

**A STUDY OF NICHE DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN
POLICY OF NEPAL**

A Dissertation

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Submitted by

Kabita Belbase

Symbol Number: 2819

Registration Number: 6-2-0657-0011-2012

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

I certify that this dissertation entitled “A Study of Niche Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of Nepal” has been prepared by Kabita Belbase under my supervision. I hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the research committee at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in the fulfillment of the requirements for MIRD 526 Thesis for the Master’s Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy

Dr. Khaga Nath Adhikari

Date: 2021/11/14

APPROVAL SHEET

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Size does matter in international affairs. Due to their unique vulnerabilities, small governments have different requirements, implement different foreign policies, and have a harder difficulty achieving positive foreign policy outcomes than large nations. When most researchers study them, they tend to focus on their ability to work with great powers or establish coalitions to achieve their objectives. Only a few academics have looked into the capabilities of minor states to wield power in international affairs on their own.

In the international system, this study focuses on the foreign policy behavior and strategy of weak and small governments. It also describes the behavior and techniques adopted by such states by studying various concepts and hypotheses and applying them to the Nepal situation. This thesis will show that small states can not only be independent actors in world politics, but also leaders in the realm of international politics, by focusing on Nepal and its execution of niche diplomacy.

Although niche diplomacy is frequently linked with medium powers with the potential to become major powers, this thesis will argue that it is a method that can help governments who have the capability and capacity but not the window of opportunity to establish themselves as international powers. This thesis thus proposes a number of specific foreign policy as Niche diplomacy like Tourism, Peacekeeping, and Water diplomacy as an example that must be driven by foreign policymakers in Nepal.

Keywords: Strategy. Niche Diplomacy, Middle Powers, Big Powers.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BCM	Billion cubic meters
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation
CHOGMs	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings
FOSS	Forum of Small States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IR	International Relations
IT	Information Technology
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOPE	Ministry of Population and Environment
MW	Megawatt
NAM	Non-aligned Movement
NRNA	Non-Resident Nepal's Association
OBOR	One Belt One Road
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TPCC	Troops and Police Contributing Country
UCPN	United Communist Party of Nepal
UN	United Nations
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WECS	Water and Energy Commission Secretariat

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Diplomacy is the means by which governments seek to achieve their objectives and the principles by managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad. It is the art of management that uses the mechanisms of coercion and consent among the various actors of international politics (Aksoy, 2018). Similarly, diplomacy is also defined as the application of tact and intelligence to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states (Satow, 1922).

In this sense, Niche diplomacy, which is coined by Andrew Cooper (1995) and further articulated by Evan Potter (1996-7), also known as a Middle Power Diplomacy is related to the small states that have a very less capability to exert the power. It is associated with the small states that don't have enough political and military power to impose their position on the decision-making process on the world stage, but they have significant political influence in some cases. This requires a proactive mindset, and a willingness to spend resources on the chosen task; that effectively inhibits developing and transition countries from pursuing this option.

The literature on small states in diplomacy rarely agrees on a typical definition of what constitutes a small state. As a result, no common theoretical definition has been established and there's even no universal consensus on how a small developing state is defined. However, generally small states are often defined both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The quantitative definition addresses this question on the basis of geographic or demographic factors whereas the qualitative definition focuses on the

product of these relationships (Henderson, 2016, p.4). The geographical size of a state has normally been the sole because of the difference between the small and the larger states. However, other quantitative initiatives have turned to the population as a measure of scale in identifying small countries.

In the context of niche diplomacy, the small developing countries are those countries that have limited resources. Due to their size, they often lack visibility and recognition by the foreign public. Therefore, they have to be more imaginative and inventive in shaping their diplomacy, in order to persuade more powerful counterparts that what is proposed by them is in the mutual interest of their common good. Their foreign policy agenda is heavily affected by their geographical size and location, the limited human and natural resources available to them, and their international geopolitical context in which they function. One of the most popular approaches that successful small states followed to address this problem is the 'niche diplomacy' by which they are focusing their resources within one area in order to get the best returns and the widest international recognition. Moreover, in analyzing the foreign policy behavior of small developing states, the question arises of how the small states perform their diplomatic relations in order to gain maximum benefits.

Nepal is a small state because it lies in between the two big nations, India and China. Nepal's worldview is shaped by these two civilizations. Nepal is not small in terms of and population and territorial size. Nepal, however, is identified as a small state because of its relatively smaller size than those of India and China (Bhattarai, 2017, p.1) similarly; smallness is a matter of influence. Big countries such as India and China have high economic and political influence at a regional and global level while

Nepal's influence is less than low. Thus, in its foreign policy and diplomatic activities, the small state syndrome of Nepal is always manifested.

The origin of Nepal's diplomatic relations dates back to the very first time establishment of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom in 1816. Following that, the USA (25-April-1947), India (13-June-1947), France (20 April- 1949), China (01-August-1955), Russia (20- July- 19 56) are the top 5 countries to establish diplomatic relations with Nepal. Moreover, Nepal has recently established its diplomatic relation with Sierra Leone on 29 June 2021 and has become the latest member on the list (MOFA, 2021).

Similarly, the evolution of Nepal's Foreign Policy can be traced back to the consolidation of the nation-state by King Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769. However, many scholars have correlated the genesis of the nation-state with the emergence of Nepal. Even before the consolidation of the nation-state by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, however, princely states scattered across the territory, which mainly consists of modern Nepal, were involved in diplomatic and bilateral intercourse with each other. The conception and execution of Foreign policy were evident, albeit in primitive forms, both with the states within modern Nepali territory and as well as beyond. Alliances were formed, wars were waged, and the states reached treaty agreements. Military pursuits, conquests as well as compromises, and commercial relations were the realities. The foreign policy of Nepal has passed through various critical junctures, achievements as well as setbacks, enrichments as well as mortifications and evolved a great deal.

In ancient and medieval Nepal, the relationship with the Indian states, Tibet and China was also active and functional. The ruling dynasties, the Licchavis, and Mallas

had relationships with the neighboring states. Ideational imperatives, such as religion, cultural and ethnic affinity, as well as realist priorities, such as interests either national or that of ruling elites and security, were the determinants of foreign policy formation. Matrimonial relations between the ruling families, security alliances, and trade relations were the major manifestations of foreign policy in execution.

The geographical and the topographical factors were, certainly, the major parameters that framed the foreign policy choices and structured diplomatic maneuverability even before the era of national consolidation. These parameters still resonate as relevant vis-à-vis the present-day realities and have been a contiguous determinant in Nepal's foreign policy all way through the latter's evolution.

Furthermore, Nepal being a small state, this thesis will try to analyze if Nepal possess niche factors that may help Nepal in its overall development. It will focus on shedding light on the conditions that make niche diplomacy a possible strategy for a small state like Nepal.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Small state syndrome is frequently manifested in foreign policy and diplomacy practices, which tend to maintain low levels of participation in global affairs. Tourism and water resources have been described as a tool for prosperity by many scholars in the case of Nepal however, peacekeeping arose as one of the means to be recognized and gain bargaining power in the international arena. Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/2011 shows 25 percent of Nepali people are below the absolute poverty line and the richest 20 percent hold more than 40 percent national income and this share is about 5 percent to the poorest 20 percent (Pokharel T, 2011, p.1).

The basic problem lies in understanding tourism water resources and peacekeeping from the perspective of interstate economic relations. Similarly, the unpredictability of the Nepalese government is seen as the most significant impediment to Nepal's progress. This has resulted in the misidentification and ignorance of key dimensions such as hydroelectricity, tourism, and peacekeeping in Nepal's foreign policy, which can be a powerful tool for Nepal in establishing itself on the international stage. The study focuses on how Nepal can benefit the niche diplomacy using the areas for the country's development.

1.3. Research questions:

In analyzing the Niche diplomacy of Nepal, the following questions will need to be addressed:

- A. How are Foreign Policy and Diplomacy being practiced in Nepal?
- B. Why should Nepal pursue Niche Diplomacy?
- C. What are the key issue areas that have that might make Nepal an active player in the international arena?

1.4. Research Objectives

- A. To analyze Foreign Policy and Diplomatic History and practices of Nepal.
- B. To explore why Nepalese Diplomacy and Foreign Policy is bordered in terms of Niche.
- C. To introduce the existing and potential key “area of interest” that might make Nepal an active player in the international arena.

1.5. Significance of the Research.

Given the importance of niche diplomacy that is gaining significant power in the international system, the findings of this study will benefit the state. It is most beneficial to provide analysis that sheds light on how niche diplomacy plays an important role in shaping small states' foreign policy. As a result, the research expands on the significance and implications of niche diplomacy for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

1.6. Chapter Organization

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one has presented the introduction, statement of the problem, research question, research objectives, Hypothesis, Delimitation, significance of the study, definition of the key concepts, and organization of the study. Chapter two contains the review of related literature and various scholarly writings on how the small states perform their diplomatic relations to gain maximum benefits. The methodology and procedure used to gather data for the study are presented in Chapter three. The study of some small states and how they can be relatively influential in the global power stage are contained in Chapter four. Chapter five represents the historical development and present scenario of Nepalese foreign policy from the evolutionary phase to the present. Chapter six mainly describes Nepalese foreign policy as a Niche diplomacy including key Topics as Tourism, Peacekeeping, Water Diplomacy, and, with the help of such factors, Nepal, can get international space. Chapter seven gives a conclusion of this thesis as well as a discussion on directions for future work and offers recommendations for the improvement.

1.7. Definition of the Key Concepts

This research encompasses the study of niche diplomacy and how this exhibits the foreign policy behavior of a small state. To analyze the niche diplomacy and foreign policy of a small state a basic understanding of the core terms and concepts are outlined as follows:

1.7.1 Small State

In understanding the role of small states in the international system, an adequate definition of what constitutes a small state should be surmised. In this sense, despite researchers' differing definitions of what constitutes a small state, there is widespread agreement that small states are considered weak powers. Because their size and power are rarely mutually exclusive, this necessitates a shift in emphasis from quantitative to qualitative criteria.

1.7.2 Foreign Policy

Foreign policy entails the development and implementation of a set of principles that guide a state's behavior when negotiating with other countries to defend or advance its vital and national interests. It can also be defined as the management of nation-states' exterior interactions and activities, as opposed to their domestic policies. Foreign policy is a complex interplay of geography, history, tradition, present requirements, perception of the national interest by the ruling elite, and the ideological consciousness of the policymakers besides the national and international scenario (Aryal, Subedi, Thapa, 2011, p. 11). These proposed definitions are essential parameters for evaluating states' diplomatic activity in general.

The foreign policy of small states has the primary objective of ensuring survival and

strengthening the power and position of the state in the international environment. Large states have similar objectives but the small state is often faced with problems of viability in terms of economics and politics and the vulnerability of a political, economic, and military nature from its larger neighbors (Jaiswal, 2016, p. 5). Given this, the foreign policy of small states has a short- term and geographically limited perspective in comparison with the major powers, whose foreign policy decisions are global and long-term. Moreover, the foreign policy decisions of small states are more often not related to security questions and small states have the option to either join a defense alliance or remain neutral in compliance with their security strategies.

1.7.3 Niche Diplomacy

Niche diplomacy is associated with the state with less political and military power, however having significant potential in some of the specific areas, which play an important role in making a head-turn in the international arena. The International Relations theory and diplomatic history have primarily focused upon the largest and most powerful states. Theorists have concisely stated the rationale: The great powers have utility for the system. They define it and uphold it by their existence. On the other hand, in functional terms, the system has no particular use for small units. Their survival is theoretically and perhaps ethically justifiable but the international system has no function for them; it is indifferent to their presence or absence. In this sense, Niche diplomacy can assure to make some space which can change the attributes of the world to see the respective state. Niche diplomacy thus can be a major factor in reshaping a country's foreign policy behavior.

A policy domain can be called a niche if it abides by three criteria:

1. Specific knowledge provision that is internationally in demand and scarce/competitive;
2. Long-term investments, activity, and a broad network in a related policy (sub) area:
3. Niche recognition in the form of institutional responsibility.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Review of the literatures.

This section does not promise to gather together all accessible literature; rather, it tries to bring together a subset of it that will help guide this thesis toward its ultimate goal of demonstrating that small states can engage as independent actors through alternative techniques like niche diplomacy (Tourism, Water Resources, and Peacekeeping)

To reach the thesis' goal, it is necessary to reaffirm Browning's (2006) claim that IR literature is limited, particularly in terms of small states' ability to gain autonomous voices in international politics.

This thesis intends to move away from a concentration on Western states and build a more inclusive project that may be used to demonstrate that all small states, regardless of their geographic location, can function as autonomous entities without the need for a coalition or an international institution.

2.1.1 Small States in the International system

Despite the lack of a universally agreed upon definition of a small state, there is indeed a “variety” of small states. The quantitative aspect (population, area, GNP etc.) alone is not sufficient to adequately define a small state. Areas can differ extremely and the size of population is a function of historical time. A state may be defined as small based on its weak international position and of its having less influence on the international system (Kosary, 1987, p. 2). The list of small states' economic disadvantages includes a narrower range of resources and a limited market, which makes their production less diversified and more specialized on certain

promising sectors, while their structure is more dependent on foreign trade, and is more exposed to international economic fluctuations. Similarly, Nepal's geographical location as a landlocked state makes its economy heavily dependent on India.

Studies of small states tend to focus on the nature of their vulnerabilities, without considering that these countries have managed external pressures in different ways. Globalization brings opportunities as well as risks, and a more integrated global economy may enable smaller states to adapt quickly to changing conditions, and to more readily pursue strategic development policies (Brautigam, Woolcock, 2001, p. 1)

It has long been customary to rank states in the order of their importance in world politics where states have been classified as first, second, third and even fourth-class powers. This classification has recently progressed to the terms great powers and small states or nations. To ascertain whether a state is a small state or whether it is entitled to the rank of a Great Power, the test of military power (both actual and potential) has usually been employed. Some of the elements, which determine this power, such as geographic location, manpower and natural resources can be fairly accurately measured, but other factors, such as technical proficiency, national psychology, culture and political institutions, are qualitative and variable. Owing to this, a state's rank among the Powers is very largely determined by its actual exhibition of military strength (Vandenbosch, 1964, p. 293).

The difference between great and small states is best revealed from the divergent character of their security problems. The security of the great powers is mainly assured by their internal strength and less by external factors. The security of a small state depends, on the other hand, primarily on external, international factors. Internal

strength can vary with the level of economic, technical, cultural development and with the degree of political, national loyalty. It is sometimes supplemented by “natural” security factors like the geographical position and relative distance of a country (Kosary, 1987, p. 79). Nepal, which has limited access to the sea and is heavily dependent on India for its trade routes. However, Nepal’s proximity with its neighbors allows for easy movement of people and goods and easy access to services, as is exemplified by the open border policy between Nepal and India.

2.1.2 Tourism: A Perspective

According to Sharpely (as described in Dirk Reiser, 2003), the League of Nations attempted to define a tourist for the first time in 1937, defining it as someone who travels 24 hours or more outside their customary nation of residence. Tourists are defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as “temporary visitors who spend at least 24 hours in a nation (or region) visited and whose travel can be characterized as a. leisure; b. business; c. family; d. mission; or e. meeting.” According to Chadwick (1971), tourism or travel can be divided into three categories: people moving around, a sector of the business or industry, or a complex system of interconnected ties between people and their desire to leave their comfort zones, and the services that attempt to respond to these needs by supplying products. Similarly, three features shall be included in the technological definition of tourism: the purpose of travel (e.g. business, leisure), the time dimension involved (e.g. minimum/maximum time involved from home at the destination), and tourist’s excluded/included (e.g. transit passengers, crew ship passengers). Aforementioned perspectives about tourism and its scope necessities tourism is seen from the perspective of interrelated economic affairs. As Reiser points out, tourism has two

dimensions: geographical scope and time from history, which can be seen in the field of tourism, which also plays a critical role in the study of economic issues, particularly commerce. Space dimension (geography) is an essential element in trade and the time dimension helps to understand the priorities of trade. Essentially, a tourist is a leisured individual who visits a location distant from home intentionally to experience a change of scenery (Smith, 1989, p.2). The things tourists do and the experiences they seek have changed over time, just as they varied from country to country, and across social categories of class, gender, and race (Stronza A., 2001, p.265). Different tourists travel based on different interests. MacCannel (1976) proposed that by following in the footsteps of tourists, one can begin to understand the value system of the modern world. The idea that tourism may act as a unifying force in modern cultures, bringing people together to define collectively locations, events, and symbols that are regarded essential and somehow meaningful, is particularly evocative in MacCannel's work (Stronza A., 2001, p.266). Traveling to different places will make them understand different peoples with different ways of life. Graburn (1989) characterizes tourism as a kind of ritual process that reflects society's deeply held values about health, freedom, nature, and self-importance. Graburn examines tourism's ceremonial function in society, particularly its involvement in the formation and maintenance of collective consciousness. In addition to time and space, people and values are newer trends in International Relations, which also play a vital role in economic affairs among states and peoples. Nye (1990) defines culture as a source of soft power. Tourism, Earlier similar culture, and similar value systems were considered sound for economic activities but now such scenarios have changed. Strong trade relations between two economic powers USA and China show economic affairs no longer require similar value systems.

Tourism has also been seen as a means which helps to understand the value system of the modern world, alongside helping in building a collective consciousness. Human as a center of international affairs, has evolved through human rights laws based on the foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A state is always a unit of analysis in the field of International Relations. Economic activities are considered one major to develop interdependence among states. From the 1970's economists enthusiastically promoted tourism as a source of development. Investments in the tourism sector have helped countries thrive economically. Tourism is seen as having high growth potential, particularly in the sand, sea, and sun regions (Crick, 1989). Kadt (1979) pointed out tourism not being able to boost macroeconomic development as planned. Rather than alleviating poverty Oppermann (1998) pointed out tourism introducing new types of problems like currency black market, drugs, and prostitution. Richter (1992) assessed hotel and luxury goods investments as having minimal impact on poverty, education, and health difficulties. Nash (1989) contends that tourism is a neocolonial instrument. There are two distinct versions of tourism and development; one argues tourism as a source of economic development whereas another defines tourism as a tool of neocolonialism. Both arguments carry perspectives that define economic development or imperialism, as a phenomenon of economic activity among states. Tourism also accommodates international political economy tourism can be seen from the prism of interrelated economic affairs among states. "Commodification" has been described as a process by which values via trade become goods. "Commodification of culture" has been used to describe a process by which objects come to be valued largely in terms of their exchange value, in a framework of trade, and therefore become goods, according to Cohen, as referenced by Dirk Reiser. Greenwood (1977) explains how a local culture in Fuenterrabia lost

its cultural and symbolic significance to people once it was opened to tourists and promoted as a product. Some academics worry that as a result of tourism, residents in host destinations may lose their cultural identity. Locals adapt to new lifestyles and ways they learn from foreigners. Erisman (1983) argues input of international peoples, ideas, and commodity has a negative impact, which ultimately decays peoples' self-esteem. Reiser puts forward this as a "cultural dependency" in which people gain economic benefits, but they are catering to the needs of the outsiders and loss of identity occurs as the local economy improves and host begin to act and think like tourists, whom they perceive as superior in every way. Another very important perspective of tourism can be visualized from both liberalism and dependency theory. Economic affairs are one of the pillars in both of these IR theories. Reiser puts tourism helps in economic development but creating a cultural dependency. The interrelated cooperation logic and cultural dependency are carried by both tourism and economic affairs. Some scholars define tourism explains something about the local culture rather than what reality is. Boorstin (1964) defined encounters between tourists and locals as "pseudo-events" that are based upon what tourists choose to perceive rather than on what is there. Economic affairs among states also carry both state and non-state actors as major stakes like tourism.

2.1.3 Water Resource: A Perspective

Nepal's water resources are referred to as "white gold," "the best hope for transforming Nepal's economic future," and "the best hope for transforming Nepal's economic future" through power export to India.

"A dynamic process that tries to establish rational, sustainable, and peaceful water management solutions while fostering or informing cooperation and collaboration

among riparian stakeholders," according to the definition of hydro diplomacy (Klimes, 2019)

Water's utilization presents both obstacles and opportunity for social action because it connects territories. Water quality degradation, flooding, or a water surplus can cause political difficulties and conflicts between upstream and downstream governments (Mirumachi, 2010).

The politics surrounding these geographical and power imbalances, on the other hand, are frequently overlooked in the growing literature on water diplomacy. This is especially troublesome because international law has yet to demonstrate that it is an effective arbiter of trans-boundary water issues. So yet, the International Court of Justice has only heard one case involving freshwater: the Gabčíkovo-Nagymarós dam project between Hungary and Slovakia. Even riparian's with concerns but no treaties, as Wolf et al. (1999) demonstrated, seldom initiate a war over water alone.

The role of power in trans-boundary water diplomacy and how it interacts with other actors is the focus of this special issue. Water diplomacy's nature and associated actors, as well as its role in the trans-boundary water agenda, appear to be changing. We may not go as far as Zhou Enlai, the former Chinese Prime Minister, who proclaimed in 1954 that all diplomacy is essentially another form of warfare. Even yet, power is significant. The majority of water diplomacy literature, on the other hand, is extremely power-averse, if not outright power-blind. Environmental law's "soft power," problem (re) framing, and conflict resolution are all highlighted in current study on trans-boundary water interactions. There is a lack of focus on how power impacts the interplay between the parties when (re)framing conflicts and attaining constructive cooperation. Power is viewed as a beneficial component in

water diplomacy in some circumstances since it empowers actors in dispute settlement and (re)framing. For example, the asymmetric power relationship between India and Bhutan is viewed as symbiotic and advantageous because the interplay between the two riparian's has resulted in significant economic gains (Biswas, 2011).

2.1.4 Peacekeeping: A Perspective

Peacekeeping is a term that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. The term is not always defined, similarly to the word peace, it appears to be assumed that we know what peacekeeping is, or that the definition is simply what that particular project or mission is doing. According to the literature, the word was coined by the UN Emergency Force in Suez (Schweitzer, 2010), which was a peacekeeping mission. UN General Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined peacekeeping in 1992 as an activity of the UN emphasizing deployment of military and police personnel, while noting the frequent inclusion of civilians, to prevent conflict and make peace (without defining what he envisioned as conflict or peace).

The notion of conflict prevention evolved in tandem with the United Nations' establishing contract (Charter of the United Nations, 1945), as indicated by the fact that the UN's founding document (Charter of the United Nations, 1945) outlines how to avert international conflict.

According to the Joint Doctrine (2003) of the United States military, peacekeeping entails military operations carried out with the consent of all major parties to a dispute to monitor and facilitate the implementation of an agreement, as well as support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement.

Peacekeeping is defined in a recent UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) manual as "a tactic aimed to preserve the peace, however fragile, when violence has ceased, and to aid in the implementation of peace agreements." Roberts (2011), for example, does not define peace building or peacekeeping and appears to use the terms interchangeably.

The UN and its peacekeeping missions are discussed widely in academic writings, and most discussed is the (in) effectiveness of the UN system, both in geopolitical in international law contexts. The developments in UN peacekeeping are blurring the distinction between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Originally, UN peacekeeping operations are operations involving military personnel, but without enforcement powers, undertaken to help maintain or restore international peace and security in areas of conflict.

Peacekeeping has been instrumentalized by the international community in general and individual countries in particular as a weapon to confront threats and conflicts in a changing security landscape. The incentives for countries to participate in peacekeeping must be explored to fully comprehend this tool.

To explain contributions to peacekeeping, realist explanations focus on national self-interest. As Findlay (1996, p. 8) put it, states join in peacekeeping missions because it is "decidedly in their national security interests." Greater or broader influence in molding the international system is one of these national security and foreign policy objectives. So-called middle powers are considered to be interested in maintaining the international status quo and prefer to control UN peacekeeping, which they regard as a well-established tool of the international community (Neack, 1995). During the Cold War, Canada, Sweden, and Australia were examples, as were India and Pakistan,

which have dominated UN peacekeeping in recent years. Another widely held belief is that peacekeeping is a status or positional good. Participation in peacekeeping raises a country's international status and position, which it can subsequently utilize to advance some of its foreign policy objectives. India, for example, is said to contribute to peacekeeping to raise its international status and power base in the hopes of accomplishing its goal of becoming a "great" power and eventually obtaining a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (Krishnasamy, 2001, 2003a). Another example is Pakistan, whose participation in peacekeeping is linked to the country's desire to improve its worldwide image, reduce its isolation, and become more appealing to the international community—and the international economic and development aid that comes with it (Krishnasamy, 2001). Bangladesh, likewise, aims to garner international aid and support for its economy (Krishnasamy, 2003b). Because a peacekeeping mission is based in a certain region, private, contributor-specific incentives are frequently available for countries that are close by or have a particular interest in it. The countries closest to the war region stand the greatest risk of conflict spreading, and their security and stability may suffer as a result. For example, the European Union's foreign policy purpose is to promote stability, security, and prosperity in its vicinity. Peacekeeping missions in the Balkans in the 1990s and early 2000s—first through NATO, then through the European Union with EUFOR Concordia in the Republic of Macedonia and EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina—showed how European countries attempted to stabilize their region and periphery. The European Union has adopted a foreign policy instrument called the European Neighborhood Policy to bring Europe and its neighbors closer together and promote regional stability.

2.1.5 Power

Long (2017) argues that power is inextricably linked to the concept of independent action, which this thesis supports. It would be a mistake to overlook Luke's' three faces of power, particularly when considering and analyzing how participants in international society obtain an independent foothold and a voice that cannot be ignored. Despite being created more than a decade ago, Luke's' (2005) approach to power remains relevant across disciplines and has served to shape our understanding of many ways in which power might show itself. Luke's' definition of power is more concerned with the unseen side of things. Luke's goes above and beyond the agenda-setting invisible hand. To put it another way, Luke's defines power as the ability to control, distort, and mold someone's view and preferences (Robinson 2006, 2). According to Long (2017, 187), the nature of power has evolved, and as a result, international society now has a new concept of what power is, which differs from the realist definition. Power has evolved to encompass ways that small states wield it, although it is still relevant. Small nations, as Long (2017) and Björkdahl (2007) note out, frequently lack the tangible resources that make up a realist definition of power. However, power can also take the form of norms, agendas, interests, interdependence, and institutions, as Long (2017) and Björkdahl (2007) point out. As a result, small states have options to consider. This is the point of view that this thesis will take. As a result, the focus of this thesis will be on theorizing the type of power that small nations can wield, allowing them to compete on an equal footing with great powers. It will also concentrate on non-Western small states to theorize possibilities for small states to wield independent power in international politics. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to go even further and lay a basis on which minor states might develop their autonomous diplomacy through specialized diplomacy.

2.2. Hypothesis

The following have been proposed and will be tested against facts.

As a landlocked nation sandwiched between two considerably larger and far more powerful countries, Nepal has attempted to maintain positive ties with both of its neighbors, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India. However, Nepal has a long history of non-alignment and has good relations with its neighbors as well as practically all of the world's major countries. Nepal's most important foreign contacts are with international economic organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, a multilateral economic development organization. Nepal also has significant bilateral connections with key economic and military aid suppliers such as France, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, the United States, and especially the United Kingdom, with whom it has military ties dating back to the eighteenth century. Nepal, on the other hand, has diplomatic ties with 171 nations to date (MOFA, 2021).

Nepal should pursue niche diplomacy in order to maximize the benefits of the country's available resources, which can make a significant difference in exerting power in the international system. Finding niches should be based on a careful selection of policy lines that are well-known and respected in the international community. Nepal despite its small size is endowed with numerous opportunities including the most attracted areas such as hydroelectricity, tourism and peacekeeping which can benefit the niche diplomacy of the country and can make Nepal an active player in the international arena.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research will strive to analyze and examine how niche diplomacy contributes to the foreign policy of Nepal. In this regard, the research will employ a case-based approach focusing on the main Niche' factors of Nepal which have the high possibility for Nepal to gain a greater space in the international system. Particular focus is directed to the peacekeeping, water resources, and tourism sector inside Nepal as these factors will form the basis of analysis for the proposed research. The methodology applied to this proposed research will be qualitative.

3.2 Data Collection Method

In this Research, both the primary and secondary sources of data have been taken. Primary Data include the official documents and statements about the niche diplomacy and Foreign policy of Nepal. And, the secondary data include the sources like Books, Journals, Scholarly Articles and, writings related to the research subject.

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3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis of the research will be based on content analysis.

3.4. Limitation

The major limitation of this study is though there are many literatures related to this topic, however less focus has been given for the specific parameters that can play as an important strategies if used wisely, for a country like Nepal. The related ministries have performed some survey regarding diplomacy and the respective areas but literature relating has not reached to that level

CHAPTER IV: SMALL STATE DISCOURSES

The vast majority of the international community is established by small states. It is estimated that no more than two dozen of the 193 UN Member States will surely fall outside this group (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2006: 3) when deciding which states to examine, the issue of which state is small and which is not, is a critical one. The goal here, however, is to go beyond only addressing the criteria for determining small states, and to decide whether a specific state is small and the other is not solely based on relational criteria – i.e. identify the position of the state against the other states and how it impacts its actions. In the international arena, the main strategies of small states are primarily determined by their relative influence, 'weight', power, and not by their absolute quantifiable characteristics.

4.1 Peace diplomacy of Norway

Norway presents an example of being a small state that has set a unique benchmark in the world stage by hosting a Nobel peace prize so Norway is taking as a case of study. Norway has been involved in several peace and reconciliation efforts since the early 1990s, making peace diplomacy a significant aspect of Norwegian foreign policy. Both in Norway and abroad, there is a widespread belief that Norway is a country with a long history of encouraging peace.

Norway represents a noteworthy case study; it is a country that is small in size, with a homogenous population within a large territorial domain. However, keeping this in mind Norway does not belong to have higher resources in terms of people and material goods. It has not many resources that any small state can be relatively influencing in the global power stage. Norway, often justifiably characterized as being on the periphery of Europe, gained recognition and criticism in the last third of the

20th century for both its internal social policy and its independent, sustained, often groundbreaking, foreign policy initiatives (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1998)

The most important achievement that Norway comprises is of hosting Noble Peace Prize annually. A Centerpiece of this diplomatic effort has been the Nobel Peace Prize that the country hosts annually. Norway has contributed to peace in building efforts in Afghanistan, Colombia, Guatemala, Myanmar, Nepal Israel-Palestine, The Philippines, Somalia, Srilanka, and talks on the secession of South Sudan from Sudan. Oslo has also provided financial and technical support for peace processes in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Syria, and Uganda.

Similarly the 1993 peace agreement between Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization knew as the Oslo Accord, has been a high point of Norwegian diplomacy. In addition, Norway role in ending complex and bloody civil wars in Mali (1995) and Guatemala (1996) are clearer success stories.

To conclude, Norway regularly represents itself as a neutral state and tends to be a mediator in international conflicts. With the peace diplomacy, Norway has set its benchmark on the international stage being a small country Norway gives an incredible example on how a small state can also be a big player by identifying its niche area.

4.2 Singapore as a Coordinator of Small States

Singapore presents an example of being a small state that has set a unique benchmark in the world stage by coordinating different small states by establishing various international non-governmental organization that helped small states to gather

together. Singapore is probably one of the world's most successful small states. Since its independence in 1965, the state has maintained its sovereignty and achieved a first-world level of affluence within a single generation despite its small size and lack of natural resources. One of the key reasons for Singapore's success is its diplomatic skill in maintaining good relations with all of the great powers by making itself useful to them and peacefully coexisting with its immediate neighbors.

Singapore supports platforms that enable small governments to discuss and build shared viewpoints on topics of mutual concern, giving them more clout at the UN (United Nations). In 1992, in New York, Singapore formed an informal and non-ideological grouping of small states, known as the Small States Forum (FOSS). Singapore has been the Chair of FOSS since then. It now comprised 108 countries across the world and meets several times a year to discuss the issues of concern to small states. FOSS chapters have also been founded in Geneva, Vienna, and London, in addition to New York.

Another informal community of 30 small and medium-sized UN members was set up by Singapore in 2009: the Global Governance Group (3G). The 3G was established primarily to encourage greater openness and inclusiveness in the G20 process by fostering deeper dialogue and ties between the G20 and the wider membership of the United Nations. As the Convener of the 3G, Singapore hosts, the 3G Ministerial Meeting annually on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly High-Level Week, involving 3G members, the G20 Troika, (present, and former presidencies), as well as the President of the UN General Assembly.

Singapore is a member of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in addition to FOSS and 3G. Officials from SIDS

have taken part in the training program, which covers a wide range of issues including sustainable development, climate change, public governance, and economic development. Since 1999, Singapore has provided special SIDS technical assistance packages in recognition of the specific challenges facing SIDS.

Thus, Singapore has played as a coordinator of small states which has contributed to placing itself in a different position in the world.

4.3 Canada's Peacekeeping Strategy

It focuses on the role of Canada as a middle power through the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in the form of peacekeeping activities (PKO). Canada's predominant area of niche diplomacy has been peacekeeping. For 40 years, it has been the icon of Canadian diplomacy (since World War II). Canada has contributed to the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. And Canada was one of the countries with the quickest response to requests from the UN for peacekeeping. As an intermediate force, however, it was not easy for Canada to sustain peacekeeping operations. Issues such as the small budget, the death of peacekeepers, and ineffective operations have raised concerns about the need to preserve peace.

4.4 Brazilian Health Diplomacy

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Brazil has been involved in worldwide health collaboration. It has also begun to engage in international cooperation programs as a provider of knowledge and funds through south-south cooperation.

The development of a national HIV/AIDS program with universal coverage and treatment based on local production of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) dates from this

period and was marked by coordination of national policies and international diplomacy in the context of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights negotiations (TRIPS). To ensure the continuation of public universal coverage for HIV/AIDS treatment through the local production of generic versions of ARVs by Fiocruz – which were less expensive than buying from international laboratories – Brazil launched an international campaign to recognize access to such medicines as a humanitarian issue and legitimize compulsory licenses for ARVs. The WHO recognized the construction and operation of Human Milk Banks, a nationwide project conducted by Fiocruz since the 1940s, as an effective policy toward reducing child mortality during this period. Fiocruz has organized a worldwide network of Human Milk Banks since 2003, fostering Brazilian experience and expertise in the consolidation of national networks among partner nations in the Americas and, since 2008, in countries of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPSP).

Brazil's niche was unique, and it was related to the establishment of national public health systems that relied on National Health Institutions for policy-making expertise and training of specialized human resources for health management and care under the system's needs. Health diplomacy was also used by Brazil as a means of actively participating in rising regional initiatives in which health was acknowledged as a major factor to be addressed.

4.5 Nepal (Tourism, Peacekeeping and Water) Diplomacy:

Nepal possesses many areas that can attract tourists in so many ways, the Highest mountain of the World – Mt. Everest lies in Nepal similarly Lord Gautam Buddha was also born in Nepal. Meanwhile, there are so many places which are immensely beautiful and can attract tourists and create a different space in the international arena.

Nepal has tried to promote tourism sector in 2020 by starting a tourism agenda named “Visit Nepal 2020” however because of the pandemic “covid 19” it did not get success and Nepal has to withdraw the agenda.

Similarly water resources are also another potential key area from which Nepal can benefit. Being a second richest country in terms of water resources, Nepal can utilize the electricity being produced from it by selling it abroad. It has a capacity to produce eighty-three thousand MW of hydroelectricity. Of the technically feasible capacity of forty-three thousand MW of hydro-electricity. The consequence of such miniscule utilization of water resource is felt both in the loss of economic productivity and social well being, much less the absence of revenue from large-scale exports. Most visibly, average Nepali consumers on a daily basis feel lack of adequate electricity supply. For the last two decades, people have endured daily “load-shedding” or blackouts due to the inability of the Nepal Electrical Authority (NEA) to supply adequate electricity. During the dry seasons when the production dwindles, people in Kathmandu, the capital city face up to 16 hours of blackouts daily (Adhikari, 2011) however it’s been five years Nepal has ended that long run load shedding and made a load shedding free country. Meanwhile recently, Nepal has started to sell to India as well. Thus, Nepal can gain much benefit from this sector.

In addition, Nepal as a member of UN has contributed in the UN peacekeeping mission from the very beginning. Since then Nepal has participated in UN peacekeeping operations and till now it has covered 43 UN peacekeeping missions. From this to today Nepal has contributed so much. Being a small developing state with less militirical power it is now a fourth largest contributor among the member states. Thus, not only the available resources like water resources and tourism, Nepal also contributes to the UN peacekeeping mission which is one of the most important factors that shapes a different impression in the world stage.

CHAPTER V: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT SCENARIO OF NEPALESE FOREIGN POLICY

5.1 During Prithivi Narayan Shah (1769-1815) (Evolutionary Phase)

Aware of the geostrategic setting of Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah adopted a nonaligned and defensive foreign policy. The bold, visionary, and nationalist monarch Prithvi Narayan Shah established not only the foundation for modern Nepal's foreign and security policy, but also helped to shape the country's worldview in the second part of the eighteenth century (Khanal, 2009:96). Nepal, he said, like a yam wedged between two stones. He went on to say that the Chinese emperor should be kept in close friendship. Friendships with the southern seas (the British) should likewise be cultivated (Aryal, 2011:15). He pursued the policy of cultivating a friendship with both neighbors. He demonstrated his wisdom by stressing the fact that Nepal, a small nation, lying between the giant powers, Pax- Britannica and the external Chinese Empire to maintain a delicate balance with both for the preservation of national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. The geographical realities developed a sense of physical isolation among the policymakers and the ruling elites. The policy of friendship with southern and northern neighbors was adopted. India was considered as more dangerous of its neighbors whereas China was considered much benign given the physical and cultural distance (Rose 1971). Nepal's foreign policy was preoccupied with the preservation of independence. British East India Company in the south and a steady expansion of Chinese presence in Tibet posed an imminent threat against which the foreign policy to guard sovereignty was formulated. By and Large, a unified nation with a strong non-aligned foreign policy was formulated.

5.2 Era of Treaty of Sugauli (1815-1846) (Formative Period)

Nepal's foreign policy underwent a deep setback during this period as the vision of the rulers for the further expansion of the nation-state after the demise of King Prithivi Narayan Shah was retarded by the war with the East India Company. The East India Company declared war against Nepal under the immediate pretext of boundary disputes. The war ended with a bitter experience for Nepal as it lost almost a third of its territory. The country had to conclude the treaty of Sugauli on March 4, 1816, with the Company, which narrowed the map of Nepal by one-third size (64000, square km). It restricted Nepal's interaction with other countries except for British India. However, Nepal fought bravely in the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814-16 and through it had to cede away a certain part of its territory; it never compromised its independence.

5.3 Rana Era (1846-1951)

Nepal's Foreign policy during the period of the autocratic Rana regime, which lasted for about 104 years, was mainly obsessed with the appeasement of the British. It was characterized not only by the pro-British stance but also by the strength of the preservation of the sovereignty of the country at a time when the East India Company was widening its colonial grips. As the might of the Chinese empire was on a slippery slope, the balancing factor lacked and Nepal tilted towards British India. The collaboration of Ranas with the British had not served only their personal and familial interests but was the most appropriate strategy to preserve the independence of Nepal vis-a-vis the overarching presence of British power in the Indian subcontinent. Nepal was isolated from current international opinion under the Rana era (Khanal,2000). The Treaty of Friendship between Nepal and Great Britain was signed on Dec.21, 1923, which has recognized Nepal as an independent country. However, as the era of British rule in India ended the support base for the Rana regime dwindled and Nepal

opted for the diversification of relations. In 1947, Nepal established diplomatic relations with India and the USA and in 1949 with France as well. Nepal attempted for UN membership. Nepal and India also signed the Treaty of Trade and Commerce on July 13, 1950, and the treaty of peace and friendship on July 31, 1950.

5.4 Interim Democratic Era (1951-1960)

The revolution of 1951 was a cornerstone that changed the course of Nepal's hitherto isolationist foreign policy. However, India had conspicuous influence in the affairs of Nepal. Although the revolution in itself was not an Indian product, the results were, and this fact set the tone for the relationship between the two states thereafter (Rose 1971). The "Special Relationship" of Nepal with India, with a latter patronizing attitude, was the bitter reality. Nevertheless, the quest for diversion of diplomatic relations gained momentum. In the short term, Nepal was developing a plausible foreign policy during a decade of democracy after the collapse of the Rana regime. Major breakthroughs during this period were Nepal's admission to the UN as well as the establishment of Nepal's diplomatic relations with 21 countries. During this period, progress was registered in bilateral trade and friendship treaties with the conclusion of the Extradition Treaty with India in 1953, the treaty of Trade and Transit in 1960, and the treaty of Peace and Friendship with China in 1960.

5.5 Panchayat Era (1960-1990)

The rise of King Mahendra marked a major breakthrough in Nepal's Foreign Policy. Nepal moved away from the policy of 'special relations' with India and evolved a certain balance of power in the relation of its neighbors (Muni 1973). The diversification of Nepal's foreign policy reached a new zenith in the Panchayat era. Similarly, the foreign policy of Nepal had a strong economic component. Diplomatic

apparatus were employed and various bilateral and multilateral assistance pursued the construction of infrastructure-including the East-West highway. Nepal's faith in the UN Charter, the principle of Non-alignment, friendship, and cooperation with all nations of the globe was the basic tenets of foreign policy during the Panchayat era. Nepal actively engaged in the establishment of SAARC. Nepal was elected for the first time as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1969. The Arniko Highway (110km) was constructed by the Chinese aid to link the two countries by road despite India's interest. During the panchayat era, Nepal's foreign policy took a deep root with its further expansion and diversification based on of the increasing number of the establishment of diplomatic relations with 71 countries, nonaligned approach, peaceful gestures, and friendship and cooperation with all the nations. Nepal's separate identity as an independent, peaceful, and non-aligned country was further consolidated in this era.

5.6 After Democratic Restoration (1990-2004)

The early years of the 1990s saw two major occurrences in both domestic and international fronts – democratic restoration and the end of the cold war respectively. The People's movement brought the Panchayat system to its knee and the multiparty democracy was restored. The foreign policy headed towards the process of democratization, albeit the basic tenets of Nepal's foreign policy have remained unchanged despite the abolition of the previous Panchayat system and subsequent restoration of democracy in the country in 1990.

5.7 Royal Takeover (2005-2006)

King Gyanendra took the executive power on 1 Feb 2005 and formed a council of Ministers under his chairmanship. The royal regime made every effort to gain support

from the international community. However, Nepal faced criticism in many regional and global forums due to this nipping of democracy and sheer violation of the principles of human rights and fundamental freedom.

5.8 Democratic-Republican Era (2006 onwards)

The victory of the popular movement put the Royal regime to an end on 28 May 2008. The whole international community welcomed the restoration of democracy and fondly looked forward to lasting peace in a democratic Nepal.

Thus, the foreign policy of Nepal has passed through different phases in its long journey from King Prithivi Narayan Shah to the government of UCPN Maoist to the current government of New- Nepal.

5.9 Nepalese Foreign policy at present

The international system is composed of various actors in which there are continuous interactions among them to promote and protect their interests. The only fundamental instinct that determines every actor's behavior is the national interests of the respective actors. The way in which an actor deals or interacts is largely influenced by the core concept of national interests. In this view, state actors' interactions are still solely motivated by national interests.

The basic aim Nepal's foreign policy is to reinforce the dignity of Nepal in the international arena by preserving the country's sovereignty, and freedom. Nepal's foreign policy is guided by a strong faith in the United Nations and a non-alignment policy. Nepal's fundamental guiding principles of the foreign policy include mutual respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each other, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, respect for mutual equality, non-aggression, and

peaceful resolution of conflicts and cooperation for mutual gain. Nepal's foreign policy is also driven by international law and other universally accepted principles that regulate international affairs. The value of world peace also constitutes a significant element guiding the foreign policy of the country.

There is no question that a nation formulates its foreign policy in light of its numerous national interests and priorities. Because foreign policy is defined differently in different countries, general, internal, and external drivers all play a part in this. Policymakers' perceptions of a country's foreign policy are likely to impact policy choices.

5.9.1 Trilateralism

Nepal, as a landlocked country, is strategically located between two powerful Asian countries, China and India. Despite the fact that globalization has created interconnectedness and that nations cannot live or grow in isolation, the politics of power and hegemony continue to hinder minor powers from competing on an equal footing. The collaboration and rivalry between India and China have had a direct impact on Nepal. Their relationship is full of animosity, cooperation, and competition from the standpoint of boundaries, commerce, and strategic issues (Khanal, 2073:286). The latest instance involving LipuLekh has raised questions regarding our position. During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's May 2015 visit to Beijing, the Chinese President Xi Jinping and Modi were said to have agreed to utilise this corridor for their mutual benefit (Baral;2016:13). So, the big question is whether the three countries can maintain a strong trilateral relationship. They've also made significant progress in terms of road, rail, and maritime connectivity. Xi Jinping's grandiose OBOR (One Belt, One Road) project aims to unite around 60 Asian,

African, and European countries. President Obama's vision of creating a "community of common destiny" through "Go West" and "Peripheral Strategy" (Subedi, 2016:41) has extended a kind of significant advancement of India in the field of Science and Technology, and its "Neighborhood First" Policy can be fruitful. Changing Dynamics for our prosperity. If these techniques are implemented with sincerity, the concept of trilateral can be realized. However, this does not mean that our near neighbors will put their security concerns aside when dealing with Nepal; China is more preoccupied with the Tibet issue. The border dispute in China, the Tibetan refugee crisis, and China's strategic connection with Pakistan remain troublesome (Baral, 2016:11-25). India is also concerned about China's expanding role in Nepalese politics. India is dissatisfied with China's investment in Nepal's infrastructure and electricity. The water diplomacy between the three countries is one example. India refuses to buy electricity from a Nepalese hydroelectric project in which China has invested. India is only interested in purchasing its own investment in Nepal, demonstrating India's involvement in Nepalese water diplomacy. Apart from these, open border issues such as the distribution of counterfeit currency, an increase in criminal activity, an increase in terrorist attacks, illegal trade, drug, and people trafficking, and so on constantly cause conflict between two countries. In Nepal, rising anti-Indian sentiment has exacerbated the situation. Nepal, on the other hand, is committed to preserving the security of its neighbors by refusing to allow the use of Nepalese land for anti-Nepal operations.

5.9.2 Nepal and the World Community

Nepal's entry into the international community was finally formalized in 1955, when it became a member of the United Nations. Nepal has also been elected twice to the

UN Security Council as a non-permanent member (1969-1970 and 1988- 1989). Nepal is a founding member of the NAM, having joined in 1961. Nepal's role to the formation of the SAARC in 1985, as well as the building of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, raised the country's profile. Nepal's membership in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation), which began on July 31, 2004, has improved its worldwide image. Nepal now chairs SAARC, but the country's inability to coordinate its summits has raised questions about its ability to oversee foreign policy.

Taking this into consideration, Nepal, which possesses crucial aspects such as tourism, peacekeeping, and water resources, can forge a distinct identity in the global arena. Nepal may use its platform as a founding member of SAARC and a member of other international organizations to promote such elements.

CHAPTER VI: FOREIGN POLICY AS NICHE DIPLOMACY

Niche diplomacy entails concentrating and specializing a country's efforts in specific areas that are most likely to provide worthwhile returns. Finding niches should be based on a deliberate selection from among policy lines that are well known and regarded favorably by the international community. By cultivating specialized knowledge on a restricted range of issues and performing specialized functions, all governments can engage in niche diplomacy.

Governments have used military and economic strength as a type of hard power to reflect their influence in the international system since the dawn of nationhood. Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, Hans J Morgenthau, and Thomas Hobbes were all proponents of using force to protect a country's national interests. Until the two world wars and the cold war, the realist notion of employing hard power as a source of power persisted. After it, however, the breadth of hard power was drastically reduced. As economic and military power failed to define the concept of power in the contemporary international order, the concept of soft power entered the picture.

Soft power, as opposed to hard power, which only refers to economic and military might, focuses on a country's culture, conventions, values, and ideals. Because of their liberal political ideas and economic progress, certain Western democracies have been able to attract individuals from all over the world. To enhance their soft power in the international arena, they frequently use foreign policy instruments such as cultural diplomacy, educational assistance programs, and financial aid. The United States' remarkable independence, quality education, developments in information technology, and economic initiatives such as McDonald's and Coca-Cola, for example, convey a positive image around the world. Similarly, the world admires

Europe's great welfare system as well as its diversified lifestyle and culture. Europe's strong commitment to mediating and resolving disputes, as well as its outstanding achievements in preserving human rights and the rule of law, have made it a global model of soft power.

Asian countries are increasingly investing in soft power promotion in their own backyard and beyond. The Chinese one belt one road (OBOR) initiative, the increase in foreign direct investment in Latin America and Africa, the growth of Confucius Institutes, and the resounding success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics have all been remarkable exercises in the international arena to promote soft power. Similarly, foreigners regard India's unique cultural legacy, pluralist democracy, Bollywood films, and technological advancements in the same way. Other Asian countries, such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia, have attracted international interest by showcasing their history, culture, economic progress, and technological advancements.

This isn't to say that only huge, militarily powerful countries can effectively disseminate their soft power. Even small and militarily weak states can wield soft power with outstanding socio-cultural virtues and resource capabilities. Small governments also lack economic and military capabilities, thus using force to achieve foreign policy objectives is not an option. Small countries' sole option against their larger neighbors is to pursue an effective and efficient diplomacy model that can act as a shield in the absence of hard power.

As a result, developing and implementing a soft power strategy for Nepal could be a viable option for expressing its national identity to the world community. Visitors have previously recognized Nepal's rich socio-cultural diversity, exciting tourism

sites, natural resources, and water resources. Apart from the usual platitudes of Nepal as the land of Mt Everest, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the ancestral holy land of the Hindu Lord Shiva as symbolized by the Pashupatinath temple, and eight of the world's highest peaks, Nepal has largely failed to convey a distinct identity to foreign viewers.

Niche diplomacy is thus linked to a country's soft power, which focuses on the niche areas of countries that are now covered. Nepal could use an approach known as 'niche diplomacy.' Rather than aiming to cover all bases, niche diplomacy is focusing a country's resources on specific areas that are most likely to yield worthwhile results. The work of identifying niches should begin with a careful selection of policy lines that are recognized and considered positively by the international community. Norway, for example, a small Scandinavian country, has built a reputation as an international 'peace broker.' Finland, Switzerland, Malta, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Netherlands, for example, have shifted their focus from conflict resolution to natural resource diplomacy.

Developing and maintaining niches in this dynamic environment, however, necessitates persuasion and powerful foreign marketing. This will necessitate active cooperation from the government, political leaders, diplomats, and other interested parties who are responsible for managing international public relations with foreign actors.

While some academics say that soft power does not always produce the desired objective and is considerably slower and indirect, it may work in tandem with hard and soft power to reach the desired result. Smart power, a recently discovered sort of power derived from the effective mix of hard and soft power, is thus seen as critical in

accomplishing desired outcomes. Given Nepal's restrictions and resource capabilities, soft power diplomacy in general, and tourist diplomacy, water diplomacy, and peacekeeping as a style of niche diplomacy in particular, would be the greatest weapon for pursuing a national interest in the international realm.

6.1 Tourism as a form of Niche Diplomacy

Tourism is directly proportional to development. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states tourism as an engine through foreign currency earning and direct and indirect and indirect employment. Tourism contributes 5% in world GDP and 6% in world export in services being the fourth largest export sector after fuel, chemical and automobile; tourism is responsible for 235 million jobs of one in every twelve jobs worldwide (UNWTO, 2016). Now tourism is not limited to developed and sophisticated European cultures but also to biodiversity of small and least developed countries. Some important facts stated by UNWTO that advocates the role of tourism in economic development are not related to tourism as the first or second source of export earnings on twenty of the world forty eight least developed countries (LDCS) whereas some developing countries are notably small island state tourism can account for 25% of total GDP and total tourists arrivals in emerging markets and developing countries in 2011 was 459 million (UNWTO). The contribution of tourism in development can be utilized not only by developed but also by developing and least developed countries. Tourism is also a lot more than industry; it represents a diverse multidimensional supply chain across different sectors (Francis P.,2011)

Tourism may help alleviate poverty, which is a critical development goal. Part of the income trickles down to different groups of society, and if tourism is managed with a

strong focus on poverty alleviation, it can directly benefit the poorer groups through the employment of local people in tourism businesses, goods and services provided to tourists, or the operation of small and community-based enterprises, among other things, all of which have positive effects on poverty reduction (UNWTO, 2016) Climate, cultural legacy, biodiversity, and awe-inspiring landscapes are among the developing country's endowments.

The tourism sector is the comparative and competitive advantage for the economic development of Nepal (National Planning Commission, 2014, p 213). The tourism sector can act as a source of economic development in the case of Nepal which has diverse geography ranging from the Himalayas with the highest peak of the world, Mt.Everest, hills and plains of terai accommodating various cultural and biodiversity's ethnic cultural and religious heritages like Lumbini where Lord Gautam Buddha was born are some major tourist attraction of Nepal. Constitution of Nepal 2015 states on policy regarding tourism:

Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) categorizes adventure, and mountaineering, nature, culture and spirituality and pilgrimage as the major variances of tourism in Nepal. National Planning Commission also strongly advocates utilizing diplomatic missions for tourism development to achieve the economic development of the country. "To play an increasingly active role in the conduct of Nepal's economic diplomacy, thereby boosting our trade, investment, economic cooperation, tourism, and helping tap and develop our tremendous water resource potentials," is one of Nepal's foreign policy goals (MOFA, 2016)

Diplomacy currently encompasses not only political interactions between sovereign states but also relationships between private individuals, such as those in the tourism

industry. Economic, cultural, heritage, and gourmet tourism are only a few of the subcategories of tourism. Tourism diplomacy promotes cultural exchange and brings people closer together. It is vital to offer all institutions, organizations, and individuals – particularly guides – who work in the tourism sector the necessary guidance and education in order to treat them as diplomats.

Having an impact on the economies of the countries, tourism is to be regarded as one of the topics of dialogue between high-level foreign affairs committees. In other words, “diplomacy is based on tourism” and therefore has succeeded in gradually finding its place in international treaties and agreements. Given that the tourists need to go to embassies to enter the other countries, and governments have given different options to their ambassadors as their highest-ranking representatives, they directly indirectly have a crucial role in the acceptance of visitors; as a result, ambassadors use diplomacy and international relations to consider all aspects of tourists' internal, external, and regional difficulties because the implementation of "international relations or tourism diplomacy" will have a very direct and powerful impact on economic, political, cultural and social issues (Moravej Khorasani, Bi ta). In many countries, the development of tourism necessitates the use of economic diplomacy in general, and tourism diplomacy in particular, if economic diplomacy is interpreted as a technique of foreign policy and the domestic economy, or, in other words, it is regarded as using foreign policy to achieve domestic economic goals. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is dedicated to direct foreign economic relations, including internal decision-making and external negotiations through the abovementioned issues. The direction and channelization of a diplomatic activity support the expansion of the foreign economy through marketing and extracting of foreign business opportunities and investing and internationalizing business and space

for the tourism industry (Faraji Rad, 2004). If these items are implemented accurately by the head of the diplomatic body, they can expand the tourism space and markets.

In fact, tourism is regarded as a process can achieve the necessary dynamism through the short-term and long-term plans as well as the development of tourism and the mental and business cooperation of firms and institutions; It is possible to create new jobs in this field in to solve the problem of unemployment and create social vitality among people. For example, the expert decision-making can resolve the challenges ahead, and observe new horizons on a national, transnational, and global scale by changing and empowering the tourism infrastructure and through increasing the role of people in the implementation of tourism programs, or by involving the private sector and attracting domestic and foreign investment, reducing intermediary affairs, reducing the role and direct involvement of governments in the tourism industry, and reducing the performance of governments to implementation of three key principles of guidance, support, and oversight. The establishment, improvement, development, and deepening of geopolitical relations with neighboring countries and other tourism markets in various parts of the world, as well as economic diplomacy in general and capacity building in the tourism industry in particular, are regarded as diplomatic and international relations priorities.

6.2 Peacekeeping as a form of Niche Diplomacy

The United Nations was founded to "rescue future generations from the scourge of war," and one of its key goals is to keep international peace and security in place.

Peacekeeping at the United Nations has evolved into a complicated, global enterprise over the last six decades. During this time, UN peacekeeping operations have been led by a largely unwritten set of principles that have been inspired by the experiences of

the many thousands of men and women who have participated in the more than 60 operations that have been conducted since 1948. (The blue helmets, p.4)

Nepal has taken a neutral international stand since becoming a member of the UN, including an active, original member of the Nonaligned Movement as a relatively small country in a sensitive geopolitical climate. Its foreign policy promotes adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and its values, stressing, in particular, the value of the preservation of international peace and stability. By being one of the few countries to contribute troops in the UN during the Cold War, Nepal followed this idea. Nepal was also a contributor to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which was founded in 1948 in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The frequent participation of Nepali troops to UN operations has been seen by successive Nepali governments as a contribution to good international citizenship and a way to boost Nepal's worldwide status. The legitimacy of the UN stems from its role, where Nepal is in many ways in a better position, particularly in the area of peacekeeping. As such, UN peacekeeping operations have become an important aspect of Nepal's foreign policy, helping Nepal to project a favorable international image and, at the same time, to pursue its national interests. For smaller countries like Nepal, the United Nations has created an important forum to pursue its national interests and exercise foreign policy with integrity and sovereignty.

In terms of the number of peacekeeping forces sent to participate in the United Nations peacekeeping operations worldwide, Nepal has emerged as the fourth largest Troop and Police Contributing Country (TPCC). Nepal had previously been the UN peacekeeping mission's sixth-highest soldier contributor.

Thus, considering peacekeeping as one of the major forms of niche diplomacy, utilizing this as a foreign policy objective will help a small country like Nepal, to gain immense support and recognition in the International arena. As one of the largest troop providers to UN peacekeeping operations and missions, Nepal has long been committed to the cause of peace and disarmament. This has aided in enhancing and boosting Nepal's international reputation. Not only should the government continue to participate in future peacekeeping operations, but it should also endeavor to increase its peacekeeping activities. Larger and more active participation in the UN peacekeeping operations should be one of the major foreign policy agendas of the country (Shrestha, 2012, p. 48).

Well for small states like taking part in peacekeeping is a big thing. Nepal gets to contribute to international peace through our peacekeeping duties. Because it can't play big roles like big countries like the US, Canada, etc. Our role in peacekeeping elevates its position in the international arena. Role in peacekeeping will make Nepal equal to other developed countries, at least in the context of international peace. We may be small but we still contribute. So this is a good image for us. And in diplomacy, other countries will know of us through our participation in peacekeeping so, it is all about a small state like Nepal and its role in the international arena. It may be economically weak but it is very active in its role in contributing to international security and peace. So it's all about our international image in the context of diplomacy.

6.3 Water Resources as a form of Niche Diplomacy

Water diplomacy is a strategy that allows a wide range of stakeholders to consider how they may help discover solutions for the joint management of shared freshwater

resources. It is a dynamic process that aims to establish rational, long-term, and peaceful water management solutions while supporting or informing riparian stakeholders' cooperation and collaboration.

Growing water scarcity combined with the effects of climate change are having a major global impact, necessitating increased conversation and collaboration over shared water resources. Freshwater from rivers shared by two or more countries is used by more than half of the world's population (McCracken & Wolf, 2019)

Different groups of state and non-state entities can be active in multi-track water diplomacy. Formal actors, which include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Water, and other ministries and government agencies depending on the situation, are frequently the most conspicuous. In water diplomacy discussions, non-state or informal entities play a crucial role. Civil society organizations, academics, and think tanks, the media, and faith-based traditions all have a role to play in developing frameworks to enable discussions about how different sectors and actors can collaborate more successfully.

The term hydro diplomacy has been used with a normative perspective in recent decades to refer to a diplomatic approach that aims to promote, establish, or develop cooperation, stability, and peace over water (Grech-Madin, 2018).

Water resource management is critical to achieving targeted socio-economic growth. It is not the water itself that hinders growth in a country like Nepal, where the Monsoon brings much of the rainfall; rather, it is a lack of governance and management. As a result, Nepal has failed to attain the expected levels of growth and development. Attempts to harness water resources have been attempted in the past,

but the progress has not been as planned. It's high time for Nepal to correct past errors and pave the way for a new era of sustainable management of water.

In terms of water availability, Nepal is considered rich. It is estimated that Nepal's surface water supply is approximately 225 billion cubic meters (BCM) per year, equivalent to an average flow of 7125 m³/sec (WECS, 2005). Annual precipitation, both in the form of rain and snow, contributes to its availability. Approximately 10% of Nepal's total precipitation occurs as snow, while 23% of the country's total surface is covered in permanent snow above 5000 meters (MOPE, 2004). Further, 3.6% of Nepal's total area is covered by glaciers (WECS, 2011). The availability of water resources in Nepal is pretty astounding, as seen by the data above.

However, increased water insecurity resulting from climate change processes, mounting environmental pressures, expanding economies, growing populations, and unsustainable consumption practices are increasing strain on the world's shared water resources. So in this sense, diplomacy can play a vital role in conserving water resources which are not possible alone rather, it needs the support of other states as well.

Thus, in the context of Nepal being the second richest country in water resources can joint hand with the international community to contribute for the freshwater supply and not only that, Nepal possessing a huge capacity of hydropower can really benefit from it and can export the hydropower outside taking immense benefit for the country's development.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS

States are the major components of the international system, interacting with one another to safeguard their national interests. This rising interdependence prohibits any country from being isolated, therefore there are always grounds for interactions among world community actors to develop international processes. Their interactions are best expressed in a country's policy toward other countries. These policies are commonly referred to as foreign policies, and they entail regulating and managing the state's external interactions with other countries in the international arena. Just as it should with its internal and domestic politics, a state should give special attention to the thorough conception and successful execution of its foreign policy. The sovereignty of a nation is maintained, international integrity is strengthened, and the national interest is promoted only via the adoption and successful implementation of solid foreign policy (Thapa, 2014, p. 1). Not all states, however, are equally capable of crafting competent foreign policy in order to preserve and promote their national interests.

For small powers like Nepal prone to economic vulnerabilities and political challenges, foreign policy choices are constrained and they must strategically make adequate choices that address their domestic priorities and at the same time align to the changing dynamics of the international system. The protection and promotion of national interests, contributing to the development of a wealthy Nepal, and promotion of civilization, culture, and identity values are all goals of Nepal's foreign policy.

The founding king of Nepal, Prithivi Narayan Shah, recognized the geographical realities from the start of the country's foreign policy and advised very cautious interactions with them. Following his death, neither his successors nor the country's

unity was able to properly comprehend the issue. In such a context, Nepalese foreign policy was unable to take shape. It went through several phases, with the events causing significant shifts in foreign policy outlook. In different times of history, neutral and non-aligned foreign policies, isolation policies, special relationship eras, equidistance policies, zone of peace policies, non-aligned foreign policies, and so on were selected.

The goal of this thesis was to highlight a specialized diplomacy method that small states can use to become independent powers. It was argued that through niche diplomacy as an alternative to developing economic and military strategies, small states can establish themselves as non-negligible participants of world politics. Thus, to gather the witness the example of various countries has been taken such as, Norway which is recognized as a peace developer by hosting Noble Peace Prize, Singapore, as a coordinator of small states, likewise, Canada's peacekeeping strategy for its contribution in peacekeeping operations since so long and last but not the least, Brazilian health diplomacy as it played an important role as a mediator of the investment of East Asian countries in the Middle East.

This thesis chose to focus on a non-Western small state such as Nepal in an attempt to decenter mainstream IR whose focus seems to mostly be on the West. It sought to show that non-Western states and in particular those that are seen as powerless because of their size can develop a strong international presence without the use of military or economic means. The example of Nepal demonstrates that small states might choose a different path that will assist them in becoming independent actors in the international arena.

Nepal has endeavored to maintain friendly relations with both of its neighbors, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India, despite being a landlocked country situated between two much larger and far more powerful countries. Nepal, on the other hand, has a long history of non-alignment and has strong relations with its neighbors as well as practically all of the world's major countries. International economic organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, a multilateral economic development agency, are Nepal's most important foreign contacts. Nepal also has strong bilateral ties with key economic and military aid providers like France, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, the United States, and, in particular, the United Kingdom, with which it has military ties dating back to the eighteenth century.

IR and its scholars focused on the foreign policy of weak and small states for several decades. In such situation niche diplomacy; a country soft power plays an important role in determining the foreign policy of a country. Nepal should seek niche diplomacy to maximize the benefits of the country's available resources, which can make a big impact in the international system when it comes to exerting power. Finding niches, on the other hand, should be based on a careful selection of well-known and accepted policy lines in the international community.

Nepal is gifted with several opportunities, including the most sought-after fields of water resources, tourism, and peacekeeping, all of which can boost Nepal's niche diplomacy and help it become a more active player in the international arena. Examples of Norway, Singapore, Canada and Brazil provide the most relevant example on how the niche factors works. Thus, to gain an international recognition being a small and landlocked country the best way for Nepal is to incorporate such factors in its foreign policy.

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