

**ARMED POLICE FORCE, NEPAL RELATION WITH
BORDER POPULATION TO STRENGTHEN BORDER
SECURITY IN KOSHI PROVINCE**



A Thesis

Submitted to the APF Command and Staff College,

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Tribhuvan University,

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For Master's Degree in

Security, Development and Peace Studies

Submitted by

Mohan Raj Niraula

Ninth Batch (2080-2082)

Roll No. 123740090

TU Registration No. 7-1-224-156-98

APF Command and Staff College

Sanogaucharan, Kathmandu, Nepal

April 2025

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research paper entitled **ARMED POLICE FORCE, NEPAL RELATION WITH BORDER POPULATION TO STRENGTHEN BORDER SECURITY IN KOSHI PROVINCE** submitted to APF Command and Staff College, is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Bhim Raj Suwal.

I have made due acknowledgments to all ideas and information cited and extracted from different sources in course of preparing this research. The result of this research paper has not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or any other purpose. I assure that no part of the content of this research paper has been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidences found against my research paper.

This thesis is being submitted to APF Command and Staff College, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in Partial Fulfillment of Master Degree in Security, Development and Peace Studies.

.....

Mohan Raj Niraula

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Date: April 2025



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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This thesis entitled **ARMED POLICE FORCE, NEPAL RELATION WITH BORDER POPULATION TO STRENGTHEN BORDER SECURITY IN KOSHI PROVINCE** has been prepared by Mr. Mohan Raj Niraula under my guidance and supervision. I hereby recommend it in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of MASTER of Security, Development and Peace Studies Final Examination.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This thesis entitled **ARMED POLICE FORCE, NEPAL RELATION WITH BORDER POPULATION TO STRENGTHEN BORDER SECURITY IN KOSHI PROVINCE** submitted by Mohan Raj Niraula to APF Command and Staff College, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in Partial Fulfillment of Master Degree in Security, Development and Peace Studies approved by the undersigned members of the Evaluation Committee.

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Mohan Raj Niraula

April 2025

ABSTRACT

The Armed Police Force (APF) Nepal plays a crucial role in ensuring border security and maintaining stability in eastern Nepal. The open border with India and the complex geographical and socio-cultural dynamics of the region, APF, Nepal has adopted various community engagement strategies to strengthen relations with border populations. This study explores how APF, Nepal's initiatives have contributed to enhancing border security through collaboration with local residents. It examines the effectiveness of community-based programs, the challenges faced in implementation, and potential solutions to improve engagement efforts. The research adopts a qualitative approach, relying on interviews, field observations, and secondary data to assess the opportunities and challenges in adopting collaboration between security forces and local residents. The findings reveal that APF, Nepal has conducted multiple relationship-building activities, including health camps, skill development training, disaster response programs, and awareness campaigns. These efforts have fostered trust between security personnel and local communities, leading to better cooperation in intelligence-sharing and crime prevention. The study highlights that through local collaboration, APF, Nepal has successfully intercepted several cases of smuggling, illegal trade, and human trafficking, showcasing the effectiveness of community participation in border security. Residents have become more proactive in reporting suspicious activities, reducing cross-border crimes and strengthening security operations. Despite these successes, challenges remain. Limited financial resources, logistical constraints, and the need for more culturally sensitive approaches hinder APF, Nepal's ability to expand its outreach. Some communities still view security forces with distrust, requiring sustained efforts to build long-term relationships. The study suggests improving coordination between APF Nepal and local government bodies, increasing training programs for APF personnel on community policing, and implementing technology-driven border monitoring solutions. The study underscores the need for a more integrated and community-centered approach to border security in Nepal. A key recommendation is the enhancement of intelligence-sharing mechanisms by fostering a participatory model where local communities feel valued and actively contribute to security efforts. Policy interventions that prioritize mutual trust, human security, and economic development in border regions could significantly improve the effectiveness of border security strategies. By bridging the existing gaps between security forces and local communities, this research offers valuable insights into security governance and highlights

the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in border management. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on national security and community engagement while offering practical recommendations for policymakers, security agencies, and local leaders who aim to create a more resilient and well-coordinated border security system in Nepal.

Keywords: Border security, community engagement, security cooperation, local governance

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APF	Armed Police Force
APF Act	Armed Police Force Act, 2058
BADP	Border Area Development Program
BOP	Border Outpost
CBP	Community-Based Policing
CDO	Chief District Officer
DIG	Deputy Inspector General
DSP	Deputy Superintendent of Police
KII	Key Informant Interview
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
PABSON	Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal
P.T.	Physical Training
SSI	Senior Sub-Inspector
SP	Superintendent of Police
SSP	Senior Superintendent of Police

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Border security is a fundamental aspect of national sovereignty and stability. Nepal shares open and largely unregulated borders with its neighboring nations. The porous nature of these borders presents both opportunities and challenges, making security efforts complex and multidimensional. The Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal, is assigned with the responsibility of securing the borders, preventing illegal activities, and ensuring national security. However, the effectiveness of border security measures is not solely dependent on law enforcement agencies but is also shaped by the level of cooperation, trust, and engagement with the local border population. The communities residing along the border areas play a vital role in intelligence-sharing, surveillance, and overall security management, making their involvement an indispensable part of an effective border security strategy.

Borders are lines of separation between different territories or political entities, often created through treaties, wars, or negotiations. Historically, borders were shaped by strategic, economic, and military considerations. In ancient times, borders were frequently marked by natural features such as rivers, mountains, and deserts. Borders represent territorial boundaries between countries, historically shaped by strategic, military, and economic factors. Early civilizations, including the Ming Dynasty, built structures like the Great Wall of China for defense (Yang, Tan, & Tan, 2017).

In the 20th century, the World Wars and their aftermath brought significant shifts in border policies. The two World Wars in Europe led to the redefinition of many national boundaries and triggered debates on how borders should be drawn (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). The formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 and the subsequent establishment of various international treaties sought to promote the peaceful resolution of border disputes and the protection of state sovereignty (United Nations, 2022). With the rise of globalization in the late 20th century, the role of borders became more complex, involving not just physical territories but also the regulation of movement, ideas, culture, and information. This shift in the nature of borders influenced migration patterns, international trade, and national security policies (Sassen, 2006). The growing interaction between trade openness and immigration

policies became more apparent as trade restrictions often led to more open immigration policies, and vice versa (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). Moreover, the globalization of trade and the proliferation of multinational corporations necessitated harmonized regulations across borders (Hummels & Schaur, 2013).

The open nature of Nepal's border with India, facilitated by the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, allows for unrestricted movement of citizens between the two countries without the need for passports or visas. While this arrangement has fostered strong socio-economic and cultural ties, it has also introduced significant security challenges, including difficulties in monitoring cross-border activities effectively.

These challenges encompass illegal trade, organized crime, and militant activities that exploit the open border (Subedi, 1994). On Nepal's northern frontier, the rugged Himalayan terrain serves as a natural security barrier. However, increasing geopolitical interests from regional powers have heightened security concerns in these areas. The strategic location of Nepal between India and China has led to intensified competition and involvement from both neighboring countries, impacting Nepal's foreign policy strategies and internal security dynamics (Haq, 2024).

The term "border population" refers to communities living in geographical areas near or at the boundaries between two or more countries. These populations often reside in strategically important regions, where their daily lives are influenced by factors such as mobility, trade, security, and cultural exchanges. Due to their proximity to national borders, these communities experience complex socio-political and economic conditions. Border areas are often marked by heightened cross-border interactions, which significantly impact local economies, migration patterns, and national security policies (Xinting, 2020).

Border populations are communities that reside in regions adjacent to national or territorial boundaries. These populations often experience unique socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics due to their proximity to borders. According to Schimanski and Wolfe (2017), borders are not merely geopolitical demarcations but also sites of negotiation, conflict, and transformation. The duality of borders as both barriers and bridges significantly influences the lives of border populations.

In the context of migration and refugee movements, border populations often serve as the first point of contact for displaced individuals. Lojo-Rodríguez and Pereira-Ares (2024) highlight that the global refugee crisis has intensified the policing and fortification of borders, impacting the mobility and livelihoods of border communities. These populations frequently navigate complex identities, balancing national allegiance with transnational interactions.

The effectiveness of border security is not solely dependent on enforcement mechanisms but also on fostering strong relationships with border populations. Public relations in the context of border security refer to the strategies employed by security forces to build trust, improve cooperation, and gather intelligence from local communities (Putnam, 2000). The success of community-based policing models across various countries has demonstrated that when security forces actively engage with the public, crime prevention and intelligence-gathering efforts improve significantly (De Maillard & Terpstra, 2021). In border areas, the cooperation of local residents is essential in identifying security threats and preventing criminal activities. APF, Nepal has recognized the importance of community engagement and has introduced several outreach programs, including awareness campaigns, joint security meetings, and disaster preparedness training to strengthen its relations with the community (Shahi, 2023).

A secure border is not simply a demarcation of territory; it represents a complex and interconnected space where issues of security, economy, and cross-border cooperation meet. Effective border management requires more than just enforcement; it necessitates coordinated strategies that integrate advanced technologies for surveillance, as well as collaboration with local communities and authorities. According to Gana, Adamu, and Zakariya'u (2023), cross-border crimes such as human trafficking, arms smuggling and terrorism highlight the importance of comprehensive border governance.

These crimes thrive due to porous borders, economic disparities, and political instability, emphasizing the need for an integrated approach to border security that fosters international cooperation and strengthens regional stability. Scholars argue that successful border security models incorporate both “hard measures,” such as fencing and patrols, and “soft measures,” like public engagement and intelligence sharing (Cozine, 2016). In the case of Nepal, achieving border security requires enhancing the capabilities of APF, Nepal personnel, improving surveillance infrastructure, and fostering cross-border cooperation with India and China to tackle illegal activities and ensure smooth trade operations (Upreti, 2022).

Historically, Nepal's border security mechanisms have undergone significant transitions. Before the establishment of the APF, Nepal relied primarily on local administrative bodies, Nepal Police, and customs offices to regulate border activities. However, with the increasing threats of cross-border crimes and illegal trade, the government recognized the need for a dedicated force to monitor and secure its frontiers (Aryal, 2022). The Government of Nepal established APF, Nepal under the Ministry of Home Affairs during the Maoist insurgency. After the agreement between the Government and the Maoists, APF, Nepal, focused on public order management, border security, and other mandated tasks (Timilsena, 2021).

APF Nepal plays a pivotal role in border management. However, traditional law enforcement approaches often encounter limitations in remote and socio-culturally diverse border regions. Effective border security relies not only on the presence of security personnel but also on fostering collaboration with local communities. Engaging borderland communities as partners in border protection is essential, as these populations possess intimate knowledge of the local terrain and socio-cultural dynamics, which can significantly enhance surveillance and intelligence-gathering efforts (Bhatta, 2024). Furthermore, community participation in border management addresses challenges such as cross-border crimes and smuggling by integrating local insights into security strategies, thereby promoting a sense of ownership and cooperation among residents (Jha, 2009).

Public perception plays a vital role in the success of border security initiatives. The effectiveness of any security strategy depends on how well it is received by the communities it aims to protect. Studies on community-based security models highlight that when local populations view security forces as allies rather than enforcers, cooperation increases and crime rates decrease (Putnam, 2000). In Nepal, there have been efforts to bridge the gap between security forces and border communities through initiatives such as health camps, educational workshops, and public awareness campaigns.

APF, Nepal, has always focused on maintaining national security through effective border management. APF, Nepal recognizes the importance of developing positive relations with the border population. Public relations are necessary for gaining the trust and cooperation of the local people. APF, Nepal conducts community engagement programs, health camps, and awareness campaigns to connect with locals and make them part of the security process. Building good relationships with the border population helps in gathering local intelligence and ensures the smooth implementation of border security measures. Since its establishment,

APF, Nepal, has been working continuously to strengthen both the borders and the bond with the people living in those areas.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nepal shared an open border with India, allowing for the free movement of people and goods, but this also presented significant security and governance challenges. In Koshi Province, particularly in Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari districts, border management complexities have persisted due to cross-border crimes, smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal trade. APF, Nepal has been at the forefront of border security operations, aiming to control illegal activities while fostering strong relations with border populations. However, despite these efforts, several challenges have hindered effective engagement and cooperation between APF personnel and local communities.

One of the major issues was the lack of trust and coordination between APF, Nepal, and border residents. While APF, Nepal conducted awareness programs, public engagement meetings, and development support activities, many local populations have still perceived border security measures as restrictive rather than protective. Due to historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and cultural differences, some communities remained hesitant to cooperate with security forces, making intelligence gathering and security enforcement difficult.

Illegal cross-border activities, such as smuggling, human trafficking, and unauthorized trade, have continued to thrive due to porous borders and limited resources. These challenges significantly undermined national security and economic stability, particularly in regions with insufficient surveillance technology and manpower (Guragain, Pokharel, & Adhikari, 2024). Without active collaboration from border communities, APF, Nepal has struggled to control these illicit activities effectively. The lack of community participation in security initiatives has also weakened early warning systems, leaving border areas vulnerable to criminal networks and external threats.

APF, Nepal faced logistical and operational constraints that hindered effective border security management. Limited resources, outdated surveillance equipment, and insufficient personnel training have impacted the efficiency of border monitoring (Pulami, 2023). Although APF, Nepal organized various community engagement programs, the absence of a structured

feedback mechanism has made it challenging to assess the impact of these initiatives and make necessary improvements.

To address these issues, it has been crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of APF, Nepal's current border security measures and community engagement strategies. This research aimed to analyze the relationship between APF, Nepal, and border populations, identify barriers to cooperation, and assess how relationship-building activities impacted overall border security outcomes. A comprehensive understanding of these dynamics has been essential in strengthening security policies, improving APF, Nepal's engagement strategies, and fostering greater trust between security forces and local communities.

1.3 Research Questions

A research question is a precise, focused, and well-defined inquiry that directs a study by identifying the key issue to be investigated. It serves as the foundation for the research process, ensuring clarity and relevance in the study's objectives (Majid, 2017). Despite various efforts made by APF, Nepal, in strengthening border security and fostering relationships with border populations, there is still a need to adopt more effective strategies for improving engagement and security outcomes. To address these gaps, the researcher has formulated the following research questions:

1.4.1 What are the major activities performed by APF, Nepal in enhancing relation with border population to strengthen border security in Koshi province?

1.4.2 What challenges does APF, Nepal face in conducting activities to enhance relation with border population in Koshi province?

1.4.3 How can the challenges of conducting activities to enhance relation with border population and border security in Koshi Province be mitigated?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Research objectives define the specific themes or inquiries a study seeks to explore, aligning with the broader research problem to ensure a structured and focused investigation (Hazari, 2023). This study broadly investigates the relationship-building initiatives of APF, Nepal in Koshi Province, the challenges encountered in implementing these activities, and their impact

on enhancing border security. To systematically address these themes, the following specific objectives have been formulated:

1.5.1 To examine the major activities performed by APF, Nepal in enhancing relations with border populations to strengthen border security in Koshi Province.

1.5.2 To identify the challenges faced by APF, Nepal in conducting activities aimed at fostering relations with border populations.

1.5.3 To explore potential solutions and strategies to mitigate the challenges of conducting activities those enhance relations with border populations and border security in Koshi Province.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The relationship between APF, Nepal and the border population plays a crucial role in maintaining national security, stability, and law enforcement along Nepal's international borders. Strengthening ties with local communities helps enhance intelligence gathering, prevent cross-border crimes, and foster cooperation in security efforts. APF, Nepal's community engagement programs, joint security efforts, and public relations activities are critical in promoting trust and collaboration with border populations.

This study is significant in understanding how APF, Nepal's activities impact the local population and border security. It provides insights into the effectiveness of ongoing engagement strategies and identifies challenges that hinder strong relationships between security forces and border residents. By analyzing these challenges, the research will propose practical solutions to enhance APF, Nepal's engagement initiatives and contribute to a more secure and cooperative border environment.

The study holds importance for policymakers, security forces, and local authorities who are responsible for formulating and implementing border security policies. It will assist in improving existing strategies, developing new frameworks for security cooperation, and ensuring sustainable and community-friendly security measures.

The findings will contribute to academic research and future studies related to border security, law enforcement, and community policing in Nepal. As limited research exists on

APF, Nepal's engagement with border populations, this study will serve as a foundation for further exploration in this field. Ultimately, the research aims to support APF, Nepal in strengthening its role as a professional security force while promoting peace, security, and cooperation along Nepal's borders.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the research refer to factors or constraints that may influence the interpretation or validity of the study's findings (Olufowote, 2017). This study is conducted as part of the academic requirements for the Armed Police Force Command & Staff Course (APFC&SC). This study faced several constraints that may impact the interpretation and validity of its findings. The key limitations are as follows:

- a) **Geographical Limitation** – The research is limited to Jhapa District (Bhadrapur Municipality) and Morang District (Rani Municipality) in Koshi Province.
- b) **Data Availability** – The study relied on recent reports and interviews, with limited historical data on APF Nepal's engagement.
- c) **Limited Scholarly Resources** – Few academic studies exist on APF Nepal's border engagement, leading to reliance on internal documents and local reports.
- d) **Time Constraints** – The research was conducted within a fixed academic timeframe, restricting extended fieldwork and broader stakeholder participation.
- e) **Communication and Cultural Barriers** – Engaging diverse border communities posed challenges in communication and cultural interpretation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. The literature review is a written overview of major writings and other sources on a selected topic. Sources covered in the review may include scholarly journal articles, books, government reports, Web sites, etc. The literature review provides a description, summary and evaluation of already published source (Rhoades, 2011). There are several types of literature review methods such as narrative, systematic, and meta-analytic reviews and chronological order literature review.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Aniszewski (2009) introduced the concept of Coordinated Border Management (CBM) as a modern approach to border security. This theory emphasizes inter-agency collaboration to balance trade facilitation and security enforcement. CBM focuses on integrated risk management, information sharing, and joint operational strategies among customs, immigration, and security forces. The theory argues that an effective border management system requires seamless coordination between various stakeholders. Without such coordination, inefficiencies arise, leading to security vulnerabilities and delays in border procedures.

Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) proposed securitization theory, which explains security as a socially constructed process rather than an objective reality. According to this theory, security threats are not just about physical dangers but also depend on how they are framed by key actors, such as governments or security agencies. A securitizing actor presents an issue as an existential threat to justify extraordinary measures, such as stricter border controls or emergency policies. This theory highlights how border security policies often evolve due to political narratives and public perception rather than purely technical considerations.

CBM and securitization theory offer different perspectives on border security. CBM focuses on operational efficiency through coordination, while securitization theory explains why certain border issues receive heightened security attention. When a government securitizes an issue such as cross-border crime or illegal migration, it may lead to policies that prioritize

strict enforcement over coordination. However, CBM suggests that an effective response should involve cooperation among agencies rather than unilateral security measures. If border issues are over-securitized, it may hinder CBM's goal of facilitating legitimate trade and movement.

Putnam (2000) introduced social capital theory, which emphasizes the role of trust, community engagement, and social networks in governance. This theory suggests that strong social connections lead to better cooperation and conflict resolution. In border security, relationships between local communities and security forces can improve intelligence-sharing and compliance with regulations. Social capital fosters mutual understanding, reducing tensions between authorities and border populations.

CBM and social capital theory both advocate for collaboration, but they focus on different aspects. CBM is concerned with institutional coordination, while social capital theory emphasizes community relationships. A securitized border environment may weaken social capital by creating mistrust between local populations and security forces. If security policies are based solely on the securitization narrative, they may undermine efforts to build cooperation through CBM. On the other hand, integrating social capital into CBM can enhance its effectiveness by encouraging community participation in security initiatives.

Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) proposed community policing theory, which focuses on proactive engagement between law enforcement and the public. This theory promotes decentralization of authority, where officers actively interact with communities to identify and address security concerns. Transparency and accountability are essential components, ensuring that security efforts are fair and effective. Community policing shifts security from reactive enforcement to preventative collaboration.

CBM and community policing theory share a common emphasis on cooperation but apply it differently. CBM seeks inter-agency coordination, whereas community policing focuses on direct engagement between security forces and the public. Social capital theory complements community policing by explaining why trust and relationships matter in security efforts. However, securitization theory can challenge both concepts by justifying stricter enforcement rather than community collaboration. If securitization dominates security discourse, it may limit the effectiveness of CBM and community policing initiatives. Therefore, a balanced approach is necessary, integrating coordination, trust-building, and proactive engagement.

These theories collectively provide a framework for understanding border security management. CBM highlights the need for inter-agency coordination, securitization theory explains how security threats are framed, social capital theory emphasizes community trust, and community policing theory advocates for direct engagement with local populations. In the context of border security, particularly in Nepal, these theories suggest that an effective strategy should incorporate coordination between agencies, careful framing of security threats, community trust-building, and proactive policing. Integrating these approaches can enhance border security while maintaining positive relations with border populations.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review is divided into international and national context

2.2.1 International Context

McLinden et al. (2011) highlighted that effective border management is no longer limited to customs operations alone but requires a comprehensive, "whole-of-government" approach that involves multiple agencies, including immigration, police, agriculture, and health services. The authors stressed the importance of collaborative border management (CBM) to address increasing challenges such as cross-border crime, smuggling, and terrorism. They argued that CBM improves both security and trade facilitation by fostering cooperation between different government agencies and local communities. According to the authors, modern border management strategies should prioritize not only regulatory control but also local participation to ensure that border communities become partners in security efforts. In the context of Nepal, this indicates that engaging local populations living in border areas is essential for effective border security.

Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002) explored the concepts of "bordering, ordering, and othering" to explain how borders are not merely physical lines but socially constructed tools that define inclusion and exclusion. Their research highlights how borders create divisions by identifying who belongs to a nation and who is considered an outsider. They argue that border management is not only about controlling territory but also about controlling identity, culture, and social relations.

De Maillard and Terpstra (2021) discussed that community policing has become one of the most widely adopted policing models globally, focusing on improving relations between

security forces and local populations. The study explained how community policing seeks to create trust and cooperation, especially in transitional societies where democratic traditions are weak. The authors pointed out that community policing must adapt to local social, economic, and cultural contexts to succeed. Challenges such as political pressures, socio-economic disparities, and ethnic tensions often affect its implementation.

Stawnicka and Klonowska (2018) examined the role of community police officers in enhancing local security through social engagement and preventive measures. The study, based on a national survey of 5,400 respondents in Poland, evaluated various aspects of community policing, including officers' satisfaction, interpersonal communication skills, perceived prestige, and participation in local meetings. The findings emphasized that community officers are crucial in bridging the gap between law enforcement agencies and local populations, fostering trust and cooperation. The research highlighted that officers who engage with local communities regularly are more effective in preventing crime and resolving disputes before they escalate.

Jha (2009) examined the significance of community participation in border management and its role in national security. The study emphasized that engaging border population in security initiatives fostered mutual trust between local residents and security forces. The author discussed various community-based strategies, such as involving local leaders in security discussions, promoting economic development in border areas, and integrating civilians into surveillance and intelligence-sharing programs. Jha argued that successful border management required a collaborative approach involving security forces, local governments, and border communities to create an effective and sustainable security environment.

Nnadi and Okoye (2022) analyzed how ungoverned spaces in border communities have posed a security risk, particularly in Nigeria. The study highlighted that poorly governed borderlands have become safe havens for smugglers, human traffickers, and armed groups, threatening national security. The authors argued that active community engagement has mitigated these risks by integrating local populations into border management efforts. Their research suggested that community policing, local intelligence gathering, and socio-economic investments in border areas have played a crucial role in reducing security threats.

Côté-Boucher (2014) examined border security as a set of practices rather than a fixed policy, emphasizing the daily interactions between security forces and local populations. The study highlighted how border policing has been shaped by socio-political dynamics, historical relationships, and local engagement rather than just state-imposed regulations. The author argued that community relations have played a crucial role in enhancing security, as cooperation from border residents has improved intelligence gathering, law enforcement efficiency, and conflict resolution. The research suggested that effective border security has required mutual trust between authorities and communities, which has been fostered through dialogue, collaborative security initiatives, and socio-economic programs aimed at improving local livelihoods.

Kasura (2021) examined the impact of border management strategies on regional security, focusing on Kenya and Somalia. The study highlighted the importance of integrated border management approaches that have incorporated both security enforcement and community engagement. The research found that effective border security has required cooperation between security agencies and local populations to address transnational threats such as terrorism, smuggling, and human trafficking. The study further argued that Kenya's border management framework has been strengthened through the involvement of community policing, intelligence-sharing, and cross-border collaboration. However, challenges such as inadequate resources, corruption, and lack of trust between security forces and local communities have remained significant barriers to effective implementation.

Vollmer (2019) explored the paradox of border security by examining the perceptions of the UK civil society regarding their national border. The study argued that while governments have heavily invested in making the UK border more stringent and secure, these measures have paradoxically contributed to insecurity among the population. Through critical discourse analysis and empirical data, the article highlighted the mismatch between the intended security policies and their actual effects. The research introduced the concept of vernacular security, which has focused on how individuals and communities have perceived and experienced security at the border. The findings revealed that despite the state's emphasis on security, border policies have often created confusion, fear, and social tensions, leading to a broader societal impact. The study suggested that future border security policies should consider public perceptions and the unintended consequences of strict enforcement measures to foster a more inclusive and effective security framework.

Mazurkiewicz (2022) explored the challenges of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and highlighted the complex role of soldiers in linking military and civilian spheres. The study found that CIMIC soldiers face multiple expectations, leading to role conflicts that affect their performance and overall effectiveness. By analyzing NATO CIMIC documents and conducting interviews with CIMIC soldiers, the research identified key elements of their roles and the challenges they encounter in bridging military and civilian interactions. The findings suggest that structured engagement, clear communication, and well-defined responsibilities can improve cooperation and reduce misunderstandings.

Surina (2020) examined the role of the Border Guard in ensuring national security, with a specific focus on Poland. The study emphasized that border protection is a crucial aspect of national security, as it helps prevent threats such as illegal migration, smuggling, and cross-border crimes. The research highlighted that the Polish Border Guard plays a key role in safeguarding the state by employing various security measures and response strategies. By analyzing literature on border security, the study demonstrated that effective border management strengthens national security and protects citizens.

Koff (2016) explored the dynamics of informal economies in cross-border regions, highlighting the challenges that state administrations have faced in regulating these activities. The study compared informality in European (Eurométropole and Bari–Durrës) and American (San Diego–Tijuana and Cúcuta–San Crístobal) regions, emphasizing the flow of goods, services, and labor. Koff's research underscored the importance of understanding the socio-economic conditions of border communities to address the social impacts of informality. The article also highlighted the role of regional organizations in promoting collaboration to mitigate the negative consequences of informal economies.

International Organization for Migration (2019) examined community integration and perceptions of border security in the Tillabéri region, highlighting the crucial role of local communities in strengthening border security and fostering social harmony. The study emphasized that sustainable border management is only possible through active community participation, where structured and resilient local commitment supports the work of regional authorities. It further revealed that understanding the concerns, cultural dynamics, and needs of border populations helps create more inclusive and effective security strategies. The research also discussed significant challenges such as porous borders and the activities of terrorist and criminal groups, which threaten regional stability.

Das (2021) examined the challenges of border management and threats to internal security in India, highlighting issues such as cross-border terrorism, illegal migration, and trafficking of drugs and weapons. The study emphasized that these threats often originate from or are facilitated by neighboring countries, posing significant security concerns. In response, the Government of India has implemented a comprehensive border management system that includes border guarding, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure development, and bilateral cooperation mechanisms. However, the research identified several obstacles that hinder effective border management, including insufficient manpower, financial constraints, bureaucratic rigidity, corruption, and lack of cooperation from state governments.

Martin and Ferris (2017) explored the complex relationship between border security, migration governance, and national sovereignty, emphasizing that effective border management requires balancing national security priorities with humanitarian obligations. The study focused on how states can manage cross-border movements while respecting the rights of migrants and ensuring community safety in border areas. The authors highlighted that strong cooperation between security forces and local communities helps reduce illegal activities, such as human trafficking and smuggling, while also building public trust. They further explained that inclusive border security frameworks, which involve local populations in decision-making and surveillance, contribute significantly to long-term peace and stability in border regions.

Andreas (2003) explored a comparative analysis of the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders following the September 11 attacks, emphasizing the transformation of border security within the context of globalization and security threats. The study explains that although globalization encouraged open borders to foster trade and regional integration, the 9/11 terrorist attacks reversed this trend, bringing about stricter border controls, increased military presence, and heightened security measures. Andreas describes how the vision of a borderless North America quickly shifted towards a fortified boundary, where migration and trade flows were subjected to intense scrutiny under the banner of national security. This shift had critical implications for cross-border relations, as traditional economic collaborations became overshadowed by security concerns.

2.2.2 National Context

Aryal (2022) explored the role of APF, Nepal in promoting good governance through border security. The study emphasized that border security is a crucial element of national security and that APF, Nepal plays a vital role in safeguarding international borders. The research highlighted that effective border management helps control trans-border crimes, which contributes to stability and governance. The study found that APF, Nepal collaborates with various stakeholders to enhance border security, ensuring preparedness, participation, transparency, accountability, and human rights protection. Furthermore, the research established a direct positive relationship between border security and good governance, as maintaining national integrity, sovereignty, justice, and the rule of law are key indicators of governance.

Upreti (2022) examined inter-agency cooperation in border governance in Nepal, focusing on the role of various governmental and security agencies in maintaining border security. The study highlighted that coordinated border management (CBM) is essential for balancing trade facilitation and security compliance. The research identified that Nepal has 12 ministries and 14 departments managing 670 borderline agencies, operating within a hierarchical system from central ministries to district-level offices. The study found that the District Administration Office (DAO) plays a central role in local border management by instructing and supervising other agencies. The research further emphasized that security agencies collaborate through information exchange, joint training, and coordinated inspections to prevent cross-border crimes. The study recommended the establishment of a national border management authority to integrate efforts at all levels of governance, reducing duplication and improving efficiency.

Bhatta (2024) analyzed the strategic role of Nepal's borderland communities in national security and border protection, particularly in the context of Nepal-India border disputes. The study, based on qualitative research methods such as interviews and literature reviews, emphasized that border communities hold a unique political position that directly impacts state sovereignty. The research highlighted that engaging these communities as state allies can significantly strengthen border security, while neglecting them could lead to security vulnerabilities. The study suggested that Nepal must actively involve border residents in security initiatives to ensure territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Timilsena (2021) examined the role of APF, Nepal in protecting and promoting human rights. The study highlighted that APF, Nepal plays a crucial role in maintaining public order while safeguarding individual rights. The research emphasized that APF has adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward human rights violations and adheres to national and international human rights instruments. Ensuring the protection, respect, and fulfillment of human rights remains a fundamental duty of APF personnel in their law enforcement responsibilities.

Dhungel (2023) analyzed the impact of demographic changes on Nepal's border security governance. The study highlighted that internal migration, cross-border movements, and population shifts contribute to security challenges such as illegal border crossings, human trafficking, and smuggling. The research examined the perceptions of local-level elected representatives regarding these threats and their implications for national security. The findings emphasized the need for a strategic approach to mitigate security risks through better governance, inter-agency cooperation, and policy reforms to address demographic changes along Nepal's borders.

Shahi (2024) highlighted APF, Nepal's role in community-based disaster management, focusing on awareness programs, capacity-building training, and rescue operations. APF conducts search and rescue drills, firefighting, medical response, and disaster preparedness training, fostering trust and cooperation with local communities. The study concluded that APF, Nepal's involvement in disaster management has not only improved response mechanisms but has also fostered long-term community partnerships. These collaborative efforts have laid the groundwork for future disaster resilience strategies, demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating security forces with local populations in crisis management. This finding is significant in the context of border security, where local engagement is essential for maintaining stability and safeguarding national interests.

Pulami (2023) explored border governance in the Nepal-India open border, identifying transnational threats and security challenges. The study stressed collaborative management strategies, structured governance principles, and enhanced cooperation between Nepal and India to have addressed border-related insecurities effectively.

Several scholars have examined different aspects of APF Nepal's role in border security and governance. Aryal (2022) highlighted that APF Nepal plays a crucial role in promoting good governance by ensuring border security, which helps control cross-border crimes and

strengthens national stability. Upreti (2022) emphasized the importance of inter-agency cooperation in border governance, noting that multiple governmental bodies work together through coordinated border management (CBM) to balance security and trade facilitation. Bhatta (2024) analyzed the strategic role of borderland communities in national security, stating that engaging these communities strengthens border protection, while neglecting them creates security risks. Similarly, Timilsena (2021) discussed how APF Nepal upholds human rights while maintaining public order, implementing a strict zero-tolerance policy against human rights violations. Together, these studies show that APF Nepal's role extends beyond security enforcement to include governance, human rights protection, disaster management, and community engagement, all of which contribute to national stability and border security.

2.1.3 Legal Provision Review

The Armed Police Force Act (2001) serves as the foundational legal framework for the establishment and functioning of the APF in Nepal. This Act outlines the roles, responsibilities, and powers of the APF personnel in maintaining internal security, including border security. However, the Act does not extensively address the engagement of the APF, Nepal with local populations in border security efforts. The Armed Police Force Rules (2002) provide detailed regulations and guidelines for the functioning of the APF as outlined in the APF Act. These rules focus on the administrative, operational, and disciplinary aspects of the force, including recruitment, training, and resource management. The Rules also cover the conduct of personnel in the execution of their duties, and the mechanisms for accountability.

In an effort to enhance the relationship between APF personnel and the local communities, the APF launched the SIMABASI SAGA SASATRA PRAHARI program on 2080/4/30, which has been implemented across all APF units. The core objective of this initiative is to foster better interaction, cooperation, and understanding between the APF, Nepal and the populations living in and around Nepal's border areas. By creating a sense of mutual trust and collaboration, the program aims to improve the efficiency of security measures while also ensuring that local communities actively contribute to border security. The APF Nepal focuses on building strong relationships with the border population through various community activities like conducting awareness classes organizes Sima Gasti with the local people, the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) works on improving infrastructure, healthcare, and livelihood in border regions, strengthening ties with the local communities.

2.4 Research Gap

There is a lack of comprehensive research on the current policies and practices related to border security management in Nepal, particularly concerning the role of APF, Nepal in securing the borders of Koshi Province. Although much attention has been paid to general border security issues, there is limited research that specifically focuses on the operational practices of APF, Nepal and their engagement with local populations in strengthening border security. Specifically, there is a dearth of studies on the effectiveness of community-based security approaches, the role of local populations in border management, and the interactions between APF and border communities.

Additionally, existing literature does not sufficiently address the challenges faced by APF, Nepal in combating cross-border crimes such as smuggling, trafficking, and illegal migration, especially in the context of the unique socio-political dynamics in Koshi Province. While there is growing interest in the cooperation between security forces and local populations, there is limited research on how such collaborations can be optimized to improve border surveillance, information sharing, and threat detection.

There is a significant gap in understanding the impact of APF's resource allocation, training programs, and equipment on their operational efficiency at border posts in Koshi Province. There is also a lack of studies examining the role of inter-agency cooperation between APF, Nepal and other national security agencies in strengthening border security. Addressing these research gaps is essential for improving the effectiveness of border security in Nepal, particularly in enhancing APF's engagement with local communities and ensuring the smooth operation of security measures in the Koshi region. These gaps need to be explored to provide practical insights for strengthening Nepal's border security framework and facilitating better cooperation between security forces and border populations.

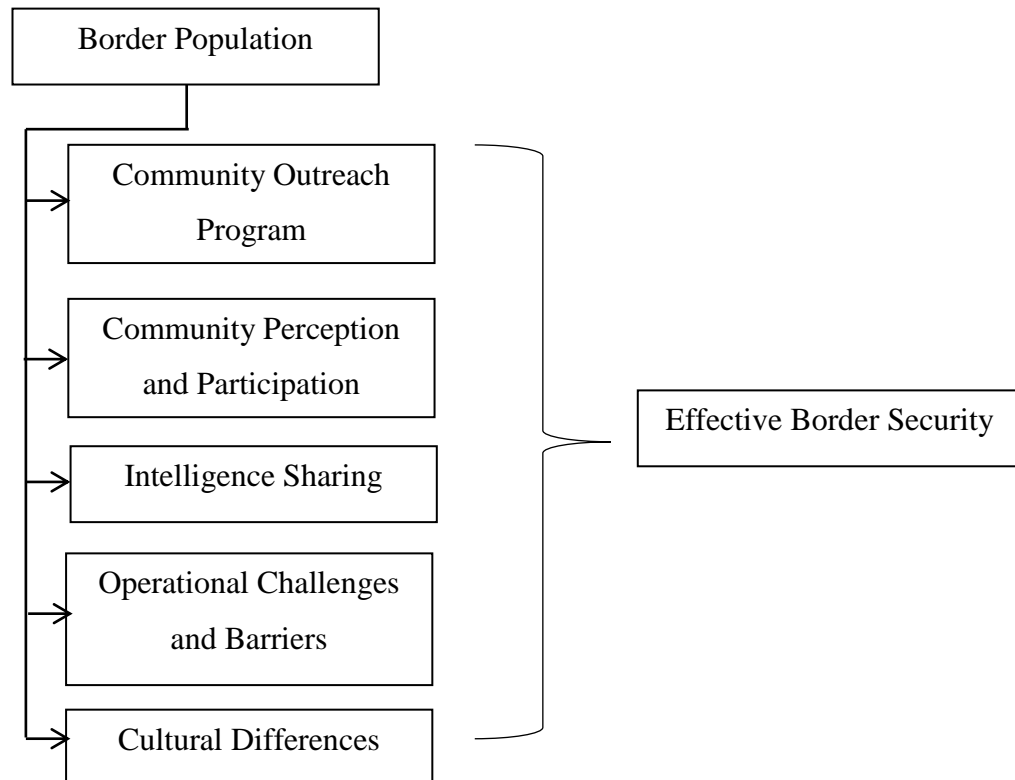
2.5 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework provides the foundation for conducting a specific study by explaining its importance and relevance. Essentially, it serves as a rationale, highlighting why the research is needed. It draws upon the existing knowledge base, typically outlined through a literature review, to identify gaps in understanding related to a particular phenomenon or issue. Furthermore, it outlines the research's methodological approach, establishing the

groundwork for the study (Varpio et al., 2020). The researcher has applied following conceptual framework for the study.

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted and modified from Maillard & Terpstra, (2021).

The conceptual framework for this study visualizes the interplay between APF, Nepal's relationship-building activities, challenges, community perceptions, and border security outcomes in Koshi Province. At its core, the framework positions APF, Nepal's engagement strategies—such as community outreach programs, development projects and intelligence-sharing mechanisms—as independent variables that directly contribute to enhanced border security. The relationship between APF's activities and security outcomes is mediated by operational and socio-cultural challenges, including logistical constraints, ethnic and linguistic diversity in Koshi Province, and historical mistrust between communities and security forces.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the process of designing, collecting, and analyzing data to ensure accuracy and reliability in answering research questions (Adedoyin, 2020). This study follows a qualitative research design with an inductive approach to understand the relationship between APF, Nepal, and border populations in Koshi Province. The research relies on primary data collected through interviews and questionnaires, along with secondary data from legal documents, government reports, and academic sources.

The researcher conducted fieldwork from Poush 19 to Magh 1, 2081, visiting Jhapa, and Morang districts to gather information from key stakeholders. Total of 27 participants were selected to ensure diverse perspectives. In Bhadrapur Municipality, Jhapa, interviews were conducted with the Municipality Mayor, Ward Chairpersons from Wards 2, 5, and 6, the Chief District Officer (CDO) of Jhapa, 12 local residents, and the Commander of APF No. 2 Battalion. In Rani Municipality, Morang, the researcher interviewed Ward Chairpersons from Wards 5 and 6, five local residents from the border area, and the Commander of APF No. 3 Battalion. Additional interviews were conducted with the Commander of APF No. 4 Battalion and the Commander of No. 1 APF Brigade to understand security operations and policies.

Primary data was collected using semi-structured interview guides and questionnaires tailored to different participants. Questions for APF personnel focused on operational challenges, community engagement, and policy implementation. Interviews with local residents and government officials explored their perceptions of APF's activities, trust levels, and suggestions for improvement. Secondary data sources included the APF Act, 2058, APF operational guidelines, government reports, and research articles from academic journals related to border security and public relations.

The researcher applied thematic analysis to interpret data, categorizing responses based on recurring themes. Ethical considerations were maintained by securing informed consent, ensuring anonymity, and protecting participant data. This research methodology ensures a

thorough investigation of APF, Nepal's role in strengthening border security through its engagement with border communities in Koshi Province.

3.1 Research Design

The nature of this research is descriptive and analytical. It is descriptive as it presents the existing information on APF, Nepal's relationship with border populations. At the same time, it is analytical as it integrates and examines data from various sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The study is conducted through the collection of both primary and secondary data, ensuring a balanced and well-rounded analysis.

3.1.1 Research approach

A research approach defines the overall strategy used to select methods and procedures for systematically addressing research objectives (Grover, 2015). This study adopts an inductive approach within a qualitative research framework to explore the relationship between the APF, Nepal, and border populations in Koshi Province. The study focuses on understanding the experiences, perceptions, and socio-political factors shaping APF's engagement with local communities. The key areas of analysis include relationship-building initiatives, operational challenges and the impact of these activities on border security effectiveness.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding, the study employs semi-structured interviews with APF personnel, local government representatives, and border residents. The researcher also conducted field visits and direct observations to assess APF-led operations and community engagement efforts. To enhance reliability, primary data was triangulated with secondary sources.

This research approach provides contextual depth by integrating field-based insights with policy analysis. By prioritizing qualitative exploration over numerical generalizations, the study aims to identify actionable strategies for enhancing APF's role in strengthening border security and fostering trust-based relationships with border populations in Koshi Province. This methodological foundation ensures a balanced, evidence-driven perspective that aligns with Nepal's security policies while centering the voices of affected communities.

3.1.2 Area of the study

The area of the study refers to the specific focus and boundaries of the research. This study examines how the APF, Nepal interacts with border populations in Koshi Province, specifically in Jhapa (Bhadrapur Municipality) and Morang (Rani Municipality) to strengthen border security. The research explores APF's community engagement activities, challenges faced and the impact of these efforts on improving security outcomes.

To gather insights, the researcher conducted interviews with local government officials, APF personnel and border residents. The study focuses on understanding how APF's strategies align with the needs of border communities and the broader goals of national security. Data was collected through qualitative methods, with participants selected using judgmental sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives. This approach allowed the researcher to deeply explore the dynamics of APF-community relations in Koshi Province.

3.1.3 Research sampling

Research sampling involves selecting a specific group of individuals or units from a larger population to represent it in the study. This process allows researchers to draw conclusions about the broader population based on the characteristics of the selected sample (Makwana et al., 2023). To collect the necessary data, the researcher visited the study areas, interviewed APF personnel, local government representatives, and border residents, and gathered qualitative data regarding the research questions. The selection of respondents ensured diverse perspectives, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of APF's community engagement activities, operational challenges, and their impact on border security.

The study utilized 27 respondents to gather qualitative insights into APF Nepal's relationship with the border population and its role in strengthening border security in Koshi Province. This sample size was selected based on the non-probability purposive sampling method, ensuring that only key informants with direct experience in border security, law enforcement, and local community engagement were included. Respondents consisted of APF personnel, local government officials, community leaders, and border residents, providing a comprehensive perspective on the research problem.

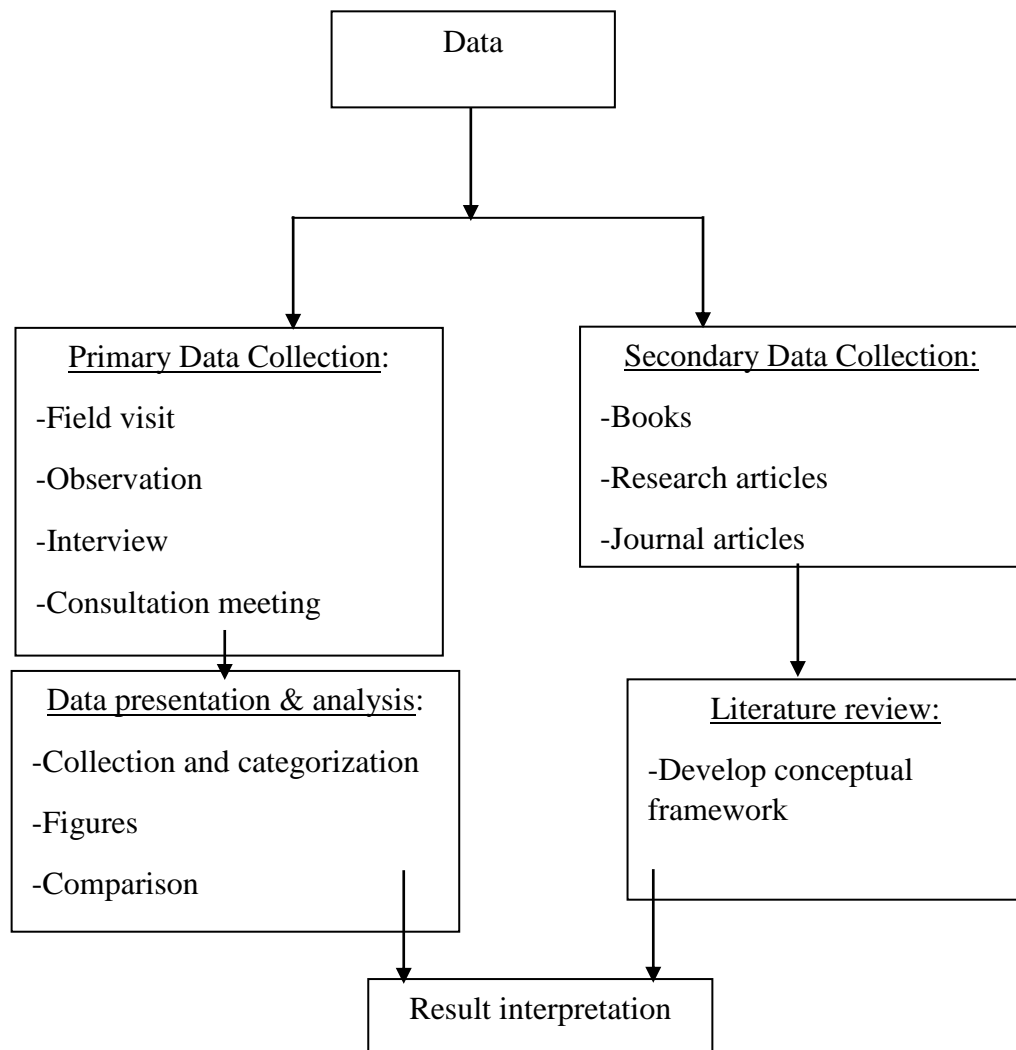
The selection of 27 respondents aligns with qualitative research principles, where depth of information is prioritized over numerical representativeness. In qualitative research, sample sizes typically range between 20 to 30 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018), ensuring sufficient data saturation while maintaining manageability for in-depth analysis. Given the study's focus on border security and community relations, a larger sample might have led to redundancy, while a smaller sample could have limited the diversity of perspectives.

Moreover, logistical constraints, including the remote nature of border areas and security considerations, influenced the feasibility of conducting extensive interviews with a larger pool of participants. However, the data obtained from the 27 respondents was sufficient to identify key patterns, trends, and challenges in border security and community engagement, making the sample size appropriate and justifiable for this qualitative study.

3.1.4 Nature and sources of data

Sources of data refer to the origins from which researchers collect information for analysis. These sources include primary data, which is obtained directly from firsthand observations or interviews, and secondary data, which is collected from existing records, publications, or databases. Primary sources often involve interviews and questionnaires, while secondary sources include literature reviews, government reports, and archival documents, providing a diverse foundation for data analysis (Ajayi, 2023).

For primary data, the researcher visited the study areas and conducted interviews with APF personnel, local government officials, and border residents. Respondents were provided with structured questions, and their responses were documented for further analysis. Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, books, research articles, historical records, and official reports, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of border security activities, relationship-building efforts, and operational challenges faced by APF, Nepal, in Koshi Province.

Figure 3.1*Sources of Data*

Source: Adopted by Researcher, (2081).

3.1.5 Primary Data

Primary data refers to original information collected directly by the researcher for a specific research purpose. It is gathered through methods like interviews, and observations are unique to the study, as it has not been previously collected or published (Curtis, 2008). In this study, primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with APF, Nepal personnel, local government representatives, and border residents in Jhapa and Morang districts of Koshi Province.

The researcher designed semi-structured questions to be simple and clear, ensuring respondents could understand and answer effectively. The questions are listed in Appendix A, B, & C of this thesis. During the interview process, the researcher explained the study's purpose in detail to each respondent to ensure clarity and transparency. In addition to interviews, the researcher also gathered primary data through field observations of APF, Nepal activities and the border areas.

To maintain the accuracy and quality of the data, the researcher regularly checked and verified all collected information during the data collection period. The data was then analyzed in depth using descriptive and explanatory methods, ensuring a thorough examination of APF's relationship buildup activities and their relationship with the border populations.

3.1.6 Secondary data

Secondary data refers to information that has already been collected by others for purposes other than the current research. It includes sources such as government publications, academic journals, organizational records, and online databases (Chivaka, 2018). For this study, secondary data was collected from journal articles, books, different literature, websites, and other published report.

Ensure the quality of the secondary data, the researcher by applying which methods carefully checked and verified all collected information. Any inconsistencies or inaccuracies were corrected during the data analysis phase. Data was analyzed using a descriptive method, and unnecessary information outside the study's objectives was removed to maintain focus and clarity. Regular verification throughout the collection process ensured the reliability and validity of the data used in this research.

3.1.7 Method of data analysis

Data analysis involves systematically examining, interpreting, and synthesizing collected data to derive meaningful insights and draw conclusions relevant to the research objectives. It uses various approaches, such as qualitative coding, thematic analysis, and content interpretation (Abdul-Jabbar & Farhan, 2022).

For the purpose of the study data collected from primary (interviews and observations) as well as secondary sources were analyzed in terms of descriptive way for using the methods different interpretation have been done to identify the pattern and activity which has significant impact on security and relationship along the Koshi province international borders.

The collected information was systematically organized and synthesized analytically. Unnecessary or irrelevant data were removed to maintain the study's focus. Detailed examination and editing were performed throughout the process to ensure the findings accurately reflect the research objectives. The researcher verified the data regularly to ensure accuracy, clarity, and consistency in the final analysis.

3.1.8 Ethical consideration

This study followed the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition code of ethics to ensure ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process. Before conducting interviews, the full consent of participants was obtained. Each respondent was informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. The dignity, privacy, and autonomy of all respondents were respected and protected throughout the study. The researcher ensured that personal identities were kept confidential, and in cases where anonymity was required, pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of respondents.

This study is purely academic and conducted without external sponsorship. All intellectual property rights are acknowledged as per legal and academic standards. Data collected from respondents and institutional documents were securely stored and kept confidential. All sources used in the study were properly cited and referenced, ensuring transparency and giving credit to original authors and scholars.

The researcher adhered to general ethical principles, including responsibility, justice, and confidentiality. Throughout the research process, care was taken to ensure the accuracy and integrity of all data while maintaining honesty, transparency, and respect for the participants and their information.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISUCSSION

4.1 Finding

Findings refer to the results obtained from data collection and analysis, providing insights into the research questions. They help in understanding how the APF, Nepal, engages with border populations to enhance security, the effectiveness of community-based initiatives, and the challenges faced in border management. Findings also highlight patterns, trends, and practical implications for policy and operational improvements (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This chapter presents the key findings of the study, focusing on APF Nepal's role in strengthening border security through community engagement in Koshi Province. It explores how APF, Nepal fosters trust with border residents, enhances intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and mitigates security threats. Additionally, it identifies operational challenges such as logistical limitations, cultural barriers, and resource constraints that hinder full effectiveness. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of the relationship between security forces and local communities in border regions.

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study included 27 participants selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation of key stakeholders. Respondents comprised APF personnel, local government officials and border residents. The study utilized 27 respondents to gather qualitative insights into APF Nepal's relationship with the border population and its role in strengthening border security in Koshi Province. This sample size was selected based on the non-probability purposive sampling method, ensuring that only key informants with direct experience in border security, law enforcement, and local community engagement were included. Respondents consisted of APF personnel, local government officials, community leaders, and border residents, providing a comprehensive perspective on the research problem.

Table 4.1*Characters of Respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Total	Percent
Role	APF Personnel	7	25.93
	Government Officials	8	29.63
	Local Residents	12	44.44
Sex	Male	23	85.19
	Female	4	14.81
Location	Bhadrapur (Jhapa)	17	62.96
	Rani (Morang)	10	37.04
	Total	27	100.00

Source: Field survey, (2025).

The table reveals that the study included 27 participants, comprising APF personnel, local government officials, and border residents. Among the respondents, 7 (25.93%) were APF personnel, 8 (29.63%) were government officials, and 12 (44.44%) were local residents. The gender distribution shows that 23 (85.19%) were male, while 4 (14.81%) were female. Regarding the location, 17 (62.96%) respondents were from Bhadrapur (Jhapa), and 10 (37.04%) were from Rani (Morang). The study provides insights into the representation of key stakeholders in the survey, highlighting a diverse demographic composition from both the APF and local communities.

4.1.2 APF Nepal's Relation Fostering Activities

The policy framework and guidelines of APF, Nepal, are designed to regulate and guide its operations, especially in border security and community engagement. Section 6 of the APF Act, 2058 identifies border security as one of the core mandates of APF, Nepal. In line with this mandate, APF implements the "Armed Police Force with People in Border Areas"

program, which aims to strengthen relationships with border populations while ensuring national security and public welfare.

This program focuses on fostering cooperation between APF personnel and local communities through various community-based activities. These initiatives are intended to build trust, address local concerns, and promote a sense of partnership in maintaining border security. Key activities under this programmed.

APF, Nepal conducts routine meetings with local residents to discuss security concerns, share information, and strengthen communication, organizes community support activities, including health camps, infrastructure improvements, and community clean-up drives to support local development. APF, Nepal provides skill-based training programs for local populations to enhance their job skills and contribute to economic growth, supports local infrastructure by assisting in the establishment of deep boring systems to improve access to water for agriculture and community use. APF, Nepal engages in maintaining public infrastructure, such as cleaning and repairing temples and roads, to support community welfare and cultural preservation, conducts awareness classes on issues related to border security, legal rights, and crime prevention, fostering community cooperation and promoting public safety.

4.1.3 Community outreach program in Jhapa district

APF No. 2 Battalion Jhapa engagement with "Armed Police Force with People in Border Areas" program aims to strengthen the relationship between APF, Nepal, and the border population by supporting local communities through various welfare initiatives. These initiatives focus on improving education, providing social support, and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. On the occasion of the 23rd APF Day 2080, APF, Nepal, introduced several welfare programs to enhance community engagement and promote social responsibility. The respondent (P5) stated that

As part of these initiatives, APF No. 2 Battalion, under the directive of APF H.Q provided a full scholarship to Rani Rishidev, a 10-year-old girl from an impoverished Dalit family in Gaurigunj Rural Municipality-4, Jhapa. After losing both parents, she now resides with her sister and brother-in-law. On 2081/01/09, with the support of

APF personnel and her family members, she was enrolled at Nepal APF Thakodevi Jogendra Bhagat School, Saptari. (Interview, 07 Jan., 2025)

Such community-oriented programs by security forces are essential in fostering trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and local communities. This initiative reflects APF, Nepal's commitment to community welfare and their efforts to build positive relationships with border populations through educational support and social development.

APF No. 1 Baraha Brigade Headquarters engaged in community engagement programs. According to respondent (P9)

On 2081/03/11, a health camp and awareness program titled "Safe Border, Safe Life" was conducted at Khajurgachi Secondary School, Gaurigunj Rural Municipality-6, Jhapa. The During the program, awareness classes on border security, crime prevention, and disaster management were conducted. Following the awareness session, a free health service for 88 senior citizens was provided by a medical team from APF Eastern Regional Hospital, Sunsari. (Interview, 07 Jan., 2025)

BADP program is play a vital role in shaping the relationship with the border people APF Nepal also engage the different kind of BADP program respondent P7 stated that

Under the "Armed Police Force with People in Border Areas" program, APF, Nepal plans to enhance community engagement and border security through various initiatives under the Border Area Development Program (BADP). Future activities include installing drinking water tube wells for local residents, cleaning and maintaining religious sites, and distributing sanitation materials. Additionally, APF will conduct awareness programs on drug abuse prevention, illegal trade, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and revenue leakage, fostering mutual trust and cooperation with border communities.

4.1.4 Community outreach program in Sunsari District

Community welfare programs are an essential part of strengthening the relationship between APF, Nepal, and the border population. The respondent (P8) stated that

Community welfare programs play a vital role in strengthening the relationship between APF, Nepal, and the border population. These programs focus on improving the health, education, and livelihood of local residents, fostering trust and cooperation between security forces and the community. The initiative taken by APF No. 4 Battalion is shown in following table.

Table 4.2

Community programed in Sunsari

Date (B.S.)	Program	Location	Participants/Beneficiaries
2081/02/11	Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Health Camp	Sunsari	101 women (APF personnel, ex-APF personnel, families, and local residents)
2081/03/14	Free Health Camp Anti-Drug Awareness Class	Sunsari	54 students and senior citizens benefited
2081/05/25 - 2081/05/27	Community-Based Volunteer Rescuer Disaster Response Training	Sunsari	54 students (22 girls, 32 boys) trained in disaster response
2081/02/20 - 2081/02/27	Physical Training (P.T.) for Teachers	Sunsari	47 teachers from Private and Boarding Schools (PABSON)
2081/01/23 - 2081/02/03	Skill Development (Haircutting)	Sunsari	20 local participants trained in haircutting skills

Source: APF, Nepal No. 4 Bn Sunsari, (2025).

This table shows the initiative taken by no. 4 Bn for fostering relation with local people. On 2081/02/11, during the 17th Annual Celebration of APF No. 4 Battalion Headquarters in Sunsari, a health camp for breast and cervical cancer screening was organized. The event was conducted in collaboration with Birat Medical College Teaching Hospital and coordinated by the Eastern Regional Hospital, Pakali, Sunsari. A nine-member medical team carried out

health check-ups for 101 women, including APF personnel, their families, ex-APF personnel, and local residents.

Similarly, on 2081/03/14, under the "Safe Border, Safe Life" program, a free health camp for senior citizens was conducted at Rastriya Secondary School in Laukahi, Koshi Rural Municipality-1, Sunsari. Along with the health camp, 54 students from the school participated in an anti-drug awareness class conducted by APF personnel. On 2081/05/24, a one-day free health camp was held at Krishna Secondary School, Dewanganj Rural Municipality-3, Sunsari, in collaboration with Nobel Medical College Teaching Hospital, Biratnagar. The health check-up was conducted for a total of 731 individuals, including 668 local residents (414 women and 254 men) and 63 APF personnel.

From 2081/05/25 to 2081/05/27, APF Nepal organized a Community-Based Volunteer Rescuer Disaster Response Training at the B.P. Smriti Study Institute in Koshi Rural Municipality-1, Laukahi, Sunsari. A total of 54 students (22 girls and 32 boys) participated in this program, which aimed to equip them with basic disaster response skills. A Physical Training (P.T.) program for teachers was conducted at Inaruwa English Boarding School, Inaruwa Municipality-2, Sunsari, from 2081/02/20 to 2081/02/27. The training, organized in collaboration with Private and Boarding Schools Organization Nepal (PABSON), benefited 47 teachers by enhancing their physical fitness and teaching them structured training methods.

Additionally, Skill Development (Haircutting) Training was held at Harinagar Rural Municipality-4, Sunsari, for 15 days from 2081/01/23 to 2081/02/03. This training was provided to 20 local participants, equipping them with professional haircutting skills to improve their livelihood opportunities. These initiatives highlight APF Nepal's continuous efforts in strengthening relations with border communities through welfare and awareness programs.

4.1.5 Community outreach program in Morang District

APF No. 3 Battalion, Morang, has been actively engaged in strengthening the relationship between APF, Nepal, and the border population by implementing various community-focused initiatives. These programs aim to improve public welfare, enhance disaster preparedness, and build trust between security forces and local residents. The respondent (P7) stated that:

As part of the "Armed Police Force with People in Border Areas" program, APF No. 3 Battalion constructed a public toilet facility (Sarbjani Sauchalaya) in Rangeli, Morang to address the sanitation needs of the local community. Additionally, APF Nepal organized awareness classes on disaster preparedness equipping local residents and security personnel with essential knowledge and skills (Interview, 12 Jan., 2025).

This initiative ensures improved hygiene and public health, particularly benefiting travelers, shopkeepers, and daily travelers in the area. These sessions emphasized emergency response strategies, canine-assisted security operations, and disaster risk management techniques, enhancing both public safety and the operational capabilities of APF personnel.

4.1.6 Intelligence sharing mechanisms

One of the key findings of this study is the establishment of a local coordination committee in each district of Koshi province to facilitate intelligence sharing and enhance border security. The APF, Nepal, has formed a border facilitation committee that includes representatives from various sectors to strengthen cooperation in border areas. This committee is expected to play a crucial role in security coordination, crime prevention, and cross-border information exchange.

The proposed committee will be led by the Ward Chairperson as the Coordinator and include members such as a ward member, representatives from social organizations, youth clubs, civil society, media, the local business community, teachers, Nepal Police, APF representatives, and the chief of the local Border Outpost (BOP). The BOP Chief will act as the secretary of the committee. The primary objective of this committee is to create a collaborative mechanism where security forces and local stakeholders can work together to address border-related issues effectively.

According to the Participation (P9)

The committee is expected to function actively in border security and problem-solving efforts. It will take responsibility for protecting border pillars, preventing encroachment in the Dasgaja area, and conducting regular monitoring of border activities. Additionally, the committee will facilitate information exchange to control smuggling, cross-border crime, and other illegal activities. One of its key responsibilities is to assist APF, Nepal, in identifying and addressing border security threats through intelligence sharing.

This type of committee is formulated in Morang district as well. According to (P10)

The committee will participate in awareness programs to educate border residents about security threats and legal provisions related to cross-border movement. It will also play a role in securing land for APF Border Outposts (BOPs) that lack proper land allocation and assisting in the maintenance and construction of duty posts and security infrastructures. The committee is also expected to provide advice and recommendations to security agencies regarding border security issues and actively intervene in disputed areas to prevent illegal activities.

According to the (P11) establishment of a local coordination committee has played importance role to sharing intelligence.

The committee will take responsibility for discouraging individuals from engaging in illegal cross-border activities such as smuggling and human trafficking. By working closely with security forces, this committee will contribute to strengthening border security through improved intelligence-sharing mechanisms and coordinated community involvement. This initiative aligns with APF Nepal's goal of enhancing border security through local participation and effective information-sharing strategies.

Based on information gathered from local residents, APF Nepal has successfully confiscated various drugs in Koshi Province. According to respondent P10

Confiscation of illegal drugs in Koshi Province has been largely facilitated by intelligence provided by local residents. APF Nepal's collaboration with border communities has played a pivotal role in intercepting drug trafficking activities, leading to the seizure of significant quantities of narcotics. The data from FY 081/082 reveals that APF Nepal seized 863.83 grams of brown sugar (heroin), 3,900.48 kg of marijuana, and various pharmaceutical drugs, including 58 tablets of Spasmo Proxyvon and 378 strips of Tramadol. Despite these successes, challenges remain in completely curbing drug trafficking due to porous borders and evolving smuggling techniques. Strengthening local engagement programs, awareness campaigns, and surveillance technology will be crucial for enhancing APF Nepal's capability to combat drug-related crimes in border regions.

Table 4.3

Seized Drugs in Koshi Province (FY 081/082)

S.N.	Drug Type	Quantity
1	Brown Sugar (Heroin)	863.83 g
2	Marijuana	3900.48 kg
3	Spasmo Proxyvon/Spasmo/Spasmin & Other Tablets	58 tabs
4	Tramadol/Tramazec/Tramato (Strips)	378 strips
5	Nitrazepam Tablets	58 tabs
6	Dilex DC/Corex/Dilex DC & Other Syrups	47 bottles
7	Nitrazepam Tablets IP	398 tabs
8	Diazepam Injections	40 ampoules
9	Lupigesic/Yupigesic/Titigesic Injections	23 ampoules
10	Phenergan Injections	82 ampoules
11	Hydrochloride/Narpham/Promethazine/Buprenorphine	2869 ampoules
12	Nitrogen Tablets	265 tabs
13	Dispo Can Tape/ICE Drugs (Methamphetamine)	1.27 g
14	Individuals Arrested	91 people

Source: APF, Nepal No.1 Bde, Pakali, Sunsari

The confiscation of various drugs in Koshi Province by APF Nepal highlights the critical role of local community cooperation in border security. The seized drugs, which pose severe threats to society by fueling crime and addiction, were primarily intercepted based on intelligence provided by local residents.

Table 4.4

Border Security Operations and Achievements (FY 081/082)

S.N.	Criminal Activities	Incidents/Seized Amount	People Arrested
1	Human Trafficking	5 cases	2 people
2	Illegal Nepalese Currency	NPR 39,16,267	20 people
3	Illegal Indian Currency	NPR 16,63,872 (INR 10,39,920)	10 people
4	Seized Timber	2527.44 cubic feet	2 people
5	Seized Silver	2.399 kg	3 people
6	Illegal Entry of Third-Country Nationals	5 cases	0 people
7	Muzzle-Loading Guns	4 Naal	0 people

Source: APF, Nepal No.1 Bde, Pakali, Sunsari

The Table indicate that APF Nepal has been actively conducting operations based on information provided by local residents. As a result, many crime-related activities, such as drug smuggling, illegal arms trafficking, and human trafficking, have significantly decreased in the border areas. The cooperation between APF Nepal and the local population has played a crucial role in preventing cross-border crimes and maintaining security.

4.1.7 Challenges faced in fostering relation

The Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal, engages in various community-based activities to foster relationships with border populations, such as infrastructure development, awareness campaigns, and collaborative programs. However, these efforts face significant limitations due to resource constraints and operational challenges. Respondents from APF units in Jhapa and Morang districts highlighted recurring issues, stating

APF Nepal lacks sufficient or dedicated budget and resources to independently conduct community development programs. For infrastructure projects, we must

depend on or request support from local governments, which creates delays and complicates implementation.

This dependency on external agencies hampers the efficiency and scope of APF's initiatives, limiting their ability to address community needs promptly and effectively.

The respondent (P9) explained that

Limited personnel strain our ability to secure the border and maintain internal security. Our teams are already engaged in operational and logistical duties, leaving few staff for community-based programs. If sufficient manpower were allocated, implementing such initiatives would be far more effective.

This underscores how staffing shortages hinder APF's capacity to balance security tasks with community engagement.

The Participation from district administration office Jhapa p8 highlighted APF Nepal's critical role in border security, internal security, and disaster management. However, he emphasized key challenges

With few APF personnel managing a 144 kilometer border, manpower is stretched thin, making it difficult to deploy effectively across all areas. Limited resources and budget constraints further complicate operations. Additionally, distinguishing between local residents traveling to India for daily necessities and unauthorized vendors poses a significant challenge. Residents often cross the border for affordable goods, but identifying genuine needs versus illegal trade activities creates friction and enforcement difficulties."

These insights underscore the need for enhanced staffing, resource allocation, and community dialogue to balance security enforcement with the socio-economic realities of border populations. Collaborative strategies between APF and local authorities could help address these challenges more effectively.

4.1.8 Community perception

According to Schneider and Bouffard (2016), community perception encompasses the collective attitudes and beliefs of individuals within a community regarding safety, security, and the effectiveness of law enforcement. This perception significantly influences how residents interact with law enforcement agencies and can affect overall community cohesion. Factors such as personal experiences, media representation, and direct interactions with law enforcement shape these perceptions (Tyler, 2017).

The Mayor of Bhadrapur Municipality acknowledged the positive contributions of APF Nepal in the region but highlighted challenges arising from cross-border trade dynamics. He stated that

Since APF established its company in Bhadrapur, many locals cross into Indian markets to buy cheaper daily essentials. When APF personnel confiscate these goods, residents approach us to mediate, requesting the items be returned. While some bring goods for personal use, others engage in unauthorized trade, complicating enforcement. APF sometimes releases the goods after verification or forwards them to customs for legal procedures. This creates occasional friction between APF and locals, requiring municipal mediation to balance security protocols with community needs. Moving forward, we aim to collaborate on awareness programs to reduce such conflicts while ensuring fair enforcement.

This statement underscores the delicate balance between border security measures and the socio-economic realities of border communities.

One participant mention about the APF Nepal and its necessity in the border area by his views the participant (P5) stated that

Before the establishment of the APF base camp in the area, it was very difficult to sit outside at night. Thieves would come and steal animals from our livestock, and such incidents were common. However, since the base camp was established, we no longer experience these problems. Now, we can leave some of our important items outside our rooms without fear of theft. One challenge we still face, though, is transporting daily goods from Jogbani, where prices are lower than in our area.

Local residents often assess the APF's impact based on their experiences with safety, responsiveness, and engagement in community matters. The community's view is typically

shaped by various factors, including past incidents of crime, interactions with APF personnel, and the perceived effectiveness of security measures. One respondent noted that the establishment of the APF base camp has significantly improved perceptions of safety, as they feel more secure at night and have witnessed a decrease in criminal activities.

4.1.9 Culture barriers

Cultural barriers hinder effective communication and collaboration between different groups due to differences in language, traditions, values, and social norms (Hofstede, 2001). These barriers can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust, and resistance to cooperation, particularly in cross-border security operations and community engagement efforts (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). Cultural differences in border areas significantly affect communication and security operations. One of the respondents from Rani (P20) stated that

Cultural and linguistic differences often create barriers in the relationship between security forces and local populations. one example that stands out is from a border town where APF officers were invited to a local festival. The officers, unaware of local customs, hesitated to accept food and drinks offered as part of a traditional gesture of hospitality. In the local culture, refusing such offerings is considered disrespectful. As a result, the community perceived the officers as distant and uninterested in engaging with them.

The cultural differences in border areas significantly impact communication, mutual understanding, and the effectiveness of security operations. The statement from a respondent in Rani (P20) highlights how cultural differences can lead to unintended misunderstandings between APF personnel and the local population. Such incidents indicate the need for cultural awareness training for APF personnel to foster better relationships with border communities. Misinterpretations due to cultural differences can create tension and hinder cooperation in security operations. Understanding local customs, traditions, and language nuances can significantly improve communication and foster stronger relationships between security personnel and the communities they serve. Only through mutual understanding can effective security and cooperation be achieved.

4.2 Discussions

The findings of this study show that the Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal, has actively engaged with border communities through various programs to build trust and improve security. These initiatives include health camps, disaster response training, community awareness programs, and infrastructure development. For example, APF No. 4 Battalion organized multiple health camps, including a breast and cervical cancer screening camp in Sunsari, which benefited 101 women. Similarly, APF personnel conducted an anti-drug awareness session for 54 students at a school in Laukahi. Another major event was a free health camp at Krishna Secondary School, where 731 individuals, including APF personnel and local residents, received medical check-ups. These activities reflect APF Nepal's effort to engage with border populations while addressing their immediate needs.

Another key initiative was community-based disaster response training, which helped 54 students in Koshi Rural Municipality learn essential skills in handling emergencies. Additionally, APF conducted physical training (P.T.) for 47 teachers and a skill development (haircutting) program for 20 local participants, enabling them to gain practical skills for employment. These activities show that APF Nepal is not only focused on security but also on community development, which strengthens its relationship with border populations.

4.2.1 Impact of Relationship-Building Activities

The participation of border residents in APF Nepal's community programs has significantly improved trust and cooperation between security forces and the local population. Respondents from the field study in Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari consistently expressed that APF Nepal's initiatives, such as health camps, disaster response training, drug awareness programs, and skill development projects, have helped build a positive perception of the force. For example, the health camp organized by APF No. 4 Battalion in Sunsari provided medical check-ups to 731 individuals, including local residents and APF personnel. Similarly, an anti-drug awareness session at Rastriya Secondary School in Laukahi educated 54 students about the dangers of substance abuse. The Community-Based Volunteer Rescuer Disaster Response Training, which trained 54 students in Koshi Rural Municipality, was also highlighted as a critical effort in preparing the youth for emergencies.

Many border residents acknowledged that such programs made them feel more connected to APF personnel, as they saw officers actively contributing to community welfare. However, some participants noted the inconsistency of these programs, stating that they were conducted occasionally rather than regularly. Several residents suggested expanding these activities to a broader scale, ensuring continuous engagement rather than one-time events.

The importance of community engagement in security operations is well documented in various studies. Putnam's (2000) social capital theory argues that strong community networks foster better governance and cooperation. In line with this theory, APF Nepal's efforts to interact with the local population have strengthened social ties, leading to increased trust and better security coordination. When the community perceives security forces as allies rather than enforcers, they are more likely to share critical information, thereby improving law enforcement effectiveness.

Similarly, De Maillard & Terpstra (2021) highlight the importance of community policing in enhancing cooperation between security forces and the public. Their research indicates that when police actively participate in social programs, they gain greater acceptance from the public, which in turn helps in preventing crimes, gathering intelligence, and ensuring long-term security stability. The findings from this study reflect a similar pattern, where border residents in eastern Nepal have responded positively to APF Nepal's outreach initiatives.

Despite the positive reception of these initiatives, some respondents raised concerns regarding the sustainability and effectiveness of APF Nepal's programs. Some community members argued that while APF conducts social programs, they lack the resources and manpower to maintain them consistently. Additionally, cultural and language barriers in border areas have occasionally led to misunderstandings between officers and local residents. For instance, one participation mention one example that stands out is from a border town where APF officers were invited to a local festival. The officers, unaware of local customs, hesitated to accept food and drinks offered as part of a traditional gesture of hospitality. In the local culture, refusing such offerings is considered disrespectful.

Critics also argue that border security responsibilities should focus more on intelligence gathering and surveillance rather than community engagement. Some believe that resources allocated for social programs should be redirected toward strengthening patrols,

infrastructure, and technological monitoring to combat cross-border crimes such as smuggling and illegal trade more effectively.

Based on the findings and literature, it is clear that community engagement plays a crucial role in strengthening border security. While some critics emphasize stricter enforcement, building trust with the local population is equally vital for intelligence gathering and crime prevention. Putnam's (2000) theory of social capital strongly supports this, indicating that a well-connected society with strong institutional relationships is more likely to cooperate with security efforts.

Additionally, Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde's (1998) securitization theory suggests that security is not just about military strength but also about how threats are perceived and addressed through societal cooperation. If APF Nepal continues to involve the local population in security-related initiatives, it will enhance social cohesion and reduce the likelihood of border residents engaging in illegal activities.

4.2.2 Challenges Faced by APF, Nepal in Strengthening Border Security

APF Nepal faces several challenges in strengthening border security in eastern Nepal, particularly in ensuring effective law enforcement and maintaining positive relations with the border population. The field study conducted in Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari revealed key difficulties, including limited resources, lack of advanced technology, manpower shortages, and challenges in cross-border crime prevention.

One major issue reported by APF personnel was insufficient budget allocation for community engagement programs. Many officers mentioned that while APF Nepal has initiated various welfare and awareness programs, such as health camps, skill development training, and anti-smuggling campaigns, the lack of financial and logistical support has made it difficult to sustain these initiatives. For example, in Morang, APF personnel expressed concerns that funding for community welfare projects comes mainly from local donations rather than government support, making long-term sustainability uncertain.

Additionally, cultural and language barriers have posed significant obstacles in building trust with border communities. Many border residents speak local dialects that APF officers, who are often transferred from other regions, do not fully understand. A respondent from Rani,

Biratnagar (P20) give one example that stands out is from a border town where APF officers were invited to a local festival. The officers, unaware of local customs, hesitated to accept food and drinks offered as part of a traditional gesture of hospitality. In the local culture, refusing such offerings is considered disrespectful.

Another critical challenge is cross-border crime, including smuggling, human trafficking, illegal trade, and drug trafficking. According to APF officers in Sunsari, the open Nepal-India border makes it difficult to monitor illegal activities. Smuggling networks use local residents as intermediaries, making it even harder to track illegal operations without strong community cooperation.

The lack of modern surveillance technology further exacerbates security concerns. Unlike some developed countries that use drones, CCTV, and biometric border control systems, APF Nepal still relies on manual patrolling and outdated communication tools. Officers in Jhapa and Morang reported that many border checkpoints lack basic surveillance infrastructure, making it easier for criminals to operate unnoticed.

The challenges faced by APF Nepal align with global research on border security and law enforcement difficulties. Aniszewski (2009) highlights that effective border management requires coordinated efforts between security forces, government agencies, and local communities. However, as seen in Nepal, poor inter-agency coordination and limited funding often weaken border control measures.

Similarly, Upreti (2022) discusses the need for inter-agency cooperation in Nepal's border security framework. His research shows that the absence of a unified command structure among security forces, customs officials, and local administrations results in overlapping duties and inefficiencies. APF Nepal's personnel also mentioned this issue, emphasizing that coordination with local government authorities and customs officials is often inconsistent, leading to delayed responses in critical situations.

Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde's (1998) securitization theory explains that border security is not just about physical protection but also about how threats are perceived and addressed through institutional frameworks. APF Nepal's limited technological resources and lack of intelligence-sharing mechanisms indicate that the perception of security threats is not fully integrated into national policy planning, leading to reactive rather than proactive strategies.

Putnam's (2000) social capital theory suggests that strong community ties enhance security cooperation. While APF Nepal has conducted various community outreach programs, the lack of consistent engagement due to funding issues has hindered its ability to establish long-term trust with border residents. This challenge is similar to cases in South Asia, where border communities often view security forces with suspicion, making cooperation difficult unless there are ongoing relationship-building efforts.

While many respondents recognized the difficulties faced by APF Nepal, some expressed dissatisfaction with the force's approach to border security. Some local residents in Morang and Sunsari argued that APF's presence is often visible during major operations but lacking in day-to-day security monitoring. They believe that APF should increase foot patrols and checkpoints to deter smuggling and illegal activities more effectively.

Based on the findings and literature, it is evident that APF Nepal faces significant structural and operational challenges in securing Nepal's eastern border. While community engagement is crucial, the force's limited resources and outdated security measures make it difficult to maintain consistent security operations.

The challenges of cross-border crime, weak surveillance, and insufficient inter-agency coordination indicate a need for reforming Nepal's border security policies. Upreti (2022) suggests that a National Border Management Authority should be established to streamline security efforts and improve coordination between different agencies. This recommendation is relevant for APF Nepal, as a centralized authority could help allocate resources more efficiently and implement modern security measures.

Furthermore, Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde's (1998) securitization theory suggests that border security should be framed as a national priority, integrating modern intelligence tools and strategic planning. APF Nepal should advocate for increased funding and technological upgrades to align its security measures with international best practices. At the same time, Putnam's (2000) social capital theory remains relevant in addressing community concerns. APF Nepal must balance enforcement with continued relationship-building efforts, ensuring that local residents view the force as a reliable security partner rather than just a law enforcement agency.

4.2.3 Potential Solutions and Strategies to Mitigate Challenges in Enhancing Relations with Border Populations in Koshi Province.

The field study in Jhapa, Morang, and Sunsari revealed that APF Nepal has been actively engaging with border communities through various programs, but several challenges hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives. The primary issues identified include limited financial and logistical resources, cultural and language barriers, security concerns related to cross-border crime, and inconsistent coordination with local authorities. APF personnel in Koshi Province noted that while initiatives such as health camps, disaster response training, and skill development programs have strengthened ties with local communities, the lack of sustained funding and support has made it difficult to expand these efforts.

The challenges faced by APF Nepal in Koshi Province align with global findings on community-based border security initiatives. Aniszewski (2009) emphasizes that effective border management requires strong collaboration between security agencies and local populations. However, poor resource allocation and bureaucratic inefficiencies often weaken these efforts, as seen in Nepal. Upreti (2022) also highlights that inter-agency cooperation is essential for border security, suggesting that a well-structured coordination mechanism between APF, local governments, and federal authorities is necessary for sustainable community engagement.

Additionally, some community members remain skeptical about APF's role, as security enforcement activities such as border patrols, anti-smuggling operations, and crackdowns on illegal trade sometimes create tensions between residents and law enforcement officers. Residents in border towns like Rani and Laukahi expressed concerns that security checks disrupt daily life, making cross-border movement for trade and family visits more difficult. Furthermore, language barriers and cultural differences have contributed to misunderstandings between APF personnel and local communities, making it harder to establish trust.

Furthermore, Putnam's (2000) social capital theory suggests that building trust and cooperation between security forces and local communities enhances governance and security outcomes. APF Nepal's engagement in health camps, awareness campaigns, and skill development programs reflects efforts to strengthen social capital, but a lack of continuity in these programs due to funding constraints limits their long-term impact. Similarly, Buzan,

Wæver, & de Wilde's (1998) securitization theory highlights that border security should not solely focus on military enforcement but should integrate socio-economic initiatives to address the root causes of insecurity, such as unemployment and illegal trade.

Based on the findings and literature, a balanced approach is needed to strengthen APF Nepal's relationship with border communities while maintaining effective security operations. While resource constraints and security concerns are valid issues, investing in long-term community engagement strategies can significantly enhance trust and cooperation.

From a theoretical perspective, Putnam's (2000) social capital theory reinforces the idea that border security is more effective when communities actively participate in security efforts. However, this requires structured policies, sustainable funding, and trained personnel who understand the needs of local populations.

Additionally, Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde's (1998) securitization theory highlights that border security should be addressed through a combination of law enforcement, economic development, and social policies. In this regard, APF Nepal should advocate for policy changes that integrate community development into national security planning.

Furthermore, Aniszewski (2009) on Coordinated Border Management (CBM) emphasizes that border security cannot be managed by a single agency alone. Strong inter-agency cooperation and public-private partnerships are crucial to creating a secure and well-managed border environment.

By implementing policy reforms, increasing inter-agency collaboration, leveraging technology, and strengthening community policing strategies, APF Nepal can mitigate challenges and build a more cooperative and secure border environment. The literature supports the argument that sustainable border security requires a multi-faceted approach, integrating law enforcement, economic development, and social engagement to achieve long-term stability in Nepal's border regions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This study examines the role of the Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal, in strengthening border security through community engagement in Koshi Province. The research investigates the relationship between security personnel and border populations, the challenges in implementing security measures, and the overall effectiveness of community-oriented programs. The study highlights the significance of local cooperation in maintaining border security and preventing cross-border crimes such as smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal trade activities. The findings suggest that while APF Nepal has made significant progress in fostering trust and collaboration, several challenges persist in ensuring comprehensive border security.

The study highlights that APF Nepal has implemented a wide range of relationship-building activities aimed at strengthening ties with local communities. Programs such as awareness campaigns, free health camps, disaster response training, and community outreach initiatives have contributed to fostering public trust in security forces. Local residents, who previously held skeptical views of law enforcement personnel, now actively cooperate with APF, seeing them as key partners in maintaining peace and security. Intelligence-sharing between APF and local representatives has improved, allowing for faster and more effective responses to border-related crimes. This development aligns with existing theories on community policing, which emphasize the importance of engaging local populations in security governance.

A key initiative identified in the study is the formation of community-based border security committees. These committees include representatives from local government bodies, civil society organizations, business communities, and youth groups. APF Nepal encourages these committees to take an active role in monitoring border activities, reporting suspicious movements, and addressing issues such as illegal land encroachment and unauthorized trade. The study found that such locally led initiatives have significantly contributed to security enforcement by ensuring community participation in crime prevention efforts. However, sustaining the effectiveness of these committees requires continued support, training, and financial resources.

Another critical aspect of the study is the role of intelligence-sharing mechanisms in border security. The findings reveal that local communities play an essential role in providing information on cross-border crimes, helping APF personnel intercept illegal activities more effectively. Regular meetings between APF officers and local stakeholders have improved the efficiency of intelligence-sharing. However, the study also identified challenges in this area, including the reluctance of some community members to report security threats due to fear of retaliation or a lack of confidence in law enforcement agencies. Addressing these concerns requires further community engagement and awareness-building efforts.

Despite the success of community-oriented strategies, the study found that APF Nepal faces several operational challenges. One of the primary issues is the lack of proper infrastructure and resources. Many border outposts are inadequately equipped, making it difficult for security personnel to perform their duties effectively. Some APF posts lack proper roads, communication systems, and transportation facilities, limiting their ability to respond quickly to security incidents. Additionally, the study highlights the need for increased budget allocations to strengthen APF operations and provide essential training to personnel stationed in remote border areas.

Cultural and linguistic differences between APF officers and border populations also pose challenges in security operations. The study found that effective communication is crucial for maintaining trust and cooperation between security forces and local communities. In some border areas, APF personnel struggle to interact with residents due to lack of understanding of local customs and traditions. This challenge underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity training for APF personnel to improve their interactions with the communities they serve.

The presence of unregulated and porous border points remains a significant concern for Nepal's border security. The study found that certain areas along the Nepal-India border remain vulnerable to illegal activities due to inadequate monitoring. Unregulated crossings facilitate the smuggling of goods, weapons, and human trafficking, creating security risks for both Nepal and its neighboring countries. To address these issues, the study suggests strengthening border surveillance through the use of modern technology, including CCTV cameras, drones, and biometric identification systems.

Another key finding is the lack of proper coordination between security agencies responsible for border management. While APF Nepal plays a central role in border security, overlapping responsibilities with other agencies such as the Nepal Police, Customs Department, and local administration have led to inefficiencies. The study found that improved inter-agency coordination, regular joint meetings, and shared intelligence systems can help enhance border security operations. Establishing a dedicated national border security framework could further streamline operations and reduce duplication of efforts.

Policy and legal frameworks also play a crucial role in border security management. The research found that while APF Nepal operates under the Armed Police Force Act, 2058, and related regulations, existing policies do not always provide clear guidelines for addressing emerging security threats. There is a need for updated policies that integrate modern security measures and community engagement strategies. The study recommends the development of a national border security policy that includes provisions for infrastructure development, personnel training, and enhanced cooperation with neighboring countries.

In conclusion, the study highlights that APF Nepal's engagement with border populations has significantly contributed to strengthening border security in Koshi Province. Community participation in security efforts has improved intelligence-sharing, reduced criminal activities, and fostered trust between security forces and residents. However, challenges such as resource limitations, unregulated border crossings, inter-agency coordination gaps, and cultural barriers remain significant hurdles. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased investment in border infrastructure, better coordination among security agencies, and enhanced public awareness programs. The findings of this study underscore the importance of integrating community-based security strategies with modern technological solutions to ensure comprehensive and sustainable border management.

Future research should explore additional strategies for enhancing border security in Nepal, including the role of regional cooperation and international best practices. By implementing the recommendations provided in this study, Nepal can develop a more effective border security framework that balances enforcement with community engagement, ultimately contributing to national security and regional stability.

5.2 Conclusion

Concluding this thesis on the role of the Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal, in strengthening border security through community engagement in Koshi Province, it is evident that border security is a complex issue requiring a multi-dimensional approach. Effective border management is not solely about enforcing regulations but also about fostering trust and cooperation between security agencies and border populations. APF Nepal's initiatives, including community outreach programs, intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and collaborative security committees, have contributed significantly to strengthening border security while enhancing public cooperation and participation.

The study reveals that APF Nepal has successfully engaged with local communities through awareness campaigns, disaster relief operations, and health camps, which have improved the perception of security personnel among border residents. These initiatives have helped bridge the gap between law enforcement and civilians, leading to more effective intelligence gathering and crime prevention. The research highlights that community involvement is crucial in border security management, as local populations are often the first to detect and report suspicious activities. The establishment of border security committees, consisting of representatives from local government bodies, youth groups, businesses, and social organizations, has further facilitated cooperation and security monitoring.

Despite these successes, the findings also indicate several challenges in border security operations. One of the primary issues is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources in remote border areas. Many APF outposts face logistical difficulties due to poor road connectivity, limited surveillance technology, and insufficient manpower. These constraints hinder the effectiveness of security operations and make it challenging to monitor illegal cross-border activities effectively. Additionally, cultural and linguistic differences between security personnel and local communities have sometimes created communication barriers, making engagement efforts less effective.

Another significant challenge is the presence of unregulated border crossings, particularly along the Nepal-India border, where informal trade and movement are common. The study identifies that these unregulated crossings pose security threats, including smuggling, human trafficking, and unauthorized trade. Strengthening border security requires improved surveillance measures, such as the deployment of modern technologies like CCTV cameras,

biometric identification systems, and enhanced patrol operations. Furthermore, better coordination among security agencies, including the Nepal Police, Customs Department, and local administrative bodies, is necessary to address border security challenges holistically.

The research also underscores the importance of a well-defined legal and policy framework to govern border security effectively. While APF Nepal operates under the Armed Police Force Act, 2058, and related regulations, there is a need for updated policies that align with modern security challenges. Establishing a national border security policy that integrates infrastructure development, personnel training, and regional cooperation could enhance Nepal's border management system. The study suggests that a dedicated border security coordination mechanism, involving multiple stakeholders, would improve efficiency and reduce duplication of efforts in managing border security.

Despite the challenges, the resilience and adaptability displayed by APF Nepal in its border security initiatives highlight the force's commitment to ensuring national security. The gradual improvements in intelligence-sharing, community participation, and inter-agency coordination demonstrate progress in strengthening border management. These developments indicate that a community-oriented approach to security can yield significant benefits in enhancing law enforcement capabilities and fostering a safer border environment. Another significant aspect of the study is the importance of systemic reform.

Applying Social Capital Theory supports the argument that APF Nepal's effectiveness depends not only on enforcement measures but also on fostering trust and engagement with local border populations. When security agencies establish strong relationships with communities, intelligence-sharing improves, and local support in reporting suspicious activities increases. Currently, a lack of cultural awareness and structured community engagement programs reduces this trust. By enhancing collaboration through participatory security initiatives, awareness campaigns, and joint community projects, APF Nepal can strengthen border security while maintaining positive relations with the local population.

The findings of this research offer valuable lessons for policymakers, security agencies, and researchers seeking to improve border security mechanisms. Strengthening border security requires not only physical enforcement but also community engagement, infrastructure development, and policy reforms. The study highlights the necessity for a sustainable

approach that balances security enforcement with economic and social considerations in border areas.

This research provides crucial insights into the evolving role of APF Nepal in border security management. The study's findings contribute to the broader understanding of how community engagement can enhance security operations, and its recommendations can serve as a foundation for future policy improvements. As border security remains a dynamic and evolving issue, continuous research and adaptation are necessary to address emerging threats and maintain effective security measures.

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APPENDICES

(DSP Mohan Raj Niraula)

Appendix “A”

(Refers to page no. 22)

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

ID No.:

APF, NEPAL RELATION WITH BORDER POPULATION TO STRENGTHEN BORDER SECURITY IN KOSHI PROVINCE

Ward No.

Date:/...../.....

1. Age (in years)
2. Gender (Male//Female)

Respondent Number	Position	Location
1	Mayor	Bhadrapur municipality Jhapa
2	Ward Chairperson	Bhadrapur Ward no. 2 Jhapa
3	Ward Chairperson	Bhadrapur Ward no. 3 Jhapa
4	Ward Chairperson	Bhadrapur Ward no. 4 Jhapa
5	Ward Chairperson	Rani Ward no. 5 Morang
6	Ward Chairperson	Rani Ward no. 6 Morang
7	Ward member	Vokraha ward no. 7 Sunasari
8	CDO	Jhapa district
9	SP	No 2 Bn Jhapa
10	SP	No 3 Bn Morang
11	SP	No 4 Sunasari
12	SSP	No 1 Bde Sunasari
13	DSP	Border section No1 Bde
14	DSP	Bhadrapur proposed coy
15	DSP	Rani proposed Coy

16	INS	Border department Jhapa
17	INS	Border department Morang
18	INS	Border department Sunsari
19	Local people	
20	Local people	
21	Local people	
22	Local people	
23	Local people	
24	Local people	
25	Local people	
26	Local people	
27	Local people	

Appendix “C”

(Refers to page no. 22)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Id No.:

APF, Nepal Relation with Border Population to Strengthen Border Security In Koshi Province

Ward No.

Date:/...../.....

- 1. Age (in years)
- 2. Gender (Male//Female)
- 3. Education (.....)
- 4. Occupation (.....)

A. Questionnaire for the interview with local government members

- 1. What role does the local government play in supporting APF, Nepal’s initiatives to foster better relations with the border population?
- 2. What challenges have you observed in collaboration between APF, Nepal, and local communities in border areas?
- 3. How effective do you think APF, Nepal's community engagement programs have been in strengthening border security?
- 4. What additional measures or policies do you believe should be implemented to improve coordination between APF, Nepal, and local authorities?
- 5. How can local government and APF, Nepal work together to address cross-border challenges such as illegal trade, human trafficking, and smuggling more effectively?

B. Questionnaire for the interview with Chief District Officer

1. What is the role of the District Administration Office in coordinating with APF, Nepal for border security management?
2. How do you assess the effectiveness of APF, Nepal's initiatives in fostering relations with the border population to enhance security?
3. What major challenges do you think APF, Nepal faces in implementing community engagement programs in border areas?
4. What policies or strategies do you suggest for better collaboration between APF, Nepal, local government, and the community?
5. How can APF, Nepal and the District Administration Office work together to improve border security while maintaining strong community relations?

C. Questionnaire for the interview with the APF personal

1. What community engagement activities does APF, Nepal currently conduct to build trust with the border population?
2. What challenges do you face while implementing programs to foster relations with local communities in border areas?
3. How does APF, Nepal coordinate with local authorities and other stakeholders to address cross-border security threats?
4. What additional resources or support do you think are necessary to improve APF's efforts in strengthening border security and community relations?
5. How do you assess the impact of APF's community-based programs on improving cooperation with the border population?

D. Questionnaire for local people

1. How do you perceive the role of APF, Nepal in ensuring security and stability in your border area?
2. What kind of support or assistance have you received from APF, Nepal through community engagement programs?
3. What challenges do you face in your daily life due to border security issues, and how effectively does APF address them?

4. In what ways do you think APF, Nepal can improve its relationship with the local community?
5. Do you feel that APF's initiatives, such as awareness programs and public services, have positively impacted your community?

GLIMPSES OF FIELD VISIT



