They blamed the so called big brother as a hegemon who violated territorial integrity of the state. The then prime minister of Nepal gave a speech in the Parliament and said that the Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura are not part of disputed territory. However, it is Nepal's own land. India created a scenario through conspiracies and the government must raise the issue at global level (Pokharel, 2020).

Nepal also issued its new map and included disputed territories in the map. Kathmandu passed crucial second amendment in the constitution. The first one was to fulfill demands of Madhesi which were also demanded by New Delhi and imposed unofficial blockade to compel the state. The second amendment was about territory. Nepal included disputed territories which are also claimed by India in its geography. Members of the Lower House of Kathmandu amended the constitution with two third majorities. There was not a single

member in the House who voted against the bill. The government was supported by all political parties of Nepal even Madhesis supported the government on the issue (Bhatacherjee, 2020). Member of the Lower House named Prachanda said, “We are working to ensure territorial integrity national sovereignty and freedom of our people. The kings of Nepal lost our territory, but today we republicans are restoring it” (Bhatacherjee, 2020).

Kings of Nepal have close relations with India and they need India’s support to gain legitimacy at home. Therefore, they did not put pressure on New Delhi’s troops to leave the pass. Another factor was Nepal’s dependence on India for trade and transit facilities provided little room to Nepal to raise question of territorial dispute. After 2015 blockade and improvement in relations with Beijing, the government of Nepal has legitimacy at home against India’s policies in the state. Public opinion dramatically shifted against New Delhi in post 2015 unofficial blockade. In 2015, Nepal recorded protest against India’s movement to use Lipu-Lekh pass for trade with Beijing but India did not consider it significant enough to respond Kathmandu (Subramanian, 2020).

Foreign Ministry of India responded to the new map of Nepal as unilateral move and urged the state to respect India’s territorial integrity. The spokesperson mentioned that India is not going to accept these claims which lack historical facts. Toyanath Baral believed that unveiling of new maps from both sides of the border put pressure on the states to resolve the conflict through peaceful means (Giri, With release of new map, Nepal and India enter a state of ‘cartographic war’, experts say, 2020). Before the new map India refused to talk with Nepal on the matter of disputed territories. The Lipu-lekh pass has strategic value for India and Indian military controls it since 1950s (Bhatacherjee, 2020). Chief of Army Staff of India criticized Kathmandu’s protest against the link road and said the state protested on the wish of someone else (Pandit, 2020). Prime Minister of India Vajpayee and his counterpart in Kathmandu raised the question of the disputed territory in their bilateral meeting in 2002. Both of them were agreed to resolve the dispute. It proved that a claim of Nepal is not new but in history Nepal raised the issue at official level (Subramanian, 2020). At the

moment, public anti-India sentiments gave courage to Nepalese politicians to highlight the issue and gain support of masses.

#### **4.1.7 Nepal and BIMSTEC Exercise**

BIMSTEC is a group of states from South Asia and South East Asia adjacent to Bay of Bengal. The objective to form a group is to strengthen economic relations between the two regions. At regional level SAARC failed to achieve economic cooperation and development (Mohan, 2016, p. 1). In 2018, BIMSTEC summit held in Kathmandu. Member states agreed to cooperate in areas of trade, infrastructure development, connectivity through roads and ports, energy cooperation and counterterrorism. All states agreed to conduct military exercises to counter terrorism activities in the region. However, Nepal did not participate in the two week long exercise held in Pune. Historically New Delhi and Kathmandu's armed forces are closely linked and cooperate with each other at multiple forums. Gorkhas are appointed in Indian army since British rule in India. Indian army chief also invited newly appointed Army Chief of Nepal but he refused to attend 'enclave of BIMSTEC army chiefs' (Nepal Army Chief declines Indian Army's invite to attend conclave of BIMSTEC army chiefs, 2018) because of his appointment ceremonies in home country.

However, Kathmandu sent its observer teams in the joint military exercise. Thailand also refused to join the exercise because of budget restrictions. Indian military officials considered this military exercise vital for strategic and security links with the member states. It was a little blow to BIMSTEC as India's neighbor, Nepal, announced its participation in Sagarmatha Friendship-2 with China. It was the second joint China-Nepal military exercise since 1947. There was a huge cry in Indian media that Nepal tries to build military relations with China and undermines New Delhi's supported BIMSTEC group. Kathmandu's decision to be just an observer state put India in an "embarrassing position" (Jha P. , 2018). India explained its concerns to government of Nepal that the state did not accept the explanation for not joining military exercise and enclaves of army chief.

#### **4.1.8 Nepal and Belt and Road Initiative**

In 2017, Nepal joins Belt and Road Initiative with China. Nepal was interested to develop Trans-Himalayan Economic Corridor which was proposed by China in 2014. Since 1989 blockade of Nepal by India, Kathmandu wanted to lessen its complete dependence on New Delhi for trade and transit. However, India was not willing to join Trans-Himalayan corridor which was trilateral: China, Nepal and India. India considered Nepal as its sphere of influence and did not want China to be active in development and economic activities inside Nepal. Therefore, she refused to be part of trilateral connectivity program. It was not in India's interests that Nepal has less dependence on New Delhi. Complete dependence of Kathmandu on India for transit facilities has given New Delhi a predominant position to influence political, security and economic policies of the state. Economic blockade of Nepal by India which led to severe shortage of fuel and medicine compelled Nepal to diversify its trade and transit. Joining of BRI by Nepal was not a surprising movement. Politicians in Nepal took practical measures to develop good relations with other states and collaborate with China for transit facilities. Kathmandu expressed its interest to change Nepal's fate as an India-locked state to Land-linked state. P. K. Dahal, prime minister of Nepal stated, "Himalayas can no more be considered as barriers and obstacles. Instead, they can serve as important bridges that connect the two emerging regions of Asian continent. Most importantly, connectivity lies at the heart of trans-Himalayan cooperation" (Baruah, 2017).

Nepal signed agreements with China for connectivity and transit linkages. Nepal wanted to have a rail link with China through which the state can access sea ports and trade linkages with global market. After completion of projects with Beijing, which is time taking process, Nepal can access seven ports in China. China is only other option for Kathmandu to reduce its economic dependence on New Delhi. India viewed these connectivity and development projects as projects to secure geo-political leverage against New Delhi by China. However, it is primary interests of Kathmandu that the state should have other options of transit when India again imposed unofficial blockade on the state. India's bullying policies to use transit as a tool to

influence internal matters of Nepal compelled the state to balance New Delhi's pre-dominance with Beijing (Khan, Indo-Nepal Relations since 2015, 2022).

#### **4.1.9 Challenges Faced by 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship**

Amendment of 1959 treaty has become an important slogan for all political parties in Nepal during election campaign. Leaders publicized the issue and gained public support for amending it. The treaty gained national sentiments and it also impacted Indo-Nepal relations in recent years. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in 1950 by the Indian ambassador C.P.N Singh and Nepal's Prime Minister Shumser Rana. The Rana wanted India's support to maintain its rule in Kathmandu (Leo E. Rose, 1971, p. 168) because there was a democratic movement against his hereditary rule. The signatories of the treaty were not of equal status and the treaty favored India's interests. In 1959, first time secret letters were revealed in India which was signed by prime minister of Nepal there is a concern in Nepal regarding the treaty that it is unilateral, dominating and undermines sovereignty of Nepal.

Nepal believed the Rana was not elected by the people so he did not manifest interests of masses. Therefore, Nepalese compared the treaty with Treaty of Versailles (Timalsina, 2019, p. 730). The treaty of Versailles inflicted humiliation on Germany after World War I, though the treaty of Peace and Friendship was not signed to establish peace after any war between the two states. Nepal insisted to revise article 2, 5, 6, and 7 of the article. These clauses of the treaty provided dominance to India in security, foreign and economic policies of the country. India itself violated key terms of the treaty.

Nepal wants to revise 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the treaty because it is against the state policy of non-alignment. Kathmandu seeks to establish equal and peaceful relations with both of its giant neighbors. It is in Kathmandu's interests due to its geo-political location to be a neutral state. Through neutrality, it will gain more from two competing powers. India prioritizes its security interests in Nepal and wanted to keep real check on Sino-Nepal relations (Timalsina, 2019). Nepalese also claimed New Delhi is the first signatory who violated this article in Sino-India war in 1962. India did not inform Kathmandu before the war but on the

other the former state always demanded from Nepal to inform India.

Article 5 of the treaty put restrictions on Kathmandu to not buy arms and ammunitions from any other country except India. Historically, India was not capable enough to support and provide enough ammunition to Nepalese army. Policy makers in Kathmandu analyzed this article as ambiguous and controversial. In this article India agreed that Nepal could purchase arms from third party but in 1989 India imposed blockade on the state for purchasing arms from China. However, Nepal is subject to inform India first to purchase arms from any other country. The state needs India's permit to import ammunition for its own security. (Timalsina, 2019, p. 730). The major issue between two states regarding this clause is divergence of interests. India wants to dominate the security set-up of the state and control its defense relations with any other states. When Nepal requested India for arms, India denied the request that Kathmandu had no need of these arms. India also exported five times more expansive arms than other states (Sharma N. M., 2014). Therefore, Nepal wants to revise the clause, but India is not ready to revise it (Giri, Ignored for three years, EPG report is losing its relevance, 2021).

Both states open border which is also a source of contention between the two neighbours. People in Kathmandu raised questions on India's compliance with this treaty. In 1980s, Nepalese were forced by India to leave from bordered states. Nepal also introduced law to control surge of foreign citizens. Kathmandu has serious reservations regarding article 6 and 7 because the state has limited geography and resources. It is not possible for a country which has population of 29 million to accommodate 1 billion people of another state (Sharma N. M., 2014). Hence, the treaty is not signed on equal terms. 8<sup>th</sup> article of the treaty of Peace and Friendship claimed that existing treaties are invalid which were signed between British India and Nepal. According to this article of the treaty, India has no right to claim sovereignty on Nepalese territory that was occupied by East India Company in Sugauli treaty. However, India occupied those territories and established its sovereignty. In addition, both states have sovereign claims on the territory of Kalapani and Lipulekh. Therefore, India itself violated terms of the treaty.

#### **4.1.10 Open Border and its Challenges**

Leaders of both states raised serious apprehensions against open and unregulated border between the two states. They always blamed others for smuggling and abduction on the border. Women are sold out in Indian brothels. There was a campaign from human rights activist ‘not for sale in India’s brothels’ (Shrestha B. N., 2014). Girls are smuggled from Nepal to India and it has become a business. Businessmen and their children are also abducted from Nepal and smuggled to India. Either they are killed or released after ransom (Nepali businessman murdered in India, protests in native town, 2013).

India always accused Nepal for movement of terrorists and insurgents from Indo-Nepal open border. Policy makers in Kathmandu have negotiated with India to regulate the open border and signed new treaty. India refused to accept the proposal. New Delhi made it clear to Kathmandu either you have to stick with already open border as it is working since 1950 or you have to completely close the border. India is not ready to regulate the border under new treaty (Upadhyay S. , Issue of border regulation between India and Nepal, 2022). It is not in interests of a land-locked state to close border with India. Nepal’s economy and trade is heavily dependent on transit routes granted by India

Indian Prime Minister Modi stated that both neighbours should respect each other’s security concerns because open border creates security challenge for India (Shrestha B. N., 2014). New Delhi accused Kathmandu for illegal infiltration of citizens of other countries through this border. The state raised concerns about movement of nationals of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Pakistan from Nepal into Indian bordering states. Chief Minister of Bihar stated that unregulated border with Kathmandu is a serious threat to the security of the state because of illegal movement of peoples and commission of crimes (Sarkar, 2017).

Ranjeet Rae who served as ambassador of New Delhi to Kathmandu stated due to open border people misused it and commit crime in one state and run away into the neighboring state. This issue jeopardized the security of the two states (Shrestha B. N., 2014). India is not ready to take practical measures to regulate long and open border with Nepal. Its leaders mainly focused on blame game. It is in India’s interests to have porous

and unregulated border with Nepal for movement of its people in the state. If it poses a real threat to security of India, the state must draft strategy to regulate it under an agreement. The issue of regulation of open border is supported by national sentiments in both states. Political parties in Kathmandu included the issue in their political campaign.

#### **4.2 Areas of Cooperation between India and Nepal**

This part of the fourth chapter discusses about cooperation between two states. It explains close ties between India and Nepal to build rail-links, oil pipelines, electricity transmission lines and cooperation in transit facilities.

##### **4.2.1 Rail-link between India and Nepal**

Since Independence, New Delhi invested tremendously in development projects in Kathmandu. India invested in rail and road projects of the state. The first ever project in Nepal was the Tribhuvan Rajpath highway. Indian engineers constructed it and maintained by New Delhi till 1965. Prime Minister Sharma Oli visited India in 2018. Narendra Modi and his counterpart in Kathmandu agreed to extend cooperation in development of rail-linkages in Nepal. India always wants its predominance in development sector of the state. Therefore, Modi government in India took initiative to build rail link between Raxaul in Bihar, an Indian state, and Kathmandu.

Nepal and India signed MoU of \$3.15b to construct the rail link (Nepal-India sign MoU for Kathmandu-Raxaul railway linkhe , 2021). India will bear the cost of this project. The project will be completed in five years. After completion of this rail link Kathmandu will be directly connected with India's railway system. Nepal will be able to import and export to India and other countries directly from Kathmandu to India through the rail service. The project is crucial for economy and connectivity of Nepal with India. It will also improve people-to-people contact between the two states (Proposed Kathmandu-Raxaul rail project moves a step ahead. , 2021).

#### **4.2.2 India-Nepal inaugurate Motihari-Amlekhganj Oil Pipeline**

Nepali completely dependent on India for its fuel related imports. In 2020, Indian Prime Minister and Nepal's Prime Minister Sharma Oli inaugurated a 69 kilo-meter long pipeline virtually. It is a significant step to improve relations between the two states and to build trust building measures. Indian Prime Minister claimed this energy pipeline will help masses because it will reduce the cost of petroleum products in Nepal. The pipeline has the capacity to transfer two tons of petroleum to Kathmandu in a year. India's ambassador to Nepal stated the Motihari-Amalekhganj pipeline is a first step to improve storage issues of petroleum products in Kathmandu with the help of India. The pipeline project not only based on environment friendly scheme of India but also will reduce cost of transportation of petroleum products in Nepal (Explained: The India-Nepal petroleum pipeline inaugurated today, 2019).

#### **4.2.3 Indo-Nepal Butwal-Gorakhpur Transmission Line**

India and Nepal have historical relations in transmission of power. Nepal always imported electricity from India. During 2015 blockade, state faced severe shortage of petroleum products and limited capacity to generate electricity during winter. Lack of capacity to generate power exacerbated the situation and leaders in Kathmandu decided to increase state's own capacity to generate power and be a self-sufficient in it. Therefore, the state initiated multiple projects to reduce its dependence on India for electricity. In 2021, both states signed an agreement to strengthen power transmission cooperation. Electricity generation will increase two folds in coming years in Nepal. The transmission line is established to transmit electricity in different parts of Nepal. Nepal will also export 400kv power to India.

It will prove a life line for power export of the country. Due to lack of transmission infrastructure, energy has cost millions to Nepal's exchequer. Nepal always imported more than half of its electricity from India (Vater, 2020). It is the second agreement to development of cross border transmission lines. After operationalization of Upper Tamakoshi hydropower project, there will be addition of extra power in grid of Nepal. Extra voltage will be wasted because Nepal does not have enough infrastructures for transmission line

inside the country. Wastage of extra voltage of electricity will cost heavily to economy of Nepal. Capacity of Kathmandu to generate electricity is highly dependent on flow of rivers.

Nepal can export electricity to India in summers when there is a huge demand in India. The season in which flow of rivers is slow down, Nepal can import power from India (Shrestha P. M., 2021). The part of power line passed through territory of Nepal, it will be funded by Nepal and the part of line transmission passed through India territory will be funded by an Indian commercial company. If India imports hydropower from Nepal, it will really boost revenue generation of Nepal from New Delhi. It will also reduce trade deficit between the two countries. Trade deficit is another important concern for Kathmandu as it favors India.

#### **4.2.4 Access to Inland Water Ways**

In 2018, PM Modi and PM Sharma Oli initiated the discussion on access to inland water ways. Later on, India has given access Nepal to three water ways. Indian official stated that the state granted access to Nepal to the Kolkata-Kalughat, Raxaul; Kolkata-Sahebgunj, Biratnagar and routes. Access to the Indian waterways will facilitate efficient movement of cargo imported from third countries to Nepal. K. Bhadur in an interview stated significant of inland waterways, “India has agreed to incorporate inland water facilities in separate Trade and Transit Treaties, paving the way for us to navigate inland water facilities from Haldia to Nepal border via our two rivers. This will pave the way for our own inland waterways. This will diversify our transit facilities, as we are currently completely dependent on land transit,” (Khanal, 2019).

For a long time, Kathmandu requested India to give access to inland waterways. Inland waterways play prominent role in diversification of transit inside India for Nepal. It will also reduce time and cost for imported and exported commodities. New Delhi permitted Kathmandu to use two waterways of India: Gandak and Koshi. Through these waterways Kathmandu's imports and exports for countries other than India can reach at Haldia port. There is also an increase in Nepal's export to India. Almost 64% of total export of Nepal destined to New Delhi in 2019 (Jha H. B., 2020). Upward trajectory of exports increased in 2020 as

75% of total exports (Jha H. B., 2020) of the state reached in Indian markets.

#### **4.2.5 India Tried to Normalize Relations with PM Oli**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Nepal four times since he came into power in 2014. His counterpart Sharma Oli also visited India in his three terms. India blamed Sharma Oli for his more close collaboration with Beijing than New Delhi. During period of Sharma Oli, both states had conflict ridden relations. Sharma Oli accused India for ousting him out of power (Nepal PM accuses India of conspiring to oust him, 2020). However, India tried to develop good relations with the state. Chief of Army of India paid 3 day visit to Kathmandu. Chief of intelligence agency (RAW) of India visited PM Oli (Rej, 2020) in Nepal. India announced multiple long and short infrastructure projects, gave access to inland waterways and reduced tariff on commodities of Nepal to normalize relations with the state. Beijing has filled the vacuum which created by New Delhi in terms of development and financial assistance in Kathmandu since 2015. China has been dominating over India in FDI since 2015. India increased pace of its developmental projects in Kathmandu to compete with China.

#### **4.2.6 Indo-Nepal Joint Military Exercises**

India and Nepal signed an agreement to commence joint military exercise in 2011. Despite the fact that relations of both states deteriorated since 2015, the two countries continued their joint exercise annually. In 2020, the military exercise held with the name of 'Surya Kiran XIV' (Surya Kiran exercise, 2021). Different regiments and battalions participated in these exercise in each year. Terrorism, insurgency, disaster management and terrain warfare are the domains which gained primary focus. In addition, introduction of new weapons and their technical aspects are also discussed. Different concepts and strategies for search operations in difficult areas are part of these bilateral exercises. Indian military strategists think such military exercises between the two states help in developing strong military ties and enhancing defense collaboration. Armies of both countries shared their experience to counter-terrorism.

When relations between two states were strangled, India's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Rawat visited

Nepal. He visited Kathmandu twice (Bipin Rawat's visit to Nepal helped in deepening ties between armies, 2017). On the other hand, chief of Nepal also visited New Delhi to receive honorary rank. Both countries give importance to their military links and honorary ranks in each other states. Visits of Chiefs played role in bringing normalcy in cold relations. These visits of army chiefs send the message to the regional and external players that India is concerned about its relations with security persons in Nepal and the state will not permit any security agreement of Nepal with China.

India is not ready to accept Nepal and other smaller states as an independent and sovereign in the region. India desires to maintain its dominance in the region. India considers Nepal as a part of its greater India (Akhand Bharat) concept (Upadhyay S. , India's quest for regional hegemony, 2022). This concept is widely accepted not only in New Delhi but also in different parts of India. People from India when communicate with Nepalese, they do not treat them as sovereign citizen of other state. They treated Nepalese as less than the Indians. India desires to guide Nepal in domestic and foreign relations. However, Kathmandu is really sensitive about India's guidance and infringement of its sovereignty (Upadhyay S. , India's quest for regional hegemony, 2022).Therefore; policy makers in Kathmandu are active to develop good relations with the regional and global powers to avoid the fate of Sikkim.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion**

Relations between India and Nepal are guided by Peace and Friendship treaty. The treaty favors India's security interests. India heavily handedly dealt with Kathmandu regarding transit facilities. People of Nepal have close cultural and religious links with India. Despite that, India lost its relative dominance to China because of its own economic and security interests and punished the state with economic sanctions. After independence of India, its leaders tried hard to project the state as an emerging power. They initiated a plan to develop India's own atomic bomb to acquire the status of nuclear state. Though, India as an emerging power gained international attention after its opening of economy and market. Changing geo-political scenarios in the region also played huge role to project India as a rising power in South Asia in post 9/11 era. India has attributes to dominate the South Asian region due to its vast geography, position, 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population, growing economy, technological advancement and huge military. On the other the U.S policy to pivot Asia and U.S-India's convergence of interests mobilizes the pace of New Delhi to gain status of rising power. Other states in the region do not possess equal geography, economy, and military might. Therefore, they are not able to challenge India's status in the region except Pakistan. Since independence India aspired to establish its dominance and influence in the region, but India is not able to establish its hegemony because of its entanglement in regional territorial conflicts.

Indo-Nepal relations are historical and both states are connected through religious and cultural links. It is evident through detailed study of relations of both states that they have complex and multilayered economic, security and political bilateral relations. Nepal shares three sides of border with India. Most of its trade with third countries is dependent on India. On the other hand, India cannot afford to lose its influence in the state because of its aspirations for regional dominance. In this context, both states cannot avoid each other

in any political and security structure. India and Nepal's relations could not be explained under approaches of global hegemony. India is not a global hegemon. Though, both neighbors did not develop relations based on sovereignty and non-interference. Relations of both states viewed in the context of regional aspiration of dominance and hegemony. New Delhi intervened in political, economic and security of its smaller neighbor multiple times since 1950. Due to globalization, open markets and information technology bilateral relations between the two states marked with more complexity. Despite its dominance and capacity to influence, New Delhi is not a single actor to regulate Indo-Nepal relations. Different actors of political and administrative domains from both states influence formulation of foreign policy choices and public opinion of their respective countries.

India seeks to be a hegemon in the region. The state desires to establish a regional security framework. India is not in favor of involvement of any outside power with its neighbors. The state wants to lead the region at global level. On the other hand, its long-standing territorial disputes with neighbors are hindrance for its domination in the region. India's interference in internal matters of other states, military interventions, supports to the insurgent groups in neighbors, has built its image as a bullying regional power. Whenever India's neighbors did not pay attention to its interests, New Delhi used coercive measures to compel states to prioritize its interests in the region. The other smaller regional states accused India for its hegemonic approach to the region. India's action in Sikkim, Bangladesh, and Sri-Lanka prompted security concerns for other regional states. India lost its image of soft power in its own region. Other regional states do not have their stakes in rising India. Therefore, New Delhi's developmental projects and political guidance in Nepal is viewed through the lens of dominance and violation of sovereignty of the state.

Public opinion in Kathmandu was not against India in 2014, when PM Modi visited Nepal, signed multiple projects related to development, and sent aid after earthquake in the state. When Kathmandu promulgated new constitution, New Delhi imposed unofficial blockade to put pressure on the state. This incident completely shifted public opinion regarding India's policies towards Kathmandu. Anti-India protests

and social media campaigns were organized by people in Nepal. Most of the common people were target of the blockade. This blockade refreshed memories of 1989 economic blockade. It led to a dramatic shift in Nepal's public opinion regarding India and China. Political leaders in Nepal exploited the opportunity and built economic relations with China. India's policies to guide Nepalese political leaders, economist and officials from administration what to do and what not to do highly criticized not only by leaders but also from Public. New Delhi gave more importance to cultural and religious links with Kathmandu; however, people in Nepal give primary importance to their economic interests. Leaders from Nepal demand for equal and sovereign relations with India and other states. India relatively loses its influence to China, as Beijing's investment, political and diplomatic support overpassed India in Nepal. Kathmandu is not satisfied to be part of New Delhi's security framework. The state seeks to be independent in foreign policy choices. Therefore, India should not expect from Kathmandu to pay price for contest and power politics between India and China.

### **Policy Options for Re-setting Relations between the States**

- First of all, New Delhi should pay attention towards trust building measures. It should take leaders of Nepal in confidence that India is not going to infringe sovereignty of the state. New Delhi should focus on soft power to shift public opinion in favors of India.
- For many years, Nepal has been demanding to review the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950. Geo-political and geo-economic scenarios has been changed from 1950. India should review the treaty and take Nepalese in confidence that treaty is not unilateral and unequal. It will improve bilateral relations between the two states
- India should refrain to intervene and use harsh economic measures like economic blockade to influence political process in Kathmandu. India should respect choice of people in Nepal regarding political parties and don't favor an ethnic group over the whole state.
- New Delhi should refrain from guiding foreign policy of the state. Media and leaders in Kathmandu consider it as violation of sovereignty of the state. It impacts directly on long-term national interests

New Delhi in Kathmandu.

- India should not view Nepal through lens of realism and consider each agreement between Kathmandu and Beijing as a security threat for India. Kathmandu is a land locked country. India gains much more if it follows path of neo-realism to reset relations with Kathmandu.
- Another important step India should take is project delivery. New Delhi has initiated multiple economic and developmental projects, but these projects do not complete during fixed time period. Therefore, there is a common observation in Nepal that India just make promises but unable to deliver them.
- Leaders in Nepal should choose balanced and neutral foreign policy towards India and China. It is not in interests of Nepal to incline towards any state. Nepal should prefer economic and transit relations with both states rather than security alliances. In addition, Kathmandu makes sure that its territory should not be used against India. In this way, both states will be able to trust each other.
- Nepal should not align with one of the two major powers on its borders in any security framework which undermines its own sovereignty.
- India should shift focus on economic cooperation and delivery on time rather than imposing sanctions and blockade on Kathmandu and initiate projects to balance projects of BRI initiated by China in the state.
- New Delhi and Kathmandu should design a proper framework to regulate open border to curb heinous activities and smuggling across border.
- India and Nepal should resolve territorial disputes through dialogue. India should respect Kathmandu's concerns regarding land claims. Otherwise, Nepal will incline towards China and India will face strategic loss in the state.
- If India wants to dominate the region, it should get rid of offensive approaches towards neighbors; otherwise it will exhaust its resources in fighting economic, proxies and territorial wars with small

neighbors.

- India should follow the pathway of European Union to create cooperation in the region. Otherwise New Delhi will be unable to balance China in Asia.
- To improve security along border both states should draft a new treaty which curb illegal trade and black markets along the border

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