

**GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOECONOMIC DISCOURSES ON NEPAL'S FOREIGN  
POLICY**

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By

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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

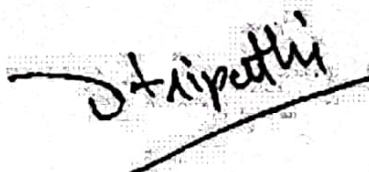
We hereby certify that the work incorporated in this dissertation entitled **Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Discourses on Nepal's Foreign Policy** submitted by **Hari Prakash Chand (He/His/Him)** has been accomplished under our supervision and guidance. Such materials as have been obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged in the dissertation. We, therefore, recommend this dissertation submitted by him for the final examinations by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirement for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in International Relations and Diplomacy**.



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11 December 2024



# TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

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APPROVAL LETTER

This dissertation entitled "Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Discourses on Nepal's Foreign Policy" was submitted by Mr. Hari Praksh Chand of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relation and Diplomacy. I hereby, certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality. Therefore, it has been accepted for the degree.

Prof. Dubi Nanda Dhakal, PhD  
Dean and Chairperson  
Research Committee

Date: 2081-9-26

## DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that this PhD dissertation entitled "**Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Discourses on Nepal's Foreign Policy**", submitted to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University (TU), is entirely my original work and research conducted under the supervision of my supervisors. I have made due acknowledgments of all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of drafting the dissertation. The results of this dissertation have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or any other purpose. No part of the contents of this dissertation has ever been published in any form before. I shall be responsible solely for any evidence found against my declaration.

Signature



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11 December 2024

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is the outcome of a thorough analysis of Nepal's foreign policy in Geopolitical and Geoeconomic discourses. The qualitative method, especially, the phenomenological research method was dominantly used in the dissertation, along with numerous quantitative data analyses. Hence, both the deductive and inductive approaches of reasoning have been followed. This study introduced the 'Theory of Heartland' as a key geopolitical framework. It relates to the approaches of foreign policy formulation and implementation. While formulating, analyzing, and implementing Nepal's foreign policy Nepal, the existing model of foreign policy analysis in world affairs developed by Graham Allison seems unable to address the Nepali critical challenges of external influence and engagement. Hence, a new model is analyzed in this dissertation in the special case of Nepal which is the 'Role of Dominant External Actors Model'. Because of such external roles, Nepal has adopted various approaches to formulate its foreign policy in different periods, based on research question one and objective one.

Similarly, the study explored that Nepal should focus on maintaining harmonious relations with all external actors based on a pragmatic and realpolitik approach under the framework of trustworthy manner (Credible Diplomacy) keeping the national interests at the center of diplomatic affairs. Similarly, the study analyzed that foreign policy needs scientific change when its geopolitics changes, otherwise, traditional foreign policy becomes insufficient to deal with the very latest geopolitical complexities perfectly.

Likewise, the study concludes that because of eighteen external and twenty internal fault lines of Nepali geopolitics, Nepal seems to be lagging in gaining the required capability to address the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in formulating and implementing its

foreign policy. This conclusion relates to research question number two and objective two. To carefully deal with those fault lines, Nepal should adopt a scientific and empirical foreign policy outline named ‘7\*7 Matrix Model of Scientific and Empirical New Outlines of Nepal’s Foreign Policy’. This newly analyzed model has incorporated geopolitical and geo-economic issues and actors to accurately research, analyze, and measure the impact of foreign policy. This is linked to research question number three and objective three. Therefore, geopolitics and geoeconomics cannot be separate units to perfectly, precisely, and comprehensively analyze the foreign policy of any country in the world.

The study also analyzed two theories i.e. neorealism and neoliberalism, which failed to address the foreign policy (economic and political) issues of developing and under-developed countries. These theories are, in fact, the theories of dominant and developed powers instead of mainstreaming theories of World affairs. Hence the national interests of developing and underdeveloped countries cannot be widely promoted and expanded in comparison with dominant and developed countries under neorealism and neoliberal framework. Being an underdeveloped country in South Asia, ‘Trilateral Geopolitics’ is an evolving theory of Nepal’s International Relations at least up to the next century in the special case of Nepali politics and external engagement if the present Nepali geographical territory existed the same for the same periods. Hence the Trilateral Geopolitics should be aligned with the new outlines of Nepal’s foreign policy and vice versa.

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## ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AUKUS	Australia-United Kingdom-United States
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBIN	Bhutan Bangladesh India Nepal
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BIN	Bangladesh India Nepal
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa
BS	Bikram Sambat
CE	Common Era
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPN (Maoist Center)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center)
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DIRD	Department of International Relations and Diplomacy
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
EU MSS	European Union Maritime Security Strategy

EVI	Environmental Vulnerability Index
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
G-20	Group of 20
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs And Trade
GDI	Global Development Initiatives
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GoG	Gulf of Guinea
GSI	Global Civilizational Initiatives
HAI	Human Asset Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HLPC	High-Level Privatization Commission
HoG	Head of Government
HoS	Head of State
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICSID	International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes
IDA	International Development Association
IFA	Institute of Foreign Affairs
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPE	International Political Economy
IPS	Indo-Pacific Strategy

IR	International Relations
KII	Key Informants Interview
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MCC	Millenium Challenge Corporation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEFA	North-East Frontier Agency
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSMS	National Strategy for Maritime Security
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PMPD	People's Multi-Party Democracy
PRI	Policy Research Institute
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SEI	Sovereign, Equal and Independent
SNG	Sub-National Governments
SPP	State Partnership Program
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization
WVI	World Vision International
WW-I	World War-I
WW-II	World War-II
ZOP	Zone of Peace

## CHAPTER- ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Geo-strategically, Nepal is located in a very sensitive zone of South to South- North Asia. This geopolitical position has been perceived metaphorically as a root between two stones. Nepal's geopolitical situation demonstrates how geopolitics has imposed a severe obstruction to harmonizing foreign relations with aspirations for peace, security, and development. Because of such obstruction, complex geopolitics has been developed, and hence Nepal is facing challenges to maintain cordial relations with addressing all the interests of foreign actors. The then-Nepal government allowed Khampas to enter Nepal from Dehradun as per P. S. Basnyat. This situation indicates how Nepal's geopolitics was serious and complicated. 'Nepal Strategy for Survival' (1971) states that Nepali foreign policy has long been how to preserve national independence in the face of threats from abroad. The author's argument is Nepal's struggle during the past two centuries has focused on her huge struggle for survival. In that period, Nepal could not focus on upgrading its economic strength because of that kind of struggle for survival. Geopolitics and geo-economics play a vital role in determining foreign policy. We understand geopolitics primarily because we are located between two giant neighbors. Location generates geopolitics for us. King Prithvi Narayan Shah metaphorically defined Nepal as a *Tarul* (a root vegetable) between two stones (Muni, 1973, p. 2).

Muni further writes, "King Prithvi Narayan had also analyzed the then Nepali geopolitics and popularly claimed that great friendship should be maintained with the Chinese emperor and friendship should also be maintained with the emperor of the Southern seas (The British), but the Southern ruler is very cleaver" (1973, p. 2). K. Bashyal opines in a similar way that Nepal's

geopolitics among China, the USA, and India is a major obstacle to Nepal's limited foreign relations with other powers. The limited geopolitical relations between India and China is already complicated (personal communication, September 2, 2022). This indicates that the geopolitical history as well as the present context of Nepal is quite complex. Two great emperors were face to face to expand their influence in the historical context of Nepal whereas three dominant powers are focused on Nepal in the present context. Hence, Nepal's geopolitical and geostrategic location was strategically very important but also too vulnerable for safeguarding Nepali national interests and achieving economic prosperity rapidly without any obstacle.

In the context of the very sensitive geopolitics of Nepal, Khanal (2000) writes that Nepal's foreign policy is a difficult, serious, and sensitive subject owing to its geopolitics and underdevelopment (p. 408). He further argues that ... external security matters for Nepal are the object of its search. So far as Nepal is concerned, underdevelopment and geopolitical position are the first harsh realities at the base of national security (p. 408). Similarly, Nepal is not able to constantly implement its foreign policy in parallel with the present complexity of geoeconomics and geopolitics (M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022). King Prithvi Narayan Shah was quite aware and sensitive to such geopolitical issues and hence he adopted his policy towards the North and South keeping the security threats and challenges in mind and he also made his successors. Nepal still is following his principal while dealing with her immediate neighbors. The present-day non-aligned foreign policy concept actually evolved during King Prithvi Narayan Shah's period and this concept was pragmatically produced by him. Therefore, the doctrine of Nepal's present-day foreign policy was developed by King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

Geopolitics is one of the key determinants in formulating foreign policy, it is also one of the major factors in shaping and reshaping bilateral and multilateral relations of a country. It is

influenced by the actions and reactions of geopolitical players. They sometimes push their actions broadly to achieve their national and global interests, and sometimes even narrow down their actions but their interests continue to grow. Because of this fact, Nepal is facing challenges in handling the relations, especially with major external players including addressing their all interests at a time. This is because of the geopolitical interest of super and great powers in Nepal.

Geopolitics analyzes the geographic influences on power relationships and includes the contemporary rationalization of power politics. It combines the history (political process) and geographical territory of countries worldwide. Furthermore, geopolitics is also the analysis of the interaction between geographical settings, perspectives, and political processes. Researchers have found that geographical circumstances political actions and geopolitics are dynamics.

The significance of geopolitics is linked with the discourse of geo-economics in the recent time period. The geo-economics is also equally important to geopolitics for shaping and reshaping the country's international affairs. Geopolitics is more related to power exercise between and among the countries, especially the power related to hard type, not absolutely excluding soft power, because, in politics, power exercise is the central part of state's affairs. The geo-economics is more related to upgrading and strengthening of country's economic power through bilateral and multilateral cooperation in economic activities and aspects. Soilen (2012) argues that geo-economics is the study of spacial, socio-cultural, and strategic dimensions of resources, along with the aim of acquiring sustainable competitive advantages (p. 2). He further explains that it is the regularity of the logic of geopolitics, which is applied to the era of globalization. More specifically, the study of geo-economics is most relevant in the context of larger strategic entities, particularly not military might, such as nations and multinational enterprises. The geo-economics is a multi-disciplinary discourse for the study of economics

which ultimately contribute to the overall country's geopolitics. It has been explained more in upcoming chapters.

Soilen differentiates geoeconomics from geopolitics as below:

The discipline and dimension of such geo-economics differ from geopolitics in two fundamental aspects. One is from the perspective of its topic, it is not related to political and military actions but is more concerned with the economic process. The next is perspective, the actions are not undertaken chiefly by those kinds of actors representing the state, but by personnel of private companies, and organizations, who are perfectly responsible to the owners of such companies and organizations. Geo-economics is studied with the interests of states in mind or from the macro perspective. It makes it more complex than the study of geopolitics, where the State itself is the primary actor (p. 2).

According to Soilen, geoeconomics is an important discourse for a country's prosperity through economic gain (2012, p. 2). Nepal is in the same situation where the super and global powers are focusing to achieve their strategic as well as economic interest. In Nepal, geopolitics cannot be studied separately excluding geoeconomics. China's Belt and Road Initiatives and the USA's Millennium Challenge Corporation are more related to geoeconomics as they claim however their effects on strategic fronts cannot be undermined. Therefore, both geopolitics and geoeconomics discourses are equally important to study Nepal's foreign policy.

Theoretically analyzing, geopolitics is linked with neorealism and geoeconomics relates with neo-liberalism. All the external actors are focusing on Nepal in both ways: Firstly, they want to expand their strategic and security interests in Nepal which is linked with their neorealist approach. Secondly, they want to expand their political as well as economic values

(democratization, free trade, deregulation, increasing the role of multi-national companies, etc) which is related to the neo-liberal approach. Therefore, it is not possible to precisely study and conclude about Nepal's world affairs and foreign policy without integrating both theoretical approaches. Hence, neorealism and neoliberalism are the theoretical aspects of this research whereas geopolitics and geoeconomics are two discourses related to the theoretical approaches adopted in this research.

One of the best-known realist thinkers Machiavelli advised rulers to use deceit and violence as tools against other states (Machiavelli, 2014), originally published in 1532. He claims that moral goals are so dangerous and that to act morally will bring about disaster. He thus ignores the moral values of cooperation between and among states for relative gains, Thomas Hobbes, another prominent realist thinker, claims that the anarchic state of nature, seen as entailing a state of war and "such a war as is of every man against every man". In his book *Leviathan*, Hobbes argues that the state of nature is the "war of every man against every man," in which people constantly seek to destroy one another. This state is so horrible that human beings naturally seek peace, and the best way to achieve peace is to construct the *Leviathan* through a social contract (Hobbes, 1997). His statement 'war of every man against every man' is linked with classical realism. Classical realism is the foundation of the development of neorealism which is a part of the theoretical framework of the research. So, to explore the notion and argument of neorealism, the study, and analysis of classical realism are important. Therefore, Hobbes's concept of *Leviathan* is linked with neorealism. The arguments of Machiavelli and Hobbes are related to classical realism but neorealism is developed based on the foundation of classical realist arguments. Classical realism talks more about human nature and its reflection on state affairs whereas neorealism argues that the international system is prominent and it shapes the nature of

human beings or individuals. This study is more related to international structures or systems and hence is focused on neorealism.

Cristol (2009) mentions six principles of political realism which are based on the principle of Hans J. Morgenthau: 1) Objective laws govern politics, 2) Politics is all about power, 3) the concept of interest defined as power is universally valid concept, 4) Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action, 5) Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral principles, and 6) Policy must come out of political analysis: An analysis of power (p. 239). These six principles are linked much with international systems and structure and hence these principles are the transitional principles from classical to neorealism.

In the same way, neoliberalism is also developed based on the foundation of classical liberalism. Locke (1689) in his 'Two Treaties on Government' established two fundamental liberal ideas: 1) economic liberty, meaning the right to have and use property, and 2) Intellectual liberty, including freedom of conscience (Locke, 1967). Later on, Baron de Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, John Stuart Mill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, etc contributed to the discourse of liberalism and they spread the ideology all over the world. However, what researcher has focused on is the neoliberal discourse started by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s.

These two theories in international relations (Neorealism and Neoliberalism) have entirely influenced Nepali international affairs and foreign policy. Major external actors are focused in Nepal based on two theoretical approaches that affect Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics and ultimately foreign policy of Nepal as well. So, the research is focused on Nepal's foreign policy

from the discourses of geopolitics and geoeconomics selecting neorealism and neoliberalism as the theoretical tools.

Hartman views foreign policy as a systematic statement of deliberately selected national interests (Hartman, 1967). Similarly, Schleicher elaborates that foreign policy includes the objectives, plans, and actions taken by a state relative to its external relationship (Schleicher, 1963). Likewise, Lord Palmerston says, that in foreign policy, there are no permanent friends or enemies; there are only permanent interests (Acharya, 2014). He further elaborates, “We have no eternal allies or perpetual allies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and we must follow those interests”. From the aforementioned definitions of scholars, it is clear that foreign policy is an instrument to achieve the national interest of a state where the policy is formulated keeping the national interest at the core. The national interest and the foreign policy never go separately and foreign policy should match the way of achieving the national interest. Hence, foreign policy is a systematic statement of deliberately selected national interest.

Pragmatically, the foreign policy of a country is oriented towards managing the crisis created by external geopolitical actors and searching the opportunities for a country simultaneously even in adverse geopolitical circumstances to achieve national interest. In foreign affairs, geopolitical players are one of the primary factors which not only influence the actors within the state but also create political pressures to weaken the major organs of the state for their national benefits which retard the country's acceleration of achieving the national interest. In the context of Nepal, Nepal has been facing challenges created due to the active participation of global and regional geopolitical actors like the United States of America (USA), India, and China. These major external actors are engaged in Nepal politically as well as economically. They have their interests which are contested to each other. When their interest is contested, they try to influence

Nepali institutions even from lower to upper structures in their way. In this condition, Nepal cannot handle the multiple issues, interests, and pressures that arise from them, and thus complexities in foreign affairs evolve. On the other hand, they are Nepal's developmental partners as well. They provide financial support to Nepal every year for the development of Nepal. Hence, Nepal gets opportunities from them too. In this way, a developing country like Nepal has been compelled to focus on managing the complexities created by external geopolitical actors and searching the opportunities simultaneously. In this situation, Nepal seems not so effective in handling its foreign policy without any external pressure, and thus dilemmas in foreign policy come up frequently in Nepal.

Due to the sensitive geopolitical situation, the geo-economic issues in Nepal have also become similar to geopolitics because one cannot separate from the next between the two in international politics as explained above. The governments of Nepal have not been able to take the necessary diplomatic, economic, and political steps to get rid of the kind of geopolitical and geo-economical influence and pressure that Nepal has been facing for a long time. After the restoration of democracy, the country adopted a policy of neo-liberalism and multinational companies entered in large numbers. They mobilized their bodies to fulfill their interests in Nepal. National and local industries, on the other hand, could not compete with multinational companies and either closed down or went into privatization. Local production was declining. As a result, the citizens who lost their jobs were forced to go abroad and due to the lack of productive forces in the country, the country has been facing a big blow to production and the economy. Therefore, geopolitics and geo-economics go together and affect each other simultaneously.

When geopolitics and geo-economics have an impact on a country's foreign policy, foreign policy has to be changed accordingly and solve the problems that arise from it, or the challenges posed by geopolitics and geo-economics should not hinder the dynamic implementation of foreign policy. As Nepal's diplomacy and foreign policy faced challenges to properly deal with the recent phenomenon arising from changing geopolitics and geo-economics, Nepal's foreign policy either has problems in its implementation and diplomacy or it is confirmed that foreign policy is not up-to-date as per the changed geopolitics and geo-economics. This study has focused on assessing the challenges created due to Nepal's sensitive geopolitics and geo-economics connected with it and the relevant foreign policy with the changing context to be adopted by Nepal. Therefore, this study may be important for scholars, policymakers, and diplomats.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nepal in 2021 is \$36.29 billion (Microtrends Website). The Gross National Product later termed Gross National Income (GNI) of Nepal is \$36,590,881,233 in 2021. The GDP and GNP (GNI) are major factors in a country's geoeconomic situation which affects the country's geopolitics as well. Nepal as a small geoeconomic power has been dealing with geoeconomic powerhouses like the USA, China, and India on which this study is focused for the country's benefit. The tool to measure the economic benefits obtained from geoeconomic powers is bilateral trade. Nepal's trade deficit with India, China, and the USA is \$1 trillion (Prasain, 2023, para. 12), \$2302 million (OEC Website), and \$144 million (OEC Website) in 2021 respectively. Such kind of data shows that Nepal's foreign policy is not aligned with such kind of geoeconomic realities.

Most importantly, geopolitics is a dominant factor affecting the country's foreign policy where geoeconomics plays a role to support the geopolitical goal of any country in world politics. Nepal's foreign policy seems to have been incapacitated to address the challenges caused by the changing geopolitical and geo-economic situations. This situation is not only because of the lack of a culture of intensive research but also due to the indifference and lack of knowledge of decision-makers and policy-makers. More than that, Nepal's foreign policy is basically affected by geopolitical actors, attitudes, trends, and geoeconomic circumstances. Nepal is surrounded by a rising superpower, and a great power i.e. China and India. The existing superpower i.e. the USA is also engaged in Nepal directly to serve its greater global interests. India wants to further strengthen its sphere of influence and is anxious about the presence of China in Nepal. China also has varied interests in Nepal. The attitude, behavior, and engagement of immediate neighbors and the USA have made Nepali geopolitics, geoeconomics, and then foreign policy much more complicated and challenging.

Problematizing the geopolitical and geoeconomic situation of Nepal and the political roles of key external actors of Nepal; China, India, and the USA, the following research questions are framed;

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the approaches to foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nepal?
2. Why has Nepal been facing challenges in dealing with the geopolitics and geoeconomic realities to achieve National Interests?
3. How Nepal can address the geopolitical and geo-economic complexities in the formulation and implementation of Nepal's foreign policy?

## 1.4 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study were;

1. To assess the approaches of foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nepal.
2. To analyze the causes and effects of complex geopolitical and geoeconomic realities while dealing with achieving the National Interests.
3. To explore how to deal with the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in formulating and implementing foreign policy.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study comprehensively focused on two theories i.e. neorealism and neoliberalism from the Nepali perspective, two discourses i.e. geopolitics and geoeconomics. It also concentrated on analyzing the foreign policy of Nepal from the Lichchhavi era to the current period in the light of theoretical and discourse points of view. The study has deeply analyzed and proposed a new model of foreign policy analysis in the special case of Nepal i.e. Role of Dominant External Actors in formulating and implementing Nepal's foreign policy. Likewise, the study has put forward a new doctrine of Nepal's foreign policy i.e. "A Cat & Three Lions" instead the regularity of "Yam between Two Boulders" which is related to Trilateral geopolitics. This Trilateral Geopolitical concept has tried to analyze the core external actors and key internal factors of Nepal's world affairs based on their engagement and involvement in Nepal. Similarly, the study has explored a new outline of Nepal's foreign policy in the age of Trilateral Geopolitics. Though the study focused on academic discipline in this way to generate knowledge, policymakers, implementers, researchers, scholars, diplomats, and even academic politicians will be benefited from these core finding. The research attempted to explore the Nepali foreign policy model, and many international scholars from developing and landlocked

countries will also benefit from that. In addition, the research is based on empirical data from the land-locked country Nepal relating to three key external actors. Hence scholars, academics, and researchers from many countries similar to Nepal and other great powers will specifically be benefitted from this research and its publication. Therefore, the research is significant.

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

This study has been done within the theoretical frameworks; of neorealism and neoliberalism which are applied to geopolitics, geoeconomics, Heartland theory, and foreign policy analysis. So far as the data limitations are concerned; both primary and secondary have been used. Key Informants Interview (KII) thorough purposive sampling has been adopted for primary data collection purposes.

## **1.7 Operational Definitions**

### ***1.7.1 Geopolitics***

Geopolitics is the analysis of geographic influence and power relationships. In other words, it is the interaction between geographical settings and political processes in world affairs. Countries with huge geography have a greater influence on domestic political actors in small states.

### ***1.7.2 Geoeconomics***

Geoeconomics is a continuation of the debate and argument of geopolitical impact on the national economy, which is important in the era of globalization. It is also defined as the tool to achieve the geopolitical goal in world politics.

### ***1.7.3 Heartland theory***

The concept of Heartland was developed based on the geographical significance of the pivot position. Three key geographical aspects are integrated with the Heartland. First is the lowland plain on the face of the globe, the second is some great plain navigable rivers, and the third is the

grassland zone of the Heartland. Thus, the Heartland deals with the sea powers to the land powers, and geopolitics.

#### ***1.7.4 Neorealism***

Neorealism as the structure of the system that is external to the actors, in particular the relative distribution of power, is the central analytical focus. According to Waltz's neorealist theory, a basic feature of international relations is the decentralized structure of anarchy between states.

#### ***1.7.5 Neoliberalism***

It is a political philosophy that gives priority to individual freedom and the right to private property. More generally it is described as neo-liberalism is a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individuals, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights.

#### ***1.7.6 Laissez-faire economy***

Laissez-Faire Economy is a French term that means 'let you do'. It means the little the government is involved in the economy, the more business will be. Its extension ensures more benefits for society as a whole.

#### ***1.7.7 Great powers***

A great power is a sovereign state that is recognized as having the ability and expertise to exert its influence on a global scale.

#### ***1.7.8 Geopolitical complexities***

It is a tough task to manage and address the geopolitical actors and their interests in the national geography of a state.

### ***1.7.9 Counter strategies***

It is a strategy (a detailed plan for achieving something) intended to make another strategy less successful.

### ***1.7.10 Think tanks***

A think tank, or policy institute, is a research institute that performs research and advocacy concerning topics such as social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology, culture, etc.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction which includes the major contents of the proposal except the literature review. Chapter Two is a Review of Literature related to ‘Geopolitics and Geoeconomics: Concept and Context’ which has focused on core theories of International Relations, and academic debate on two discourses philosophically and empirically. Chapter Three is Research Methodology which adopted a qualitative approach. Chapter Four is Approaches of Foreign Policy Formulation and Implementation of Nepal. Similarly, Chapter Five is related to the Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Complexities of Nepal, Chapter Six is about the Roles of Geopolitics and Geoeconomics in Foreign Policy Formulation and Implementation, and finally, Chapter Seven is about Summary and Conclusion.

## **CHAPTER- TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **GEPOLITICS AND GEOECONOMICS: CONCEPT AND CONTEXT**

The following sections from 2.1 to 2.5 deal with theoretical and philosophical review whereas the sections 2.6 to 2.11 relate with empirical part.

#### **2.1 Geopolitics**

Geopolitics is one of the major discourses in International Relations. It influences leaders, States, and governance, which heavily affects how a country's international relations matter. In most cases, leaders of powerful countries contribute to the ups and downs of geopolitics. In the context of the bloodshed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, and other less well-reported places such as the Congo, the relevance of geopolitics is massive (Dodds, 2007, p. 1). U.S. forces started bombing the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan on 7 October 2001. Similarly, the invasion of Iraq by the USA on 20 March 2003 is the next devastating attack on a sovereign state. The occupation of Korea by the USA and former USSR in 1945 to disarm the Japanese invaders from the Korean peninsula is also an example of intervention by a powerful country. Likewise, intervention in Syria and the overthrowing of an elected parliamentary government in 1949 by the Truman administration, the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in overthrowing Egyptian King Farouk in 1950, the then US President Eisenhower's attempt to impose an embargo on Cuba in 1958 are few more examples of incidents that show how powerful countries use to divert the flow of geopolitics in their own calculated political alignment. There are also numerous incidents of intervention by the super and great powers in other states covertly and overtly in the post-Cold War era which significantly implicates global geopolitics and international affairs. Small states, developing nations, and other third-world countries usually

become losers from such great games of geopolitics, and their international relations is also affected. Hence, geopolitics is a prominent discourse in International Relations.

Growing global changes and challenges like the effect of globalization, technological innovation and its misuse, terrorist activities, various fundamentalist groups, and their political agenda, etc have made geopolitics more complex. The recent development in many cases challenges the existing perspective, discourse, world views, and theories which opens the way for inducting new perspectives and theories.

In International Relations, realism, and liberalism are mainstreaming theories. This chapter has examined how global changes and challenges affect the theoretical discourse globally and assessed impacts locally. It means how geopolitical and geo-economical new developments in world politics affect the mainstreaming of theoretical discourse globally and locally which heavily matters the local politics as well. Similarly, the effect of the new era on the theoretical debate and discourse and then how it impacted the discourses of geopolitics, geoeconomics, and foreign policy pragmatically is also critically reviewed in this chapter.

Geopolitics is a controversial power exercise by political actors by which intellectuals of the states localize international politics and represent it as a world specialized by unique types of places, people, and dramas (Tuathail & Agnew, 1992, p. 190). They categorize geopolitics into formal geopolitics and practical geopolitics. As per the definition of Tuathail and Agnew, formal and practical geopolitics seems valid as states or political actors represent the formal geopolitics whereas localization of international politics by intellectuals is more related to pragmatic or practical geopolitics. Linking with the geopolitical concept of Tuathail and Agnew, they further argue that the confrontation and massive struggle between the powerful and expansionist East against the democratic West is the most dominant geopolitical discourse of this period. This

discourse seems influenced by ideological clashes. The notion of expansionist East and powerful West is guided by the Western notion of democracy and their perspective toward the Eastern world. Integrating ideological ground in geopolitics makes it quite controversial in its traditional definition. The traditional definitions of geopolitics are basically guided by the concept of geographical settings and political processes (Gokmen, 2010, p. 16). The term 'political processes' does not care about ideological political actors but it focuses on all kinds of political actors who concentrate on certain geography to achieve their targeted goals or interests. Therefore, Tuathail and Agnew have defined geopolitics from the Western perspective.

Along with the invention of the term 'geopolitics' by Rudolf Kjellen in 1899, it was more popularized in the academic field (Gokmen, 2010, p. 13). Academics have also known geopolitics as the analysis of geographic influence and power relationships in world affairs. Countries with huge geography have a greater influence on domestic political actors in small states. Nepal is an example of such a situation. Nepal's total area is 147,516 sq. km (The Kathmandu Post, 2020, para. 5). India's total area is 3,287,263 sq. km. Similarly, China's total approximate area is 9,600,000 sq. km. Thus, Nepal is almost 22.284 times and 65.077 times smaller than India and China, respectively. These two neighbours have a greater influence on Nepal and Nepali political parties than other Nepal's friendly neighbours except the superpower. Therefore, the definition of geopolitics is valid in the case of Nepal.

Granieri defines geopolitics as an approach to studying recent world affairs in history, culture, tradition, political practices, and geography, or ... it is a study of the "realities and mentality of localities" (2015, p. 492). While studying geopolitics, history, culture, tradition, political practices, geography, etc are an integral part of the research for precise results and conclusions on geopolitics. As per Granieri, there are serious reasons behind regional and global

conflict or confrontation between and among the nations. For example, there is no single reason behind the competition, and confrontation between the recent Russia-Ukraine crisis, the Korean Peninsula issues, the Israel-Palestine conflict, Iran-Saudi Arabia affairs, Turkey-Syria relations, and even the US-China trade war. Reasons from various perspectives are responsible for such kinds of inter-state competition and conflicts. These bilateral and multilateral issues are linked with the concept of realities and mentalities of localities.

Geopolitical research, study, and analysis start with a map of certain geography or states but it doesn't end there. The geographical map itself is nothing unless the psychological construct of statesmanship is not considered as a research unit while conducting research on geopolitics because leaders' actions and reactions guided by their psychological construct play a crucial role in shaping and reshaping geopolitics. For example, there are maps of Nepal and India. However, the state leaders' role is vital for harmonious Nepal-India relations. Their psychology and decision-making capacity lead the bilateral relations and their possible consequences. As the map comes first when talking about geopolitics, it has its root between the decades 1880 and 1910 (Granieri, 2015, p. 492). Though the term 'geopolitics' was coined in 1899, its debate is even older than this period. Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote a book entitled "The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783" in 1890 which mainly deals with the supreme importance of sea power in national historical dominance. This notion argues that controlling the seas is the major source of Britain's rise as a world power in the early phase of the modern world (Kennedy, 1983). As geopolitics significantly is controlled by the action of great powers to become a superpower, controlling the seas by Britain is also a way of becoming a superpower in that era. Hence, an informal debate on geopolitics linked to this event in Britain.

Mahan's book focuses on the general history of the United States and Europe in a specific context to examine the influence of naval power in the course of that history (Mahan, 1898, p. iii). This book was published in 1890 as the first edition. It has focused on how the great powers try to develop their naval power to control the seas to become a superpower. The book has debated a lot about geopolitics even not focusing on the term. Later, Rudolf Kjellen invented the term and became the formal discourse in world academia. As Mahan geopolitically focuses on the politics of the sea, Mackinder (1943) focuses on the Heartland whose foundation is the physical basis for strategic thinking (p. 598). Strategy in political science deals with power politics which concentrates on definite geography.

Klieman writes:

In brief, geopolitics can be defined as what great, and superpowers are involved in, what they do exercise in geography, and what they are best at for establishing themselves as powerful players. The variables that arise in physical geography, including geography, climate, and demography, still translate either into property or liabilities, openness or constraints, as in the age of empires for growing, inhabiting, or declining superpowers. The major thing is that geopolitics provides the context—the landscape, the backdrop, the arena—in which great powers concentrate (2015, p. 4).

The discussion of geopolitics can be traced from Klieman's above argument that geopolitics is the process, actions, reactions, strategy, counter-strategy, and balancing of enemies' power by powerful political actors to establish themselves as the dominant player in a certain geography. In doing so, some existing powers weaken and some new ones rise. This process is never-ending either on the seas or on land. Thus, nineteenth-century geopolitics seems concentrated on the

seas' politics, whereas, twenty-first-century geopolitics equally imposed on the seas and land politics.

Political geography is a branch of geography and was in common use till the discovery of geopolitics in 1899 (Gokmen, 2010, p. 13). When the terminology 'geopolitics' was invented in 1899 by Rudolf Kjellen (Ibid, p. 9), it became further popular in the discipline of academia. The difference between geopolitics and political geography is: —geopolitics is related to the local *requirements* of a state, while political geography examines only its local *conditions* (Goodall, n.d., p. 191). Similarly, geopolitics is an "analysis of the influence of geography on power relationships in international relations". Likewise, it is defined as the study and analysis of the effect of a country's status, international prestige, position, and population, etc. on its politics. Moreover, Rudolf Kjellen who discovered the term, defines geopolitics as the state-theory of a geographic organism in space. It means that states behave like a living organism that extends, expands, and grows in nature. Geopolitics deals with such types of characteristics of a state. Moreover, Hagan's definition of it is that "geopolitics is a contemporary rationalization of power politics" (1942, p. 485). Gokmen further opines, "Geopolitics is a combination of history based on the political process and geography itself" (2010, p. 16). He has quoted from Cohen's Geopolitics of the World System about geopolitics which gives a new definition:

Geopolitics is the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings, and perspectives and, on the other hand, political processes. ... both geographical settings and political processes are dynamic, and each influences to next and is influenced by the other. Geopolitics addresses the consequences of this interaction (Gokmen, 2010, p. 16).

Therefore, from the above discussions, it can be summarized that geopolitics is all about the power exercised by any powers in defined geography to control or influence territorial politics explicitly or implicitly.

### ***2.1.1 Emergence of Geopolitics***

Geopolitics emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and re-emerged at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has needed to explain certain issues arising out of the general evolution of human society and the growing influence of permanent politico-economic changes on the human consciousness and the entire system of socio-political life and culture (Pascu, 2015, p. 438). There is a significant role of the German geopolitical school, Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellen, and Karl Haushofer in shaping the first geopolitical concepts. The traditional German geopolitical school played a role in the consecration of the new disciplines as well. The geopolitical perception was generated by legion concerns regarding the political geography, political theories, and military conceptions in that period. It evolved and developed due to the historic stage of the society and the state traveled German since the second half of the nineteenth century, in conjunction with the expansionary policy in the period of the Second World War (Claval, 2001, pp. 27-31).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the geopolitical school French identify themselves as part of this first period, covering issues such as domestic studies of French, claiming it in human geography (Pascu, 2015, p. 438). Gokmen (2010) investigates, "Geopolitics was born in the late nineteenth century and disappeared from universities with the end of the Second World War" (p. 3). He elaborates that IR as a separate academic discipline was born during the interwar period. Scholars know from his study that the geopolitical discourse has encountered many ups and downs, challenges, and problems for its emergence, development, and well establishment.

Sometimes, it was practiced as a separate discipline and sometimes it was considered only as political discourse. Likewise, Deudney (2000) claims that geopolitical theory emerged in two waves, early naturalism, and global geopolitics, the latter of which grew out of the former in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century under the impetuses of the Darwinian and industrial revolution (p. 78). He explores that global geopolitics was analyzed from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries produced by Alfred Thayer Mahan, Friedrich Ratzel, Halford Mackinder, Frederick Jackson Turner, H. G. Wells, Karl Haushofer, and others gave greater explicit recognition to technology...and was focused on the global-scope system of power and security relationship...As per Deudney, geopolitics is more related to the balance of power system which relates to the security arena as well.

Even though both IR and geopolitics deal with common issues and share many common assumptions, IR theory never directly mentions geopolitics or its prominent figures. Any history of IR that fails to address the links between geopolitics and IR theories remains fundamentally flawed, historically speaking. The researcher in this dissertation tries to fulfill this philosophical gap. In this way, geopolitics emerged as a separate theory of International Relations and now it needs to investigate its relations with other theories of IR.

### ***2.1.2 Discourse of Geopolitics***

Cohen has conceived geopolitics not as a tool of conquest and dominance in the interests of some national states, but as a tool for promoting and managing equilibrium amongst powers in the interest of the whole world (1964). The author's notion here does not demand strategic competition and preparation for war and the focus seems just on common good with equal opportunity and balanced relations without any dominance from each other. In Cohen's perspective, the world system is made of geopolitical structures. These structures are organized

along two hierarchically ordered spatial levels: first-geostrategic realms, and second-geopolitical regions. These two levels are associated with a third level, that of the national state, which is the linchpin of Cohen's whole world system (Antonsich, 2004, p. 807). But Taylor aimed to convert geopolitics into an instrument of peace. Cohen talks only about promoting and managing equilibrium conditions which advocates more about the interest of the world but Taylor argues that geopolitics should play the role of an instrument to establish peace in the world. Cohen does not care about world peace, but in contrast, Taylor emphasizes it.

### ***2.1.3 Dimension of Geopolitics***

Since geopolitics covers the multiple areas of International Relations and world affairs such as politics, culture, economy, technology, and so on from national to global, it is essential to analyze the dimensions of geopolitics to understand the diverse concepts. There is no uniform perception among the scholars regarding the dimensions of geopolitics. Brzezinski (2016) claims that the European identity is no longer defined through a Western community of developed nations but now involves a heterogeneous, pan-European association of states (p. 48). In the same way, the Asian identity, politics, and economy cannot be perceived through European and Western belief and discourse. We can borrow their ideas to analyze our beliefs but we have to come to a conclusion based on our values, beliefs, and practices existed for a long time.

In contrast to Brzezinski, Germond has explained the geopolitical dimension from the perspective of maritime security. He proposes a few terms as the dimension of maritime security such as: Geography and maritime security, and Maritime security (geo) strategies. Under maritime security (geo) strategies, three terminologies are explained: 1) the National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS), 2) The European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EU MSS), and 3) The EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) (Germond, 2015, pp. 137-142). Germond's

perspective therefore seems written from a European perspective but the Nepali perspective of geopolitical dimensions are different. Bhattarai (2016, pp. 63-72) has written a research paper entitled 'Geopolitical dimension of Nepal and its impact in South Asia' and published it in the Journal of International Affairs but he has not explored the specific framework of dimensions of Nepalese geopolitics. His study roughly has focused on very few factors of Nepalese geopolitics rather than investigating specific geopolitical dimensions of Nepal. Therefore, the specific dimensions of geopolitics in the context of Nepal are yet to investigate and this research has covered the dimensions of world geopolitics as political/strategic, economic, and cultural milieus which are also relevant to Nepalese geopolitics. Here in this research, the dissertation will more focus on geopolitics and geoeconomics however linkage with culture is not ignored.

Theoretically, strategic and political dimensions of geopolitics are close to neo-realism, economic dimensions are related to neo-liberalism, and cultural dimensions are linked to constructivism. Therefore, the core focus of the research on dimensions of geopolitics will be on those two dimensions (neorealism and neoliberalism) whereas constructivist aspects can be linked to a few issues related to debates on cultural aspects of Nepal's foreign policy. This research has identified three topics under the dimensions of geopolitics: a) Neorealism and Geopolitics, b) Neoliberalism and Geoeconomics, and c) Constructivism and Geopolitics. The third dimension is not the issue of this research and hence it is not dealt with in this study. But, the first and second dimensions are dealt with in 2.2 and 2.3.

## **2.2 Heartland Theory**

The concept of Heartland was developed on the basis of the geographical significance of the pivot position (Chand, 2021, p. 141). As written by Chand quoted from Mackinder (1943), three key geographical aspects are integrated with the Heartland. First is the lowland plain on the face

of the globe, the second is some great plain navigable rivers, and the third is the grassland zone of the Heartland. Thus, the Heartland deals with the sea powers to the land powers, and geopolitics, in this way, developed in a different form by the 1950s decade.

Heartland, a perspective of the theory of geopolitics, is claimed by Mackinder (1943) "The Heartland provides enough physical ground for strategical thought and thinking" (p. 598). From a perspective, strategy is the part of political activities and power politics that takes place in defined territory and geography and simply is known as political geography. The Heartland is part of geography, which links with geopolitics and covers the Eurasian territory. Mackinder (1943) argues in his Heartland Theory that states were able to control Heartland, would control world politics, and pose the threat of a worldwide empire (Deudney, n.d., Para.4) explores the idea of Heartland based on the British war in South Africa which was indeed in 1902 and the Russian war in Manchuria around 1904 (p. 596). The concept of Heartland evolved based on the geographical significance of the pivot position. Mackinder put the significance of the territory from the northern part and the interior Euro-Asia, the Arctic coast down to the central deserts, Baltic and Black Seas under the area of the Heartland which is quite strategic. In Heartland, three aspects of physical geography are reinforced to another: a) the lowland plain, b) some great plain navigable rivers, and c) the Heartland grassland zone. It seems that the Heartland areas are categorized based on the strategic interests of global powers, the strategic part for offensive and defensive intentions, and the ideological control for global domination. As per the changing world, the Heartland is no longer static, it is dynamic and shifting in nature towards the regions of China, and India where Nepal is located in the middle part of those countries. For oriental scholars, it can be termed as the 'New Heartland'.

In international politics, everything keeps changing. For example, in 1850, Russia was at the top in terms of military power having 767,423 military personnel followed by France with 450,651 number (YouTube, 2020) in 1850. In 1863, the USA reached the top position with 838,608 numbers, and Russia fell behind the USA with 771,828. Similarly, in 1872, France reached the top having 862,608 numbers of military personnel followed by Germany having 846,593. In 1920, Germany reached the top and Russia fell down to the second position. In 1932, China reached the top with 1,736,839 military powers. In 1950, again Germany gained the top position followed by Japan, USSR, China, and then the USA. Such a phenomenon keeps changing as per changes in geopolitics. If geopolitics would not be changed, world power and politics would have been unchanged or if world powers and politics would not be changed, geopolitics would also have been unchanged. Since the Heartland theory is part of geopolitics, it keeps changing and shifting from one geographical continent to another geographical continent based on the changing concentration of world powers and their priorities. Therefore, the Heartland focused on Eurasian land in the 1950s now has significantly changed based on changing global political actors, their intentions, concentration, and their efforts. The change in Heartland influences Nepal and its surroundings. Therefore, the new Heartland is now developed in South Asia in general and Nepal in particular.

### **2.3 Neorealism, Power, and Geopolitics**

Neorealism or structural realism is one of the most important and dominant theories of International Relations which affects the theory of geopolitics, power, and political system as well. Jackson and Sorensen (2013) write that Waltz's Theory of International Politics seeks to provide a scientific elaboration of the international political system (p. 79). As geopolitics is the interaction between geographical settings and political processes where power exists (Cahnman,

1943; Natter, 2003; & Gokmen, 2010), the international political system does not exclude its effect on geopolitical issues. Therefore, the international political structure is related to neo-realism because it talks about the international structure.

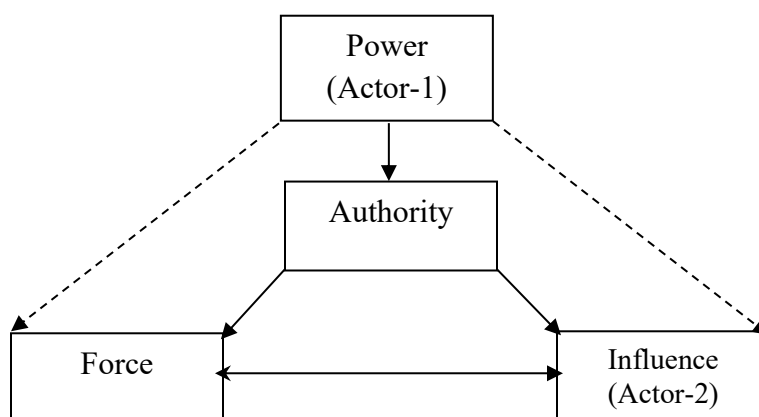
Jackson and Sorensen define neo-realism as the structure of the system that is external to the actors, in particular the relative distribution of power, is the central analytical focus (2013, p. 79). According to Waltz's neorealist theory, a basic feature of international relations is the decentralized structure of anarchy between states. Decentralization of anarchical structure is also a part of political and strategic action where power struggle always exists and impacts geopolitical circumstances. In his words, Waltz argues that the state units of an international system are 'distinguished primarily by their bigger or smaller capabilities for performing similar tasks... the structure of a system changes with changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system's units' (Waltz, 1979, p. 97). The level of capabilities to perform tasks of state affairs is a part of political matters and changes in the distribution of capabilities in national and international structures and systems play a role in changing geopolitics as well. Neo-realists claim that international change occurs when great powers rise and fall and the balance of power shifts accordingly (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013, p. 80) which ultimately shifts the geopolitics too. Such change or shift occurs as the result of great powers' struggle and war, they claim. In doing so, power is always the central discourse of the phenomenon.

The neorealist approach does not provide an explicit way of policy guidelines to leaders as they face the pragmatic challenges of global politics. Since every state focuses on its national interest, globally common policy guidelines never be outlined and proposed by neo-realist thinkers because every state has a different national interest in nature which also differs in the challenges and ways of achieving it in different environments. Waltz operates with a concept of

the national interest: 'Each state plots the course it thinks will best serve its interests (1979, p. 113). The national interest seems to operate like an automatic signal commanding state leaders when and where to move. In other words, national interest provides explicit ways and guidance to state leaders on how to deal with world powers and global leaders both in general and particular situations.

As written earlier, 'Power' is the key ambition of states in an international political system where the neorealist approach is vital to gain and regain power in competitive geopolitical international structure. Power has an ambiguous relationship with all categories of legitimate authority (Pye, 1985, p. 33). Ghosh writes that power is seen as the ability to get another actor to do what the first wants otherwise have done or not to do what it would have done (2013, p. 59). Power, therefore, is a relationship between and among multiple agencies or actors in international politics. Power always has three ingredients: 1) Force, 2) Authority, and 3) Influence as represented in the below figure:

Figure 2.1 QUAD relations among power, authority, force, and influence



*Source: Self Prepared*

## 2.4 Neoliberalism, Laissez-Faire Economy, and Geoeconomics

Geoeconomics is a tool to achieve the goal of geopolitics. So, researchers should integrate both topics for accurate research and analysis of foreign policy. Since being a part of geopolitics, geoeconomics is not analyzed independently, and integrating with neoliberalism i.e. 'geoeconomics and neoliberalism' is another dimension of geopolitics in this study. Another term to connect neoliberalism and geoeconomics is 'Laissez-Faire Economy'. Laissez-Faire Economy is a French term that means 'let you do'. It means the little the government is involved in the economy, the more business will be. Its extension ensures more benefits for society as a whole.

Neoliberal ideology embraces a highly individualistic concept of society, viewing it as simply a collection of individuals. Kotz (2018) writes, "Neo-liberalism glorifies market relations, which are viewed not just as an institution that allocates resources efficiently, as claimed by neoclassical economics, but as essential to human freedom". Neo-liberalism basically advocates for free trade, deregulation, and privatization of companies throughout the world. Neo-liberalism is a part of International Political Economy (IPE) which is about the interplay of economics and politics in world affairs (Woods, 2001, p. 1). Some scholars argue that politics guides the economy and some argue the economy shapes the politics. Research shows that both are interrelated and interdependent to each other. Gilpin (2001) claims, "...world economy has a considerable impact on the power, values, and political autonomy of national societies" (p. 77). Similarly, Alt, Frieden, Gilligan, Rodrik, and Rogowski (1996) elaborate, "...the tools of modern political economy have been brought to bear on a wide variety of topics. Two active areas of work have been the politics of trade policy and the new economics of institutions" (pp. 689-690).

Moreover, Eichengreen (2000) shows, "how the actions of self-interested groups in national societies affect the making of foreign economic policy and how international political and market forces can influence the interests of social actors" (p. 37). Likewise, Alt, and Alesina write that by focusing on how political and economic institutions constrain, direct, and reflect individual behavior, it stresses the political context in which market phenomena take place and attempts to explain collective outcomes like production, resource allocation, and public policy in a unified fashion (1996, p. 645). In addition, it is claimed that a hegemon, a dominant military and economic power, is necessary for the creation and full development of a liberal world market economy because, in the absence of such power, liberal rules cannot be enforced around the world (Jackson, & Sorensen, 2013, p. 180). Based on all the above texts of renowned authors, it is proven that the international political economy is the interplay of economics and politics in world affairs which are interrelated to each other.

There are various theories under international political economy. Neo-liberalism is also one of the theories of IPE. Neo-liberalism to a greater extent is based on the ideas of an Austrian economist, Friedrich Hayek who had written in the 1930s that the control of an economy by a government is the "road to serfdom". He wrote a book entitled *The Road to Serfdom* in 1944. In that book, he writes:

...it was almost inevitable that, once their position was penetrated at some points, it should soon collapse as a whole. The position was further weakened by the inevitably slow progress of a policy that aimed at a gradual improvement of the institutional framework of a free society. This progress depended on the growth of our understanding of the social forces and the conditions most favorable to their working in a desirable manner (Hayak, 1944, p. 18).

The above statement implicitly advocates the principle of neo-liberalism which clearly has mentioned the institutional framework of a free society and working in a desirable manner. The recent concept of neo-liberalism seems evolved from this concept of Hayak however Adam Smith has written about the base of neo-liberalism in his famous book *Wealth of Nations*. Ambrose (2006) writes, “due to his (Adam Smith) influence on today’s socioeconomic institutions, his thinking indirectly but strongly shapes the development of gifted and talented individuals” (p. 185). The last portion of this sentence advocates the principle of neo-liberalism. Talented individuals and their work in an open and free society can bring bigger results. Ambrose further reviews, "the most well-known modern interpretations of Smith's work suggest that he promoted economic freedom through the operation of free markets largely unfettered by regulation from governments, which themselves should be tightly constrained" (Ibid). Therefore, the concept of neo-liberalism goes back to the Smith era i.e. the later period of the 18<sup>th</sup> century however it emerged clearly in world affairs in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century through Hayak's work.

It is clear that though the practice of neo-liberal policy was begun after World War II, its theoretical concept evolved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as explained above. Recardo (1772-1823), cited by Jackson and Sorensen (2013), has also included the notion of neo-liberal discourse or liberal economics. He argued that free trade – i.e., commercial activities that are carried on independently of national borders – will bring benefits to all participants because free trade makes specialization possible and specialization increases efficiency and thus productivity (p. 165). He emphasizes free trade and its efficiency in increasing productivity which is a neoliberal concept. Recardo in his theory of comparative advantage, introduced in 1817, suggests that countries will engage in trade with one another, exporting the goods that they have a relative advantage in productivity. One of the most important concepts in economic theory, comparative

advantage is a fundamental tenet of the argument that all actors, at all times, can mutually benefit from cooperation and voluntary trade. It is also a foundational principle in the theory of international trade. This concept of comparative advantage is also one of the foundations of the neoliberal concept because in neoliberalism, due to free trade, all actors can get benefits at all times. The consumers buy the commodities that provide comparatively lower selling prices and thus they save their comparative advantage.

Neoliberalism is a political philosophy that gives priority to individual freedom and the right to private property. More generally it is described as neo-liberalism is a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individuals, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights. This conviction is a kind of belief that the state ought to be minimal or at least drastically reduced in strength and size and that any transgression by the state beyond its sole legitimate purpose is unacceptable. Neoliberalism has been built on deregulation, liberalization, privatization, and ever-tighter global integration which took root in the 1980s and consolidated in the 1990s.

Since being a part of social science, the neoliberal construct cannot be scientifically verified based on positivism. Being an artificial construct unlike scientifically verified facts, neo-liberalism can be analyzed based on interpretivism. The neoliberal discourse seems emerged from the individual construct of prominent scholars rather than its discovery like derivatives of pure science. Because of this ground, different scholars have different arguments and claims about this theory. The argument which becomes most influential can dominate all other arguments of social scientists. Therefore, this is a totally artificial construct.

## 2.5 Geoeconomics: Tool for Geopolitical Goal

Geoeconomics is a continuation of the debate and argument of geopolitical impact on the national economy, which is important in the era of globalization. The study is further relevant as well as important in the situation of greater strategic entities, like nations and global companies, which constantly face global competitive issues. It is an alternative multidisciplinary orientation for the study of economics (Soilen, 2012, p. 8). Soilen further argues:

Geoeconomics, and indeed the study of economics in general, matter less to smaller private-sector organizations whose individual activities do not possess national strategic significance. However, taken as a group, these companies have great geoeconomic importance to society. And larger private-sector organizations are even actively engaged in geoeconomic thinking.

The larger they are, the more aware they become of the contribution they make to the economic strength of the society of which they are a part, whether at the level of the nation, the region, or their local community. Larger companies or multinational enterprises use their position to negotiate with the State to obtain special favours, whether with respect to infrastructure investments, labour laws, tax laws, or the like (2012, p. 10).

These are the exactly same as the discourse of neoliberalism. The neoliberal policy promotes multinational companies, advocates for maximum gain for individuals and private companies, creates an environment of free competition in the market, and emphasizes de-regulation of the open market. Therefore, geoeconomics and neo-liberal policy cannot be studied in a separate box. It is automatically integrated into the same sort of discourse. In the Nepali context as well, Nepali geopolitics and neoliberal policy adopted by Nepal should be studied and critically analyzed on how global and regional geoeconomic actors are focusing in Nepal to use Nepali

natural resources for achieving their geopolitical objectives and goals. Hence, Geoeconomics and geopolitics are entirely interrelated discourses and thus these are the two core discourses of this Doctoral dissertation.

Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics are also part of the world's geopolitics and geoeconomics where global actors are concentrated. Nayak (2014) writes that Nepal is the core geopolitical actor that attracts the great and super power/s to Nepal (Table of content of Strategic Himalayas: Republican Nepal and External Powers). If the geopolitical actors are attracted to Nepal, they have geoeconomic interests as well and hence the same countries are also geoeconomic actors in Nepal. Nayak covers the massive engagement of India, China, European countries, and the USA as geopolitical and geoeconomic actors. Similarly, Nepal has also been drawing the attention of world powers "... both India and China have interest in Nepal due to its natural resource base and for security concern" (Kumar, 2017, p. 30). In addition, Khadka claims that "Nepal's situation provides an interesting example of how geopolitics has imposed an extremely serious obstacle for harmonizing external relations..." which also impacts the geoeconomic arena of Nepal (1992, p. 134). He argues Nepal is facing some major challenges to diversifying the relations in the wider horizon of the global arena basically because of the contested issues of neighbours and other powers' interests in Nepal. On top of that, Nepal is well-known for its strategic station in the Himalayan belt of South Asia. It is situated at the meeting point of East Asia and South Asia, and between two powerful countries—India and China—who have fought war in the past (Gupta, 2014, p. xi). Therefore, the global actors are concentrated in Nepal's geopolitics.

The crucial geopolitics of Nepal has provided enough bases for the global actors to be engaged in their worldwide strategic and economic interests. The priority given to Nepal in BRI

and MCC, a part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, is the result of the strategic importance of Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics equally. Because these both the projects have been claiming to upgrade the economic status of poor families and communities of developing and underdeveloped countries. Nepal is almost 69 times, 68 times, and 23 times smaller than the USA, China, and India respectively (Agrawal & Upadhyay, 2006) quoted in (Kumar, 2017, p. 30) however; its strategic importance is significantly higher than other states in South Asia for those kinds of global and regional actors.

China initiated the BRI in 2013 for the purpose of promoting economic engagement and investment along two main routes; the New Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road (The Economic Intelligence Unit, 2015, p. 3). From the perspective of geoeconomics discourse, China wants to mobilize her local resources in abroad to achieve the Chinese economic and geopolitical interests. Nepal involved in the BRI after signing on 12 May 2017 (The Himalayan Times, 2017, Para. 1). After that, Nepal signed an agreement on the USA's MCC project on 14 September 2017 after four months of signing the BRI for building 400 KV high voltage transmission line and upgrading roads (Millennium Challenge Corporation, n. d., Para. 3). India has also long been covertly and overtly playing between the MCC and BRI to achieve her interest in Nepal. India had also created huge pressure for Nepal not to participate in the BRI before Nepal signed on BRI. Hence, Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics have been becoming fertile soil for international actors for a long time.

India's interest in Nepal also needs to be examined from both discourses i.e. geopolitics and geoeconomics. India wants to put her neighbors under her sphere of influence including Nepal which is more related to her geopolitical interest in Nepal. As quoted by S. D. Muni, B. P. Koirala writes in his *Atmabrittant* (Autobiography) that ... Indian Ambassadors behaved as if

they were higher than even the King of Nepal (Muni, 2009, p. 37). Nepal and India both are equally sovereign states and the value of their independence is also equal. But, the Indian mindset in fact is hegemonic in Nepal and she wants Nepal should ask for permission before taking any decisions by Nepal.

India imposed an embargo in 2015. The embargo, which the Nepal government blames on India (New Delhi denies involvement) immediately followed the passage of a (the) new constitution by Nepal on 19 September 2015 (Para. 1). Not only in 2015 but also India's behavior was similar even in 1950s. According to Muni, in a statement in December 1950, Nehru said:

Our interest in the internal conditions of Nepal has become still more acute and personal, because of the developments across our borders, to be frank, specially those in China and Tibet. Besides our sympathetic interest in Nepal, we were also interested in the security of our own country.

From time immemorial, the Himalayan have provided us with a magnificent frontier. Of course they are no longer as impassable as they used to be but are still very effective. We cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated because it is also the principal barrier to India...we cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened...( 2009, p. 36).

It is well understood from the above statements that India wants to direct and instruct Nepal in every external and internal matter. Similarly, Chinese communist leaders had described this region (Himalayan region of South Asia) as forming China's hand, wherein Tibet was its palm and Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (then called North-East Frontier Agency or NEFA) were its five fingers (Schram, 1963, p. 257) quoted in (Muni, 2009, p. 31).

Such types of expressions of the leaders of our immediate neighbours threaten Nepali sovereignty knowingly and unknowingly. These examples relate to the geopolitical objectives of China and India in Nepal.

India published an updated political map on 2 November 2019 which included Nepal's territories Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipu-Lekh, the territory of *Sudur Pashchim Pradesh* of Nepal. Budhathoki (2019) reports, "After sparking a regional and worldwide controversy by changing the internal status of Kashmir, India's new official political map is stirring criticism in Nepal, including from Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (MoFA) (Para. 1). After four days of the map's release, MoFA released a press statement objecting to the inclusion of Kalapani in the Indian map. Nepal government clearly wrote that Kalapani is an integral part of the country and that talks are still going on between New Delhi and Kathmandu over this "unresolved" area (Mohan, 2019, Para. 3). India unilaterally inaugurated 'Link Road' on 8 May 2020 connecting to Lipu-Lekh (Nepal), which passes through Nepali territory, without any consent of Nepal government. On the following day, MoFA again released a press statement with strong disappointment towards Indian that unilateral (MoFA, 2020). These all Indian activities are related to the geopolitical interest of Indian to Nepal which also incorporates her geoeconomics aspects. More than that, Nepal's geopolitical condition has attracted the world powers like the USA, China, and the EU countries which creates one of the new Heartlands in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

China has agreed to provide transit facilities to Nepal from its four Chinese ports Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang, and Zhanjiang, and three dry ports named Lanzhou, Lhasa, and Xigatse as well as roads to these facilities (Sharma, 2018, Paras. 4-5). All the agreements and MoUs are under the BRI cooperation between two countries and from the perspective of theoretical discourse, it is linked with Chinese geoeconomic interest in Nepal. Such types of bilateral

activities accelerate the process of changing geopolitics and geoeconomics, and Nepal either will get benefits if Nepal is able to deal effectively with those latest developments or lose from such changed geopolitics if Nepal is unable to handle those new geoeconomic and geopolitical incidents.

China and the USA are focused on all continents and of course, Nepal is a very small portion of it but recently, its importance is significantly rising for them. The USA invests under MCC in agriculture, education, energy, health, land and property rights, roads and transportation infrastructure, water sanitation, and irrigation (<https://www.mcc.gov/sectors>). China also invests in similar areas (<https://www.aiddata.org/china-official-finance>). The then president of the USA Barack Obama declared the 'Pivot Asia' policy, also termed as re-balancing Asia in 2009 (Manyin, et al., 2012, p. 2). They claim that "...many countries have approached the United States to gear up her momentum to provide a balance to China's rising influence" (Manyin, et al., 2012, p. ii). It means US allied countries in the region have been supporting the USA to counter China. Likewise, Schiavenza (2013) believes "The United States is the only country with enough muscle to check China's rise and many of the smaller countries in East Asia have sought reassurance from Washington that it remains invested in the region" (Schiavenza, 2013, Para. 6). When Donald Trump came into power on 20 January 2017 in the USA, he announced the America First policy and began Indo Pacific Strategy (IPS) which aims to make free and open Indo Pacific region (Department of State, 2019). In the meantime, China and the USA fought the trade war, and still, there are many bilateral issues between them. Swanson (2018) writes "A trade war between the world's two largest economies officially began... to impose tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese products..."(Para. 1). China also has imposed tariffs on US products in China. Thus, the geopolitical rivalry is ongoing between the USA and China.

The USA claims the MCC is an innovative and independent U.S. assistance agency that helps to fight against global poverty whereas the anti-US bloc perceives it as part of IPS which aims to fight against common security challenges among its member countries. Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov criticized the United States for introducing a new Indo-Pacific concept that aims to contain China. He questioned "Why do you need to call Asia-Pacific as Indo-Pacific? The answer is evident – to exclude China" (Sharma, 2020, Para. 1&4). The USA has put the MCC under the Indo-Pacific Strategy. The report published by the Department of State of the USA mentions "To date, support has included \$2.9 billion through the Department of State and USAID for the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific strategy...and hundreds of millions more through other agencies, including the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)..." (Department of State, 2019, p. 13). The MCC became quite controversial in Nepal as many intellectuals have perceived it as a US economic project having strategic interest in its hidden part which aims to balance China in Nepal. The US embassy had lobbied in Nepal with different power centers to ensure the ratification of the MCC by the parliament of Nepal. Jha (2020) argues that...the process of ratification of the MCC was getting delayed. One of the major factors that led to this situation was the rivalry between the US and China in Nepal (Para. 1). In this way, the US and China are highly concentrated in Nepal and hence Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics becoming more critical. Thus, these two discourses seem inseparable discourses for foreign policy analysis. Detailed empirical analysis is done in Chapters Five and Six.

## **2.6 Nepal's Foreign Policy**

In different periods, Nepal's foreign policy is guided by different ideas and motives. During the period of unification of 'Tiny States' initiated by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, Nepal's foreign policy was more offensive. King intended to expand territory as necessary to make a strong state

to fight external enemies. This kind of strategy is defined by offensive realism. Offensive realism argues that states are power maximizers, meaning that they are continually searching for opportunities to gain more power relative to other states (Cox & Stokes, 2012, p. 9). This kind of foreign policy continued from 1769 to 1837 up to Bhimsen Thapa's tenure and fell down along with materializing the Sugauli Treaty signed on 2 December 1815 and ratified on 4 March 1816. After this treaty, Nepal experienced pressure to change its foreign policy and adopted defensive realism. As per Cox and Stokes, states are fundamentally security maximizers rather than power maximizers. The states show that moderate behavior in defensive realism and expansionistic policies to achieve security are generally not necessary (Ibid). Nepal adopted a defensive realist foreign policy approach from the early period of the 'Sugauli Treaty (1816) until the beginning of the Rana regime (1846). During Rana's period, they moved towards the liberal approach keeping cooperation at the core and keeping isolation from the outside world. Similarly, Panchayat era, since 1960, was influenced by 'proactive cooperation' putting the strategic move at the center. After the 1990s, Nepal entered into a multiparty system and the economy was neo-liberal under the government of the Nepali Congress. The neoliberal idea opens the market for multinational companies accepting the structural adjustment policy coined by the World Bank and IMF. CP Chandrasekhar argues that neoliberalism has been a disaster in Nepal. During the last twenty-five years, Nepal not only lost state-owned industries but also local brands of production and the capacity to compete with external goods.

After many ups and downs, finally, Nepal has provisioned the principle of socialism in Nepal's constitution in 2015. The preamble of the Constitution states:

Expressing commitment to creating the basis of socialism by adopting democratic norms and values, including peoples' competitive multi-party democratic governance system,

civil liberty, fundamental rights, human rights, adult franchise, periodic elections, complete press freedom, and an independent, impartial, and competent judiciary, and the concept of rule of law (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015).

It is believed that the Nepal government is trying to make the full effort to implement the provision is there in the constitution of Nepal promulgated in 2015 for economic development and prosperity.

According to the Nepal Constitution promulgated in 2015, the provision of Nepal's foreign policy is:

1) To conduct an independent foreign policy based on the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, principles of *Panchsheel*, international law and the norms of world peace, taking into consideration the overall interest of the nation, while remaining active in safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and national interest of Nepal (Article 51, m, 1) and 2) To review treaties concluded in the past, and make treaties, agreements based on equality and mutual interest (Article 51, m, 2) (Ibid).

The above points especially represent Nepal's Foreign Policy. Constitutional provisions in previous constitutions were also almost similar. This clearly indicates that Nepal's foreign policy is quite common and general since long time.

The historical foreign policy adopted by the rulers in different period, it can be categorized into five different periods. a) Foreign Policy Doctrine of King Prithvi Narayan Shah (1769-1806), b) Foreign Policy Doctrine of Bhimsen Thapa (1806-1837), c) Isolationist policy under Rana regime (1846-1951), d) Era of Expansion of Nepal's relations under King Mahendra (1955-1990), e) Era of Instability: Neoliberal policy after the restoration of democracy (1990-2023).

Regarding the first phase of Nepal's foreign policy, Yadu Nath Khanal (2000) has analyzed, "He (King Prithvi Narayan Shah) described the country as a yam between two stones and, in that vivid image, highlighted the uniquely difficult security problems that land-locked Nepal faces" (Khanal, 2000, p. 229). As per Khanal, there are key four aspects of his foreign policy doctrines:

- a) Nepal must unite against Western penetration in Nepal otherwise Nepal must be ready to perish.
- b) Building of military strength by organizing, and appointing competent commanders, acquiring arms, and weaving the land-military complex.
- c) Cautious friendship with the rising British power from across the ocean and the Chinese Empire across the Himalayas.
- d) Strategy of offense in relation to small powers that he wanted to subjugate under his unification campaign with a strategy of defense in relation to China and Britain.

The doctrine of Bhimsen Thapa was not so much different than the doctrine of King Prithvi N. Shah. However, Bhimsen Thapa adopted the policy mainly from two aspects: a) Friendship with China and importing French technology to face a possible war with British India. b) Alliance with the *Maharajas*, the *Sikhs*, and some other distant powers (Khanal, 2000, p. 230).

After the Sugauli Treaty concluded in 1816, Nepal lost two-thirds of its territories consequently it also affected the policy of Nepal. Most importantly, Nepal geographically shifted to a landlocked country. Geographical conditions compelled Nepal and the Rana regime to ally with British India and adopt isolationist foreign policy. Khanal writes that the fundamental shift that needs to be noted was the change in the role of the Nepali military force which continued henceforward not as independent but practically as an ally of the superior British military force on pragmatic considerations (Khanal, 2000, p. 231).

King Mahendra promoted Nepal's national interests in international fora including the United Nations and the Non-aligned conferences along with developing balanced political relationships

with immediate neighbours. He expanded Nepal's relations with many countries. Nepal became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council two times which largely promoted Nepal's international recognition.

The fifth phase of Nepal's foreign policy is during the period of 1990 onwards. No government completed the full tenure during this period. Twenty-seven numbers of Head of Government appointed and elected during the last twenty-eight years (YouTube Link). Due to such political instability in Nepal, Nepal could not formulate a specific and comprehensive foreign policy to fulfill the interests of the Nepali people till 2020. Most popularly, Nepal tried to continue the policy of equidistance and later termed equi-proximity only in principle. Because of the natural border with India, and cultural, religious, and linguistic similarities, Nepali leaders dealt more with India than with China. In every political movement, India's influence and appeal to Nepali leaders for support from India is vital in Nepal. People's movement-1990, next people's movement-2006 are a few examples. However, due to the geo-sensitive situation of Nepal, Nepali leaders often say that Nepal has been adopting the policy of equ-distance and equ-proximity. A significant shift was only in Nepal's foreign policy at the beginning of the democratic system to adopt liberal policy. Economic reforms including deregulation, free trade, and privatization of state-owned companies (Liberalized policies toward FDI) were initiated in the early 1990s (International Trade Administration Website). The Privatization Act of 1994 generally does not discriminate between national and foreign investors (Ibid).

We can consider that the next phase of Nepal's foreign policy starts after the election of the federal parliament in 2017. It was the time after the blockade imposed by India. In this election, the Communist Alliance of CPN (UML) and CPN (Maoist Center) got the victory in 70.3% and 46.9% in both types of election systems respectively at the House of Representatives. Later on,

both communist parties united and formed a new party named the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) on 17 May 2018 (Xinhua News, 2018). After becoming a federal republic country, this government was considered a powerful and stable communist government in Nepal but due to internal power imbalance and external interference, this government also could not complete its full tenure.

In the meantime, Nepal government published first-ever comprehensive foreign policy document in 2077 B.S. (2020) which is a significant in Nepal's foreign policy's history and also is the first official comprehensive document as well. Though it is a historical and comprehensive one, it is an incomplete and general document according to this researcher. If real and contextual challenges and threats are not well analyzed while implementing the policy, it may be difficult to achieve, defend, and expand the country's national interest due to some critical gaps in the document and hence it has been not enough able to address geopolitical and geoeconomic issues and challenges.

## **2.7 Geopolitical Cooperation and Rivalry between Immediate Neighbors**

Various factors do not allow China and India to go towards great strategic games. They share a 3488-kilometer-long international border. They have large geography i.e. 9,390,784 sq. km. of China and 3,287,263 sq. km. of India. They are the first and second biggest countries in the world in terms of population. China's population is 1.402 billion and India's population is 1.38 billion in February 2022. Similarly, they have good trade relations and are interdependent with each other. These sorts of common variables do not allow China and India to go towards great strategic games or confrontation. On the other hand, politically, India has become the main geopolitical rival of China along with the decline of Russia and Japan. Pakistan seems quite useful to counterbalance India in the strategic calculations of Beijing. Thus, it seems China wants

to pursue a 'classic balance of power strategy' in South Asia based on its relationship with Pakistan. In the meantime, India does not seem happy with China from this strategic partnership and hence her partnership is with the USA and Japan to counterweight China for balance of power purposes. In such a situation, the action and the counteraction between both countries will determine not only the future of Nepali geopolitics but also of Asian dominance in global geopolitics.

Despite some strategic competition, positive signs were developed around 2005 for a good relationship between China and India however; the relationship between the countries was normalized by the China visit of the then-Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 (Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998, Para. 1). During Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India in April 2005, both countries signed an agreement entitled "strategic partnership for peace and prosperity." A year later in 2006, they marked "friendship year," and 2007 was declared "year of friendship" through tourism. Exchanges of official visits led to diplomatic advances of a symbolic nature such as the reopening on 4 July 2006 of the Nathu La border pass between Sikkim and Tibet after 44 years of closure (Jayaram & Huchet, 2008, p. 2).

Despite the above agreement made between the countries, there is always doubt about each other about their behavior. New Delhi's views towards Chinese policies that aim at the strategic encirclement of India whereas Beijing's calculation on India's act to limit China's strategic influence in South Asia and Southeast Asia and its power projection into the Indian Ocean, has overridden their conventional statements of common interests as partners in strengthening a multi-polar world order. Moreover, the new reality of rivalry is evident from the following security issues: (1) the escalation of the Sino-Indian border dispute; (2) the deepening of the strategic alliance between China and Pakistan; (3) China-India rivalry in Southeast Asia and the

Indian Ocean; and (4) India's "Act East" policy to promote bilateral ties with other countries that have tense relations with China in the region...(Frankel, 2011, p. 3). These are the factors affecting Sino-Indian affairs in the international arena. Therefore, their cooperation in the field of bilateral, multi-lateral, and regional security has been always affecting despite their good trade relations which also impacts their geopolitical and geoeconomic priorities in Nepal.

One of the most crucial factors affecting Sino-Indian relations is the Sino-Indian border dispute. The disputes are a complex historical phenomenon. As both countries cannot agree on border delimitation, the Sino-Indian border has never been officially drawn. When India came under British rule, it began to advance the two countries' traditional border to the Chinese side (Neville, 2003). Similarly, Zhang and Li write:

During the 1913-1914 tripartite conference involving a Tibetan delegate, a representative of the Chinese central government, and Sir Henry McMahon, a foreign secretary of the British Indian government, a secret bilateral agreement was signed with the Tibetan representative on a new borderline (later known as the McMahon Line). The Chinese central government rejected the accord and their plenipotentiary, and the Tibetan government later disputed the legality of the McMahon Line. The new government of Independent India inherited the British territorial policy, including the McMahon Line as the legitimate border. After the newly established People's Republic of China took over Tibet in 1951, India felt threatened by the Chinese military presence in Tibet and quickly extended administrative and military control in the eastern sector (Zhang & Li, 2013, p. 4).

Thus, the Sino-Indian border dispute emerged, and they fought the 1962 border war. Lidarev (2012) reports, "Fifty years ago, on 20 October 1962, with the world's terrified gaze fixed firmly

on the U.S. –Soviet nuclear standoff in Cuba, China attacked India. Provoked by a territorial dispute and tensions over Tibet, the war was brief and China emerged victorious” (Para. 1).

Similarly, the Doklam Standoff in the summer of 2017 had emerged. Joseph reports:

Despite several rounds of engagement between China and Bhutan, the dispute between the two over Doklam had not been resolved. It flared up in 2017 when the Chinese were trying to construct a road in the area, and Indian troops, in aid of their Bhutanese counterparts, objected to it, resulting in the stand-off (2018, Para. 3).

Therefore, China and India time and again go to disputes and border confrontation in the South Asian Himalayan range which often affects Nepal's non-alignment and independent foreign policy matters and geopolitics.

On the other hand, these two countries are involved in many international organizations and institutions together. Sajjanhar (2016) writes there is a memorandum made on commitments of India and Pakistan with the goal of acquisition by them, a status of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member-states (Para. 3). Furthermore, India is a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) established by China and the member of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Both countries are involved together to establish New Development Bank under the BRICS. In addition, as prominent members of the G-20, their influence will be manifested in the global economy, global politics, and the global security environment, however; the analysis concludes that the rivalry has taken almost half of the deal (Wolf, Dalal, DaVanzo, Larson, Akhmedjonov, Dogo, Huang, & Montoya, 2011, p. 5)

## **2.8 Major Geopolitical Actors in Nepal**

Nepal's geopolitics is part of the global geopolitics where continental and international actors are concentrated. Nepal is the central geopolitical actor itself which pulls super and great powers

to Nepal (Nayak, 2014). He not only covers the high engagement of India and China but also the serious involvement of Western countries. Similarly, ...Nepal has also been attracting the attention of world powers... both India and China are showing their interest in Nepal mainly because of its natural resource base and for security concern" (Kumar, 2017, p. 30). Likewise, Khadka argues clearly that Nepal's situation in the 90s had shown an example of how geopolitics had imposed a serious obstacle to making the relations cordial and harmonizing it with aspirations for Nepali peace, security, and development" around the 90s. (1992, p. 134). As Khadka claims, Nepal had been facing critical challenges to expand and diversify her relations in the wider horizon of the global arena basically because of neighbors' contested concerns and some other powers' Nepal interest. Arvind Gupta states "Nepal is well-known for its strategic location in the Himalayas. It is situated at the meeting point of East Asia and South Asia, and between two big and powerful countries—India and China—who have gone to war with each other in the past" (2014, p. xi). Therefore, the regional and global powers are concentrated in Nepal's geopolitics.

The complex geopolitics of Nepal has provided the political ground for those regional and global powers to be engaged in their global interest making Nepal a base-place. The priority given to Nepal in Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a part of Indo Pacific Strategy, is the consequence of the strategic importance of Nepal's geopolitics. Nepal is almost 69 times smaller than the USA, 68 times smaller than China, and 23 times smaller than India (Agrawal & Upadhyay, 2006) quoted in (Kumar, 2017, p. 30) however; its strategic importance for those powers is significant than other bigger states in South Asia. China initiated BRI in 2013 aiming to promote economic engagement and investment along two

main routes; the New Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road (The Economic Intelligence Unit, 2015, p. 3).

India published her updated political map on 2 November 2019. It included Nepal's territory Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipu-Lekh in the far western region of Nepal. It created a huge criticism of India in Nepal due to its hegemonic nature, particularly towards Nepal. Budhathoki (2019) reports, "After sparking a regional and worldwide controversy by changing the internal status of Kashmir, India's new official political map is stirring criticism in Nepal, including from Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (MoFA) (Para. 1). After four days of the map's release, MoFA released a press statement objecting to the inclusion of Kalapani in the Indian map. Nepal government clearly wrote that Kalapani is an integral part of the country and that talks are still on between New Delhi and Kathmandu over this "unresolved" area (Mohan, 2019, Para. 3). The press statement further clearly said, "The remaining issues related to the border should be resolved in bilateral consensus and any unilateral actions will be unacceptable to the Nepal government". (Ibid, Para. 6). India unilaterally inaugurated 'Link Road' on 8 May 2020 connecting to Lipu-Lekh (Nepal), which passes through Nepali territory, without any consent from the Nepal government. On the following day, MoFA released a press statement strongly objecting to Indian unilateral action in Nepal's territory (MoFA, 2020). There are so many examples that India exhibits such hegemonic behavior towards Nepal but the Nepalese counterpart seems unable to resolve the problem with diplomatic measures and capability. These activities of India are related to the geopolitics of Nepal and it attracts the world powers like the USA, China, and the EU countries in Nepalese geopolitics which creates one of the new Heartland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

After signing the BRI, the way has been opened even at least theoretically to diversify Nepal's relations with north East Asian nations for Nepal. Chand writes that one of the historic agreements made during Oli's visit to China in 2018 is the signing of the MoU on railway connectivity...which is the second milestone in the diversification and opening-up policy of Nepal (2018, Para. 4&6). He further argues that both countries underscored it as the most significant initiative in the history of bilateral cooperation and hoped that it would herald a new era of cross-border connectivity. Other key agreements during his visit are 1) cooperation for development and prosperity under the framework of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, 2) Protocol on the utilization of Highways in Tibet Autonomous Region, China, by Nepal, for cargo transport, 3) MoU on energy cooperation, 4) Agreement on economic and technical cooperation, 5) Deal on human resource development (Ibid). Similarly, China has included the Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, including Nepal-China cross-border railway in point no. 23 of the annex of Joint Communiqué of the Leaders' Roundtable of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, 2019, Para. 42).

Likewise, the Joint Communiqué says, "...we support policy and activities that help land-locked countries to transform into land-linked ones, including by strengthening connectivity and cooperation on transit arrangements and infrastructure" (Ibid, Para. 16). Nepal has access to Tianjin port, the Eastern part of China, after the deal of 'Treaty of Transit Transport' made in March 2016 (Chand, Para. 11). Moreover, China and Nepal are agreed to cooperate for the construction of Koshi Economic Corridor, Gandaki Economic Corridor, and Karnali Economic Corridor which was committed during the state visit of the Chinese president Xi Jinping in 2019 (Bashyal & Chand, 2019, p. 29). On top of that, China has agreed to provide the transit facility to

Nepal from four Chinese ports named Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang, and Zhanjiang, and three dry ports named Lanzhou, Lhasa, and Xigatse as well as roads to these facilities (Sharma, 2018, Para. 4&5). All these agreements and MoUs are under the BRI cooperation between the two countries. Thus, if all the agreements made are implemented, the way for Nepal to access the rest part of the world will be opened as Nepal will have the opportunity to use all the seven economic corridors of BRI being its signatory country. Such types of bilateral activities accelerate the process of changing geopolitics and Nepal will get benefits from such changed geopolitics due to agreements and engagement of both Nepal and China which also impact Nepal's geoeconomics.

China and the USA are focused in African countries, Latin America, West Asian nations, and Southeast Asian nations. The USA basically invests under MCC in agriculture, education, energy, health, land and property rights, roads and transportation infrastructure, water sanitation, and irrigation (<https://www.mcc.gov/sectors>). Similarly, China invests in agriculture-forestry and fishing, communications, industry-mining-construction, transport-storage, and energy generation and supply (<https://www.aiddata.org/china-official-finance>). The then president of the USA Barack Obama announced 'Pivot Asia' policy which is also termed as re-balancing Asia in 2009 (Manyin, et al., 2012, p. 2). They claim that "...many countries in the region have encouraged the United States to step up its activity to provide a balance to China's rising influence" (Manyin, et al., 2012, p. ii).

It means the American allies in the region have supported the USA to balance China. Likewise, Schiavenza (2013) believes "The United States is the only country with enough muscle to check China's rise and many of the smaller countries in East Asia have sought reassurance from Washington that it remains invested in the region" (Schiavenza, 2013, Para. 6). When Donald Trump came into power on 20 January 2017 in the USA, he announced the

America First policy and initiated Indo Pacific Strategy (IPS) aiming to make free and open Indo Pacific region (Department of State, 2019). In the meantime, China and the USA fought the trade war, and still, there are many bilateral issues between them. Swanson (2018) writes "A trade war between the world's two largest economies officially began ... to impose tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese products..."(Para. 1). China also imposed tariffs on US products in China. Thus, the continuous geopolitical rivalry is ongoing between the USA and China.

Not only India but also the USA and China have been focused in Nepal. Their concentration in Nepal for their strategic and economic interest has created geopolitical rivalries in contemporary world affairs. Four months later of signing BRI, the USA signed an agreement with Nepal on MCC compact project on 14 September 2017 as mentioned earlier. The USA claims that the MCC is an innovative and independent U.S. foreign assistance agency that is helping lead the fight against global poverty whereas the anti-US bloc considers it as part of IPS which aims to fight against common security challenges among its member countries. Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov criticized the United States for introducing a new Indo-Pacific concept that aims to contain China. He questioned "Why do you need to call Asia-Pacific as Indo-Pacific? The answer is evident – to exclude China" (Sharma, 2020, Para. 1&4).

The USA has put the MCC under the Indo-Pacific Strategy. The report published by the Department of State of the USA mentions "To date, support has included \$2.9 billion through the Department of State and USAID for the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific strategy...and hundreds of millions more through other agencies, including the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)..." (Department of State, 2019, p. 13). The MCC became quite controversial in Nepal as many intellectuals have perceived it as a US economic project having strategic interest in its hidden part which aims to balance China in Nepal. The US embassy lobbied in

Nepal with various Nepali social groups and political parties to ensure the ratification of the MCC by the parliament of Nepal. Jha (2020) argues that "... the process of ratification of the MCC is getting delayed. One of the major factors that led to this situation is the rivalry between the US and China in Nepal" (Para. 1). In this way, the US and China are highly concentrated in Nepal including India as major geopolitical actors, and Nepal's geopolitics becoming more critical.

Chinese President Xi Jinping announced One Belt in September 2013 in Kazakhstan and One Road in October 2013 in Indonesia. Materializing this initiative is the core objective of building the "Community of Common Destiny" among countries in South Asia and beyond as envisioned by Chinese President Xi Jinping. The BRI has formed a development strategy that focuses on economic integration as well as cooperation among all the countries primarily in the Eurasian continent. A document entitled "Visions and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road" which was issued by the National Development and Reform Commission on 28 March 2015, outlined the co-operation mechanisms and the areas of co-operation regarding the BRI.

The Himalayan frontier has already been penetrated along with the plan of China's rail link up to Kerong and in the future, up to Kathmandu. The Himalayas as a natural frontier may have become less relevant in an era of nuclear weapons, globalization, technology, and the improvement in the Sino-Indian relationship in recent years (Nayak, 2014). The Chinese technology of railway construction in the Himalayas range has proven his argument. Recently, China has agreed to provide a transit facility to Nepal from four Chinese seaports named Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang, and Zhanjiang and three Chinese dry ports named Lanzhou, Lhasa and Shigatse (My Republica, 2018, Para. 3). All these circumstances claim that China will be

connected soon with South Asia via Nepal and Nepal will connect her immediate neighbors through the road and rail networks which will be a milestone for Nepal's connectivity with her neighbors in changing geopolitical and geoeconomic situations. Therefore, from all the above data, analysis, and supporting facts, China basically has moved towards Nepal and the Global arena via South Asia especially through the China-Nepal-India Trilateral Corridor and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to achieve mainly its geoeconomic interests however it eventually contributes the Chinese geopolitical goals in this region.

Regional and global platforms emerge along with the change in the geopolitical arena. After World War II, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed on 4 April 1949. It was an intergovernmental military alliance between 28 European countries and two North American countries at the beginning. Its purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means especially to secure democracies from the former USSR. This formation changed global power configuration and it demanded a parallel military organization. As a result, the former USSR led to establishing the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, commonly known as the Warsaw Pact, on 14 May 1955. It was a collective defense treaty signed in Warsaw, Poland between the former USSR and seven other Eastern Bloc socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe. These two global military alliances are the result of changing geopolitics after World War II. Rivalry and competition between the USA and the former USSR during the cold war period shifted to the USA-China rivalry after the end of the Cold War. The rapid rise of China motivated the USA to initiate some global security platforms excluding NATO after the end of the Cold War and it materialized only under the Trump administration. Former US President Donald J. Trump announced QUAD in 2017 as a global security partnership with four major

geopolitical actors. During the 2017 ASEAN Summits in Manila held on 28-29 April 2017, Shinzo Abe, Narendra Modi, Malcolm Turnbull, and Donald Trump agreed to revive the quadrilateral alliance in order to counter China militarily and diplomatically. After this agreement among four countries (the USA, Australia, Japan, and India) tensions between the QUAD members and China have led to fears of what was dubbed by some commentators as "a new Cold War" in the region. Jamali and O'connor report:

President Donald Trump is pushing to build on increasingly robust partnerships with the likes of Australia, India, and Japan to gain the upper hand in a feud that has divided and reshaped the region...the QUAD was established in 2004 but given new life under Trump in 2017. Since then it has become a driving force that presents an informal challenge to an increasingly powerful China without the overt commitments of an official military alliance (2020, Para. 1 & 4).

In March 2021, the major Indo-Pacific powers of Australia, India, Japan, and the USA concluded the first-ever summit of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, better known as the 'QUAD'. The 'QUAD' is later developed as the form of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. The 90-minute event, conducted virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions, paves the way for a de facto "Asian NATO" amid growing concern over China's increasingly assertive behavior in recent years (Heydarian, 2021, Para. 1&2). The four countries are united thus to fight against common threats to be raised by China in the South China Sea and other parts of the Indo and Asia Pacific Region. Such developments are the result of geopolitical changes and complexity raised.

In the same month of the first-ever summit of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, China and Russia agreed to establish a security dialogue platform. Journals of India report, "China and Russia have rejected US calls for a 'rule-based order', which was endorsed by the QUAD

summit, and have proposed setting up a new regional security dialogue platform to address security concerns of countries in the region" (2021, Para. 1).

Thus, due to the emerging threat posed by the QUAD and Indo-Pacific Strategy and unexpectedly changed geopolitics, China and Russia proposed to establish such a dialogue platform targeting the threat posed by the QUAD and Indo-Pacific Strategy. In this way, China and the USA are concentrating on world geopolitics and geoeconomics through the BRI and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, where other countries are also part of such strategic alliances as Russia. Nepal, being a neighbour of China, has either positive or negative implications of such alliances has to be faced in Nepali geopolitical and geoeconomic contexts.

## **2.9 Market and Great Powers**

Smith writes that when the market becomes small, no person can show the courage to be perfectly focused himself/herself entirely on one employment...(2005, p. 21). Adam Smith's claim is still relevant. An individual seeks a bigger market to earn much profit from his/her business. If the market provides him/her with good returns, then they can concentrate on the production. A group of individuals create a business house or corporate house. Such kinds of houses competitively produce their commodities in a neoliberal state so that they compete to sell their production for their maximum returns. The market is freely self-operated and expanded without any state's intervention and regulation. Smith argues that the extent of the market must for a long time be in proportion to the riches and populous Ness of that country (2005, p. 23). He further argues that the improvement of population should address the country's desire to be economically prosperous. This is the issue of domestic production, market, producers, corporate houses, and the state. But the same phenomenon happens at the international level as well.

Developed countries which also can be called great powers have massive production. Their market becomes limited within their countries in comparison with their production. Simply arguing, consumers reach a saturated level from such production within their countries. Hence their domestic market also becomes saturated. In this scenario, the great powers search the international markets, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries which are also known as peripheral countries in the theory of Emmanuel Wallerstein's World System Theory. The developed countries are also termed as most advanced economic countries or 'Core' countries (Ghosh, 2013, p. 38). The next group of countries is the periphery as per Wallerstein which has been providing raw materials and cheap unskilled labors to support the Core's economic expansion. But, "The Wealth of Nations" analyses that the increase of productive powers of labors is crucial part for economic progress but not the circulation or distribution of them (Takashima, 2019, p. 67). But peripheral countries are denied modern technology from the core countries and hence they cannot produce the commodities needed for them in the everyday lives of people and to generate revenue, they are compelled to export their unskilled labors and raw materials.

In the present context of Nepal, the major developing partners i.e. Great Powers are the USA, India, and China. Not only are they competing in their security interests, but also in the field of the economic arena. Ripsman writes that ... since the economic performance of the Great Powers is integrally dependent on the global economy, ... and globalization provides additional non-military avenues to pursue Great Power competition (2021, p. 1318). Especially, in the post-Cold War era, politically, the world became unipolar but it provided enough space for many countries to compete in the global market as Great Power competitors due to the neoliberal and globalized world. Ripson argues that... globalization is not responsible for Great Power restraint and

cooperation. Cooperation is only because of the principle of democratic peace theory where democracies never fight each other (Russett, 1993, p. 3). After the Cold War, communist regimes in the world became defensive, and capitalist democracies organized under the USA to promote Western model democracies throughout the world. However, it did not close the way to compete for Great Powers for their international market in the globalized and liberalized world. India is the largest democracy in the world and the USA is leading the capitalist group of democracies. However, China opposes the Western model of democracy and now it is promoting Socialism in Chinese Characters under Xi Jinping's thought. These three Great Powers including more are competing in the world for their international market and Nepal is a part of their competition for the economic influence and Nepali market. Nepali customers can easily buy US, Chinese, and Indian products in the Nepali market which proves that their productions are competing in Nepal. Moreover, China's BRI, the US's MCC, and India-funded many projects in Nepal also prove their competition for economic influence and the Nepali market. It is a Trilateral Geoeconomics in Nepal in the present context.

## **2.10 Review Summary**

The review of literature has begun with the theoretical aspect; the researcher has reviewed the geopolitical theory first, its emergence, and its evolution. The Heartland Theory under geopolitics has been briefly assessed. Since geopolitics and neorealism are linked to each other, the researcher has also reviewed neorealism from geopolitical discourse. Similarly, since geoeconomics is a tool to achieve the goals of geopolitics, it is tried to connect these discourses that how they are closer to each other. Then the relationship between geoeconomics and neoliberalism was discovered. Since being a vital discourse for Nepal's foreign policy, it has explored how geopolitics influences national interest and foreign policy. Then, as an empirical

part, the researcher investigated the principles and objectives of Nepal's foreign policy. After that, the review is focused on major geopolitical actors, cooperation among them, and geopolitical rivalry in Nepal. Finally, the review ended with research gaps.

### **2.11 Research Gap**

From the above review, the researcher has found that it seems, Nepal's geopolitics including geo-economics in recent times have not been studied comprehensively to analyze Nepal's foreign policy from the recorded history of Nepal. Numerous incidents developed in Nepali external affairs show that Nepal has long been facing the effect of Geopolitics and geoeconomics changes and hence its pragmatic foreign policy discourse is also in dilemma. Nepal's geopolitics shifted in the post-1950 period and then in the post-2015 period comprehensively. Similarly, Nepal's foreign policy has also not been well studied and analyzed in light of such changing historical as well as contemporary geopolitics and geoeconomics relating to theoretical fault lines. Previous research has not seemed focused on addressing geoeconomic and geopolitical dynamics in Nepal's foreign policy before the ages of the Shah era. Many Nepali authors so far have claimed that Nepal's foreign policy begins from King Prithvi Narayan Shah but Nepal's recorded history goes back to Lichchhavi Kingdom. Similarly, foreign policy, geopolitics, and geoeconomics are interrelated domains of research in making a Country's foreign affairs effective. Therefore, this research has done, reviewing aforementioned literature, finding out the gap, mentioned above.

## **CHAPTER-THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Philosophical Position**

This study has focused on the ontological part of the research questions. The ontology of this study is the knowledge that existed in the Universe about approaches and processes of foreign policy formulation in Nepal since the Lichchhavi age to the Federal Democratic Republican stage. Epistemology related to this ontology is neorealist and neoliberal theoretical lenses to discover this ontology as it is the theory of knowledge.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The whole research design is based on a phenomenological approach under the qualitative design.

#### **3.3 Study Area**

Data collection was done in Nepal, India, China (also an American respondent based in Kathmandu was also approached). The study areas were:

- a. Problems of geopolitics, geoeconomics, and foreign policy nexus.
- b. Impact of geopolitics and geoeconomics in foreign policy; neo-realist and neo-liberal perspectives have been embedded.
- c. Dual relationship of geopolitics and geoeconomics with neorealism, and neoliberalism has been incorporated.
- d. Dependency of foreign policy discourse on geopolitics and geoeconomics has been analyzed.

### **3.4 Nature and Source of Data**

The study has focused on both primary and secondary data due to the nature of the research design. Since the study aims to investigate the challenges and opportunities of geopolitical (including geoeconomics) shifts in the foreign policy of Nepal, primary data are collected to examine the ground reality of geopolitics and foreign policy through Key Informants Interviews (KII) based on the purposive sampling. Only qualitative data are collected as primary data because the nature of research and primary data are largely qualitative. Diplomats, academics, and Academic plus diplomatic politicians are the source of qualitative primary data. An open-ended schedule (a set of open-ended questions for qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews) is applied for KIIs. In addition, secondary data are used to interpret the multiple perspectives of geopolitics and geo-economics about foreign policy as data triangulation. Since secondary data extends the scope of the study in different contexts and realities, they are collected from published journal articles, books, survey reports, and authentic publications of government and internationally reputed institutions and organizations.

### **3.5 Data Collection Method, Sampling and Procedure**

The researcher has followed the Phenomenological method research design to collect data based on purposive sampling. The study seems like a Mixed Method but it is not like that because in this study, mostly qualitative data are collected and then quantified but separate quantitative data are not collected for the study. The following tools and techniques have been applied in the study.

#### ***3.5.1 Key Informants' Interview (KII)***

KIIs are conducted based on the purposive sampling method, one of the forms of non-probability sampling during conducting research in which the researcher has relied on his

judgment when choosing experts as sampling to participate in KIIs. The KIIs are conducted when general and descriptive information is needed to make decisions over the issues of inquiry. The researcher conducted KIIs with 28 experts from Nepal, China, India, and the USA based on the following category of experts (See in detail in Chapter Four). These experts are estimated based on geopolitical and geo-economic actors who have been engaged for a long time in Nepal. As China, India, and the USA are trilateral geopolitical actors, the sampling of the research also is chosen from the same countries. Therefore, six experts from China, seven from India, one from the USA, and 14 from Nepal are chosen.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Method**

This study was mainly based on secondary data collected through historical and contemporary documents review however primary qualitative data are also collected by interviews. The data received from KIIs are coded/decoded and critically analyzed subjectively based on the content analysis method. The questions asked to experts during the researcher's physical visit to China and India were not the same since being open-ended and experts from different countries. Since their priorities, interests, and approaches are a little different, the questions asked were different. The answers received from twenty-eight experts are categorized as per the research objectives and then tabulated qualitatively in upcoming Chapters in data presentation and analysis.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

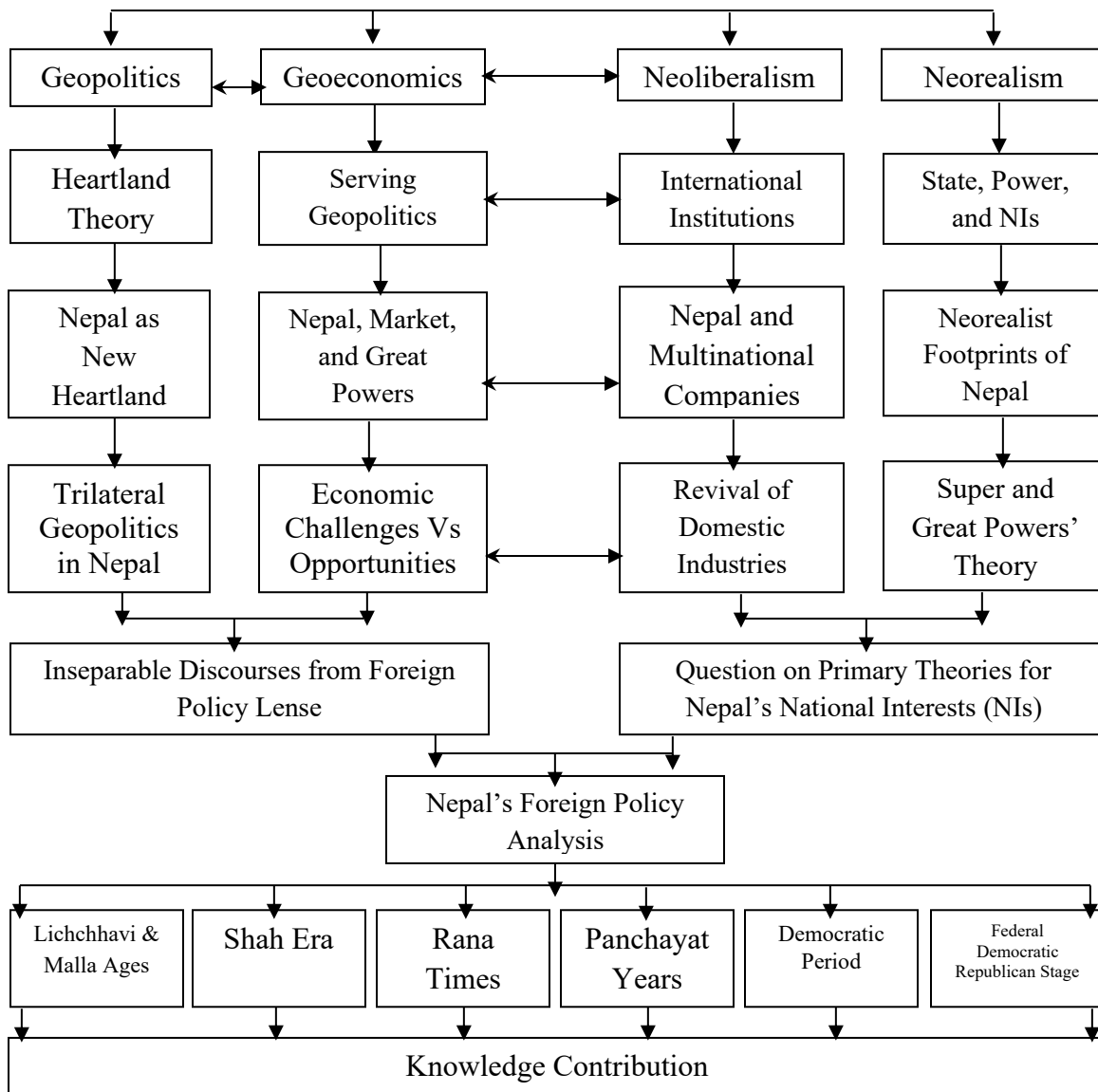
The researcher has maintained all the ethical considerations related to the research. Since ethical consideration is one of the fundamental issues in research, the researcher has been involved in the investigation of research problems as a scientific researcher. He abided by certain duties, rules, and regulations during research. Ethical values such as confidentiality,

permission of experts for interviews, ensuring no harm to involved experts, secrecy, security, justice, and freedom during the research task are well maintained. Similarly, Most of the Chinese professors were not ready to disclose names and hence they are represented by research codes in this dissertation in certain issues.

### **3.8 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The research is mainly focused on the theory of geopolitics and geoeconomics as two discourses and neorealism and neoliberalism as two theories. The engagement and involvement of three key external actors is tried to analyze from these two theories and discourses which have deeply implicated Nepal's foreign policy. Under geopolitics, Mackinder's heartland theory has been contextualized as per Nepal's current geopolitics. But, neorealism and neoliberalism have been tried and the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is as follows:

Figure 3.1 Theoretical and conceptual framework



Source: Self Prepared

### 3.9 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and its Tabulation

The researcher conducted KIIs with 28 experts from four countries which is tabulated and analyzed below.

Table 3.1 Background characteristics of Key Informants

**Nationality**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of Informants</i>
Nepal	14
India	7
China	6
the USA	1
In Total	28

**Profession**

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Number of Informants</i>
Academics	15
Diplomats	5
Diplomatic and Academic Politician	4
Security Experts	3
Think Tanks	4

**Gender**

Male	23
Female	5
Others	0
In Total	28

**Academic Degree**

PhD	19
Non-PhD	9
In Total	28

**Opinion Expressed by Key Informants**

Number of experts having critical views	16
Number of experts having non-critical views	4
Number of experts having diplomatic views	8
In Total	28

*Source: Self-prepared based on the fieldwork (primary data)*

## **CHAPTER-FOUR**

### **APPROACHES OF FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEPAL**

This chapter is focused on Nepal's foreign policy from the Lichchhavi age (from Nepal's recorded history) to the current stage. This chapter is mostly based on secondary qualitative data however experts' views as primary data are also analyzed.

#### **4.1 Lichchhavi and Malla Ages**

In foreign policy, approaches and processes of foreign policy formulation are important for the sound conduct of a country's external affairs. It should address the country's political, and economic situations, issues, concerns, and requirements externally and internally. In doing so, external and internal geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities play a vital role in either creating difficulties or supporting on smooth formulation of the foreign policy of a country. This section is focused on how foreign policy used to be formulated during the Lichchhavi and Malla ages in Nepal.

It is believed that Lichchhavis migrated from the northern part of India to Nepal around 250 A.D. They originated in Vaishali, India, and conquered Kathmandu. Although many Indian authors have claimed that the Lichchhavis originated in India, there is always doubt whether that is a real fact or is a just narrative built. Because many authors have different arguments and claims about the Lichchhavis' origin. Some of the Nepali authors have also cited the Indian authors about Lichchhavis' origin. Acharya also claimed that the Lichchhavis had shifted from Vaishali, India. He writes that the Lichchhavis, who succeeded the Kirats, ruled Nepal for four centuries (c. 400-750 CE). They are believed to have come from Vaishali, a little north of Patana in India (Acharya, 2019, p. 5). The Lichchhavis dynasty was extended up to 879 A.D. from

almost 250 A.D. (Eagle, 2008, p. 173). The Lichchhavi period is described in academia as the golden era in Nepali history. According to Eagle, they are high-caste Hindus who migrated from their kingdom i.e. northern India to ancient Kathmandu. After they migrated to Nepal, they united various areas and established the Kingdom i.e. the Lichchhavi-Kingdom in Nepal (Eagle, 2008, p. 173). It does not seem clear that the Lichchhavi Kings had formulated their foreign policy in a systematic way to conduct inter-state relations to make their Kingdom a golden age but attractive, arts, culture, tradition, the way they behaved with neighbours, and their trade with north and south indicates that the Lichchhavi Kings had tried to conduct and maintain their state affairs sound with other states in that period.

The concept of foreign policy was not academically developed in the age of the Lichchhavi Kingdom but based on their conduct relations with other states, it can be said that they had successfully conducted the external affairs of their Kingdom in that era. Literature flourished, the practice of writing in Sanskrit using the Gupta script, the inscriptions built, arts and cultures, and trade with northern and southern states are some of the symbols of the foreign policy of Lichchhavi Kingdom in Nepal. These kinds of practices have become now Nepal's soft power.

The first Lichchhavi King was Manadeva-I of the Lichchhavi dynasty though there are various claims that there were several kings even before him. But, according to written history (stone inscriptions), Manadeva-I is considered the first king of the Lichchhavi dynasty (Adhikari, 2021, pp. 108-111). The Lichchhavi dynasty was extended from Gandaki to Koshi under this Kingdom. King Manadev-I, himself established as a powerful king of the Lichchhavi dynasty through innumerable inscriptions. A famous Nepali academic Dhanbajra Bajracharya has written and published some precious books like *Lichchhavi Kalka Abhilekh* (Records of Lichchhavi Period), *Mahyakalka Abhilekh* (Medieval Records), and *Poorwa Madhyakalka Abhilekh* (Pre-

Medieval Records) etc. There are 190 inscriptions collected by Bajracharya built in Lichchhavi age. Similarly, Gautamavajra Vajracarya writes that the most reliable source of Nepali history in the Lichchhavi period is the inscriptions on the stones (1973, p. 117). The history of Lichchhavi's age also covers their behavior towards their neighbours as well. The inscriptions in that age were confined to the Kathmandu Valley from ca. A.D. 300 to 850 (Bajracarya, 1973, p. 117). It shows that the Lichchhavi Kings are sincere in recording their affairs, activities, achievements, and even their policies.

The major structural reform under King *Manadeva-I* was *Mangriha* (The first Royal Palace at *Gokarna*), *Changu Narayan*, and *Mananka* (The first Nepali money i.e. coin) which was widely used in the Kathmandu valley and surrounding hills in that age. Adhikari writes that Since *Shree Mananka* was found in most of the ancient currencies, *Mandeva-I* added an important dimension to the economic system of his country by creating a coin for

Figure 4.1 Shree Mananka



Source:

[https://www.vcoins.com/en/stores/coinindia/36/product/nepal\\_lichhavis\\_sri\\_mananka\\_c\\_576605\\_a\\_e\\_pana\\_rare/1129710/Default.aspx](https://www.vcoins.com/en/stores/coinindia/36/product/nepal_lichhavis_sri_mananka_c_576605_a_e_pana_rare/1129710/Default.aspx)

the first time in ancient Nepal (2021, p. 111). The coin is not only used for internal purposes among the people but also used to be useful in external affairs to buy and sell the production in the age. Therefore, the Lichchhavi age is a significant period for Nepali currency which is also a part of external affairs of the Lichchhavi age. The Shree Mananka was directly linked to external trade. According to the stone inscriptions of Deopatan built in 399 and 402, groups of business people, who were pioneers in doing business from one country to another, had praised King *Manadeva-I*. From this fact, it can be analyzed that the trade during his regime was remarkable.

The next crucial part of Manadeva's work is the concept of a Think Tank. Most of the intellectuals under his governance used to be gathered at his Durbar every day. Manadeva was very interested in literature and language and hence he used to invite the intellectuals of various fields to gather ideas, information, and knowledge. This is proof of how Manadeva had produced, developed, protected, promoted, and mobilized intellectuals under his regime.

According to Baidya, Manadeva-I was a courageous leader. At that time, some of the feudal tried to be independent of the state of King Manadeva-I. But he easily controlled them in the East and West and made his governance stronger than before (1981, p. 130). At that time, when there was a serious crisis in the national integrity of Nepal, King Mandev-I succeeded in maintaining Nepal's independence and unity. He was able to protect the country from disintegration and built a strong and powerful state. So, it shows that King Manadeva-I used his diplomatic skills and characteristics for the country's independence and unity. King Manadeva-I went to the East with his military to fight the war with Kirat feudal. He had won the battle with Kirat and integrated them under the Lichchavi Kingdom. Then again, he moved to the West to fight the war with Western feudal. In this way, he expanded the territory up to Koshi in the East, Gandaki in the West, and the Himalayan belt in the North (Adhikari, 2021, p. 110). From such a series of war events, it can be analyzed that the basic foundation of the foreign policy of the Lichchhavi Kingdom was guided by classical realist notion and behavior though this concept had not been evolved in the Lichchhavi's age academically. However, the characteristics exhibited by Lichchhavi Kings were closer to the concept of classical realism from one aspect.

The next pioneer King under the Lichchhavi Kingdom was Anshuverma. It was proof of his genius and influential personality that he was able to safeguard ancient Nepal from imperial powers by removing the powerful *Samant* like *Bhaum Gupta* who was in power during the

Lichchavi regime. It can be assumed how effectively King *Anshuverma* was able to manage his external relations, who was always looking for the interests of the people by asking 'How will my people be happy' (Adhikari, 2021, p. 113). According to the Pant, during Anshuverma's reign, there were very strong rulers in the north and south like *Tsrong Tsong Gompo* in Tibet and *Harsha Bardhan* in India, so he maintained a friendly relationship with a balanced way to save Nepal from both powers (Pant, 2043 B.S., pp. 1-34). According to *Adhikari*, King *Anshuverma* had also started the process of diversification of ancient Nepal's trade policy to increase the national trade with northern and southern countries (2021, p. 115). Since ancient times, iron, copper utensils, wool, musk, deerskin, etc. were sold in the Indian market. To further encourage this work, he had exempted the import-export duty of other items besides these. He made many efforts to establish dominance in the Indian market and make a leap in economic development by bringing diversity in trade and progressing the country.

For the first time during his reign, Nepal had trade relations with Tibet. It means he first time opened the trade route with Tibet which is quite a significant foreign policy of the Lichchhavi age. Due to the profitable trade with Tibet, China, and India, the arts and crafts in the Kathmandu Valley were highly developed. King Anshuverma improved the difficult trade through Himghati and expanded the trade routes. After the opening of new routes from the Himalayan region, Kathmandu became the center of international trade due to the migration of traders from India to Tibet through the valley and from Tibet to India through the same. This achievement during the Lichchhavi period highlights Nepal's foreign relations at that time. The next crucial work of King Anshuverma was promoting soft power through the construction of the *Kailashkut* Building and *Bauddha Bihar*. Because of the beauty and very attractive appearance and design of those infrastructures, the Chinese diplomat was surprised even if China had more amazing structures in

that age. This fact proves how King Anshuverma had built Nepali soft power in that time. Likewise, like King Manadeva-I, King Anshuverma also continued the concept of Think Tank. Because he patronized knowledge and scholars and brought about educational progress, there used to be a crowd of scholar fellowships in his palace (Adhikari, 2021, p. 116).

Though there were no formal practices to appoint Ambassadors at that age, Lichchhavi's top unofficial ambassador was Bhrikuti. Bhrikuti was a famous diplomatic heroine who saved Nepal from the north and south imperialist powers during the Lichchhavi period and smoothed the relations between Tibet and China in ancient Nepal. Historians claim Bhrikuti was not a daughter of King Anshuverma and many historians have claimed that Bhrikuti was a daughter of King Udayadeva (Shah, 1991, p. 18). Historians have claimed that Udayadeva, who fled to Tibet with his family, expected military support from the then ruler of Tibet (Bhot), Tsrong Tsong Gompo, to regain power in the state, and the state was finally regained under the leadership of Bhrikuti's brother King Narendradev (Jha, 1970, p. 159). Being wary of the expansion of Emperor Tsrong Tsong Gompo, the unifier of Tibet, i.e., the creator of Bhot State, even a powerful country like China married his princess Wenching to him. To prevent the growing influence of *Bhot* and protect the independent sovereignty of Nepal from the strong power of Asia, Anshuverma married Bhrikuti to a Tibetan ruler. It should be taken as a great diplomatic ingenuity of the Lichchhavi King (Kuwar, 2041 B.S., p. 10). Likewise, Adhikari writes:

Bhrikuti was able to save the sovereignty of ancient Nepal due to her marriage relationship with Gompo, who was the creator of the great Tibet. Jishnu Gupta, a leader of the Gupta family, had established Dhruvadeva as a puppet ruler and the Royal family of King Udayadeva reached to Tibet for their shelter. But, Bhrikuti supported his brother

Narendradeva through her husband Gompo to revive the regime of King Udayadeva in Nepal. (2021, p. 119).

Such kind of incidents prove that there was established cordial relations with Tibet due to Bhrikuti and she played a significant role in such a harmonious relation between ancient Nepal and Tibet. Sharma and Devkota write that just as a skillful woman works to tie the relationship between the birth family and married family, Bhrikuti tied the relationship between Nepal, Tibet, and China in the same way (2029 B.S., pp. 82-88).

In that age, there were no practices of establishment of diplomatic relations. State leaders used to establish relations with other states in various ways and methods. Marriage relations were also one of the approaches to establishing relations with other states in the age of Lichchhavi Kingdom like Bhrikuti. It is widely believed in Nepal and in the world that spreading the gospel of Buddha in Tibet and China was started just after the marriage of Bhrikuti as the key instrument. The Buddha message and culture have now become Nepal's soft power in the world and began to spread in the international arena by Bhrikuti. This is also a major part of Lichchavi's foreign policy. In this way, it was a historical and great contribution of Bhrikuti by protecting Nepal from the great powers of that time, maintaining the religious and cultural environment, and playing a significant role in making Nepal's foreign policy independent and non-aligned. In this way, it seems that King Anshuverma managed foreign relations very tactfully during his time. It can be found that the subsequent Lichchhavi kings also followed Anshuverma's policy.

Dhanabajra Bajracharya has collected a historical document about King Anshuverma's daily routine also. In the *Deupatan* inscription of King Anshuverma, there is written his schedule from morning to evening. As per the inscription, the timetable of King Anshuverma to meet the Secret

Department is from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm daily (Bajracharya, 2030 B.S., p. 360). The Secret Department can be interpreted as a state organ to collect internal as well as external information. This stone inscription indicates that the Lichchhavi Kings had practiced external affairs through the Secret Department (*Gupti Bibhag*) to keep the state intact, secured, and unified.

A milestone work of Lichchhavi's age is the construction of several world-famous Temples and Stupas in Kathmandu which are massively attractive to the international community. The Buddha Stupa, the Chabahil Stupa, the Deopatan shrine of Shiva, the Swayambhunath Stupa, and the village of Patan are some significant structures of Lichchhavi's kingdom that have the great meaning of present Nepal's soft power, a part of Nepal's foreign affairs.

Narendradeva was another king of the Lichchhavi Kingdom. He started friendly relations with China. His successors established matrimonial alliances with the Indian Royal families. The last ruler of the Lichchhavi Kingdom was Jayakamadeva. The Lichchhavis Kings tried to have harmonious relations with the then Tibet, Chinese, and Indian royal families to maintain a stable and prosperous state under this dynasty.

Since Lichchhavi's rule, state, and government were guided by the divine theory of law, the King was the supreme body to decide on internal and external affairs in that age. There was no any well-managed diplomatic system established to handle the state's relations with other states but King used to have the final rights to decide on any state's external affairs. Kings were the source of all kinds of powers in the age. King was considered as the representative of God to rule over the people and the country in the name of God. So, the source of the state's external affairs in the Lichchhavi's age was the King himself, the divine concept and belief system, and the King's psychological construct but, the Kings had tried to maintain peace, harmony, and prosperity through developing the indigenous arts, culture, and attractive religious structures.

Therefore, the approaches and process of foreign policy formulation in the Lichchhavi age are not developed however the Kings seemed aware of conducting their external affairs tactfully. Analyzing the theoretical aspects of Lichchhavi's foreign policy, the classical realist approach seems dominant to safeguard the country and Lichchhavi's regime, however, there seems integration of constructivist notions about spreading Buddha's gospel to Tibet and classical liberalism while conducting trade with the north and south. So far as foreign policy institutions to formulate foreign policy are concerned, available works of literature are silent about it. It means that they did not build such institutions during Lichchhavi's kingdom and Kings are the supreme body to decide all the foreign affairs.

The Lichchhavi age slowly weakened and started to be divided into a number of states. At the time when the Lichchhavi regime was weak, the *subjective feudal lords* of Lichchhavi made three powerful kingdoms emerge in three regions. Bigger Nepal was divided into three powers, the *Khas Malla* kingdom in Karnali in western Nepal, the *Tirhut Doi* kingdom in the southeastern Terai, and the *Malla* kingdom in the center of Nepal. According to historians, the period from 936 B.S. to 1558 B.S. is considered to be the pre-medieval period, and the period from 1559 B.S. to 1825 B.S. is considered to be the post-medieval period. The period before the beginning of Jayasthiti Malla's rule is considered to be the pre-medieval and the period after his rise to rule is considered to be the post-medieval period (Adhikari, 2021, p. 138). The process of establishing independent states started after the center's control was loosened due to joint rule, mutual disobedience among the feudal lords, etc. It is believed that the outbreak of the division of Nepal into twenty-two principalities in Karnali region and twenty-four in the Gandaki region started from this point, and the foreign relations of the Lichchhavi age also started to be disturbed from that point.

Numerous principalities evolved after the Lichchhavi age in Nepal. Bam Bahadur Adhikari has written a book named *Nepalko Brihat Itihas* (Comprehensive History of Nepal). He has divided the pre-medieval period and the post-medieval period into six sections in his book. The first part deals with the 'Rise of the three Kingdoms', From the tenth century to the fourteenth century. The second part covers 'Mallas of Kathmandu Valley', from the fourteenth century to the eighteenth century. The third part explains 'Principalities of Kathmandu Valley'. Likewise, the fourth part includes the 'Malla civilization'. Similarly, the fifth and sixth parts describe the 'History of twenty-two Principalities of Karnali region', (Fourteenth to Eighteenth Century), and 'History of twenty-four Principalities of Gandaki region' (Fourteenth to Eighteenth Century). These all chapters have explained the various Kings and Principalities in various regions and periods but the author has not clearly dealt with the foreign policy of the Malla age. No authors have scientifically analyzed the foreign policy of the Malla age more specifically however many authors have tried to describe the history of the Malla age and we can find out how various rulers in the Malla age dealt with other Principalities and states to survive in that age. Historian Dhana Bajra Bajracharya has written two crucial historical books about stone inscriptions in the Malla age. He has collected 627 stone inscriptions built in the pre-medieval and medieval age. Bajracharya has translated all the inscriptions and elaborated in the Nepali language to make the understanding easier. Indirectly, we can analyze some of the inscriptions from the perspective of foreign affairs of the Malla age. The processes and approaches of foreign policy formulation and implementation in the Malla Age are more focused on analyzing the behavior and attitude of the Malla Kings in the Kathmandu Valley towards other Principalities and states in that age. However, little parts of the behavior and attitude of Kings of other Principalities in Karnali and Gandaki regions are also analyzed in this section.

King Nagaraj was the founder of the Khas Principality in the Karnali Zone. As the Khas entered Tibet from Kumaon, they were not of Tibetan origin (Adhikari, 1988, pp. 27-30). The origin of Nagaraj is not the birthplace of Tibet. From Sinja, Nagaraj extended his conquest campaign to the Karnali region and strengthened the Khas kingdom. He conquered western Tibet and Nepal and his conquest campaign started towards the south. After capturing Lipulek and Yari region respectively, he took Sinja from Urai hills under his control.

Krachalla was the next King after King Nagaraj. At the time of Krachalla, the boundaries of the Khas kingdom extended from the Kumau region to the Doti region in the west, Dullu, Dailekh, and Surkhet in the east, and the Terai region in the south. The rulers of Khasmandal with surnames like Malla, Challa, Illa, Jhalla, and Pal once extended the boundaries of this kingdom from Trishuli to the Arun river in the east, Ladakh in the west, Tibet in the north and the plains of the Bhagirathi Gangas in the south (Adhikari, 2021, p. 139). He declared the Dullu region as an outpost by building a trade route between Tibet, Sinja, Dullu, Surkhet, Bardia, and Indian territory. From his reign, the 'Sinja' of Khasamandal became known as the capital of an important state in all regions of India, and the history of the Malla kings began to be clear from his records (Subedi, 2054 B.S., pp. 61-63). It seems that the rulers of Sinja and Jumla maintained contact and relationship with the Indian rulers since the Sinja Empire period. Thus, the Khas Kings had conducted their external relations cautiously with other principalities and bigger states. One of the most crucial facts seems that the Khas Kings adopted an offensive approach towards weaker principalities and controlled them under the Khas state on the one hand and on the other hand, they tried to maintain good relations with powerful states like India. The successors also followed the same approach in the Khas state. The Khas Kings like Jitari Malla and Ashok Malla even attacked the valley principalities in that time. It indicates that the Sinja

Khas state was even stronger than the principalities in the Kathmandu valley. In this way, Khas Kings in the Karnali region seem conducted their external affairs in the pre-medieval age.

Therefore, the way Khas Kings conducted their external affairs can be interpreted from the perspective of Historical Realism which is more related to real happening in history at a particular time and space.

Since being the Kathmandu Valley the current capital city of Nepal, the external affairs of the Valley Kings in the Malla age are more important to analyze the foreign policy of the Malla Kingdom. In the post-medieval history of Nepal, the rise of Jayasthiti Malla was an important event that stabilized the unstable political environment of the pre-medieval period. His rise calmed the political unrest that had been a terrible attack and sectarian act for almost a century in the history of Nepal. Jayasthiti Malla, an ambitious ruler with strong ideas, was full of qualities and characteristics like foresight in vision and rigor in governance. It is also reflected in his quality that what was the external behavior and affairs of Jayashithi Malla. In the Malla age's history of Nepal, his personality emerged as a reformist revolutionary king in that age. His act of strengthening the regime by radically changing the politics, economics, and state of mind, which had become internally dilapidated by external attacks, was a sign of his great personality. To give stability to the disturbed society of the valley, he made various rules by imitating the system established by Nagaraj, the founder of the Khas Kingdom in West Karnali (Subedi, 2061 B.S., p. 142). As King Prithvi Narayan Shah praised Jayashithi Malla, it is proven that Jayashithi Malla excelled in politics, governance, and foresight, and the external affairs of Kathmandu Valley in the post-medieval period were influenced by the policies he started (Adhikari, 2021, p. 189). He made various reforms to restore the *Varnashram* system and public faith in Hinduism. His reform works contributed to building Nepal's character over time, which is still established as

Nepal's soft power (Subedi, 2061 B.S., p. 142). Expanding the trade with India and Tibet, which had been going on since ancient times, he also developed trade relations with China. At that time, Nepal's relations with Tibet, China, and India were considered to be Nepal's relations with the world. Jayashithi Malla continued the external relations established in the Lichchhavi era, and it seems that he intensified the relations with China.

Next Malla King was Yaksha Malla. He is famous for dividing the Malla Kingdom into a number of Principalities. Along with the division of the Malla Kingdom in Kathmandu Valley, the legacy of the external affairs of King Jayasthiti Malla was also disrupted. Like his predecessors, Yaksha Malla had also attempted to extend his Kingdom but due to the weaknesses of central governance, the feudal rulers around his Kingdom became independent (Adhikari, 2021, p. 194). Studying some available historical sources and materials, it is clear that he tried to expand the Kingdom through military campaigns. Though he is recognized as the source of division of the Malla Kingdom, he had expanded the territory up to the Gorkha in the West, Bengal in the East, Shikarjong in the North, and Mithila (up to Morang) in the South. He took control of the political situation in the valley, which was poisoned by foreign invasions and courtier conspiracies, and turned the capital Bhaktapur state into a strong stronghold (Subedi, 2061 B.S.) quoted in (Adhikari, 2021, p. 194). King Yaksha Malla was also diplomatic. King Yaksha Malla seems to have realized that if he went ahead with the expansion campaign of the state without consulting the feudal people around his kingdom, they would join the enemy's side. This was his foresight. To neutralize them or bring them to his side, King Yaksha Malla used to seriously discuss with the surrounding feudal rulers before starting the expansion campaign of the kingdom. This was his diplomatic clarity and skill. After accumulating the power of the feudal rulers under his side, Yaksha Malla prepared the basis for conquering the small kingdoms

outside the valley. After all the feudal rulers of that time united with the central Malla state and made an agreement to fight with the enemy states, they took the help of common people and fortified the Bhaktapur palace as a safe fort by surrounding it with walls from all sides. This confirms that King Yaksha Malla was also a war strategist. His similar abilities, skills, and strategies were reflected in the foreign policy of the then Malla kingdom.

Challenges faced by King Yaksha Malla in the state's internal affairs also implicated its external affairs as well. He had so many queens, sons, and daughters from his many queens. A tussle for power began between his six sons and the grandsons from the daughter's side. As mentioned in *Bamshavali*, when Yaksha Malla tried to give the responsibility of state affairs to his eldest son Ray Malla, his immediate next younger son Ratna Malla opposed it. In the Malla period tradition, the kings' sons were jointly declared kings. Not only that, Yaksha Malla's grandson on his daughter's side named Bhim Malla was also forced to make him a joint ruler (Adhikari, 2021, p. 195). Such kind of impracticable practices became the entry point of the division of the Malla Kingdom into various independent principalities. The only reason for mentioning the internal affairs of the Malla state in such detail is that it has a direct impact and influence on external relations as well. In other words, the internal policies and extended form of the situation become the external affairs of the state.

Ratna Malla, son of Yaksha Malla, became a rebel during his reign and unsuccessfully tried to become an independent ruler of Kantipur. Yaksha Malla's two sons, Ray Malla, and Ratna Malla, seem to have established three Malla kingdoms in the valley due to mutual rivalry and hostile behavior between them. It seems that the Gorkhali state took advantage of this gap and attacked the valley (Adhikari, 2069 B.S., p. 201). Once upon a time, the Malla rulers united and fought against the enemy state Gorkha Kingdom. In both the battles of Kirtipur, when all the

three Malla kings of the valley fought jointly against the Gorkhali, they also were able to safeguard Kirtipur. Therefore, it is proven that when the internal structure and affairs of the state are strong and integrated, the external affairs will also be automatically strengthened. But later on, a great struggle for power between the descendants of Yaksha Malla slowly developed. Some Malla kings like Laxmi Narsingh Malla and Siddhi Narsingh Malla were overthrown by their princes. Such a situation led to mistrust, disharmony, conflict, and uncertainty in the Malla Kingdom. Its effect is not only on their internal subjects, external states took advantage of this internal strife and weak situation. In this situation, it seems that the Malla Kingdoms of the valley are getting weaker due to the economic embargo by the Gorkhali state. In this way, when the reins of government are handed over to all the princes jointly, the kingdom would weaken and eventually the kingdom would be torn apart due to internal power struggle. Since King Yaksha Malla's lack of foresight on such complex issues, historians have concluded that the Malla kingdom was slowly weakening because of his wrong approach of giving opportunity to all his descendants in the joint ruling system.

Another courageous and charismatic Malla King was Jaya Prakash Malla, the last King of the Malla Kingdom. The brief story of his rise in Kantipur Principality is interesting. After the death of Bhupatindra Malla, his son Bhaskar Malla became the King and sat on the throne of Kantipur. Bhupatindra Malla, who ruled for about 22 years from around 1700 AD, had to die childless. In such a situation, there was a crisis of his succession. To solve this crisis, Mahiptendra Malla's daughter's descendant Jagajjaya Malla was brought in and made the king of Kantipur (Adhikari, 2021, p. 246). When Jagajjaya Malla died, two out of his five sons died before him. After his death, there was a tussle over who would become the king of Kantipur among his remaining three sons, Jaya Prakash Malla, Rajya Prakash Malla, and Narendra Prakash Malla. There were

two factions about who should be made king. One faction was led by Kashiram Thapa and the other by Jhangal Thakul. Kashiram faction wanted to make Narendra Prakash the king while another faction wanted Jayaprakash. Jaya Prakash Malla was made the king of Kantipur City with the support of his brothers Narendra Prakash and Rajya Prakash, based on his bravery, patience, foresight, and political activeness. Some historians have mentioned that he was as brave as Gorkha King Prithvi Narayan Shah. In this way, Jaya Prakash had risen in the Malla Kingdom of Nepal.

After Jaya Prakash Malla became the king, an internal struggle started with his brothers Rajya Prakash Malla and Narendra Prakash Malla. There was also a split between the *Bhardars* within the state. The power struggle escalated as the hard-tempered King Jaya Prakash Malla could not manage the internal conflict properly. As a result, King Jaya Prakash had to step down from power for almost four years. On the one hand, the British East India Company wanted to fully maintain its dominance in the state of Kantipur, which suffered from internal divisions, while on the other hand, Gorkha state, one of the twenty-four states, had attacked Nuwakot, an economically and strategically important region, in 1736. After concluding the responsibility for the defeat in that war, the Gorkha kingdom expelled a famous Bhardar Jayant Rana. King Jaya Prakash Malla on the other hand, appointed him as the guard of Nuwakot. Then, the Bhardars of Kantipur were unhappy with Jaya Prakash Malla's wrong decision. Although trying to be strategic, Jaya Prakash Malla seems to have to face many challenges because he could not estimate how much it would weaken the state from internal and external relations. Although Jayant Rana's attachment to Gorkha is not psychologically separated from Gorkha, on the one hand, he was unable to pay attention to the possibility that the Gorkha state could use him again, on the other hand, he could lose the support and trust of his allies within the Kantipur

Principality. It seems that his foreign policy at that time had become weak due to such weak and short-sighted decisions.

Fearing the loss of Belkot fort from Kantipur in the third battle of Nuwakot in 1744, Jaya Prakash Malla sent an army under the leadership of Kashiram Thapa to return Nuwakot. Kashiram Thapa, who had lost the war, went to his home (Sindhupalchok) in fear of the lion-like nature of Jaya Prakash Malla. But Jaya Prakash Malla suspected that he had joined forces with the Gorkhalis. In this situation, Jaya Prakash Malla ordered the Kantipurian army to search and kill Kashiram Thapa. This activity also confirms that Jaya Prakash Malla was taking action without finding any truth or evidence. With this kind of nature, it seems that his external relations have reached a very weak situation. It seems that Kantipur state could not take strong defensive measures against the Gorkha state. Gorkha king Prithvi Narayan Shah took advantage of this internal weakness and succeeded in capturing the Malla states of Kathmandu valley. In this way, the external relations of Nepal during the Malla period became worse than during the Lichchavi period and it seems that due to the internal conflict and whims of the Kings, the Malla age ended. External relations were weakened due to internal disunity, lack of mutual trust, lack of internal unity and unhealthy family competition between the Malla kings and princes. Although this kind of situation can be analyzed from classical realism, it is a little more related to historical realism because it is a matter of ancient Nepal. Also, like the Lichchavi, in the Malla age, there did not seem to be any kind of institutional arrangement and development to manage external relations and to develop the process and approach of formulating foreign policy. Therefore, it can be concluded that foreign relations also used to be developed as Kings wanted. And, no one but the king would have any prior knowledge of where the state's external relations were going. Like the Lichchavi and Malla ages, there are mutual relations between the Baise

Kingdoms that existed in the Karnali region at that time and the Chaubisi kingdoms that existed in the Gandaki region, but these things are not included in this study due to less important than Lichchhaviu and Malla Kingdoms for ancient Nepal's foreign policy.

## **4.2 Shah Era**

Most foreign policy experts argue that the foundation of Nepal's modern foreign policy starts from the Shah era. Not only modern policy but also the foundation of Nepal's whole foreign policy discourse started from the Shah era, they claim. Some of the leading figures in the foreign policy domain wrote that Nepal's foreign policy dates back to King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Almost all prominent scholars and academics followed the same which is incomplete. Foreign policy is not a separate discourse from a country's history, culture, politics, and economy. It evolves together with a state's sorts of domains. More than that, the concept of foreign policy emerges even before the actions of leaders in building a state. Because leaders already think about what kind of processes and approaches to foreign policy formulation can precisely contribute to the state-building process.

Leaders start to build and maintain relations with international actors who support their mission of state-building. Fukuyama writes that state building is the establishing new government and its institutions on the one hand and the strengthening of existing ones on the other hand (2009, p. xvii). State building is a crucial issue because weak/failed states are the source of many of the global most serious challenges... There is a great deal we don't know, particularly about how to transfer strong institutions to developing countries.

As Fukuyama argued, establishing new governments and institutions means foreign policy institutions as well. Foreign policy institutions simply either are built in the brain or at the base of the ground after the brain. In the Lichchhavi and Malla ages, foreign policy institutions

seemed built in the brain of the Kings but in modern Nepal, these have seemed built in the real base of the state' structures. So, the process and approaches of foreign policy formulation start together with the process and approaches of the state-building phase. Hence, the narrative built by foreign policy experts about Nepal's foreign policy seems wrong.

Many experts quoted King Prithvi Narayan Shah's statement that Nepal is a like Yam between two boulders. King Prithvi Narayan Shah had said that a cordial friendship should be maintained with the Northern ruler. Maintaining a friendship with the Southern emperor (the British East India Company) should also be kept in mind cautiously, but, the British East India Company is very clever (Muni, 1973, p. 2). Muni has started his research about Nepal's foreign policy only from King Prithvi Narayan Shah. It indicates that there was no history of Nepal's foreign policy before him. Many readers of his work may understand that Nepali history only begins with King Prithvi Narayan Shah which is not correct. King Prithvi Narayan Shah himself seems learned from the external affairs of ancient Nepal during Lichchhavi and Malla ages. Lichchhavi Kings might learn from Kirat and other earlier dynasties whose history and facts are not well recorded.

Similarly, Rose's work 'Nepal Strategy for Survival' is written from an anthropological perspective which is not from the core IR domain. This book explains only the historical incidences and events but does not analyze them from core IR theories and foreign policy perspectives. He did not focus on the foreign policy of Nepal in ancient periods like the foreign policy of Nepal during the *Gopal dynasty*, *Mahishpal dynasty*, *Kirat*, *Lichchhavi*, and *Malla Dynasty* (see Rose, 1971). This is a critical gap in Muni's and Rose's research about Nepal's world affairs from an IR perspective.

Another crucial work in the foreign policy domain of Nepal is Yadu Nath Khanal's 'Nepal's Non-Isolationist Foreign Policy'. He also seems unable to investigate the foreign policy of ancient Nepal scientifically (see Khanal, 2000). So, it proves that even prominent scholars have failed to discover and analyze Nepal's foreign policy in ancient Nepal. Nepal's foreign policy dates back even before the Lichchhavi age but due to the lack of recorded history of those eras, this study has assessed from the Lichchhavi age but the researcher strongly believes that the root of Nepal's foreign policy reached the very beginning phase of ancient Nepal's state building phases.

Nepal's state-building process seems started from the ancient periods even before the Lichchhavi age and so foreign policy discourse also began with the process of Nepal's state-building phase. K. Bashyal, one of the Key Informants of this study says that Nepal should investigate the characteristics of external affairs of even the father of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. His argument seems valid in the sense that obviously King Prithvi Narayan Shah learned also from his father's rule. Characteristics are transferred from parents to the next generation. So, investigating the external affairs even in brief of the Gorkha Principality before King Prithvi Narayan Shah is crucial for this study.

According to the book 'History of Modern Nepal' written by Adhikari, Dravya Shah, son of King Yashobrahma Shah of Lamjung, established an independent Gorkha state when the power was weakened due to mutual conflicts within the twenty-two and twenty-four kingdoms in ancient Nepal (Adhikari, 2073, page 43). Dravya Shah was a descendant of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the creator of modern Nepal. Theoretically, at that time, it seems that the state was run based on either the Balance of Power system or Divine Power Theory. According to the Balance of Power system, if one state (Principality in ancient Nepal) increased its military and other kinds

of power, the other states also increased their power in the same domain so that there could not be the absolute power of any single state. Similarly, as per the Divine Power Theory, the state was established and governed by God, the King is representative of God and no one can raise the questions to the King. Nepal's ancient Principalities existed as per these two concepts of state building.

Even during the period of twenty-two and twenty-four kingdoms in Karnali and Gandaki regions, it seems that trade business was carried on up to Tibet-China in the north and the Indian region in the south. Therefore, even at that time, according to the theory of international relations, Nepal seemed to be affected by the bilateral geopolitical reality. Nepal seemed to have benefited a lot from the use of geoeconomics conditions at that time unlike facing critical challenges in the present context. Therefore, Prithvi Narayan Shah's concept of a yam between two stones seems to only elaborate on the geopolitics of Nepal at that time and also Nepal before that period. This does not seem that this concept was King Prithvi Narayan Shah's own innovative idea in that context.

In the Lig Ligkot of the Gorkha region, the Magar rulers of the Ghale caste established the tradition of appointing the King to the first person who used to get the first position in the race competition every year based on the principle of power and performance. It is believed that Dravya, the son of the King of Lamjung, was also appointed the king of Gorkha Principality after participating in the race and winning the competition (Adhikari, 2021, p. 202; Sharma, 2040 B.S., p. 5). He established the Gorkha Kingdom after his victory on Majhkot and Upallokot. However, Regmi claims that The Ghales and Magars of Gorkha used to elect a king every year. On the day of the election of the king, all were eager to see the race competition, and Dravya Shah seized the opportunity to attack and capture Ligligkot. After killing the Khadka Magar king

of Gorkha, Dravya Shah became the king of Gorkha in 1616 B.S. (1559 AD) (2025 B.S., p. 112; Bajracharya, 2019 B.S., p. 96).

The kings of the Shah regime were Shahi Thakuris. According to language genealogy, they entered the hilly land of Nepal after the fall of Chitaud. According to historians, the ancestor of Shahi Thakuris was Khan. After Micha Khan in Nuwakot, Jain Khan, Surya Khan, Micha Khan-I, Vichitra Khan, Jagdev or Naraz Khan, and Kulamandan Khan came to Kaski and defeated the Ghaes there and conducted administration there (Adhikari, 2075 B.S., p. 114). Historians have mentioned that because the younger Kulamandan Khan got the title of 'Shah' after pleasing the Delhi Emperor, the title of the kings of this dynasty became Shahi Thakuri. Among the seven sons named Jalal, Kalu, Chaitu, Rupa, Bigridi, Vijay, and Yashobrah Shah of Kulamandan who became Shah after getting his 'Shah title', the first Kalu Shah and after his death, Yashobramha was taken as king by the people of Lamjung (Acharya, 2070 B.S., p. 81). Among the three sons of Yashobramha Shah, Narahari Shah, Dravya Shah, and Narpati Shah, Narahari Shah became the king of Lamjung after his death and Dravya Shah conquered Gorkha and established his independent Gorkha Principality.

As historians are divided about the fact of King of Gorkha Dravya Shah, there are various claims about how he became the King of Gorkha Principality. One of the strongest arguments is that he got the victory over King Mansingh Khadka and killed him and then he became the new King of that Principality (Pant, 2021 B.S., p. 50) quoted in (Adhikari, 2021, p. 206). If this claim is true, the characteristics of the Gorkha Principality and Kings are to use military power and fight wars to expand the territory of that Principality which is the core characteristic of Shah Kings of Gorkha. Later, this characteristic was reflected also in King Prithvi Narayan Shah and

he adopted the policy of expansion through military attack which is more related to Classical Realism theoretically.

There was a huge conflict between Lamjung and Gorkha Principality. The main cause is that Narahari Shah, King of Lamjung, claimed that Gorkha Principality should be merged with Lamjung Principality as Dravya Shah was the younger brother of the King of Lamjung. But Dravya Shah seems to have laid the foundation for the unification of Nepal by strengthening Gorkha as an independent state (Shah, 1968, p. 45) and the DNA of modern Nepal's foreign policy is linked to Dravya Shah. Dravya Shah established good relations with the Change Gurung community of Gorkhali village and Dravya Shah imported salt from Tibet, China to Gorkha Principality. This shows that Dravya Sah had diplomatic thinking and ability. Such ability seems to have developed even more in the later Gorkhali kings. Many historians have claimed that if Dravya Shah had not established the Gorkha Principality, maybe, Nepal's unification campaign would not have started and Nepalis would not have had the opportunity to be proud of their country Nepal.

King Ram Shah is another one of the most popular Kings in Gorkha Principality. He is an extraordinary King in Gorkha. He developed many innovative practices for equality and public justice. In the case of the external affairs of Gorkha Municipality, Ram Shah invited the *Newar* business persons to his state to transact business and increase the bilateral trade between the Nepal Valley and his Principality (Hasarat, 1970, p. 102). Although the judicial system he started is not related to the external affairs of his state, it seems very appropriate to mention it here. He used to judge the general public based on the concept of perfect justice (Dudhko Dudh, Paniko Pani). "If you don't get justice, you either go to Kanshi or go to the Ram Shah's kingdom" has been very popular for centuries (Adhikari, 2021, p. 214). It is reasonable to assume that such

qualities related to his state administration were also reflected in the external relations of his state.

Historians have mentioned that with the new system of justice that he started, the life of the Gorkhalis became a happy and perfect society. Moreover, the administrative, economic, judicial, and religious reforms made by King Ram Shah are still in practice in present-day Nepal and those policies were not only adopted by many of the rulers of tiny states at that time, but also became a part of greater Nepal after unification, so the things he started have remained as soft power for Nepal today. The soft power concept is a post-modern IR discourse of world affairs. Thus, King Ram Shah is still remembered in Nepal and scholars beyond. It seems that Ram Shah tried to strengthen the external policy of the Gorkha Principality started by King Dravya Shah.

Another King of the Gorkha Principality was Naravupal Shah, father of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. He was born in his mother's birth home i.e. Tanahu Principality. When Prithvipati Shah tried to get his daughter-in-law and grandson a Gorkha after getting the news of the birth of his grandson Narbhupal, King Digvijaya Sen of Tanahun did not send Gorkha to his sister and grandson. Maybe Narbhupal's mother, Mallikavati, was insulted in the Gorkha court, so she went to her brother (Adhikari, 2021, p. 223). After a few years, after the environment became easy, Prithvipati Shah brought his daughter-in-law Mallikavati and grandson Narbhupal Shah to Gorkha and declared his grandson the crown prince in 1707 (Acharya, 2070 B.S., p. 23; Pande Kshetri, 2041 B.S., p. 9). Since his father Virbhadra Shah died at the condition of crown prince, Narbhupal Shah ruled the Gorkha kingdom from 1716 AD to 1742 AD after his grandfather Prithvipati Shah's death in 1716 (Sangroula, 2071 B.S., p. 26).

During the reign of Narbhupal Shah, Lamjung was a powerful neighbor among the twenty-four kingdoms. Under the leadership of Lamjung, twenty-four states allied against the Gorkha

Principality. Lamjung influenced Tanahun to her side and attacked the Gorkha. But, Narbhupal Shah retaliated with the Gorkhali army and drove them away (Sharma, 2033 B.S., p. 215).

Narbhupal wanted to move eastward. To the east, there was the kingdom of Nuwakot under Kantipur. In the year 1737 AD, Narbhupal Shah attacked Nuwakot, a powerful fort of Kantipur state that could penetrate the valley. But in this first attack, the Gorkha was defeated. Then, Narbhupal Shah seems to be dejected and separated from ruling the Kingdom and goes towards spiritual worship.

After that, one of his queens, Chandravati, seems to have run the state to fight the external threats in the Gorkha state. In 1740 AD, on the advice of Queen Chandraprabhavati, Narbhupal Shah sent Prince Prithvi Narayan Shah to Bhaktapur State to establish bilateral relations. King Ranjit Malla of Bhaktapur joined the friendship of Prithvi Narayan Shah with his princely son Bir Narsingh Malla to make Gorkha a friendly kingdom. Baburam Acharya has written that in the name of friendship with Bir Narsingh Malla, very clever Prince Prithvi Narayan Shah stayed in Bhaktapur for three years and succeeded in doing a serious study of the Nepal Valley in depth (Acharya, 2070 B.S., pp. 137-138).

On 11 Magh, 1796 B.S., Narbhupal Shah concluded the treaty of '*Ekani Shatru Ekani Mitru*', famous in Malla period history, with the Lamjung Kingdom. Thus, it seems that Ram Shah made the Gorkha Kingdom established by Dravya Shah popular, while Narbhupal Shah tried to protect the legacy of his ancestors and lay the foundation for the unification of Nepal for his descendants. It seems that by attacking Nuwakot Fort for the first time, Narbhupal Shah inspired his son Prithvi Narayan Shah to dream of uniting Nepal. After this point in time, the modern history of Nepal begins and along with this history, the foreign policy of modern Nepal is also

considered to have started. But its foundation dates back to the very beginning phase of the Lichchhavi Kingdom in Nepal.

Thus, it can be analyzed from the above textual data and supporting details that the foreign policy of ancient Nepal was conducted by Kings in different periods based on historical realism. Carr wrote that 'historical realism' is linked with historical events in which history is shaped by 'some special and concrete force', giving rise to a couple of equally important objects of inquiry: the economic struggle between classes as depicted by Marx, as well as the geopolitical conflicts and competition between states (1961, p. 66). Carr further elaborates that the primary laws of history are political laws, and Economic laws are secondary. The characteristics of Nepal's ancient Principalities are also more oriented towards economic struggle and geopolitical conflicts and cooperation as well at needy situation. However, the foreign policy of Nepal before and after King Prithvi Narayan Shah had one similarity. In both periods, Nepal's external relations seem to have been conducted based on the campaign to safeguard and expand its territory and preserve the sovereignty of the Kingdoms of both periods. But the foreign policy of post-modern Nepal seems to be focusing on only safeguarding Nepal from great powers competition.

Many authors consider King Prithvi Narayan Shah as the founding father of Nepal's foreign policy. This claim has only half of the truth. The complete truth is that King Prithvi Narayan Shah innovatively launched his new foreign policy directions based on the foundation of the foreign policy practices and approaches of ancient Kingdoms of Nepali territory. King Prithvi Narayan Shah was the son of Narbhupal Shah, King of the Gorkha Kingdom.

After Prithvi Narayan Shah became the king of Gorkha, he dreamed of the unification of Nepal. Such a dream seems not only of his father Narbhupal Shah, but also of Dravya Shah, the founder of the Gorkha kingdom. It can be analyzed from the effort made by them before King

Prithvi Narayan Shah. Several times, King Dravya Shah faced attacks from the Lamjung kingdom where his brother was the king but the strong Gorkhali military never lost the battle with Lamjung. Though having the dream of expanding (unifying) the territory of the Gorkha Kingdom, the Kings of Gorkha before King Prithvi Narayan Shah could not succeed in that campaign but King Prithvi Narayan Shah achieved this dream and motivated his successors for the mission. Thus, starting from the King of Gorkha Dravya Shah, and then Ram Shah and Narbhupal Shah, Nepal's modern foreign policy took shape during the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Also, the Gorkha kingdom seems to have learned from the Malla and Lichchavi kingdoms for their external affairs.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah has said in his *Divyopadesh* (Divine Counsels):

Whereas, Nepal is like a Tarul (root vegetable) between two boulders. Maintaining better friendship with the Chinese Emperor and the Emperor of the sea (English Emperor) in the south is most important. But the southern neighbour is very clever. Southern ruler is occupying the Hindustan. He is trying to capture the plane area (of Nepal also). When the people in the southern neighbour woke up (not tolerate them), might have found it difficult to push back beyond our border. They (The British East India Company) might have been trying to search and conquer for a safe fort and always there is the possibility that the southern ruler may come here any day (Dibbaya-Upadesh, n.d., p. 9).

The *Divyopadesh* further says:

In this very critical situation, we have to search our Sandhisarpan (weak points) and change them into our strengths (the strong forts). We must build barricades in the path they may try to enter into our land. Remember that they can arrive and attack us at any time. Do not go down to fight with them. Let them arrive here (hilly region) and fight

with all kinds of measures to safeguard our land. If we succeed in doing so, they could easily be beheaded in the region of the Chure Hills. If we could do so we would be able to collect arms and ammunition which would suffice for our Four to Five Generations. And we will be able to extend our border up to the Ganga River (Dibbaya-Upadesh, n.d., pp. 9-10).

King Prithvi Narayan Shah's above Dibbaya-Upadesh (divine counsels) indicates his advanced strategic thinking and war strategy even in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Adhikari writes that the unification of Nepal had already appeared in the year 1768 AD, while the American War of Independence, the unification of Italy and Germany was later than that, so it seems that the unification campaigns of Germany and Italy imitated the unification of Nepal by Gorkha or King Prithvi Narayan Shah (2079 B.S., p. 374). In the context of Nepal's unification, the founder of modern Nepal, His Highness Prithvi Narayan Shah, is compared as a great nation-builder to the American father of the nation George Washington, German Chancellor Wismark and Emperor William-I, and Italian unification heroes like Cabur, Mezzini, Gerivaldi, and Victor Emmanuel-II. But, being a third-world country, the rest of the world does not want to recognize the great contribution of King Prithvi Narayan Shah as a Nepal-builder whereas many Western countries seem to consider him as a territorial expansionist only which is a biased perception.

Understanding the meaning of unification (integration), the process of reuniting all the states that were under the control of one state earlier and later divided into different states is called the unification campaign. If one state merges another state into its own state, then the defeated state becomes a conquered state. Such a process is considered as the state expansion campaign in political parlance. If a state conquers its neighboring states, then it can be considered a great victory. But King Prithvi Narayan Shah's campaign was the unification campaign of Nepal

(Adhikari, 2079 B.S., p. 374). It is also proven from his Dibbaya-Upadesh at the last stage of his life that the campaign was not territorial expansion but was the unification of Nepal (Adhikari, 2079 B.S., p. 380). He writes:

On January 10, 1775, at 7:30 AM, Prithvi Narayan Shah passed away at Mohantirtha in Devighat. In this way, Prithvi Narayan Shah gave his heirs and followers the divine sermon (counsels) to make the rest of the work of the unification campaign of Nepal a reality, and by giving birth to the great modern Nepal dominion, he completed the great important work of the nation builder (Adhikari, 2079 B.S., pp. 379-380).

From his above Dibbaya-Upadesh, it is proven that his campaign was perfectly the unification of Nepal. And hence, Westerners' blaming of territorial expansionists was wrong and biased. This is because developed and powerful countries do not allow the soft power of developing countries to spread throughout the world. The points of Dibbaya-Upadesh even seem comparable with the strategic points of the world's famous strategists and economists like Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, and Kautilya. Nepal needs further research on this issue and should make an effort to establish him at the level of those famous world strategists.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah has said:

If external forces could not fight with us they would try to arrive on our land using Lolo Poto (tricks) or any other types of conspiracies. This is a Thakhat (suitable place/natural fort) in Nepal. If they (Englishers) get this fort they will win over all the Four Emperors of the world. This state itself is a fort created by God himself. It does not need any human touch on it. Prepare seven strong forts in these places namely Shivapuri-1, Phulchouki-1, Chandragiri-1, Mahadevpokhari -1, Palung-1, Dapcha -1 and Kahule-1 (Prithvi Narayan Shah, n.d., pp. 9-10).

His divine counsels taught his successors and they fulfilled the rest of his dream to create the Greater Nepal. All the explanations for King Prithvi Narayan Shah's great campaign are not possible in this study but analyzing his approach and processes of formulation of Nepal's modern foreign policy briefly seems related to a more defensive realist approach however significant contribution of classical realist thinking of him cannot be undermined. Both types of notions seem greatly applied in his unification campaign. One of his most pertinent statements related to the defensive realist approach is 'Do not go down to fight with them. Let them arrive here (hilly region) and fight with all kinds of measures to safeguard our land'. In Nepali, he has said a famous quotation i.e. "*Jai katak nagarnu, jhiki katak garnu*". It is exactly what the above statement says. But, in the case of other principalities within the ancient Nepal territory, he moved with an offensive realist approach. The offensive realist approach adopts the way of power maximizing, meaning that they are continually searching for opportunities to gain more power and search for greater territory or intensive influence (Cox & Stokes, 2012, p. 9). But, as per Cox and Stokes, states are fundamentally security maximizers rather than power maximizers in a defensive realist approach. The states show that moderate behavior in defensive realism and expansionistic policies to achieve security are generally not necessarily relative to other states (2012, p. 9). So, King Prithvi Narayan Shah seems to have adopted both approaches towards other countries and principalities within the Nepali territory. Likewise, the psychological construct and his innate behavior (ambition, ego, way of thinking, etc) i.e. classical realist behavior supported him in adapting such foreign policies. One of the examples of his classical realist approach is given here:

King Prithvi Narayan Shah launched a Western campaign within Nepali territory after solving the unification problem of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Sarlahi, and Mahottari under

Makwanpur Principality (Adhikari, 2079 B.S., p. 377). At that time, Karna Sen of Chaudandi conspired to assassinate Prithvi Narayan Shah with the help of Ranjit Malla's sons, Kazi chiefs who had escaped from Patan and Nagarkot forces.

At that time, Karna Sen, being the king of the Chaudandi Principality, stood against Gorkhali's unification campaign and King Prithvi Narayan Shah (Subedi, 2049 B. S., pp. 13-16). King Prithvi Narayan Shah ordered the execution of the ex-chiefs of Patan along with Devidas and about 250 Nagarkote soldiers, as the secret of the conspiracy was revealed (Acharya, 2026 B.S., p 522).

This incident represents King Prithvi Narayan Shah's nature of classical realism i.e. acted upon other states not based on wisdom but based on revenge.

There is another good example of his classical realist approach. Due to the strategy of holding back the military forces led by Ddokalsingh Basnyat and Sriharsh Pant, the Chaubise Principalities succeeded in defeating the Gorkhali Military power. Prithvi Narayan Shah behaved insultingly towards his soldiers who had returned to save their lives. He made strict military management by ordering them to pay a fine of NRs.120/- per person for their loss in war (Sharma, 2047 B.S., p. 93). King Prithvi Narayan Shah could motivate his soldiers to make their psychology stronger and to do powerful preparation for the next battle but he behaved his soldiers like criminals. NRs. 120/- was a huge money in that era and soldiers could hardly pay that money as a fine. But it can be analyzed from another perspective. In war or battle, everything is justified to make the battle stronger and to win over the enemies. If he had not brought out such a strict rule, his soldiers might have considered the battle lightly, and the unification campaign might have been incomplete. So, his classical realist approach towards his soldiers seems justified for a greater Nepal.

As above analysis, the principal policy of King Prithvi Narayan Shah was guided by offensive realism in the case of the unification process which can be termed “The Policy of Unification” whereas adopted defensive realism in the case of protecting unified territory and dealing with southern and northern emperors which can be termed “Policy of Protection based on Cautious Relations with Great Powers” throughout his unification campaign. King Prithvi Narayan Shah adopted the policy of *Sam, Dam, Danda, and Ved* (negotiation, price, punishment, and difference). This approach is directly linked with the realist school of thought and hence his policy seems predominantly guided by the realist approach (Policy was a neo-realist whereas Behavior was a classical realist).

King Prithvi Narayan Shah adopted some pragmatic (realpolitik) policies like below: This realpolitik includes a) Unification itself, b) Military buildup, c) Cautious relations with British India and China, d) both offensive and defensive approaches, and, e) dealing with the foreign powers.

- Treaty of *Parikraya*: According to Kautilya, Prithvi Narayan Shah signed the *Parikraya* Treaty based on the unification of Nepal and paid off the loan taken from *Sahu-Mahajan* by pledging the money. Chanakya (Kautilya) called *Parikraya* sandhi to return the lands he had won in the war by taking a pledge of money.
- *Dharma Sandhi* between Gorkha and Kantipur.
- Four strategies to conquer the valley: a) Economic blockade, b) Espionage policy, c) A policy of maintaining animosity in the three Malla Kingdoms, and d) A policy of favoring Malla employees (Adhikari, 2021, pp. 445-451).

Likewise, King Prithvi Narayan Shah had established cautious relations with the British East India Company, Treaty relations with Sikkim, Indifferent relations with Bhutan, Honored

relations with the Mughal Emperor, and Cordial Relations with Tibet. But he had also strengthened his military maximization to protect the territory from possible attack of foreigners. King Prithvi Narayan Shah sensationally defeated the British Indian military in the battle of Sindhuli, who was coming to support King Jaya Prakash Malla of Kantipur against King Prithvi Narayan Shah's attacks in Kantipur Principality. Dahal writes that King Jaya Prakash Malla, the last king of Kantipur, had requested the British to support him against King Prithvi Narayan Shah and accordingly, Cap. Kinloch arrived in Nepal to support him. In 1767, King Prithivi Narayan Shah defeated the British forces led by Captain Kinloch in Pauwa Gadhi, Sindhuli. The humiliating defeat of the British, the then global power, in this guerrilla warfare had heightened the glory of Nepal and the Nepali army in the international arena (Dahal, 2018, p. 94). Thus, this policy of King Prithvi Narayan Shah was based on a defensive realist approach. He was very clever and strategic in his defensive approach towards foreigners.

Such kind of policy seems continued by his successors like Rajendra Laxmi Devi Shah and Bahadur Shah. Nepal fought the war with Tibet under Bahadur Shah in 1791 on the issue of a trade dispute between the Gorkha Kingdom and Tibet. The Nepali military under Bahadur Shah attacked Tibet (Acharya, 2019, p. 83) which was a Qing protectorate and the Tibet government signed the Treaty of Kerung paying annual tribute to the Nepal government. However, Tibet asked for the support of the Chinese intervention, and the Chinese imperial military forces under Fuk'anggan were sent to Tibet and repulsed the Nepali Army from the Tibetan plateau in 1792. Acharya writes that after a fierce war, Nepal and Tibet settled the differences through a Treaty of Nuwakot (1792) (2019, p. 83). So far as foreign policy formulation and implementation are concerned, according to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), there was a *Jaishi Kotha* to conduct the foreign policy of Nepal at the very beginning phase of modern

Nepal. So, King Prithvi Narayan Shah started some kind of institution-building approach and he had well understood the importance of the institution for foreign policy formulation and implementation. It has been further explained in Chapter Six in detail.

Another great leader of the country is Bhimsen Thapa during Shah era, the statesman (Mukhtiyar) of Nepal.

Bhimsen Thapa continued the policy of King Prithvi Narayan Shah and also made some changes (Khanal, 2000, p. 230). Khanal writes:

Bhimsen Thapa viewed the so-called British quest for innocent trade from Banaras as an undisputed pursuit of political control after the trial. So the change in assessment is partly due to the element of adventure in his approach but mainly to the fact that the situation had changed so much in the intervening years. In this case, his policy was both a follow-up to King Prithvi Narayan Shah and a new original response to the concrete situation of Nepal faced in his time (Ibid).

Similarly, Rose writes that ... the foreign policy of Nepal in the post-1814 period, based on the principle of balancing the Southern and Northern powers, could have only limited success, and then only because of Culcutta's reluctance to take positive action towards the real balance of strength of Nepal between Nepal's southern and northern neighbors, that policy seems less effective (1971, p. 95).

Analyzing the above texts of Rose, Nepal under Bhimsen Thapa tried to balance the relations but due to realpolitik among the three countries, it was struggling to balance the great powers in that era.

Bhimsen Thapa reestablished relations with several Indian states in the scenario of the British-Mahratta war of 1817-18 and thus he tried to design and carry out to meet the changed context. The basic difference between King Prithvi Narayan Shah and Bhimsen Thapa was in the mindset and perception but the policy was not so different. King Prithvi Narayan Shah tried to maintain cautious relations with the Great Powers. He had envisaged a conflict with the British in some future. But Bhimsen Thapa acted

as if the war was no longer avoidable (Khanal, 2000, p. 231) by one step ahead. Muni writes that under Bhimsen Thapa, Nepal moved toward the south until stopped by the British in 1816. As a result of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16, Nepal's western, southern, and eastern boundaries were more or less fixed...(1973, p. 2). From this claim of Muni, it can be analyzed that Bhimsen Thapa's approach and process of foreign policy was a bit more offensive realist in nature and the Sugauli Treaty of 1816 was the peak point of his offensive realist foreign policy.

Foreign policy any state's leaders adopt is influenced by personal behavior and international structures or systems. The former is related to classical realism and later is linked with neorealism (structural realism) or complex international systems. By habit, he was personally a staunch opponent of the British, a patriot, and a diplomatic and skilled politician. The founder of modern Nepal King Prithvi Narayan Shah was the icon person of Bhimsen Thapa. It may not only be due to being from the same district but also due to the same vision as King Prithvi



Figure 4.2 Greater Nepal expanded under the leadership of Bahadur Shah as a part of the unification process of King PN Shah

Source:

<https://www.telegraphnepal.com/greater-nepal-map-must-be-brought-to-official-use-henceforth/>

Narayan Shah. Bhimsen Thapa was born in Gorkha (Borlang, Pipalthok) in 1832 B.S. His behavior was similar to King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Due to strategic limitations, he accepted the Sugauli Treaty, but he was constantly involved in trying to expel the British from India (Adhikari, 2021, p. 553). Accepting the Sugauli treaty is because of the complex international system that compelled him to accept the treaty but regular effort to expel the British from India is due to his innate behavior and egoism. So, his approach to foreign policy seems a fusion of classical realism and offensive neorealism.

At that time Bhimsen Thapa was admired not only by the Nepali King but also by his enemies. Hudson, a person from the British side, said about him, "Though he was an enemy by the birth of the British, he was a unique patriot. We should respect such patriotism and pray to God that such brave men may be born also in our country". Similarly, King Ran Bahadur Shah said about him, "The country will not sink because of my death, the country will sink because of Bhimsen's death". It means the country seems dependent upon Bhimsen Thapa rather than on the King. It is because of his influential role and his leadership quality. Fearing the military organization of Bhimsen Thapa in the Nepal-British war, General Auckland said, "The British never had to face a war like the one with Nepal in the war with the Indian kingdoms" (Adhikari, 2021, 554). Its meaning is that the British did not have such a brave military army with them like Nepal under Bhimsen Thapa. These all facts prove that Bhimsen Thapa was a brave Prime Minister of Nepal who never feared any foreign powers and never compromised with his patriotism.

Bhimsen Thapa bravely challenged the then British India. Not only the Nepali people but also the British people called Nepal of that time Bhimsen Thapa synonymously. That's why Ran Bahadur Shah said, "The country will not sink when I die, but the country will sink when

Bhimsen dies". Here, the word 'sink' is used metaphorically. It means not sinking in the water but it means Nepal would not be sustained without Bhimsen Thapa. Bhimsen Thapa's great contribution safeguarded the independence of Nepal by daring to fight the war with the British, a superpower of that era. At that time, Nepali people used to sing this song, "*Pashchim killaa kangada purwama Tishta pugethyaun, kun shaktiko samuma kahile hami jhukethyaun* (We had reached the west fort of Kangra, Tishta in the East, and we never bowed down with any superpower in history)".

As the part of continuation of the unification campaign of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, some of the major states conquered by Bhimsen Thapa are Palpa, Gadhwal, Twelve and Eighteen Thakurais, Kumaun, etc. But, due to adverse internal and external power equations, he was compelled to accept the Sugauli treaty. After the Sugauli treaty, signed on 4 March 1816 (Ratified by the Government of Nepal on December 11, 1816 (Bhandari, 2073 B.S., p. 5)), Nepal lost almost one-third of its territory in the east, south, and west. After this juncture, Nepal's foreign policy shifted and became defensive in nature i.e. known as the defensive realist approach. The Sugauli Treaty became the first turning point of modern Nepal's foreign policy. Stiller mentioned the Treaty provision of Sugauli. Article-5 of that treaty says that the King of Nepal renounces for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claim to or connection with the countries lying to the west of the river Kali, and engage never to have any concern with those countries or the inhabitants thereof (2018, p. 25).

Similarly, Articles 2, 3, and 4 of the Sugauli Treaty are the articles due to which Nepal lost its territory in the East and the South. Article 2 says that Nepal must give up the disputed territories between the two states before the war. Article 3 deals with the surrender of the entire territory occupied by Nepal to the east of the Mechi river, i.e. between the Mechi and Tista

rivers, and the vacating of that territory within forty days. Similarly, Article 4 mentions that compensation will be received from the British Government of India for the loss of the lowlands of the Terai (Manandhar, 2022, pp. 20-21; Bhandari, 2073 BS. p. 4; Kumari & Kushwaha, 2019, p. 42). Due to this treaty, Nepal lost a huge territory and began the era of Defense. This incident made Nepali rulers and people psychologically weak and this psychological construct of the rulers and people seems reflected in Nepal's modern foreign policy as well.

However, Bhimsen Thapa greatly contributed to the unification campaign started by King Prithvi Narayan Shah based on the offensive realist approach. After reading the history of Nepal's external affairs of Bhimsen Thapa, it seems that he continued the *Jaishi Kotha* started by King Prithvi Narayan Shah to formulate and implement his foreign policy but during wartime, there were not enough systematic processes and approaches to formulating foreign policy in that era.

### **4.3 Rana Time**

A remarkable shift in domestic and foreign policy followed the rise of Jung Bahadur Rana in 1846. Rose writes that Jung Bahadur's rise to power resulted in a major redefinition of Nepal's foreign policy towards both China and British India (1971, p. 106). Jung Bahadur realized that Calcutta would not tolerate especially anti-British policy followed by King Rajendra and hence he attempted to shift the existing policy. Not only because of initiated the Rana oligarchy system but also attempting to make a shift in the foreign policy of modern Nepal, many scholars perceive him as the most powerful Prime Minister in Nepal's history. As a part of his shift, Jung Bahadur began a new era of friendship with the British understanding the new situation of domestic and regional geopolitics.

The belief in the invincibility of the British in India was a major determinant of Jung Bahadur Rana's foreign policy. According to General Padma Jung quoted in Muni's Foreign Policy of Nepal, Jung Bahadur Rana had a conversation with the then-British Resident in Kathmandu as follows:

We know, you (the British) are a stronger power. You are like a lion, we are like a cat, the cat will scratch if it is driven to a corner, but the lion would soon kill the cat. You can force us to change our- policy, you can take our country if it pleases you to do so (Muni, 1973, p. 7).

From the above conversation, it is analyzed that either he considered himself very weak with external forces, or he said so as a strategy to safeguard the country by pleasing British India. As we know Jung Bahadur Rana's attitude, he was not a weak-minded Head of Government, which is also confirmed by the fact that he is still considered the most powerful Prime Minister in the history of Nepal. Muni writes that there were some private causes behind Jung Bahadur's soft corner towards the British (1973, p. 7). His rise to power was from a very humble position and, so, British patronage could be helpful to legitimize his authority.

The rise of Jang Bahadur Rana was a result of the continuation of murder and conspiracy in the Palace. When the internal strife of the Shah Dynasty Kings took a violent form, there were internal disturbances and extremely unhealthy rivalries between Prithvi Narayan Shah and his brothers, Pratap Singh Shah and Bahadur Shah, Rajendra Lakshmi and Bahadur Shah, Bahadur Shah and Ran Bahadur Shah, Ran Bahadur Shah and the various *Bharadars*, between Sher Bahadur Shah and Bhimsen Thapa, etc. As this internal conflict escalated, conspiracies and massacres took place in the palace. Jung Bahadur Rana emerged from this background of internal conflicts.

Jung Bahadur Rana came to power in Nepal by killing his maternal uncle Mukhtiyar (Head of Government) Mathawar Singh Thapa. Jung Bahadur Rana was ready to kill him due to several disagreements with his maternal Uncle over various issues. According to the plan to kill him, on the night of May 17, 1845, a message was conveyed to Mathawar Singh Thapa that Queen Rajyalakshmi Devi had sought a visit through Kulman Singh Basnyat, pretending to be in pain. At that time, Jung Bahadur Rana had said to the King and Queen that he would murder Mathawar Singh Thapa that night if it was ordered by the King (Bajracharya & Shrestha, 2037 B.S., p. 55). As soon as Mathawar Singh Thapa reached King Rajendra's room, Jang Bahadur, who was hiding behind the queen's curtain, shot him three times consecutively with the help of Gagan Singh (Adhikari, 2021, p. 606). After the murder of his maternal uncle Mathawar Singh Thapa, Jung Bahadur Rana was able to accumulate power by taking control of the gruesome massacre of *Kotparva*, which took place during the search for the killer of Gagan Singh (Adhikari, 2079 B.S., p. 424).

The surprising fact was that King Rajendra made a speech in front of the people gathered at Tudikhel on 21 May 1845 that King Rajendra had killed Mathawar Singh Thapa and wrote a letter to the then British Resident Sir Henry Lawrence about the murder case and made five serious charges against Mathawar Singh Thapa (Baidya & Manandhar, 2035 B.S., p. 347). But Jung Bahadur Rana accepted in 1851 that he had killed his maternal uncle. Mathawar Singh Thapa's murder is connected with the rise of Jung Bahadur Rana, so this incident has to be mentioned here.

In this way, politics in the Palace took a violent form from King Prithvi Narayan Shah to the rise of Jang Bahadur Rana, the founder of the Rana Oligarchy regime, and Nepal's palace politics became extremely unstable. When the foreign policy of Prithvi Narayan Shah and Bhimsen

Thapa lost its rhythm due to this palace-politico's instability, Jung Bahadur changed the foreign policy of Nepal to a great extent. Thus, due to the changes in the internal and external geopolitical situation of Nepal, he started a new era in the history of Nepal's foreign policy by changing the legacy of Prithvi Narayan Shah and Bhimsen Thapa's foreign policy.

For the brave support of Jung Bahadur, British India returned territories of Banke, Bardia, Kailali, and Kanchanpur to Nepal in 1860 which were lost in the Sugauli Treaty. In 1857, Indian soldiers revolted against the British in Lucknow, India which is famously known as Sepoy Mutiny. The Indian soldiers who revolted against the British and centered at Merath declared Bahadur Shah Zafar the Emperor of India on 11 May 1857 (Bhandari, 2073 B.S., p. 6). Known as 'Gadar', the Sepoy Mutiny became out of control of the British government. Then British India sent a letter to Jung Bahadur Rana requesting military assistance. After receiving the letter, Jung Bahadur convinced the *Bhardari* Assembly on June 3, 1857. Among many advice and suggestions, Jung Bahadur decided to do military support to British India.

On 2 July 1857, 6,000 Nepali troops led by Colonel Pahalman Singh Basnet went to India. The Nepali army took control of Azamgarh, Jaunpur, and Attauli. The company government realized that additional support was needed, then, again corresponded with the Nepal government for further support. In December 1857, Jung Bahadur himself went to India with 14,000 troops. The army led by him took control of Chanda-Kuhna, Sonpur, Basganga, Muwarakpur, and Ballia (Bhandari, 2073 B.S., p. 7). In March 1858, Ambarpur, Ferozpur, Badshahbagh in Awadh, Begumkothi, Motibagh, Tarakothi, and Kesharbagh came under the control of the Nepali army. Finally, the Sepoy Mutiny in India ended with the capture of Imambada, Machhibhavan, and Musabagh. In this way, to recognize and respect such great support of Jang Bahadur Rana to the British government, the British Indian government handed over the lowlands' territories between

Rapti and Mahakali (Banke, Bardia, Kailali, and Kanchanpur) in December 1860 which had been lost in the Sugauli Treaty (Aitchison, 1929, pp. 71-72).

Jung Bahadur, to please the British in this way, provided such a large military support to the government of British India under his leadership. Jang Bahadur very strategically and diplomatically moved towards harmonious relations with British India. Very cleverly, he had expected to receive support from the British Indian government for the actions taken by Jang Bahadur to become unquestionably powerful in Nepal. Studying his history reveals that he was a very clever, diplomatic, and skilled political player. Since the Sugauli Treaty, the intervention of the British Indian government in Nepal had started. Even after the treaty, the British Indian government started sending its representatives to Nepal to weaken the powerful people who were against the British Indian government in Nepal and to create its puppet government in Kathmandu. The British Government of India seems to already have understood that Jang Bahadur was the most comfortable and favorable person for their mission in Nepal. So, it seems that the British Indian government supported Jung Bahadur.

At that time, the British Resident had become a key external actor in Nepali politics. Residents could promote whomever they wanted in the politics of Nepal and establish their dominance in the place they occupied (Kadel, 2055 B.S., pp. 96-97). Jang Bahadur was well aware of the British Indian attitude, and strategy towards Nepal from the incident of the assassination of Bhimsen Thapa, a strong critic of British India. Historians argue that there was a key role of British India behind the death of Bhimsen Thapa (Adhikari, 2021, p. 611). Jang Bahadur also realized that it would have been almost impossible to rule in Nepal from an offensive realist and even from a defensive realist approach towards the southern neighbour.

Therefore, he shifted Nepal's policy towards the British government from the liberal ground which is also called as 'Policy of Appeasement'.

Jung Bahadur Rana wanted to establish himself internally as an optionless and powerful ruler. To fulfill such a dream, he had to do many things like creating many conspiracies within the country, increasing the conflict between the King and the Queen, building an atmosphere of mutual distrust between the *Bharadars*, getting close to the palace, and murdering the beloved persons of the palace, and weakening his opponents by carrying out Massacres. He wanted to establish himself as more powerful even than the king through many traps and conspiracies. For that, he had to prevent possible intervention from the British Indian government. It seems that he had brought changes in the foreign policy of Nepal to make the British Indian government in his favor to become powerful in the internal geopolitics by making the external geopolitics favorable. Here is an example of how Jang Bahadur Rana played efficiently and tactfully in internal politics.

Jung Bahadur joined the faction of the then-powerful Queen Lakshmi Devi together with Gagan Singh, the leader of this faction, and murdered Mathwar Singh Thapa with the support of the King and Queen. The King and Queen became happy with his work. After that, he killed Gagan Singh in a disguised and mysterious manner and prepared the basis of *Kotparva*. Gagan Singh was the Queen's most favorite person in *Durbar*. According to Gagan Singh told to Queen, there was a confrontation between Gagan Singh and Bir Kishor Pandey. Based on this, the Queen assumed that the murderer of Gagan Singh was Bir Kishor.

Thinking that Bir Kishor would be killed, the queen ordered all the *Bharadars* to the area of *Kot*. The strategy of inviting all the *Bhardars* was specially made by Jung Bahadur. A plan was made that Jang Bahadur would notice the murderer of Gagan Singh to the Queen in a secret way

in the crowd of *Bharadars* and kill him immediately. Along with his assassination, 32 *Bhardars* gathered in Kot were killed by Jung Bahadur and 26 were sentenced to exile. In this way, Jung Bahadur established his leadership in the politics of Nepal by mass murdering of all the seniors than him. In the same way, he played a vital role in a number of incidents including the *Bhandar Khal Parwa*, and became the most powerful leader and received the title of *Shri 3 Maharaj* of Kaski and Lamjung.

When the British Resident in Kathmandu sought to understand several times about those incidents, it seems that Jang Bahadur took the support of the British Indian government through various strategies and plans. Thus, in order to be powerful internally, it was necessary of some criminal incidents in Nepal and stop British India's interference in it. To achieve these goals, Jang Bahadur changed foreign policy significantly towards the British government. That foreign policy was liberal towards the British government.

As relevant as the discussion of Jung Bahadur Rana's British India policy is, the Nepal-vote war that took place during his time is equally important. By defeating *Bhot* in this war, in 1849, Nepal succeeded in regaining the prestige it had lost the 'Lama's Land' (Manandhar, 2080 B.S., p. 106). Most of the authors have said that Nepali had to declare war on the *Bhot* because the *Bhotes* misbehaved with the Nepali and the government refused to pay the damages demanded by Nepal (Jangbahadur, 1909, pp. 173-74; Upreti, 1980, pp. 62-65). According to Manandhar, some documents recently found in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal have tried to clarify three things related to the Nepal-vote war. 1) The immediate cause of the Nepal-*Bhot* war, 2) Nepal's policy towards China, and 3) Jang Bahadur's policy of mobilizing the nation for war (2080 B.S., pp. 106-107).

It seems that Nepal has attacked the vote especially on the basis of a common incident as per Manandhar. He writes:

The Nepali citizens, having Eighteen Hundred rivers, built a cowshed and reared Chauri cows on the Bhot land near the Nepal-Bhot border. They had paid the rent of the land. But in the month of Paush in the year 1911 B.S., 25 young Bhotes suddenly came and attacked the Nepali shepherds, killed one, injured four others, captured and tortured the other four, and robbed them of their property. As soon as Nepal listened to the news of this incident, Nepal sent troops under the leadership of Ranasingh Khatri and Bam Bahadur respectively to Kuti and Kerung to attack Bhot (2080 B.S., p 107).

Manandhar considers it a simple reason for the attack because such kinds of incidents used to have happened in the border region frequently. Not only Manandhar but also Rose argues in the same way. He also argued that Nepal attacked the *Bhot* without any serious reasons (Rose, 1971, p. 110). But there are historians who claim in different ways:

Adhikari writes:

The national and international situation supported Jang Bahadur to restore Nepal's political and commercial dominance over Tibet by restoring the traditional monetary trade with Tibet that Nepal had lost due to China's intervention. Without losing such a golden opportunity, Jang Bahadur, the founder of the Jahaniya Rana regime, who wanted to expand his influence to other countries in Asia, attacked Tibet and put forward the policy of war with Tibet at the appropriate time to solve some of Nepal's problems and to raise his image at the international level (2079 B.S., p. 439).

The situation in Tibet at that time looked a little different. Around 20,000 lamas of Tibet at that time planned to remain neutral in the event of a Nepal-Tibet war to weaken China's

influence over Tibet (Rose, 1971, p. 109). This kind of internal geopolitics of Tibet supported Jang Bahadur's plans and ambitions. Jang Bahadur, adept at analyzing internal and external geopolitics with great skill, used Tibet's internal weakness as an opportunity to fulfill his plan. On April 6, 1855, the Nepali army under the leadership of General Bam Bahadur and Dhir Samsher attacked Kerung, Kukurghat, and Kuti Sunagumpa respectively. Jang Bahadur heard that a large number of Tibetan troops were stationed in Tingri, Tibet. Jung Bahadur sent nine regiments of the army there to fight with Tibetan soldiers. There was a fierce battle with the Tibetan army at that place. Forty army officers including 232 Nepali soldiers were killed in that battle. Immediately, Jagat Samsher divided the Nepali army into two parts and opened fire on the fort of Ghantagarhi, the Tibetan forces started to flee. The Nepali army killed about 600 Tibetan soldiers. After a continuous war for nine days with 6,000 Tibetan troops in Jhung under the leadership of Jagat Samsher, the Tibetan troops fled from there on the tenth day. On May 7, Jung Bahadur himself reached Jhunggarhi with 18 thousand new troops and took possession of the surrounding areas.

In the second phase of the war, when 15,000 combined forces of China and Tibet attacked Kuti on November 5, 1855. The Nepali army faced an extraordinary obstacle from them. In that war, 700 Nepali soldiers lost their lives. In the end, the combined Tibetan and Chinese forces that came to attack Jhunggarhi were defeated by the Nepali forces (Adhikari, 2079 B.S., p. 442). In the third Nepal-Tibet-China war, although both sides suffered huge losses, the victory was in favor of Nepal (Ibid). In January 1856, Palden Dondup came to Kathmandu to discuss with Jagat Samsher with a proposal to make a treaty, on behalf of the Tibetan side, and it was agreed that the treaty negotiations would be held in Kathmandu. This treaty became famous as the

*Thapathali Treaty*. According to the points of the treaty held on March 24, 1856 (Kandel, 2047 B.S., p. 216), it seems that Nepal has the following strategic advantages.

- 1) Although it did not have the results expected by Jang Bahadur, it has remained important in the diplomatic arena at the international level.
- 2) The third Nepal-Tibet-China war not only sent a clear message that Nepal was not defeated, but Nepal's reputation at the international level has remained high.
- 3) Because of this treaty, Nepal got a chance to become the protector of Tibet, while before that China came to war with Nepal by taking the side of Tibet and claiming that the land given for purely religious purposes could not be handed over to Nepal from the hands of Tibet.
- 4) This treaty seems to have brought the king of Nepal to the equivalent of the emperor of China.
- 5) It seems that Jang Bahadur's inner desire to prevent China's influence in Tibet has been fulfilled.
- 6) After the war between Nepal and Tibet, Nepal got extraterritorial rights in Tibet.
- 7) It seems that Tibet has become a semi-independent country in front of Nepal since Nepal receives an annual gift of Rs. 10000 from Tibet and to get the responsibility to protect Tibet. and It is analyzed that Nepal's diplomatic prestige has become high at the international level due to this treaty (Mishra, 2054 B.S., p. 209).
- 8) Because of the Treaty of Thapathali, Nepali traders would be able to trade various goods in Tibet without any hurdles.
- 9) After the treaty, it seems that Nepal's relations with China were smooth throughout the period of the Rana Times, and Jung Bahadur's personality and Nepal's reputation grew rapidly at the international level according to his strategy.

10) From the point of view of nationalism, the Thapathali Treaty can be understood as a high honor of Nepal at the international level.

Before and during war times, it seems that Nepal had taken a serious initiative diplomatically so that China might not cooperate in favor of *Bhot* in the Nepal-*Bhot* war. Before that, one million rupees was demanded from the *Bhot* government by Nepal as compensation for the misbehaving of Nepali people in Lhasa. In addition, it was mentioned that if the land worth one million rupees was given, there would be no attack on behalf of Nepal. On the other hand, it was tried to assure China that even if Nepal attacked the *Bhot*, it would not do any harm against China.

In that way, on the one hand, Jang Bahadur adopted the Nepal policy to please the British Indian government, and on the other hand, he adopted the policy of mobilizing the nation for the war with *Bhot*. Therefore, it does not seem to be fair to look at Jang Bahadur's foreign policy from the perspective of only one theoretical ground.

Based on these facts, Jung Bahadur's foreign policy can be analyzed as follows.

1) He took a very liberal policy to the British Indian government popularly termed as "Policy of Appeasement" and fought with its northern neighbor Tibet (*Bhot*) and ended it with the Treaty of Thapathali. His Tibet policy was guided by his realistic approach.

2) There was no possibility of expanding the territory southward after the Sugauli Treaty.

Influenced by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, Bahadur Shah, and his maternal uncle Bhimsen Thapa, he wanted to expand the Nepali territory of Nepal. Therefore, he attacked the *Bhot*, which was weak internally. This researcher considers the attack on the *Bhot* to be justified, no matter how other authors and historians analyze it. Because, if any foreign government hurts or arrests

or kills Nepali citizens, it was justified in the world politics of that time to take action against that country according to the principle of responsibility to protect (R2P).

3) It seems that Jung Bahadur Rana also adopted diplomatic precautions. To avoid any interference from the British Indian government in the way of his emergence as an all-powerful ruler in the internal conflict, he conducted British India policy based on a very liberal approach. He was very humble towards British India. However, to establish himself internally as an autocratic and totalitarian ruler, he adopted the policy of *Saam, Daam, Danda, and Bhed* (*negotiation, price, punishment, and difference*). He took political steps in such a way that King Surendra agreed to give him the title of Sri 3 Maharaj of Kaski and Lamjung. Along with this, he seems to have taken diplomatic steps to keep China neutral by assuming China's possible support to *Bhot* against Nepal. In correspondence with the Chinese Emperor, he had requested to stay neutral in the Nepal-Bhot war and Nepal would not take any action against China, but due to the killing, arresting, and looting of Nepali citizens by *Bhotes*, Nepal had taken action against *Bhot*.

4) Jang Bahadur was a very self-confident and courageous ruler. This fact has to be accepted when studying the entire history of how he emerged in the politics of Nepal. Although diplomatic efforts were made to keep China neutral in the Nepal-Bhot war, China finally took the side of Tibet and came to fight against Nepal. He did not fear and cancel the war even against such a great emperor. Many Chinese and Tibetan troops were killed by Nepali soldiers. At the end, the international prestige and dignity of Nepal was high and the Thapathali treaty was concluded with Tibet. Although China was not happy with this treaty, the Thapathali Treaty was concluded very tactfully and efficiently. This should be considered a great achievement of Jang Bahadur.

5) Looking at all these facts, his foreign policy was not only based on a liberal school of thought. Against the arguments of many diplomats, his policy was not just a "policy of appeasement". Looking at only one power, it looks like this, but when analyzing the relations with other powers, his overall policy cannot be called a "policy of appeasement". Even though his relations with British India seemed to be liberally analyzed from the outside, he never compromised with anything requested by the British India which hurt the interests of the country. Therefore, his foreign policy was neither entirely liberal nor entirely based on a realist approach. Rather, his foreign policy was based on pragmatism (pragmatic approach), it seems that it needs to be reinterpreted in this way.

Jang Bahadur continued the *Munsi Khana* converted from *Jaishi Kotha* by Bhimsen Thapa established by King Prithvi Narayan Shah to conduct the foreign policy of Nepal. It is analyzed that the process and approach of formulating and implementing foreign policy at that time were mainly driven by extreme internal political instability and conflict among *Bharadars*. Also, Rana Times was not very clear about the process and approach of formulating foreign policy but rulers used to decide the foreign policy based on the consultation with their core team members. Mohan Shamsher, the last prime minister of the Rana times, did the wrong thing in trying to extend the Rana regime by the unequal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950. Signing the 1950 treaty by the Rana Prime Minister also confirms that other Rana prime ministers were not as patriotic as Jung Bahadur and there were no scientific and well-established processes and approaches for the formulation of Nepal's Nepal's foreign policy at that time.

#### **4.4 Panchayat Era**

After Rana times in Nepal's foreign policy, the Panchayat years started after a 10-year gap (1950-1960). This gap was a transition period from the Rana Times to the Panchayat Years.

Nepal encountered a series of political instability in that period. External (Southern neighbour) intervention reached a new height at that moment. Dixit writes that Nepal's struggle since 1947 has been to keep New Delhi out of its affairs (2023, para. 9). This statement has the meaning that India's involvement and engagement were massively launched in Nepali internal politics. Many of the Nepali authors argue that India started doing 'micro-management' and macro-management on both fronts of Nepali politics (Dixit, 2023, para. 1) specially after Rana Times continued the policy of the British Indian government.

After the resignation of Mohan Shamsher in the year 2008 B.S., King Tribhuvan on the advice of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru appointed Matrika Prasad Koirala as the Prime Minister of Nepal (Adhikari, 2079 B.S., p. 512). It is clear from this situation that after the advent of democracy, Indian involvement and intervention in Nepal reached a peak. Even King Tribhuvan himself was under the massive influence and pressure of India. In such a situation, it is proven that Nepal's foreign policy was not in a position to operate independently due to India's high intervention under King Tribhuvan. Therefore, the researcher did not make this 10-year period a separate topic for this study of Nepal's foreign policy. Overall, Nepal experienced "*Delhi instructed Nepal's Foreign Policy*" in that period, especially under King Tribhuvan. Historian Rajesh Gautam says that the representatives of India used to attend the then cabinet meeting of Nepal to collect the information directly and immediately supply it to New Delhi (2076 B.S., para. 6). When a representative of another country's agency is admitted to the meeting of the Council of Ministers of one country, it cannot be claimed that that country is practically sovereign and independent. On the other hand, such developments also clarify how India has planned to control Nepal's politics after the Rana times. However, such Indian representatives' involvement in the cabinet meeting of Nepal was not as per any bilateral

agreement. Since such practice has been done for some time based on realpolitik, theoretically, it is not justified to question the sovereignty and independence of Nepal.

When Mahendra became the King of Nepal, then, it was started Nepal's foreign policy to be corrected. In the mid-1950s decade, Nepal tried some significant initiatives under Prime Minister Tank Prasad Acharya. Acharya's tenure is considered in Nepal's history as a golden period after the Rana Times for establishing diplomatic relations with some countries. Three crucial top-level institutions were established which were: a) the First five-year plan, b) Nepal Rashtra Bank, and c) the Supreme Court. One of the most important departures of Nepal's foreign policy in the 1950s was the diplomatic relations with China and the Economic Assistance Agreement signed during Acharya's Premiership (Bhattarai, K. D., 2019, para. 3). Because of Tank Prasad Acharya's nationalistic action, many authors argue that he had tried to bring Nepal's foreign policy on track as Prime Minister in 1950s however he could sustain for only one year. On 1 August 1955, Nepal established diplomatic relations with China under the direct rule of King Mahendra (Website of MoFA), and then "*Delhi instructed Nepal's Foreign Policy*" totally started to be changed which was the entry point of the rise of Panchayat Years in Nepal. "*Delhi instructed Nepal's Foreign Policy*" is also proven by Muni's statement. He writes:

Nepal's close relations with the countries that had adversarial relations with India like China and Pakistan, figured prominently in this respect. With China, the King ignoring Indian sensitiveness, signed an agreement in October 1961, to establish a road connection across the Himalayas with Chinese assistance linking Kathmandu with the Tibetan border point at Kodari pass. With Pakistan, Nepal signed a Trade Agreement in October 1962 (Muni, 2009, p. 41).

Such kind of Indian perspective implicitly indicates that India wants to diversify of Nepal's relations only for the benefit of India as per Delhi's instruction. However, India's fear of possible friendly relations between China and Nepal cannot be ignored. Chen Yi, the then Deputy Premier and Defense Minister of China, told the then Foreign Minister of Nepal Rishikesh Shah, who went to China in 1962 exactly two weeks before the Sino-Indian border war, "If any other foreigners attack Nepal, China will stand with you" (Muni, 2009, p. 42).

On 15 December 1960, King Mahendra took over and dissolved the parliament accusing the ousted government was working in the interests of the Party and not for expanding the country's national interests, the administration process was paralyzed, Corruption was very bad, law and order was entirely disordered, and anti-national forces (foreigners) were made influential and encouraged (Muni, 2009, p. 38; Chauhan, 1971). Some authors have argued that there was a personality clash between King Mahendra and B. P. Koirala. Some other experts analyze that it was due to the Cold War effect and China-India rivalries in this region. However, it is not proven that King Mahendra took power due to regional rivalries between immediate neighbours or due to his clash with BP Koirala. It seems that such claims are built by some intellectuals who distort the facts and build false narratives. The reason is that King Mahendra took over the power in his hands in a situation where the country's independence was threatened due to external terrible interference in Nepal. Neither the Sino-Indian rivalry had any effect on Nepal's democratic system at that time, nor was BP Koirala a leader of the level to compete with King Mahendra. Therefore, both these claims appear to be wrong.

India strongly opposed the new move of taking power by King Mahendra. The then Prime Minister of India, Nehru, speaking in the Indian Parliament on 20 December 1960, strongly criticized the new steps of the Nepal King. In addition, he announced to stop of the financial aid

provided to Nepal. From this juncture, a nationalist approach to foreign policy under Mahendra's leadership was begun.

Nepal's international relations and foreign policy were conducted effectively in history during the Panchayat period under the leadership of King Mahendra. In particular, he made his best effort to safeguard the primary national interest (Hartmann, 1957, p. 6) of Nepal i.e. sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political (national) independence. After becoming the first elected Prime Minister in 1958 before the Panchayat years began, BP Koirala tried to advance Nepal's international relations according to King Mahendra's vision. Basnet (2009, p. 54) writes (quoted by Shambhuram Simkhada) that Koirala brought a new perspective to the international relations of Nepal (Simkhada, 2022, p. 9). BP Koirala's speech at the United Nations General Assembly, his emphasis on strong relations with China, an official visit to Israel on behalf of the head of government, and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations by opening the Israeli embassy in Nepal when there was no Israeli embassy, indicates Koirala's sincerity to foreign relations of Nepal (Ibid). As Western countries consider Israel the holy land and use their power to protect it, Koirala very cautiously and carefully analyzed the importance of such a Geo-religious issue even 65 years ago. And, he played a role in making the relations with the superpower more reliable through good relations with Israel.

Simkhada argues that Parliament was dissolved by King Mahendra when Koirala was Prime Minister. Koirala and other senior leaders of the Nepali Congress were arrested and jailed. However, in Nepal's foreign policy, Mahendra continued Koirala's active internationalism and expanded it as the best means of protecting Nepal's national interests while facing regional and beyond geopolitical challenges (2022, p. 10). However, this scholar does not agree with this argument because King Mahendra was an extraordinarily visionary leader of Nepal in the field of

international relations and safeguarding national interests. King Mahendra did not need to learn from BP Koirala's vision. Even though the democratic rights of the people were violated during the Panchayat years, the initiative he took to safeguard Nepal from the complex geopolitical interests of India at that time, confirms that King Mahendra was not an incompetent king who must learn from B.P. Koirala.

One of the important achievements in Nepal's foreign policy during the Panchayat year is the 'establishment of global diplomatic relations' and 'free from Delhi-centric Nepal affairs'. Muni mentions that the Chinese communist leader had described this region as forming China's hand, wherein Tibet was its palm and Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh were its five fingers (2009, p. 31). Because of such a legacy of inner perspective and claim of China toward Nepal, India needed to tie Nepal with the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship to bring out Nepal of China's possible hands. But Thapliyal (2012, p. 119) quotes Bhasin that it was true in the context of the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed between two countries to take care of the mutual national interests of Nepal and India within a particular regional context (Bhasin, 2005). However Nepali intellectuals and political parties feel that this treaty has greatly diminished Nepal's national interest. In the context of solving the issue of the 1950 Treaty, the report submitted by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) is not owned by the Indian government. One of the prominent members of the EPG from the Indian side M. P. Lama clearly said with this researcher during a face-to-face interview conducted on 11 November 2022 at JNU that the report has not taken ownership by the Indian government mainly because of having strong recommendation from Nepali side. He claimed that the report has tried to address the issues raised by Nepali members of EPG and the Indian members also agreed with Nepali counterparts (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Even if the current EPG report is linked above, the main issue is Indian pressure and influence in Nepali politics. On this issue, the then-Indian Prime Minister Nehru said to the Indian Parliament on March 17, 1950:

India suggested to the Government of Nepal that the forces fighting for democratic rights should be brought under the discipline of democracy, during which the world was undergoing a democratic wave. Such kinds of suggestions could not be implemented perfectly and the situation developed in the line of more proactive engagement and intervention directly in Nepali politics by India (Muni, 2009, p. 32).

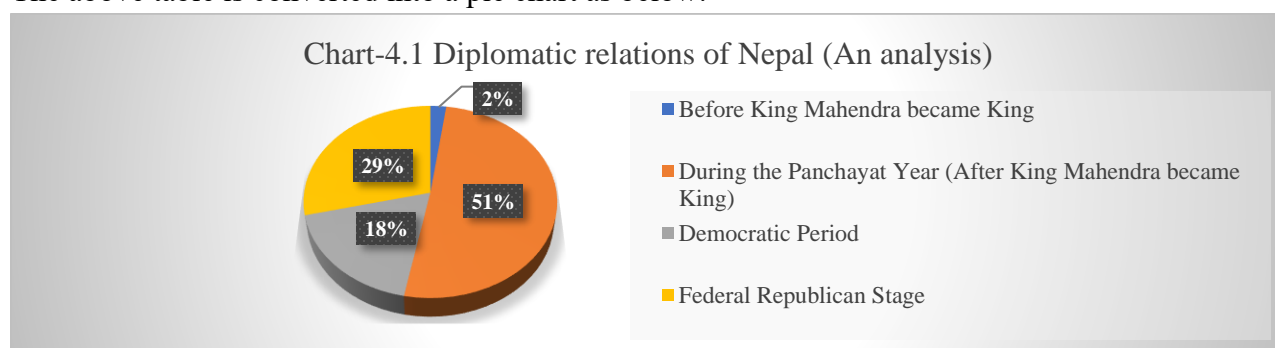
So, it should be analyzed that India had engaged overtly in Nepal in the name of democratic rights but the inner issue was the rising China's possible influence in Nepal. Muni clearly says that India's intervention in Nepal was not driven primarily by democratic considerations (2009, p. 33). It means the engagement, involvement, and intervention of India in Nepal was promoted by keeping the facts in mind of the overall strategic context developing in Nepal which really had several aspects. China's possible influence in Nepal was thus a strategic context for India's overt engagement. In this situation, Nepal had no other option of globalizing its relations in order to become free from the terrible involvement and massive pressure of India in Nepali internal affairs. To fulfill that necessity, the process of diversifying its relations in the global arena during the reign of King Mahendra took a new height very aggressively which was begun in the post-1945 time. The following table shows the move of Nepal towards global engagement under King Mahendra's initiatives in the Panchayat years. This study has taken King Mahendra as the key actor of Nepal's diversified relations.

Table 4.1 Diplomatic relations established in Nepal: An analysis

Diplomatic Relations established in Nepal	Before King Mahendra became King	During the Panchayat Year (After King Mahendra became King)	Democratic Period	Federal Republican Stage
	4	92	33	52

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The above table is converted into a pie chart as below:



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

This pie chart shows that 51 percent of diplomatic relations were established in the Panchayat years, especially after Mahendra became the King. Only two percent of diplomatic relations were established before King Mahendra. Similarly, 18 percent and 29 percent of diplomatic relations

were established during the democratic period and federal republican period respectively. The chart shows that even more than 50 percent of total diplomatic relations established now in Nepal were established during the Panchayat years. Therefore, the diversification of Nepal's global affairs was aggressively moved during the Panchayat years which is a significant achievement. Because of this Nepal's world affairs, Indian dominance, and intervention significantly decreased during the Panchayat Years.

Among the diplomatic relations that Nepal has established so far, five diplomatic relations are of special importance. Diplomatic relations with Britain established in 1816 show that Nepal was independent even when the current superpower of the world was just born, Nepal was here for thousands of years and it was always independent. If the country was independent for thousands of years, then its institutions (like procedures and methods of foreign policy and its organs) were also in existence along with the country.

The diplomatic relations with the USA established on 25 April 1947 reflect the message that the new India, which was about to become independent, should not adopt a policy based on the British legacy in Nepal. Moreover, since Nepal established diplomatic relations with one of the great powers at that time before India's independence, it is clear that Nepal had already started expanding its world relations before India's independence.

The message of the diplomatic relations with India established on 13 June 1947 is that the new government formed after the independence of India should treat Nepal in a friendly manner based on the diplomatic relations. Because the newly independent country had little chance of treating Nepal which, was never colonized in history, (which is also the soft power of Nepal) as an independent country. To avoid this scenario, Nepal seems to be trying to lay the foundation of

independent relations by establishing diplomatic relations three months before India's independence.

The meaning of diplomatic relations with China established on 1 August 1955 is that Nepal wants to maintain sovereign and friendly relations with its both neighbors. Also, diplomatic relations with Communist China would have been very meaningful for Nepal to reduce the massive interference of India in the period after 1950. After the establishment of diplomatic relations with China, although there was some doubt on the part of India about Nepal-India relations, some positive situation was created in Nepal. The construction of the Kodari highway indicates the importance of diplomatic relations with China and scholars are well known that how the Kodari highway changed the geopolitics of Nepal.

Another important part is that Nepal became a member of the United Nations in December 1955 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n. d., para. 1). In 1955, the total number of members of the United Nations was 76 (UN Website: see this link- see the link in the reference list). Nepal, being a member of it, set the basis for moving forward in relations with those countries at the same time. In addition, the possibility of overt intervention of any country in Nepal became less due to the Charter of the United Nations. In this way, the above five diplomatic relations established at the initial stage for Nepal carry great meaning and message diplomatically.

The message of such diplomatic relations with great powers was that Nepal would no longer be interested in the narrative built by Indian experts i.e. “special relations with India”. In human relations, this narrative is of course relevant but in the case of state-to-state relations, this narrative is only emotional and carries partiality in nature because human beings have hearts that can easily feel the special relations but states have no hearts, they have only the interest as per a lecture of R. N. Pandey delivered in 2015 at MIRD, TU (personal communication, 2015). This

notion of “special relations” was shifted into “equal friendship under the then Prime Minister of Nepal Tank Prasad Acharya on 30 January 1956 based on King Mahendra’s vision” (Rose, 1971, p. 209).

Another significant policy of King Mahendra was connecting Nepal with China via the Kodari highway and building the East-West highway in the Terai region of Nepal. At that time, to reach from one place in the Terai to another, it was necessary to cross the land of India due to the lack of highways in Nepal's Terai region. When there was a problem in Nepal-India relations and Nepal was not getting support from India, King Mahendra built the East-West Mahendra Highway in Terai to end the situation of Nepali citizens having to go through Indian territory to another place in Nepal. Indian authors claim that King Mahendra requested China to support the East-West highway to counterbalance India but the highway was constructed in the support of India, the UK, the USA, and Russia. It was a great success of King Mahendra that he was able to make the powerful countries of that time, including the superpower, involved in the project of national pride to transform Nepal's geopolitics. In addition, it can be analyzed that King Mahendra had an extraordinary ability to make the internal and external geopolitics of Nepal favorable to Nepal's socio-economic development. It has greatly contributed to addressing the complex geopolitics of Nepal to globalize Nepal’s international relations.

Removing the Indian military camps from the northern border is another crucial move of King Mahendra (Adhikari, 2021, p. 867). According to Rajesh Gautam, Indians were looking for an opportunity to establish their military presence in Nepal. It seems that KI Singh's rebellion of 2008 was also seen as an opportunity, but the plan did not succeed at that time. Then Indian soldiers entered Nepal to suppress Bhimdatta Pant's movement. After 2007, the government led by Matrika Prasad Koirala started many reforms. *Buch Commission* was formed for

administrative reforms. One of the reforms to be done in the administrative machinery by the *Buch Commission* was a suggestion regarding military reforms. In the name of that reform, Indian soldiers were allowed to enter Nepal in 2009 B.S. (Gautam, 2076 B.S., paras. 6-7). The main 'mission' of the Indian army, which came for military reform, was to stay on the northern border of Nepal. They stayed on the northern border and gained influence in other areas of Nepal. That situation remained until 2026 B.S.

Yadunath Khanal was the Foreign Secretary during the Prime Ministership of Kirtinidhi Bista. After they also discussed with King Mahendra, the interview of Prime Minister Bista was published in "Rising Nepal". After the publication of that interview, pressure was created on the Indians. Based on the political situation that developed from that, the Indian army gradually withdrew from their 17 military camps from the northern border but the military camp at Kalapani was not withdrawn. Some of the analysts claim that King Mahendra had verbally allowed to continue the Indian military camp in Kalapani but its written proof is not available. The then Prime Minister Kirtinidhi Bishta took a strong stand for Nepal's sovereignty on the backup of King Mahendra and thus 17 Indian military camps were removed from the Northern border of Nepal keeping the relationship with India intact, Nepal managed to remove its army. This work succeeded during the Panchayat years and should be considered as a milestone in Nepal's independent foreign policy of the Panchayat regime.

Moreover, the initiative of King Mahendra to promote Buddhism as Nepal's soft power was another crucial part of his foreign policy. The fourth congress of the World Buddhist Fellowship was held in Kathmandu on the occasion of the 2,500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Gautam Buddha (Rose, 1971, p. 214). Buddhist monks and scholars from thirty-two countries participated in the congress inaugurated by King Mahendra on 17 November 1956. Nepal prided itself on hosting

its first international congress and establishing cultural relations directly with many other countries rather than through India as an intermediary which India wanted.

The diplomatic ties with China in 1955 led to the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1960 and the 1961 Treaty on the Border (Simkhada, 2022, p. 11). Those events indicate that Nepal's search for a balance in the immediate neighbourhood was the priority of King Mahendra where Nepal had already signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950 with India. Similarly, Nepal's prestige was significantly reached at a high level due to the Membership of the United Nations Security Council twice in 1967-68 and 1988-89. This achievement was possible only due to the diplomacy towards the great powers of King Mahendra and his influential global personality. Likewise, active participation in the UN especially for Peace Keeping operations is another tool of the soft power of Nepal's global affairs not only in the Panchayat years but also in post-Panchayat political systems.

Another important pillar of the Panchayat years' foreign policy was adopting the Non-Aligned foreign policy. The Non-Aligned Movement started from Belgrade in 1961 and now it has 120 member countries, 17 observers, and 10 international organizations supporting the movement (Nepal Council of World Affairs, n. d., para.2). By challenging the realist world view that was dominating the world in whole Cold War era, with the policy of non-alignment representing the third world, Nepal played an important role in preserving its independence by not participating in any military camp of the world but standing in favor of a liberal world view with peaceful co-existence and cooperation.

SAARC in 1985 was another prominent initiative for regional cooperation to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia, to improve their quality of life, and to accelerate economic growth of whole region (SAARC Website, n.d., para. 2). At the regional level, Nepal played an

important role in the establishment of SAARC to play a role for the overall welfare and common progress of the people of the region and to reduce the influence of the powerful countries in the region and establish relations between all countries based on mutual harmony, trust and equality. Through SAARC, Nepal seems to have played an important role as the chair in expanding its foreign policy at the regional level during the Panchayat years.

The Zone of Peace proposal proposed by King Birendra for Nepal, where the main global conflict between the communist bloc and the capitalist world was going on, and which was in the midst of the conflict between communist China and democratic India in this region, is very famously known as ZOP in world affairs. At the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Algiers in September 1973, Birendra said that there was a need to formalize peace and cooperation between Nepal and its neighbours. He said, 'Nepal, which is located between the two most populous countries in the world, wants its borders to be included in the peace zone. Two years later, in his coronation address, in the presence of heads of state and government and high officials from 65 countries, King Birendra formally asked the international community and the United Nations to support his ZOP proposal (Duquesne, 2022, para. 9). But the proposal was failed despite having the support from 116 countries. The former USSR vetoed Nepal's ZOP in consultation with India however, the world community knows this idea as Nepal's foreign policy which was significant lobbying in the Panchayat years.

King Mahendra successfully involved the superpower and all the great powers of that time in the development of Nepal. It has proven that he took steps after carefully understanding the geo-economic dimension while dealing with all external powers. Succeeding in getting China's financial support for the Kodari highway and getting support from the USA, the UK, Russia, and India for the construction of the East-West highway, Mahendra's wise geo-economic policy at

that time was clear. At that time, the superpower and all great powers supported the development of Nepal's infrastructure development, which explains the global impact of Mahendra's period geo-economics. However, due to King Mahendra's failure to practice multi-party democracy internally, its impact on external affairs during the Panchayat period was also highly negatively affected, and the external trust towards the one-party Panchayat years weakened and multi-party democracy was restored in 1990.

King Mahendra massively raised nationalism in Nepal. Muni claims that King Mahendra's attempts to recognize himself with Nepal's nationalism became even more significant after his 'takeover' from the Nepali Congress government (1973, p. 43). With the belief that ex-soldiers protect the border and territorial integrity, his policy of resettling thousands of ex-soldiers' families as well as other citizens of hilly origin from the hilly areas in the border area with India was of extremely far-sighted decision whose importance is still proving in many of the border cases with India. One of the *Susta* residents Aadam Khan, vice chairman of the Save Susta Campaign (Susta Bachaun Abhiyan), told this scholar during a face-to-face interview conducted at Susta on 16 March 2023 that King Mahendra had resettled the family of Gopal Gurung (Ex-Army) including dozens of such families in this area, and later Gopal Gurung was Chair of the Save Susta Campaign. In this way, thousands of families were resettled in the southern border along the plain areas of Southern Nepal. Such kind of far-sighted and visionary political strategic action of King Mahendra had significantly changed the borderland geopolitics to safeguard Nepal's border and territorial integrity.

In the foreign policy of the Panchayat years and even in the foreign policy of Nepal after that, the most heard words are 'balance', 'equidistance', and 'equi-proximity'. In Nepal's foreign policy, these are the words that are heard the most, are discussed the most, and must be uttered by

ordinary citizens to the head of state. However, the theoretical explanation of these words cannot be found anywhere. At that time, there were no experts and academics who studied the subject of core international relations in depth, so there was no theoretical explanation of those words that were forcibly connected with Nepal's foreign policy. Especially in Nepal, when Tank Prasad Acharya was the Prime Minister, to change India's narrative of 'special relations', he said on 30 January 1956 that it was not a 'special relation' but a 'policy of equality' (equal relations) (Rose, 1971). This concept of equal relations is linked with the concept of Westphalian sovereignty i.e. the concept of sovereign equality (Acharya, 2019, p. 71). In the following periods, the words 'balance', 'equidistance', 'equi-proximity' etc. have entered Nepal's foreign policy discourse. The term 'balance' is linked with the realist theory of international relations. When this scholar asked the Indian experts during face-to-face interviews about 'strategic balance', they were surprised and asked this scholar, "Is Nepal able to follow the 'balance of power system approach' in her foreign policy?" They understood the term from a balance of power system perspective, a realist discourse in international relations. So, the discourse of 'balance' in Nepal's foreign policy seems to be used haphazardly without in-depth theoretical research and analysis.

Even if we forget the theoretical explanation, for example, the word 'balance' seems to have started with the meaning that the interests of external powers should always be balanced or taken care of. In other words, it seems that such words (balance, equidistance, equi-proximity) are used to mean that the interests of external forces should be fulfilled rather than focusing on the national interests of Nepal whereas, foreign policy argues that it always should strive to fulfill the national interest of its own country. Therefore, such words are used contrary to the original objective of Nepal's foreign policy, and as a result, Nepal's foreign policy is not enough able pragmatically to focus on the interests of its own country, but it is entangled in the 'complex

contested interest-relations' of major external powers. It happened because there were no scholars who studied core theories of international relations during the Panchayat years to perfectly analyze Nepal's foreign policy discourse from such theoretical discourse. Even the scholars who emerged after that did not seem to pay attention to this. This is seen as a weak part of Panchayat years' foreign policy however it prevented additional foreign policy risks and threats from such a foreign policy approach focused on balancing the interests of external powers. Likewise, one of the most important progresses in the Panchayat years was building institutions and making them vibrant for research and publications. Most crucial historical publications are done in Panchayat years like the history of the Gopal Dynasty, Mahishpal Dynasty, Kirat, Lichchhavi, Malla, and Shah dynasties. Moreover, competent and best minds were picked up for state affairs in those years than in other periods including in foreign affairs. Yadu Nath Khanal, Rishikesh Shah, etc were the product of the Panchayat years.

When summarizing the foreign policy during the Panchayat years, the state at that time had a strong belief that 'knowledge drives the foreign policy more effective than power'. The power has to look for outstanding talents, contribute to the birth of such talents, and properly appreciate and mobilize the potential of the talents. The Panchayat regime was aware of these things.

Mahendra's foreign policy (the foundation of Panchayat's foreign policy) integrated geopolitics and geo-economics. On the one hand, the removal of Indian military camps from the northern borders of Nepal and on the other hand, ensuring India's financial support for the construction of the East-West Mahendra Highway, prove that geopolitics and geo-economics have been integrated.

There was an attempt to theorize the foreign policy of modern Nepal in the Nepali local context rather than theorizing the global issues, however, such theorization does not seem to be

compatible with Western theories. The words like the policy of 'Balance', the policy of 'equidistance', and the policy of 'equi-proximity' seem to be trying to lead Nepal's foreign policy to the path of theorization. Even though it was not theoretically correct in the context of that time, that approach was pragmatically optionless because the use of those words was able to neutralize the aggressiveness of the great powers and their interests in Nepal.

On the one hand, the Panchayat regime reassured the external powers by the 'Policy of Balance', on the other hand, it attempted to focus on fulfilling the national interests first during the Panchayat period. In the name of balancing the interests of foreign powers, the Panchayat regime did not ignore the national interests of Nepal. However, there were many such problems in foreign policy after the Panchayat period. Rehabilitating families of ex-soldiers in the southern border area for border protection also makes it clear that the foreign policy during the Panchayat period was the "patriotic-based foreign policy".

Based on prioritizing knowledge of foreign policy and increasing its diplomatic power, rehabilitating citizens capable of protecting the border in border areas, minimizing foreign interference as much as possible, and removing Indian military camps from the northern border, the foreign policy of the Panchayat years seemed like a defensive realist, but it did not look like that at all. It looks like the foreign policy of that time was based on a liberal approach as it seems that the panchayat-years government tried to advance developmental activities by cooperating with great powers like India, China, Britain, Russia, and America, but that is not true that the foreign policy approach was liberal. The establishment of national industries to develop national capital, the ignorance of multinational companies to protect and promote national production, King Mahendra's approach to regulating the activities of diplomatic missions in Kathmandu through his different channels, and the development of mechanisms to deal with interference

from foreign powers also does not prove that the policy at that time was based on a liberal approach. Therefore, it was difficult to analyze the foreign policy of the Panchayat years from only one theoretical perspective. Therefore, it seems that King Mahendra, by greatly promoting nationalism, laid the foundation of a pragmatic (realpolitik) foreign policy based on game theory, and this style seems to have become the foreign policy of the whole Panchayat era.

#### **4.5 Democratic Period**

Nepal's foreign policy in the democratic period slowly decayed. People getting democratic rights and electing their own government and their representatives was a great achievement of the democratic period, but Nepal lost its full strength to conduct foreign policy independently and effectively during this period, unlike the Panchayat years. Khanal (1996) quoted by Acharya (2019, pp. 87-8) writes that the reassertion of commitment to values of freedom, justice, human rights, and above all, human dignity, has brought Nepal into line with the growing number of democratic countries. One of the positive aspects of Nepal's international affairs in the democratic period was the democratization of Nepal's foreign policy and the diplomacy restricted to the officials loyal to the royal palace before, was accessible to common intellectual people as well. Moreover, due to the democratic system, openness, and transparency, foreign policy became more transparent whereas there was a secretive one during the Panchayat years.

Although there is openness and freedom in the democratic political system, the foreign policy of Nepal was not able to be really broad, inclusive, and reflect the sentiments of the people. In the democratic period, political parties were unable to make foreign policy mature and pragmatic. It lacked seriousness in strategic vision and behavior and reflection of perfect national aspirations.

In the period when Nepal was conducting its foreign policy during the Panchayat years, the world was divided into a complex global geopolitical competition between socialist realism and capitalist realism. Both camps were expanding their military power massively in order to dominate the world and maintain their monopoly fully. China, our northern neighbor of Nepal, aligned with the camp of capitalist realism (i.e. the USA) despite having ideological differences with it. In contrast, India, the neighbor to the south, forgot the ideological dissimilarity with the former USSR and became a supporter of socialist realism. The ideological conflict of the Cold War period did not prevent the countries from aligning with the opposite blocs. Therefore, it proves that every politics (global, regional, or national) is motivated and driven by individual and national interests rather than ideological destiny. The ideological debate and promotion in the public is only the tool to attract common people who are really unknown about realpolitik. Even at the regional level, Nepal had to conduct its foreign policy in the midst of the rivalry between communist China and democratic India. Therefore, even in such a difficult geopolitical situation, Nepal successfully had conducted its independent foreign policy.

Comparatively, the geopolitics of the world was easier during the democratic period than during the Panchayat years. There was no such country after 1990 that might vetoed Nepal's international relations like the former Soviet Union thwarted King Birendra's proposal for a Zone of Peace and veto power against Nepal when it initially sought to become a member of the United Nations. On the other hand, Nepal had good relations with the USA in the post-1990 period as well. Therefore, the global geopolitics after 1990 was much more favorable to conducting the foreign policy of Nepal than the geopolitics of the world in the Panchayat years. If leaders were able to understand international relations well and set national interests as the

core priority, the foreign policy of the democratic period would have been more effective and successful than the foreign policy of the Panchayat years. However, that could not happen.

After 1990, when the geopolitics of the world changed, its impact was also experienced in Asia. US geopolitical competition with the former USSR was gradually being prepared as a competition with China. Since 1978, after China adopted the policy of reform and opening up, it made great progress in economic growth. On the other hand, the economy of the USA, which fought a long Cold War and several hot wars, gradually declined. According to the website of Trading Economics, in the 1950s and 60s, the average growth rate of the USA was above four percent. In the 1970s and 80s, the growth rate decreased to around three percent. And, till 2000, the growth rate of the USA was even below two percent (See the link in the reference list). On the other hand, China's average economic growth from 1978 (since the period of her reform and opening-up policy) to 2000 was 9.76 percent (Website of Macrotrends). With this situation, the United States clearly understood that the contradictions of the world geopolitics of the Cold War had changed and that China was gradually emerging in the place of the former USSR. Thus, although China is slowly emerging in the place of the former USSR, the competition of the USA with China had not reached the level of geopolitical competition with the former USSR after 1990. Therefore, to make Nepal's foreign policy more effective, geopolitics after 1990 did not become a challenge for Nepal.

Although the world's geopolitics is not challenging, the neighborhood geopolitics after 1990 was as complicated as before, as the competition was more intensive than the cooperation between Nepal's neighboring countries. After 1990, when the world entered into neo-liberalism and globalization, it also affected India and India also moved towards neo-liberal policies. India's Cold War relations changed and it gradually became closer to the USA, while China gradually

emerged as the US rival. This situation added some challenges to Nepal in conducting its foreign policy.

The impact of the world entering the era of neo-liberalism and globalization has not only affected India but also Nepal. After the restoration of democracy in Nepal, the parties that conducted the people's movement with the direct/indirect support of India came to power. The influence of the relations with India was not only on the Nepali political parties but also on the Nepali government and its foreign policy. Thus, Nepal also adopted a neo-liberal foreign policy by falling into the global political wave without conducting intensive research. After adopting the neoliberal policy, Nepal became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) whereas Nepal had already become a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank in 1961. After turning towards neo-liberal policy, the global and regional financial institutions including multinational companies entered Nepal and they influenced the Nepal government to adopt their values to receive financial support from them. Dahal claims that the political and economic aspects of the world and the global and regional banking groups (including the World Bank, IMF, and ADB) also failed to take effective measures to ensure the all-round economic growth and development of Nepal (2018, p. 103). Nepal accepted all liberal values and provisions and received foreign aid. Unfortunately, that aid could not be properly used for strengthening capability in the domain of foreign affairs of Nepal. The democratic period became like receiving loans, and aid and misuse it by the ruling class and the political elite (Dahal, 2018, p. 103).

Dahal further explains:

Under the era of globalization, the international economic reforms promoted by the World Bank, which included privatization and liberalization, and the waves of democracy

spread by the liberal world and Western values loaded human rights have also practically added limitations among the Nepali leaders, who often thought that how to serve the foreigners rather than serving sovereign Nepali people...Under the massive engagement and involvement of global actors in this globalized world, the external actors//factors were also playing a significant role for destabilizing Nepali society. These external factors also played negative roles in preventing the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in Nepal (2018, pp. 103-104).

So, because of the critical roles of external actors and their influence, Nepal faced massive pressure not only because of the vested interests of international actors but also because of the lack of seriousness and dedication of Nepali leadership towards promoting Nepali national interests in the world arena.

The topmost foreign policy departure of the democratic period is privatization, deregulation, and free trade under neoliberal policy. With the policy of privatization, all the state-owned industries were privatized. The policy of deregulation allowed private industries to earn as much profit as possible, while the policy of free trade opened the way for foreign products to capture the domestic market. This neoliberal policy intervention in Nepal was introduced based on the Privatization Act, of 1994. The Act was promulgated to conduct the privatization program rapidly with the help of legal structure (K.C., 2008, p. 64). The Act comprised the procedural activities of the organization set up, the process of privatization, the criterion for the bid evaluation, and provision to make transactions more transparent, etc. Similarly, the Nepal Law Commission mentions:

... to increase the productivity via enhancement of efficiency of the governmental companies i.e. state-owned enterprises of Nepal, thereby, mitigating the burden of financial

administration to the Nepal Government, and to usher in wholistic economic and financial development of the country by ensuring the participation of the private sectors in the operation of those enterprises, it is necessary in the national interests to privatize state-owned enterprises and to make arrangements therefor. Now, therefore, be it enacted by the Parliament in the twenty-second year of the reign of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev (Website of Nepal Law Commission).

In this way, the Nepal government in the democratic period started to formulate and implement the neoliberal policy in Nepal. To effectively and efficiently implement this Act, a Privatization Committee headed by the then Minister for Finance Ram Sharan Mahat was formed. Therefore, in Nepal, many academics and scholars say that Ram Sharan Mahat had introduced neoliberal policy in Nepal but the fact is not like that. This policy was the result of the global wave of neoliberal policy and its influence on the Nepal government. Ram Sharan Mahat of course advocated for introducing neoliberal policy but the decision was made by the government of Nepal.

Before the implementation of the Privatization Bill, of 1994, the Council of Ministers formed a High-Level Privatization Commission (HLPC). The then finance minister was the chair of the committee. Issuing guidelines and recommending privatization programs to the Cabinet was given to the committee as the major responsibilities. The composition of the committee was as below criterion:

Chair: Minister for Finance or State Minister for Finance

Member: Chairman of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives

Member: Two members of parliament nominated by the government

Member: Member of the National Planning Commission

Member: Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Secretary, Ministry of Labor

Secretary, Ministry of Law, justice and parliamentary affairs

Member: President of Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industries

Member Secretary: Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Finance (Corporation Co-ordination Division)  
(Website of Nepal Law Commission).

Thus, in the democratic period, foreign policy issues became more open and accessible for the people, and an open institutional setup was built.

As Dahal writes, a number of international financial institutions and global organizations supported the program of privatization in Nepal. According to a report of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in December 1996, USAID was the lead donor in promoting privatization in Nepal (USAID Nepal, 1996, p. 2). But, after forming the communist government in Nepal and after Manmohan Adhikari became Prime Minister of Nepal, the privatization process was very slow and USAID stopped major support for the privatization program. Not only based on the ideological base but also based on this fact, it is clear that the Communist government was reluctant towards neoliberal policy in Nepal and the Congress government is solely responsible for this policy intervention in Nepal though the government of Nepal had incorporated a plan to start program for privatization in the Seventh Plan (1985-90). However, this plan was not implemented till 1991.

Moreover, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) was another donor to support directly Nepal's privatization program. Similarly, UNDP provided assistance for the program of privatization under the World Bank (USAID Nepal, 1996, p. 4). Other international donors had also supported and promoted the program of privatization in Nepal like Danida, The World

Bank, Germany/KfW, The Asian Development Bank, Finns and Australian with Forestry, The Canadian Government, etc. Thus, the neoliberal policy was adopted not based on Nepal's need and intensive research by the Nepal's government including Cost/Benefit analysis but it was the effect of the wave of the global trend of the neoliberal campaign of the West. In this way, Nepal's geoeconomics started its shift in the support of global geoeconomic players in Nepal and it heavily affected Nepal's overall foreign policy as well as political system and situation.

Many scholars have researched and concluded that neoliberal policies will not boost the economy of developing countries, but on the contrary, the national economy will weaken. KC concludes that when evaluating private and public enterprises in Nepal, it was found that public enterprises are capital intensive, efficient in capacity utilization, better in profit, and have higher financial returns than private enterprises (n. d., p. 15). KC has conducted a fifteen-page long research and analyzed on various indicators of public and private enterprises and his research shows that public enterprises were more efficient than private enterprises. He also argues that Privatization may not be profitable unless there is competition in the market. He argues that An ideal step in this direction would be to identify problems related to policy and implementation processes regarding the impact of privatization in developing countries and to deal with appropriate measures along with environmental aspects (KC, n. d., p. 33). Therefore, it is clear that without the growth of domestic production, until people have the financial capacity to invest in private businesses, as long as only certain business houses have control over the market and the foreign products through those domestic business houses capture the domestic market, and without extensive research, privatization will not be in the interest of developing countries.

Another thing is that unless the multinational companies occupying the domestic market through free trade and the quota system on foreign products are provisioned, the domestic

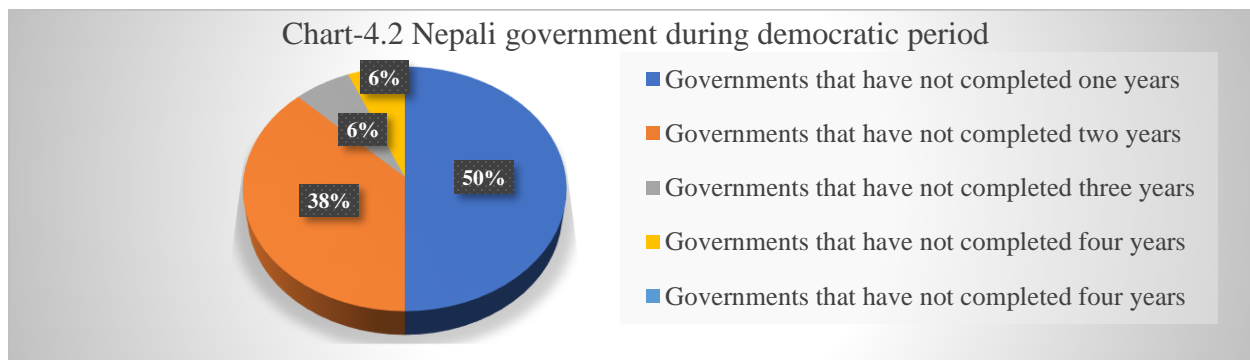
products cannot compete with them. Similarly, if there is no subsidy system from the government for the increase of domestic production, the neo-liberal policy cannot safeguard the economy of the developing countries. Because excessive domestic capital is spent on buying and consuming foreign products, and thus the national economy will weaken when domestic capital flees.

Analyzing the geopolitical sphere, the foreign policy of Nepal during the democratic period also remained very weak. Because geopolitics and geo-economics are always connected and affect each other. After the restoration of democracy in the 1990s, no government of Nepal could sustain for a full period. There are both internal and external reasons behind this. Among the many internal reasons, one of the main reasons is that Nepali leaders maintain undiplomatic relations with foreign powers for their political and personal benefits. One of the major external causes is that external players always try to fulfill their vested interests through the political leaders and the government of Nepal. When the conflict between external support and their interests arises, they interfere on Nepali internal politics and then the government changes.

Bhatta highlights that ... the former king Gyanendra Shah said that Nepali political leadership is *parochiality* (mobilized) from outside. Similarly, one of the former Prime Ministers also claimed that the center point of Nepali politics lies somewhere else, and 'we Nepali - leaders' have become just *gotis* (pawns) (2013, p. 170). These both examples are also supported by another statement of former Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli. Without taking the name of India, Oli expressed that neighboring countries were focusing on unnecessary interest in the formation of the Nepali government and urged them not to interfere in Nepal's internal affairs (Giri, 2023, para. 2). Similarly, Hari Har Jnawali has written a research article entitled 'Indian intervention in the ethnic movement of Nepal: Did Madheshi lose or gain'? He argues that the

mainstream political parties viewed Indian interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state as unwelcomed interference and responded to this pressure by promulgating the constitution excluding the demand for the rights of self-determination of Madheshi political parties (Jnawali, 2023, p. 235).

In the democratic period, Nepali scholars, leaders, and academics have written more about India's intervention in Nepal's domestic affairs. Publications about China's and US direct intervention in Nepal's domestic affairs by Nepali academics seem less. However, many Indian authors have written about China's engagement in Nepal. Indian experts SD Muni and N. R. Nayak told this scholar during the face-to-face interview that China has come aggressively to Nepal to weaken India's sphere of influence in the Himalayan state. But, in the period of the democratic system in Nepal after 1990, neither China's nor the US's intervention was at the level of India's direct intervention in Nepal. In that period, China's policy was non-interference in other countries' internal affairs whereas the USA used to view Nepal through India's lens. So, like in the 1950s, the post-1990 foreign policy of Nepal was also heavily affected by India's direct involvement even at the level of micro-management. Because of such micro-management of India and Nepali leaders' undiplomatic relations with India's counterpart, Nepal's foreign policy could not become intensive towards defending and expanding Nepal's national interests during that period due to political instability encountered as below chart:



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There are 16 governments formed from 1990 to 2008 i.e., the democratic period (See Annex-E for detailed table). The above chart shows that unfortunately, 50 percent of Nepali governments did not complete even one year during that period. The number of such governments is Eight. Similarly, only 38 percent (Six) governments completed their one-year period but could not complete two years period. There is only one (Six percent) government which completed two years out of 16 governments formed. Likewise, only one government completed three years i.e. Six in percentage. The number of governments which completed four and five (full tenure) years is zero. So, the above data (Chart) clearly proves that the political instability during democratic period was massively high.

In general, at least the first year of the new government is spent on the study of its foreign stakeholder countries, the interests and priorities of the major powers, their working style and diplomatic tools/nature, and the relationship versus competition between and among major powers in Nepal. Without thorough study and analysis of these things, the new government cannot carry forward its clear foreign policy and implement it effectively. Either the political parties should have done in-depth research about foreign relations and policies as a shadow government when they were out of government, otherwise, any new government would need almost one year to start new dimensions in foreign policy properly, while eight out of sixteen governments of Nepal could not complete this basic period. Based on this analysis, it can be said that the foreign policy of that period had lost its pace like it had no destination.

Although the foreign policy at that time was not effective, it is important to know how the eight major incidents affected the foreign policy of Nepal during that period. Those eight incidents are:

- a. Nepal's entry into neo-liberal foreign policy under Nepali Congress

- b. Rise and mysterious demise of Madan Kumar Bhandari
- c. Manmohan government of UML for nine months
- d. Mahakali Treaty
- e. Maoist Insurgency
- f. Palace massacre that destroyed the dynasty of former King Birendra
- g. The direct rule of the then King Gyanendra
- h. 12-point agreement between the Maoists and the then-seven political parties

Nepal's entry into neo-liberal foreign policy had already been discussed. Rest six incidents are briefly analyzed below.

Madan Bhandari contributed significantly to the democratization of the communist movement in Nepal. Pokharel writes that After the promulgation of the Constitution of 2047 B.S., Madan Bhandari was established as the most popular leader among the Nepali people in less than four years (2079 B.S., para. 1). Two decades ago, in an online survey conducted by the BBC Nepali Service, he was chosen by the most people as the leader who had the most impact on Nepali society in the last hundred years (Pokharel, 2079 B.S., para. 2). This was because he had proved himself as a visionary and most influential ideological political leader of the Communist Party in Nepal by passing the People's Multi-Party Democracy (PMPD) in the Fifth National Congress of the CPN (UML) and winning the election against the then Nepali Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in 2047 B.S. How far-sighted he was that the 27 points of disagreement he presented in the 2047(B.S.) constitution were completed after the 2062/63 people's movement.

The PMPD program believes in fair democratic election competition to get ratified by the people for the country's development and prosperity. PMPD, which considers the Communist

Party's cordial relations with the people to be the strongest force to compete with the capitalist political powers within the country, adopts the method of defeating the capitalist powers and coming to power through the process of democratic elections, and from there, doing radical changes in favor of the people and the country. PMPD strongly believes that when the Communist Party comes to power and carries out some initial phase significant works for the prosperity of the country and the people, then it is possible to secure a two-thirds majority from the people in the coming elections and then can change the upper structure of the state and complete the task of radical change in the country. Madan Bhandari's ideology has had a great impact on the foreign policy of the communist parties that occupy the majority of Nepal's population, and its impact has also affected the foreign policy of Nepal during the democratic period, so it is necessary to mention a little about his PMPD here.

The rise of Madan Bhandari in Nepali politics seems to have had a great impact on the foreign policy of the Communist camp of Nepal. Especially, the foreign relations of Nepali communists, based on classical Marxist philosophy, changed to a neo-Marxist worldview according to Bhandari's opinion. Madan Bhandari was also one of the very few ideological leaders in the world who propounded and promoted neo-Marxism in this region. Due to the PMPD, which was later claimed as a communist principle, a liberal socialist trend was born, challenging the capitalist neo-liberal trend in the foreign policy of the democratic period. Especially during that period, Nepal's foreign policy mainly clashed between these two main trends. However, due to political instability, none of the trends could prove themselves strong during that period.

If Madan Bhandari had not propounded the PMPD, the communist camp representing the majority of Nepal's population would probably still be entangled in the socialist trend based on

neo-realism and the foreign policy of the communists would also remain in the classical Marxist socialism. In other words, the communist camp of Nepal would still be moving to change the upper structure through armed revolution and war. After 10 years of war, the Maoists finally came to the point of Nepali society as analyzed by the PMPD and by adopting the 14 characteristics of the PMPD, the Maoists also came to the foreign policy directed by liberal socialism. Madan Bhandari's death in a mysterious way stopped the debates of foreign policy in the political arena, which would identify the Nepal of the 21st century by studying Nepal's politics more deeply.

The CPN (UML) formed a minority government in the general election of 2051 B.S. based on the Bhandari's PMPD. Within two years of the party's ratification of PMPD from its fifth National Congress in 2049 B.S., the PMPD seems empirically proven in Nepali politics by forming the government from the democratic election. The minority government of CPN (UML) formed under the Premiership of Manmohan Adhikari has been claimed by UML as the golden time of the democratic period. Based on this, CPN (UML) promoted PMPD as the principle of the Nepali Communist Movement.

Manmohan Adhikari's government, which laid the foundation for social security and local development, was not only Nepal's but also the first communist government in South Asia and one of the rarely elected governments in the world at that time (Nepalpress, 2021, para. 8; Thapa, 2005, p. 149). The Manmohan government spread the message to the world community that 'the communist parties also can be reached to the government through peaceful movement and democratic elections and significant works are possible to do in the public interest, welfare, and national interest'. Since foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, the foreign policy of the Manmohan government was also focused on maintaining independence, and freedom, and

changing unequal Nepal's relations with India despite having a very short period of that government. Kaushik writes:

Nepal-India relations changed when Nepal's then PM Manmohan Adhikari visited India in 1994 and raised serious issues about the security clause and labeled it as an Indian 'security umbrella' that was an outdated approach given the considerations of globalization, changing geopolitics and the geo-economic dynamics ... (2021, para. 5).

Manamohan Adhikari was the first Prime Minister of Nepal after Kriti Nidhi Bista to raise the issue of the unequal 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship for its amendment based on emerging geopolitical and geoeconomic circumstances which might create a win-win situation (Kaushiki, 2021, paras. 3-5).

Thus, Manmohan Adhikari, not only analyzed the geopolitics and geo-economics of the world but also tried to adopt sovereign and independent foreign policy as an important dimension of Nepal's foreign policy by studying the neighborhood relations after the restoration of democracy. Theoretically, his policy seems to be closer to a liberal-socialist approach. Therefore, even though the period of his government is short, the study of his government's foreign policy cannot be escaped due to its importance in Nepali history.

The fourth factor that impacted Nepal's foreign policy during the democratic period is the Mahakali Treaty. After the dissolution of the Manmohan Adhikari-led government in nine months, a three-party coalition government was formed under the premiership of Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba. During the time of that government, 'the Integrated Development of the Mahakali Barrage Including Sarada Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage, and Pancheshwar Project' was signed between Nepal and India. This treaty has a serious meaning in Nepal's international relations and foreign policy. In this treaty, the Mahakali River is said to be the border river of the

'major stretches' without mentioning the Nepal-India border river in all the region (Bhandari, 2073 B.S., p. 18; See the draft of that treaty). The Mahakali River was not declared as the Nepal-India border river of the entire region due to which the border problem between Nepal and India remained problematic and hardly solved. In addition to this, it is not clear the major stretches in the Treaty which is bordered by the Mahakali River. Such kind of ambiguous provisions could not contribute to making Nepal-India relations harmonious and cordial.

Another serious issue of the Mahakali Treaty is that the Treaty is against the spirit of the Sugauli Treaty of 1816. According to Article 5 of the Sugauli Treaty, the territory west of the Kali (Mahakali) River cannot be claimed by the Nepali King. This means, according to the Sugauli Treaty, the Mahakali (Kali) River belongs to Nepal. In that treaty, the Mahakali River is not mentioned to be a common river of both countries. It has given a clear message that the Mahakali River totally belongs to Nepal based on the provision that the territory west of the Kali River cannot be claimed by Nepal. It means not only Nepal easily can claim, but also the Mahakali River is under the sovereignty of Nepal. However, according to the Mahakali Treaty, India is using 14,000 cusecs of Mahakali water and Nepal is using only 460 cusecs of water (Bhandari, 2073 B.S., p. 18). Article 3 of the treaty stipulates that the water used for consumptive consumption will be deducted and the remaining water will be equally shared. This provision violates the sovereignty of Nepal on the Mahakali River.

If the Sugauli Treaty of 1816 is considered to be canceled by Article 8 of the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the 1950 Treaty is silent on the border between Nepal and India. In this situation, legally, the territory of Nepal will expand to Greater Nepal. But a geopolitically and geo-economically weak country cannot practically make such a claim with great power. Therefore, the Mahakali Treaty has not only questioned Nepal's sovereignty over the Mahakali

River, but it has weakened Nepal's entire foreign policy in the long run. All the parties of that time who agreed to sign that treaty were equally responsible for weakening the foreign policy of the democratic period. In this way, after Manamohan's government in Nepal, Nepal's foreign policy was volatile and lost its right path.

The fifth factor that affected Nepal's foreign policy was 10 years of Maoist Insurgency. In the signature of Baburam Bhattarai, United People's Front, Nepal submitted 40 points demand letter to the government of Nepal on 4 February 1996 (Thapa, 2003, p. 391; Verma & Navlakha, 2007, p. 1839) and started Armed Conflict on 13 February 1996. The foreign policy of Nepal's democratic period weakened since the Mahakali Treaty focused on controlling the Maoist war rather than protecting and expanding national interests. In general, rather than analyzing the Maoist war in detail, it is only intended to target how the country was forced to get caught up in internal conflict rather than establishing itself in the world community during the 10-year war.

Looking at the economic growth of Nepal from 1997 to 2006, the growth rate of six out of ten fiscal years was negative. This caused a serious shock to the country's economy. The average negative growth rate of those six years was -1.61 percent (Macrotrends website). According to an ADB's report of 2005, the Maoist war increasingly affected Nepal's economic performance since 2001 (Ra & Singh, 2005, p. 1). The economic strength was weakened through various channels. Almost seventeen thousand lives were lost and physical infrastructures worth at least \$250 million have been destroyed by the war. This data is from 2003. But the infrastructural damages increased between 2003 to 2006. More than 400,000 rural families were internally displaced and many Nepali citizens left the country during that period is numerous. The brain drain trend during that period was high. Likewise, private investment was significantly decreased and foreign investors were demotivated.

Due to such a situation, the country's economy during the Maoist insurgency was significantly affected and hence the state's geoeconomics was weakened. Not only the geoeconomics, but the geopolitical situation became more dangerous and its serious impact was on the country's overall developmental and foreign policy. Without the economic aspect, foreign policy cannot be studied precisely considering only the geopolitical issues. Therefore, Nepal's foreign policy was not strong at that time as the economic situation was very fragile. Because, for the foreign policy to be strong, the institutions related to foreign affairs should be strong, intensive research should be conducted abundantly, Nepal should have an impact on the world through its works worth being proud of, there should be an investment-friendly environment, and country should gain the trust of the world, and the world community should agree on issues related to Nepal's interests, the production of the country should be high and the system of exporting it to the foreign market should be developed. None of these things were there during the Maoist insurgency. The whole state mechanism was concentrated on the war. Therefore, the foreign policy of that time seems ineffective.

Thus, throughout the Maoist insurgency, Nepal was forced to use foreign relations to suppress the insurgency rather than economic development, on the one hand, and the other hand, the Maoists also mobilized the international community to make their war successful. Due to such diverged strategies of the state and the Maoists, Nepal was not able to catch up with the track of foreign policy during that period.

The foreign policy of that time does not look like neo-realism, nor does it look like neo-liberal. The government tried to strengthen and maximize its military power by taking hand-to-arms support from various countries to counter the Maoist insurgency, which seemed close to the neo-realist worldview. However, since this military power is not intended to be used in external

affairs, it cannot be considered a neo-realist foreign policy. On the other hand, the neo-liberal policy was not able to function effectively at that time. Due to the war, multinational companies could not stay in Nepal and produce their products. Due to free trade, there is no restriction on the entry of foreign products into Nepal, but other countries could not be convinced by Nepal's environment for free trade. Therefore, free trade could not gain momentum. The private sector was also in a state of disarray as the private companies were very depressed and frustrated. Therefore, it was not possible to connect that situation with neo-liberalism. It is seen that the countries that believe in the identity, beliefs, and values of Nepal have supported the Nepal government, but the facts have also come out that they have supported the rebel side, provided shelter for them, and provided training (Sharma, 2070 B.S.). Therefore, the foreign policy of this situation cannot be connected with constructivism as well. Therefore, the foreign policy at that time seemed to be free from the theories of international relations. It is the 'Fault line in Nepali foreign policy'.

The other two events that caused a complete shift in the foreign policy of the democratic period were the palace massacre, and the destruction of the Descendants of King Birendra, and the direct rule of King Gyanendra. This event was the starting point for Nepal to enter the federal republic system. After the assassination of King Birendra, his brother Gyanendra became the king. People's trust in him was not impressive. The activities of his son Crown Prince Paras further weakened the faith of the Nepali people towards the monarchy led by King Gyanendra.

According to Khadga KC, King Birendra was the person who first used the term 'Gun-Boat Diplomacy' in the arena of international relations (personal communication, 2019). he said this during his lecture in PhD class). Also, his (King Birendra's) proposal that Nepal should be declared a Zone of Peace is still famous in the world as ZoP. His assassination ended a chapter in

Nepal's foreign relations and policy of the democratic period. After Gyanendra became the king, it became easy for the Maoists to turn the people against the monarchy. Other political parties of that time were also forced to take a stand against the monarchy after Gyanendra's move on *Magh 19*. In this situation, the political situation of Nepal produced a conducive environment in which Maoists and the seven political parties came together internally, while externally, with the help of India (Verma & Navlakha, 2007, p. 1839), through the 12-point agreement, both forces were actively opposed to the monarchy and in favor of the republican Nepal. Therefore, this event should also be considered as a major tool to influence the foreign policy of Nepal's democratic period. Rather, the Foreign Policy at that time can be analyzed with a little more constructivism. Because, the faithful commitment to democracy seems to have brought Maoists, seven political parties, and foreign powers together.

The twelve-point agreement was another pertinent issue which had implicated Nepal's foreign policy during the democratic period. The twelve-point agreement seems to be the foundation for ending the foreign policy of the democratic period and starting a new phase of foreign policy under the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. In the below part, the issue of Nepal's foreign policy after the establishment of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal has been briefly analyzed. Thus, analyzing the foreign policy of the democratic period as a whole, it is found that whatever was written in the constitution failed to promote and expand the national interest significantly during that period.

#### **4.6 Federal Democratic Republican Years**

This stage is the last period out of six phases of Nepal's foreign policy based on the recorded history of Nepal. After Nepal became the Federal Democratic Republic, the new political system gradually eroded the history of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who laid the foundations of modern

Nepal's foreign policy. The decision to cancel the National Unification Day in the Republic can ultimately be interpreted as a grave insult to the contribution of the founder of modern Nepal. Bhatta writes that ... post-2006 governments did not continue national symbols, national dress code, and National Unification Day. They also failed to win people's trust because 10 years of Maoist insurgency remained unresolved and also generated more losers after the Maoist Insurgency (2013, p. 170).

The change in Nepal's foreign policy after the declaration of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is the most important in Nepal's foreign policy in the past four stages (Shah Era, Rana Times, Panchayat Years, and Democratic Periods) of Nepal's foreign policy. In the previous stages of foreign policies, the legacy of King Prithvi Narayan Shah was preserved, but in this last phase of Nepal's foreign policy, a series of attempts were made to destroy his legacy and drag his personality into the controversy. Especially after 2006, the systematic attack on the contribution of King Prithvi Narayan Shah was started through a series of articles and political debates. Prakash Wasti has written in his book *"Hamro Kaanuni Itihasko Naalibeli (from the Kirant period to 2078)"* that Prithvi Narayan Shah was the king who expanded his kingdom (Wasti, 2079 B.S., para. 12; Shrestha, 2017, para. 4). Dozens of other Nepali authors have blamed Prithvi Narayan Shah as an expansionist king. Especially, such things grew rapidly in the period of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. These kinds of activities are not only attacks on Prithvi Narayan Shah as a person, but also attacks on the foreign policy that he started in modern Nepal by learning from ancient Nepal. Therefore, this latest period of Nepal's foreign policy seems to be trying to come out of the 250-year-old legacy.

There was no situation in which the country could be completely freed from Prithvi Narayan Shah's foreign policy. Because, the post-democratic period's external players changed in the new

geopolitics of Nepal, but they became like successors of the old external players and have been repeating the same trend. In such a situation, it was not easy to significantly change the foreign policy of Prithvi Narayan Shah despite the blow to the legacy of his foreign policy. That is why the previous provisions related to foreign policy were mentioned in the constitution of the Republic of Nepal. Thus, attacking Prithvi Narayan Shah and ignoring the foreign policy of modern Nepal was the first development of foreign policy in this period.

There are so many incidents that have contributed to shaping and reshaping Nepal's foreign policy discourse during the Federal Democratic of Republic Nepal however here are briefly analyzed some major incidents below which have significantly implicated Nepal's foreign policy during this period:

- a) Discourse-Attack on Prithvi Narayan Shah
- b) *Krambhang* Tendency
- c) International Role and Intervention
- d) The USA's New Position
- e) Constitutional Promulgation and Economic Blockade
- f) Attempt for Geopolitical Shift: A New Phase of Diversification
- g) Emergence of Trilateral Geopolitics

After the first election of the Constituent Assembly, the CPN (Maoist) became the largest party in Nepal. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the Chairman of that party, who used to use the word "*Krambhang*" (Attitude to discontinue the regularity and start with surprised actions) frequently since before the start of the Maoist war, was appointed as the first elected Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (Dahal, 2008, p. 1). After coming to the government through the election, the Chairman of CPN (Maoist) changed the socialist-realism approach to

the Socialist-liberal approach in behavior which was very close to Madan Bhandari's approach to foreign policy. It was a big shift in Nepali politics because the CPN (Maoist) was a major force that had started the war by adopting communist radical ideology.

This fact makes it clear that the geopolitics of Nepal is not suitable for the political parties here to come to power through wars and armed conflicts. Such kinds of wars and armed conflicts were used by them only to establish their parties in Nepali society. This is proven by the compromise-oriented politics of the Nepali Congress which sought to demolish the Rana regime through armed conflict, the then CPN (Marxist Leninist) which sought to create a people's revolution in Nepal through the Jhapa Rebellion, and the CPN (Maoist) that tried to establish communist autocratic regime through war.

After Dahal's government was formed, the strong communist force believing in socialist realism in the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal came to an end, and this ideology became weak in the politics of Nepal. It is a very crucial incident to analyze Nepal's foreign policy. It also had an impact on foreign policy. The USA, which had declared the CPN (Maoist) as a terrorist force throughout the war, removed this party from that list of groups and became ready to cooperate with the Dahal government for the peace and development of Nepal, while India also took credit for bringing Nepal's Maoists to the democratic line where India performed double standard throughout the war (Mishra, 2004, pp. 645-646).

In Dahal's own words, another *Krambhang* was his first foreign visit to China after becoming the Prime Minister in 2008. Even though there was no *Krambhang* at all, especially when visiting neighboring countries, he popularized this issue in that way. It seems that he unnecessarily propagandized the issue to become more popular and gain the people's sentiments. But this incident weakened Nepal's diplomacy rather than strengthened and eventually it became

one of the causes of his departure from Prime Minister. This can be understood as his 'Politicization of Diplomacy'. However, foreign policy based on the approach of 'Diplomatisation of Politics' can safeguard the national interest through sound foreign policy. After that incident, India realized that Nepal was out of its sphere of influence and began to be suspicious of the Nepali government. The relations of Nepal with India have their issues and serious agendas, but because the then Prime Minister of Nepal raised unnecessary issues and 'politicized the diplomacy', the relations with India deteriorated. In this way, the first elected government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal failed to start sound foreign policy due to the lack of knowledge and skill of the government.

The third factor affecting Nepal's foreign policy at this stage is 'International Roles and Intervention'. Dahal writes that Nepal in post-April 2006 faced a series of external pressures in its relations with the international community (2018, p. 110). Role of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) for the peace process, The Tibet factor (The Chinese were seriously concerned about the free Tibet movement and external support to them in Nepal), engagement of the European Union for ethnic issues at Terai in Nepal, pertinent issues of the diplomatic code of conduct in the post-earthquake rescue period in 2015, India's role in domestic politics are some major factors of international roles and intervention.

On the one hand, the Tibetan refugees demonstrated in Kathmandu on the occasion of the birthday of Dalai Lama and demanded a Free Tibet especially after 2008, and on the other hand China pressurized Nepal to push back Tibetans or to crackdown on the political activities in Nepal (Human Rights Watch, 2014, para. 18). In the meantime, the western countries pressurized Nepal to protect the human rights of Tibetan refugees. So, Nepal frequently encountered such

political and diplomatic pressure from international actors and hence foreign policy came under huge pressure.

Similarly, UNMIN's role was also in controversy in Nepal. Nepal is not a failed state, but inviting the role of UNMIN in Nepal indicates that we became fail in resolving Nepal's internal affairs on our own (Acharya, n.d., p. 13). Eventually, after four years of its office establishment and starting its role in the peace process, the UN Security Council voted to close UNMIN's office in Nepal after Nepal's opposing political groups...(United Nations, 2010, para. 1). On the one hand, inviting UNMIN for Nepal's peace process conveyed the message that Nepal was not capable of solving internal problems, on the other hand, UNMIN's early departure from Nepal without completing the peace process is understood as a failure of UNMIN or its unnecessary interest in Nepal's internal affairs. Likewise, in the post-earthquake period, some misunderstandings about the diplomatic code of conduct were experienced by the Nepal government and the international community (Dahal, 2018, p. 111). All the situations including India's active role in the post-democratic period are a few major examples of external intervention in Nepal's foreign policy due to which Nepal's foreign policy in the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal could not be independent.

After the establishment of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the changed position of the USA in Nepal affairs also influenced the foreign policy of Nepal during this period. Despite being India a major actor in post-democratic Nepali geopolitics as well, the USA changed its perspective to look at Nepal through India's eyes. As various experts of Nepal and India said during face-to-face interviews, after the establishment of the Federal Democratic Republic in Nepal, the role of the third country (India) in Nepal-US affairs is being gradually reduced from the concept of 'US's India's eye approach'. Especially in the case of Nepal after the end of the

monarchy, the USA changed its way of dealing with Nepal and relied on India's Nepal approach, and there are indications that it is slowly starting to deal with the matter on its own. But it took time to see the US's new approach in public.

As various experts said to this researcher, after the end of the monarchy, the permanent power center of Nepal was destroyed, and 'politically divided temporary power centers' were established. Thus, in this context, the USA took five to seven years more to conclude that the US interest in Nepal could not be achieved through India's eye approach. Therefore, in 2012, the US started studying the implementation of the MCC project proposed by Baburam Bhattarai's government (Gambhir, 2022, para. 3). Detailed analysis of it is done in Chapter Five. However, the geopolitics and geoeconomics developed after MCC's official entry in Nepal proved that the USA is not in the previous position like in the democratic period and will not return to that position again due to rising China's engagement in Nepal. Because of this situation, Nepal's foreign policy in the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is in a critical condition and seems lost its path to achieve its aspirations due to such geopolitical and geo-economic challenges.

The way India tried to influence Nepali political parties while promulgating the constitution after the Second Constituent Assembly was another factor that massively impacted Nepal's foreign policy. However, the Nepali people had high expectations from the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Nepal in August 2014 (Singh, 2016, p. 65). Modi said in the Nepali parliament during his visit first time as Indian Prime Minister, "it is not the Indian job to interfere in Nepal's internal affairs and work, it is a duty of India to support Nepal in all Nepal's decisions" (Express News Service, 2014, para. 6; Singh, 2016, p. 65). But in contrast, India sent the then foreign secretary S. Jaishankar as a special envoy to convey the special message of the Indian government to Nepali leaders which intended to address some concerns of New Delhi before the

promulgation of the constitution (The Kathmandu Post, 2015, paras. 1-5; Bhattarai, 2018, p. 2). But, KP Oli, the Chairman of CPN (UML) said that Nepal's major political parties had not stopped reaching out to the disgruntled parties. More parties would join the process before promulgation but Nepal would promulgate the constitution this time, because, it is the sovereign right of Nepal to promulgate the constitution (The Kathmandu Post, 2015, paras. 1-5). Former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal P. K. Gyawali also said that Nepali political parties faced huge pressure however Nepal promulgated the constitution in 2015. After the promulgation of the constitution, India shared its seven points of issues to address in the constitution (The Indian Express, 2015) but Nepal did not hear this voice and then started the 2015 blockade on the southern border. Therefore, in contrast to Narendra Modi's speech in the Nepali parliament, the Indian government intervened in the constitutional process and it largely affected Nepal's foreign policy. This incident created the space to bring Nepal's foreign policy on track and the post-2015 period was better than before for decreasing external interference and intervention on Nepal's foreign policy. In fact, this was the time of a shift of Nepal's foreign policy towards Independent Foreign Policy.

After the promulgation of the constitution in 2015 and then encountering the Indian economic blockade, Nepali geopolitics significantly changed. Since being the crucial phase of Nepal's foreign policy, the process of changing geopolitics has been dealt with here a bit in detail than other factors affecting Nepal's foreign policy at this stage.

Chairman CPN (UML) K.P. Sharma Oli came to power in Nepal as the 38<sup>th</sup> prime minister on 11 October 2015 (My Republica, 2018, para. 1). At that time, Nepal was facing numerous challenges for rehabilitation after the devastating Earthquake. Nepal was at very critical phase during that time and it is also because of the movement of Terai-based political parties to

establish their political demand. In the meantime, the Nepal Constitution was promulgated on 20 September 2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, para. 1). Immediately after the promulgation of the Constitution, the Ministry of External Affairs of the Indian government released a press on 20 September 2015. There was written, “We note the promulgation in Nepal today a Constitution” (Ministry of External Affairs, 2015, para. 1). The sentence indicates the dissatisfaction of the Indian government on the promulgation of the Nepal Constitution. Four days after the promulgation of the constitution, The Indian EXPRESS published a report entitled, “Make seven changes to your Constitution: India tells Nepal (Roy, 2015, para. 1)”. To mitigate the possible long-term political interference in Nepal’s domestic affairs, Oli resisted the massive pressure of amendment of the constitution (Sharma, 2016, para. 1). In the meantime, many Indian media claimed and reported that Nepal tilted towards China. KP Oli also claimed after his resignation that "India's role was primarily behind" the pulling out of support by the Maoists. He further told, “The process of government change was not an automatic process but conducted by remote control” (First Post, 2016, para. 1).

During his first visit to India as the Prime Minister of Nepal, Oli did not become ready for the issuance of joint communiqué because India’s reservations continued to persist (Giri, 2016, para. 1). Before his India visit, he had conveyed his message to his counterpart through diplomatic channel that until and unless the blockade would end, he would not visit India. Finally, the Indian prime minister ended five months plus the Indian blockade unofficially (Gyawali, 2018, para. 1).

In the meantime, the two largest communist parties allied two-tier elections in 2017. The then UCPN (Maoist) was involved in Deuba’s government; however, the Prachanda-led communist party agreed to ally for the elections with the Oli-led CPN (UML). As a result, the communist

alliance won the elections and made the majority government at the central, provincial, and many of the local levels. When Oli came to the power second time in Nepal in February 2018, he hosted a Luncheon meeting with the diplomatic community and remarked:

I understand nationalism as the protection of our sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence, and fulfillment of our national interest. We, the Nepalis, are a proud people with our long and glorious history of independence and sovereignty. We are committed to safeguarding that space for the benefit of our national interest and the good of our posterity. Pursuit of national interest and fulfillment of international obligations must go hand in hand. This comes as a non-negotiable priority for us. We will serve this cause based on our values, realities, and aspirations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 1).

Moreover, he raised his ideas in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. The statement delivered by Oli was more focused on the globalization of Nepalese soft power. Nepal's peace process is unique since Nepal developed its own model of conflict management and peace-building process. Nepal itself managed a decade long internal conflict without any external mediation which is rarely practiced in world community. Regarding the foreign policy of Nepal, Oli said, "Our foreign policy guides us to maintain amity with all and enmity with none. It has shaped our independent outlook on global issues, which we consider on a merit basis. We believe that regional and global efforts complement our national development efforts" (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018, paras. 1-51*). As his statement is analyzed, Oli's psychological construct seems guided by cooperation with all and confrontation with none. Although the government formed communist forces, the foreign policy seems guided by a more liberal perspective in which cooperation is the main principle.

Oli has emphasized regional cooperation and integration on common issues. He (2018 August 30) told during the 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC summit in Kathmandu:

...It is also a Destiny- a destiny ordained by the organic linkage of the ecosystem between high mountains and deep seas, a destiny shaped by contiguous geography as well as the potential of robust people-to-people contacts. Above all, it is our Commitment- a commitment to deeper integration of our economies, trade, and commerce. It is a commitment espoused over two decades ago, as a thoughtful response to seize the opportunities of globalization and shifting of economic locus to Asia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. Summarized all).

To establish Asia as the epicenter of the world economy, Asian regional and sub-regional organizations need to be revitalized like BIMSTEC. In his deliberation Oli says, “We would like to see a revitalized SAARC as an important regional organization” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 23). Regarding United Nations, Oli told in 73<sup>rd</sup> UNGA, “Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies resonates well the need of our time”. ... (Ibid). Oli further said, "The pursuit of making the UN relevant to all people is well captured in the philosophy of ‘leaving no one behind’” (Ibid). Oli’s statement indicates that the reform of the United Nations and its all organs including the Security Council is most important and inevitable. The speech justified that Oli is aware of Nepal’s policy towards International Organizations as conceptualized above as 3<sup>rd</sup> secondary pillar of Nepal’s Foreign Policy.

Analyzing Nepal's China relations, there is written in a joint press statement with China issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016:

The Nepalese side reiterated its commitment to one China Policy. It firmly supports the efforts made by the Chinese side to uphold state sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity, and does not allow any forces to use Nepalese territory for any anti-China or separatist activities. The Chinese side firmly supports and respects Nepal's own choice of social system and development path, and the efforts made by the Nepali side in upholding its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, national unity, and stability (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016, para. 4).

Similarly, Oli visited India second time as the Prime Minister of Nepal in 2018. The joint statement issued between India and Nepal during that visit says, "The two Prime Ministers resolved to work together to take bilateral relations to newer heights based on equality, mutual trust, respect, and benefit" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 2). Both aforementioned contents of the joint statements with China and India ensured the mutual trust and respect to Nepal from the side of immediate neighbors.

Nepal inked a Transit Trade Treaty with China in March 2016. The deal opened trade between Nepal and the Chinese port of Tianjin, which is almost 3,500 kilometers away from the capital city of Nepal. This deal has made Nepal strong geopolitically and geo-strategically at least in principle. If Nepal implements the deal in the future, Nepal's international relations will expand up to the Association of North East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and beyond. In this condition, there will be the rare possibility of imposing coercive diplomacy on Nepal from any other countries if the treaty could be materialized by the state. This treaty is a milestone for Nepal's foreign policy under the communist government.

Even in the light of weak implementation of previous agreements made with India regarding developmental projects, this government had made an MoU with India on the construction of the

Raxaul-Kathmandu rail link. If these MoUs come into the force, a breakthrough will happen in neighborhood policy especially to maximize the benefits in lower investment and risk. For that Nepal's domestic policy should be focused on massive production, which will be connected with the rail links in the north and south through exporting Nepal's goods and commodities.

In addition, recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a two-day historic state visit to Nepal on 12th and 13th October 2019 after 23 years of state visit to Nepal from the Chinese side. Nepal's government has claimed that the visit by President Xi Jinping has widened and broadened Nepal's international personality in current global affairs. Xi also highly emphasized Nepal and announced that China would support Nepal for its transformation from a landlocked country to a land-linked status. Both countries agreed to upgrade their ties to a strategic partnership, with Xi vowing to “help Nepal realize its dream of becoming a land-linked country from a land-locked one” (Albert, 2019, para. 1). Similarly, the two sides, while recalling the MoU signed between the two countries on 21 June 2018 on Cooperation in Railway Project, agreed to conduct the feasibility study as outlined in the MoU signed on 13 October 2019, which will lay an important foundation to launching the construction of the Cross-Border Railway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019, para. 11). Moreover, both countries are agreed to construct tunnel for upgrading and modernizing connectivity between Kerong and Kathmandu. It is written in a joint statement issued on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Kathmandu that the two sides agreed to proactively cooperate on the feasibility study for the construction of tunnels along the road from Jilong/Keyrung to Kathmandu. The next historic agreement made during this visit is to do the cooperation for constructing North-South highways in Nepal. Statement says:

The two sides reiterated their commitment to undertake a study on the possibility of cooperation, as reflected in the Joint Statement issued in Beijing on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, for

the development of the three North-South corridors in Nepal, namely the Koshi Economic Corridor, Gandaki Economic Corridor, and Karnali Economic corridor to create jobs and improve local livelihood, and stimulate economic growth and development (Ibid).

President Xi diplomatically expressed during bilateral talks with his Nepalese counterpart that both sides should seriously implement all the agreements made honestly and proactively. It means the aforementioned three major agreements should be implemented seriously. If those agreements are implemented, Nepal will access with rest of the world via the Nepal-China Economic Corridor, the seventh BRI corridor, under the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. In addition, Nepal can use other six corridors of BRI while needed as being the part of BRI. In such conditions, Nepal will no longer be a landlocked country and no country may adopt coercive diplomacy towards Nepal in the future. The state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping has therefore been a historic milestone for modern Nepal first time at this level and will have great strategic meaning as well.

In this way, Nepal's geopolitics significantly shifted and Nepal's foreign policy began to become pragmatically independent after the promulgation of the constitution nevertheless, the trend of fast-changing geopolitics is ongoing in Nepal and Nepal's foreign policy continued to face diverse external challenges due to external engagement, involvement, and pressure.

Based on this study and analysis, Nepal is theoretically falling prey to the Trilateral geopolitics. Especially Nepal's two neighbors, which will never change, and another the superpower, which will have to maintain its influence in this region as long as China and India become powerful. Therefore, the trilateral geopolitics of Nepal will continue for many more

decades. It has become and will be the biggest challenge of Nepal's foreign policy in the twenty-first century. Further detailed analysis is done in Chapter Five.

The analysis in the above sub-titles was entirely based on the literature as experts were more focused on current affairs rather than Lichchhavi and Malla ages. Experts' opinions as well as a few texts from literature have been incorporated and analyzed to focus on the first Research Question. Rose mentions, "...it is clear that topographical and geographic factors have a major impact on establishing policy-making parameters for the Himalayas and other countries connected to it" (1971, p. 277). Geographically, Nepal is located in the middle part of two rising world powers and this situation cannot be changed easily. There is a new narrative in the field of international affairs that friends can be changed but neighbours remain the same. Based on this fact, Nepal's two immediate neighbours are indispensable factors for the processes and approaches of formulating Nepal's foreign policy. Rose had also opined on the same line. Similarly, Madhuraman Acharya says that the Panchayat era foreign policy was restricted to a privileged coterie of advisers at the royal court (2019, p. 87). In the Panchayat years, people's representatives did not have much say in the making and implementation of foreign policy, which was beyond the normal critique of ordinary citizens. In Rana times and the Shah era also there were similar practices during Panchayat years. Foreign policy and diplomacy were the matters of Kings and their *Bharadars* or elite groups in those periods as well. After the restoration of democracy, every matter related to foreign policy and diplomacy started to be open and public. Along with the evolution and emergence of various non-state actors like NGOs, corporate houses, media groups, different pressure groups, influential individuals, etc, foreign policy issues became common concerns of those all-non-state actors in democratic periods. In this condition, processes and approaches of foreign policy formulation involved those

stakeholders through formal and informal channels. During the drafting of Nepal's constitution, suggestions were collected publicly. This is the process of policy formulation in the transition phase after the democratic period which can be called a bottom-up approach of policy formulation.

According to C. D. Bhatta, the constitution is a major source for the formulation of foreign policy in Nepal (personal communication, December 16, 2022). The constitution provides directive principles, policies, and a framework for formulating the foreign policy of Nepal. The constitution has also created Institutions and mechanisms for formulation and implementation of foreign policy. He argues that the foreign policy of Nepal has existed for long time back which was formulated from various processes and approaches in different eras. The *Jaishi Kotha* of Peacekeeping soldiers was the oldest foreign policy of Nepal which had architected the processes and approaches of foreign policy formulation and implementation in the Shah era, especially from the time of unification under King Prithvi Narayan Shah (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). Based on the processes and approaches from 1950 onwards, the foreign policy of Nepal from the 1950s to 1990s was a regime centered where there was no access for common people. C. D. Bhatta further argues that from the 1990s to 2006, the foreign policy of Nepal was hijacked by political parties of Nepal (personal communication, December 16, 2022). There was a frustrating monopoly of political parties in this period, which should be prohibited for the country's national interest. Political leaders even became loyal to foreign powers with minimal individual gains like scholarships available for their relatives, visits, and other personal benefits. It was ironic of Nepal's foreign affairs at that time. After 2006 the foreign policy of Nepal became more ideological and individualistic which is also the wrong approach. Because, in foreign policy formulation and implementation, the role of the individual

is highly important but it should not be individualistic. This approach cannot achieve the national interest, only individual attitudes, emotions, feelings, and egos are reflected in the foreign policy options.

Based on the analysis of processes and approaches, the regime centered foreign policy of Nepal changed to political parties directed foreign policy after the 1990s. It was not necessarily state needed policy, rather the political parties needed foreign policy. After 2006, the foreign policy of Nepal received more ideological color, sometimes going close to China and sometimes to the USA, C. D. Bhatta said (personal communication, December 16, 2022). His argument seems true to some extent however the state's organs under foreign policy like the Nepal Army, Civil Servants, etc. cannot be completely China or the US close. Due to ideological proximity, some parties might be seen close to China and some to India and the USA. This factor also significantly implicates to the foreign policy formulation and implementation.

Similarly, G. L. Malla during an interview conducted on 2 September 2022, argues that Nepal's foreign policy formulation process is spontaneous; it is created spontaneously after the occurrence of some diplomatic and political developments like the scenario that emerged after the Ukraine-Russia conflict (personal communication, September 2, 2022). When Nepal voted in favor of Ukraine, the decision was spontaneous. Based on Nepal's capability, size, and power, it asserts its foreign policy in a global context to protect its national interests. There is no specific process for the formulation of foreign policy in Nepal. Nepal created its foreign policy spontaneously as a reaction to global affairs (G. L. Malla, personal communication, September 2, 2022). His argument seems linked with the pragmatic approach of Nepal's foreign policy. It is determined by the actions of global powers in Nepal rather than the priority setting of Nepal's national interests.

H. R. Subedi thinks differently than Bhatta and Malla. He argues that Nepal should not forget the 'Yam Factor' of King Prithvi Narayan Shah's concept. Because, a Yam between two boulders cannot grow freely if two stones become closer and the same Yam cannot be survived if the same two stones collide (personal communication, August 18, 2022). Subedi's argument is serious factor when formulating Nepal's foreign policy as Rose argued about the fact of the Himalayan region. So, Subedi's argument seems closer to Rose's that the Himalayan geopolitics especially geopolitics linked with China and India should be carefully dealt with during formulating and implementing foreign policy. Subedi suggests that while formulating foreign policy, geography, population, culture, religion, sovereignty, and territorial integrity should be taken into consideration (personal communication, August 18, 2022).

J. N. Khanal's view on the processes and approaches of Nepal's foreign policy formulation is mostly the same as the above experts but as a former Prime Minister, he emphasized three things: a) Nepal should consider its constitutional provisions like sovereignty, national unity, territorial integrity, Panchsheel, non-alignment, international obligations, world peace, and international law while taking any new decisions in the foreign policy domain, b) Nepal's one of the most sensitive conditional factors is Tibet and one-China policy (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Conditional factor in the sense that if Tibet becomes independent state, Nepal's primary national interest will be under threat and vice versa. Or, if Nepal cannot maintain its independent status, Chinese sovereignty in Tibet will be at high risk, c) The next crucial aspect Nepal must consider is Nepal should never allow other countries to use Nepal's soil to target their rival countries in Nepal (personal communication, August 19, 2022). He emphasizes that Nepal must care about those three points while deciding on any issues related to Nepal's foreign policy.

K. Bashyal, highlights two approaches to foreign policy formulation i.e. domestic (internal) and external (personal communication, September 2, 2022). Internal policy formulation refers to the act of formulating policies based on the intrinsic factors of the state and its status. External process refers to the consideration of all external factors that may have an impact on the state, and policy is developed on that basis. As Bashyal said, domestic issues and international affairs cannot be separated in the domain of foreign policy because of being the extension of domestic policy is foreign policy. Similarly, M. K. Bhattarai shares his experiences that:

The process of developing Nepal's foreign policy has always been reliant on the nation's de facto executive power. For instance, in the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, he declared the Ditya Upadesh as the instruction for the new unified Nepal. Similarly, Bahadur Shah created an expansionist foreign policy during his rule. Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa devised a foreign policy to contain the British colonizers throughout South Asia. The prime minister, Jung Bahadur Rana, created the policy of balancing the neighboring states to sustain their government. Now, Nepal is a democratic republic nation; the prime minister has executive power and acts as a de facto power to create foreign policy. Foreign policy falls under the domain of the prime minister of Nepal (personal communication, August 16, 2022).

As Bhattarai mentioned, foreign policy is the highest responsibility of the Head of Government (HoG) or Head of State (HoS) and he or she mobilizes every state mechanism to formulate foreign policy or to decide on any issue in the field of foreign policy. So, according to Bhattarai, processes and approaches of foreign policy formulation begin first in the mind of HoG or HoS and then only enter into the formal stages (M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022). Along with the highest responsibility of the HoG or HoS, the roles of foreign

ministers, secretaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), advisors, experts, the defense minister, the finance minister, the home minister, and ambassadors also play necessary roles in the creation of foreign policy.

As per the experience shared by P. K. Gyawali, there were three fundamentals for drafting the foreign policy of Nepal: a) the think tank model, b) the opinions of the political parties, and c) the initiation of a national dialogue on foreign policy (personal communication, December 30, 2022). By using these three methods, drafting the foreign policy in its entirety and solving the confusion about the foreign policy of Nepal was accomplished during the period of the foreign ministry of Gyawali from 2018 to 2021. R. Bhattarai raises two aspects i.e., constitutional provisions and domestic policies. He argues that it was a time when Nepal focused on maintaining peace. Then Nepal started focusing on drafting the constitution. After the accomplishment of the election and drafting of the constitution, Nepal started focusing on the way to a “Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali” (personal communication, May 17, 2022). So, Nepal’s focus should also be on the same. He also highlights the external situation, domestic politics, and constitutional provisions to highly consider while taking ways on foreign policy.

On the issues of formulating foreign policy, S. R. Simkhada highlights the trend of international relations. According to him, multilateral relations among various great powers is a matter to be considered for a country’s foreign policy. Each country formulates its foreign policy being based on this idea, and the instrument that is used to implement this kind of ‘foreign policy’ is known as diplomacy (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Therefore, while talking about the context of foreign policy and its formulation in Nepal, it is imperative to understand these three basic concepts of the same: a) Geopolitics, b) Nepal has long been the preacher of neutrality, and c) Consultative process (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication,

August 19, 2022). In contrast, R. N. Pandey claims that the formulation of foreign policy is unchanging (personal communication, September 1, 2022). When we see any nation, India's foreign policy has been the same since its birth. The same is the case with the USA and China as well. So, there can be seen a wrong notion in Nepal about changing the foreign policy because foreign policy is never changed. Any country has a permanent foreign policy because the only aim of foreign policy is to protect the national interest and it is never changed. When the national interest is never changed, the foreign policy to protect it can also not be changed (R. N. Pandey, personal communication, September 1, 2022).

But, the claims of Pandey are not close to the pragmatic issues and theoretical ground. IR theories are related to foreign policy. Theories in international relations keep changing this is because of the change in priorities on national issues and agendas. When the issues and agendas change, political leaders change their approach which is directly related to foreign policy. If foreign policy remains unchanged, the world would revolve around the theory of classical realism still but the case is not like that. Therefore, as per the above claims, arguments, opinions, information, and knowledge, foreign policy changes as per the change in geopolitics and geoeconomics whereas the processes and approaches can be varied from single to multiple ways. Implementation of foreign policy is linked with individuals and institutions. Individuals mean HoG or HoS, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Secretary, Ambassadors, other diplomats, and envoys, etc. whereas concerned institutions are the office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other concerned Ministries, Embassies, etc.

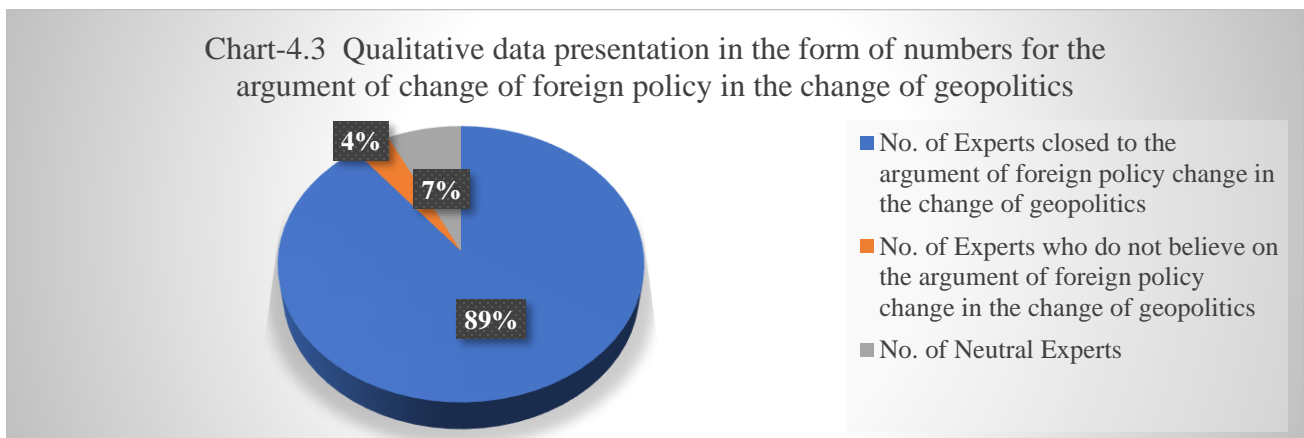
The following table is used to present the qualitative data in the form of quantitative numbers.

Table 4.2 Primary qualitative data analysis in the form of quantitative numbers from the fieldwork

No. of Experts closed to the argument of foreign policy change in the change of geopolitics	No. of Experts who do not believe in the argument of foreign policy change in the change of geopolitics	No. of Neutral Experts	Total Number
25	1	2	28

Source: Self-prepared based on primary qualitative data

The above table is analyzed in below chart.



Source: Self-prepared based on primary qualitative data

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

Almost 89% views of experts are close to the argument of the change of foreign policy in the change of geopolitics. The percentage of experts who do not believe on this argument is only 'four' whereas 7% of experts are neutral on this argument. So, not only based on the textual analysis, but also from the table and chart, it is clear that foreign policy is changed when geopolitics changes.

From the above discussion, the approaches of foreign policy formulation or decision-making processes are sketched below to briefly highlight the Lichchhavi Dynasty to the federal democratic republican stage. According to Graham Allison, generally, there are Five Models of foreign policy analysis in global affairs (Norwich University Website), but these five models seem unable to address the special case of Nepal where the external actors play an invisible role in influencing the decision-making process of Nepal's foreign policy. So, the sixth model is proposed below based on the critical analysis of Nepal's foreign policy decision-making process.

- a) Rational Actor Model:** The most widely cited foreign policy analysis model is the Rational Actor Model. This model assumes that the main actor in foreign policy is a rational individual who can be relied upon to make informed, calculated decisions that maximize value and perceived benefits to the state. A rational actor's decision-making process has four main steps: identify a problem, define desired outcomes, evaluate the consequences of possible policy choices, and, finally, make the most rational decision to maximize beneficial outcomes (Norwich University Website). So, the decisions taken by individual leaders without these four steps is the 'Non-Rational Actor Model'.
- b) Bureaucratic Politics Model:** The bureaucratic politics model analyzes decisions based on the actions taken by many independent, competing institutions within a particular state. Each of these separate organizations brings values to the decision-making process, as well as its view of what is best for individual, organizational, and national interests (Ibid).
- c) Organizational Process Model:** The organizational process model views government as a mix of powerful institutions working in concert, rather than a single individual or group of partisan institutions. This model examines foreign policy decisions made within the rigid rigidity of bureaucracy, where actions can only be taken with proper authority and adherence

to the chain of command, respecting established procedures and standard operating methods (Ibid).

- d) Inter-Branch Politics Model:** The inter-branch politics model is similar to the organizational and bureaucratic process model. It involves distinctly defined groups or institutions. However, instead of focusing on single goals and outcomes, the inter-branch politics model evaluates actions and their outcomes based on the joint efforts and cohesion of different groups and their progress toward achieving collective goals (Ibid).
- e) Political Process Model:** In the political process model, there are a large number of actors involved in the foreign policy decision-making process, which are mainly concentrated in the office of the President and Congress, but across all levels of government as well. Similar to the bureaucratic politics model, the political process model emphasizes bargaining and the presence of various power centers seeking to achieve their respective goals—these goals can either be in conflict or consensus with those of others (Ibid).

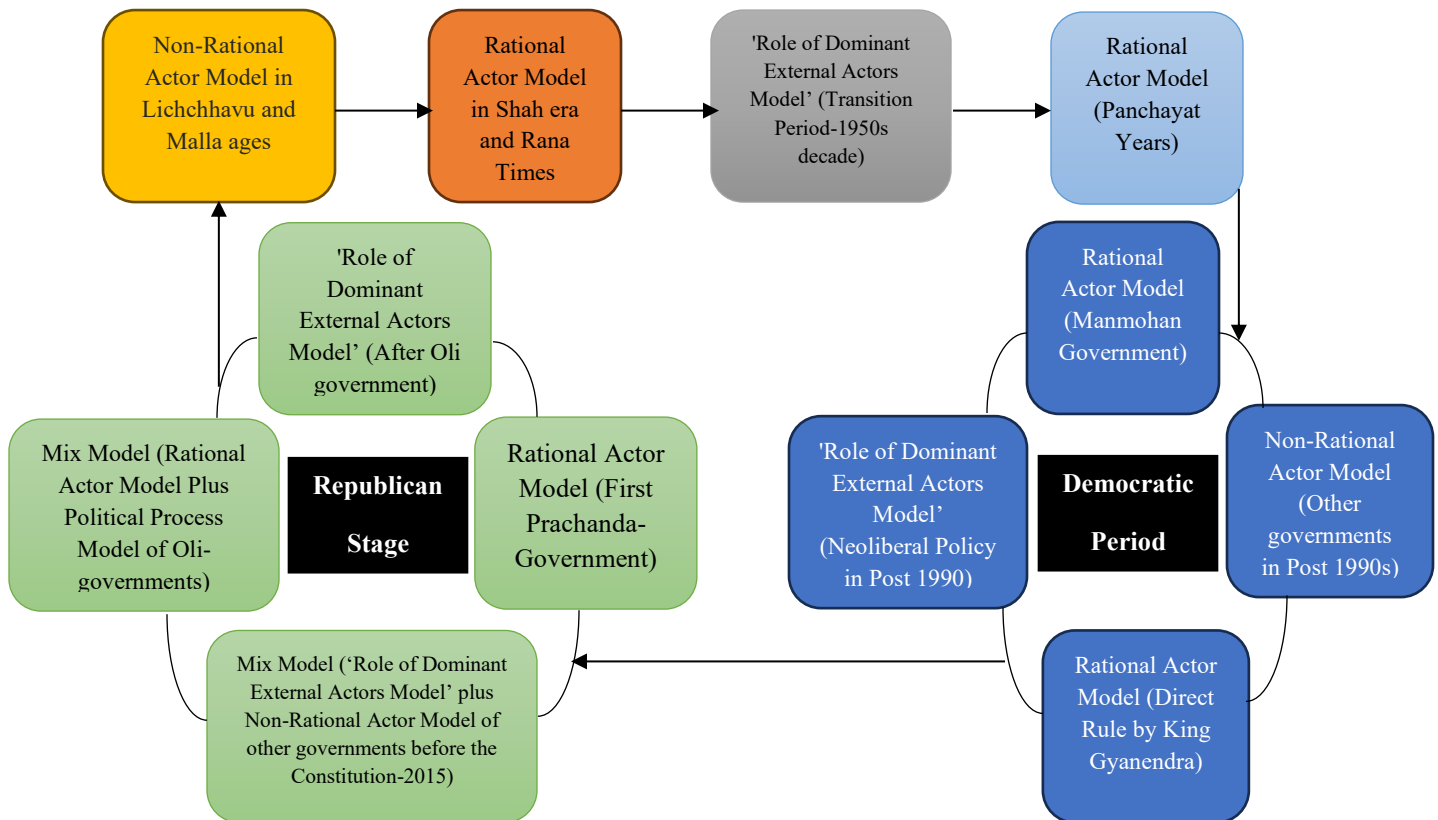
But these five types of foreign policy decision-making analysis processes do not seem to pay attention to the complex geopolitical situation of a land-locked country like Nepal, which is surrounded by great powers, in addition to this, the massive presence of superpower also. In general, it seems that various scholars have put forward those five models based on the primary belief that only national actors play and should play a leading role in the foreign policymaking process. But there are also countries like Nepal in the world that have not been able to make their foreign policy independently many times in their history. None of these models have been able to address such a situation. Therefore, as the sixth model, the 'Role of Dominant External Actors Model' has also been added in this dissertation. Of course, the sovereign states make decisions on foreign policy themselves independently but liberal values in the globalized world order

challenge this notion, and influential global actors play invisible roles in making foreign policy decisions of other small and weak states. Such issues can be summarized as the 'Role of Dominant External Actors Model'.

**f. Role of Dominant External Actors Model:** This model is newly analyzed in the special case of Nepal as analyzed above.

The following figure shows the Foreign Policy decision making process of Nepal from the Lichchhavi Age to the Federal Democratic Republican Stage based on the analysis of the whole content of Chapter Four.

Figure 4.3 Foreign policy decision-making process of Nepal from the Lichchhavi age to the federal democratic republican stage



Source: Self prepared

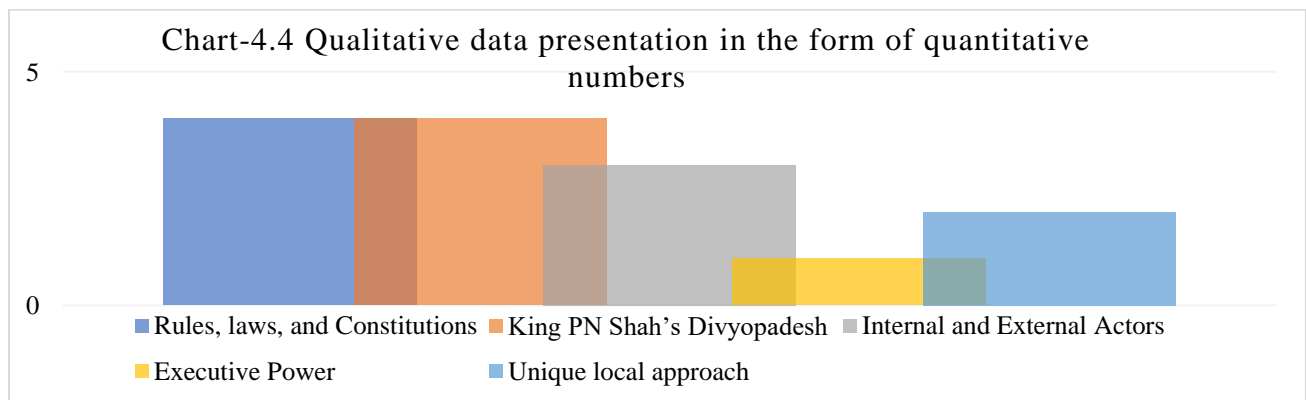
The following table shows the quantitative data converted from the qualitative text which is also linked to the above figure indirectly. The following table and chart contribute to the foreign policy decision-making process.

Table 4.3 Qualitative data presentation in the form of numbers for the source foreign policy formulation

Rules, laws, and Constitutions	King Prithvi Narayan Shah's <i>Divyopadesh</i>	Internal and External Actors	Executive Power	Unique local approach
4	4	3	1	2

Source: Self Prepared based on the fieldwork (Primary Data)

The above table is displayed in chart below.



Source: Self-prepared based on Primary data

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

The above chart shows, that four experts said that the source of foreign policy formulation is 'rules, laws, and the constitution', and an equal number claimed that this source is King Prithvi Narayan Shah's *Divyopadesh*. The second highest number of experts said such a source of foreign policy formulation is the role of internal and external actors whereas third highest number (i.e. Two) said that the source is the unique local approach which is developed in the

context of Nepal. And, the last and lowest number of experts said that such a source of foreign policy formulation is the Executive Power of the country. Due to the divergent opinions of the experts, the analysis is also divergent and the researcher has analyzed that the above all are the source of Nepal's foreign policy formulation along with other many things like geopolitics, geoeconomics, country's historical legacy, diplomatic capability, leaders' psychological construct, etc.

## CHAPTER-FIVE

### GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOECONOMIC COMPLEXITIES OF NEPAL

#### 5.1 Geopolitical Complexities of Nepal

From the analysis in Chapter Four, it is argued that the foreign policy changes with the change in geopolitics. Or, if the foreign policy cannot be changed according to the change of geopolitics, it cannot serve the national interest perfectly. So, these two terms are very important in the field of international relations. The theoretical aspects of geopolitics are dealt with in Chapter Two along with a few empirical issues. Here, the primary data collected from the in-depth interviews are analyzed empirically.

Z. Subin claims that the role of Nepal's government in making Nepali geopolitics complex is vital (personal communication, August, 2022). He says that The Deuba government which was established in July last year (2021) and supported by four left parties has adopted a pro-India and US policy. The five-party coalition government ratified MCC, which is a tool of the US's Indo-Pacific Strategy aiming to contain China, will have some potential risk to making Nepal a playground for big powers' competition.

C. D. Bhatta says that geopolitics and geo-economics play a vital role in determining foreign policy. We understand geopolitics primarily because we are located between two rising powers (personal communication, December 16, 2022). Location is a vital factor of geopolitics and foreign policy which provides a lot of geopolitical advantages as well if carefully managed. But the state is the actor in the overall country's geopolitics. Since being surrounded by two ambitious politically, economically, and technologically rising neighbors, Nepal needs to maintain cordial relations with them (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16,

2022). However, the key issue is to successfully manage their major concerns in Nepal without compromising Nepal's national interest.

Not only two ambitious rising neighbors, but also, the USA as the superpower and distant friend of Nepal has also come up with a new ambitious objective from the next pole of the globe. M. Templer, US diplomat in Nepal, claims that Nepal's geopolitics is heavily influenced by its neighbors (personal communication, August 18, 2023). It means, his message was the USA has not focused on Nepal with political interest, it is just as a developmental partner to support Nepal's development and prosperity. He further suggests that China and India are very concerned about not doing something that makes them upset. For example, Nepal often states that foreign policy should address the issue of one China policy. They will not harm or allow their soil to harm China's interests. In the same way, if India has a strong view of something, Nepal will try to pay attention (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023).

Templer thinks that the USA is not in the same position because the USA is far away but with India and China, Nepal's goal is connected in a balanced way. It will be a kind of negative influence in the sense that Nepal avoids doing things that would upset others (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). It means the USA also feels that Nepal makes upset sometimes to India, sometimes to China, and sometimes to the USA. This is a very good example of Nepal's complex geopolitics, as Templer assessed. Similarly, H. Zhengdou, Associate Professor of Sichuan University, opines during an email interview that because of geographical limitations, Nepal cannot escape the political influence of two great powers (personal communication, September, 2022). This statement is very close to the opinion of US diplomat Templer. Most of Nepal's diplomatic challenges, or opportunities have arisen from its relations with two major powers i.e. India and China.

But, since history, India is quite difficult and frequent, and Nepal's great political and economic dependence on India is an Achilles heel (H. Zhengduo, personal communication, September, 2022). Highlighting India's three economic blockades and its usual omnipresent micromanagement of Nepal, the asymmetric dependence is dangerous. Such dependence indicates that Nepal's geopolitical scenario is complex. Nepal is bound to continue this dependence and use its relations with China as a counterbalance to Indian behavior, according to H. Zhengduo (personal communication, September, 2022). Moreover, the new facts suggest that geographical distance is not a hindrance for extraterritorial powers to project influence on Nepal, as the MCC launched in Nepal. He emphasizes coming out from the mindset of geographical difficulties because modern technology can make the geographical distance very close. The USA's involvement in Nepal can be an example of how political willpower can change physical obstruction into mental and psychological opportunities (H. Zhengduo, personal communication, September, 2022). But, in Nepal's view, geopolitical difficulties create obstacles to the political situation, diplomatic empowerment, and economic development of an economically weak country like Nepal. However, such a situation is becoming an opportunity for powerful countries like China, India, and the USA.

Likewise, S. D. Muni assesses Nepali geopolitics from his perspective. He says that there are multiple aspects of Nepali geopolitics. Nepal's development cannot survive without security and prosperity. Nepal needs to regulate the geopolitical conditions of being surrounded by two very big nations, India and China (personal communication, November 6, 2022). But its sociological compulsion is that Nepal is more related to or assimilated with India, Muni emphasizes. However, Nepal has been trying to maintain equal relations with both countries, Nepal can get support and assistance from both neighbours for economic prosperity. Not only for support and

assistance but also for utilization of its own resources like hydropower, and employment for Nepali people, it has to depend upon its neighbours. So, these are the complexities Nepal has in terms of both economic matters as well as strategic and security issues (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022).

Muni's clear signal is that Nepal is very close to India in most of the socio-cultural dimensions. But Nepal seems unable to link this with its foreign policy matters. He argues that socio-cultural proximity has not been connected to Nepal's foreign policy and this is the fault line of Nepal's foreign policy (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022).

According to M. P. Lama, US policy to Nepal is basically to check China at its doorstep which significantly has contributed in making Nepali geopolitics complex (personal communication, November 11, 2022). It has given foreign economic assistance to Nepal, trained Khampas, and so on. Chinese policy to Nepal is not to give absolutely a free hand in dealing with Nepal to India. In order to do that, it uses economic instruments, military instruments, political instruments, infrastructures, and so on. China made the road from Kodari to Kathmandu, Kathmandu to Pokhara, and now they have the Lumbini project (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022). That is why; in 2060-2070 governments of Nepal and India decided that no Chinese projects will be entertained in plain areas and agricultural sectors.

Similarly, India's policy to Nepal focuses on increasing its single-hand control of Nepal's external affairs. India wants to minimize the US's role and eradicate the Chinese presence in Nepal (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022). India cooperates with the USA in Nepal only in weakening Chinese influence but in other issues, India differs with the USA in the Nepal case. For that, India has been adopting the policy of Micro-management for decades. To successfully handle it, India has been supporting many developmental projects

directly at the community level which is criticized by Nepali people due to its wrong approach. So, lama argues that Nepal's geopolitical situation is hinged on three external key actors which proves the argument that Nepal's 'Trilateral Geopolitical discourse is major discourse in Nepal's International Relations'.

P. S. Basnyat says that for the first time, during the time of Matrika Prasad Koirala, Khampas were entered from Raxual. About 300 to 350 Khampas came from Dehradun. They claimed that they had come because your (Nepali) government supported us (personal communication, August 15, 2022). In Colorado, Khampa training was opened. India and America planned where to keep Khampas. They were operating from Olangchung Gola to Lipulekh although their permanent headquarters was Kesang. These activities were done in a joint venture of India and America. Even King Mahendra closed his eyes on this issue (P. S. Basnyat, personal communication, August 15, 2022).

Basnyat's information is serious. He claims that Khampas entered Nepal based on the support of the Nepal government. It is an unbelievable statement however it is the expert's data. It shows how Nepal, India, and the USA play a role in the case of Khampas. This incident was one of the main factors that brought a turning point in the geopolitics of Nepal during the Panchayat period and it was not easy for Nepal to change the course of geopolitics thereafter. Although the Khampa Rebellion ended at that time, the current geopolitics also seems to be a different continuation of it in some way.

On the other hand, Chinese experts have recently viewed Nepali geopolitics from the Indo-Pacific Strategy every time. L. Tao, a Professor at Sichuan University, China, expresses that foreign relations have become very important in the present scenario of the Indo-Pacific Strategy led by the USA in Nepal (personal communication, April 24, 2023). The USA and India want to

go jointly ahead in Nepal against China. L. Tao's statement differs from the US Diplomat Templer, and is similar to some Indian and Nepali experts. There have been significant changes in the foreign relations between big powers. With these changes in the international scenario, China also loves India and the USA in Nepal for the development and prosperity of Nepal (L. Tao, personal communication, April 24, 2023). However Chinese experts are quite suspicious of Nepal's behavior towards the USA and China recently. One of the Chinese experts does not want to disclose his name but he expresses that Nepal already started implementing MCC and is reluctant towards the BRI. They perceive the MCC as a US strategic economic project to Nepal mainly to make a failure of the BRI's implementation in Nepal.

Under the US strategy, the USA wants to increase economic, political, cultural, and social dominance in Nepal (L. Tao, personal communication, April 24, 2023). Media is also a tool being targeted by the USA. The Nepali community seems divided in terms of international powers. Some Nepali seem close to India, some seem close to China and some seem to support the US agendas and strategies. This is a very serious issue that the Chinese expert has exposed the fact that not only the external reason but also the internal cause is stronger in Nepal's geopolitics. That's why her expression is very serious. One of the Chinese academics who does not speak much has seriously raised this point that the main reason behind Nepal's unmanageable geopolitics is the internal division of Nepalis and multi-aligned Nepali politics, leaders, intellectuals, and society.

N. Acharya, former Ambassador of Nepal to India, has a different opinion about geopolitics. He argues that bigger nations are not following international law and hence geopolitics becomes critical (personal communication, September 4, 2022). His argument is related to the action of the former USSR towards Ukraine and the same analysis is linked to India's behavior toward

Nepal-India border problems in many border areas in the southern borders of Nepal. India has not followed the 'Watershed Principle' in the Kali (Mahakali) River. He further argues that due to a lack of knowledge, confidence, and research, Nepal blindly supports international actors without critical views, and hence Nepal time and again faces difficulties in its geopolitics (N. Acharya, personal communication, September 4, 2022).

Similarly, R. N. Pandey perceives Nepali geopolitics differently. The major cause becoming Nepal's geopolitics too critical is the external factor (R. N. Pandey, personal communication, September 1, 2022). He argues that due to the strategic interests of the USA, China, and India, Nepal has been experiencing challenges in managing geopolitics carefully. Likewise, S. R. Simkhada raises two issues behind making Nepali geopolitics much more critical: a) an extremely politicized foreign policy, and b) a bureaucratized diplomatic system (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). Because of these two reasons, foreign policy cannot be implemented in a systematic diplomatic manner and its impact reflects on the country's geopolitics.

Similarly, M. K. Bhattarai says:

Nepal is not able to constantly implement its foreign policy in parallel with the present complexity of geoeconomics and geopolitics. There are also territorial disputes between Nepal and both India and China. This has hampered Nepal's relations with our two neighbours. This issue never has been debated in public. This problem could be easily solved. Nepal has failed in diplomacy by failing to deal tactfully with neighboring nations to gain benefits from them, resolve problems, and participate in economic cooperation projects to protect the nation's best interests (personal communication, August 16, 2022).

Bhattarai argues that due to being unable to implement foreign policy, Nepal's geopolitics has been developed in the adverse course of Nepal's national interests. His argument seems valid as Nepal could not decide on MCC and BRI's implementation on time. Because of this delay, both great powers created diplomatic pressures on Nepal and it was reflected in the country's overall geopolitics.

P. K. Gyawali also highlights the key external actors as factors of Nepali critical geopolitics.

He says:

The great powers have their interests in and outside of Nepal. The European Union has more interest in religious freedom, press freedom, human rights protection, the transitional justice process, and similar types of issues. The USA has the same interest in the area as the European Union, but at the same time, the USA wants to contain the rise of China.

China has an interest in monitoring the Western activities in Nepal to prevent it from doing anything against the interests of China and also wants Nepal to be the gateway for South Asia. India wants to maintain its traditional sphere of influence in Nepal. India wants Nepal to be aligned with and supportive of its policy. The remaining nations are less interested in Nepal, but they are interested in climate issues as well (personal communication, December 30, 2022).

Like M. P. Lama, Gyawali also indicates the role of three major powers in Nepali geopolitics. Gyawali has also pointed out the engagement and interests of these three major countries as the reason behind Nepal's sensitive geopolitics. Indian expert G. Kochhar has also similar views about Nepal's geopolitics. She highlights the major geopolitical issue in Nepal is Tibet. She claims that Nepal is poised to become a proxy-war kind of situation where multiple actors are

going to fight like China, Tibetans, India, and the US. India has a security umbrella for Nepal (G. Kochhar, personal communication, November 10, 2022). It proves that India wants to always keep Nepal under India's security umbrella which violates the principles of sovereignty and independence.

J. N. Khanal claims that during his tenure, multiple foreign powers tried to pursue foreign policies that were not in favor of Nepal's interests. As per his claim, he strongly rejected and discouraged foreign policies that were not in favor of Nepal's national interests (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Even during the release of the new map of Nepal that included Limpiyadhura, Lipulek, and Kalapani, foreign powers tried to actively influence the political parties to discourage publishing the new map through a constitutional amendment. It proves the geopolitical pressures of external actors created directly even on the Head of Government of the independent country.

Nepali former head of government indicates the pressure created by our southern neighbour however the Indian scholars talk more about the external affairs of Nepal linked to the northern neighbour, this is an interesting part of geopolitics. As per Kochhar, in terms of the interest that many of these countries have, one of the clear interests is Tibetan communities which are there in Nepal because officially, there are more than twenty thousand Tibetan migrants in Nepal and unofficially, they are larger in numbers (personal communication, November 10, 2022). Such a situation challenges the Chinese stability in the Western sector as well and they can be used against China by the Western powers. It also has linkages with India because the Tibetan exile government is actually in India. So, the interest of the Indians also lies out there about Tibetan refugees. It is a very significant interest that cannot be dissected which was started from what happened in Mustang region to other places in the past.

Kochhar adds more issues like military alliance and its impact on Nepal. India and the USA have a strategic and nuclear partnership that has been trying to include Nepal through IPS. She perceives that Nepal has fallen under the geo-religious circumstance. India wants to see Nepal as a Hindu state, the USA and Western countries want to rapidly spread Christianity, and China has a soft corner towards Buddhism. Recently there have been hundreds of *Madarsa* established in Terai communities and Islam fundamentalist is backed by fourth countries except the USA, India, and China (G. Kochhar, personal communication, November 10, 2022). Her signal was toward Pakistan's support. So, geo-religious power politics becoming vital in Nepali geopolitics and again there are the same major external actors India, China, and the USA also in this realm.

N. R. Nayak argues that even in sensitive geopolitics, Nepal has no synchronization of its foreign policy with geopolitics and geo-economics. The foreign policy of Nepal is in one direction and economic policy is in another direction (personal communication, November 14, 2022). That's why there are lots of tensions and political instabilities happening in Nepal. He indicates that Nepal's recent foreign policy is tilted towards Beijing whereas Nepal's economy is dependent upon India and the West (N. R. Nayak, personal communication, November 14, 2022). So, he suggests reviewing the foreign and economic policy of Nepal to synchronize. He also sees the major role of the USA, India, and China in Nepali geopolitics. Chinese scholar G. Liang has also a similar opinion that Nepal has no option of being involved in both BRI and IPS and dealing with India cautiously (personal communication, April 27, 2023). Almost all the experts say that the major external actors are India, the USA, and China in Nepali geopolitics which have been playing a significant role in making Nepali geopolitics out of manageable and critical. So, not only because of the experts' views but also due to political development happened pragmatically proves that the nature of Nepali geopolitics is Trilateral which can be

termed as “Trilateral Geopolitics in Nepali special characteristics”. So, foreign policy also should be aligned with this geopolitics to achieve the national interests in every changed geopolitical condition. The detailed foreign policy outline is dealt with in Chapter 6.6.

To further explore the logical evidence of trilateral geopolitical discourse, it needs to examine very briefly the rise and fall of at least the three superpowers of the world in the past. After that, it is significant to talk about the possibility of China and India becoming superpowers in the future. Then after assessing the major possible focused region of the world of new superpower after the fall of the USA, it can be said whether the debate on Nepal's geopolitics is trilateral or not.

The first superpower in world history was the *Achaemenid Persian Empire*. It extended from Anatolia and Egypt across western Asia to northern India and Central Asia. Its formation is traced back to 550 B.C., when King Astyages of Media, who dominated much of Iran and eastern Anatolia (Turkey), was defeated by his southern neighbor Cyrus II (“the Great”), king of Persia (Briant, 2002, pp. 1-12). The total period of this superpower was almost 220 years.

The Roman Empire was the next superpower. It was risen in 27 BC and extended for five centuries. It is written the longest superpower by historians (Shankar, 2020, para. 3). Emperors like Caesar, Trajan, Augustus, Hadrian, Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius’ and decadent ones like Nero, Tiberius and Caligula ruled it. It dominated the Middle East and Europe, ruling major population centers and civilizations including Greece, Egypt, the Levant, Carthage, Anatolia, and Italy.

Similarly, the third is the Mongol Empire. It was the largest land empire in the world. Only a million Mongols conquered much larger populations and empires. It was not a unitary empire as commonly envisioned but a vast conglomeration of widely varying territories held together by

military dominance (Shankar, 2020, para. 3). Military prowess elevated it to superpower status. Its all-conquering military machine was based on superior strategy, mobility, technology utilization of victorious peoples, and logistics. The Mongol Empire covered the area most closely related to history. Initially led by Genghis Khan, the empire lasted from 1206 to 1368 (Blakemore, 2019, para. 2).

The British Empire as a superpower comprised the dominions, protectorates, colonies, mandates, and other territories ruled by the UK and its predecessor states. It started with trading posts and overseas possessions established in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. This empire was established based on economic, military, and soft power influence in the globe and there is a famous statement that “the sun never set” in the British Empire (Shankar, 2020, para. 5). It spans more than 400 years and started its decay from the WW-I and completely collapsed after WW-II.

Then, the USA replaced the British Empire as the superpower. According to economic historian Adam Tooze, quoted on the PBS website, the British Empire was the largest economic power in the world; in 1916, its output was overtaken by that of the USA (PBS, n.d., para. 6; Tooze, 2014). The USA is still the superpower and hence the USA may maintain its position for some decades. It means the US superpower position is for a century.

Thus, what the exploration of the brief history of superpowers reveals is that any superpower has secured its position for at least 150 years. However, the case of the USA may be different because many scholars of the world have claimed that China will surpass the USA in every field by 2050. Even if that happens, the USA will not end its ineffectiveness all at once and China will become a superpower, the influence of the USA will also remain for decades, and will try to regain its superpower position. Therefore, until the USA becomes a superpower, the USA will try to advance its policy by considering Nepal as a strategic base area to prevent China from

taking its place. Even if the USA is overtaken by China and pushed to second position, the situation seems to be that the USA will base itself on Nepal as its friendly country to regain its previous superpower position surpassing China. On the other hand, India has been making significant progress in every field as a nuclear and space power recently. It seems that not only the superpower competition between China and the USA but also the competition between China and India for their influence in Nepal will continue. On the other hand, the competition between the USA and India in the field of culture and civilization seems to intensify in the future. Such trilateral competition in Nepal is not only for a couple of decades, but it seems that such trilateral competition will continue until the USA and China become the first and second superpowers. As India also moved ahead with ambitions to become a superpower, its focus and momentum would continue for centuries until it became the superpower surpassing the USA and China. As analyzed earlier about the period of rise and fall of superpowers, even if China leaps to superpower status by 2050, according to superpower trends, it can be projected that its superpower status will last for at least a century. In that situation, the US and India will also be competing to become superpowers. Since India and China are neighboring countries of Nepal, their rivalry greatly affects the geopolitics of Nepal, while the USA as a superpower, the role it plays affects the geopolitics of Nepal significantly. Even if the US power wanes, another new power will emerge to compete with China and India which will focus on this region to compete for superpower position, so that the geopolitics of Nepal will continue to be affected by such phenomenon. Thus, not only based on the facts obtained during the in-depth interview with the experts but also based on the historical study and its analysis, the geopolitical discourse of Nepal is "Trilateral Geopolitics" and it seems that it will continue for at least the next two centuries until China, India, and third power will compete for superpower position. The analysis of the

geopolitical study is that Nepal should develop its foreign policy based on this "Trilateral Geopolitics", otherwise Nepal will have to face a big challenge to protect its primary and secondary national interests. The following table and chart show a clear quantitative analysis of qualitative data about it.

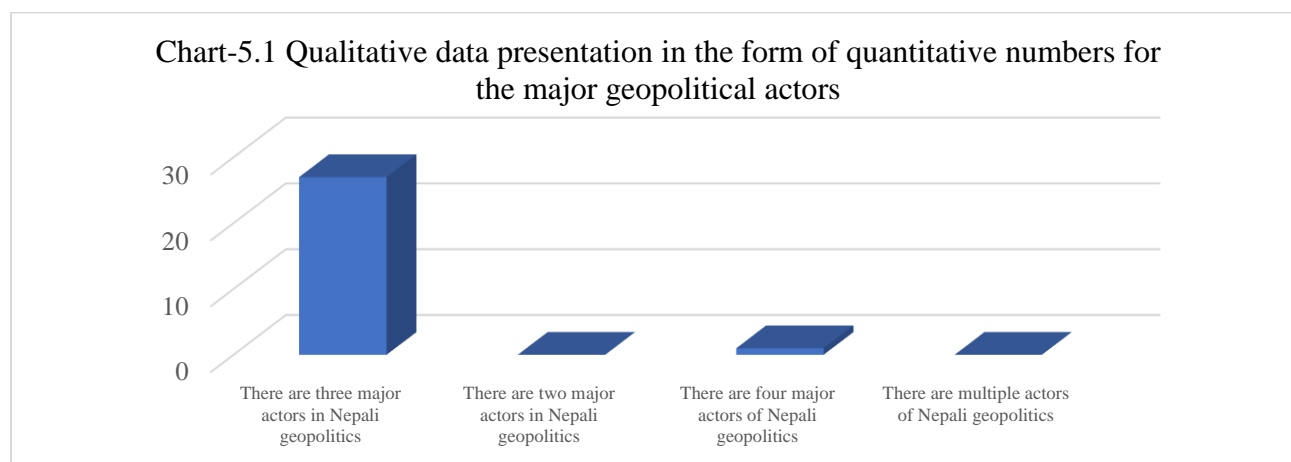
Table 5.1 Qualitative data presentation in the form of quantitative numbers for the major geopolitical actors i.e. nature of geopolitics

No. of Experts who believe in three major actors of Nepali geopolitics	No. of Experts who believe in two major actors of Nepali geopolitics	No. of Experts who believe in four major actors of Nepali geopolitics	No. of Experts who believe in multiple major actors of Nepali geopolitics	Total Experts
27	0	1	0	28

Source: Self-prepared based on Primary data

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

The above table is analyzed in below chart.



Source: Self-prepared based on primary data

The above chart shows that the biggest number (i.e. 27 out of 28) of experts had shared that Nepal's major external geopolitical actors are the USA, India, and China whereas only one had shared that the geopolitical actors of Nepal are the USA, India, China, and Pakistan. Therefore, the study conducted from various approaches in this dissertation found that Nepal's geopolitics is neither unilateral, nor bilateral, nor multilateral. It is perfectly 'Trilateral Geopolitics'.

## **5.2 Assessing Nepal's Geoeconomic Challenges**

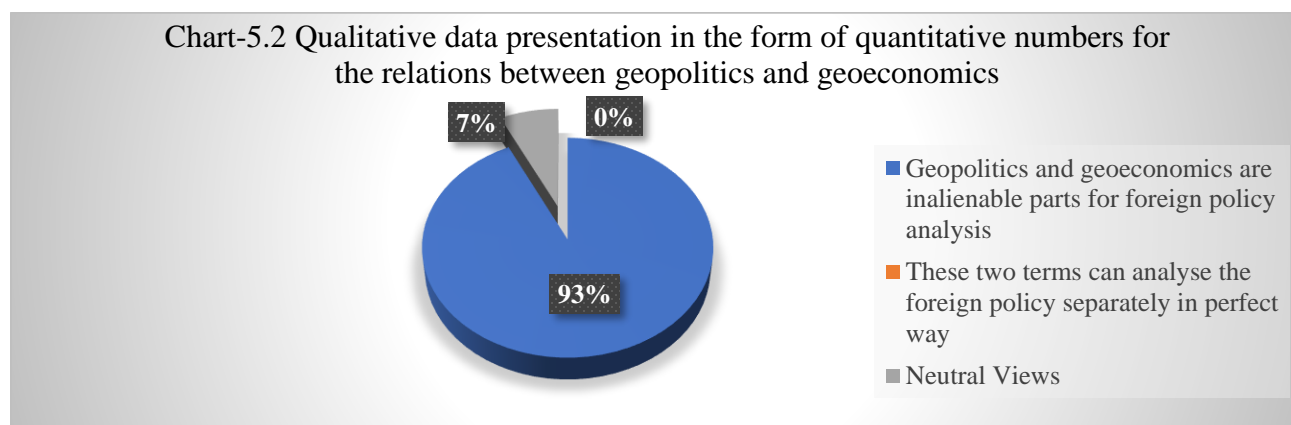
Geoeconomics is a continuous part of geopolitics and it cannot be separated from geopolitical discourse. Geoeconomics is a study of the effects and the material causes of disputes of power among multiple actors in the global order, which justifies the importance of analysis in the field of IPE. Nevertheless, conceptually, geoeconomics comprises a significant number of contested visions, resulting from various facts that it is a research agenda still under debate (Gaeger & Brites, 2020, p. 23). As Gaeger and Brites highlight the dispute of power factor in geoeconomics, is closely linked with geopolitics because geopolitics deals with a state's power, security, and military influence whereas geoeconomics deals with financial and economic influence in other countries. Similarly, Scekcic, Draskovic, and Delibasic argue that geoeconomics is the theoretical and methodological ground as the extended arm of geopolitics and the post-industrial development paradigm (2016, p. 66). Likewise, Soilen claims that geopolitics and geoeconomics are directly linked to the research of strategy where optimal plans for institutional objectives are tried to implement (2012, p. 9). Therefore, geoeconomics is an inalienable part of geopolitics as many scholars define it. The following table and chart make it much clearer.

Table 5.2 Qualitative data presentation in the form of quantitative numbers for the relations between geopolitics and geoeconomics

Geopolitics and geoeconomics are inalienable parts of foreign policy analysis	These two terms can analyze foreign policy separately in a perfect way	Neutral Views	Total
26	0	2	28

Source: Self-prepared based on primary data

The above table is analyzed in below chart.



Source: Self-prepared based on Primary data

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

Almost 93% of views expressed by experts argue that geopolitics and geoeconomics are interrelated to analyze, formulate, and implement the foreign policy of every country in the world. It means, these two discourses separately cannot comprehensively analyze the foreign policy.

The state is presented in this research as the Institution. So, optimal plans of the state to achieve the national interests are tried to conduct. Such kind of plans are both geopolitical and geoeconomic. It is not possible to achieve national interests by only making and implementing separate plans either in geopolitics or in geoeconomics escaping one out of two. Because geopolitics is linked with primary national interest and geoeconomics is related to secondary national interests of the country which are equally important. So, separate studies only on geopolitics or geoeconomics cannot analyze foreign policy precisely.

The logic of geoeconomics is a process that nation-states do not control in the Western world, as it is primarily driven by private-sector economic initiatives at the international level (Soilen, 2012, p. 10). But in socialist countries, the case is different. States themselves are involved in socialist countries like Cuba, North Korea, and pre-1980s China for overall geoeconomic plans and activities. Because of neoliberal domination, developing and underdeveloped countries have also provided all the space for private-sector geoeconomic initiatives. Nepal is also a case of providing such platforms to private sectors. Next, the private sectors in Nepal either can survive with the cooperation of Multi-National Companies (MNCs) which are guided and trained by capitalist countries, or are compelled to be closed due to adverse market/economic situations. Thus, MNCs have indirectly captured the geoeconomics of developing and underdeveloped countries. Thus, such countries are under the political radar of the neoliberal world.

Like geopolitics, Nepal is also in a very sensitive position in geoeconomics because the same geopolitical actors have geoeconomic interests as well in Nepal. C. D. Bhatta during an in-depth interview argues that geopolitics in later days is driven by geo-economics. Certain projects like connectivity projects came as a consequence of geo-politics. China and America came to know

that Nepal needs connectivity. So, this new momentum in geo-economics has risen (personal communication, December 16, 2022). Bhatta's argument seems true that there are companies that have higher GDP than the GDP of many countries in the world. Many individuals are richer than some of the countries in the world. The number of individuals has been even more influential in the world than in many small countries. The influence of Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and Mark Zuckerberg, etc. is higher than in some of the countries. This is because of the impact of geoeconomic policy of individuals who can easily influence the states and their policies. Therefore, geo-economics has been the determining factor of geopolitics in later days which has been implicating even Nepal's foreign policy significantly like in the case of MCC and BRI. All foreign loans, assistance, and investments are part of geoeconomics which indirectly influences the foreign policy adaptation and implementation.

G. L. Malla says that the budget for research in the field of foreign policy formulation is very small. It is also the effect of the geoeconomic capacity of Nepal because Nepal is unable to invest enough fund in the field of policy research (personal communication, September 2, 2022). The experts from all the fields are rarely included, even though they are selected based on their political affiliation. Malla's experience reflects the country's institutional lack of idea of how the state's experts can be linked with geoeconomic issues and opportunities. According to Malla, the report created by one committee of a government is discarded by another committee of the next government (G. L. Malla, personal communication, September 2, 2022). It will be sound and best if the government allocates a huge budget for the formulation of foreign policy and consultation with experts from different fields. So, Malla emphasizes that without being sensitive and serious by the state about geoeconomic matters, the country cannot successfully formulate, adopt, and conduct relevant foreign policy based on changing geoeconomic issues.

M. K. Bhattarai links geoeconomics with Nepal's sold state-owned factories. He raises issues that after the liberalization period of Nepal in 1990, Nepal sold its factories at a very low cost (personal communication, August 16, 2022). Before 1990, Nepal had lots of factories, but after 1990, in the name of privatization, the then-Nepal government sold the factories. Ever since then, Nepal has changed from a net export country to a net import country. This country's shift from a net export to a net import is only because of the wrong handling of geoeconomic issues by the government. If continues the same, Nepal will lose further. Hence, Nepal must consider the detailed research on geoeconomics and its impact on foreign policy before making any new decisions on foreign policy matters that relate to geoeconomics but at the same time, the geopolitical dimension should also be included.

P. K. Gyawali understands Nepal's geoeconomic situation between China and India as an opportunity. He says that it is an opportunity for Nepal to be between India and China once more, transporting its manufactured goods to neighboring countries and reaping economic benefits (personal communication, December 30, 2022). But the major thing before transporting Nepal's goods is that how Nepal can rapidly increase the production for exporting to our neighbours. Without production, Nepal is always compelled to import goods facing a huge trade deficit. In 2023, Nepal has a trade deficit with 133 countries out of 171 in total (Poudel, 2023, para. 1). The similar trend Nepal has been facing for decades is the central fault line of Nepali geoeconomics due to which Nepal can hardly achieve its secondary national interests and Nepal is unable to take right pace towards making favorable geoeconomic situation. Gyawali also considers foreign employment as a part of Nepali geoeconomics. He prioritizes the task of creating good relations with those countries so that Nepali citizens can work in a safe environment. As per him, this is very important for the geoeconomic aspect of Nepal in its

present condition. In 2023, almost 750,000 youths left their home country Nepal for foreign employment which is the record itself (Jha, 2023, para. 3). In 2021, Nepal received remittances from 63 countries (Statista Website), and in 2023, Nepal received the highest-ever remittances (NRs. 136. 97 billion) in a month from mid-September to mid-October, 2023 (The Kathmandu Post, 2023, para. 1). But the remittance is a temporary solution for contributing to Nepal's secondary national interest. For permanent financial resources, Nepal must build its national economy through the modernization of the agricultural sector, tourism development, rapid industrialization, herbal products, hydropower production, decreasing utilization of sophisticated goods like private vehicles, and other materials, building advanced academic system so that Nepali students can study in Nepal. Gyawali also accepts that geopolitics and geoeconomics are interrelated to each other. Likewise, S. D. Muni says that there are multiple aspects of Nepali geoeconomic aspects. In order to maintain political balance with both countries, economic prosperity is most important and this can achieve from close cooperation with its neighbours which contributes also to make geopolitics easier (personal communication, November 6, 2022). Nepal can get support and assistance from its neighbouring nations. According to him, Nepal's development cannot survive also without security as well as economic prosperity (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). It means these two discourses cannot travel separately in a country's political course. If geopolitics is at the center, geoeconomics revolves around it, and vice versa.

R. N. Pandey argues about Nepal's geoeconomics and that Nepal has been under the strategic radar of the USA, China, and India (personal communication, September 1, 2022). It indicates a discourse of "Trilateral Geoeconomics in Nepali Geopolitics". Chinese trains come to Nepal with their goods to be exported but they return empty, in such a situation there would be no

possibility for trains to work, Pandey argues, however, it is a matter of further research. There may be some reasons why China wants to bring trains to Nepal. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the largest markets in India and that is the reason why behind Chinese want to link with Nepal by train because it wants to get connected to Indian regions through Nepal (R. N. Pandey, personal communication, September 1, 2022). But the Chinese train will help Nepal to face any kind of economic blockade to be imposed on Nepal in the future by any other countries. Therefore, this is a tool to significantly change from controlled geoeconomics to independent Nepali geoeconomics. Hence, linking Nepal with either Chinese or Indian trains is the central priority of Nepali geoeconomics.

S. Sharma has a different opinion on geoeconomics. He claims that India has controlled most of the economy of Nepal (personal communication, August 8, 2022). Data also can prove that in Nepali geoeconomics, India is the dominant external actor. The biggest trade deficit of Nepal is with India. It is a sufficient example of how Nepali geoeconomics is dominated by Nepal's southern neighbour however, recently, the Chinese have also come up with their geoeconomic strategies. Thapliyal elaborates on geoeconomics on the basis of geopolitics. She claims that the government of India cannot do many things against Nepal. Otherwise, they will lose the Indian people's sympathy. Politicians of Nepal also know the relationship of Nepal with the Indian people. That is why, when King Gyanendra arrested their leaders, CPN-UML was sending emails to Indians for support (S. Thapliyal, personal communication, November 9, 2022). It is not only a matter of geopolitics, its influence on geoeconomics is also vital. She argues that when we talk only in terms of theories in geoeconomics, we would lose many dimensions. Because theoretical claims and pragmatic realities may be different. In international relations, the understanding of geopolitics and geoeconomics is different than the USA or India, Pakistan

everything matters (S. Thapliyal, personal communication, November 9, 2022). She argues that the USA, India, China, or any other predefined countries are not the only actors of geoeconomics. There are also new actors including other countries, international organizations, etc. Thapliyal has another claim about Nepali geoeconomics. She says that China and India are convergent for Nepal's Hindu population. Both countries are comfortable with Nepali Hindu people but the Christian community creates a problem for both China and India (S. Thapliyal, personal communication, November 9, 2022). She opines that Christian people go to the Nepal-China border with South Korean money. It is an open secret that which power supports South Korea. As Thapliyal claims, many other scholars have similar suspicions about the Christian population but there is no clear evidence that Nepali Christian people are invested by other Western countries. There are some Christian INGOs in Nepal like UMN, WVI, etc but it is not proven that these organizations have geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in Nepal. They seem active in community development in some districts of Nepal. But the next part is that the people who get the benefits from those organizations obviously may have a soft corner towards Christians and funding agencies. It may contribute in different ways to Nepali geoeconomics so that the economic status of some families, who engage with those organizations, may improve. But, as non-state actors, such activities may impact the country's foreign policy and so these incidents sometimes may be vital.

The Chinese experts' understanding of Nepali geoeconomics is that Nepal's external economy, as well as its politics, is dangerously dependent on India. H. Zhengduo argues that Nepali politicians seem too preoccupied with the power struggle to seize it and hence they often compromise with wrong agendas that affect Nepali geoeconomic circumstances (personal communication, September, 2022). He explicitly indicates that Nepali leaders compromise

national issues and agendas with those things that in fact do not support creating conducive geoeconomic environments for building the national economy. Moreover, H. Jing very briefly says that Nepal can benefit from China's developmental model for making Nepal's geoeconomics more conducive (personal communication, April 26, 2023). Likewise, G. Liang says that Nepal should be benefited from such "Trilateral Geopolitico-Economics". He argues that Nepal cannot deny India's security and economic issues and interests. Similarly, neither Nepal can escape from the US-led IPS and MCC nor China-led GSI, BRI, and GDI (G. Liang, personal communication, April 27, 2023). So Nepal is under the radar of such "Trilateral Geopolitico-Economics" which is a big challenge for Nepal's government to handle effectively, he emphasized. M. Templer believes in trilateral cooperation among India, China, and the USA for Nepal's conducive geoeconomic development for Nepal's prosperity (personal communication, August 18, 2023). He has some suspicions about the Chinese political treatment toward Nepal especially raising questions on US high-level visits to Nepal and Beijing's treatment towards Tibetan refugees but Templer believes that China will cooperate with India and the USA in Nepal's geoeconomic arena despite having some differences in security-related issues (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). Therefore, just as geopolitics has a serious impact on Nepal's foreign policy-making process, geoeconomics also has an equal influence and effect on foreign policy. So geoeconomics cannot be separated from the research of geopolitical issues in the foreign policy-making process. And, hence, it should be defined as a significant factor in the foreign policy-making process.

Here are a few data from the last five years presented and tried to analyze the geoeconomics of Nepal only to know the trend of Nepali geoeconomics in terms of three key external actors. The following table shows the aid received from India, China, and the USA as bilateral

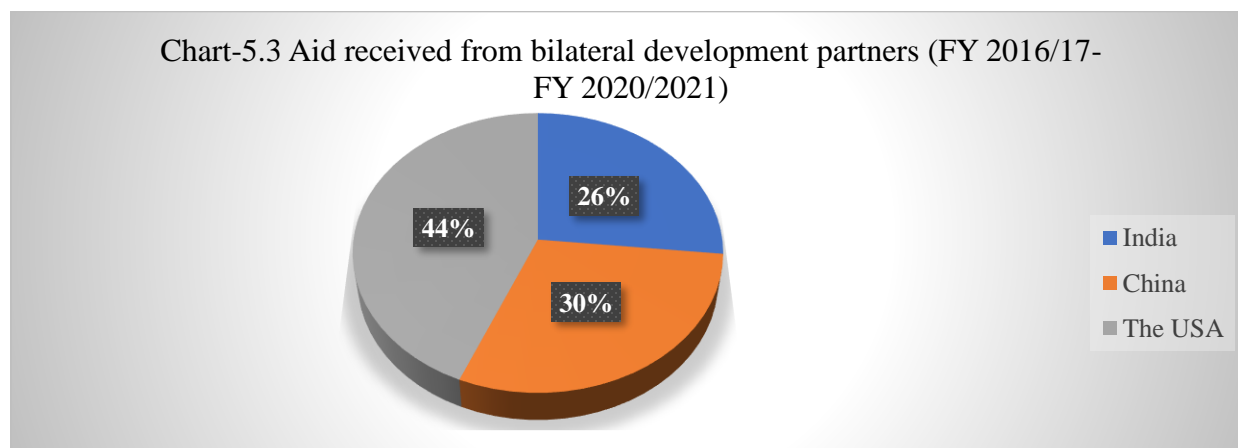
developmental partners under the discourse of geoeconomics. This is only an example that how key external geoeconomic actors are supporting Nepal.

Table 5.3 Aid received from bilateral development partners (FY 2016/17-FY 2020-21)

S. No.	Bilateral Development Partners	Amount of Disbursement (Million US Dollars)	Remarks
1	China	380.45	Aid Disbursement (in US\$) for Different Projects  (Grant, Interest-free loan & Concessional loan)
2	India	340.8	
3	The United States of America	558.9	

Source: International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance

The above-tabulated data are presented in the following Chart.



Source: International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

The above Chart shows that during the last five years, the US financial support is the biggest one among the three countries which holds 44 percent. China is in the second position out of the three but in this amount, the Chinese aid and loan are not separated. India is in the third position

which holds 26 percent of total aid received from these three countries. So, despite the claim of many experts that India is the key actor in Nepal, the data shows that India is not the key actor in Nepali geoeconomics. The USA is the key actor. So, the foreign policy also should be analyzed and adopted in the same way. The country that has more financial support, has also a greater vested interest of that country in aid recipient states. As mentioned in Chapter Two, especially since 2016/2017, US interest in Nepal has been increasing. Because of its Indo-Pacific strategy and MCC, the USA started dealing with Nepal directly and it seems that it has such a high level of interest in Nepal. But based on the analysis of economic relations and investment at the public level, it seems that India is the main geoeconomic external actor. However, it seems that India, China, and the USA should be dealt with seriously by Nepal not only from the geopolitical point of view but also from the geo-economic perspective and it should be reflected in its foreign policy.

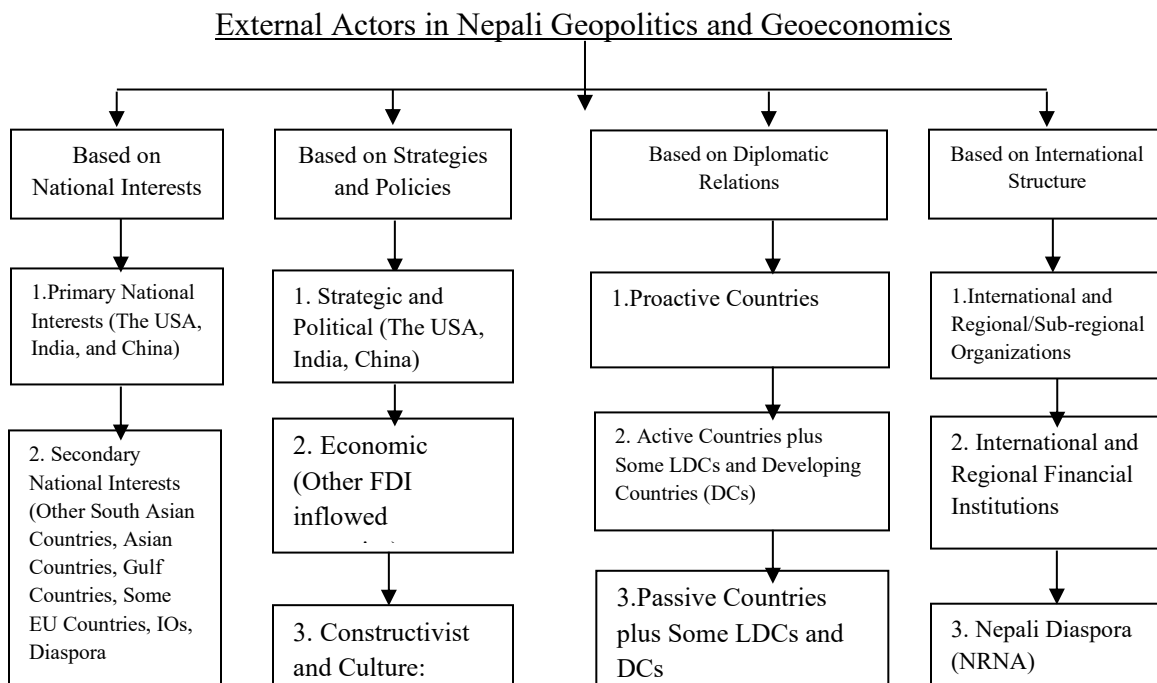
### **5.3 Geopolitical Actors and Nepal**

Many types of external actors are active in Nepali geopolitics. It does not seem that the nature, categories, and tendencies of those actors have been studied in an exhaustive manner. For a proper study and analysis of geopolitics and foreign policy, it is very important to study and analyze the external actors who affect the geopolitics in Nepal in one way or another by their involvement, interests, activities, or expressions. In this sub-chapter, an attempt has been made to analyze the opinions expressed by the experts during in-depth interviews conducted with them and also about various actors in some different frameworks. As discussed in in-depth interviews, most of the experts said that the major external actors connected with Nepal's geopolitics are the USA, China, and India. Only very few experts have said that some new actors have been added and new countries are trying to be active in Nepal in a new way.

According to S. R. Simkhada, there exist three major actors on the periphery of geopolitics and foreign policy in Nepal. The most influential actor is India, the second is China, and the third is the USA (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Similarly, G. Kochhar claims that there not only the USA, China, and India, but also some new actors in Nepali geopolitics like Pakistan. From the fundamental perspective, Pakistan is a new actor in the Nepali geo-religious dimension. She argues that Nepali *Madarasas* have been supported by Pakistani fundamentalist groups (personal communication, November 10, 2022). All other experts including M. Templer, M. P. Lama, R. K. Dahal (during an interview conducted via telephone conversation), H. R. Subedi, G. L. Malla, and G. Liang say that the USA, India, and China are the major external actors in Nepali geopolitics. But the researcher has tried to analyze it in a different way.

According to this study, the external actors are briefly analyzed critically as the following figure.

Figure 5.1 External actors in Nepali geopolitics and geoeconomics



Source: Self-prepared

The geopolitical actors of Nepal have been analyzed mainly from four dimensions.

- a) Based on influencing the national interest of Nepal
- b) Based on strategy and policy
- c) Based on diplomatic relations
- d) Based on international structure

***a) Based on influencing the national interest of Nepal***

Under this dimension, also two categories should be considered. The first is - external actors who affect or influence the primary national interest in one way or another. This entire study is focused on the involvement of these actors and the geopolitics of Nepal that arise because of them. The whole study has been done mainly based on these state actors. Their engagement has been affecting and influencing the primary national interests of Nepal. Those countries are India, China, and the USA, and their official media houses that promote their agendas in Nepal. In the same way, the external actors that influence the secondary national interest in one way or another are both state and non-state actors. Especially countries that focus on economic and cultural issues more than political and strategic interests and agendas such as South Asian countries other than India, Arab nations, European countries, and media houses close to them, Nepali diaspora and international organizations are included under this category.

***b) Based on strategy and policy***

This dimension includes three categories. The first category includes strategically and politically aggressive countries and international organizations related to those countries. India, China, the USA, and international organizations/institutions like the Indo-Pacific Strategy, Global Security Initiatives, SCO, G-20, BRICS, Belt and Road Initiatives, World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organization, AIIB, etc. fall under this category. In the second category of this

dimension, there are 57 countries including Japan, South Korea, Australia, Britain, France etc. that support Nepal financially only (Nepal Rashtra Bank, 2023, p. 20). The third category of this dimension includes countries that are significantly associated with religious, cultural, identity, and values. India, China, and the USA are also included under this category. India because of its Hindu culture, China because of its focus on expanding Chinese cultural values and Buddhism, and the USA because of its association with Christianity also fall under this category. Also, countries like Japan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, etc. due to Buddhism and its religious beliefs, countries including Pakistan due to Islam and related beliefs, and some European countries due to Christian religious beliefs have emerged as soft actors in Nepal's geopolitics.

***c) Based on diplomatic relations***

The actors of Nepal's geopolitics have to be analyzed from the third dimension as well. This dimension is the basis of diplomatic relations. There are also three categories under this dimension. The first category includes countries that are more proactive in their diplomatic relations with Nepal. In this category, India, China, and the USA fall which are very active. A country having the oldest diplomatic relations i.e., the UK, other countries which have opened their embassies in Nepal, and the countries in which Nepal has opened its embassies, belong to this category. Under the second category, even though diplomatic missions are not established, the diplomatic missions of one country have to look after the diplomatic missions of some other countries, and the countries that have to be active from time to time due to economic and social issues fall under this category. Similarly, the third category under this dimension includes countries with diplomatic relations but no direct linkage on any issue. Therefore, such countries are called passive countries. Such passiveness is reciprocal. It means that not only those countries but also Nepal is also becoming passive in such a bilateral linkage. It can also be called

the countries having only formal relations. In addition, the second and third categories under this dimension also include the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Developing Countries (DCs) as they deal with international issues such as climate change, economic development, and South-South cooperation together under the same global fora.

***d) Based on international structure***

This fourth dimension is equally important when it comes to the geopolitical actors of Nepal. Especially from the point of view of neorealism, the foreign policy and geopolitics of every country are influenced by the international structure to a great extent. Therefore, Nepal's geopolitical actors have been added as the fourth dimension based on the international structure. There are also three categories under this dimension. First, international/regional/sub-regional organizations such as the United Nations Organizations (UNO), the European Union (EU), BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), SAARC, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), Global Security Initiatives (GSI), BIN, etc. fall under the category. Actors in this first category tend to be more interested in political issues, in the areas of security, peace, and cooperation. The second category includes the World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organization (WTO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), MCC, BRI, etc. which are related to financial investment and cooperation. Another important category of this fourth dimension is the Nepali Diaspora, which has been contributing significantly to Nepal's national economy by sending remittances to Nepal for a long time. Therefore, this category has also been added as a very important actor in Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics.

Therefore, whatever the experts said during the interviews, those data seem insufficient in this case. Therefore, the researcher had to conduct a critical analysis of the external actors that influence the geopolitics and geoeconomics of Nepal by briefly studying and analyzing them

separately. As these actors have a deep impact on Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics, they automatically influence Nepal's foreign policy as well. Its impact and influence fall on the primary and secondary national interests of the country. Therefore, when analyzing the country's foreign policy, if geopolitics and geoeconomics, as well as the external geopolitical and geoeconomic actors that are connected to these two discourses, are not properly studied and analyzed, the study becomes insufficient. But the key external actors are obviously India, China, and the USA.

#### **5.4 Strategies and Counter Strategies of Major External Actors**

In this sub-chapter, the strategies and counter-strategies of three key external actors shared by experts during in-depth interviews are analyzed. R. Rae explains that there is a rising confrontation between China and the USA (personal communication, November 12, 2022). There is still an ongoing debate about the MCC project. Dhital has written a report in Kantipur National Daily regarding the cancellation of the MCC contract saying that the cost was high (2080 B.S., para. 1). The USA is investing 500 million US dollars in Nepal for the MCC project, basically for the construction of rural roads, transmission lines, etc. but the bidding and contract process is still in dilemma due to investment cost. According to Rae, the left-wing Communist Party of Nepal, in particular, saw this as harmful to China, claiming that it was part of the Indo-Pacific strategy. On the contrary, one of the left political Parties CPN (Maoist Center) played a crucial role in ratifying the MCC from the Nepali parliament whereas the current opposition party CPN (UML) had taken the neutral position. Rae's argument seems wrong because one communist party i.e. CPN (Maoist Center) played a central role in ratifying the MCC from the Nepali parliament. His next argument seems to some extent true because of China's unofficial lobby to take care of the Chinese security concerns. Since being a neighbour and having the one-

China policy, Nepal cannot do anything wrong against China. Moreover, Nepal also seriously cares about India's security interests due to being the next neighbour. So, Nepal took a long time to decide on the MCC Nepal wanted to ensure only the MCC's developmental priority rather than focusing on any strategic affairs to threaten the security interests of our neighbours. The United States and China publicly quarreled on this issue. Jianxue argues that The US push for Nepal in terms of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and its once again baseless slander over China demonstrate that the MCC is nothing more than a pact with the geopolitical purpose of targeting China (2022, para. 1). This is a very clear example of the China-USA contest in Nepal. So, many experts claim that the US strategy, engagement, and involvement in Nepal is to target China's rising influence in Nepal and South Asia whereas China wants to expand its economic, cultural, and political influence in Nepal, experts say.

R. Rae further says that the second example is that there is a huge energy business between India and Nepal (personal communication, November 12, 2022). An agreement has been signed between India and Nepal according to him. Shrestha writes a report on Nepal linked to India's real-time energy trade (2023, para. 1). Now Nepal is selling its energy to India. According to Rae's observation, India's one of the strategies in Nepal is the energy business (R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022). There is also huge criticism of India in Nepal that India wants to capture and control Nepali natural resources. Adhikari writes that the northern region of India is suffering from power shortages, and the fertile Gangetic plains there, in *Uttar Pradesh* and *Bihar* in particular, require water resources for irrigation. Nepali rivers flowing towards India are the only viable water sources for irrigation purposes in the Indian plains (2014, p. 113). This argument of Adhikari supports the argument that India wants easy access or control over Nepal's natural resources. The Koshi Pact, Gandak Pact, and Tanakpur (Mahakali) Pact made by

different governments of the Nepali Congress also prove the same argument. Therefore, India's easy access to or control over Nepali natural resources is one of its strategies for Nepal.

N. R. Nayak explores that traditionally, Nepal has been a monitoring post for the USA (personal communication, November 14, 2022). To some extent, the UK claims that it technically continues its long military kind of relationship with Nepal. The UK fees that Gorkha regiment and pre-colonial contact with connection to Nepal. The USA has been using Nepal as a monitoring post since the Cold War period. Their activities and movements doubled up or increased when they realized that China and India were emerging as two important Asian actors (N. R. Nayak, personal communication, November 14, 2022). From his statement, we can analyze that the US strategy is to contain both the Chinese rise and India's emergence in Asia. The US does not have any strong presence in any other South Asian countries like Afghanistan, they had a very difficult situation, and they were forced to withdraw from Afghanistan. Pakistan has a relatively good relationship but not a smooth relationship since for the last decade, they have improved their relationship with India but at the same time, they have lost their relationship with India and they have lots of differences with India. Nayak also agrees that there is not only a convergence between the USA and India in the case of Nepal but also some serious divergences exist.

There are many regional issues at the strategic level, there are certain issues but global trade and human rights issues, have differences with India also, Nayak highlights. Therefore, they feel that Nepal could be the most appropriate place where they can build up their presence, and strategy and they can monitor what is happening in the Himalayan region, what is happening between China and India also. China has always been sensitive towards Western power's presence in the Himalayan region. So, when the US presence increases, there will be reactions

from the Chinese side also. When China comes, there will be reactions from the Indian side also (N. R. Nayak, personal communication, November 14, 2022). So, being comparatively a weak state, it is very difficult for Nepal to manage these three major international actors. Nepal has become an intersection of the multiple security, economic, and cultural interests of the USA, China, and India (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). Because of such an intersection, lots of proclaims are happening in Nepal like a passage of MCC, and BRI projects, The US offers MCC and SPP, and China offers BRI. India also offers BBIN. In this situation, Nepal's diplomatic capability is most important to handle all these issues (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022).

R. Ranjan says that India has an interest that Nepal should not become allies of China. if China and Nepal become close, then India takes it as the opposite of their interest (personal communication, November 7, 2022). If Nepal becomes close to China, India perceives it as a threat (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022) which proves the continuation of Indian's sphere of influence in Indian academia as well. Nepal as an independent state can manage its relations based on its priority settings for the sake of its national interest but India, as Nepal's friendly neighbour, should not perceive it in that way. But, Nepal also should take care of India's serious concerns. Nepal is in such a position, where Nepal cannot ignore some genuine concerns and interests of any of its neighbors and another superpower focused on Nepal as a part of trilateral geopolitics. R. Ranjan opines that earlier, India was not so happy when the USA's engagement in Nepal. Now India has no problem with the USA's arrival with a new objective in Nepal to counter China (personal communication, November 7, 2022). Therefore, Indian experts have expressed their opinions in a way that reinforces the prevailing opinion in Nepal. That is, India's top strategy in Nepal is to stop China's growing influence. For this, India welcomes the

USA in Nepal by compromising on some of its differences with the USA. Also, during the interview, it was revealed that if India was in a position to stop China alone, it would not like the US presence in Nepal.

According to Ranjan, the Chinese interest is that, in the long run, Nepal should not be a partner to any other powers like India and the USA (personal communication, November 7, 2022). If the USA and India come together and if there is a conflict between India and China then Nepal should be independent, which China wants. For China, Nepal being independent is good but Nepal being independent is not favorable to India, he claims. So, this opinion seems to contradict the principle of Nepal's foreign policy. Similarly, M. P. Lama highlights India's strategic priorities in four points. These are National security (orthodox and non-traditional threats), development, market, and natural resources including water resources (personal communication, November 11, 2022). China's strategic priorities in Nepal are not to allow India's influence to expand, and to get access to India's mainland (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022; S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). China's next strategy is to stop Western influence and closely monitor them in Nepal (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). Similarly, the US strategic priority in Nepal is to stop China at its doorstep (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Moreover, lama highlights four categories of strategies of those three key external actors: a) Economic: trade, aid, and investment, b) Political: Influence on political parties, ideology, and institutions, c) Military: strategic interest, and d) Others: infrastructures (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Lama argues that those three external geopolitical actors have been engaged through these four types of strategic ways. About the USA's strategy in Nepal, he argues that to stop China on its doorstep, it made India a venue. So, it introduced MCC

to Nepal. Otherwise, there is no relation between the USA and Nepal except China is a neighboring country of Nepal, and hence the USA has an interest in Nepal, Lama argues. Other Indian experts have also similar views about strategies and counter-strategies of key external actors in Nepal.

L. Siwei, an Associate Professor at Sichuan University, China, says that China and India always think about their security matters in the case of Nepali geopolitics and hence they focus on the same strategically (personal communication, April 28, 2023). The security interest of Tibet for China and the threat of India's interest in the sphere of influence in Nepal for India are core factors affecting the Chinese and Indian strategic plans in Nepal. Liu also raises the same issue of access or control of Nepali natural resources especially on rivers (L. Siwei, personal communication, April 28, 2023) as M. P. Lama. She says India has invested in or controlled many rivers of Nepal to produce hydroelectricity. But, in fact, the Nepal government has not received the benefits as expected because Indian companies delayed finishing the work in Nepal (L. Siwei, personal communication, April 28, 2023). She further briefly discusses that India does not buy the electricity produced by the Chinese companies in Nepal. This is a huge hydro-geopolitical complexity of Nepal. Such kind of complexity impacts adopting the right foreign policy and implementing it in the right way. According to her, India wants to include Nepal in regional and international fora and make the same views on global issues through such platforms as BBIN and BIMSTEC, etc. The USA has also similar interests to the US's Nepal factor is China. Both India and the USA have similar strategic interests in Nepal i.e. China factor (L. Siwei, personal communication, April 28, 2023). She also highlights that India and the USA are trying to bring out Nepal from the BRI framework. Similarly, H. Jing, the Assistant Dean of Qinghai Minzu University, China, argues that India and the USA may not be doing very well and

they have been trying to interfere in Nepali internal politics and governance (personal communication, April 26, 2023). Why India and the USA are doing so? She did not want to reply maybe due to her professional circumstance. Likewise, L. Tao, a professor at Sichuan University in China, emphasizes that US engagement is increasing which may be a disaster in Nepal (personal communication, April 24, 2023). She opines that the relationship between Nepal and the USA is different from the relationship between Nepal and its neighboring countries. The USA is a distant state. She suggests Nepal be careful of the US engagement in Nepal because distant states do not care about the development of Nepal, she claims.

Nepali experts' views on the strategies of major geopolitical actors seem slightly different than Indian and Chinese experts. Nepali security expert P. S. Basnyat says that the USA wants to go to Tibet through Nepal using Kerong and other routes and reach Mongolia and Peking (personal communication, August 15, 2022). During the Malla age, the Malla kings of Kathmandu Valley had formally invited the USA. They aimed to go to Tibet through Nepal. This was stopped by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, he argues. Similarly, Basnyat claims that India wants to put Nepal's geography under its security umbrella. He says:

India is worried that it will not be able to take over or fully control Nepal's natural resources like the Nepali Rivers. After the rise of China and the introduction of BRI, the USA tried to encircle China's immediate neighbours. For the implementation of the US interest, leaders should accept it. The countries that accepted the US interest are Nepal, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. So, Nepal is strategically important to the USA. More the power of China and India increases, Nepal will suffer from strategic threats from other countries (P. S. Basnyat, personal communication, August 15, 2022).

As Basnyat says, the more powerful India and China become, the more geopolitical risks Nepal will face. Because Western powers do not want to see both India and China become powerful. Now the USA is leading the Western camp, if it becomes weak, another Western country will lead this camp. This is exactly linked with the "Trilateral Geopolitical Discourse" (See Chapter 5.1 for details).

S. Sharma says that India does not want to lose Nepal's business because Nepal's sole business and market are captured by India (personal communication, August 8, 2022). During informal talks with Chinese experts, they say that first Nepal should build hotels in Kathmandu based on Nepal's national economy, then only Chinese tourists can happily stay there otherwise Chinese people stay in Chinese hotels in Kathmandu. Chinese say that Chinese people may not stay in Nepali hotels in Kathmandu to boost Indian investment and economy. It creates a huge risk in Nepali financial sectors. Such kind of situation does not help Nepal to get prosperous economically. So, Sharma's claims seem true about Indian investment in Nepal. It is true that without foreign investment, Nepal cannot get rich at the initial phase but the question is how Nepal can manage the foreign investment of all countries and how Nepal deals with the financial security of them in Nepal. But, Sharma views that China and the USA are supporting Nepal positively and the relations with them is also good (personal communication, August 8, 2022).

S. R. Simkhada's opinion seems close to Sharma's in terms of the trend of relations between Nepal and the USA. He further highlights three phases of the US engagement in Nepal. Present time is one of the phases of the US engagement with Nepal amongst its three phases of engagement. The 1960s was the first phase, the second phase was the reaction to the friendship between China and Nepal during the Maoist movement, and what exists now in its present form is the Indo-Pacific strategy (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). The

overarching theme of dispute during the Cold War was communism vs capitalism, he argues. The same scenario exists in the present with the rise of Chinese power and Nepal has become the epicenter of it. So, based on Simkhada's analysis, apart from China and India, the USA has also come up with into force. He argues that after the US's powerful presence in Nepal, Nepal's geopolitics has started to look like *Odan i.e.* Tripod (A Nepali tool made up of iron with three legs to be used for cooking like on the stove) (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022) which is similar to the Trilateral Geopolitical Discourse in Nepal.

Simkhada expresses that historically, we can observe that China does not have territorial ambition in the south of the Himalayas. This is one of the reasons why we have had a good relationship with China which always remained the same despite the change in government (be it during the Rana regime, Kingship, or leadership of BP) (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). But this perspective however has changed for China, it is at such a stance that it does not want to listen to any antithetical views regarding Taiwan or Tibet. And as Nepal is near to Tibet China is more inclined to Nepal for the same reason. China has a foreign policy of 3 C's (Cooperate, Compete, and Confront) the same policy being applied to our homeland (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). It can be analyzed that if Nepal has good relations with China due to China's territorial non-expansion policy, Nepal's relations with India is problematic due to India's ambition to expand its territory.

Regarding India, Simkhada highlights that while talking about India, geographically we are connected by open borders, and historically we have had a continuous relationship with the said country so the obvious standing influence cannot be denied (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). As of present, India cannot be lumped into either US or Chinese camps, and because of its large size and other factors, it does not seem like India will go

to either of the camps. Another thing to be put into consideration is that India too is developing itself as a great power. So, Simkhada indicates that India is trying to conduct its activities strategically which supports to become India one of the great powers.

T. B. Karki says the USA always wants to maintain its supremacy over all to others. It wants no competition from any country challenging its status quo. This is a core strategy of the USA (personal communication, August 10, 2022). The rise of China and India in Asia has tended to the increment in the engagement of the USA in Nepal as Nepal geographically offers the best place to observe the rising neighbours of Nepal. Similarly, China has been keenly observing and monitoring the movements of the US government and the Indian government in Nepal. China's core strategy in Nepal is to actively monitor anti-China activities in Nepali territory (T. B. Karki, personal communication, August 10, 2022). Likewise, India's main strategy in Nepal, as per Karki, is India wants no countries to interfere in the affairs of Nepal except India implying a special relationship with Nepal characterized by the resemblances of culture and tradition between the countries. India is skeptical about anti-India activities in Nepali land of other countries like ISI concerns. Karki's argument seems just the opposite of Indian experts that India wants foreign powers like the USA and EU to assist Nepal through India, not directly to Nepal but Indian experts say that there is no problem for Delhi with US and Western engagement in Nepal because they target China, not India.

M. Templer says that the US policy or strategy in Nepal is to build a strong, sovereign, prosperous, and democratized Nepal. It is more official and our secret policy (personal communication, August 18, 2023). "We genuinely want a strong Nepal," he says. The USA does not want Nepal to get into the big gate, and to do things against its sovereignty of interest. The USA wants democracy and human rights. The USA thinks this is good for Nepal, he assumes. So

as per his statement, the USA does not compromise with democracy and human rights all over the world and also in Nepal. However, many global experts criticize that the USA is not fighting for democracy and human rights but for establishing its supremacy throughout the world.

Democracy is not only the freedom of people but also the freedom of states. But many countries are not free in this world due to the US realist approach and hegemonic power, many experts express.

M. Templer says that no one is dominating China not only in the globe but also in Nepal affairs while talking about geopolitical competition. They have been very successful themselves because China has stood up for itself (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). We salute them for this, and Nepal also should, he says. When comparing his such nice statements, it seems that his statements are quite diplomatic. All Indian and Nepali experts say that the USA has been engaged at the highest level, especially after the emergence of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. But in the meantime, he blames China that China has ignored the human rights of Tibetan refugees and also trying to control Nepal's US relations. He thinks that the US's high-level visits to Nepal and meetings with Tibetan camps and Tibetan refugees are part of US sovereign world affairs and China should not care about it. Templer further states that (Nepal) is not a place to put a gun to shoot Chinese people. It is a settlement where poor women refugee people are making carpets, not more than that (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). So, it is very aggressive on the part of its small Himalayan neighbour. It is none of their business. They get very angry when we talk about the rights of Tibetan refugees and Dalai Lama (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). How China treats its minorities is a serious problem of 21st-century sovereign world affairs, Templer argues.

Templer expresses an important statement. He says that the USA does not do things that make China angry because that makes China more aggressive. After all, it causes problems for India. This line proves that the USA wants to do good for India in Nepal. To do good for Delhi, the USA is compelled to make Beijing happy. He agreed with India's approach towards China in the case of Tibetan refugees and Dalai Lama. He argues that India keeps silent when the issue of Tibetan refugees and Dalai Lama is raised. The USA should also keep silent about it keeping the adverse effect on Delhi in mind but he says that their human rights should be protected and promoted.

## **5.5 Fault lines in Managing Geopolitics and Geoeconomics**

This sub-chapter focuses on finding out the answer to research question number two based on an analysis of earlier texts of this Chapter. Regarding the fault lines connected with Nepal's inability to address the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, based on a critical analysis of opinions shared by experts, the highlighted fault lines of Nepali geopolitics basically can be divided into two categories.

### ***5.5.1 External fault lines***

The external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics mainly include the involvement, interests, and strategic plans of external powers in Nepal. For detail, see sub-chapter 5.4 for strategies and counter-strategies, sub-chapter 2.8 to recap how the external actors are involved in cooperation and rivalry simultaneously, sub-chapter 2.9 and 5.3 to review the major geopolitical actors, 2.10 and 5.2 to remind the interests of those geopolitical actors in the Nepali market and how their engagement has been implicating Nepal's foreign policy, and whole chapter four to remember how external actors were engaged in Nepal's political affairs even from Lichchhavi age to federal democratic republican stage. As the three major global powers are intensively involved in

the politics of Nepal and due to the increasing long-term competition of those three powers, the concept of trilateral geopolitics is explained above in sub-chapter 5.1. Such kind of Tri-lateral geopolitics is a key factor affecting Nepal's foreign policy. These texts and analyses represent the external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics due to which Nepal has been facing critical challenges and difficulties in successfully managing geopolitics and geoeconomics.

Searching the answer to research question number three is based on views expressed by experts but these views are critically analyzed by the researcher without mentioning their names because many of the experts have expressed their views in confidentiality in most of the cases.

Because Nepal's two neighbors are rising and there are other powers as well, they wanted to claim their position in world history. In that context, there is a high chance that Nepal might be used as a launching pad. According to C. D. Bhatta, countries do not make policies as soft states like Nepal. Bhatta defines Nepal as a soft state, that does not make laws itself, does not make policy itself, and does not do politics itself (personal communication, December 16, 2022). He argues that Nepal does not do these three things itself and hence Nepal is a soft state. Foreign policy is not only about foreign affairs but also about development policy. Sustainable development goal is not only the objective of our country but also the objective of the United Nations Organization itself. So, Nepal is doing this to meet others' global standards but not to meet Nepal's national standards. This is also an external fault line of Nepali geopolitics.

Similarly, the territorial dispute with India at least in 71 border points including Limpiyadhura, Lipulek, and Kalapani is a serious fault line on Nepali geopolitics. Experts say that Nepal's geopolitics is becoming complicated because many other important bilateral issues will be overshadowed due to this unresolved border problem. This has been negatively affecting Nepal-India multilateral relations. By keeping this problem unsolved even in the rapidly

changing global context, the outdated argument that Nepal-India relations should be conducted in the traditional approach will be strengthened which is not in the interest of Nepal-India 21st-century relations.

Experts say that India's politics in Nepal guided by the notion of a sphere of influence and micro-management approach are other external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics. When India tries to influence every dimension of Nepal's politics unnecessarily, and when it is interested in micromanagement even the most common issues of Nepal, then Nepal cannot manage its geopolitics properly. Experts seem to have conflicting opinions on micromanagement. Some experts claim that it is an internal fault line, but the experts mostly argue that it is an external fault line and it seems that India has built a narrative that the micro-management issue is only due to the result of Nepal's internal politics. This narrative is carried out by many Nepali experts without any critical analysis of India's strategy behind the scenes. However, a truth from the Nepali side is that in Nepal's internal politics, the tendency to seek help from external forces is also seen as a secondary factor of the micromanagement issue. But the primary factor is India's interest and effort made for micromanagement in Nepal.

China's business-oriented Nepal affairs is another external fault line of Nepal's geopolitics. When the Chinese people talked to this researcher informally, it was found that their interest was focused on business, trade, and access to information. In formal forums and conversations, the Chinese say that they want Nepal's development, prosperity, and economic self-reliance, but in informal discussions, it has been seen that their psychology is more deviated towards economic and business benefits and access to accurate information about subtle political activities in Nepal. However, the US and India will also try to access such information, and all countries will operate their mechanisms to gather information on other countries' affairs in Nepal. In the informal

conversation with the researcher, it was found that the Chinese were a little more focused on such issues than Indians and Americans. In this way, the interest shown by the external powers in the internal political, economic, social, cultural, and religious activities of Nepal should be taken as another fault line in the geopolitics of Nepal, so that the internal geopolitics of Nepal has become more complicated.

Many Chinese and Indian experts have considered the massive and direct involvement of the USA in Nepal as a strong challenge. Especially since 2011/2012, the USA seems to have started looking at Nepal with its own eyes. Many experts have said that the USA is more involved in Nepal and monitor not only China but also India, Pakistan, and the entire Himalayan region in the future. Nepali experts have also expressed views that the USA is trying to prepare a base for joint military exercises with Nepal in the Himalayan belts of Nepal (near the Chinese border) through the SPP in the future. Experts say that the USA is not only been observing and monitoring Nepal's neighboring countries for a long time but also planning to enter the internal politics of these two neighbouring countries of Nepal in the cover of standing on India's side in the Indo-China dispute. A former ambassador of India to Nepal says that no bilateral, trilateral, or multilateral relationship is permanent and unconditional. If dimensions of such relations change in world affairs, today's friends may become tomorrow's enemy states, and today's enemy states may turn into tomorrow's allies. Therefore, he argues that some of the US's future activities can bring China and India together. He intended that if the USA takes the policy of encircling both China and India in the future, India and China can come together. Therefore, such a situation is also the next external fault line of Nepali geopolitics.

Many Nepali experts seem to consider the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship as another geopolitical challenge. Experts argue that the EPG report was worthless due to the different

views of India and Nepal on this Treaty. India wants to retain the same Treaty whereas Nepal wants its amendment and make the Nepal-India relations cordial based on equal and sovereign relations as per changing global and regional contexts. However, the opinions of Indian experts are different. They say that Nepal itself has no desire to amend the treaty. They claim that India has repeatedly asked Nepal to submit an alternative draft, but Nepal itself has not been able to submit such a draft. Whatever the case may be, indeed, Nepal and India's view of each other has not become so friendly because of this treaty. Hence, the geopolitics of Nepal is not becoming normal. Therefore, this treaty is also defined as another external fault line of Nepal's geopolitics.

Similarly, the trend of India to stop investment from other countries in Nepal has emerged as another challenge because India does not want investment from other countries in Nepal. By stopping the investment of countries other than India in Nepal's hydropower sector and not buying Nepal's hydropower by India produced by investments of other countries than India, has been making Nepal's geopolitics more critical. So, this is another external fault line of Nepal's geopolitics.

In the same way, Nepal, India, China, and the USA have been strongly connected with the issue of Tibet and Tibetan refugees for decades which has weakened Nepal's geopolitics the most. On the one hand, China continues to warn Nepal that there may be activities against it from Nepal under the cover of the human rights of Tibetan refugees. On the other hand, the United States is supporting the Tibetan refugees in Nepal based on its international humanitarian obligations (as the US diplomat claims) and it is necessary to directly monitor the proper utilization of the aid provided, so it is argued that the US officials should visit the camps of Tibetan refugees in Nepal (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). Also, since the exiled government of the Dalai Lama is in India and there is cooperation between India and

the USA on this issue, India is seriously connected with this issue in Nepal. Experts say that India may wish that Nepal does not create problems with India's obligations towards the exiled government. Due to the different types of involvements, influences, and pressures of these three countries on the same issue, Nepal is facing a huge challenge to manage its geopolitics in its way. Therefore, this issue has become an influential external fault line of Nepal's geopolitics.

Many other minor external issues can be considered as additional external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics, but only some of the major external issues highlighted above are explained here as external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics. Due to these major external fault lines, Nepal is facing a challenge to manage its geopolitics in a way that is perfectly suitable to the national interests of Nepal and this is having a serious impact on the formulation and implementation of Nepal's foreign policy.

China is rising as a superpower so the United States has also arrived in this region from another point in the future Himalayan geopolitics which is to be led by China. This situation is the basis of upcoming international relations and the center of international relations has been brought to the Himalayan region which is connected to us. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter Two, the situation where this region is becoming a New Heartland of world politics (21st Century Geopolitical Heartland) is said to be another external fault line of Nepali geopolitics.

### **5.5.2 *Internal fault lines***

For internal fault lines of Nepali geopolitics, experts' views are critically analyzed. One of the reasons behind Nepal's lack of gradual growth and development was that policies were not research-based, were not people-centered, and were instead focused on how they could keep their ruling party in power. Though some of the experts claim that Nepal's foreign policy is research-based, many of the experts reject this claim. Most experts say that there is a serious lack

of research to critically analyze the geopolitics, geoeconomics, and foreign policy of Nepal. Since there is no practice of state-led research-based foreign policy and diplomacy, the diplomatic arena of Nepal is unable to deal with external actors based on knowledge, uniformity, and consistency. Because of such a situation, diplomats (especially politically appointed) cannot enhance and upgrade their diplomatic skills resulting in bad diplomatic practices with great powers.

No sufficient and scientific arrangement of Nepali Think Tanks based on the country's need assessment, a lack of scientific restructuring and budget provision for existing think tanks, an inability of the state to provide priority-based research topics year-wise to those think tanks, no plan to make the existing think tanks in global standard, and failure to conduct world-class foreign policy related global dialogue have become an internal fault line of Nepal's geopolitics. Because of such a situation, there is a lack of environment for study and research which makes the country's knowledge domain also weak. Similarly, experts claim that on the one hand, foreign policy is extremely politicized, on the other hand, it is extremely bureaucratized (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). Because of the bureaucratized system, there is a lack of proper research, and large discourses with professionals, therefore Nepal has not been able to move/define with the changing context. It has posed problems and challenges in national power, and foreign policy has not been able to shape/determine internal politics as well.

It seems that a country with a relatively small economy does not have the psychological ability to deal with the world's first, second, and fifth largest economies in terms of geopolitics and geoeconomics, and due to its small economy, Nepal's diplomacy cannot be strengthened because it cannot invest abundantly in the diplomatic arena. Therefore, the small economy has become another internal fault line of Nepal's geopolitics.

Our political parties are heavily dependent upon external support for their successful internal politics which is an open secret and also irony of Nepali geopolitics. Therefore, most of them cannot take a stand on national issues, agendas, and interests while dealing with external actors. Moreover, they lack national aspiration and are psychologically dominated by geopolitical actors. In such a situation, they cannot do clear, bold, true, and trustworthy dealing with those kinds of actors and hence Nepali diplomacy loses its trustworthiness (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). So, this is also another internal fault line of Nepali geopolitics.

The experts say that here is a bad trend of not properly appreciating and recognizing the knowledge, skills, and expertise of independent experts who are not closely related to any political parties and are not interested in being involved in those parties. Political parties mostly ignore them while appointing diplomatic and political appointments, and also ignore to adopt the process of such appointments through the 'talent hunt' method. Such a situation is also another internal 'fault line' of Nepali geopolitics.

Experts say that the failure of all parties to have a common consensus on national issues related to foreign policy and the fact that the benefits of the parties and leaders are given the first priority rather than the national interest is an internal geopolitical fault line. Some experts say that foreign policy is losing its spirit in the name of balancing the legitimate/illegitimate interests of the powerful countries in the course of its implementation rather than focusing on the national interest of the country. Likewise, some other experts say that the security policies, economic policies, and foreign policies of Nepal are not integrated and made the foreign policy document comprehensive based on rapidly changing global and regional security, economic, and diplomatic issues and challenges.

In addition, since people are sent based on access and payment rather than knowledge and ability in diplomatic missions, Nepal's diplomatic field is in the hands of unskilled and knowledge-less persons. Internal political conflicts and cult competition within the parties also are some of the reasons why political parties are unable to appoint good and capable people to the Foreign Ministry or as ambassadors. This is also a geopolitical internal fault line of Nepal.

The inability of the Nepali government and political parties to understand the rapid geopolitical changes in the world is also an internal fault line of Nepali geopolitics. This depends on the well-arranged think tanks of the country, the genuine identification and mobilization of experts, the management of capable people in important positions of the country, meaningful collaboration with universities, the situation of critical study, and the environment of opinion formation in the country, and the national budget allocated in the field of academic and policy research.

Experts also say that extreme political instability and the inability to have strong coordination between the Ministries, and the Office of the Prime Minister on many serious issues is also an internal fault of Nepal's geopolitics. Experts believe that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the front-line country's diplomatic institution that conducts foreign policy and diplomacy and maintains the diplomatic code of conduct in order but because the Prime Minister's office has a practice of vertical intervention in most issues of foreign affairs, geopolitics, the country's foreign policy, and diplomacy have not been strengthened and diplomatic continuity is lacking. Moreover, various issues are to be dealt with by diplomats while conducting their profession. For instance, the diplomats have much to discuss about food, climate change, security, trade, and much more. All of these things cannot be done by a single minister, so the work needs to be

divided among the ministries. However, due to the lack of coordination between the ministries in Nepal, the negotiations are not being effective.

According to M. K. Bhattarai, the country's leaders either should be 'Talent' or should have a strong team of 'Group of Talents' (personal communication, August 16, 2022). But Nepali leaders neither are 'Talent' persons in the foreign policy arena nor have such a strong team of 'Group of Talents'. They do not entertain such 'Talents' who have the competencies to guide the leaders but they just enjoy with their puppets who worship leaders.

Similarly, one of the experts says that if Nepal analyzes comparative national power, the country is declining, domestic policy and foreign policy interface is also unstable and transitional. For example, BP Koirala supported Israel while India was against it, which hindered the relationship of Koirala with Nehru and thus it didn't serve the domestic affairs of the state. Later King Mahendra put Koirala in jail but continued his foreign policy and visited Israel as well and such relation was continued by King Birendra as well. What this shows is that the conflict between the King and the political parties was another internal fault line of the geopolitics of Nepal in the past and such a problem seems to be repeated in the republican governance system as well. The conflict between the President and the Prime Minister during Prachanda's first tenure confirms the conflict between the Head of State and the Head of Government. So, this is also another internal fault line of Nepali geopolitics.

Similarly, another very important thing is that there is no scientific management and practice of institutional memory systems in Nepal's foreign affairs. History and evidence are very important in foreign policy formulation, implementation, and diplomatic dealings. Without it, the country's foreign relations cannot be effective. However, the fact that the government and

political parties are neglecting the quite important matter is another internal fault line of Nepal's geopolitics.

Indian experts say that Nepal has not been able to make foreign policy decisions and diplomatic practices credibly and transparently (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022; and others. They insist that Nepal does not need to maintain a balance and such a balance is not possible in international relations. They commented that Nepal has lost credibility and transparency in the name of balance.

Some of the experts claim that the wrong notion of 'special relations' with India vs realpolitik practices is also a fault line of Nepali geopolitics. Because while dealing with many bilateral issues, experts have commented that India is weakening the Nepali side's diplomatic dealings and issues with the concept of 'special relations'. Because it seems that the concept of 'special relations' in international relations is wrong. 'Sovereign Relations' or 'relations of equality' are considered to be the norms and values of international relations. Not being able to convert the wrong concept and practice of this kind of 'special relations' into practice is considered to be another fault line of Nepali geopolitics.

In this way, because of the aforementioned external and internal fault lines of Nepali geopolitics, Nepal does not seem capable of addressing the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities while formulating and implementing Nepal's foreign policy scientifically. To rightly, pragmatically, and scientifically formulate and implement Nepal's foreign policy, the above external and internal fault lines should be entirely corrected and the country should show the courage to do it, otherwise, repetitions of fault lines will occur continuously. The above fault lines are shown in the below figure.

Figure 5.2 Internal and external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics



*Source: Self prepared based on primary qualitative data*

The above figure shows the internal and external fault lines of Nepali geopolitics systematically. This figure is drawn to compare the weightage of both fault lines. There are eighteen external and twenty internal fault lines of Nepali geopolitics as per this study. The number of fault lines may be increased or decreased by a few couple of numbers however the picture of the fault lines will be almost similar. The figure shows that there seems almost a balance in the weightage between both fault lines. It means the Nepal government or political parties should focus on both fronts to correct them equally. But the situation seems too hard to easily correct those fault lines by the existing foreign policy, and diplomatic systems and mechanisms. So, revolutionary revision in the political, diplomatic, and foreign policy domains is mandatory.

## CHAPTER-SIX

### ROLES OF GEOPOLITICS AND GEOECONOMICS IN FOREIGN POLICY

#### FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

##### 6.1 Major Actors of Nepal's Foreign Policy

Talking about foreign policy actors, some authors have defined state actors and non-state actors. Other authors and analysts have analyzed Sub-National Governments (SNG) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as actors of foreign policy. Some other scholars have said that individual and institutional actors are the actors linked to foreign policy. However, regardless of how it is defined, if we understand what the actors of foreign policy do, we can identify them well. In general, the actors of foreign policy do not only make decisions about foreign policy issues but also participate in and influence the decision-making process, not only providing advice and suggestions but sometimes also doing things like creating pressure on the higher authority to change decisions as they want and benefit in foreign policy decision-making processes.

The nature of the foreign policy actors of developed countries and the foreign policy actors of Least Developed Countries (or developing countries) like Nepal tend not to be similar in all cases. M. K. Bhattarai says:

The creation of foreign policy among nations around the world depends upon the system of that nation. For example, in the United States of America, the head of state, along with the National Security Council and State Department, creates and executes the foreign policy of the United States. In Britain, the prime minister, with the involvement of foreign ministers and ambassadors, creates the foreign policy of the United Kingdom. In the communist states, like the former USSR, the Politburo used to create and determine

the foreign policy of the USSR. Similarly, in Nepal, the prime minister handles the task of formulating foreign policy (M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022).

Based on such kind of differences between the foreign policy actors of developed and developing countries, it is necessary to identify the actors of Nepal's foreign policy. Such actors are also there to contribute or influence the foreign policy-making process from domestic and external affairs. According to the specific local context of Nepal's foreign policy, the actors of the foreign policy are analyzed at the end of this sub-chapter. However, before that, the opinions expressed by experts during the interview on this matter are analyzed. The external actors of Nepal's foreign policy and the geopolitical actors mentioned in Chapter 5.3 are the same. But here, domestic actors are tried to analyze. In general, most of the experts have expressed the same opinion on this matter. Therefore, only the opinions of a few experts have been analyzed here.

C. D. Bhatta says, in one time period when there was Panchayat Rule, the Palace was used to decode the foreign policy of Nepal (personal communication, December 16, 2022). It means the key actor of Nepal's foreign policy at that time was the Palace. However, they also used to discuss with other stakeholders. After the 1990s, political parties actively played a role in the foreign policy drafting process. It brought out the situation that political parties as new institutional actors in Nepal's foreign policy were added in the post-1990 period. Now, the foreign policy of Nepal is more individualistic and ideological. According to Bhatta, it is hard to say about the foreign policy actors of Nepal due to the unknown role in making Nepal's foreign policy (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). He indicates that there is a higher influence of some very few individuals in making foreign policy decisions whether they

may be foreigners or national. Because, in Nepal, the Prime Minister himself cannot make the right decision on foreign affairs independently (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). So, influential individuals are also actors in Nepal's foreign policy as per Bhatta. The present political economy has made it possible for even an individual to influence foreign policy. Earlier the state used to use individuals to make foreign policy. Now, individuals use the state to make foreign policy for their interests (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022)

Basically, the legislature of a state creates foreign policy, and such foreign policy is thereafter implemented by the executive body of a state. So, the legislature and executive head of the state are also the actors in the foreign policy of Nepal. There is a famous statement that the head of state and head of government are the top diplomats of a country. Because they make a final decision on foreign policy issues. Hence, they are the highest level of foreign policy actors. There is a gap between state survival and social interaction (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). This minimization of this gap should be the major concern of Scholars, ministers, and experts. So, as per his argument, Ministers, experts, and various scholars are also actors in Nepal's foreign policy but experts and scholars do not have primary roles like Ministers.

H. R. Subedi perceives the actors of Nepal's foreign policy differently. He says Nepal is in a very critical situation. Qualified experts and individuals are not provided with the right platform to serve the nation (personal communication, August 18, 2022). He claims that Nepal is a country where even ambassadors are appointed based on the amount of money received by politicians from appointed persons. Because of the bad situation in Nepal, we cannot clearly say about the real actors of Nepal's foreign policy, he opines.

J. N. Khanal uncovered one thing about the foreign policy actors of Nepal. While making decisions on the country's foreign policy, Nepal cannot ignore the norms and values it adopted in the constitution (J. N. Khanal, personal communication, August 19, 2022). Based on Khanal's argument, such kind of norms and values like UN charters, international law, world peace, Panchsheel, non-alignment, and peaceful co-existence are also silent actors (but not active actors, we can say that they are silent actors of the foreign policy of Nepal) of Nepal's foreign policy because Nepal cannot ignore these values while making decisions on foreign policy. Interpretative declaration before ratifying the MCC is the best example of the role of those kinds of silent actors. Because of the belief in non-alignment, Nepal needed such an interpretative declaration before ratifying the MCC.

K. Bashyal has similar views to Bhatta that before 1990, the Royal Palace itself was the Prime actor in Nepal's foreign policy, and later, political parties rose as key actors in Nepal's foreign policy (personal communication, September 2, 2022). M. K. Bhattarai also says that the executive head is the top actor in Nepal's foreign policy. He further describes that along with the highest role of the prime minister, the roles of foreign ministers, secretaries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), advisors, experts, the defense minister, the finance minister, the home minister, and ambassadors also play roles in the creation of foreign policy (personal communication, August 16, 2022). Therefore, these all are also actors in Nepal's foreign policy. Bhattarai also highlights the significant role of individuals. He mentions that in the USA, John F. Kennedy's team of experts and advisors was called the "Ministry of Talents." His biography has been written with a chapter on his talents. Similarly, Richard M. Nixon was known as an extremely intelligent president of the USA (Richard Nixon Foundation, n.d.). Bhattarai argues that the President, who established the Ministry of Talents (The president who massively

mobilized experts and the best brains of experts rather than applying his own best intellectual thinking) was more successful in the USA than the intellectual president. Similarly, Jawaharlal Nehru was a talented individual in India. Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi used to gather experts to form teams. Nepal should do the same and use them to develop foreign policy. China, India, and other countries have been doing this for a long time. So, individuals due to their best approach to working, are also significant actors in foreign policy in Nepal. King Prithvi Narayan Shah had both kinds of competency i.e., he was himself an intellectual King and also could mobilize numerous experts in various fields for nation building process.

Like J. N. Khanal, N. Acharya also says that there is a significant role of the constitution and laws in making and implementing foreign policy (personal communication, September 4, 2022). So, constitutional provisions are also 'Silent Actors' of Nepal's foreign policy like global norms, values, and discourses (Principle of Panchsheel, Non-alignment, etc). Moreover, Acharya considers think tanks, universities, bureaucracy, political parties, pressure groups, media houses, local NGOs, corporate houses, and even celebrity individuals as actors in Nepal's foreign policy but he mentions that pressure groups, media houses, local NGOs, corporate houses, and celebrity individuals play an indirect role to influence the decision-making process. So, these are 'indirect actors' of Nepal's foreign policy.

As per P. K. Gyawali, think tanks, political parties, experts, scholars, and professors are also actors in Nepal's foreign policy. He says that in the preparation for a national dialogue on foreign policy for making a draft of Nepal's foreign policy-2077 B.S., the experts were invited to the event so that they could effectively make their points in the dialogue (personal communication, December 30, 2022). Several scholars, professors, and think tanks were also invited to this dialogue. Similarly, P. S. Basnyat, S. Sharma, and Tara Bahadur Karki claim that

the Nepal Army is also one of the important actors in Nepal's foreign policy (P. S. Basnyat, personal communication, August 15, 2022; S. Sharma, personal communication, August 8, 2022; T. B. Karki, personal communication, August 10, 2022). The outstanding contribution of the Nepal Army to global peace operations via the UNO has most contributed to Nepal's foreign policy matters, they claim. R. Bhattarai also agrees with all the above actors in Nepal's foreign policy but he emphasizes that the government has to map on strengths and weaknesses of those actors (R. Bhattarai, personal communication, May 17, 2022).

According to the fact of S. R. Simkhada, the top roles and responsibilities in foreign policy making and executing with decisive authority are with the executive head i.e., the Prime Minister of Nepal, like M. K. Bhattarai. He says that the Key role is the executive head of the state, the deciding role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Ideally, what should be the case is that the overall dimensions of foreign policy should be determined firstly, by its history, geography, etc. Secondly, the legislative process should define broad parameters based on the current context, and lastly, by the policy which should be formulated by the executive and implemented by the foreign minister. Therefore, the executive head, legislature, and foreign minister are the key actors in Nepal's foreign policy, as per Simkhada's views.

Based on the above views of various Nepali experts, actors in Nepal's foreign policy are summarized below.

**a) *Based on borderlands***

Under this category, two types of actors are analyzed: a) *International actors* which are discussed in Chapter 5.3. and, b) *Domestic actors* which are: HoS/HoG, Minister for Foreign

Affairs, Other Ministers, Ambassadors, Political Parties, Think Tanks, Experts, Scholars, and all organizations that are directly and indirectly linked to foreign policy matters.

***b) Based on the level of influence***

The researcher has analyzed three types of actors under this category: *a) Highly influential* are HoS/HoG, Minister for Foreign Affairs, legislature, constitutional provisions, treaties, and diplomats; *b) Medium influential* are other Ministers, Nepal Army, Think Tanks, Universities, Corporate Houses, internationally renowned experts in this domain, Media Houses; *c) Low influential* are Pressure Groups and rest of other actors.

***c) Based on the nature of activeness***

Two types of actors are analyzed under this category: *a) Active actors* are all institutions and individuals related to foreign policy matters, *b) Silent actors* are All constitutional, bilateral, and multilateral documents (global norms/ values, constitution, treaties, agreements, MoUs with other countries and IOs.

***d) Based on formality***

State and non-state actors are analyzed under this category. The *state actors* are HoS/ HoG, Ministers, other Ministers, diplomats, diplomatic missions, Nepal Army, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries, etc. whereas NGOs, Media Houses, Pressure Groups, Diaspora, Political Parties etc. are the *non-state actors*.

***e) Based on national interest***

Two types of actors are analyzed under this category: *a) Actors who contribute more to Primary national interests* are the first type. Government and its influential organs are under the first type of actor; *b) Actors who contribute more to Secondary national interests* are the second

type. All other actors that focus on for country's economic prosperity are the second type of actors under this fifth category.

**f) Based on association**

All the institutions which play a role in the foreign policy domain are the *institutional actors*. Scholars, Experts, Professors, internationally renowned persons etc. are the *individual actors*.

**g) Based on roles**

Under this category, also two types of actors are analyzed. a) The *actors having central roles* are the first type. These actors play vital roles on making and influence the decision-processes like HoS /HoG, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Other Ministers, Nepal Army, Diplomats, etc. b) The *actors having peripheral roles* are the second type of actors. These actors generally are not in the place of the central role in making and influencing the foreign policy-making decisions process.

## **6.2 Institutional Mechanism of Nepal's Foreign Policy**

The institutional mechanism of Nepal's foreign policy from the Lichchhavi age to the Panchayat years is briefly mentioned in Chapter Four. During the Lichchhavi and Malla age, there was no formal institutional mechanism to formulate and conduct foreign policy. Kings themselves used to declare the relations with tiny states within Nepali territory and the relations with Tibet and Southern neighbour as well. King Prithvi Narayan Shah, had established a room popularly called *Jaishi Kotha* from where King Shah used to conduct the whole foreign affairs (see Chapter Four) of the then unified Nepal especially the relations with Tibet and China (Website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs). That was the first formal institution of Nepal to look after foreign affairs at that time. Bhimsen Thapa converted *Jaishi Kotha* to *Munsi Khana* for the same purpose because he tried to deliver innovatively and hence, he changed *Jaishi Kotha* to

*Munsi Khana*. However, he retained Jaishi Kotha as a unit of *Munsi Khana*. So, the *Munsi Khana* was established as a greater division to conduct the foreign affairs of Nepal during Bhimsen Thapa.

Janga Bahadur Rana continued the Bhimsen Thapa's *Munsi Khana* for his foreign affairs and policy conduct and expanded it in various divisions at different times of the Rana regime, certainly with necessary its restructure from time to time. It was expanded Jang Bahadur Rana into three units named 'British India Division', 'Jaishi Kotha', and 'Munshi Captain's Office'. From this restructuring, it indicates that British India was the highest priority in Nepal's foreign affairs. Chandra Shamsher Rana further expanded the divisions into a) Jaishi Kotha b) Sadar Amini Goswara c) Seema Survey d) India – Great Britain Division e) Munshi Captain's Office, and Singh Durbar Farmaisi Adda as an associate division. After 1934, the *Munshi Khana* was mentioned as the Foreign Department in English correspondence. It was then upgraded to the level of a department where a Director-General was appointed to look after it. *Munshi Khana* generally used to have appeared to act under the direction of the rulers and make correspondence with offices opened in India and Lhasa. The offices opened in India and Lhasa were "*Alaichi Kothi*" in Patna, the *Vakil Office* in Lhasa, the *Honorary Vakil Office* in Banaras, and the *Office of the Vakil in Calcutta*. The latest one was later shifted to New Delhi (Website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

After establishing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only in 1951, the government started to conduct its world affairs through this ministry. To globalize and diversify the country's relations, diplomatic relations with various countries were quite important and to rapidly establish foreign relations, the foreign services under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were expanded in a huge range. Under this Ministry, various political divisions like the UN Division, Europe America

Division, North East and South East Asia Division, South Asia Division, Protocol Division and Administration Division, etc. In this way, the institution mechanism was developed from King Prithvi Narayan Shah to the 1950s. The current institution mechanism was the continuation of the same Ministry of Foreign Affairs established in 1951. Regarding institutional mechanisms, experts have expressed their opinions which are analyzed below.

Actors and institutional mechanisms are interrelated in the foreign policy decision-making process. After the discussion on actors who participate in and influence the foreign policy-making process, the institutional mechanism, especially the mechanism of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that either participates in the foreign policy-making process or plays the key role in implementing, is equally important.

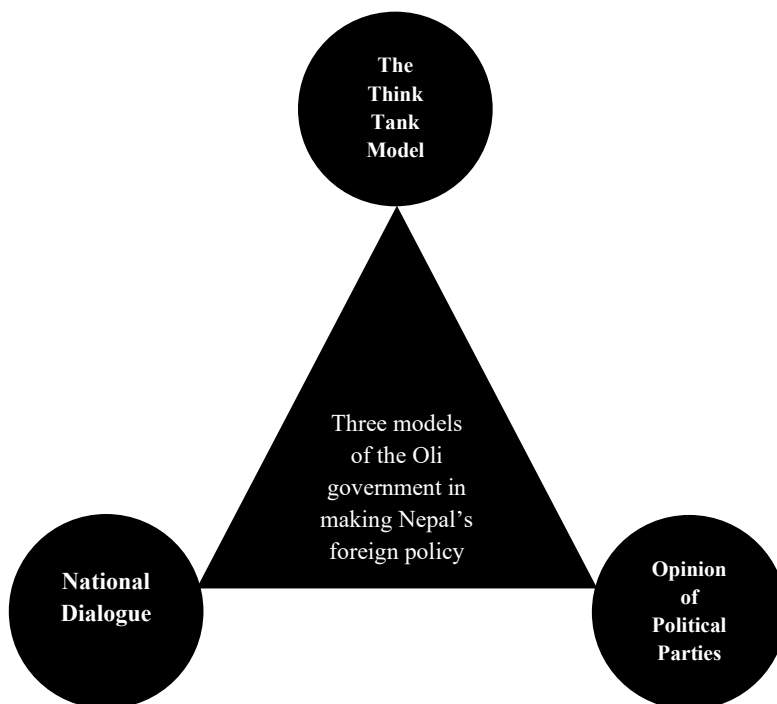
P. K. Gyawali says:

Nepal had no authentic and codified foreign policy; its foreign policy was scattered in various acts, policies, and the constitution of Nepal. In the past, Nepal lacked a clearly defined and authentic foreign policy. Nepal created several committees for drafting concrete foreign policy in Nepal in different periods. During the tenure of the late Giriji Prasad Koirala in 1992, there was formed a task force and its coordinator was Uddav Dev Bhatta. Similarly, another task force was made in 2006 while KP Oli was the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The next committee was built in 2015 while the Prime Minister was the late Shushil Koirala and Prakash Sharan Mahat was the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The coordinator of that committee was Shreedhar Khatri. However, the government did not endorse these committees' reports as the authentic foreign policy of Nepal. This created confusion about the real foreign policy of Nepal and resulted in a subjective

interpretation of foreign policy (P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022).

The main analysis of Gyawali's description is that there is not a well-managed, scientific, systematic, and established institutional mechanism in practice for the foreign policy decision/making process. Many other experts have also expressed similar views. In this dilemma, Gyawali tried to make the foreign policy-making mechanism more transparent and systematic, as per his opinion. He tried to make the foreign policy drafting procedure more comprehensive and inclusive based on three models: a) The Think Tank Model, b) Opinion of Political Parties, and c) Initiation of National Dialogue (P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022). He claims that as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, he tried to materialize these three models in his foreign policy-making approach as shown below in Figure.

Figure 6.1 Three models-mechanism of foreign policy making during Gyawali's tenure in Ministry of Foreign Affairs

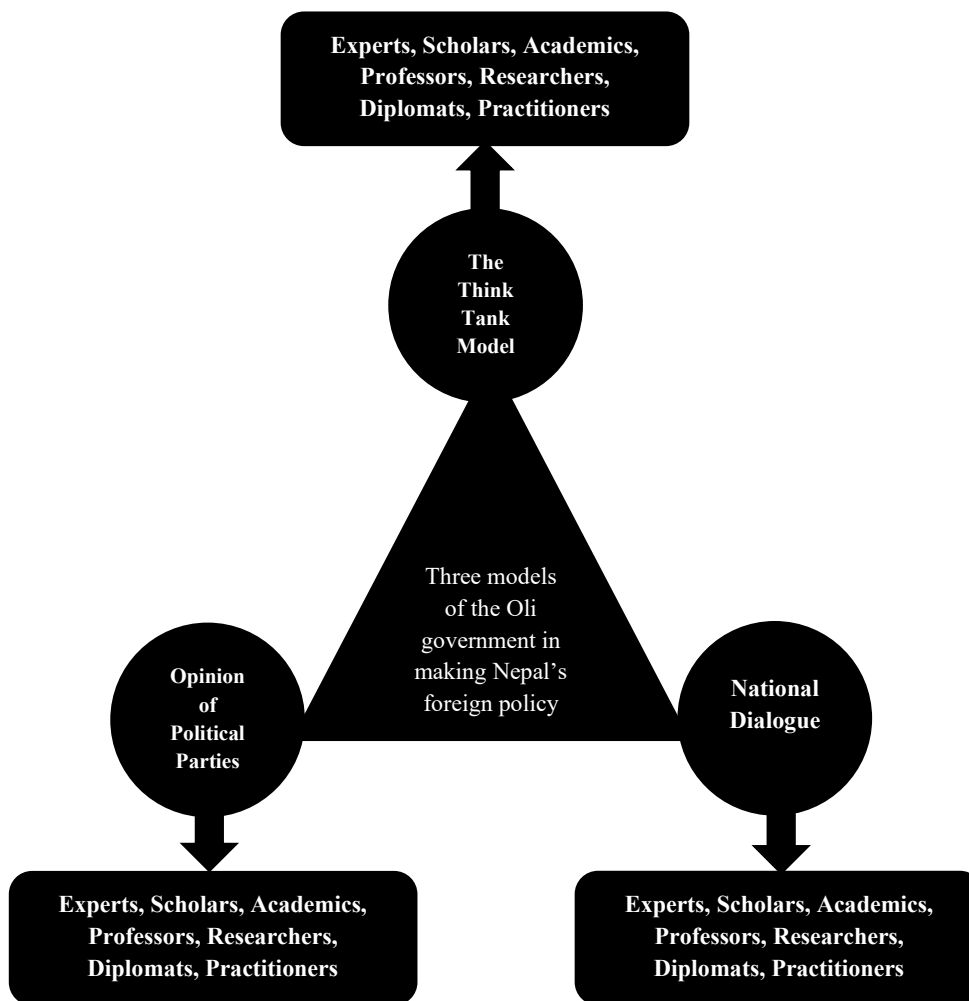


*Source: Self-sketches by the researcher*

The above figure shows a mechanism of foreign policy-making followed by the Oli government. According to Gyawali, he mobilized think tanks like the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Policy Research Institutes (PRI), and the University's concerned departments under the think tank model. Under his second model, the government discussed with political parties related to their foreign policy. According to him, key leaders of political parties or other prominent leaders recommended by the Party Chairperson and representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) were involved in the deliberation of the suggestions. It should be the practice of parties' DFA to discuss agendas related to foreign policy in the department and to collect suggestions from the members of the department and submit them to the party leadership. But, such kinds of practices are not well-managed and organized according to one of the members of a political party. Similarly, the third model is related to national dialogue inviting experts, scholars, professors, researchers, academics, diplomats, and practitioners.

Model-wise analysis seems like this in below figure.

Figure 6.2 Role of individuals in foreign policy-making mechanisms



*Source: Self-sketched by the researcher*

The above figure shows the role of individuals as experts in foreign policy-making mechanisms. Think Tank like IFA, PRI, and other independent Think Tanks conduct conferences based on the expertise of individual experts. Opinion of political parties also depends upon the role of individuals i.e. key leaders or experts within the party structure. Similarly, the national dialogue model is also based on individuals who are experts in this field. However, the government and political parties ignore such kind roles of experts/individuals while providing opportunities to serve the nation. According to H. R. Subedi, political parties entirely ignore such

roles and appoint diplomats based on give-and-take way which is the irony of Nepal's diplomatic malpractices (personal communication, August 18, 2022).

Similarly, S. R. Simkhada expresses that historically, the task of foreign policy formulation has been considered in the realm of diplomats. It was thought that war is fought by armies, but the policy of war or peace decided by generals and foreign policy formulation matter was the primary role of professional diplomats (personal communication, August 19, 2022). However, after the world wars, this view changed. A major question was posed on the historical conformity of this idea since it is the people who die in the war; therefore, the policy should be democratic and the policy is to be formulated through large discourse. E.H. Charr in his book "Twenty Years Crisis" introduced the notion of democratic policy during the interwar period challenging the historical notion of policy to be made by diplomats in a closed room. As the debate to make the foreign policy formulation process public concern, democratic countries started to involve stakeholders from various fields. Gyawali, during his tenure, tried the same thing as Simkhada says. Nepal's foreign policy-making process of the latest comprehensive draft of Nepal's foreign policy seems democratic and inclusive however areas of improvement are always there, in general.

Simkhada further describes:

foreign policy is predominantly in the domain of the executive head of the state, in Nepal, we have our Prime minister as the head of the government, in India, there is a Prime Minister, in France, there is a President, and so on, but the implementation of it is done through the Ministry of foreign affairs. The focal point for controlling and implementing foreign policy is the foreign ministry. However, such a systematic modernized process cannot be found in Nepal. While talking about the foreign policy study of 2017, I was a

member of a 'Task Force' (a committee formed by the Nepal government to study and recommend the foreign policy option of Nepal) and such task forces existed before and even after mine. The two dimensions of foreign policy are 'Dimensions of Continuity' and 'Dimensions of Change' (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022).

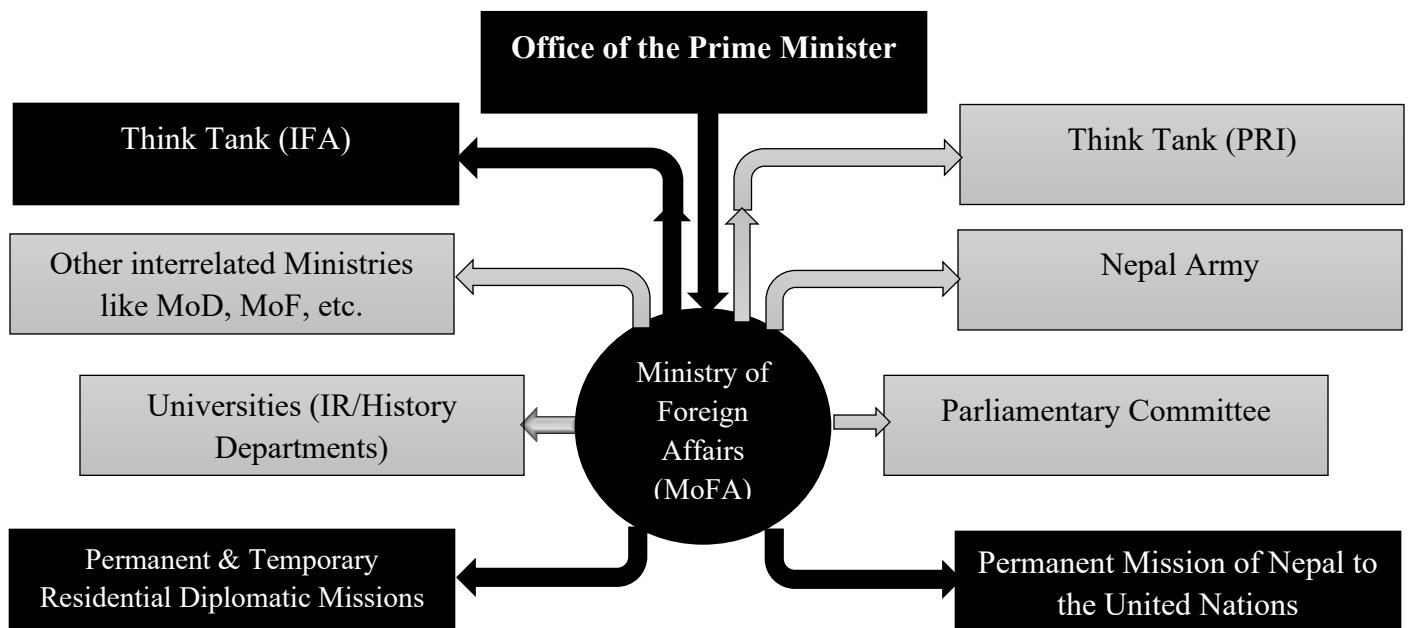
Simkhada's two terms carry a huge meaning in the foreign policy domain. 'Dimension of Continuity' means, that foreign policy continues its historical legacy like the non-colonized history of Nepal, the Bravo-Gorkha Army, One of the oldest states in world affairs, etc. These must be the inalienable parts of Nepal's foreign policy. On the other hand, the 'Dimension of Change' clearly argues for the need for change in foreign policy when the priorities and policies of international actors (i.e. geopolitics) change. To maintain such kinds of spirit, well, systematic, and scientific institutional mechanisms should be developed, otherwise, Nepal cannot meet the national aspirations and interests.

Foreign policy is the application of national power for national interest. So here arises the question, what is a national interest? From the historical perspective, ideas such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national and political independence are national interests that are described in Chapter Two. However, the definition of national interest of a country is defined by its ruling elite based on its interests. And, when there is a political transition in a country, although different proposals and reports of foreign policy are formed, one is alienated from the entire process as the transition occurs so very frequently, and then the state's institutional mechanism becomes dysfunctional. This is not a scientific institutional mechanism. One of the best examples of a bad institutional mechanism as per Simkhada is like this below:

The task force committee of 2017 A.D. was dissolved after the change of the government (The government of Sher Bahadur Deuba). The task force consisted of a larger spectrum of people which included former ambassadors, scholars, army generals, economists, etc. The new government sadly did not show interest in the reports and drafts prepared by this committee (personal communication, August 19, 2022).

This is a discouraging part from the government and such kinds of malpractices cannot serve the national interests of the country due to such non-institutional behavior for developing the scientific mechanism. So, from the above discussion, it is summarized that a scientific institutional mechanism can be developed and depends upon the skills, knowledge, willpower, and dedication of the country's leadership, then only, every concerned institution under such mechanism works as per the defined and directed roles. The following Figure shows the comprehensive existing mechanism of Nepal's foreign affairs.

Figure 6.3 Overall institutional mechanism of Nepal's foreign policy

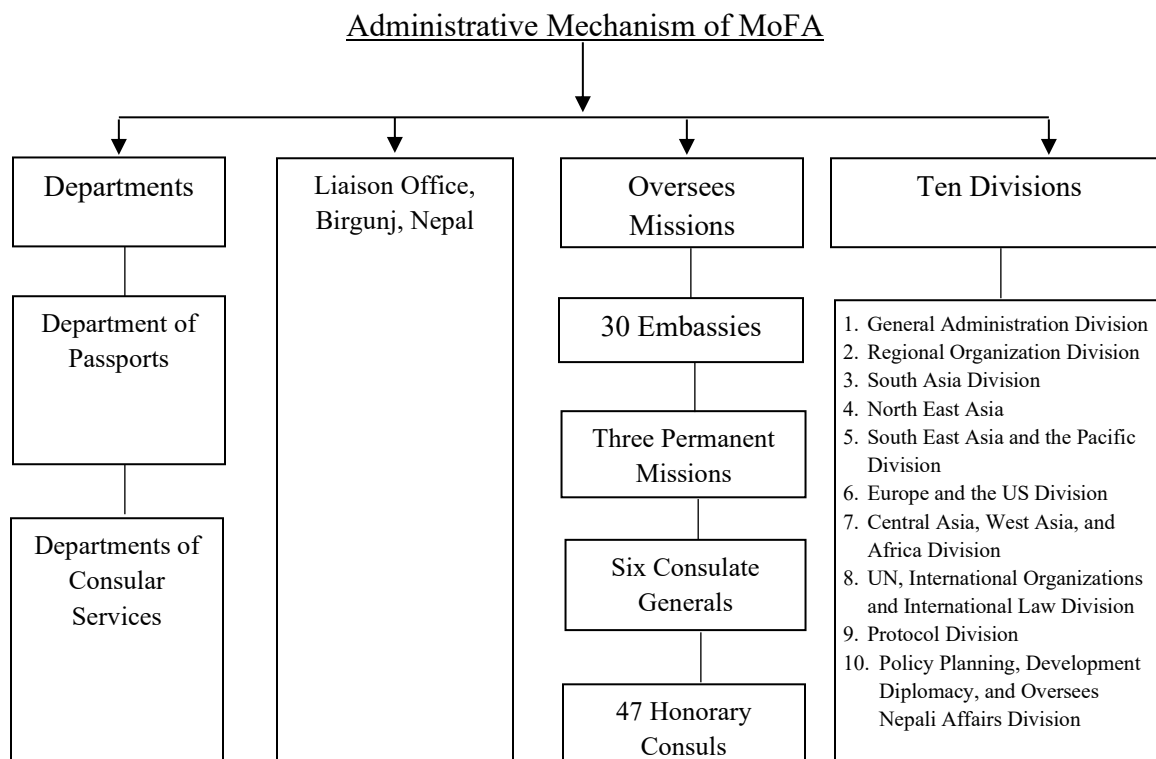


Source: Self-prepared

When it comes to the overall institutional mechanism related to international relations and foreign policy, in the case of Nepal, the office of the Prime Minister is at the top as shown in figure above. There is a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) under the Office of the Prime Minister. Then, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates with the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Permanent and Temporary Residential Diplomatic Missions, and the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations directly. It means the MoFA has the authority to monitor the performance of those three institutions and they directly report to the MoFA. This nature of cooperation is shown in dark black color in the above Figure. Similarly, the MoFA cooperates with the Policy Research Institute (PRI), the Nepal Army, the Parliamentary Committee, Universities (IR Departments), and Other interrelated Ministries like MoD, MoF, etc. indirectly. The MoFA has no authority to monitor the work of those five institutions and they do not need to report directly to MoFA. This nature of cooperation is shown in light brown color in the same figure. In above figure, only highlighted institutions are mentioned but detailed administrative and monitoring mechanisms are sketched in the upcoming next figure. However, some scholars also consider non-state actors within the institutional mechanism, which is very important for 21<sup>st</sup> century diplomacy but in this sub-chapter, only the governmental institutions (state actors) that play a central role in the field of foreign policy have been briefly mentioned due to words and page limits.

The administrative institutional mechanism of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is very important not only for the foreign policy-making process but also for implementing and monitoring the overall activities related to the country's foreign policy and diplomacy. Therefore, the existing administrative mechanism of the MoFA needs to be known for scholars of IR which is sketched in the below figure.

Figure 6.4 Administrative mechanism of MoFA



*Source: Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs 2019-2020*

The above figure represents the institutional administrative mechanism of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). There are four different divisions under the MoFA. The first division includes two departments. The second division relates to the Liaison office at Birgunj, Nepal. The third division is Oversees Missions which comprises 30 Embassies, three Permanent Missions, six Consulate Generals, and 47 Honorary Consuls. Similarly, the fourth division includes ten departments (divisions) as shown in the above figure. But such kind of mechanism is not enough to address the 21<sup>st</sup>-century issues of diplomacy and foreign policy. Because, such kind of mechanism is based on a traditional approach without enough analyzing the current (21<sup>st</sup>-century geopolitics and geoeconomics) geopolitical dimensions, issues, challenges, and priorities. So, such kind of mechanism needs to be revised as per the overall actors of Nepal's foreign policy (External and domestic actors as mentioned in Chapter Five).

### 6.3 Role of Political Parties in Nepal's Foreign Policy

As almost all Nepali and Indian experts say, the role of political parties in the foreign policy-making process has become prominent in the post-1990 period. The Royal Palace was the key actor before 1990 (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022; S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022; M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022; C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). But after 1990, with the revival of democracy, political parties emerged as decisive actors in the foreign policy-making process. However, many experts have claimed that the parties are only visible actors in the foreign policy-making process of the country, but foreign policy in the real sense is not effective due to the influence, interference, and pressure of the invisible external actors. Various facts have proven this claim which is already discussed in earlier Chapters. However, in this Sub-Chapter, the opinions expressed by experts on the role of political parties are critically analyzed.

G. L. Malla expresses that due to political instability, a foreign policy document created by one government is rejected by another government in Nepal, which creates a new dilemma in the domain of foreign policy (personal communication, September 2, 2022). This is because of either ideological differences between political parties or contested party-based interests rather than coming to common points on national interests and agendas. From this point, the process of deviating the course of the country's foreign policy begins. Foreign policy in Nepal is inextricably linked to domestic political issues; the government raises foreign policy issues only when it benefits their parties and themselves (G. L. Malla, personal communication, September 2, 2022). For example, in the case of Jaya Singh Dhimi, the Nepali government did not strongly condemn India's non-diplomatic behavior towards Nepal and Nepali citizens. On July 30, 2021, Jaya Singh Dhimi, a 33-year-old Nepali citizen, from Khangdang Mal of Byas Rural

Municipality-2 in Darchula fell into Mahakali while crossing the river using an improvised cable crossing, locally known as *Tuin* (Giri, 2021, para. 2). The said *Tuin* was cut off by the Indian security officials while Dhimi was crossing it. The new government formed under the leadership of the Nepali Congress was reluctant to talk with the Indian counterpart regarding this issue, (G. L. Malla, personal communication, September 2, 2022). This is not the policy of the Nepal government because the governmental policy of every country is to safeguard its citizens and people first. However, it happened only because of the political party's serious fault point which was leading the government.

C. D. Bhatta perceives the role of political parties as follows:

The political parties have politicized the foreign policy. They are more driven by ideology, not necessarily the ideology may not serve the interest of the state. Foreign policy is of the state but not of the political parties. They are just a part of the state but the state is not a part of them. So, political parties should not dominate foreign policy, only national interests should dominate the foreign policy-making process (personal communication, December 16, 2022).

C. D. Bhatta further claims that certain political parties are closer to China whereas certain political parties are not necessarily closer to China and are closer to some other countries like India and the USA (personal communication, December 16, 2022). We can see its reflections on domestic politics as well. Since 1990, the political parties of Nepal have instrumentalized the foreign policy of Nepal. For example, two political parties i.e., CPN (UML) and CPN (Moist Center) always called India an expansionist and the USA as an imperial power but they did that just to come into power. After they got power, they compromised and changed their voice about their previous propaganda. Because of that, Nepal's foreign policy has been shifted since 1990

and lost its legacy (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). Nepal has been continuously losing its international image due to a passive kind of diplomacy in the world arena especially after 1990. Experts claim that this situation is only due to the wrong approach of political parties.

Similarly, H. R. Subedi says that some political leaders are mature but their maturity has been affected by the interest of parties (personal communication, August 18, 2022). While giving any views or formulating any policies, they present themselves in the form of parties, but not as responsible country leaders. For example, regarding the Citizenship Bill, there is no country in the world where foreign women marry citizens of that country and get their citizenship on the same day of marriage. However Nepali political leaders do not understand the geopolitical sensitivity and complexity. They have already passed that Citizenship Bill from the Nepali parliament and its implications will be very serious in the long run. Therefore, Nepali political parties neither understand the rapidly changing country's geopolitical seriousness nor the impact of their 'Stand without Research' on the country's national interest (H. R. Subedi, personal communication, August 18, 2022). So, political leaders should not be dragged by their political parties' interests.

S. Sharma has also a similar opinion. He says that political parties must not involve the party's interest in foreign policy (personal communication, August 8, 2022). They must be focused on the welfare of the nation as a whole. That is why leaders of political parties should focus on educating cadres who are active in politics. There is a lack of such kind of schooling that leaders whatever they think, and claim, that is right but it is not like that (S. Sharma, personal communication, August 8, 2022). So, the role of political parties seems ineffective in

formulating foreign policy in Nepal and the country has been facing critical challenges in country's foreign policy matters, Subedi opines.

A few positive cases are also there. After the economic blockade imposed by India in 2015, the then Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli took a strong stand for the country's sovereignty and dignity. He did not compromise with his Indian counterpart to stop the blockade. M. P. Lama says that Oli ji is a comparatively good leader in Nepal and he tried his best for his country's national interests. Even for India's first visit as the Prime Minister of Nepal, KP Oli said that India should stop the blockade before the visit of the Nepali Prime Minister to New Delhi (personal communication, November 11, 2022). However, experts say that there was a controversial Oli's role during the time of the Mahakali treaty and some Nepali people blamed Oli for an important role in that treaty. Likewise, Nepali intellectuals perceived that Shushil Koirala was also one of the leaders who had the feelings of sovereignty, and dignity of the country and the people.

J. N. Khanal has a similar opinion to P. K. Gyawali. He emphasizes that the creation of foreign policies should always be based on the interests and needs of the nation and the people (personal communication, August 19, 2022). The issue of foreign policy is not solely created by the government of a state. As Gyawali did, Khanal says that the foreign policy formulation process requires broader consultation from the government side with all the political parties, experts, and if necessary, with other concerned groups of people as well. This latter part of the statement is linked to non-state actors. Khanal indicates that other concerned groups of people (i.e. non-state actors) also should be included while the broader consultation is conducted on foreign policy issues. The foreign policy of a state should be created through national consensus

(J. N. Khanal, personal communication, August 19, 2022). But this never could happen except in rare cases like releasing the new map of Nepal.

K. Bashyal claims that Nepali political parties work on rhetoric leadership and cannot jump to accept the dynamic nature of foreign policy (personal communication, September 2, 2022). Political parties are centered on establishing their party only for the long run due to which there cannot be developed an independent foreign policy. Political parties lacked work plans because of rigid mindsets and poor leadership. Therefore, their role seems ineffective as national demands and context are examined. Because of his work experience with practitioners, his claim seems realistic, and political parties should review their working approach and practice.

Similarly, M. K. Bhattarai has different experiences. He says that after the 1990s, only a few good politicians were appointed as Minister for Foreign Affairs by accident. The political leaders did not want to provide the opportunity to capable people to the Foreign Ministry (personal communication, August 16, 2022). There are reasons why the political leaders did not want to send capable people to the Foreign Ministry. Internal political conflicts and cult competition within the political parties are some of the reasons why political parties are unable to send good and capable people to the Foreign Ministry or as ambassadors. Also, political leaders are not able to choose experts outside of their party (M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022). The candidates for the post of ambassador or any other position in the Foreign Ministry are chosen within the party and are affiliated with that party. Because of such kind of malpractices of political parties, Nepal's foreign policy has not been sound, effective, and timely able to achieve the national interests.

P. K. Gyawali's experience as a practitioner and leader is similar to the opinions of academics. He says several political leaders were involved in the committee to draft a foreign

policy for Nepal, but the problem is they hesitated to implement the well-drafted document of foreign policy after the change of government (personal communication, December 30, 2022). It shows that the political parties are how much irresponsible in the field of international affairs and foreign policy. Due to the bias of the political parties after entering the government, they consider the previous government as a political party. Even the important decisions taken by the predecessor government are ignored by its successor government in foreign policy, which is a very harmful trend. Until such a trend ends, the country's foreign policy cannot become effective. So, political parties need to understand this in time. According to Gyawali, the role of the foreign department of the political parties was very minimal in the process of drafting and formulating foreign policy during his tenure (P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022). So, the foreign departments of political parties should be proactive to make key leaders sensitive and serious. Likewise, R. Bhattarai, Foreign Affairs Advisor to the former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, says that the political parties cannot go beyond the basic principles provisioned in the Constitution (personal communication, May 17, 2022) but sometimes, they do so. It should be corrected. Sometimes, we can see different perspectives of different political parties. We need to give the message that we are in the same place. Such a message should be given by the government and also from the public level, Bhattarai emphasizes. It means it is the acceptance of the weaknesses of political parties in foreign policy. As Bhattarai said, without a common consensus of political parties on the national agendas and priorities, Nepal cannot adopt the right track in International Relations.

R. N. Pandey says that if we read the manifesto of political parties, we can see more or less the same kind of lines but we see variation in terms of implementation (personal communication, September 1, 2022). Pandey's statement indicates the negligence of political parties in foreign

policy. They critically and scientifically do not think while drafting their manifesto but they seem to make random decisions on foreign relations without any scientific research. As an example, Pandey elaborates that when Russia attacked Ukraine, there was a vote in the UN General Assembly but Nepal voted against Russia. It shows Nepal's foreign policy is dependent upon the personal interest of the Head of Government rather than taking care of the national interest. Experts, without disclosing their names, say that this vote against Russia is backed by the USA. The USA has been claiming that Nepal has a central role in the Indo-Pacific Strategy (Giri, 2018, para.1). Therefore, it shows that Nepali political parties have been unable to critically analyze and understand the sensitivity of Nepali geopolitics and hence Nepal's foreign policy has series of issues and problems connected to key external actors. Similar opinions have also been expressed by the Indian experts. Nepali leaders are not serious about the national interest of their country, they just focus on their personal and parties' benefits (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022; R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022; N. R. Nayak, personal communication, November 14, 2022; S. Thapliyal, personal communication, November 9, 2022). This is the major cause behind unequal and non-trustworthy relations between Nepal and other countries. S. D. Muni strongly emphasized that Nepal is falling behind due to the same repetition of unethical political leaders of the same parties for years (personal communication, November 6, 2022).

From the above discussion on the opinions of experts, Nepali political parties indeed have numerous internal and external problems. They have to solve this problem and should completely dedicate themselves to national interests and trustworthy relations with the international community. For that, they have to entirely give up their personal and political party's interests.

Even when the researcher checked the websites of the four major political parties regarding their foreign policy, as the experts said, foreign policy matters do not seem to be a priority of the parties. It has been seen that foreign policy issues are not prioritized on the websites of four major parties namely Nepali Congress, CPN (UML), CPN (Maoist Centre), and Ravi Lamichhane-led National Independent Party. Out of the four, only CPN (UML) has mentioned foreign policy separately, while none of the other parties have mentioned this affair on their website, which shows the indifference of the political parties towards the issues of foreign policy. If the four major political parties of the country do not give importance to foreign policy, what will happen to the other political parties? There are three main reasons behind not keeping such an important topic on their website. Firstly, the political parties have not given any importance to this issue. Secondly, they do not have clarity about foreign policy at the level of keeping it on the website. Third, political parties are indifferent to research and digital culture.

Even the foreign policy of CPN (UML) does not seem to be based on intensive research. The foreign policy stated on the UML's website is as follows:

- a) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and sovereign equality.
- b) Non-interference in the internal affairs of States.
- c) Respect for mutual equality of rights of States, including the inalienable right of each State to determine freely its political, social, economic, and cultural system.
- d) Respect for the political, economic, social, and cultural diversity of countries and peoples.
- e) Non-aggression, peaceful co-existence, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.
- f) Cooperation for mutual benefit.

- g) Abiding faith in the Charter of the United Nations and International Law and the value of world peace.
- h) Respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the effective implementation of the right of peoples to peace and development.
- i) Promotion of justice, equality, and inclusiveness in the rules-based international order.
- j) Promotion of solidarity and cooperation at global level to solve global problems  
(Website, CPN UML).

The above points are very general and these points are not based on intensive research and critical analysis of Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics. Moreover, UML very frequently uses two lines: a) Prosperous Nepal: Happy Nepali, and b) Amity with all and enmity with none. According to UML leaders, they claim that based on the spirit of this second line, UML achieves the first line. The second line is related to UML's foreign policy including the above ten points. But it is not mandatory to say 'amity with all and enmity with none'. Because no countries say 'amity with none and enmity with all'. Therefore, it is not a new concept in the foreign policy domain. The reason why only the foreign policy of CPN (UML) is mentioned here is to present an example of the foreign policy of Nepal's political parties. The foreign policy of other parties is also not much different from this trend. Therefore, in a system where political parties are the key actors in the field of foreign policy, if there is no practice of research on the foreign policy of the political parties, then the question of what the country's foreign policy will be is natural.

It can be concluded that the main reason for this is that the role of the experts and their skills, abilities, experiences, and competencies are not appreciated and the parties are indifferent towards creating any such scientific system and mechanism to mobilize them in the national interest. N. Acharya also says the same thing that the country has no such system to utilize the

expertise of the experts because experts may be retired but their expertise never be retired and the country always should mobilize them (personal communication, September 4, 2022).

Political parties must think about this serious issue to achieve national interest more effectively and efficiently.

#### **6.4 Bureaucracy and Think-Tanks**

The bureaucratic Politics Model is one of the key approaches to foreign policy analysis. It analyzes decisions made by some independent, competing institutions within a particular country. Each of these organizations brings value to the decision-making process, as well as its vision of what is best for individual, organizational, and national interests. Each side strives to achieve its goals, which means that any collective action depends on successful negotiations and the arrival of a final agreement between all entities (Norwich University, n.d., para. 5).

The civil service dates back to the ancient civilizations of Greece, the Chinese Empire (462 BC), and the Han dynasty (202 BC), as well as philosophers like Thomas Hobbes (Agboola, 2015, p. 16). Even in our context, there is a belief that the Gopala Dynasty had discovered and practiced such a bureaucratic model and civil service in the governance of this dynasty in the Kathmandu valley. Because we cannot assume that without any bureaucratic power and mobilizing civil servants, any dynasty can survive. Therefore, the Gopala Dynasty initiated by King Bhuktaman, started such civil service in the form of their framework and it was continued by successor dynasties in Nepal.

The Bureaucratic Model is one of the important discourses in policy matters in the politics-administration dichotomy. One of the hot issues in politics, policy, and governance is the issue of political authorities and administrative departments to a great extent in democracies which is the most unsettled issue in the world. The question raised in the minds of outnumbered scholars of

policy and governance is how the dichotomy fits into the governmental policy-making process of any country (Agboola, 2015, p. 16). The same problems are there in the case of Nepal.

Administrative power (bureaucracy) and political power often go to some disputes in an invisible way. The bureaucracy does not ignore the political leadership directly but they create problems in their work and performance if they differ in some issues and agendas. In other words, if political leadership cannot make a happier bureaucracy, bureaucratic power creates such problems, generally. The happiness factor of administrative staff is a different issue of research however simply, if political leadership distributes opportunities on an unequal and irrational basis, bureaucracy becomes demotivated and then they do not work effectively and efficiently which has serious implications on the country's overall performance. Bureaucracy has made serious mistakes in some cases of press releases. This is because of a dichotomy between these two powers within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Bureaucracy has critical views towards the political power whereas political leaders criticize the bureaucratic power for overall lapses and weaknesses of the missions.

The bureaucracy and think tanks are crucial parts of the research and knowledge-based foreign policy-making process. Many experts have told that the bureaucracy should work like think tank but in Nepal, there is serious lapses in this field. Only research-based foreign policy can serve the national interests effectively. The researcher collected the views from 14 Nepali experts on whether Nepal's foreign policy is research-based or not. The following table and chart show the result.

Table 6.1 Qualitative data analysis in the form of quantitative numbers about Nepal's foreign policy is research-based or not.

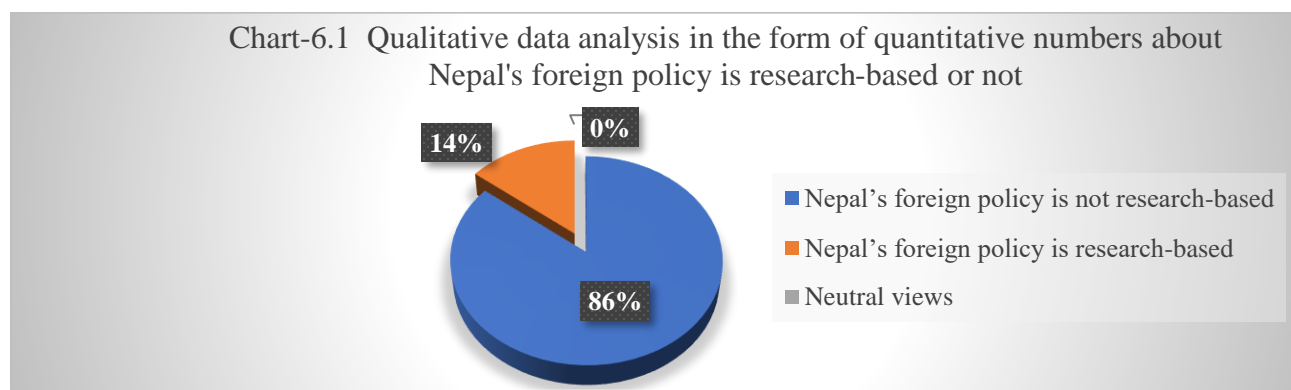
Nepal's foreign policy is not research-based	Nepal's foreign policy is research-based	Neutral views	Total

12	2	0	14
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Source: Self-prepared based on primary data

**Justification of the Table and Chart:** Table and Chart both are equally important in the field of research. Graphs or charts make possible to see all of the values at once and to easily and rapidly compare them. Next, both tables and charts are used keeping the fact of nature and category of readers in mind. Some readers understand tables and some want to analyze with the help of a chart.

The above table is analyzed in the below chart.



Source: Self-prepared based on primary data

The 86% views expressed by the Nepali experts believe that Nepal's foreign policy is not research-based. Only 14% of views (i.e. two experts) see the slow progress towards making the foreign policy research-based. Therefore, role of bureaucracy and think tank is vital to make Nepal's foreign policy research-based.

P. K. Gyawali says that the persons appointed as career diplomats simply do not decide and deliver on time due to their career practices and lack of research environment whereas the political appointees seem eager to decide fast and deliver the matters timely which is also risky due to lack of research conclusion (personal communication, December 30, 2022). But, M. K. Bhattarai views political leaders rarely appoint qualified leaders as the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (personal communication, August 16, 2022). Even for ambassadors, Bhattarai claims that political leaders do not provide opportunities to skillful and qualified leaders

(persons). Then how she or he can promote the national interests of sending states to the host states? Bhattarai argues. Gyawali is a political leader and Bhattarai is from a bureaucratic background. There seems a clear dichotomy between political leaders and bureaucratic thinkers, also in the case of Nepal.

C. D. Bhatta argues that bureaucrats are more trained on the administrative part rather than the intellectual task. It has serious impacts on diplomatic missions in the country and abroad. One of the staff of MoFA shares an opinion that people do massive hard work to enter the foreign service but when work starts in the Ministry, their diverse knowledge acquired during the preparation becomes like paralyzed due to their higher engagement only in the administrative part. According to him, there is no scientific and systematic way to engage the staff in scientific research and publications. Even if an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wants to make publications including intensive research, the Ministry systematically does not encourage such activities, so employees who want to be engaged in study and research, personally have to spend more time on administrative work. As per his experience, such academic activities are not as strong as expected in the ministry.

Not only that, there is no such institutional plan to recognize the capabilities of the staff since their entry and to prepare them as expert employees in the same field accordingly. It seems that in several trainings that are participated under/through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there is a practice of providing such opportunities on an ad hoc basis and haphazardly rather than according to their interests, abilities, needs, and long-term plans of the employees. In the same way, as P. K. Gyawali said, if career diplomats lack decision-making and leadership skills, then they should be prepared institutionally, mentally, and psychologically in this matter from the very beginning of their entry to the MoFA and, as C. D. Bhatt said, it is necessary to make the

bureaucracy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs more proficient in intellectual matters besides administrative affairs (personal communication, December 30, 2022; December 16, 2022). As future diplomats, the current employees of the ministry will maximize Nepal's reputation in the world in the future. Therefore, since only intellectual power can deal well with the global community, it is necessary to pay full attention to building them intellectually.

Likewise, K. Bashyal says that the bureaucratic role is mixed with the academic role usually creating a rhetoric phenomenon and hindering the possible academic research-based outcomes on foreign policy (personal communication, September 2, 2022). The reason behind this is that the bureaucracy has to perform two responsibilities; a) administrative, and b) academic. However, the staff are entirely engaged in the first one and they have to be dependent on external institutions and individuals for the next crucial academic task. In this way, the bureaucracy is running on an ad hoc basis and it is lagging in solving the serious issues of the nation's foreign policy and diplomatic front in a timely and creative manner. However, the other truth is that the ministry's leadership (political leadership) generally does not have such a vision, and the bureaucracy has to bear the brunt of it.

P. S. Basnyat blames not only some bureaucrats but also several professors, journalists, and even political leaders. He says that because of poverty, professors, journalists, bureaucracies, and even political leaders are mobilized by foreigners by providing them with some handsome amount of money in an invisible way (personal communication, August 15, 2022). Basnyat argues that when the government of the Nepali Congress was formed after 2047 B.S., Mahesh Acharya, and Ram Saran Mahat, who were educated in the UK and worked in foreign banks, were injected into Nepal. By combining the liberal economic model of the Western and Indian interests, Nepal faced serious financial problems after that. After 1991, Nepal stopped state-

owned industries and started asking for loans to other countries. Nepal is forced to move according to the interests of other countries in the name of the economy like in MCC, BRI, and SPP (P. S. Basnyat, personal communication, August 15, 2022). Because of such a situation, Nepal is not able to gain the trust of other countries, and thus foreign affairs is still in dilemma. This is because of leadership-bureaucracy problematic relations. Neoliberal Nepali thinkers like Mahat and Acharya led the Ministry and then, the bureaucracy was compelled to agree to the privatization and deregulation process. So, bureaucracy is a part of the problems under the whole leadership's control.

Similarly, S. R. Simkhada claims that on the one hand, foreign policy is extremely politicized, on the other hand, it is extremely bureaucratized (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Because of the bureaucratized system, there is a lack of proper research, and large discourses with professionals, therefore Nepal has not been able to move with the changing geopolitical context. It has posed problems and challenges in national power, and foreign policy has not been able to shape/determine internal politics as well. Bureaucracy should have the capacity to guide the political parties, but that capacity is not seen. Simkhada and Bhatta have similar views that the bureaucracy should be intellectual, academic, research-oriented, and capable of showing the right way to leaders in Nepal's foreign policy. Similarly, Simkhada raises another serious issue about the bureaucracy that the bureaucracy has ruled foreign ministry in such a way that the Minister acts as ordered without being conscious of the said act being right or wrong. It is not only the problem of bureaucracy but also the inability of political leaders (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). Leaders always should be experts in the Ministerial fields and only they can lead the bureaucracy otherwise, not. So, based on the above discussion, the MoFA has to seriously think about the following points:

- a. Two divisions i.e., administrative and academic divisions should be separately provisioned and the government should restructure the bureaucratic mechanism based on scientific research.
- b. Long-term, mid-term, and short-term strategic plans should be made in the fields of academic research, governance, policy, and capacity building. The capacity building should be focused on producing experts on various sectors of International Relations of Nepal based on the interests and capabilities of the staff.
- c. The government should revise the structure of the MoFA based on external and internal actors involved in Nepal's international relations.
- d. Cordial relations based on deeper cooperation between bureaucracy and political leadership should be maintained.
- e. A monitoring mechanism should be established to monitor the informal involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees with foreign powers so that the employees stop being unnecessarily mobilized by foreign powers for their interests. This is also a policy issue in the Prime Minister's Office.

Besides bureaucracy, Think Tanks are also an important part of Nepal's foreign policy. M. P. Lama highly raises the issue of the role of Think Tanks in the foreign policy of Nepal. He claims that Nepal has individual experts and scholars but no institution in Nepal can engage them to provide policy feedback to the Nepal government (personal communication, November 11, 2022). There are only two governmental Think Tanks in Nepal i.e., Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) and Policy Research Institute (PRI). But Lama says that the former does not seem enough to fully handle the research issues of the government due to lack of funding and the latter is not related to only the foreign affairs of Nepal. So, he thinks that both the Think Tanks should be

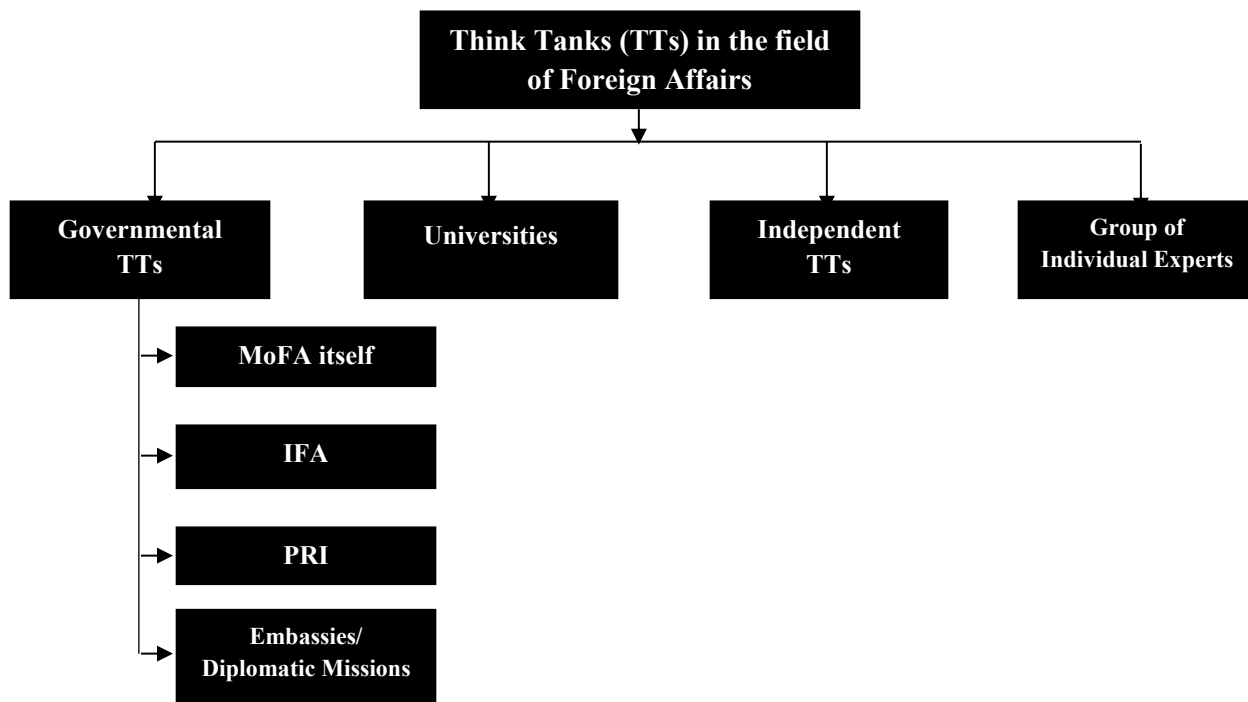
restructured so that all the individual experts and scholars (professors, researchers, scholars, security experts, former diplomats, etc.) could be involved in research work with them regularly.

Looking at the overall existing structure of Nepal's Think Tanks, four types of think tanks are seen to exist. Their status is also briefly analyzed here. The following figure shows the existing Think Tanks in Nepal. There is already an analysis done about the IFA and the PRI as governmental think tanks. However, many experts say that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself is the most important think tank despite its inability to work as a vibrant think tank in Nepal. But no one seemed to be able to pay attention to the fact that diplomatic missions are more like think tanks besides being the bureaucratic body. Regardless of what other think tanks research, those missions not only check the reliability of the research done by others, but they are more important think tanks because they investigate what to do and what not to do for the nation in the host state and also implement it. Therefore, diplomatic missions are also important think tanks principally. In the case of Nepal, neither MoFA nor diplomatic missions can be able to be think tanks due to diplomatic malpractices of political leadership. To establish and mobilize these missions as think tanks, a research cell should be developed in every diplomatic mission. Similarly, many experts say that universities are the top think tanks in the country but due to a lack of reliable and deeper cooperation between the Nepal Government (MoFA) and universities, the expected result in the field of IR policy research seems still weak but for the academic research, universities are working effectively as per the university's standard.

Moreover, there are hundreds of independent think tanks registered in Nepal. Among them, very few seem effective but such independent think tanks are not government-funded institutions. So, due to donors' predominant nature, their research investigation generally is

donors' driven rather than the country's strong monitoring and control. Such kind of investigation cannot serve the objective of Nepal's foreign policy.

Figure 6.5 Existing Think Tanks in Nepal's foreign affairs



*Source: Self-prepared*

Therefore, it seems necessary to have some kind of cooperation between independent think tanks and the Nepal government. Although not all independent think tanks can be brought under the monitoring and supervision mechanism of the state in the neoliberal policy approach of the democratic system, the government can classify all such think tanks first. Then, the first category of independent think tanks (based on their research, publication, profile, and influence) and the Nepal government need to cooperate on some serious and sensitive issues of policy research. Under such a framework, influential independent think tanks automatically come under governmental supervision and monitoring mechanisms. This is a very important approach and policy strategy to slowly detach the influential independent think tanks from external donors who do not care about Nepal's national interests. However, this researcher strongly agrees that the

think tanks should be completely autonomous but need to monitor whether they are independently working or not with donor agencies. It also should be thought that the government needs to make even governmental think tanks autonomous for promoting critical ideas, thoughts, and approaches. Because think tanks have to deliver ideas to the state and complement on narratives of the state (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022).

The fourth type of Nepali think tank is a group of individuals. There are many such excellent individual scholars/intellectuals in Nepal who are not interested in any government or non-government research institutions. It is necessary to include such a group of scholars (who are not influenced by any governmental or non-governmental structure) as a 'Societal Think Tank' and bring them into the mainstream of Nepal's foreign affairs-related research. Because, it is necessary to make a public campaign for promoting the national interests of the country rather than making it a schedule of leaders, employees, and a few organizations only.

Regarding Think Tanks, C. D. Bhatta says that in the USA, there is a Council of Foreign Affairs to work like a think tank (personal communication, December 16, 2022). Unfortunately, the think of Nepal does not generate ideas on foreign policy actively as the think tank institutes are composed of former bureaucrats. Simply, bureaucrats are not considered as real think tanks because they do have good bureaucratic skills but they do not have such theoretical ideas about the policy issues. And, they do not have critical thinking as well.

The issue that was raised by almost all the experts is that Nepali think tanks are highly politicized. The appointment, and management of think tanks are not effective, Bhatta claims. They do not provide the service in the fast-track approach. Most of the political appointees do not have the intellectual capacity but rather are based on political affiliation only. This is malpractice in the Nepali appointment system. The think tanks of Nepal are more ritualistic. No

Nepali has been able to write qualitative books on the foreign policy of Nepal to date (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). So, Nepal is compelled to read books about Nepal's foreign policy written by foreigners.

G. L. Malla says that Nepali politicians do not like to use and mobilize think tanks and experts when formulating foreign policy (personal communication, September 2, 2022). The Nepali political leaders think that they can handle foreign policy on their own without consulting the expertise of think tanks. Like Malla's experience, many experts share similar issues with this researcher during face-to-face interviews. Likewise, H. R. Subedi's opinion is also not different than Malla's. He claims that the think tank culture in Nepal has not been able to be effective enough. Only the people who are closer to parties are given more priority in such a think tank (personal communication, August 18, 2022). In addition, K. Bashyal argues that There are Nepali think tanks established in different ways but the role of those think tanks could play a significant role in foreign policy debate which is not like that (personal communication, September 2, 2022). Those think tanks have just safeguarded their existence rather than conducting serious academic and policy debates.

From the above discussion, it is concluded that Nepali think tanks are not well-managed, well-operated, independent, and effective despite having genuine experts in Nepal. Not only because of being an economically weak state, but also negligence of political leadership, the government cannot allocate enough budget for building a think tank vibrant, self-sustained, and entirely research-oriented based on domestic funds. Therefore, many independent think tanks collaborate with INGOs or foreign agencies. In such cases, they are not independent in conducting the research to promote national interests but work as the instruction of those donors. In such cases, critical and independent thoughts cannot be developed and the country's research

domain has become worse. So, the government needs to entirely revise the structure of the existing think tanks, build new think tanks based on need assessment, and bring all the think tanks under the framework of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by developing them.

## **6.5 Nepal's Dealing with External Actors**

This sub-chapter investigates the answer to research question number three of this dissertation relating to previous texts of Chapter Five. Searching for the answer to that research question begins with a statement from a Nepali expert who does not want to disclose his name. He says that there were two latest blunders in Nepal-India relations. First, India imposed an economic blockade on Nepal in 2015 in the name of the constitution promulgation issue which was the first blunder from the Indian side. The next blunder from the Nepali side is to amend the Nepali constitution to include the territory of Limpiyadhira, Lipulek, and Kalapani unilaterally. The expert's view on the amendment of the Nepali constitution seems close to the Indian experts. Almost all Indian experts including SD Muni, Sangeeta Thapliyal, N. R. Nayak, R. Rae, etc. have also the same opinion about the amendment of the Nepali constitution. They argue that Nepali former Prime Minister KP Oli announced the Nepali map unilaterally. Whatever Indian and some Nepali experts say, the amendment of the constitution is an in-house business of the Nepali parliament. The sovereign parliament can amend the constitution at any time for the sake of Nepali national interests. Theoretically, national interests cannot be preserved by any other countries and it is not a matter of permission of other countries or any kind of compromise against the national interest but their argument has a serious concern that Nepal should have done well negotiating with the Indian counterpart to convince them before the release of the new Nepali map. However, several attempts were made to diplomatically dialogue with Delhi before releasing the new map (P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022). As the

Minister for Foreign Affairs under the Oli government, Gyawali had made a huge effort several times to conduct dialogues on this issue with his Indian counterpart but India kept silent. As the last option remained with Nepal, Nepal amended the constitution and released the new map, Gyawali said with the researcher (personal communication, December 30, 2022). This is one part of Nepal-India relations.

C. D. Bhatta says that there is conflict and confrontation between the USA and China. China has always said Nepal should maintain good relations with India (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). Even during informal talks with Chinese academics, they often repeat that Nepal has to carefully build relations better with India and that China will always support Nepal's development and prosperity. This statement proves that China never wants to lose India to support Nepal. Even though many Chinese experts speak a few Hindi words with Nepali students. It is because of their wrong understanding of Nepali and Hindi language. The researcher found that Chinese academics have misunderstandings and they think, the language of Nepal and India is the same which is completely irony to Nepal-China relations. So, it seems that the Chinese experts still have to understand Nepal and its indigenous and unique culture, religions, civilization, and language, and also the similarities and dissimilarities between Nepal and India to precisely understand Nepal. So, from the study, it has been found that China does not support Nepal at the cost of its relations with any other countries. This fact has to be clearly known to Nepali rulers, political parties, and governments while dealing with China.

Similarly, Bhatta says about Nepal-India relations that Nepal is closely interrelated with India; even India knows that China will not come to Nepal to totally displace the influence of India in Nepal (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). It indicates Sino-

Indian cooperation in Nepal affairs. India does not make unhappy China by raising Chinese sensitive issues in Nepal like Tibetan refugees, free Tibet movements, and the anti-thought of one-China policy. Likewise, China does not want to make India unhappy by interfering with the act of India's sphere of influence in Nepal. The only interest of China in Nepal is the Indian markets in Indian provinces connected to Nepal's southern borderlands, except for its security issue. So, Nepal has to understand this fact, and no need to be emotional in both Nepal-China and Nepal-India relations. Being trustworthy country for all friendly countries in the framework of a pragmatic and realpolitik approach is only the way to deal with neighbours and all other countries. The same case happens with Nepal-US relations. C. D. Bhatta assumes that the USA may come and be ready not only to counter China but also to totally displace the influence of India in Nepal (personal communication, December 16, 2022). This is the biggest challenge for Nepal to wisely and tactfully deal with such kind of Trilateral Geopolitical complexities and sensitivities.

M. K. Bhattarai experiences that Nepal has failed in diplomacy by failing to deal tactfully with neighboring nations to gain benefits from them, resolve problems, and participate in economic cooperation projects to protect the nation's best interests (personal communication, August 16, 2022). His argument also seems close to Bhatta's views. Almost all experts claim that Nepali leaders' dealing with other countries is not based on the country's national interests. They talk with their counterparts in a positive (Yes, we do, we will do, do not worry...like that) way but they cannot do what they commit. Of course, the experts' views may not be perfectly true but there are of course such kinds of serious problems on Nepal's side. Both Indian and Chinese experts shared their observations and understanding with the researcher that Nepali leaders say one thing with the leader of one country and another thing with the leader of the next country.

So, their attitude and behavior are not trustworthy, Indian experts say. Almost similar but a bit softer tone is found in the Chinese experts about it. Overall, the trust deficit seemed a major problem in Nepal's dealing with key external geopolitical actors. So, building trust with all friendly countries is a basic priority of Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy.

M. K. Bhattarai thinks that first, there should be guidelines and, a code of conduct for guiding the activities of diplomats and other stakeholders to successfully deal with major powers (personal communication, August 16, 2022). Professional diplomats should be trained rigorously. The next important thing as per his knowledge is that Nepal must strike a balance with all of these nations. The researcher does not agree with the term 'balance' in social science, especially in International Relations for Nepal. The term 'balance' carries the meaning of being engaged only in balancing the national interests of other countries which never can be possible but this term does not carry meaning to be focused on own national interest. So, the term 'harmonious relations with all countries based on trust building approach' is state-centric and better for managing Nepal's sensitive geopolitics. Therefore, dealings with key external actors should be done in the same way. M. K. Bhattarai emphasizes that Nepal must maintain good relations with both India and China. Failure to strike a balance (good relations with all external actors) with all of these great powers will be a failure of political leadership (M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022). So, it seems that Nepal's pragmatic and realpolitik geopolitics does not allow Nepal to conduct untrustworthy diplomacy with other countries, to take advantage of one power to criticize another, and to deal with the same issue with another country when the expectations from one country are not fulfilled. It seems to be happening to Nepali leaders. Therefore, conducting diplomacy based on national interests and adopting a 'pragmatic state-centric approach' with all the powers can be the best deal.

K. Bashyal pointed out that in the name of balancing its relations with other countries, Nepal has been suppressing its national interest (personal communication, September 2, 2022).

Therefore, there should be the maintenance of strategy but balancing the relationship between nations doesn't not work at all. Nepal ought to be strongly committed to upholding its national interests at all times. To ensure economic growth, employment opportunities, etc., Nepal should take bold but trustworthy action without compromising its national interest through foreign policies, Bashyal says. Nepal cannot compete and fight with those key external actors. So, only the way to achieve its national interest is to gain the trust of all external powers. For this, Nepal should establish deeper relations based on 'deeper but specific mega communication' with them. This can only be achieved when Nepal conducts a comprehensive study of the interests of the key external actors regarding their Nepal affairs and then tries to strengthen its relations with those powers by considering their top interests as the highest priority. However, it is important to take care that if their highest priority interest conflicts with another country, it should be based on the second highest priority interest. In this way, it will not be difficult to manage the complex geopolitics of Nepal if Nepal defines the topmost interest of key external actors as a flagship tool to deal with them to make the relations trustworthy and harmonious.

P. K. Gyawali, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, emphasized that Nepal will never allow any other foreigners to use Nepal's land to conduct activities against our neighbors. We will never take the side of any nation in a security pact, Nepal should be focused on its national interest (P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022). Gyawali's statement indicates that taking on any side in a security pact or military alliance will be a disaster for Nepal's foreign policy and eventually for the national interest. Nepal's complex geopolitics

never allow this country to take the side of anyone in the security alliance which is the heartbeat of Nepal's foreign policy.

N. Acharya expresses two points about dealing with key external actors. The first point is related to well well-managed diplomatic system and the second is linked to geopolitical ideas (personal communication, September 4, 2022). Acharya opines that after the responsibilities of diplomats have changed, there is no respect at all for the former diplomats and their responsibilities in post diplomatic career period. Acharya's major concern is that the state or government should capitalize on the veteran experience and expertise gained during the diplomatic career of former diplomats. The state should engage them for the state's external affairs in other formal ways either that maybe through a governmental think tank or the state's diplomatic clubs etc. Such kinds of initiatives build the state's capacity to deal with external actors, he argues. The ambassador of Nepal must fulfill their responsibilities to their fullest and must work to increase respect for the institutions and actors but the state should create a conducive environment to apply their full strength and competencies. There must be communication between ambassadors and ministries frequently and there is a lack of confidentiality in exchange of information. Such kinds of things should be improved for the best country's dealing. There is a lack of trust and the ambassadors are sent to do their best for the betterment of the nation. So, the well-managed diplomatic system is the key factor of a country's best dealing, as per Acharya.

Similarly, Acharya raises the next issue. He says that Nepal should not conflict the geopolitical idea with foreign policy, rather we must develop close relations with neighboring nations and understand the circumstances that are created through accessibility, culture, history, and reality (N. Acharya, personal communication, September 4, 2022). Nepal must take action

according to the ideas and the necessities of Nepal but not of other countries. Nepal must secure its environment, culture, history, and nation as a whole which supports better dealing with other countries. Acharya emphasizes that while developing relations Nepal must not go against its norms, and values and should not be fully dependent, and must have its voice (N. Acharya, personal communication, September 4, 2022). Nepal must gather information regarding other nations and must not follow what other nations do and speak while dealing with others. Nepal should set its national agendas and all political parties should come to a common point before going to deal with external powers.

H. R. Subedi says on the same dealing issue that we need to balance our relations with all these countries (personal communication, August 18, 2022). But how to balance, which things of powerful states to balance, what will Nepal gain and lose by balancing, whether balancing will guarantee the protection of Nepal's national interest or not, whether balance is leading to more imbalance or not, such things are not clear in Nepal's geopolitics and thus balancing approach is unable to answer these serious questions so far. So, the argument of balancing seems illogical and an anti-realpolitik notion. The matter of balance, connected with the complex geopolitics of Nepal, does not seem to be close to any IR theory and it does not seem to have a theoretical explanation for the geopolitics of Nepal. But in International Relations, the balance is understood as the 'Balance of Power System' related to neorealism and it has already been mentioned that Nepal cannot afford this concept. If Nepal really cannot escape from the notion of balance, it should be well-defined and theorized first before making it a foreign policy debate.

Subedi further says that Nepal needs to focus on how to protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity. India started a river-linking project which is an ambitious one. Bangladesh urged for doing trilateral agreement among India, Nepal, and Bangladesh in the energy sector but

India wants only a bilateral agreement. Nepal's dealing should be concentrated on making this deal to shift geo-energy political complexities into an opportunity (H. R. Subedi, personal communication, August 18, 2022).

Similarly, R. Bhattarai explains that Nepal needs to maintain balance and trustworthy relations with both our neighboring countries by keeping our national interest at the center. This is the way of Nepal's dealing with immediate neighbours. Nepal's priorities like promoting national interest and achieving prosperity should also be focused on so that other countries can also help to achieve our national goals (R. Bhattarai, personal communication, May 17, 2022). According to Bhattarai, Nepal's foreign policy has some basic foundations like Panchasheel, United Nations Charter, World Peace, Non-alignment, and International Law which have been incorporated by the constitution and Nepal is guided by that. Even if Nepal misdirects from its basic foundations, Nepal needs to correct them. Nepal cannot blindly support any state. National interest is only protected if Nepal becomes stuck to our basic foreign policy (R. Bhattarai, personal communication, May 17, 2022). However, this researcher has a different argument that those principles are more the global norms and less the principles of any particular country. So, Nepal must entirely revisit its principles of foreign policy, rather than ratifying the global norms and values as its foreign policy. Then only, Nepal's international dealings become successful and it will be integrated with Nepal's national interests, geopolitics, geo-economics, foreign policy, diplomacy, and diplomatic approach and system.

S. R. Simkhada has different points to deal with key external actors. He focuses on three principles while dealing with them.

- a. Finding out the main issues of national interest, defining the agenda of national interest, and engaging in a larger discourse on it. Political parties should not divide regarding the national interest although they have dividing ideologies while dealing with external actors.
- b. No matter how politicized other fields may be institutions related to vital national interest should not be done the same. Foreign policy advisors must be competent. Bureaucracy has ruled foreign ministry in such a way that the minister acts as ordered without being conscious of the said act being right or wrong.
- c. The issue of ‘national interest vs individual interest’ has impacted dealing with external actors. Institution largely depends on the leaders who lead it. National interest should be protected and for its success appointment should be based on skills (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022).

These are Simkhada’s few highlighted points for dealing with external actors however Nepal has to care about many things besides these points as analyzed above.

R. N. Pandey has a unique argument about it. He says that no one can answer about how to deal with these key external actors. But he says that King Mahendra said Nepal wants to be a transit point between India and China (personal communication, September 1, 2022). According to Pandey, he met the Chinese president and Indian prime minister and made a transpose where young officers were brought. A concept to implement a foreign investment board was made and a concept to decide certain areas, call them free economic zones, and make different taxation policies at that place was made but that could not be implemented. From this text, it can be analyzed that a country’s national interest cannot be compromised with any foreign powers at any cost as per Pandey’s experience. Similarly, T. B. Karki highlights three major sectors to deal with these key external actors for the country’s economic prosperity. These sectors are tourism,

hydropower, and herbs (personal communication, August 10, 2022). Moreover, Madhu Raman Acharya says that Nepal's international relations is guided by geopolitical realities in its neighbourhood and beyond (2019, p. 74). So, every dealing of Nepal with external actors is determined by geopolitical activities-counter activities, incidents-counter incidents, strategies-counter strategies, investment-counter investment, strategies partnership-counter strategic partnerships, alliance-counter alliances, etc. Therefore, Nepal should be aware every time of what these actors think, speak, and do, and Nepal should deal accordingly with them based on a 'trustworthy way under a harmonious and realpolitik framework'.

S. D. Muni views it from the eye of MCC's debate in Nepal. He says that Nepal faced some challenges on MCC because of domestic political dynamics or let's say due to wrong dealing with domestic and external politics (personal communication, November 6, 2022). CPN (Maoist Center) was not happy to sign the MCC project. Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) were ready to do it. It was fine for India (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). Muni's opinion seems similar to M. Templer's views. Muni openly says that India wishes to contain China and that anybody or anyone is welcome in India as far as to contain China in Nepal (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). M. Templer had said that the USA cannot do anything wrong against China in Nepal because it affects India negatively (personal communication, August 18, 2023). It shows how the USA and India are under serious cooperation to contain China. S. D. Muni says that earlier India did not want any power in Nepal but now, India is collaborating with not only the USA but also with Japan (personal communication, November 6, 2022). In this situation, Muni did not suggest anything that how Nepal should deal with external issues but his emphasis was that Nepal should understand such a situation while dealing with them.

Similarly, S. D. Muni highlights four main reasons behind Chinese engagement in the South Asian region including Nepal as below:

- 1) China is worried about Tibet and Xinjiang because of the Buddhist factor. These territories border with South Asian nations like Pakistan, India, Bhutan, and Nepal. If China has to control Tibet and Xinjiang, China has to maintain a good relationship with South Asian nations. So, China is directly interested in South Asia.
- 2) The total population of South Asia is more than 1.6 billion. They are growing at the rate of 5 percent per year on average. Is there any part of the world that is growing like this? Not. So, China has a direct economic interest in South Asia. China wants to do trade with South Asian nations.
- 3) The third reason is the Malacca Strait Dilemma. More than 74 percent trade of in China passes through the Malacca Strait. It becomes hard for China if any foreign power blocks the Malacca Strait. So, China wants to go to the Middle East, and South Asian nations by land through connectivity, if prevented from water.
- 4) If China will not influence South Asia, then the USA will. China has a reason to influence South Asia. Nepal is equally important. So, China is coming with the BRI and Himalayan Corridor project (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022).

In this situation, Muni thinks that Nepal could better understand this situation and deal with external powers carefully. At every moment, Nepal has to try to establish its national aspirations in the international arena by applying its all-diplomatic wings and with full skills through such

kind of regional situations, and to do so, best dealing with external actors is a fundamental need for Nepal seems lacking.

M. P. Lama analyses Nepal's policy dealing from a unique viewpoint. He does not agree with Nepal's dealing either on strategic balancing or in pragmatic approach based on three major reasons:

a) No leadership

When Prachanda goes to China, he talks wholly about China and when he comes to India, he talks wholly about India. No leadership talks the facts in a trustworthy manner. There are no leaders who take a stand in Nepal. KP Oli seems comparatively good in terms of taking a stand in Nepal (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

b) Lack of institution

There are no institutions related to national security and foreign policy that seriously conduct scientific research before adopting any new policy in the field of international affairs.

c) Nepal's diplomacy

Nepal sends such kind of ambassadors who have no educational background related to international relations. Such diplomats cannot do their best to deal with external actors.

So, according to Lama, without being vibrant in the above three areas, either Nepal or any other country can do the best dealing (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022)

Lama argues on the Nepal-India border issue that Nepal's claiming of Limpiyadhura as part of Nepal would be only a one-sided statement until and unless they sit and negotiate and convince India that Limpiyadhura is Nepal's territory. There should be research in Nepal to negotiate and put forward their arguments (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022). Without any research, Nepal cannot deal effectively with its counterpart. If such issues

are not resolved, other countries may benefit from it. So, it should be resolved through the negotiation process. Things are not resolved because of the stubbornness of India and the weakness of Nepal. Since being a member of EPG from the Indian side, Lama seems also serious about the EPG report. Lama says that India is refusing to accept the report as it is mentioned that Nepal's issues have been discussed seriously and those issues should be resolved. According to his analysis, this has happened due to the weakness of Nepal's political leadership, lack of diplomatic initiative, and lack of alertness of the leadership (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022).

Moreover, M. Templer analyses Nepal's dealing matters from a different perspective. He says that the USA believes India and the USA share many common. But the USA does not view Nepal through the prism of New Delhi nor does New Delhi do it through the prism of Washington. He believes on a strong sovereign Nepal, not dependent or aligned with any country including India (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). We want Nepal to be good friends with both China and India and hence Nepal can deal with them to be good friends of all external actors for its best defended national interests, he says.

He opines the USA is glad not only due to India is assisting Nepal but also because China assists Nepal in development as assistance, not as a loan (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). Because Nepal cannot afford the excessive loans from other countries for its development. The USA does not want Nepal to be against India or against China, Templer says. The understanding of Nepali academics and intellectuals is that the USA does not want cooperation between India and China and the conflict between them would help the USA to fulfill the US interest in Nepal. But such opinions are not accurate (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). Nepal can be engaged and do the best dealings with its

neighbours first in multiple ways for economic growth and national prosperity except aligning with the security pact of any country (S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). This is the way of dealing with developing Nepal. M. Templer's and Muni's opinions seem closer about dealing with external actors however, Muni's opinion is closer to the special treatment of India by Nepal.

Similarly, L. Tao says that Nepal should cooperate with any country where its interest lies. No country, either big or small, can dictate another state as per its wish. Even with Chinese or Indian pressures, Nepal should not be used. Even when the US demands to use Nepali territory, Nepal should not permit it. Nepal should not permit giant countries like the USA to mobilize the US Armies in Nepali territory and engage in internal politics, economic development, or any part. No nation wants to invite soldiers to their territory (L. Tao, personal communication, April 24, 2023).

G. Liang says that there is some sort of consensus between India and the USA in relation to the activities against China. He argues that the approach to dealing with great powers is like a river. Sometimes it goes zig-zag but finally goes straight (personal communication, April 27, 2023). The Prime Minister or Minister for Foreign Affairs of any country including Nepal cannot always travel straight. The relations and dealings with great powers are also the same. Sometimes, Nepal needs to gain the trust of the South due to its geographical proximity, and sometimes Nepal requires an alternative when the situation becomes hard. So, China never minds about the way of dealing with Nepal (G. Liang, personal communication, April 27, 2023). According to Gao, Nepal has already accepted the IPS and it has no other alternatives of being equally engaged with both initiatives of two great powers the USA and China i.e., IPS/MCC and GSI/GDI/BRI. So, Nepal should respect both approaches very carefully so that Nepal can

address the serious concerns of both countries. Nepal had already been trapped automatically in IPS when it officially entered the MCC, which cannot be false (G. Liang, personal communication, April 27, 2023). The fact that the USA has further tried to include Nepal in the SPP, also confirms that this will be a new geopolitical crisis for Nepal for years, Gao claims. However, due to Nepal's constitutional provision, it cannot be said officially that Nepal is trapped in IPS. It has become one of the main fault lines of Nepal's foreign policy.

According to H. Zhengduo, the problem for Nepal is not how to maintain the strategic balance while dealing with external powers, but how to change the current imbalance in dealings with them (H. Zhengduo, personal communication, September, 2022). Again, Nepal's dependence on India needs to change. Over-reliance on India cannot be justified as a status quo. In the international discourse, Nepal should release a message focused on economic development and the welfare of its people and avoid giving its diplomacy too much of a power struggle, Huang suggests. He does not see the need to balance external actors but when Nepal deals with them in a trustworthy manner for its economic growth and prosperity, great powers will automatically be balanced. It is not a matter of Nepal's business to balance but Nepal needs to focus on its own national agendas and priority to protect its national interest.

Therefore, based on the experts' views and also the analysis of the researcher, Nepal does not need to focus on promoting the balanced approach which is an entirely failed concept and practice of Nepal but Nepal should focus on maintaining harmonious relations with all external actors based on pragmatic and realpolitik approach under the framework of trustworthy manner. The factors affecting trustworthy dealing are discussed in detail in Chapter Six however it is connected with Chapter 5.4 as well.

## 6.6 Foreign Policy Outlines in Trilateral Geopolitico-economics

This sub-chapter has presented a brief outline of Nepal's foreign policy based on the facts that are critically analyzed in the previous chapters. For the detailed outlines, separate in-depth research has to be conducted on this topic. Due to the limitation of words and pages, only a brief concept has been outlined. In the beginning, the opinions expressed by the experts are presented analytically, and then only according to the facts analyzed in the previous chapters, the new foreign policy of Nepal is discussed.

S. R. Simkhada says that since war is an invitation to countless deaths, diplomacy is a matter of grave discourse and discussion. Therefore, foreign policy analysis and implications should be based on the democratic debate and foreign policy should be formulated accordingly (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Similarly, C. D. Bhatta explains that Nepal may become a flashpoint if we do not prudently practice our foreign policy. That is why we should be careful while determining our foreign policy with India or China (personal communication, December 16, 2022). The Western countries have also become our distant neighbours because Nepal engaged with them. Nepal has to adopt a foreign policy based on comparative advantages (C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022). Balancing does not work in today's world.

Bhatta further analyses that the special relationship that Nepal has with India and China is not the same with the USA. The USA is also heavily engaged in Nepal, but India and China are Nepal's neighbouring countries. Its meaning is that Nepal should focus on the neighborhood first policy. Bhatta claims that Nepal cannot play one card to balance another. Nepal should view both of its neighbors as opportunities, not problems, and should seek comparative advantages from both (personal communication, December 16, 2022). With China's growing role in global

affairs after 2015, huge opportunities have opened up for Nepal, especially in geoeconomics. Geoeconomics strengthens the power of geopolitics as well.

Likewise, M. Templer says that perhaps, the first approach of Nepal's foreign policy is not to offend India or China (personal communication, August 18, 2023). He argues that Nepal's foreign policy has not prioritized the US, rather Nepal's policy is focused on not making India and China unhappy. He may have made such an observation of Nepal's foreign policy by assessing the complex diplomatic race to get the MCC ratified by Nepal's parliament, Nepal's strong one-China policy, and non-breaking India's sphere of influence easily. He suggests that Nepal has to seek national interest first and not worry about the USA, China, and India. Nepal should have a pro-Nepal policy. This means that first, Nepal has to determine what is good for the country, he emphasizes.

Similarly, L. Tao suggests that Nepal should come out from multi-aligned Nepali characteristics. Nepal should maintain cordial engagement with all countries (personal communication, April 24, 2023). In contrast, G. Liang claims that Nepal has already been part of a multi-aligned policy coming out from non-alignment (personal communication, April 27, 2023). He argues that Nepal stood on the side of the USA in the case of the Russia-Ukraine war and also has become part of IPS. So, Nepal has no choice of multi-alignment foreign policy.

R. Rae comments that Nepal does not want to join the military pact. However, Nepal is benefiting from economic assistance (personal communication, November 12, 2022). Nepal is getting foreign investment through the MCC project. But Nepal should work in its interest, he suggests. Likewise, Z. Subin suggests that the best policy is trying to keep a balance between China and India as well as the US to seek possible more benefits for the Nepali people (personal communication, August, 2022). The leaders of major political parties should be neither pro-India

nor pro-China, but pro-Nepal, he says. About the debate of multi-aligned foreign policy, M. Templer assures that the USA is fine as long as Nepal adheres to its principles like principles of non-alignment in terms of the military with other Nations (personal communication, August 18, 2023). He suggests that Nepal should apply this principle more appropriately. Nepal should not be part of any security initiative.

From Indian, Chinese, and US experts, the researcher has found that the experts of three key external actors are under great suspicion as to whether Nepal will enter into a military alliance with other countries. For example, the US expert seems to indirectly express doubt that Nepal will go somewhere in the military alliance with China. Chinese experts seem to have expressed concern that Nepal will go into a military alliance with the US, while Indian experts seem worried that Nepal will weaken its sphere of influence in the name of balancing China and the USA. Therefore, it seems that they are trying to bring Nepal into their military camp before that to prevent Nepal from having military ambitions with their competitive countries. This means that none of the powerful countries have trust in Nepal. Even though Nepal has promised not to give a chance to other countries to use its land against anyone, these actors do not trust Nepal's commitment. Thus, Nepal seems to have made many diplomatic mistakes to gain the trust of other countries. There seems to be a lack of credible diplomacy in that process.

Similarly, T. B. Karki says that the country has followed the path of non-alignment for a long past. This legacy should not be mitigated due to any small action (personal communication, August 10, 2022). It will be a setback if Nepal cannot maintain good foreign relations with other nations, he opines. Likewise, P. S. Basnyat opines that if we could have applied diplomacy as of King Mahendra then we could have gained a lot of advantages from geo-political circumstances from China. But here NGOs are becoming rich, and the country is still poor. People are going

abroad. Our country is rich in natural beauty and it has resources and more beautiful is our strategic location which has been a threat to our country.

R. Rae, in the case of strategic balance, says:

I don't understand the concept of strategic balance. This means that if one project of one country is doing well, then what about the second project of the second nation? I think the fundamental objectives are to focus on what should be the basic interests of Nepal rather than thinking, "I've already taken from China, so I should take from the United States,". Nepal should consider how the project will benefit it. What are the pros and cons of the project? What are the negative and positive consequences? But, of course, Nepal should be aware of the political realities that should be considered when considering its foreign policy (personal communication, November 12, 2022).

The term 'political realities' he used, indicates the Nepal-India special relations. He says that the Nepali people and the Indian people are greatly mixed. S. D. Muni also says the same. Nepali persons have land in both India and Nepal; some nationals also pay taxes to the governments of both nations due to their ownership of land in both states. They go to one state for one purpose and return to another for another purpose (personal communication, November 6, 2022).

Similarly, almost all of the Indian experts highly emphasized that Nepal should understand this kind of special relations between Nepal and India. They often raise the subject of "Roti-Beti", "Open Border", "Millions of Nepalis who are working in India", "India's support to Nepali development", and most importantly, "The Sphere of Influence and the notion of big brother's notion in IR". So, Rae invalidates the concept of strategic balance that such a concept is wrong. The concept that Nepal should maintain a strategic balance, is incompatible with international relations. He says that the concept of strategic balance does not carry the basic spirit of

international relations as every country focuses only on its national interests. Therefore, he concludes that Nepal will benefit from having its national priorities and national interest-centered foreign policy rather than thinking of any kind of strategic balance (R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022).

Similarly, Rae suggests that the first thing that should be considered is transparency. The manner of the decision-making process must be transparent; people should know why the decision is being taken. Furthermore, the government must be able to defend its own decisions made in the public interest; it must be able to provide evidence-based justification for the decisions it makes and prove that those decisions are fair, equitable, and consistent with the public interest (R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022). Therefore, it seems that due to the lack of transparency of the Nepal government, the trust in Nepal of other countries seems to have decayed. Similarly, N. R. Nayak also says that the decisions must not be based on any factor or actor's compulsion or coercion (personal communication, November 14, 2022). Rather, the decision should be based on Nepal's interests but it is a well-known fact that all the rivers produced from the Himalayas flow to the South, not to the North, Nayak argues. Nayak indirectly suggests that Nepal should focus on giving priority to India rather than the Northern neighbour which notion seems wrong in the case of Nepal's geopolitics. Nepal cannot prioritize more to India and less to China or more to China and less to India. This is a geopolitical fact based on its sensitivity.

Rae's next suggestion is:

Nepal should sincerely and seriously engage with every actor. Nepal should clearly state what its national interests are. Different actors have different interests; they may collide with each other, and it is important for Nepal to carefully assess how these different

interests can be addressed so that its national interests are protected. Nepal has to navigate the path. The best way to navigate is to tell all the actors that these are Nepal's interests and on what ground the decisions are being made. This is the way to conduct diplomacy in a very honest and sincere way (personal communication, November 12, 2022).

The world is becoming increasingly complex. In this situation, as Rae suggests, Nepal needs to recognize that to successfully navigate the path. Great powers want to know Nepal's interests and decision-making process precisely, clearly, and openly. Of course, the USA's intention towards Nepal is not to join the BRI project, and China's is not to join the MCC project. But Nepal should look out for its own best interests but clear and perfect diplomatic dealings and engagement with all of them are the most important.

Moreover, K. Bashyal argues that in the name of balancing, relations with other countries, Nepal has been suppressing its national interest (personal communication, September 2, 2022). Balancing the relations between and among countries does not work at all. He suggests that Nepal ought to be strongly committed to upholding its national interests at all times. Likewise, N. Acharya expresses:

Nepal should form an independent foreign policy. Nepal must work to be independent pragmatically in the foreign policy domain. It can be an impactful country in international dynamics. Europe, the USA, and China have eyes on Nepal due to changing circumstances in the world. In the current situation, from a competitive perspective, Nepal must not form policies and implement them just for competition but must study the competition and understand the possibilities with other nations and use them for Nepal's

benefit. Nepal must understand her security and independence while working at the possibilities (personal communication, September 4, 2022).

Acharya prioritizes the European Union as well while adopting its foreign policy. Yes, it is true, but this study is more focused only on key external state actors and does not focus in detail on international institutions and organizations.

P. K. Gyawali says that if Nepal's foreign policy of 2077 B.S. is implemented with sincerity, Nepal's national interest will be promoted (personal communication, December 30, 2022). He argues that after the formation of the new government, the trend of becoming biased towards sensitive issues like the foreign policy of the previous government is not in the national interest. He says foreign policy can be changed according to the changing geopolitics, but as soon as the government is changed every nine months, the trend of trying to conduct foreign policy according to personal interests will create a threat to the national interest and security. Similarly, R. Bhattarai says that Nepal's foreign policy should be focused on the national interest of the country and should balance great power relations (personal communication, May 17, 2022). However, he seems silent that balancing the interests of foreign powers and protecting the national interests of Nepal is not possible at the same time.

About Nepal's foreign policy, G. Kochhar suggests that just a strategic rebalancing would not work for Nepal. It has been trying to do it for decades. This rebalancing would be very difficult to trade and it has to lean toward something but for the interest and development of Nepal, an approach to look at geo-economic interest as the core interest of Nepal would be more conducive rather than looking at the geo-strategic relations (G. Kochhar, personal communication, November 10, 2022). Nepal would be able to function through a neo-functional approach, she says. The neo-functional approach is more based on having geo-economic

relations with the countries which will be conducive to defusing geo-strategic tensions. That is a broader term. If Nepal can deal at the geo-economics level with multiple players to have a safe relationship, it might help in diffusing tensions that Nepal might have or the pressure that Nepal is facing today. Therefore, Kochhar's opinion is adopting a neo-functional approach will economically benefit Nepal rather than by strategic rebalancing approach. The latter approach will create only security risks and the former is conducive for better and deeper economic relations with all countries.

Similarly, M. P. Lama says that Nepal can neither do strategic balancing nor apply pragmatic approaches because of three fundamental reasons: First, there is no bold leadership that truly focuses on protecting the national interests and controlling anti-national activities. Second, skill deficit problems in Nepal are high because political leadership appoints the wrong and unskilled persons in sensitive diplomatic missions, he claims. Third, there is a serious lack of resources to conduct foreign policy and diplomacy (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022). So, Nepal should focus on removing these three lapses first, he suggests then the foreign policy and diplomacy will catch the track automatically. R. Ranjan also emphasizes that balancing is not favorable to Nepal. Nepal would lose the trust of both countries when they know that it is balancing (personal communication, November 7, 2022). When India and China are rivalries, balancing would not be a good approach. So, a pragmatic approach would be the best. In theories of international relations, it is called "Hedging".

The opinions expressed by the experts above do not seem to carry perfectly new concepts that comprehensively can address the changing global, regional, and national geopolitical and geoeconomic issues and agendas. The most comprehensive foreign policy of Nepal so far seems to be the foreign policy drafted and passed by the Cabinet of the Oli government in 2077 B.S.

Even though the various governments before that formed various committees to draft foreign policy and those committees drafted and submitted it to the then government, the drafts were not passed by the government, so the researcher cannot say anything about such working committees and drafts. Despite being a comprehensive document of Nepal's foreign policy, the foreign policy document of 2077 B.S. seems lacking to address the following points:

1. Historical exploration of Nepal's foreign policy and analysis of the relationship between contemporary and that kind of Nepal's history of foreign policies.
2. Theoretical interpretation of Nepal's international relations, analysis, theoretical discussion, debate, and theorization in the special local context of Nepal's geopolitical incidents.
3. The task of connecting and analyzing the political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and religious aspects empirically developed in Nepali geopolitics with the theory of Nepal's international relations.
4. A micro study and analysis of the missions, causes, interests, objectives, and approaches of external geopolitical actors who are interdependently connected in Nepal's geopolitics.
5. Scientific verification of the said five pillars of Nepal's foreign policy mentioned in the Constitution of Nepal is really the local and indigenous pillars of Nepal's foreign policy, their rationality, logical interpretation, objective validity, theoretical justification, and national pride.
6. A careful and in-depth study and analysis of the strategies and counter-strategies of various powerful countries in Nepal.
7. Scientific study and analysis of Nepal's country-specific priorities and classification of the nature of Nepal's relations with the countries it has established relations with.

8. A micro-analysis of the influence, effects, and results of external and internal state and non-state actors linked with Nepal's geopolitics and foreign policy.
9. Establishment of additional think tanks, scientific classification of existing think tanks, measurement of their research effectiveness, restructuring of think tanks and strategies, policies, and plans to elevate existing think tanks to the level of global think tanks.
10. A thorough study, analysis, and period of the existence of Trilateral geopolitics in the special case of Nepal.
11. Accounting of the internal and external reasons for the difficulty of dealing with the said geopolitics and the management of the scientific method and approach of dealing.
12. Finally, based on the study, critical analysis, and discussion of all these things, there was a great possibility of making a more comprehensive foreign policy by using the means, resources, and human resources of the state.

This study has attempted to fulfill these gaps; however, they may be not too-much sufficient, using a single head, mind, passion, effort, and very limited resources in a limited time under the supervision of the supervisor and co-supervisor (see Chapters Two to Six).

It is necessary to scientifically study and analyze whether the five pillars of Nepal's foreign policy provided by the Constitution of Nepal are the dimensions of Nepal's foreign policy that demonstrate its national character or whether Nepal has copied these dimensions from international historical values. Due to the limitation of the length of the thesis, this has yet to be scientifically verified by further research, but this study concludes that those dimensions are not the pillars of Nepal's pillars that represent and demonstrate Nepal's national character. To avoid the trouble of drafting Nepal's foreign policy by conducting scientific research, these are just

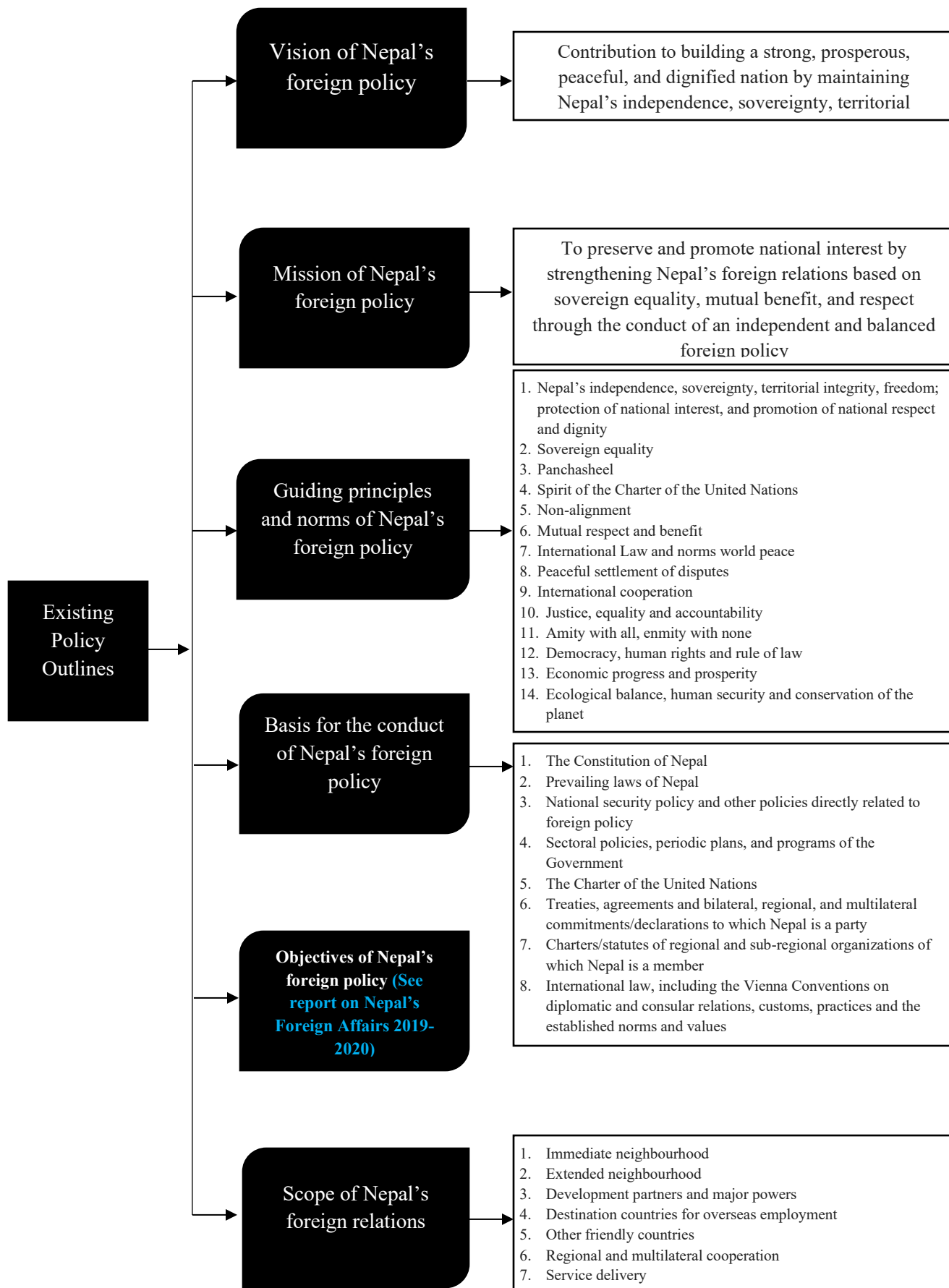
world concepts and global norms/values copied for ease from the historical concepts of the world.

Regarding outlines of Nepal's foreign policy, this study has categorized three kinds of outlines as below: First, Experts' outlines which have already been analyzed and shown in below figure for its brief review. The second is Nepal's existing outlines which are shown in below next figure, and the third is the "New Outlines" after this study based on whole previous chapters shown in other figures below. The following figure shows the first category of outlines of Nepal's foreign policy.

#### ***6.6.1 Existing outlines of Nepal's foreign policy***

This is Nepal's existing foreign policy outline, shown in the figure below.

Figure 6.6 Outlines of Nepal's existing foreign policy



### 6.6.2 *Experts' outlines of Nepal's foreign policy*

This is the outlines of Nepal's foreign policy analyzed based on Experts' opinion which is shown in below figure. The researcher has categorized 23 opinions, which are briefly listed below, expressed by the experts into the following categories:

- a) Approach
- b) Economy
- c) Strategy
- d) Policy
- e) Diplomatic Behaviors
- f) Risk Assessment
- g) Discourse
- h) Priority

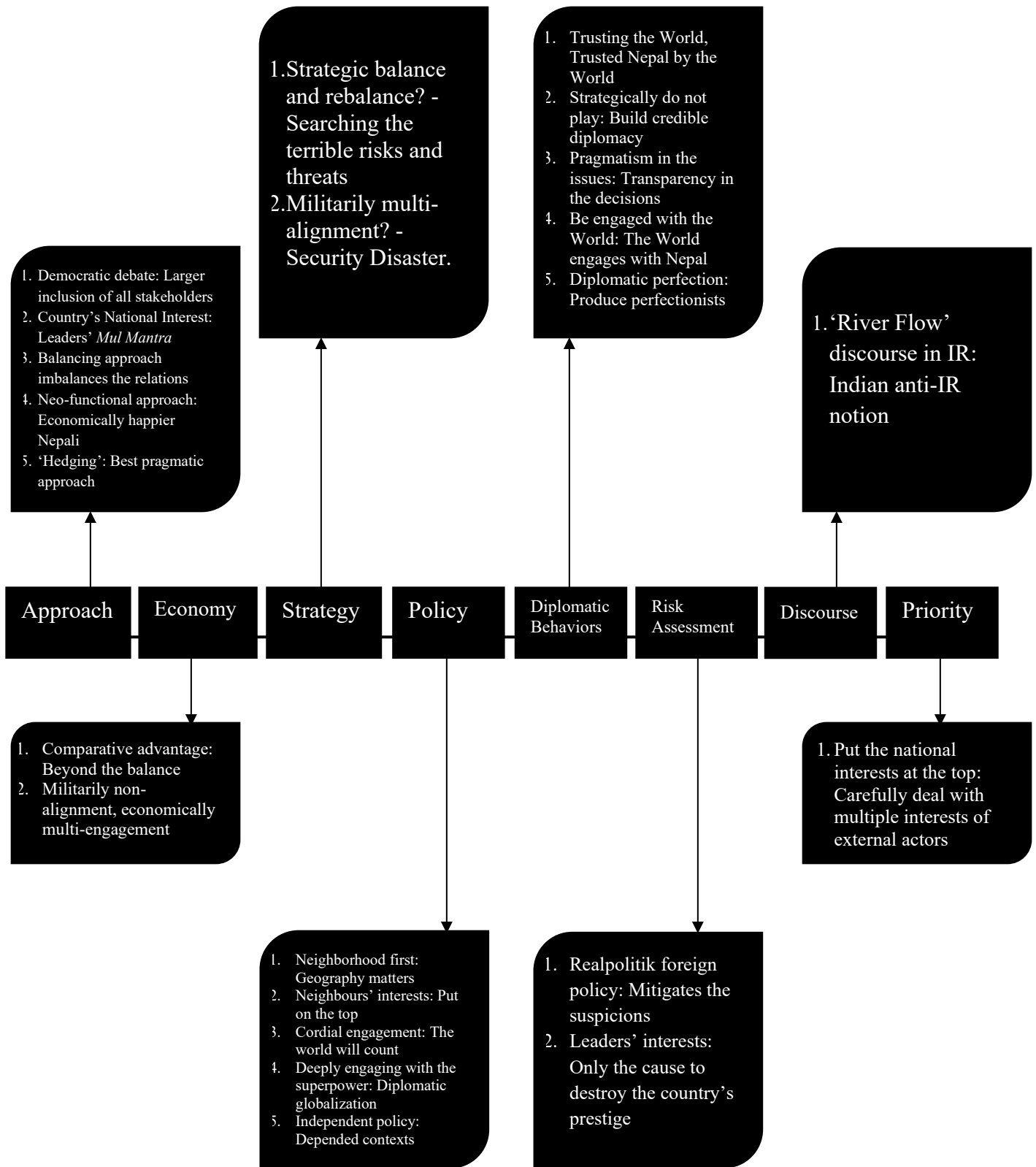
The 23 opinions of experts in the edited form are:

1. Democratic debate: Larger inclusion of all stakeholders (Approach)
2. Comparative advantage: Beyond the balance (Economy)
3. Strategic balance and rebalance? - Searching the terrible risks and threats (Strategy)
4. Neighborhood first: Geography matters (Policy)
5. Neighbours' interests: Put on the top (Policy)
6. Country's National Interest: Leaders' *Mul Mantra* (Approach)
7. Cordial engagement: The world will count (Policy)
8. Militarily multi-alignment? - Security Disaster (Strategy)
9. Deeply engaging with the superpower: Diplomatic globalization (Policy)
10. Militarily non-alignment, economically multi-engagement (Economy)

11. Trusting the World, Trusted Nepal by the World (Diplomatic Behaviors)
12. Strategically do not play: Build credible diplomacy (Diplomatic Behaviors)
13. Realpolitik foreign policy: Mitigates the suspicions (Risk Assessment)
14. Pragmatism in the issues: Transparency in the decisions (Diplomatic Behaviors)
15. 'River Flow' discourse in IR: Indian anti-IR notion (Discourse)
16. Be engaged with the World: The World engages with Nepal (Diplomatic Behaviors)
17. Put the national interests at the top: Carefully deal with multiple interests of external actors  
(Priority)
18. Diplomatic perfection: Produce perfectionists (Diplomatic Behaviors)
19. Balancing approach imbalances the relations (Approach)
20. Independent policy: Depended contexts (Policy)
21. Leaders' interests: Only the cause to destroy the country's prestige (Risk Assessment)
22. Neo-functional approach: Economically happier Nepali (Approach)
23. 'Hedging': Best pragmatic approach (Approach)

The Figure seems like below:

Figure 6.7 A brief outline of policy suggestions received from experts



Source: Self prepared based on primary qualitative data

### ***6.6.3 New outlines proposed and analyzed by the researcher***

This is the new outlines proposed and analyzed by the researcher after this study based on whole previous chapters shown in figures below. Chapter two, chapter four, chapter five and chapter six are the main bases for this outlines. In chapter two, a brief philosophical and empirical review of the main principles of geopolitics, geo-economics, mainstreaming theories of IR, the theoretical concept of national interest, the empirical aspects of Nepal's national interest, and the existing foreign policy of Nepal have been reviewed. The “New Outlines” of Nepal's foreign policy in the era of Trilateral geopolitics has made this matter the first basis. And, while formulating foreign policy, mainly geopolitics, and geo-economics should be studied together and their impact on each other should be critically analyzed together, otherwise foreign policy cannot become comprehensive and comparatively perfect. In chapter two, the Theory of Heartland under geopolitics was also explained and it was estimated that Nepal will become a new Heartland of World politics in the coming decades and ongoing century. As this study has emerged the theoretical debate of Trilateral Geopolitics in the special context of Nepal, it has been proven that Nepal will become a new Heartland of the world at least in this running century due to Trilateral Complex Geopolitics according to this study. The “New Outlines” has also made this point another basis.

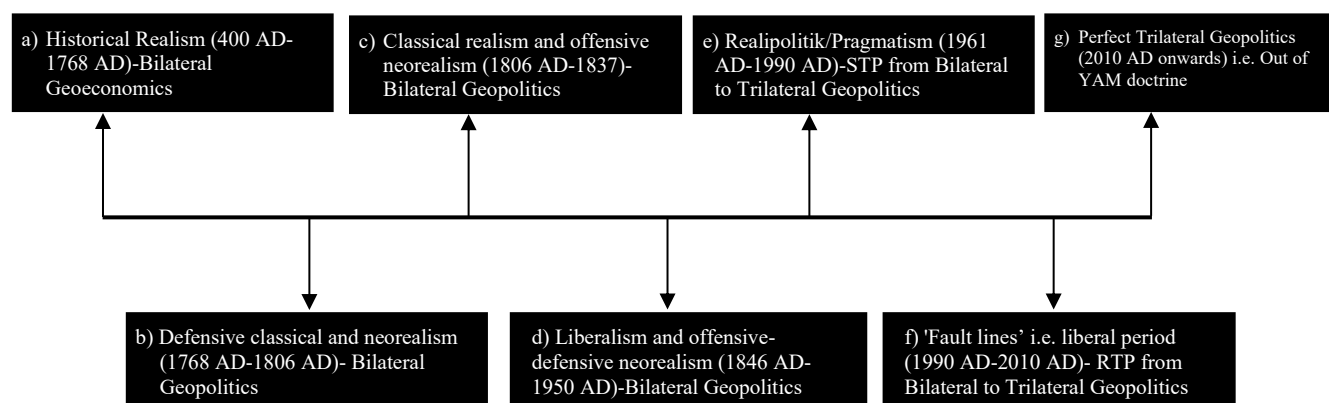
Similarly, Chapter Four has investigated the foreign policy of Nepal from the Lichchhavi age to the Federal Democratic Republican stage. Foreign policies of Nepal in different periods have been analyzed based on a theoretical foundation as well in this Chapter. This study has found that the discourse of Nepali politics and foreign policy was theoretically close to “Bilateral Geopolitics” from the Lichchhavi age to the 1950s. The period from the 1950s to the 1990s was the “Slow Transition Period (STP)” from “Bilateral Geopolitics” to “Trilateral Geopolitics”. The

period from the 1990s to 2010 was the “Rapid Transition Period (RTP)” to “Trilateral Geopolitics”. And, the period after 2010 onwards (especially after MCC’s preliminary study) is perfectly the discourse of “Trilateral Geopolitics”. Such kind of historical theoretical and empirical legacy of Nepal’s foreign policy should be deeply considered in the “New Outlines” of Nepal’s foreign policy. Chapter Four has also answered research question number one in detail.

Likewise, Chapter Five is focused on the recent geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities, new geopolitical actors of Nepal’s latest geopolitics, strategies, and counter strategies of key external actors, and fault lines of Nepali geopolitics. These issues are directly linked to the effectiveness of the foreign policy of Nepal. So, the “New Outlines” should include those kinds of issues as factors affecting the foreign policy formulation and implementation. Chapter Five has searched for the answer to research question number two.

Moreover, Chapter Six is entirely focused on the domestic structure of Nepal’s foreign policy. Foreign policy actors, institutional mechanisms, political parties, bureaucracy, think tanks, and Nepal’s dealing with external actors are the major domestic issues that play a significant role and are the factors affecting Nepal’s foreign policy formulation and implementation. So, the “New Outlines” should also think about those sorts of issues as well. This Chapter has explored the answer to research question number three in detail. There are two figures regarding the “New Outlines” of Nepal’s foreign policy. The first following figure represents the theoretical outlines of Nepal’s foreign policy from the Lichchhavi age to the current stage based on the Researcher’s analysis in Chapter Four.

Figure 6.8 Theoretical (philosophical) outlines of Nepal's foreign policy from Lichchhavi age to the current stage



*Source: Self prepared based on secondary qualitative data*

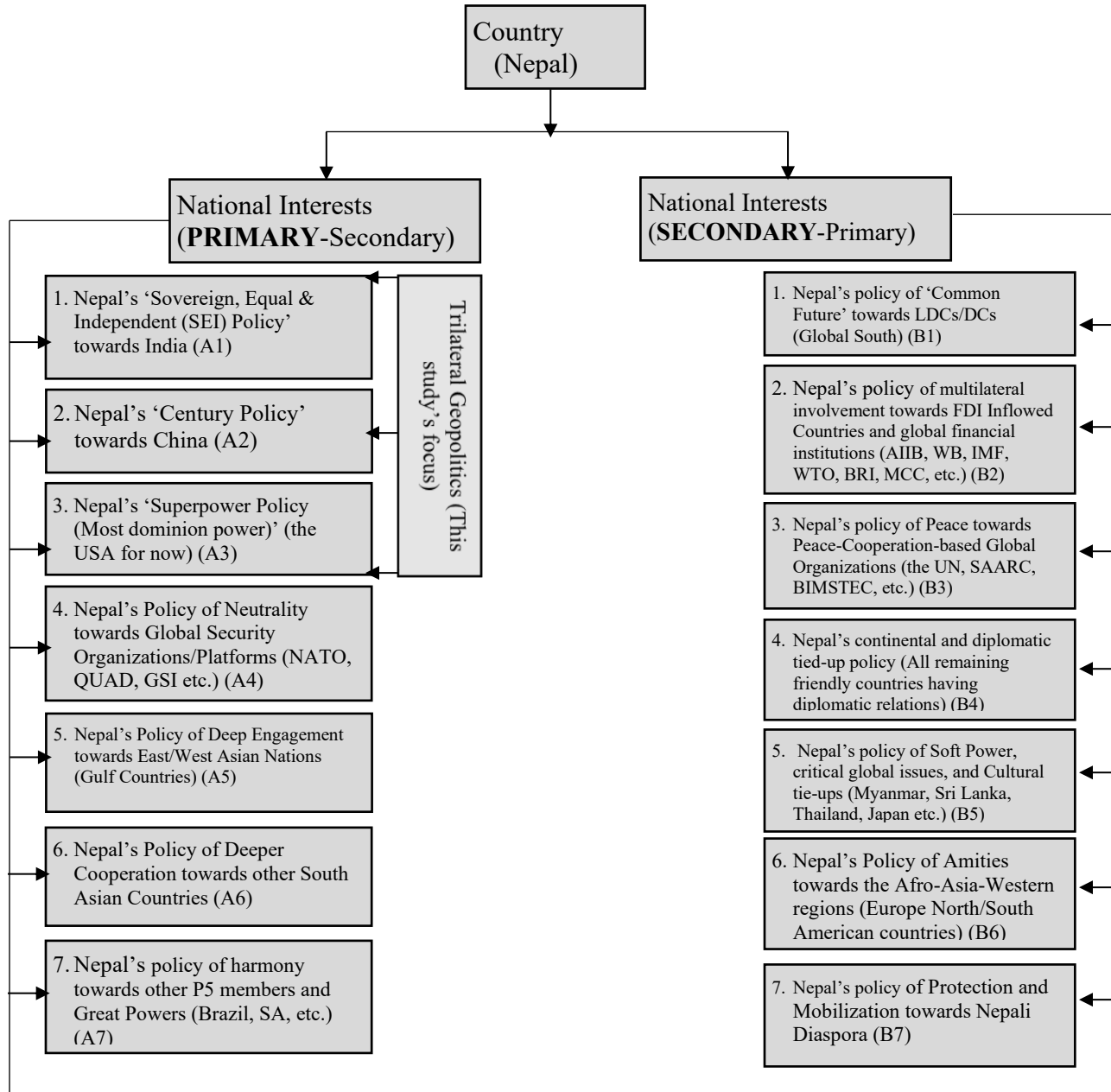
- a) Historical Realism-Lichchhavi and Malla Ages (400 AD to 1768 AD)-Bilateral Geoeconomics
- b) King Prithvi Narayan Shah (fusion of defensive classical and neorealism)-Bilateral Geopolitics (1768 AD to 1806 AD)
- c) Bhimsen Thapa (fusion of classical realism and offensive neorealism)-Bilateral Geopolitics (1806 AD-1837 AD)
- d) Rana Times (Jang Bahadur Rana)- Liberalism to the south and offensive-defensive neorealism to the north-Bilateral Geopolitics (1846 AD-1950 AD)
- e) Realpolitik i.e. Pragmatism (Panchayat Years)-Light Transition Period from Bilateral to Trilateral Geopolitics (1961 AD-1990 AD)
- f) 'Fault line in theories of Nepali foreign policy (Democratic Period)- Intensive Transition Period from Bilateral to Trilateral Geopolitics (1990 AD-2010 AD)
- g) Perfect Trilateral Geopolitics (2010 AD onwards) i.e. out of YAM doctrine.

In this way, historically, it seems that the doctrine of “Yam between two Boulders” has been slowly shifted towards the new doctrine of metaphorically ‘A Cat & Three Lions’ which is

theoretically analyzed as Trilateral Geopolitics. The state is considered as a living organism that can be grown or expanded or shrunk. But stones or boulders cannot grow and move themselves without any external forces whereas a Yam can grow itself. So, the ‘Yam’ and ‘Boulders’ doctrine was metaphorically correct but scientifically wrong. ‘A Cat & Lions’ doctrine is scientifically correct as they can grow, expand, move themselves, and target others. They are also violent by nature and the character of the state is also violent. So, ‘A Cat & Three Lions’ doctrine seems scientifically valid in the Trilateral Geopolitical era.

Similarly, the following figure represents the brief “New Outlines” of Nepal’s foreign policy in the age of “Trilateral Geopolitics”. It is interconnected to external actors in Nepali geopolitics and geoeconomics (Chapter 5.3).

Figure 6.9 Pragmatic (empirical) and scientific "New Outlines" (7\*7 Matrix Model) of Nepal's foreign policy in the age of Trilateral Geopolitics



Source: Self sketched based on primary and secondary qualitative data analysis

#### 6.6.4 *Explanation of new outlines*

The above figure represents the Pragmatic (Empirical) and Scientific "New Outlines" i.e. 7\*7 Matrix model of Nepal's foreign policy in the age of "Trilateral Geopolitics" proposed by the researcher based on this scientific research. This model is deeply connected to Nepal's primary and secondary national interests. In the figure, National Interest (PRIMARY-Secondary) is given on one side and National Interest (SECONDARY-Primary) is given on the other side. It means that the foreign policy under the left side (PRIMARY-secondary) first serves the primary national interest of the country and then impacts the secondary national interest. Similarly, the foreign policy under the right side (SECONDARY-Primary) first serves the secondary national interests of the country and then impacts the primary national interests.

In the above figure, Nepal's India policy is termed Nepal's SEI policy towards India which is denoted by 'A1'. These symbols (A1, A2, ..., B1, B2,... etc) are used to frame Nepal's foreign policy outlines as a Matrix Model. It is based on the experience of Nepal's India affairs. Almost all the Nepali (even Chinese) experts expressed that India deals with Nepal undermining Nepal's Sovereignty (S), Equality (E), and Independence (I) which are core ingredients of foreign relations of a state as per many international charters and laws. So, the policy of Nepal towards India is termed Nepal's SEI policy towards India in this study.

The second policy under the PRIMARY-Secondary category is Nepal's 'Century Policy' towards China, denoted by 'A2'. Many experts expressed that China is a rising power and has the target to become a superpower by 2050 and wants to surpass the USA in every sector. If China surpasses the USA in 2050, based on the nature of the superpower's lifespan, no next country may meet China at least for the next one and half century. So, this study predicts that China at least will maintain its superpower status for the same period if it surpasses the USA by

2050. In such a situation, Nepal must be a visionary country in the foreign policy domain and should prepare its policy towards China at least for a Century. So, the second policy of Nepal under the PRIMARY-Secondary category is termed Nepal's 'Century Policy' towards China (A2).

The third policy of Nepal under the same category is Nepal's Superpower Policy or Nepal's most dominion power policy, denoted by 'A3'. Some scholars seem to hesitate to use the term 'superpower' as this term carries the Western discourse. In this condition, this term can be replaced by the next term 'most dominion power'. After Nepal's India and China policy, its policy towards superpower is the third important foreign policy in the context of Trilateral Geopolitics.

The fourth policy of Nepal under the PRIMARY-Secondary category is Nepal's policy of neutrality towards Global Security Organizations/Platforms, denoted by 'A4'. Because Nepal cannot afford any kind of alliance or any strategic partnership with any kind of security/military organization, Nepal must adopt this policy towards any global military organizations.

Similarly, the fifth policy of Nepal under this category is Nepal's Policy of deep engagement towards East/West Asian Nations (Gulf Countries), denoted by 'A5'. These regions are the destination of Nepali workers and the remittance sent by them is a driving force of the Nepali economy. So, the geoeconomic relations with those countries are very important in the present context. It also links with Nepal's seventh policy under the next category i.e. SECONDARY-Primary category.

Other South Asian countries are partners in the same region. Their success motivates Nepal and their failure brings the lesson for Nepal. Due to the same geographic region, Nepal and these countries share common regional forums like SAARC and BIMSTEC. To solve the regional

issues collectively, and to contribute to regional peace, development, and security, these countries are also equally important for Nepal's foreign policy. Therefore, the sixth policy of Nepal under the PRIMARY-Secondary category is Nepal's policy of deeper cooperation with other South Asian countries which is denoted by 'A6'. The detailed issues and components of such foreign policy need separate in-depth research maybe in the next high-level degree.

The last policy under the PRIMARY-Secondary category is Nepal's policy of harmony towards other P5 members and Great Powers, denoted by 'A7'. Other P5 members are the UK, Russia, and France except China and the USA. Similarly, the Great Powers are emerging economies like South Africa, Brazil, etc. which are also militarily influential. Nepal cannot ignore these P5 countries as well as other Great Powers since already being a Non-Permanent Member country of the UNSC. And, the other Great Powers like Brazil, South Africa, etc. have been lobbying to become Permanent Members of the UNSC.

The next category of Nepal's foreign policy is the SECONDARY-Primary category. This category first serves the Secondary national interests and impacts on the primary national interest of the country. The first policy under this category is Nepal's policy of a common future towards LDCs/DCs (Global South), which is denoted here by 'B1'. The Least Developed Countries and Developing Countries are the members of the same group i.e. Global South. Nepal cannot forget the importance and possible cooperation and partnership with the countries of the same group of the World as they have been facing similar risks, challenges, and losses due to the industrialization and actions of developed countries, and also searching for the same opportunity for development, equal treatment, and prosperity.

Similarly, International financial institutions like IMF, the WB, AIIB, WTO, and FDI-inflowing countries are important for strengthening Nepal's geoeconomic domain and connecting

it with world geoeconomics to boost Nepal's foreign policy. Therefore, Nepal's second policy under the second category should be focused on these countries and institutions, denoted by 'B2'.

Nepal's third policy under this SECONDARY-Primary category is Nepal's policy of Peace and Cooperation towards Peace-Cooperation-based global organizations like the UNO, the EU, SAARC, BIMSTEC, etc, is denoted by 'B3'. Nepal should revive the concept of a Peace Zone which was first introduced by King Birendra. This concept is more important in this Trilateral Geopolitical context of Nepal. So, this policy helps to revive Nepal's Peace Zone proposal again.

Likewise, the fourth policy of Nepal under this category is Nepal's continental and diplomatic tied-up policy which covers the remaining all friendly countries having diplomatic relations. This policy is denoted by 'B4'. There are three types of countries that are diplomatically connected with Nepal and these categories are already explained in the previous chapter. So, Nepal should keep this fact in mind while making its policy. At least, regular exchange of ideas, major achievements, and key learnings will be enough with those countries.

One of the crucial strengths of Nepal is its Soft Power domain which has yet to be well defined and promoted. Nepal cannot fight with super and great powers with its Military Mites. It can impress and influence them through its soft power approach. So, Nepal's policy needs to build relations based on soft power, is denoted by 'B5'. For example, Nepal can capitalize the Buddhism for the sake of achieving its secondary national interests by making the relations harmonious with similar kinds of countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Japan, Thailand, etc.

Nepal's sixth policy under the second category is Nepal's policy of amity towards the Afro-Asia-Western regions which is denoted by 'B6'. This foreign policy of Nepal covers the countries of Asian, African, and European/Western regions that could not be included in the

previous foreign policies. Nepal should adopt the policy of amity towards them to build and maintain meaningful relations with those countries.

The last foreign policy of Nepal under the second category is Nepal's policy of protection and mobilization towards the Nepali Diaspora. It is denoted by 'B7' in the above figure. Not only the Nepalis working in the Gulf countries, but the lives of the Nepalis living permanently or temporarily in other countries in the world are in danger zones and insecure conditions. On the other hand, some Nepalis are also earning good money by doing business in those countries. Not only the economic power earned, but also to connect their knowledge, skills, and efficiency with Nepal's economy, a special policy should be taken to mobilize them for the country's benefit. In introducing Nepal to the world, this Diaspora power can also become a soft power of Nepal.

How the "New Outlines" of Nepal's foreign policy became a 7\*7 Matrix Model is briefly explained in the below table.

Table 6.2 "7\*7 Matrix model of scientific and empirical outlines" of Nepal's foreign policy

Null Point	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
B1	A1B1	A2B1	A3B1	A4B1	A5B1	A6B1	A7B1
B2	A1B2	A2B2	A3B2	A4B2	A5B2	A6B2	A7B2
B3	A1B3	A2B3	A3B3	A4B3	A5B3	A6B3	A7B3
B4	A1B4	A2B4	A3B4	A4B4	A5B4	A6B4	A7B4
B5	A1B5	A2B5	A3B5	A4B5	A5B5	A6B5	A7B5
B6	A1B6	A2B6	A3B6	A4B6	A5B6	A6B6	A7B6
B7	A1B7	A2B7	A3B7	A4B7	A5B7	A6B7	A7B7

The above table shows the horizontal and vertical relations between and among various variables placed in the rows and columns. In the table of the 7\*7 Matrix Model, the null point is

the point that is the very beginning phase of foreign policy. Or, we can say, that it is the starting point of foreign policy (Point of Origin or null point). If Nepal's SEI policy towards India under the first category is denoted by A1 and Nepal's policy of 'Common Future' towards LDCs/DCs (Global South) is denoted by B1, then the resultant becomes A1B1. Likewise, a similar process happens in all the cases represented as boxes above.

Similarly, let us analyze the above first resultant column (i.e. A1, A1B1, A1B2, A1B3, A1B4, A1B5, A1B6, and A1B7). A1 is Nepal's SEI policy towards India. The symbols from B1 to B7 represent Nepal's seven policies under the SECONDARY-Primary category. It means A1 or Nepal's SEI policy towards India is not only influenced and implicated by the other six policies of Nepal under the PRIMARY-Secondary category but also by seven more policies under the SECONDARY-Primary category. Similar processes happen in all cases on Nepal's policy of "New Outlines". From this Matrix Model, it is clear that Nepal's policy towards any one unit is dependent on other policies of Nepal, this is the central dilemma of Nepal's foreign policy. For example, if Nepal does good for China, India and the USA become dissatisfied. If Nepal does good for India, maybe the USA and China become upset, and if Nepal does good for the USA, of course, China and maybe India become sad. This is the major fault line of Nepal's foreign policy and this kind of fault line is reflected in the 7\*7 Matrix Model of Nepal's foreign policy. So, Nepal should very carefully adopt the policies towards all fourteen units which are direct and indirect actors of Nepali geopolitics and geoeconomics. So, the above Figure shows the Pragmatic Approach of foreign policy which puts the national interests at the center. Thus, the "New Outlines" of Nepal's foreign policy is an advanced model than a "brief outline of policy suggestions received from the experts" and "existing outlines of Nepal's foreign policy". The following picture indicates how the model is '7\*7 Matrix'.

Figure 6.10 Interpretation of the '7\*7 Matrix Model'

**Interpretation: How 7\*7 Matrix Model ?**

Null Point	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
B1	A1B1	A2B1	A3B1	A4B1	A5B1	A6B1	A7B1
B2	A1B2	A2B2	A3B2	A4B2	A5B2	A6B2	A7B2
B3	A1B3	A2B3	A3B3	A4B3	A5B3	A6B3	A7B3
B4	A1B4	A2B4	A3B4	A4B4	A5B4	A6B4	A7B4
B5	A1B5	A2B5	A3B5	A4B5	A5B5	A6B5	A7B5
B6	A1B6	A2B6	A3B6	A4B6	A5B6	A6B6	A7B6
B7	A1B7	A2B7	A3B7	A4B7	A5B7	A6B7	A7B7

*Source: Self-prepared based on the previous table*

In the above figure, arrows denote the diagonal relations between and among multiple variables placed in the rows and columns. It means every variable has multiple relations with all other variables. The social, political, and economic interpretation of such relations is that Nepal should seriously investigate the 'Cause and Effect' of each foreign policy to the rest of all other policies while formulating foreign policies and making any decision on foreign affairs.

### Mathematical and Scientific Illustrations

From the Table 9, to show multiple relations of a variable (one policy of Nepal i.e.  $A_1$  or ... $A_7$ , and  $B_1$  or ... $B_7$ ) between and among the rest of all the variables needs conversion of that Matrix into Determinant form like below based on the mathematical calculation expanding the first row:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 R_1): \\
 +A_1 \\
 -A_2 \\
 +A_3 \\
 -A_4
 \end{array}
 \left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_2 B_1 & A_3 B_1 & A_4 B_1 & A_5 B_1 & A_6 B_1 & A_7 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_2 B_2 & A_3 B_2 & A_4 B_2 & A_5 B_2 & A_6 B_2 & A_7 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_2 B_3 & A_3 B_3 & A_4 B_3 & A_5 B_3 & A_6 B_3 & A_7 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_2 B_4 & A_3 B_4 & A_4 B_4 & A_5 B_4 & A_6 B_4 & A_7 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_2 B_5 & A_3 B_5 & A_4 B_5 & A_5 B_5 & A_6 B_5 & A_7 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_2 B_6 & A_3 B_6 & A_4 B_6 & A_5 B_6 & A_6 B_6 & A_7 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_2 B_7 & A_3 B_7 & A_4 B_7 & A_5 B_7 & A_6 B_7 & A_7 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_1 B_1 & A_3 B_1 & A_4 B_1 & A_5 B_1 & A_6 B_1 & A_7 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_1 B_2 & A_3 B_2 & A_4 B_2 & A_5 B_2 & A_6 B_2 & A_7 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_1 B_3 & A_3 B_3 & A_4 B_3 & A_5 B_3 & A_6 B_3 & A_7 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_1 B_4 & A_3 B_4 & A_4 B_4 & A_5 B_4 & A_6 B_4 & A_7 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_1 B_5 & A_3 B_5 & A_4 B_5 & A_5 B_5 & A_6 B_5 & A_7 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_1 B_6 & A_3 B_6 & A_4 B_6 & A_5 B_6 & A_6 B_6 & A_7 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_1 B_7 & A_3 B_7 & A_4 B_7 & A_5 B_7 & A_6 B_7 & A_7 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_1 B_1 & A_2 B_1 & A_4 B_1 & A_5 B_1 & A_6 B_1 & A_7 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_1 B_2 & A_2 B_2 & A_4 B_2 & A_5 B_2 & A_6 B_2 & A_7 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_1 B_3 & A_2 B_3 & A_4 B_3 & A_5 B_3 & A_6 B_3 & A_7 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_1 B_4 & A_2 B_4 & A_4 B_4 & A_5 B_4 & A_6 B_4 & A_7 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_1 B_5 & A_2 B_5 & A_4 B_5 & A_5 B_5 & A_6 B_5 & A_7 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_1 B_6 & A_2 B_6 & A_4 B_6 & A_5 B_6 & A_6 B_6 & A_7 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_1 B_7 & A_2 B_7 & A_4 B_7 & A_5 B_7 & A_6 B_7 & A_7 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_1 B_1 & A_2 B_1 & A_3 B_1 & A_5 B_1 & A_6 B_1 & A_7 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_1 B_2 & A_2 B_2 & A_3 B_2 & A_5 B_2 & A_6 B_2 & A_7 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_1 B_3 & A_2 B_3 & A_3 B_3 & A_5 B_3 & A_6 B_3 & A_7 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_1 B_4 & A_2 B_4 & A_3 B_4 & A_5 B_4 & A_6 B_4 & A_7 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_1 B_5 & A_2 B_5 & A_3 B_5 & A_5 B_5 & A_6 B_5 & A_7 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_1 B_6 & A_2 B_6 & A_3 B_6 & A_5 B_6 & A_6 B_6 & A_7 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_1 B_7 & A_2 B_7 & A_3 B_7 & A_5 B_7 & A_6 B_7 & A_7 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\begin{array}{l}
 +A_5 \\
 -A_6 \\
 +A_7
 \end{array}
 \left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_1 B_1 & A_2 B_1 & A_3 B_1 & A_4 B_1 & A_6 B_1 & A_7 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_1 B_2 & A_2 B_2 & A_3 B_2 & A_4 B_2 & A_6 B_2 & A_7 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_1 B_3 & A_2 B_3 & A_3 B_3 & A_4 B_3 & A_6 B_3 & A_7 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_1 B_4 & A_2 B_4 & A_3 B_4 & A_4 B_4 & A_6 B_4 & A_7 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_1 B_5 & A_2 B_5 & A_3 B_5 & A_4 B_5 & A_6 B_5 & A_7 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_1 B_6 & A_2 B_6 & A_3 B_6 & A_4 B_6 & A_6 B_6 & A_7 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_1 B_7 & A_2 B_7 & A_3 B_7 & A_4 B_7 & A_6 B_7 & A_7 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_1 B_1 & A_2 B_1 & A_3 B_1 & A_4 B_1 & A_5 B_1 & A_7 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_1 B_2 & A_2 B_2 & A_3 B_2 & A_4 B_2 & A_5 B_2 & A_7 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_1 B_3 & A_2 B_3 & A_3 B_3 & A_4 B_3 & A_5 B_3 & A_7 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_1 B_4 & A_2 B_4 & A_3 B_4 & A_4 B_4 & A_5 B_4 & A_7 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_1 B_5 & A_2 B_5 & A_3 B_5 & A_4 B_5 & A_5 B_5 & A_7 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_1 B_6 & A_2 B_6 & A_3 B_6 & A_4 B_6 & A_5 B_6 & A_7 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_1 B_7 & A_2 B_7 & A_3 B_7 & A_4 B_7 & A_5 B_7 & A_7 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccccc}
 B_1 & A_1 B_1 & A_2 B_1 & A_3 B_1 & A_4 B_1 & A_5 B_1 & A_6 B_1 \\
 B_2 & A_1 B_2 & A_2 B_2 & A_3 B_2 & A_4 B_2 & A_5 B_2 & A_6 B_2 \\
 B_3 & A_1 B_3 & A_2 B_3 & A_3 B_3 & A_4 B_3 & A_5 B_3 & A_6 B_3 \\
 B_4 & A_1 B_4 & A_2 B_4 & A_3 B_4 & A_4 B_4 & A_5 B_4 & A_6 B_4 \\
 B_5 & A_1 B_5 & A_2 B_5 & A_3 B_5 & A_4 B_5 & A_5 B_5 & A_6 B_5 \\
 B_6 & A_1 B_6 & A_2 B_6 & A_3 B_6 & A_4 B_6 & A_5 B_6 & A_6 B_6 \\
 B_7 & A_1 B_7 & A_2 B_7 & A_3 B_7 & A_4 B_7 & A_5 B_7 & A_6 B_7
 \end{array} \right]$$

The sum of the above determinant finally gives an arithmetic result (number) which is the final resultant of national interest calculated from PRIMARY-secondary and SECONDARY-primary national interests. The sum of the above mathematical illustration (determinant) either may be a positive (+) or negative (-) value. It means that if a state (Nepal) acts and conducts its foreign policy in the right way, national interest can be expanded and extended i.e. positive value whereas if a state (Nepal) acts and conducts foreign policy in the wrong way, national interest can be threatened i.e. negative value. Here is an example (mathematical solution of “3\*3 Matrix”):

Let us consider, A (Matrix)=

1	2	-1
2	0	1
3	3	-1

$$\text{Sol}^n: |A| = \begin{vmatrix} 1 & 2 & -1 \\ 2 & 0 & 1 \\ 3 & 3 & -1 \end{vmatrix}$$

Expanding  $R_1$ :

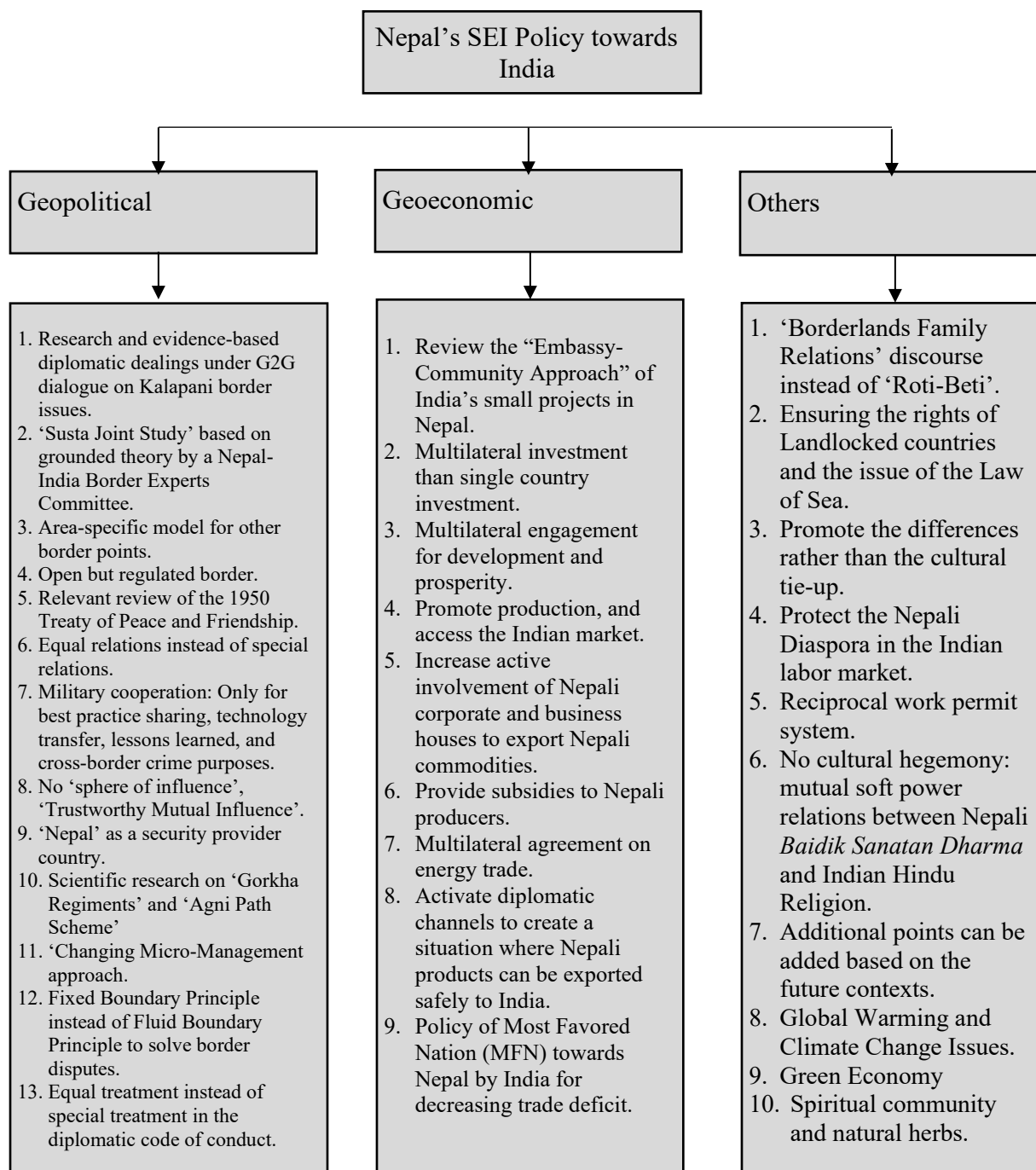
$$= +1 \begin{vmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 3 & -1 \end{vmatrix} - 2 \begin{vmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ 3 & -1 \end{vmatrix} + (-1) \begin{vmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 3 & 3 \end{vmatrix}$$

$$= 1(0 \cdot -1 - 3 \cdot 1) - 2(2 \cdot -1 - 3 \cdot 1) - 1(6 - 0) = -3 - 2(-2 - 3) - 6 = -3 + 10 - 6 = 1$$

Hence, the sum of the above determinant is +1 i.e. positive value. The positive value can be referred as the opportunities for national interest due to the right approach in foreign policy and diplomatic behaviour. In this way, we can solve the above “7\*7 Matrix” as well, as solved the “3\*3 Matrix” but its solution is very lengthy and complex. The ‘7\*7 Matrix and its solution is based on a scientific mathematical formula. So this model is perfectly scientific. The model is also empirical because it is based on the in-depth study of Nepal’s empirical issues related to geopolitics, geoeconomics, and foreign policy. So, it is scientifically, empirically, and mathematically proven from the above illustration that the new outline of Nepal’s foreign policy is the “7\*7 Scientific and Empirical Matrix Model of Nepal’s Foreign Policy”.

Here, a brief outline of A1 i.e. Nepal’s SEI Policy towards India is given below as an example, and similar way needs for all fourteen policies under both categories.

Figure 6.11 A concept of Nepal's SEI policy toward India



*Source: Self prepared*

## 6.7 Major Discussions/ Findings

### 6.7.1 Discussion-1/ finding-1

This section critically discussed the most relevant results, and interpretations, linking to the topic, and statement of the problem, answering original research questions, and checking the appropriate understanding and application of the findings. This section also briefly highlights the key results of this research. This study has focused on geopolitics, geoeconomics, and foreign policy as its topic. It studied the foreign policy of the Lichchhavi and Malla ages of Nepal from the perspective of geopolitics and geoeconomics. It was one of the statements of the problem of this study.

The study shows that the roots of Nepal's geoeconomics can be traced back to the Nepali first currency named Mananka, which was initiated by the first king of the Licchhabhi age, Mandeva-I (Adhikari, 2021, pp. 108-111) to promote Nepal's internal and external trade. This is the foundation of the geoeconomics of Nepal which was developed in the written history of Nepal. King Mandeva-I started the practice of preserving all the glorious political regimes, governance, and legal matters of the Lichchhabhi age in stone inscriptions, which was the first milestone of the Nepali geopolitics of that time. Because, based on those inscriptions (Vajracarya, 1973, p. 117) critical academic study, research, interpretation, analysis, and further arguments of the political history of Nepal were developed by academics in various periods. King Manadeva-I went to the East with his military to fight the war with Kirat feudal. He had won the battle with Kirat and integrated them under the Lichchhavi Kingdom. Then again, he moved to the West to fight the war with Western feudal. In this way, he expanded the territory up to Koshi in the East, Gandaki in the West, and the Himalayan belt in the North (Adhikari, 2021, p. 110). This was a very crucial example of geopolitics in the Lichchhavi age.

The next crucial part of Manadeva's work was the concept of a Think Tank. Most of the intellectuals under his governance used to be gathered at his Palace every day. Manadeva-I used to invite the intellectuals of various fields to gather ideas, information, and knowledge. This practice was the foundation of institution-building in his era to formulate relevant policies towards other tiny states and make the right decision to successfully handle historical diplomatic affairs. This is the best example of his foreign policy approach which was adopted by many other Kings in the Lichchhavi and also in the Malla age.

The next famous King in the Lichchhavi age was Anshuverma. According to Pant, during Anshuverma's reign, there were very strong rulers in the north and south like Tsrong Tsonq Gompo in Tibet and Harsha Bardhan in India, so he maintained a friendly relationship in a pragmatic way to safeguard Nepal from both powers (Pant, 2043 B.S., pp. 1-34). This is a very good example of foreign policy, diplomatic affairs, and geopolitics during his tenure. According to *Adhikari*, King *Anshuverma* had also started the process of diversification of ancient Nepal's trade policy to increase the national trade with northern and southern countries (2021, p. 115). Since ancient times, iron, copper utensils, wool, musk, deerskin, etc. were sold in the Indian market. He made many efforts to establish dominance in the Indian market and make a leap in economic development by bringing diversity in trade and progressing the country. Kathmandu became the center of international trade due to the migration of traders from India to Tibet through the valley and from Tibet to India through the same under King Anshuverma. These are examples of Nepal's geoeconomics in that era. He built better diplomatic relations with the Tibetan ruler Tsrong Tsonq Gompo through Bhrikuti's marriage to him. Historians have claimed that Udayadeva, who fled to Tibet with his family, expected military support from the then ruler of Tibet (Bhot), Tsrong Tsonq Gompo, to regain power in the state, and the state was finally

regained under the leadership of Bhrikuti's brother King Narendradev (Jha, 1970, p. 159). It proved that there was also serious geopolitical complexities and implications of external actors in internal politics even in the Lichchhavi dynasty and same trend was continued in the Malla dynasty onwards. From the above very brief recap of the results, the psychological construct and pragmatic approach of Kings for the decision-making process were the source of the approaches to foreign policy formulation before the Shah era.

There are several arguments and claims about the source of approaches to foreign policy during and after the Shah era. Rules, laws, and the Constitution are made from customary laws (P. S. Basnyat, personal communication, August 15, 2022). Nepal's foreign policy is based on those rules, laws, and the constitution but he could not say about other circumstances like the role of multi-ethnic social structure and its implications to the source of approaches. On the contrary, S. Sharma claims that King Prithvi Narayan Shah's *Divyopadesh* is the source of the approaches to Nepal's foreign policy formulation (personal communication, August 8, 2022) however he is silent on the source of approaches to the foreign policy before the Shah era. There were no points of *Divyopadesh* during the Malla and Lichchhavi dynasties. Similarly, C. D. Bhatta argues that the Constitution is the major source of foreign policy formulation (personal communication, December 16, 2022). The constitution is the major source of foreign policy formulation all over the world but many other factors and their effect (like the role of external actors and their serious engagement) cannot be undermined on which Bhatta seems silent in the case of source of foreign policy. Bashyal's views are different. He emphasizes that the role of external actors, as well as their relations and influential engagement with domestic actors, are the major factors affecting the approaches to foreign policy formulation (personal communication, September 2, 2022). However, Bashyal did not describe the role of charismatic leadership and

his/her bold decision-making process as the source of approaches. Likewise, M. K. Bhattarai highlights that the state's de facto executive power is the major approach (personal communication, August 16, 2022) however multilateral relations among various great powers have to be kept in mind while formulating foreign policy (S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022). J. N. Khanal's opinion is also not so different from that of others. He says the constitutional provisions should be followed for the same purpose (personal communication, August 19, 2022). Moreover, P. K. Gyawali and G. L. Malla emphasize some current and innovative approaches to it (personal communication, December 30, 2022; personal communication, September 2, 2022). Despite several sources of approaches to foreign policy having been shared by key informants, geographical settings, and their constraints, the role of epistemic community, a sovereign mindset of state's leaders, the country's historical legacy, the role of natural resources, and the state's soft power, military power, and economic prosperity, country's development model and negotiation skills, etc are not mentioned by key informants which are also the cross-cutting issues of sources of approaches to foreign policy. From the aforementioned discussion, the first major finding is that there never can be a single approach to formulating foreign policy. Multiple approaches are only the ways to precisely formulate foreign policy keeping the multiple relationships among those approaches in mind. These kinds of results or discussions help academics and scholars to conduct their research in this domain. They can explore more data based on this study to contribute to generating knowledge. On the other hand, this discussion and result help policymakers to formulate relevant policy based on this scientific research outcomes. This study can not claim that policymakers must consider this research outcome only for their policy draft. It can only be suggested to be considered this research finding by policymakers among numerous research results.

### 6.7.2 *Discussion-2/ finding-2*

Many respondents argue about why Nepal is under difficulties in addressing the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in the formulation of Nepal's foreign policy. S. R. Simkhada says that, on the one hand, foreign policy is extremely politicized, and on the other hand, it is extremely bureaucratized (personal communication, August 19, 2022). This is the major cause in the view of Simkhada however it can not be said that there is no significant role of other factors like outdated foreign policy, wrong foreign policy approach, diplomatic lapses, political weakness, etc. Many Nepali respondents argue that due to political leaders' interest focused foreign affairs, Nepal has been facing critical problems in addressing the country's geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges (M. K. Bhattarai, personal communication, August 16, 2022; H. R. Subedi, personal communication, August 18, 2022; G. L. Malla, personal communication, September 2, 2022). But, the root cause is the lack of sincerity and knowledge of political leaders unlike being only leaders' interest-focused foreign affairs because it is the byproduct of lack of knowledge and sincerity of them. Similarly, Indian respondents highlight the prime issue that Nepal's diplomatic behavior does seem trustworthy and transparent. Because of such a situation, Nepal seems unable to address such geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in foreign policy (R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022; S. Thapliyal, personal communication, November 9, 2022; S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022). But, this is the Indian perspective which may not be perfectly true in the case of Nepal. Because, from the Nepali side, Nepali leaders reject such Indian claims and argue that Nepal has always been dealing with all external actors honestly and diplomatically. Similarly, Chinese respondents doubt Nepali political unity and stability. They argue that the only conditions to address any kind of complexities in the geopolitical and geoeconomic domain are political stability and internal

unity (L. Tao, personal communication, April 24, 2023). US respondents analyze the situation that Nepal has been trying for a long time but seems very difficult situation to negotiate with the Indian and the Chinese counterparts in the happiest moment to address their interests at a time (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). Above all the claims of key informants are only for reference and relative truth, not the absolute truth. So, from the aforementioned discussion, the third major finding is that twenty internal and eighteen external geopolitical fault lines create a complex geopolitical situation in formulating and implementing Nepal's foreign policy.

### **6.7.3 Discussion-3/ finding-3**

Z. Subin claims that the role of Nepal's government in making Nepali geopolitics complex is vital (personal communication, August, 2022). He says that Deuba government which was formed in July 2021 and supported by four left parties has adopted a pro-India and US policy. But, Z. Subin views the issues unilaterally. There are multiple facts and possibilities behind such complex Nepali geopolitics. China's role in Nepal also can be a cause behind such sensitive geopolitics. While countering the West in Nepal, China should pragmatically think about Nepal's national interest as well. For example, China time and again claimed that the Pokhara International Airport was built under the framework of the BRI which does not seem true. Such a claim has seriously affected Nepal's relations with other countries and continents like India, Europe, and the USA. Because Nepal needs support from every country in the world for its economic development and fostering its global prestige. So, China needs to correct some of its views and approaches as well in Nepal.

T. B. Karki opines, "Nepal should keep in mind the potentiality of tourism, hydropower, and natural herbs while managing its complex geopolitics with external actors" (personal

communication, August 10, 2022). His suspicion seems valid as our previous governments have signed unequal treaties, agreements, and MoUs. However, Karki's opinion does not seem close to the mainstreaming issues which directly linked to the primary national interests of Nepal. P. K. Gyawali expresses that Nepal will never allow any other foreigners to use Nepal's land to conduct activities against our neighbors while dealing with them (personal communication, December 30, 2022). He also highlights that Nepal will never take the side of any nation in a security pact while conducting Nepal's world affairs. Based on his arguments, he seems to focus only on well-established facts and does not seem to pay attention to very crucial subtle issues like IPS's pragmatic radar in Nepal.

Though the balance is not the way to manage the great powers by a small power, H. R. Subedi opines that we need to balance our relations with all these countries. Nepal needs to focus on how to protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity while dealing Nepal's dealing should be concentrated on making a deal to shift geo-energy political complexities into an opportunity (H. R. Subedi, personal communication, August 18, 2022).

Other Nepali respondents have similar views like Gyawali, Karki, and Subedi but Indian respondents differ from Nepali respondents. They did not entertain the word 'balance'. They argue that what does the word 'balance' mean? Is it as a playing card between great powers? Or like a notion of a balance of power system? So, this is not the way of dealing with the great powers of a comparatively weak state. A trustworthy and transparent decision-making approach will be the best way of dealing with the great powers of Nepal (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022; S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022; R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022). On the contrary, the Chinese respondents have a different opinion. They suggest to Nepal that Nepal can deal with other countries by

keeping an independent foreign policy at the center (Z. Subin, personal communication, August, 2022; L. Tao, personal communication, April 24, 2023; H. Zhengduo, personal communication, September, 2022). US respondent emphasizes that Nepal should make happy to India and China first and then only Nepal can handle the relations with other powers effectively (M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023).

What is interesting is that regardless of the opinions expressed by Indian, Chinese, and Nepali experts, their opinions are not uniform and comprehensive. There are two reasons behind this. 1) The researcher could not ask specific and in-depth questions to get a comprehensive idea. 2) Limitation in knowledge. However, their opinion has become an important reference for the researcher.

From the above discussion, the second finding is that Nepal is still in a dilemma as to how she has to deal with great powers. There is no well-established and standard way of dealing with key external geopolitical actors. Nepal often advocates a balanced way of dealing with but she seems unclear about its theoretical and empirical paradigms. Maintaining harmonious relations with all major powers and promoting credible diplomacy to gain the trust of great powers is the way of dealing with external actors. Nepal cannot afford the balanced approach which is theoretically close to the realist school of thought. If Nepal does not want to leave the balanced approach, Nepal must theorize it first in the special case of the Nepali context.

As written in Discussion-1, these results, critical analysis, interpretation, and outcomes will be useful for both academics and policymakers however the research may have limitations as well.

## CHAPTER-SEVEN

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The summary and conclusion of the study is as below:

#### **7.1 Summary**

The topic of this dissertation entitled ‘Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Discourses on Nepal’s Foreign Policy’ was focused on investigating Nepal’s foreign policy in the context of emerging geopolitics and geoeconomics. To accomplish this study, three research questions were framed. Out of three, the first research question was: What is the approach and process of foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nepal? Similarly, the second research question was: Why has Nepal been facing challenges to deal with the geopolitics and geoeconomic realities and complexities to maximize the gains and achieve National Interests? Likewise, the third research question was: How Nepal can address the geopolitical and geo-economic complexities in the formulation and implementation of Nepal’s foreign policy? It means the third research question was focused on finding out the ways of dealing with external geopolitical actors in the emerging global, and regional geopolitical and geoeconomic context.

Three research questions framed the same number of objectives of this study which were: To assess the approach and process of foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nepal, to explore the reasons behind Nepal’s challenges in dealing with the geopolitics and geoeconomic realities and complexities, and to examine the way of dealing with geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in formulating and implementing foreign policy.

This dissertation belonged to rationalism in terms of the foundation of knowledge. The researcher applied his analysis, opinion, and rational ideas to draw out the best output by synthesizing various knowledge, information, data, facts, and analyses of various authors, and

experts received via authentic publications and interviews. Interpretivism, as a research paradigm, was employed to understand the subjective reality of the research unit. The study analyzed the motives, actions, and intentions of key external actors involved in Nepali geopolitics. Thus, qualitative was the research approach or methodology of the study where open-ended questions were applied for Key Informants Interview (KII) to collect qualitative primary data. Likewise, observation data, textual data, and audiovisual data were also collected and analyzed.

The deductive and inductive approaches of reasoning were applied. The lived experiences of different phenomena of various individuals and experienced experts were gathered through in-depth interviews. The research method adopted was the Phenomenological research method under the qualitative approach.

## **7.2. Conclusion**

The conclusion of the study based on the research questions and objectives are outlined below.

### ***7.2.1. Research question-1/ objective-1***

This dissertation has drawn out three conclusions in a comprehensive way. The dissertation has concluded relating to research question one and objective one is that Nepal has adopted various approaches, processes, and models of foreign policy formulation in various phases of Nepal's foreign policy. The various models, which can also be understood by approaches and processes, Nepal adopted in different periods are: non-rational actor model, rational actor model, role of dominant external actors model (newly analyzed in this dissertation in Nepal-case), and political process model in a separate as well as mixed approach. The existing models of foreign policy analysis in world affairs developed by Graham Allison seem unable to address the Nepali

context. Hence, a new model is analyzed in the special case of Nepal which is named by the researcher as ‘Role of Dominant External Actors Model’ (See Chapter 4.6).

### **7.2.2. *Research question-2/ objective-2***

As a response to research question two and objective two, the dissertation has concluded that because of eighteen external and twenty internal fault lines of Nepali geopolitics, Nepal seems incapable of addressing the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities in the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy. Those fault lines have not been smartly dealt with by rulers due to deviated the minds of political leaders from Nepal’s national interests to their personal gains (H. R. Subedi, personal communication, August 18, 2022; G. L. Malla, personal communication, September 2, 2022; C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022).

### **7.2.3. *Research question-3/ objective-3***

Linking to research question three and objective three, the dissertation has concluded that Nepal does not need to focus on promoting the balanced approach which is an entirely failed concept and practice of Nepal as per this study (G. Kochhar, personal communication, November 10, 2022; M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022; K. Bashyal, personal communication, September 2, 2022; R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022). Nepal should focus on maintaining harmonious relations with all external actors based on a pragmatic and realpolitik approach under the framework of trustworthy manner (Credible Diplomacy) keeping the national interests at the center of diplomatic affairs (L. Tao, personal communication, April 24, 2023; R. N. Pandey, personal communication, September 1, 2022; R. Rae, personal communication, November 12, 2022). While dealing with the affairs of foreign policy formulation keeping the fact of role of external geopolitical actors, a country should keep

this fact in mind that foreign policy needs scientific change when its geopolitics changes, otherwise, traditional foreign policy becomes insufficient to perfectly protect and promote the national interests in the changed geopolitical context (N. R. Nayak, personal communication, November 14, 2022; P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022). Nayak says Nepal's geopolitical situation and economic policy are not synchronized. It means Nepal needs to review its foreign policy according to the changed geopolitical context.

In this changed national, regional, and global geopolitical context, Nepal should adopt scientific foreign policy outlines analyzed in Chapter 6.6, proposed as the “7\*7 Matrix Model of Scientific and Empirical “New Outlines” of Nepal’s Foreign Policy”. It has incorporated both geopolitics and geo-economic issues and actors to accurately research, analyze, and measure Nepal’s national interest. Therefore, geopolitics and geoeconomics cannot be separate units to perfectly, precisely, and comprehensively analyze the foreign policy of any country in the world (Gaeger & Brites, 2020, p. 23; Scekcic, Draskovic, & Delibasic, 2016, p. 66; Soilen, 2012, p. 9; C. D. Bhatta, personal communication, December 16, 2022; P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022; S. D. Muni, personal communication, November 6, 2022; M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023). Geopolitics and geoeconomics as two discourses of this dissertation linked to neorealism and neoliberalism, mainstreaming theories of IR. The dissertation has also analyzed that these two theories failed to address the foreign policy (economic and political) issues of developing and under-developed countries. These theories create a conducive environment to achieve the national interest of only powerful countries but the same environment becomes adverse for developing and underdeveloped countries. Therefore, these theories have been serving only powerful countries and hence, are the theories of only dominant powers in the world rather being the mainstreaming theories of IR. Because,

developing and under developed countries cannot compete in military and economic fronts with dominant and developed countries and hence the national interests of those developing and underdeveloped countries cannot be widely promoted and expanded by following the values of these theories. Being an underdeveloped country in South Asia, 'Trilateral Geopolitics' is an evolving theory of Nepal's International Relations (See Chapter 5.1) at least up to the next century in the special case of Nepali politics and external engagement. Hence the Trilateral Geopolitics should be aligned with the new outlines of Nepal's foreign policy and vice versa. Then only, Nepal's world affairs will become effective, efficient, and influential in the world and its national interests will be achieved and expanded at the level of requirement in the age of Trilateral Geopolitics (M. P. Lama, personal communication, November 11, 2022; P. K. Gyawali, personal communication, December 30, 2022; N. R. Nayak, personal communication, November 14, 2022; G. Liang, personal communication, April 27, 2023; R. N. Pandey, personal communication, September 1, 2022; M. Templer, personal communication, August 18, 2023; S. R. Simkhada, personal communication, August 19, 2022).

### **7.3 Knowledge Contribution**

All three conclusions of this study are directly linked to knowledge contribution. More specifically, the following texts are perceived as the knowledge contribution.

When starting this study, authentic and scientific publications were not available written about the theoretical issue of whether foreign policy changes or not when geopolitics changes in Nepal and the world. At the end of this study, it has been seen that foreign policy goes hand in hand with geopolitics. It means foreign policy changes when geopolitics will change. As soon as foreign policy is separated from geopolitics, it cannot protect, promote, and expand national interests effectively. This is the first knowledge contribution of this study. Similarly, the five

models of foreign policy analysis did not seem able to address the issues of Nepal's foreign policy-making process. Graham Allison seems to have developed such a model from a superpower and great power perspective only. He did not seem to pay sufficient attention to the serious issues of countries having very complex geopolitics and where there is massive influence and pressure from external powers. Therefore, in the special situation of Nepal, the researcher has found the sixth model entitled 'Role of Dominant External Actors Model'. This is also a knowledge contribution of this dissertation.

Since the 1950s, two words have started to be used more in the field of Nepal's foreign policy. First, 'Special Relations', and second 'Policy of Balance'. However, when analyzed from the point of international relations view, both these concepts were found to be wrong. In international relations, every state keeps its national interest as the highest priority. The words 'special relations' and 'policy of balance' argue that the national interests of other countries should be given more priority than their national interest. The 'special relations' argues that countries with similar interests should be treated unequally. On the other hand, the term 'policy of balance' has not been able to present a theoretical basis in the case of Nepal. Therefore, this research has found that both of these debates are wrong. Therefore, this is another knowledge contribution of this dissertation. "Balance" approach is not scientific, research-based, IR-centric, pragmatic, and realpolitik.

In the field of Nepal's foreign policy, the foreign policy of the Lichchhavi and Malla ages was not studied in detail. It has also been found that some authors have argued that there was no foreign policy before King Prithvi Narayan Shah, but such arguments were found to be wrong. It seems that the Malla and Lichchhavi states tried to effectively manage the foreign policy of that time. The importance of foreign policy seems to be well understood by the kings at that time

before the Shah era. King Prithvi Narayan Shah seems to have fused some of his vision with the practice of the kings before him in his concept of 'Yam between two boulders'. Whatever King Prithvi Narayan Shah put forward in his foreign policy doctrine, was already in practice even in Malla and Lichchhavi ages. Therefore, a detailed study of the foreign policy of both periods is the contribution made in the field of knowledge of this dissertation. On the other hand, this study has investigated that the 'Yam Doctrine' has been empirically replaced by the 'A Cat & Three Lions' notion which is perfectly Trilateral Geopolitics. This is also a very important knowledge contribution to this study.

Many experts say different points about the fault lines of Nepali geopolitics, but it does not seem that there has been a systematic study of these fault lines in detail. The study has shown that Nepal has not been able to successfully deal with its complex geopolitical situation due to those fault lines, which is another knowledge contribution of this study. There is an inalienable relationship between the two discourses geopolitics and geo-economics mentioned in the title of this study in terms of foreign policy analysis, formulation, and implementation. It does not seem that such a conclusion was drawn before by scientific research about such a relationship between Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics. This study has brought forward this new argument that not only Nepal's geopolitics and geoeconomics but the whole world's geopolitics and geoeconomics should be studied together in foreign policy analysis. This is also a part of the knowledge contribution of this study.

Neorealism and neoliberalism are the theories of dominant and developed powers instead of mainstreaming theories as the Western theorists claim. The study investigated that for Nepal, Trilateral Geopolitics is an evolving theoretical discourse of Nepal's International Relations. This is indeed a significant knowledge contribution to this study. The most important knowledge

contribution is the '7\*7 Scientific and Empirical Matrix Model in Nepal's foreign policy outline'. This contribution is based on the previous contributions of this study. Therefore, this study is significant for scholars, researchers, academics, university students, policymakers, diplomats, and politicians.

#### **7.4 Areas for Further Research**

So far as further research is concerned, according to the researcher's analysis, there are only two areas for further research that are linked to this topic. The first area is the '7\*7 Scientific and Empirical Matrix Model in Nepal's Foreign policy'. It needs an in-depth investigation to make Nepal's foreign policy country-specific, region-specific, continent-specific, global organization-specific, and issues-specific. Such types of investigation should be conducted by the state itself or governmental Think Tanks/Universities. A single mind and single effort without resources is not sufficient for such comprehensive research.

The second area for further research is 'Nepal's foreign policy before the Lichchhavi age'. It is quite important to know that how the Kirat and even earlier dynasties had conducted their state-affairs. The DNA of foreign policy even goes to the Gopal Dynasty in the Kathmandu valley. However, due to a lack of recorded history, it is very difficult to precisely conduct this research. However, the researcher is confident that there was a state's external affairs (policy) also in the very earlier ages than the Lichchhavi dynasty in Nepal.

## APPENDIXES

### Annex-A (Questionnaire)

***Research Question One: What are the pragmatic approaches and processes of foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nepal?***

1. How Nepal's foreign policy is formulated?
  - a. What are the major processes of Nepal's foreign policy formulation?
  - b. Is the process of formulating foreign policy research based?
  - c. What are the key actors in formulating foreign policy in the special case of Nepal?
  - d. What are the major challenges of formulating Nepal's foreign policy?
2. How Nepal's foreign policy has been implemented?
  - a. What are the major processes of Nepal's foreign policy implementation?
  - b. What are the key actors in implementing foreign policy in the special case of Nepal?
  - c. What are the major challenges of implementing Nepal's foreign policy?
3. What is the role of Nepali think tanks in formulating Nepal's foreign policy?
  - a. How private and independent think tanks are contributing to formulating Nepal's foreign policy?
  - b. How Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is cooperating and collaborating with Nepali universities at the institutional level in formulating foreign policy?
  - c. Are independent/private think tanks responsible for the guideline of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) while conducting research in the field of Nepal's foreign affairs?
4. What is the role of Nepali political parties in formulating Nepal's foreign policy?
  - a. How is the understanding of Nepali political parties about the process of formulating Nepal's foreign policy?
  - b. Are the political parties aware of the role of various actors in formulating foreign policy? If they are aware of it, do they include them at the institutional level?
5. What is the role of geopolitical and geoeconomic circumstances in formulating Nepal's foreign policy?
  - a. Do any external geopolitical actors like the USA, China, India, etc play a direct/indirect role to influence the process of the formulation of Nepal's foreign policy?
  - b. Do the Nepali policymakers feel external threats while formulating Nepal's foreign policy?

***Research Question Two: How Nepal should deal with the geopolitical and geoeconomic realities/complexities to maximize the gains for strategic balancing and achieving prosperity for its people?***

1. What effects does the geopolitics of Nepal have on its foreign relations?
  - a. How do you assess global and regional geopolitical complexities and Nepal?
  - b. What are the major interests of external actors in Nepal?
  - c. How do you observe the geopolitical competition among external actors in Nepal?

- d. In your opinion, which external actors are in the top-three position in terms of their influence in Nepal?
- e. What minimum strengths Nepali diplomats should build to deal with those external geopolitical actors?
- f. Do you think that Nepali diplomatic skills/strengths are enough strong to deal with such influential external geopolitical players?
2. What effects does the geoeconomics of Nepal have on its foreign relations?
  - a. Who are the foreign stakeholders involved in Nepal's geo-economics?
  - b. How do you observe the geoeconomic competition among external actors in Nepal?
  - c. How do you evaluate the role of Multi-National Companies (MNCs)/INGOs in the Nepali economy?
3. How Nepal should maintain the strategic balancing among external geopolitical and geoeconomic actors?
  - a. Which one would be the best approach out of these two approaches "Strategic Balance" and "Pragmatic Relations" with external geopolitical and geoeconomic actors to achieve and maintain Nepal's national interest?
  - b. How Nepal should deal with Nepal's external geopolitical and geoeconomic actors not only to maintain the strategic balance but also to adapt pragmatic relations with them for achieving national interest?

***Research Questions Three: Why Nepal is unable to address the geopolitical/geo-economic complexities in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy?***

1. What are the geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities of Nepal's foreign relations?
  - a. As per your knowledge and evidences, which countries are more influential geopolitical and geoeconomic actors of Nepal's foreign affairs and why?
  - b. Is their engagement an opportunity or threat for Nepal?
  - c. How the threats posed by external geopolitical and geoeconomic actors can be changed into an opportunity for prosperity for Nepal and the Nepali people?
2. How the USA is engaged in Nepal?
  - a. In your observation and knowledge, what are the major interests of the USA in Nepal?
  - b. How do other regional and global powers are perceiving the US strategy in Nepal?
  - c. What kind of counter-strategies are posed by other powers in Nepal to mitigate the US threats?
  - d. What kind of complexities Nepal is facing due to the US strategies and other powers' counter-strategies posed in Nepal?
  - e. How can Nepal deal with such complexities to safeguard her national interests without any negative implications to external geopolitical actors like the USA, China, and India?
  - f. What kind of Nepal's US policy Nepal should develop to handle very recent geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities for safeguarding Nepal's national interests?
3. How China has been increasing her engagement in Nepal?

- a. In your observation and knowledge, what are the major interests of China in Nepal?
  - b. How do other regional and global powers are perceiving the Chinese strategy in Nepal?
  - c. What kind of counter-strategies are posed by other powers in Nepal to mitigate the Chinese threats if any?
  - d. What kind of complexities Nepal is facing due to the Chinese strategies and other powers' counter-strategies posed in Nepal?
  - e. How can Nepal deal with such complexities to safeguard her national interests without any negative implications to external geopolitical actors like the USA, China, and India?
  - f. What kind of Nepal's China policy Nepal should develop to handle very recent geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities for safeguarding Nepal's national interests?
4. How India has been engaging in Nepal?
- a. In your observation and knowledge, what are the top-most interests of India in Nepal?
  - b. How do other regional and global powers are perceiving the Indian strategy in Nepal?
  - c. What kind of counter-strategies are posed by other powers in Nepal to mitigate the Indian threats if any?
  - d. What kind of complexities Nepal is facing due to Indian strategies and other powers' counter-strategies posed in Nepal?
  - e. How can Nepal deal with such complexities to safeguard her national interests without any negative implications to external geopolitical actors like the USA, China, and India?
  - f. What kind of Nepal's India policy Nepal should develop to handle very recent geopolitical and geoeconomic complexities for safeguarding Nepal's national interests?

***Letter of Consent from Key Informants (Experts) for KII***

Mr. Hari Prakash Chand, a PhD Candidate in International Relations and Diplomacy at the Tribhuvan University of Nepal, has to conduct this KII to collect crucial information for his doctoral dissertation entitled "Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Discourses on Nepal's Foreign Policy" which has been approved by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. In this dissertation, the researcher will study the various traditional, and recent geopolitical and geoeconomic trends, debates, and discourses. The researcher will also intensively investigate the Nepali geopolitics including geoeconomics and major external actors involved in Nepal. Moreover, he also assesses their impacts on Nepal's foreign policy domain. Finally, the researcher will explore the policy options for Nepal in 21<sup>st</sup>-century geopolitics and geoeconomics.

For this KII, at most 30 experts from Nepal, India, China, and the USA have been selected as the Key Informants. The researcher humbly requests you to provide a precious opinion, analysis, and information based on your knowledge as a Key Informant. The information, opinion, and analysis obtained from you will be applied only for the dissertation purpose. Although the

interview will be recorded, your responses will remain anonymous however as per the research ethics, you will be cited in the dissertation based on your permission only. You are free to respond to the questions asked by the researcher and also to escape if you want. This KII is conducted not to find out the wrong and right but to know the diverse perspectives, opinions, understanding, and new trends in International Relations. Information provided by you will be kept confidential as per consideration.

Name: .....

Organization: .....

Designation: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Venue: .....

***Note 1) Could you please disclose your name as a Key Informant of this KII (Optional)?***

***Answer: Yes/No***

***1) Do you want to be cited in the dissertation?***

***Answer: Yes/No***

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Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences In Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY In INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY By HARI PRAKASH  
CHAND Ph. D. Regd. No.: 15/075 Magh T.U. Regd. No. 3-1-45-205-99 Tribhuvan University Kathmandu,  
Nepal December, 2024 v ABSTRACT This dissertation is the outcome of a thorough analysis of Nepal's  
foreign policy in Geopolitical and Goeconomic discourses. The qualitative method, especially, the  
phenomenological research method was dominantly used in the dissertation, along with numerous  
quantitative data analyses. Hence, both the deductive and inductive approaches of reasoning have been  
followed. This study introduced the 'Theory of Heartland' as a key geopolitical framework. It relates to the  
approaches of foreign policy formulation and implementation. While formulating, analyzing, and  
implementing Nepal's foreign policy Nepal, the existing model of foreign policy analysis in world affairs  
developed by Graham Allison seems unable to address the Nepali critical challenges of external influence  
and engagement. Hence, a new model is analyzed in this dissertation in the special case of Nepal which is  
the 'Role of Dominant External Actors Model'. Because of such external roles, Nepal has adopted various  
approaches to formulate its foreign policy in different periods, based on research question one and  
objective one. Similarly, the study explored that Nepal should focus on maintaining harmonious relations  
with all external actors based on a pragmatic and realpolitik approach under the framework of trustworthy  
manner (Credible Diplomacy) keeping the national interests at the center of diplomatic affairs. Similarly,  
the study analyzed that foreign policy needs scientific change when its geopolitics changes, otherwise,  
traditional foreign policy becomes insufficient to deal with the very latest geopolitical complexities  
perfectly. Likewise, the study concludes that because of eighteen external and twenty internal fault lines of  
Nepali geopolitics, Nepal seems to be lagging in gaining the required capability to address the geopolitical  
and goeconomic complexities in formulating and implementing its vi foreign policy. This conclusion  
relates to research question number two and objective two. To carefully deal with those fault lines, Nepal  
should adopt a scientific and empirical foreign policy outline named '7\*7 Matrix Model of Scientific and  
Empirical New Outlines of Nepal's Foreign Policy'. This newly analyzed model has incorporated geopolitical  
and geo-economic issues and actors to accurately research, analyze, and measure the impact of foreign  
policy. This is linked to research question number three and objective three. Therefore, geopolitics and