

NEPAL'S RELATION WITH CHINA: A STUDY IN GEOPOLITICAL
PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation

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Ashok Raj Pandey

Date: 2023/05/17

Letter of Recommendation

I certify that this dissertation entitled “**Nepal's Relation with China: A Study in Geopolitical Perspective**” has been prepared by Ashok Raj Pandey 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 fulfilment of the requirements for MIRD 525 Thesis for the Master’s Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy.

Assistant Professor Prem Khanal

Date: 2023/05/17

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work has been done by myself and no portion of the work contained in this document has been published or submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of learning. In case of other authors' information, ideas and arguments, the sources have been duly cited and acknowledged as per the requirements. The copyright of this research work belongs to the author.

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Approval Sheet

Abstract

Nepal has a long run relationship with its immediate neighbours: India and China. This paper attempts to explore the account of Nepal-China relation along with its geographical constrains and gradually digs out the history of land connectivity with China. The research has been carried out to find how the land connectivity with China has benefited Nepal and assesses the future prospect of Nepal-China relation Nepal's geopolitical position along with the geopolitical challenges of Nepal in relation with China. Similarly, the objectives of this research is to identify the way land connectivity with China has benefited Nepal and assesses the future prospect of Nepal-China relation along with geopolitical challenges between these two neighbouring countries. The research is carried out in qualitative way and is exploratory since it attempts to find out Nepal-China relation in geopolitical perspective. The research also tries to explore geopolitical challenges in Nepal-China relation and also highlight some problems under Belt and Road Initiatives. Then, the research progress to explain Indian factor in Nepal-China relation and discuss the reasons India seems reluctant to support Nepal's connectivity with northern neighbour. Based on this analysis, the paper offers recommendations to enhance land connectivity in a way that maximizes trade and mobility opportunities for Nepal.

Key Words: Road, Connectivity, Geopolitics, Belt and Road Initiative, Foreign Policy

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
APECF	-	Asia Pacific Exchange and Economic Cooperation Foundation
ASEAN	-	Association of South East Asian Nations
BRI	-	Belt and Road Initiative
CPN (UML)	-	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
FDI	-	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	-	Gross National Income
IR	-	International Relations
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	-	National Security Council
PLA	-	People's Liberation Army
PRC	-	People's Republic of China
SAARC	-	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
TAR	-	Tibet Autonomous Region
UCPN (M)	-	Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UN	-	United Nations
ZoP	-	Zone of Peace

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The history of Nepal's diplomatic relation with India and China dates back respectively in 13th June, 1947 and 1st August 1955 (MOFA, 2017). Nepal has a relation with China and India since their existence. Nepal's foreign relations with China and India have evolved through different events, stages and periods in history. So, Nepal has multitude of relations with these two neighbouring nations- ranging from social, cultural, religious, geo-political, and economic to diplomatic relations. These relations have grown through different ups and downs, and transformed from simple, linear relation to complex, weird relations.

Earlier, government of Nepal was not too inclined towards its bilateral relation with People's Republic of China but when the border issue between both countries was resolved after signing the Sino-Nepal boundary agreement on March 21, 1960, Nepal began to sought for trade and connectivity relation with its Northern neighbour (MOFA, 2019). After this phase Sino-Nepal relation finds new ground to thrive in every possible way. On October 5, 1961, the border agreement between Nepal and China was sanctioned by both governments (MOFA, 2020). After 1975 Nepal has upheld different policies to balance the potential impact of its giant neighbours, India and China, especially Kathmandu began to exercise more caution following post-annexation of the Kingdom of Sikkim by India in 1975 (Mulmi, 2019). There has been significant development in Sino-Nepal relation as China was accounted to be largest source of foreign direct investment during that period, almost two third of Nepal's total FDI used to come from Beijing government (Zhangrui, 2017).

Nepal and China share common border of 1,414 Kilometres. The boundary business between the two countries starting from the boundary delimitation agreement to boundary treaty, demarcation of pillars, preparation of strip-maps and signing on the boundary protocol have been completed within a short span of time (Shrestha, 2007). The smooth achievement of boundary agreement between two countries was marked as good omen and prospectus sign for Sino-Nepal relation in future.

Nepal and China have a long history of amicable relations, as Nepal strives to maintain a balance between the two powers that borders the country - China to the north and India to the south. This delicate diplomatic dance has helped to define the relationship between the two countries. The government of Nepal, though initially unresponsive about its relation with China, made swift moves of Geo-strategic importance after the takeover of Sikkim by India in 1975 (Mulmi, 2019). While discussing about the bilateral ties between Nepal and China, India cannot be ignored from the frame because Nepal is geologically sandwiched between two giant neighbours that are internally hostile to gain higher geostrategic influence over south Asia.

Over these days Nepal has maintained good relation with China but some geopolitical realities still put Nepal more closely to India which disturbs this Equi-distance balance (Poudyal, 2022). Connection between Kathmandu and Beijing remain in vulnerable edge due to hilly terrain while connection with India is comparatively easy with viable geography and open border. Port connectivity for Nepal is done through Indian ports like in Kolkata, Visakhapatnam as Nepal is a landlocked country. Now if Nepal wants to use Chinese port instead of Indian port, it will not be economically viable because distance between Nepal and major ports in China is about four times

that of India (Nayak, 2018). In 2015, China has agreed Nepal to use four seaports and three land ports for the third country trade. Nepal can use Shenzhen, Lianyungang, Zhanjiang and Tianjin, the latter one being the nearest sea port at the distance of around 3,300 Kilometres from Nepali border (Giri, 2018). Likewise, Nepal has been allowed to use Lanzhou, Lhasa and Xigatse land ports. Nepal-China relations have put up the test of changing context and geo-political challenges. Regardless of sizes, dissimilar political systems, unequal level of development, military and economic strength, Nepal-China relations represent an exemplary model based on the five principles of Peaceful Co-existence (Panchsheel). Nepal has always appreciated China's long-standing respect for its independence, territorial integrity, solidity and development. Neighbours hold important position in China's strategic management. China has propelled its peripheral diplomacy that includes politics, economics and security in its relations with neighbours. China seeks to protect assurances and actions from its neighbours that no anti-Chinese activities are allowed from and inside their territories. Under same relation Nepal has long been following one China policy and does not allow any activities against China from its territory (Dahal, 2019).

The geo-political position of Nepal was best identified by King Prithivi Narayan Shah in the eighteenth century when he described Nepal as 'a yam between two boulders whose continued existence depended on harmony between its giant neighbours' India and China (Garver, 1991). Since the 1950s, Nepal has been crushed between India and China on various contexts. To cite an example, the arms deal between China and Nepal in 1988 can be the best case. When Nepal negotiate an arms deal with China that incorporated light arms and ammunition, uniforms and boots, and 16 anti-aircraft guns. This gives rise to serious national anxiety in New Delhi regarding Nepal's future security balance with China at the cost of India. Allegedly there was an

intelligence exchange agreement as well and it was suspected that China's military relationship with Nepal might evolve into a Pakistan-like situation (Garver, 1991).

This context led India to execute bottle-necked economic sanctions against Nepal and China offered modest support to Nepal by supplying primary needed goods through Lhasa to Nepal.

This economic blockade incident highpoints the realization that the location of Nepal is in such vulnerable edge as it is economically dependent on India and this dependence leads to dependency in terms of security as well and since China is long way to replace India's position due to the harsh geographical complexities posed by Himalayas. While many geo-strategic specialists in India often refers those high mountains as a strong check against China's influence in Nepal. Chand and Danner (2016) look at the implications of China's rise for Nepal. They assume that since 2008 China has become self-confident in the South Asian region mainly because it has been able to improve rise out from financial breakdown faster than the United States and other western powers. This new found assertiveness has made China confident in various fronts such as the South China Sea and South Asia. The evidence related to Nepal and China's interactions in economic, political, and military area support this argument. In March 2016 the then Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli's visited China to break geopolitical doom like 1988 situation between Nepal and China when India imposed economic sanctions on Nepal. Under the initiation of both governments, two sides have signed 10 points agreements and issued 15 points joint statement including a landmark transit trade deal that would probably end Nepal's dependence on India. This treaty was signed after six-month long blockade of 2015 imposed by Terai based parties with support of India. Nepal was under terror of similar blockades and China's increased capability to help Nepal trigger them to sign

the treaty. The treaty and relation with China means lesser scope for India to influence Nepal's domestic and foreign policy.

Looking at the political domain, much part of Nepal-China relations depends on the Tibetan refugee problem and Chinese interest in keeping secret eye on India rise (Chand and K. Danner, 2016). After 2008 Tibetan uprising, China has constantly pressurize Nepal to stop any kind of Tibetan movement within Nepal territory. Since 2008 Nepal has agreed on several security and 'intelligence-sharing' agreements with China and has also strengthened check on the activities of the Tibetan community under instructions from China (HRW, 2014). The Tibet problem and its new found assertiveness has made China offer military aid to Nepal. In 2011, China agreed to provide 7.7 million US dollars in military aid to Nepal in return for its commitment to the 'One China Policy' (Krishnan, 2013). The evidence of China's growing involvement with Nepal is sometime viewed suspiciously by India as destabilizing its own influence in what has been traditionally practicing. The nature of Indian and Chinese security problem remains in such condition that any action that China undertakes in Nepal to ensure its own security is seen suspiciously by India. The recent economic rise and international influence of both the countries has the potential to intensify this problem further and it will directly impact Nepal.

Nicholas D Kristof (1993) explains this succinctly: Rise of powers has inevitably led to crisis as the old order needs to be recalibrated even as rise of a power in the vicinity leads to discomfort in the neighbourhood. If ever China and India board on a path of hostility, Nepal will be left with the choice of aligning with one neighbour. Tsering Topgyal (2016) examines the responses of South Asian countries to the rise of China. Sanjay Upadhyaya (2012) notes that, the increase in power of both the countries has

made it a conquest of influence that must be won in the minds first. He clearly outlines Nepal's strategy of putting China and India against each other for its own interests. This seems to be a grey scenario for South Asia where two great power rivalries has the potential to impact small neighbours. In case of Nepal its geographical context always put Nepal ahead in this threat.

1.2 Statement of problem

The relation between Nepal and China has always been hindered by geographical conditioning and lately when both countries are on verge of mitigating the geographical gaps the Indian factor appeared as more dominant problem. A buffer state exists as a buffer state because of the larger powers in the system. This idea of a buffer state presents a subsystem; the larger powers in this system are 'subsystem dominant' whereas a buffer state is simply 'subsystem affecting'. In today's context Nepal represents the role of 'subsystem affecting' against the 'subsystem dominant' of two giant neighbours; China and India. As a small state with limited human resources and economy, the geopolitics of Nepal provides political and economic vulnerability against these ambitious emerging Asian giants. In these respect one fundamental question need to be discussed.

1.3 Research Question

Then following research question guides this research:

- How the land connectivity with China has benefited Nepal and assesses the future prospect of Nepal - China relation?
- What are the geopolitical challenges of Nepal in relation with China?

1.4 Research Objectives

From the above main purpose of the research, the researcher has formulated following objectives.

- To identify the way land connectivity with China has benefited Nepal and assesses the future prospect of Nepal - China relation
- To highlight the geopolitical challenges of Nepal in relation with China

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study will be helpful to analyse the challenge and prospect of Nepal-China relation in present context. This study will also highlight the way Indian factor influence the relation between Nepal and China as the two giant neighbour shares a level of hostility towards each other. However, this study was carried out only for the partial fulfilment of academic criteria.

1.6 Source and Limitation of Study

Although the study was carefully prepared there were some unavoidable limitations. This study primarily depends on secondary data. Various reports and newspaper articles, journals, books have also been referred, for the necessary information. Due to time limitation, only the land connectivity relation between Nepal and China will be analysed in detail and other aspect of relation may get less emphasis. And the role of Indian factor will also be discussed in term of land connectivity issue with maximum focus on Belt and Road Initiative.

In regards to sources for basic ideas to this research, much attention will be put on secondary sources such as scholarly journals specifying Nepal-China land connectivity, neighbouring powers China and India. As the paper will collect lots of

historical backgrounds and present evidences regarding geopolitical complexions in Nepal, authorized sources of governmental institutions and writings or recordings of authoritative personal will be highly prioritized.

This research aims to analyse the geopolitical prospect and challenges of small state which is surrounded by big countries and each loaded with their own geopolitical interest. Nepal could turn these geopolitical challenges into opportunities and become strong and prosperous. Further, domestic political problems are also responsible for the involvement of the great powers is not the interests of this research. This paper does not cover influences of either India or China in the government formations, their different relations with different political parties. The paper will examine only the land connectivity with China and role of India.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Buffer to Bridge discourse

This literature review intends to identify existing chief literature regarding Nepal's geopolitical vulnerabilities generated by land topography and Sino-Indian rivalry in Nepal. Then the paper moves forward to the challenges and prospect of land connectivity with China. Also, this paper investigates into any existing literature gap and seeks any revisionist approach to study geopolitical situation.

During 2000, Nepal seems to have been grappling for means to transform its traditional buffer state mentality towards the definition of a new economic corridor-a vibrant bridge- between its two immediate neighbours (Thapa, 2014). Nepal's traditional identity of a "buffer zone" needs redefinition to adapt with the changing economic, security and political developments in the neighbourhood. Historically Nepal's strategic position was understood from narrow view geo-political perspectives which unfortunately limited its foreign policy options with China and India. It was the period when British-India was expanding its territory in Asia and China was limited with the safety of Middle Kingdom and the maintenance of its relationship with the neighbouring countries (Dahal, 2011, p. 31). In the mid-18th century, Nepal's most difficult challenge in formulation of foreign policy was the safeguarding of its sovereignty amid the pressures of newly rising power in the northern India; the British East India Company (Rose, 1971). After signing Sugauli Treaty with British India in 1816, the British Empire enforces Nepal's position as buffer state, insecurely dependent on the south for international partnership, strategic possessions and essential trade (Dahal, 2011, p. 31).

The political change of 1950/51 ended the 104 years old autocratic Rana rule (Singh, 2004). But the old regime in Kathmandu still followed the command from New Delhi in order to protect its struggling regime which was under severe pressure and revolution from the increasing people's movement demanding political change around the country (Lamsal, 2009). At the same time, Nepal's special relationship with India, following the Indo-China war of 1962 was further counteracted by King Mahendra through a policy of aid diversification, trade and foreign relations, pointing to escape from regional geo-political constrains and enhance freedom of Nepal to enjoy international system country (Lamsal, 2009).

During 2000, Nepal as state have tried a lot to reshuffle it's grand geo-strategic narrative of buffer state and alter the definition of country's geographical positioning as new economic corridor or a vibrant bridge between its two great neighbour India and China (Thapa, 2014). Nepal's traditional geographical identity of a "buffer state" needs to be transformed to adapt with changing world order, national security and political developments in the neighbouring countries. After 1990s, both China and India are seeking new means to cooperate than to compete in international ground (Porter, 2014). After the end of cold war, the historical border and security tension between India and China ease in dramatic way. They began to emphasize more on economic and trade relation rather than security concerns (Mansingh, 1994). That was the time for Nepal to put forward its economic agendas on the paddle. The security implications related with buffer mindset slowly was on verge to be replaced with a new economic order governing the region. During 2000 where the focus of international relation is progressively shifting from geo-politics to the new domain of geo-economics, the notion of transit economy should therefore be viewed as one of the outstanding for economic order of emerging world (Pandey, 2005).

The year 2006 was a year of historic political changes in Nepal. Changes in political scenery were the primary inspiration in bringing new ideas for progressive foreign policy. One of the ideas stimulated by this change was the political level initiative to revisit Nepal's geographical context; Making Nepal as a bridge between China and India so as to reap benefit of the rapid economic growth in both neighbourhood (Thapalaya, 2017). The strong and serious bilateral aspiration conveyed by Ai Ping, Chinese Communist Party's vice Minister for South Asia, and later on, by Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, eloquently signal China's shifting foreign policy priority in Nepal. Visit of Ai Ping in June 2012 made headlines in Nepali media. They intensively covered the bilateral deliberations as focused in his presentation of Chinese concern over Nepal's proposed course of identity-based federalism (The Kathmandu post, 2017).

Also in January 2012, the then Nepal's Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai reintroduced the new geographical discourse and purposed that Nepal should act as a bridge between India and China and take advantage from the rapid economic development of the two biggest and fast growing economies (The Kathmandu Post, 2017). The traditional concept of a yam between two stone is a metaphor to explain Nepal's historical pressures to balance relations between two big neighbours, China in the north and India in other three sides. The yam reality was reflected perfectly in its bilateral trade statistics; in 2010 India accounted for almost 60 percentage of Nepal's foreign trade, followed by China 20 percentage and the EU 5 percentage (Acharya, 2019).

Nepal has historically function as transit route to and from both China and India flourish of Buddhism, travel diaries of Fa-xian and Huan-xang during the period of

ancient Nepal can be viewed as testimony that the land of Nepal was used as a short-cut way by the travellers of both nations (Asia Society, 2003). The Malla Kings of Kathmandu valley has managed to sustain good trade relations with China and India. The city's spectacular monuments were built by the profits of trade between India and China during the 17th and early 18th centuries (The Economist, 2012). Similarly, Nepal had fought three wars with Tibet during that century; it slowly weakens Nepal-Tibet trade relation and eventually stopped the trade at all. Likewise, the opening of the southern border in India, far more reachable and geographically closer than the difficult north border towards China changed everything. The accessibility and easy viability to southern border over the years interested Nepal's mutual contact towards India. The bridge ambition, deeply rooted in the history of Nepal remained alive, though not realised in past.

Practically, Nepal's shift towards acting as a bridge nation seemed to have emerged in 2001 after the visit to China by King Birendra. The visit made an agreement between Nepal and China to accelerate the construction of Syaprubesi-Rasuwa road, a second road connecting Nepal to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China (Chaulagain, 2013). China-Nepal relation of this specific period seemed to be obvious by a merging of relational and geographical position. The influence of bilateral relations was to position Nepal in bigger Asian framework, which in practice began to expand the physical infrastructure that would facilitate this purpose (Koirala, 2012). As King Birendra move forward the bilateral agreement of constructing Syaprubesi-Rasuwa road with his Chinese counterparts in Beijing, Nepal began discovering its transit ambitions to get benefit from both countries. Praksah Chandra Lohani rightly said that "For Nepal, being land-locked should no longer be viewed as a constraint. In fact, Nepal is not a landlocked nation, but a link nation a country that

has direct land link with two of the most dynamic economies of the world. There is no way that this can be a disadvantage. It may have been in the past but certainly not in the future given the fact that both the countries are moving towards a more liberal trade regime. The point to emphasize is that economic interests of both the countries are not in conflict. A strong and prosperous Nepal is in India's interest and vice versa" (Lohani, 2004).

Likewise, the declaration by former King Gyanendra at Afro-Asian Summit-2005 in Jakarta to develop Nepal as a transit point between China and India once again invigorated Nepal's bridge ambition. Addressing Jakarta's Afro-Asian Summit on April 22, 2005, the then King expressed the nation's inclination to welcome all possible assistance to promote this process, trusting that it would significantly back the nation to transform into viable economic hub. Furthermore he also added that the concept of constructing an electric railway linking Birgunj - Kathmandu and Kathmandu -Tatopani should be brought into operation for developing Nepal as a transit hub between two giant neighbour countries, India and China (The Himalayan times, 2005).

But Nepal's internal conflicts, changing political setting and internal political disputes didn't allow the idea to gain much focus. Then after in 2012, as former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai appealed the bridge concept in new way as "the vibrant bridge", it highly dominated Nepal's foreign policy discourse and is hot policy agenda (Republica, 2020). The agenda was brought with intention to break geo-economic dependency and drag Nepal out from traditional geo-political ranges.

Nepal's geographical position as landlocked country and its small size is perceived as a major handicap of country's overall development. However, the immediate

neighbours' prompt ambitions of becoming super powers in the next few upcoming decades has required urgent shifting on Nepal's foreign policy agenda-from traditional buffer towards becoming the vibrant bridge. A nation of more than thirty million population is not exactly a small country; but when surrounded by two big giants on all of the four sides create the feeling of smallness. For a country of thirty million people to be crammed between two billion people with fastest moving economy can be seen as an opportunity. This is the way Nepal view its position at present (Lohani, 2011).

In May 1994, Nepal and China signed an auto transport agreement on Lhasa-Kathmandu route, in 1999, they signed the notes of agreement on cross -border grazing and in July 2002, they signed an agreement on trade and other issues between Tibet Autonomous Region of China and Nepal (Jaiswal, 2014). Trade volume between Tibet and Nepal has greatly increased, which totalled 66.159 million US dollars in 2002, with China's exports registering 61.02 million US dollars (Jaiswal, 2014). As part of economic assistance, during Prachanda's term (2008), China announced doubling of aid to Nepal amounting to 21.94 million US dollars (Shah, 2011). The volume of Nepal – China trade has been ascending over years. Nepal's trade with China is largely through the route of Tibet and Hong Kong. The six points along the Nepal – China border have been opened for overland trade, which are Kodari- Nyalam; Rasua-Kerung; Yari (Humla)- Purang; Olangchunggola-Riyo, Kimathanka-Riwo and Nechung (Mustang)-Legze (Shah, 2011).

Similarly, in 2007-08, China began the construction of a 770-Kilometre railway connecting the Tibetan capital of Lhasa with the Nepal border town of Khasa, connecting Nepal to China's wider national railway network (Ruff, 2017). In a

meeting between Chinese and Nepali officials on 25 April 2008, the Chinese delegation announced the intention to extend the Qingzang railway to Zhangmu (Nepali: Khasa) on the Nepal border. Nepal had requested that the railway be extended to enable trade and tourism between the two nations. On the occasion of the Nepali Primeminister's visit to China it was reported that construction will be completed by 2020 (Shrestha, 2014). The section Lhasa-Shigatse opened in August 2014. In June 2018, China and Nepal announced an agreement to connect Xigazê, Tibet Autonomous Region with Kathmandu, via a new railroad (MOFA, 2019). In September 2018, Nepali commerce ministry official Rabi Shankar Sainju announced that China had granted Nepal access to the ports of Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang, and Zhanjiang, as well as land ports at Lanzhou, Lhasa and Xigatse (Giri, 2019). Access to Chinese ports reduces Nepal's dependency on India for commerce, a dependence that was highlighted by the 2015 Nepal blockade. Dabhade and Pant (2004) claim that small states seek to preserve their independence by resorting to strategies that seek to balance great powers that antagonise their perceived security. In this case, geopolitical vulnerability constrains Nepal to opt for a policy of neutrality by mutually supporting both neighbours instead of exclusively favouring one against another (Dabhade & Pant , 2004).

During the literature review process, the researcher found that most of the works done on Nepal-China-India have focused on the historical relation between these three countries and some have accessed the relationship from geo-political angle. However, there are very few works in the academia which has discussed on how Nepal can act as a vibrant bridge between India and China by exercising its tactful diplomacy of equi-distance policy. Though some of the literature have discussed the changed position from land locked to land linked country that have not analysed the future

prospect and geopolitical consequences for Nepal because of this land linked status. The buffer to bridge concept is mainly popular in political speech and talk but very few literatures have been produced in this domain at academic level. Thus this research aims to fulfil the gap of knowledge production in buffer to bridge concept by accessing the land connectivity opportunities and prospects for Nepal in relation with China.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter deals with research methodology that includes the process through which information and data are collected for the purpose of the study. Methodology is composite of what type of data is collected, how the data is collected, and how it will be analysed. Various tools and techniques are used to obtain the required data for the study. In simple terms methodology is used to give a clear cut idea on how the researcher is carrying out his or her research. Content analysis is a method in the social sciences for studying the content of those types of empirical documentation that is written texts and articles.

The term historical revisionism recognizes the re-interpretation of the historical record. It usually means debunking the orthodox views held by professional scholars about a historical event, presenting contrary indication, or reinterpreting the impulses and decisions of the people involved. The revision of the historical record can reflect new findings of fact, proof, and explanation, which then inflames a revised history. In dramatic cases, revisionism involves a reversal of older moral judgments. In short, transformation from old knowledge to new knowledge (Cattini, 2011). The term “revisionist history” may be used in two contexts with one root. The root is, that the prevailing, apparently established timeline and content of history (dates, places, identities of participants, etc.), i.e. its course and the interpretation of that course, are changed. The context of the change may be entirely academic, i.e. the change may have occurred owing to the emergence of new or additional information that alters what is known about a given period of history, the course or sequence of events during a period, and therefore the interpretation of that period (Cattini, 2011).

In this study the traditional grand narrative of Nepal as “Yam between two nations” or the ‘buffer state’ has been revisited and presumed that it’s a vibrant bridge between India and China. On same assumption the reached paper discusses Nepal-China relation and possible benefits for Nepal. It also investigates on the role of India in land connectivity issues between Nepal and China.

3.1 Study design

This is a pure research as it is useful and attempts to analyse Nepal-China relation from perspective of land connectivity. To make this study insightful and reliable different perspective regarding Nepal-China relation has been analysed in critical way. The research is qualitative in nature and it is exploratory as it has attempted to find out the historical problems, present challenges, opportunities and Indian influence in Nepal relation with China, all on geopolitical front.

3.2 Source of data

The process of obtaining data required for a study can be classified into two categories i.e. primary sources and secondary sources. Since this study is aimed at the geo-political relation between Nepal and China with special emphasis on connectivity, the required information are gathered through both primary and secondary sources. Data and information that are used in the study are taken from journals, books, articles, reports, newspapers and various online portals along with interview of expert in Nepal-China and Nepal-India relations.

3.3 Data collection

Primary data was taken by interviewing and discussing with renowned personalities or experts on Nepal-China relation. Secondary data was collected through internet, published books, previous researches, newspapers and different study report.

3.3.1 Data presentation and analysis

In this study, qualitative data has been used. Qualitative data is presented in narrative form. All the data is presented and findings are provided with recommendations for the purpose of further study and program needed in this issue in future.

3.4 Ethical consideration

To complete research with appropriate research guidelines research ethics is very important. Considering ethical aspect of research enough was given to study and analyse the geo-political relation between Nepal-China with due respect to each countries viewpoint and national interest. Beyond that consideration, usage of any other secondary data from any source is acknowledged with appropriate reference. Hence, the ethical aspect of research is followed very strictly in this research.

3.5 Quality standard

As this study is only based in primary and secondary sources of data its reliability and validity can be questioned. Certain steps have been taken to maintain the quality standard of the study.

Validity – in order to maintain the validity of this study it is cross checked by the supervisor from time to time.

Reliability – the information that are collected for the study are reliable because most of the data and statistics are collected directly from research papers and dignified journals or books and other information that are used in the study are collected from reliable sources only.

3.6 Organization of Study

Chapter one present the introduction of study that consists of background of study, statement of problem, objective of study, limitation of study and importance of study. This chapter is written to give an introduction to the study so that a clear understanding can be made further. Chapter two explores the relevant literatures. Different articles, journals, etc. were reviewed in order to make this research more understandable. Chapter three discusses about the trans-border connectivity between Nepal- China and its benefit for Nepal. It also emphasizes in the importance of BRI for land connectivity and opportunities for Nepal. Chapter four explores the geo-political challenges in Nepal-China relation along with the role of India. The research methodology and technical aspect of study is explained in chapter five. Finally, chapter six attempts to draw the conclusion of the major findings of the research along with some recommendation regarding the researched issue.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Finding

4.1 Nepal-China Trans-Border Connectivity

This chapter begins with background of Nepal-China diplomatic relationship and some historical border agreement. Gradually the study shifts its focus on importance of road infrastructure and land connectivity with Chinese border. Then, the paper details the overview of five major ongoing road projects which would be a milestone for Nepal-China trade. In the following section, the paper attempts to categorize the findings into different sections focusing on both opportunities and threats. The issues like trade, bridge to tri-literalism, overall connectivity comes under opportunities whereas cost benefit, geographical challenge and trade dependency counts under possible challenges. Similarly, the research tries to give contextual suggestion to overcome aforementioned challenges. Finally this chapter ends with overall conclusion focusing on importance of road connectivity and its benefit for both Nepal and China, where Nepal will find new avenue for economic development and trade diversification and China too would successfully achieve its interest to enter south Asian region.

4.1.1 Historic Border Treaties

While analyzing the history of south Asia we can find many evidenced of historical conflict between India and China that gave rise to border dispute and create problem in demarcation of transit point. However various agreement and bilateral treaties between two countries have successfully solved the issues in a cooperative manner. As a part of same cooperative agreement, Khasa treaty was signed on September 1975, for demarking border margin in its earlier position. Kerung Treaty (2 June

1789) was signed to retard Nepal back from the invaded Tibetan land to its former borderline, Treaty of Betrawoti (5 October 1792) was to prevent an unprovoked dispute with the intention of possessing the territories of the other, and Treaty of Thapathali (24 March 1856) was to restore Taglakhar, Chewur Gumba, Kerong, Jhunga, Kuti and Dhakling by Tibet and to withdraw all the Nepali troops that may be on this side of the Bhairab Langur range (Shrestha, 2007). Similarly Nepal no longer has history of conflict with Tibet after the Nepal-Tibet Treaty of Peace-1856. This treaty became one of the triggering factors for regulating borderline with Tibet, which ultimately set up positive progress on economic, social and cultural relations between Tibet and Nepal (Thapliyal, Pg 45-48). The northern giant has always wished prosperity as well as friendly relation with its tiny Himalayan neighbor. To serve same purpose, the diplomatic ties between Nepal and China was established in 1955 and further solidified with trade and cross-border transit agreement in 1956.

Moreover with the aim of promoting diplomatic relation on the basis of Panchasheel, the Sino-Nepali Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed on 28 April 1960. After this treaty Nepal began to see the Tibetan affair as an internal matter of China and since then it has supported the notion of 'One China Policy' (Adhikari, 2012).

4.1.2 Road Linkage with China

Transport infrastructure stands as one of the prominent factors for a country's overall development. There are many evidences around the world with regard to how transport infrastructure has fuelled for country's progress in economy, trade and bilateral relation. Viable physical connectivity in the urban and rural areas mitigates the gap within country and provide equal share of development for both mainstream and backward areas. In case of countries like Nepal, where Rocky Mountains and

high hills segregates millions of people from basic facilities, the country's road infrastructure remain crucial for overall connectivity as well as development of Nation. During 2020's, Nepal's transport sector has witnessed the average 6.9 percentage growth in systematic manner, in 2019, the transport sector covers for around 10.6 percentage of Real GDP because it is the nexus for trade, development and promotion of human mobility within the country (Office of Investment Board, 2020). Nepal has total road network of 80,078 km. Out of 77 districts, only 67 district's centre roads are linked with all-weather roads. Among these also maximum roads functions at average rate and require frequent maintenance, upgrading, and further road construction to link other corners of country (Office of Investment Board, 2019). Nepal must strive to establish its road infrastructure as transit option for regulating the trade inflow from its neighbouring countries and at same time it can also rise as transit route connecting two Asian giants, India and China. The big question is, why do we need infrastructural connectivity with China for development? Firstly, Nepal as landlocked and mountainous country remains prone to high trade cost and trade dependency with a specific nation. In such situation improved road connectivity with other nation would reduce such costs and also open ground for diversifying external import/export business. Secondly, Nepal's location between two rising Asian economies also gives enough platform for Nepal to reap benefits from both India and China.

The essence of connectivity remains inevitable in case of Nepal as the country fragmented within itself because of poor infrastructure. According to World Bank study, Nepal needs infrastructure investment equivalent to 12 percent of its GDP, which amounts to nearly 13–18 billion US dollars over a decade, to maintain the current pace of economic growth. It needs to spend 2.3 to 3.5 percentage of annual

GDP to improve its connectivity, including strategic and local roads (Chalise, 2017). The transportation sector alone needs anywhere between 3.7–5.5 billion US dollars in investment for new projects (Chalise, 2017). Amid such context, Nepal trade and transit treaty with China exclusively centres on mitigating the connectivity gap which can help achieve both physical and financial objectives of Nepal. It will have a revolutionary impact on the overall development of Himalayan economy and to take bilateral relation to new heights. In March 2016, the Transport Transit Agreement was signed during a meeting in Beijing between Nepali Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli and his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang (Nepal Foreign Affairs, 2016). The protocol, which is the key to actualization of the treaty, will allow Nepal to conduct trade with third countries through China.

4.1.3 Overview of Roads

1. Kathmandu-Kodari highway

On Nepal China border the Araniko Highway joins Kathmandu with Kodari, 115 kilometres northeast of the Kathmandu Valley (Xinhua, 2017). Because of being prone to landslide and maximum sloppy areas, this road is considered as one of the most risky land route of Nepal. From the Sino-Nepal friendship bridge, it connects with China National Highway 318 to Lhasa, and eventually to Shanghai (Dorje, 1999).

The construction of road dates back to 1960, then it was a yak track expanded as transport road with help from Chinese side (Hopquin, 2013). The further expansion of road was planned in 2012 also but the landslide problem stands as a major obstacle in road expansion project. Nowadays the road is currently functioning but not too viable for transportation. Many times during clean season this road has served as a medium

for larger trade between Nepal and China and also the trade between India and China occurs when the road remains in good condition.

Nepal as land locked country enjoys the privilege of overland connectivity with China through this road. However it cannot be regarded as optimal alternative way for transport of goods because shipping Chinese goods from Kolkata seems cheaper than to truck them all way through China's Tibet region (Dorje, 1999). The Kathmandu-Kodari highway was severely damaged by devastating earthquake of 2015 and was almost reached in point of closing. However with the effort of both governments the highway was re-opened in early August 2015. This route further endured recurring destructions because of landslides caused after earthquake.

In 2014 the highway was closed after landslides, but re-opened in September 2014. The landslide shut the route to Kathmandu for 46 days until a new alternate route could be built for 15.5 million Nepali rupees. The landslides that closed it the summer of 2014 were called the Sunkoshi landslides, and the section of the highway near the Tibet border is especially prone to landslides (Petley, 2014).

The Friendship Highway (also known as the China-Nepal Highway), is 800-kilometre (500 mi) roadway joining the capital of Tibet, Lhasa, from China-Nepal border or Sino-Nepal Friendship Bridge between Zhangmu and Kodari (Tenphel, 2021). The border crossing between Zhangmu and Kodari on the Friendship Highway has been in operation since 1968 (Tenphel, 2021). It consists of the westernmost part of China National Highway 318 (Shanghai-Zhangmu) and crosses three passes over 5,000m before dropping to 1,750m at the border (Tenphel, 2021).

2. Biratnagar-Khandbari-Kimathanka road

The track-opening and up-gradation work of Koshi corridor under the north-south corridor project has resumed. The Nepal Army had been entrusted to open the 14 kilometres track of the corridor in 2019. The up-gradation of 10 kilometres road is currently underway and 39 kilometres road is being black-topped (Khabarhub, 2021).

The track from Dhongpa of Bhotkhola rural municipality to Chyamtang of Shankhuwasabha has yet to be opened, 134 kilometres road stretching from district headquarters Khandbari to Chyamtang in the north has been constructed and 14 kilometres track stretching from Nepal-China border Kimathanka to Dhongpa in the south has been opened (Khabarhub, 2021). Only the middle section of the road is yet to be constructed, according to the project. Out of the total 162 kilometres road, 148 kilometres track has been constructed. The remaining 14 kilometres track has been given to the Nepal Army. Still, the already constructed section of road has eased the transport facilities for local population living in Kimathanka. Before road construction people were under compulsion to walk three days to reach Khandbari, the headquarter of Sankhuwasabha. The same journey can be covered by 12 hrs drive. During the program organized by Dharan Sub-metropolitan city, Chinese envoy to Nepal Yu Hong put front her diplomatic discourse that China would make robust platform for China-Nepal trade by opening Sankhuwasabha's Kimathanka and Taplejung's Olangchungola border points in Province one. "Though it is very hard to open border points between Nepal and China, China is positive about opening these border points with Nepal," Hong added (The Himalayan Times, 2018). Hong restated that the flexible border access would not only open up trade opportunity but also smooth larger picture of people's mobility across the border (The Himalayan Times, 2018).

3. Beni-Jomsom-Korala route

Korala is a mountain pass between Tibet and Upper Mustang. It is only 4,660 meters (15,290 ft) in elevation; it's regarded as the least robust part between Tibetan Plateau and Indian subcontinent. This route is being planned as vehicle border crossing between China and Nepal. Korala is one of the oldest routes between the two regions. It was historically used for salt trade between Tibet and Kingdom of Nepal. Korala remains as among the historic routes between two regions. In ancient time this route was used for trading salt between Nepal and Tibet.

The border has been closed since the 1960s. However, there is a semiannual cross-border trade fair during which the border is open to local traders (Murton, 2016). Nepal has also given priority to opening this border point along with Kimathanka and Korala in Mustang. It is also expected to be the third most important crossing between the two countries. The Beni-Jomsom-Korala route is 186 kilometres and 76 kilometres long Beni-Jomson road stretch under process of complete blacktopping while 110 kilometres long Jomsom-Korala road is being further advanced (Khadka, 2021).

China and Nepal governments have intensified the infrastructural constructing and also have started diplomatic initiative for completing Corala roadways. Kaligandaki corridor is the shortest road link to connect India and China (The Himalayan Times, 2016).

4. Mailung-Syabrubesi-Rasuwegadi road

China and Nepal jointly decide to open new border crossing; Rasuwagadhi in 2012, to mitigate the level of border gap. In December 2014, the entry port was opened near

the Rasuwagadhi fort. It is the second border point made available for trade after Tatopani, the first and largest border point (Kharel, 2018). This route between China (via Gyirong Town / Kyirong on the Chinese side) and Nepal was considered to be more reliable than the crossing through Zhangmu–Kodari. However, this crossing is not open to foreigners until 2017. In addition, this border crossing is being considered for a future rail crossing between the two countries. After completion the entire highway connecting Nepal's northern and southern borders will be 230 kilometres long. After the damage of Kathmandu-Tatopani route by the deadly earthquake on April 25, 2015 in Nepal, the connectivity gets replaced by new Kathmandu-Rasuwigadhi route which at present is functioning as primary land route of trade between Nepal and China (Kharel, 2018).

After the opening of new section Mailung-Syabrubesi-Rasuwigadi road, the distance between Kathmandu to Rasuwigadi has been shortened by 25 kilometres in comparison to the Original Betrawati-Dhunchhe-Syabrubesi section which was 145 kilometres before. The new route comparatively covers shorter distance with minimum turnings and comfortable travel experience (Devkota, 2018).

5. Hilsa-Simikot Road

Tibet-based Hilsa point is seasonally operated for local purpose. This road is more popular as tourist route than for trade and business practice. In 2015, there was an agreement between Nepal and China to construct a bridge in Hilsa, which connect Humla and Tibet (Rokaya, 2016). Though both Nepali and Chinese governments were positive regarding that road, the state assembly member of Karnali province, Jeevan Bahadur Shahi said that it could not be operated as a commercial route because

Humla is not connected with road. He further added that after the construction of Nepalgunj-Siimkot road Hilsa can be trading route of Karnali (Khabarhub, 2021).

4.1.4 Opportunities of Trans-border Road connectivity

Nepal seeks to have direct linkage with China through more roads and other means of access by which Nepal desires to have an absence of third party on trade and transit between Nepal and China. As discussed in earlier section of this paper, cross border highway would be considered to be the major turning point between China and Nepal in terms of trade, tourism and many more infrastructural exchange sectors. This road may help in developing every infrastructure of Nepal.

Especially for Nepal, the five roads can play a greater role in expansion of trade and tourism between Nepal and China. Being the huge economy the price of goods and equipment from China would be much less and the road connectivity could play a crucial role in decreasing the existing price in Nepal. Till today (2022) Nepal used to rely on Kolkata port for maximum trade but after its access to Tianjin port of China and Vishakhapatnam port of India, it can diversify its trade. Tianjin is 3,300 kilometres from Nepal border, as against the Kolkata port that is only 1,000 kilometres from Nepal (Bhattarai, 2017). So, at surface level using Kolkata port seems rational choice. However if shipment costs is taken into consideration, it require 35 days for shipment of Chinese goods to arrive in Nepal via Kolkata, while it can reach Kathmandu via Kerung in no more than 10 days. In comparison to the Kolkata port, easy accessibility and availability of all global goods at the Tianjin Port, which trades with over 600 ports in 180 countries is expected to significantly bring down Nepal's shipment costs (Bhattarai, 2017).

Considering these possibilities the pendulum of trade process will swing to new direction. Comparing to access to Indian sea port and Chinese Sea port, Nepal would be highly benefited from India port because of one-third less distance than China. But the case is Nepal needs to diversify its trade and should not rely on a single country. The situation of 2015 “Unofficial Embargo by India to Nepal” clearly shows that why Nepal should focus on diversifying instead of relying on one country. As a result, the process on the construction of these roads is being increased rapidly.

Nepal needs to build-up the connectivity between Nepal and China and is in process of doing it. There have already been historical agreements with China during the tenure of Prime- minister KP Oli government through which Nepal is trying to expand bilateral connectivity in every front, like road connectivity, railways, trade, investment and people to people connectivity. And emphasising on national interest, Nepal has initiated this connectivity process. Rajan Bhattarai says “In today’s world connectivity itself is important. Connectivity in every form, name it bilateral, trilateral, multilateral, inter-continental or regional. Today the rail from Beijing is reaching Rome and London. In such context, through the land connectivity with China, we can are seeking viable platform for prosperity, infrastructural development, improvement in education and health sector and serve our aim for overall development” [personal communication].

The trade relation between China-Nepal-India has to be looked from a historical perspective. During medieval times, Nepal used to be the transit country between India and Tibet. In modern time, this is something that Nepal has wanted for a long time. Nepal aspires to benefit from the growth of the two emerging economies. So long as Nepal is able to develop transport connectivity, it can be a natural bridge

between the two countries. For this Nepal tactically needs to maintain Equi-distance with both the neighbors and again revive the past narrative of natural bridge between India-China. Both India and China as rising global economics would get the share of economic benefit from each other and Nepal in between them would also acquire some degree of benefit in economic as well as diplomatic front.

China and India collectively occupy one-third of the world population and have cheap labour as well as huge market. The development of these roads connects the largest market with short distance by which all three countries would be highly benefited. Amid the rising trade relation between India and China, the Nathula pass functions as the only viable route between two countries even when both the countries shares 4,500 kilometres long border. Because of risky passes, snowfall and other infrastructural hazards this route is regarded as seasonal pass-way. Beside the route just reopened in 2006, earlier it was closed because of 1962 India-China war (Bhattarai, 2017). In this case the above mentioned five roads not only benefits Nepal but also can bridge the two Asian giants India and China at larger extent. When Nepal exists as a transit point it automatically can reap the benefits from the trade between two neighbours.

Nepal is focusing on these five roads because it covers the eastern to western part with scientific distance. As the single road cannot cover the whole country so the five roads connects all part of Nepal and China. Considering the fact that only five major roads cannot cover the trade and other factor between Nepal and China, but also leads to another step than the existing practice. Kimathanka road is considered to be the best option for covering eastern part of Nepal, from Kimathanka to Biratnagar and further more expanding to India. This shows that the road will not ends on Nepal but

also further more expanded to third country. Korala and Kodari road can connect Kathmandu and the central part of Nepal and Tibet with shortest route. The rest of two routes can be more effective for western part of Nepal. When all of the roads start functioning well then the issue of using the same road to distribute the product overall Nepal will end up. For instance, if the eastern part of Nepal needs to import some goods from China, at present they should only use the Korala route which may not be cost and time effective. If the Kimathanka route starts functioning well then the trade between both countries would be more flexible.

The present scenario shows that the Chinese tourist travelling to Nepal by road transportation is being increasing day by day. Similarly in case of tourism the cheap travel cost will encourage many neighbouring tourist to visit Nepal through road transport. Mostly neighbouring tourists enter Nepal via airways and the cost of ticket is comparatively higher than roadways. This new route would provide cheap mobility for inflow and outflow of humans as well as trading goods.

The northern belt as geographically crushed area does not share easy connection with other developed market hub. Since long decades the northern belt population has remained in isolation from international connection with Tibetan highways. The entire population in this area had relied on internal connections for trade and business. After this revival of road the agricultural products from rural northern belt will get potentially huge market in Tibet. The other infrastructural development like construction of housings, administrative buildings, marketplaces and other will come tailed with road development.

Additionally, the standard of living will also show positive rise after the improvement in road ways. The standard of living has direct relation with economic opportunities,

which can be enhanced through trade. When people of Northern belt enjoy the privilege of easy mobility around Tibet, they can achieve greater prospect of trade and employment opportunity. Beside the lone land will also come in contact with mainstream part of the international society. Road not only connect places, it also establish intense connection between diverse people, culture and unique lifestyle. The people of Northern belt would get opportunity to know and imitate the sophisticated living pattern of other developed areas and consequently would strive to adopt same standard of living. Human mobility itself results cultural amalgamation and such fusion between two cultures will encourage the primitive one to abandon its old living standard and adopt new one. So in order to improve Nepal's connectivity and expand Himalayan trade through China, the construction of Kathmandu-Kodari highway, Biratnagar-Khandbari-Kimathanka road, Beni-Jomsom-Korala route, Mailung-Syabrubesi-Rasuwegadi road and Hilsa-Simikot Road is utmost in priorities.

Furthermore these broad highways need compartmentalization in form of four-lane fast track roads for easy access. Nepal should seek finances for these highway projects through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as well as required support from the Chinese government. Officials at the Commerce Ministry said three sea ports— Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou—and two land ports have been identified for Nepal's third country trade via China (Giri, 2018). It would have been better if Nepal sought agreement on other three ports: Chongqing (river port near Chengdu), land port of Khorgas (China-Kazakhstan border) to trade with European parts, and land port of Kashgar (near China-Pakistan border) for establishing trade relation with Iran, Pakistan and other Gulf countries. According to Govinda Nepal (The Kathmandu Post, 2016), chief economic adviser at the MoFA, "Nepal has prioritized these road projects to increase trade with China and other countries through China."

4.1.5 Prospect of Belt and Road Initiative

The trade between China and Nepal in the past was on gold, salt and, wool. So, through BRI it can be changed into oil and rail (Bajracharya, 2017). It shows that ancient Nepal used to trade with Tibet through different land routes because of the geographical features of Nepal. It is hard to trade between these countries even though the trade for gold, wool and salt was common in between Nepal and China mostly in high mountain areas of Nepal. Former parliamentarian of Nepal, Hiranyalal Shrestha said that there was the trade relation of Nepal with China in the past especially trading salt and gold and can be transformed into the trade of the Oil and gas, through Railway connectivity in present [personal communication].

Sanjaya Baru writes that, for achievement of the political aims China has made the entire world to depend upon them by offering cheap consumer goods. BRI is focusing on the trade and economy. During 2017, the American president Donald Trump encourages Americans to buy the American goods and China should focus on 'Fair Trade' rather Than 'Free Trade'. This emotion is also being focused by the present American President Joe Biden. The trade is win-win game because there is interdependence among each other. So, it can be viewed, the BRI project can help in the stability of the world peace as per the history till now the countries that trades between each other has never gone to war (Baru, 2017). Here, more than trade between the two countries, the world peace has been focused despite the amount of trade may not be equal. One may import high and other may import low, even though there remains a mutual understanding and the chance of conflict is low.

One of the helpful part for the reconstruction of the Nepal is that Nepal is also a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that is led by

China (Subin, 2017). Since, huge amount is required for the reconstruction of the earthquake destroyed Nepal as AIIB can provide some financial facilities for implementation and organization of some projects. This project raises the confidence of the Chinese and Nepali entrepreneur and private and public sector investment is also hoped to be increased (Paudyal, 2017).

The growing technology has made a lot of things possible which was thought impossible by human beings. Geography is viewed as a challenge for the implementation of the connectivity in the Alps of Himalayas but the railway development in Lhasa proved the possibility of road and rail connectivity. The connection of BRI will make Nepal to be connected to Europe and Asia through China. The small landlocked country will be able to link the other country through land network like roadway and railway.

However none of the projects under BRI has been started in Nepal due to negligence from governmental side. Shankar Prasad Adhikari, the former finance secretary had demanded the complete framework of the project operating under the BRI in 2017 by justifying its relevance to the grand project and implementation modality of proposed schemes. The five ministerial of the Nepal government had recommended the names of 22 projects. These projects were: railway corridor construction project, cross border broadcasting line, two regional airport projects, three irrigation projects, 6 road projects, two drinking water projects, one disaster management project and 6 tourism projects. Although the names of these projects were recommended, the concerned ministry did not present complete framework. Therefore, the Chinese government has not yet been able to gauge the required resource and investment under BRI project in Nepal. The nine agreements were signed and exchanged between Nepali and Chinese

officials in visit in March 2022, after the delegation-level talks between Narayan Khadka, the foreign minister of Nepal with his Chinese counterparts Wang Yi, and none of the agreements is related to BRI. China experts believe that implementation of BRI projects in Nepal had been relatively slow, perhaps due to multiplicity of agreements signed between the two countries in various areas without much clarity or commitment for their implementation.

The railway project has always been issue of national discussion among major political parties. Even in their election manifestos all the major political parties have emphasized Nepal-China railway project. Despite its national importance and shared political determination of ruling as well as opposition government, the project has not started yet. Expert views that the issue of funding might have delayed the implementation of this project. It has been reported that China has offered a loan for the construction of the Nepali side of the railway. But, Nepal prefers the funding be a grant as rumours have been falsely spread that Nepal will be caught in “debt trap” if the railway is funded through a loan from China.

Also after ascending up to the position of second largest economy in 2012, China has amplified the amount of foreign investment in Nepal. According to economic studies, by the end of 2016, China had spent 161 billion US dollars as foreign investment. It is much higher compared to past investments. In such case it’s not a big deal for China to invest in Nepal’s railway project.

Similarly Nepal’s prospect in term of Hydropower, tourism and agriculture can also be further enriched under BRI project. Nepal needs large investment and global connectivity to best utilize these potentials. Firstly, there is high possibility and technical viability to produce 42,000 megawatt of electricity from numerous rivers in

Nepal. And easy access with many countries through BRI, the produced electricity can find wide range of global market for selling. Secondly even if a small fraction of people from the two densely populated neighbourhood inroads Nepal as tourists it would be a breakthrough achievement for Nepal to lift up tourism industry. Thirdly, the prospect from agriculture can be achieved only after improvement in irrigation facilities. The total cultivated land in Nepal is 2.64 million hectares, out of which only about 1.76 million hectares are irrigable and to this also only about 20 percentage lands has year round irrigation facility. In short Nepal's agriculture highly depends on Lord Shiva's grace or monsoon rain. If China finds ways to fund the construction of permanent irrigation system in Nepal under BRI project, the small country can transform itself as huge agricultural market and can send loads of organic agro products to the whistling train back China.

4.2 Geo-political Challenges in land connectivity

Positive changes never come without any cost and Nepal's road connectivity with China is also on exception. Firstly, many roads project itself remains as challenge as they have not been completed yet. Due to complex geographical structure and lack of funding, it remains as a very daunting task for current Nepal government. Beside the trade deficit will upswing when cheap Chinese goods will flood domestic market and Nepal has very less products to export. And also the natural calamities like flood, landslide, and snowfall may limit this road as seasonal functioning route.

While doing this research the researcher found that the cost benefit study of this road should also be the primary concern of government. The total estimated expenditure for two lane - five roads is around 160 million US dollar which is solely funded by Nepal government. But the government hasn't yet considered the future outcome of

such big spending. In present context the two lane road may seem enough for trade and connectivity but in the long run when trade will expand to maximum height then these roads cannot hold the rising trade mobility. Despite this fact the government of Nepal has proposed this road Under BRI plan but the proposal has not yet been ratified.

Till 2022 Nepal's trade is highly dependent on India and the trade agreement with China has only been limited within papers, without successful implementation. Though Nepali leaders are swayed by romantic thoughts of diversifying the trade with India and China they had not considered following up with pre-agreed terms. Doomed by the history of inconsistency in Nepali leaders and unstable politics inside home, the current investment in this road project may also go in vein.

In case of geographical complexities both existing land topography and possible natural calamities comes in to primary focus. Connecting road through high hills remains very daunting task as it may need to make underway roads penetrating the hill. The investment cost and technological requirement may exceed beyond the capacity of Nepal. Even if the road construction is successfully done there remain risk of potential natural calamities that may destroy the entire infrastructure. For instance the Kodari root, which was destroyed by 2015 earthquake, is still under construction. Conditioned by such topographical difficulties, the road project needs massive funding and skilled manpower with advance technological support.

In future these five roads would connect China and India through Nepal's land if the trilateral cooperation comes into practice. So the government of Nepal should approach it's both neighbours for investment support. Because Nepal is not the sole beneficiary of this project, even India and China can reap maximum trade benefit

from the road linkage. This road project is too large for Nepal to complete on its own so international support from its neighbour would add efficacy as well as probability of completing the connectivity project.

The trilateral relationship among India, China and Nepal will no doubt, also benefit India. It will benefit India by giving India access to Tibet, which it had for centuries but does not have at the moment. When you talk of the old, entrepot status of Nepal and the salt trade between China, Tibet and India, India had access to The Tibetan market. I am very fond of saying that, China, as we know it today, is a new neighbor of India and Nepal. Until the military intrusion of China and its takeover, it was Tibet that we were interacting with through the Himalayas. China was a distant entity and we knew very little of Chinese people and society. If this triangular relationship builds up, it will also facilitate India's access to Tibet and possibly even to Xinjiang, and further on to Central Asia. We are in India struggling to get access to Central Asia. (Muni, 2016:5)

The Nepali market will be flooded by cheap Chinese products and consequently the import figure of Nepal will also rise in no time. During 2021 Nepal has 796.39 billion rupees trade deficit with India alone and after this road connectivity the series of rising trade deficit will continue with China too, which is 90.19 billion rupees in 2021 (Republica, 2021).

Unfortunately, Nepal is capable of exporting only small quantities of few goods like iron, steel, tea, coffee, spices, carpet, footwear, textile, plastic, clothing, accessories, handicraft, beverage and vegetables. Can Nepal rise up the production of these goods to meet the huge demand of newly connected markets? And will the export of Nepal

be balanced with the huge import from China. Considering the issue of Doklam agreement without consent of Nepal, same kind of diplomatic doom may again hit Nepal. Beyond the narrative of “land linked theory” in real ground, Nepal still remains sandwiched between two Asian giants who are stronger in economic, population and market front. If China and India both put their interest at primary focus and just use Nepal’s road, it will yield zero benefit for the transit country. It is not only about the movement of goods; it has to be associated with the movement of people as well. China has always desired one China policy from Nepal side but after the easy border access there remain high probability that Tibetan refugees may enter Chinese border. So due to this security concern China may be reluctant to assist Nepal in this connectivity project.

4.2.1 Challenges under BRI

BRI can also be seen as the Marshall plan of China but the Chinese views that the BRI is for trade peace and prosperity in the world. It is hot issue in the world as BRI connects Africa China Europe, but there can be a challenge to make US and other European country agree for BRI. Enright and Scott explain that, "BRI initiative is about as high in profile as is possible in the Chinese context. Failure is not an option and success will be measured in investments made, projects completed, friendships and alliances strengthened, and geostrategic position improved" (Enright, Scott & Associates, 2016).

Although BRI must be made successful, there will be huge investments and friendship and cooperation among countries increases but in every country there may be a different factor that acts as a problem for the foreign investment projects for the successful completion. As for the infrastructural development in the high hills and

mountain areas of Nepal it is not going to be an easy task. Thus, the efficiency and most use of technology is important. Some places for the development and due to geographic location may create problem in the efficiency. China's long-distance construction activity, both across China itself (from the east coast to Xinjiang and Tibet) and across Eurasia, has been driven as much by these economic calculations as it has been by geopolitical ones (Baru, 2017).

As analyses have viewed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is clearly a geopolitical but the Chinese claims this project only for an economic purpose as it plays an important role for the cooperation among countries and its economic Development. The implementation of the BRI and Development of politics of Nepal may play a key role for that. Frequent changes of government of Nepal may create problems. Less argument more consensuses should carry on and the political system shouldn't matter and the continuity of the policy should be kept in priority even the government changes. It is seen that the politics is not so stable in Nepal as government changes fast. The continuity of the project is also changed with introduction of new government. The project being done by previous government stops and another project starts, so the projects do not completes. Global rising Terrorism, the human security threats could be taken as a challenge of the BRI as it can be challenges for both Nepal and its neighbour (Oli, 2017). The terrorism is raising and South Asia is also one of the region where it is believed that terrorism is flourishing. Taliban, Al-Qaida in Pakistan, Afghanistan, ISAS in Iraq, Iran may find easy route to enter China, India and Nepal, making Nepal as transit to enter India. This route may also be easier for the illegal trafficking of girls from Asia to Europe and Middle East if not properly securitized. Geography of Himalayas can be also seen as challenge for the infrastructural and development projects.

Former Nepali Ambassador to China Leela Mani Paudyal mentioned in a lecture about economic cooperation between China Nepal and India. He argued that the cooperation with China is importance for India for the formation of capital and for the market of the goods. With this only India can be benefitted. Due to the saturated market of Europe, China is important for India to maintain its current growth rate. If both the countries become prosperous small country Nepal will also be prosperous (Paudyal, 2017). As the market of China and India had helped both the countries as Indian products are sold in China and vice versa. Both country should work together. India and Japan to initiate freedom corridor to help Africa to improvement of economy and infrastructure but, the huge amount of the Investment, capital management and technology is necessary and the Japan don't like to take China but can take India. There is controversy among scholars regarding that issue as sustainability of Japan for freedom corridor initiative. Lee & Cheung (2021) explains that the China's development is linked with Asia and more than that so for that making friends is important for the infrastructural development. There are challenges in this initiative but cooperation and good relations of partners countries can make it last long.

4.2.2 Influence of the Indian factor

Nepal has for decades maintained good bilateral relations with her two giant neighbours - India and China. India and China enjoy their own bilateral relations. Pioneers of the three nations meet frequently either at reciprocal dimensions or at the regional or worldwide forum. Frequent high level bilateral visits between the nations have constantly assumed a pivotal job in fortifying the relations.

Former ambassador and foreign affair specialist Hiranyalal Shrestha views (personal communication) that “When liberation army freed Tibet and maintain presence of China, India along with America adopts the strategy to encircle the communist China. And they took northern border of Nepal not only as Nepal-China border but as mythical narrative of ‘freed world frontier’. Similarly, 1950's Peace and Friendship Treaty was actually the then strategy of India to protect itself amid cold war. After that India always consider northern Himalaya’s side as its sphere of influence and try to in-shield itself with mountains. On contrary China always encourage Nepal to stand independent and support it in diplomatic ways”[personal communication].

China is Nepal's important partner in the region in several areas like infrastructure, power development, communication, agriculture and technology, education and culture, tourism and aviation, capacity building, health, people’s livelihood, disaster prevention and mitigation, and cultural heritage renovation (The Himalayan Times, 2018). By signing understanding on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative on May 12, 2017 in Kathmandu between Nepal and China, implies new progress for bilateral cooperation in mutually agreed areas are expected to open. Nepal hopes to update its vital infrastructure, improve cross-border network with China and upgrade people to people relations. (The Himalayan Times, 2018).

China seeks to invest into huge network extends in Nepal yet wants to bring its Asian rival, India, on board. Some Nepali and Chinese researchers consider this to be an open door for trilateral cooperation between Nepal, India, and China, yet Indian policymakers and scholars have not demonstrated much interest. Chinese commitment in Nepal is pointedly expanding with new areas of participation, making India uncomfortable. India sees Nepal as its traditionally dominating partner, and needs to

limit Chinese influence. Subsequently New Delhi is dismissing the proposition for trilateral participation, initially drafted by China and later upheld by a few scholars and politicians in Nepal. Such reluctant behaviours of India was seen in past as well when Nepal sought New way of connectivity, the Kodari highway came in existence to link Nepal with Tibet. Despite the opposition from India, US, USSR, King Mahendra stated that “Communism doesn’t travel through road” and opened Kodari route. Then Nepal achieve alternative route and ascend to the position of being independent. But after construction of Kodari highway, in 2014 India demand same route from Nepal and got the transport agreement (Hiranyalal Shrestha). He further added “China expects Nepal to not initiate any kind of anti-China activities inside Nepali border and has promised not to encroach in Nepal’s internal matters. But in case of India, such favour only is not sufficient as it consider Nepal as its sphere of influence and try to use Nepal as shield of its strategic security. Now India and China both are competitive power in Nepal and Nepal is the hub to meet both growing power and make Asian Century possible [personal communication].

In November 2016, during the BRICS summit in Goa, India, there was an unplanned meeting between then-Prime Minister of Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping. At the point when the gathering was promoted as the start of trilateral cooperation, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs rushed to state this was not a trilateral gathering, more proof that India isn't supportive of trilateral collaboration. (The Diplomat, 2018)

In the wake of making positive vibes in Nepal-India relations, Nepal's former Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli spent his time and energy in extending ties with China, which was keenly seen over the political and strategic field. There are broad

observations that India interferes in Nepal's internal. In 2015, when India objected Nepal's constitution and applied pressure for Nepal to accommodate the voices of Madhesi people, China respected the proclamation of the constitution in Nepal, commending it as a historical progress.

Despite generous announcements, India continues to send mixed signals. First, in terms of the land and air connectivity, the response has been sluggish: the gap between providing access to Vizag Port and new air routes to Nepal is two years. Nepal's request to access India's west ports is at a nascent stage and will take some more years. Second, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi has hit all the right chords in his talks, India is still unwilling to cooperate on power trade with Nepal in the way Nepal would like it to, or to provide electricity at lower rates. The message that Nepal remains India's "client state" will not be helpful to the aims of working towards a higher level of cooperation. India must formulate an integrated approach towards Nepal to reflect the current reality.

Regarding expanding Chinese presence in Nepal, an option for India to minimize the status is by diversify its cooperation with neighbours, through projects, for example, infrastructural development as doing under Chinese Investment. However, such a policy is bound to fail because Nepal is determined to take advantage of cooperation opportunities with foreign partners, including China. Addressing the issue of external interference, Nepali Foreign Minister Pradip Gyawali said, "We want to draw a clear boundary line, stating that internal matters will never be the issues in a bilateral discussion with India, China and others." (Front Line, 2018)

China is winning hearts and minds in Nepal through generous strategic charity. After the 19th Party Congress, it will continue to "use economic diplomacy as the

foundation of its foreign policy.” (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2017). Therefore, the way forward for India would be to depart from its exclusively traditional security angle and be proactive with innovative strategies and policies.

Former Nepali Ambassador to India Deep Kumar Upadhyay asked India not to ‘push it to the wall’ by blocking petroleum and other essential supplies, otherwise the landlocked country would have to find alternatives: i.e. China ‘despite logistical difficulties’. According to The Economic Times, Upadhyay asserted that, though India had assured Nepal that the present difficult situation will be resolved ‘at the earliest’: "They (India) should give a time frame. Does it mean hours, weeks or months?" While one can only hope that the constitutional issues will soon be resolved to the satisfaction of all (and not only a section of the Nepali population), China enjoys the situation. (India Defense Review, 2015)

In September 21, 2015 Beijing congratulated Kathmandu on the promulgation of its new constitution made public on the previous day. During his daily press briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei stated: “We expect Nepal to use this as an opportunity, achieving the nation's unity, stability and development.” Hong added: “China attaches great importance to the China-Nepal ties, and is willing to continue the friendly cooperation between the two nations.” Further, China is ready to provide “as much help as it can for the economic and social development of Nepal.” In this atmosphere of Nepali-China bhai bhai, the relations between Nepal and Tibet are upbeat too (Claude Arpi, 2015). The fact that Nepal and Tibet (and China) are getting closer by the day, at a time when the relations between Kathmandu and Delhi are rather frosty. Naindra Prasad Upadhyay, Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies of Nepal, earlier posted as Consul General in Tibet, says,

"Tibet has done an impressive job with education and health development. Even in rural areas, we can find every facility. The living standard of people is high." Upadhyay served in Tibet from 2007 to 2011; it was "a wonderful experience full of hospitality and cooperation," he recalls. (MoFA, 2018)

Through the latest sign in protocol of trade and transit treaty between Nepal and China, in the long-term, it signifies that China can replace India as the main supplier of commodities. This will have serious strategic implications for India. India is always claiming that Nepal and India have historical relationship with brotherhood. Under this India is eager to explore its big brother attitude towards Nepal. Despite having open border, close people to people relation, historically and religiously tie India is lacking its fostering relation with Nepal because of its big brother attitude (Bhattarai, 2020). In order to re-establish the relation it should play a crucial role in promoting people to people relations because anti-Indian sentiment in Nepal is rising day by day. While talking about Nepal and China and the role of India here is, India is being more worried because it leads to full stop the Indian Influence or presence in Nepal's political and other internal matter. India always wants to have its greater with its neighbour. For instance India is still gaining donor from other country and again providing donation to Nepal and hence to create economic power to Nepal.

4.2.3 Indian reluctance towards Nepal-China land connectivity

As China engagement in Nepal had several challenges to India because India is felling threat from China in several terms. Some of situation when Indian factor comes between Nepal-China relations are as follow:

i. Security Concern

There is a cold war brewing between India and China. The rivalry is always concealed & not revealed in open. Both wants to outsmart each other & counter each other, in almost all the fields. In some areas, China is ahead & in some areas, India is ahead. The gap of superiority, development & capabilities between the two is narrowing & in many fields India is in equals & the other areas, India is catching up (BBC, 2021). This development of India's is not viewed positively by the Chinese. There are several instances by which Indian side is not satisfied with Chinese policy. Whenever, India tests longer range missiles, Chinese raise their concern and complain to UNO. Similarly, the Chinese theory of surrounding India by a string of pearls is on full steam. India's premiere space agency ISRO'S achievements are not openly accepted or recognized and always negatively commented. Promoting the Pakistanis, unwarrantedly and putting the line comparison, with India. Blocking India's bid in banning Masood Azhar as a terrorist in UNO. Ignoring India's concerns over the CPEC Corridor, as it passes through Indian territories which are in Pakistan's occupation. In general India's raising, developments, achievements and contributions are not accepted openly & recognised by the Chinese and always wants to downplay and recently. During the antipiracy mission in the South Indian Ocean. India and China jointly neutralized the bid, however the Chinese media and official versions completely ignored & didn't mention India's name not even once.

The relation between India and China can be viewed rivalry in terms of political ideology and there are several border disputes between them. War between China and India in 1962 and the end of bilateral relations to two decades proves the dispute between two countries. Relations between India and China have been worsening in

2020. The two world powers are facing off against each other along their disputed border in the Himalayan region (BBC, 2021). The presence of India on Doklam issue between Bhutan and China also proves the rivalry relation between them. In this regard, India assumes that maximizing China's presence in Nepal will bring a sort of challenge to their nation. As India and Pakistan had disputes in almost all terms and support of China to Pakistan is being burden to India and also claims that many Pakistanis and Naxalbadis are using Nepal's land in internal matter of India and if China had greater presence in Nepal then those groups would be more benefitted and hence China will support on using them.

ii. Economic concern

China and India got a new government in the similar time frame. But the economic liberation of China was in 1978, and India had waited till its emergency crisis. Indian economy was liberated after the major economic crisis faced in 1991. Chinese economy compared to other Asian nations was not much good till 1970s, and after the rise of leader Deng Xiaoping took an open-market concept increasing 70 percentage contribution of private sector to the economy by 2013. Till 2022 India is the Sixth largest economy in the world. Indian economy was liberated after the major economic crisis faced in 1991 (Baru, 2017).

China proceeded onward to wind up an assembling centre point of the world with a very fast development for a long time, making it the second biggest economy on the planet with a capitalization of over 11 trillion US dollars. It is the biggest economy on the planet as far as Purchasing Power Parity, where India comes third. India is relied upon to end up the third biggest economy by 2025. Yet it would be at an inaccessible from China regarding economy estimate. China is built on manufacturing sector while

India is built on the software sector. Economy size speaks a lot in the world domain whereas Indian cash is a market determinant money. At the point when the world's second biggest economy chooses to devalue its economy, it will influence all countries on the world particularly India since India import a great deal from China. Oil consumption is second highest following China, thereby determining the prices and demand of oil in the world. So economy fragile to oil costs will be influenced if China grasps choices adequately. India is a dependent economy unlike China. United States and Europe is major export market for software. Most of the software developed in India is redistributed by these organizations situated in US and Europe. If India lose this market due to various factors, economy will be on India's knees as India's service sector contribution to the economy is close to 50 percentage. China is less dependent economy. The government can take bold decisions which can help the country survive in crisis situation as it isn't a multi-party system like in India. Cheap labour will keep China going on and on (Kamath, 2017).

India had its GDP of only 1/5th of Chinese GDP. There is huge difference in terms of economy but both had huge market in which India believes that China wants to use its market for supply of low cost Chinese product which may create flood on Indian market. China is willing to enter India via Nepal's land so investing huge amount on cross border roads between China and Nepal and linked up to India Border. "String of Pearls" strategy and China's policy of economically influencing the world are now well known. They are playing a global chess game in which their purpose is to checkmate everybody.

India is under threat from China. India should play a role on different sector to improvise the relation with China. If India wants to be at par with China, it needs to develop better military force and stronger economy. People just told India is under

threat, but no one told how India can improve its situation. This can be done by Promoting skilled labour in the country by investing heavily on infrastructure, reducing imports by expanding productions in-house, promoting Research and Development in Arms and Ammunition advancement in India, promoting alternatives to oil for running vehicles, trains and electricity grid such that India is isolated from variation from oil prices, improving connectivity to the Sino-Indian borders, making India dependent on manufacturing hub (Quality) over China (Quantity), reducing dependencies on cities like Delhi and Mumbai. Delhi is very prone to natural calamities and if a nuclear war happens, Delhi would be finished. These all describe about the threat to India from China and hence it is shown in relation between China and Nepal. There are some other reasons why India does not want Chinese presence in Nepal are:

iii. End of Monopoly/ losing its influence

Indian foreign policy establishment that guides Indian government believes that South Asia with small countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives falls under Indian sphere of influence and hence their view is that somehow India has an inherent right to interfere in Nepal and Bhutan whereas other view India is a big and powerful country and it's only natural for them to dominate smaller countries, as they point to Russia trying to dominate smaller countries like Ukraine or Georgia and also with US and Mexico. But the presence of China and the ways Chinese coming in Nepal in terms of investment and somehow influencing on politics of Nepal is being a bigger threat to India. After the independence of India on 1947, India is always dominating or somehow influencing in Nepali politics which seems to be ended after the rise of Oli and his good relation with China.

India is being known as the sole way for Nepal to enter world but after the agreement of trade and transit treaty between Nepal and China, Nepal's dependency on India is somehow ended. There are several projects holded by India and Nepal's action against India on those projects somehow shows demotion of Indian influence in Nepal.

In fact, Nepal and China expanding their friendship doesn't mean Nepal is enemies of India. This Zero sum outlook whereby if Nepal extends relations with China in some extend, it's playing China card or anti India must stop. As said by foreign policy expert Rajan Bhattarai "We need to grow out of our narrow perspective of pulling India while talking about Nepal-China relation and puling China while talking India-Nepal relation. Our relation with China is independent matter as well with India also. As we and our both neighbour are sovereign state, we shouldn't encourage such narrow mindset of dragging another nation in bilateral matters."

China is Nepal nearby neighbour like India, and is the second biggest economy of the world. There is no any valid reason on why Nepal shouldn't endeavour to be friend with China and acquire ventures here to improve Nepal's economy? On the one hand India is trying to get more investment from Chinese side and isn't it tricky to recommend Nepal shouldn't bring investment from China? Some of the Indian scholar believes that expanding friendship between Nepal and China, will prompt China utilizing Nepal to hurt India, again this is just dread mongering. Nepal will never allow its territory to be utilized against either India or China. Nepal isn't stupid enough to make India an enemy and Chinese additionally understand that in Nepal. China wants to connect railroad from Tibet to Kathmandu for exchange purposes, additionally endeavor to construct roads and hydroelectric project.

Some Indians feel that, if Nepal and China relationship increases, it implies India will lose its supreme predominance over Nepal. Indeed, no Nepali can acknowledge this view India has inherent rights to command and interfere in Nepal and that Nepal ought to totally be dependent to India for everything. There's literally nothing wrong in Nepal attempting to grow its exchange and travel ties with China and different Countries.

China doesn't need Nepali area to be utilized against Nepal (like in 1970's when CIA utilized Tibetan Khampas in Nepal to assault Chinese troops in Tibet), China likewise needs a steady Nepal to work together here, China is growing financial relations with all South Asian Countries including Nepal, China needs Nepal to be a part of Belt and Road Initiatives which is beneficial to Nepal, China needs Nepal to maintain One China policy which Nepali are completely cheerful to do and manage Tibet situation (Nepal has a lot of Tibetan refugees), among others. Nepal is a federal democratic Republic and hates dictatorship of any kind, Nepali seeks Chinese economy for development however not its legislative issues. In this regard if anybody in India believes that Nepal may pursue China in following one party communist system this might not be right point of view.

Finally, Nepal and India are similar in several regards, both being a Hindu majority Country with similar language and culture among others. Indian influence is much in Nepal than others and Nepal positively has a long chronicled relationship going back a great many years and nothing will change that. Simply this Zero Sum mentality that Nepal should possibly be overwhelmed by India and on the other hand Nepal attempts to grow relations with China, then it's all bad and anti-India would not be able to define Nepal and India's relations.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

As discussed already Nepal connecting with India and China, there are several misunderstandings in several time periods with one of the neighbours i.e. India and the relation with China is not gone to such a condition since the 1960s. One of the major obstacles of Nepal and China relations is being considered to be the faithfulness of Nepal toward China and how Nepal can convince the Chinese leaders on Nepali efforts. Till 2022 it is seen that China wants more stable government on Nepal by which she can trust easily on the development helping projects. It's sure that China wants to spread their market Asia using Nepal route but due to ineffective task conductance of Nepali leader it's not being ranking on the top priority.

At first, the government of Nepal should consider future sustainability of contemporary road projects. The two-lane road construction is under process which will not be sufficient in the future, so the government should ponder over the issue of expanding roads in accordance with geographical viability. Primary focus of government should be to make roads as short distance as possible, like Rasuwadi-Kathmandu road distance which has been cut off by almost 25 Kilometers. Considering the geographical complexities the government should adopt advanced scientific methods to improve roads and guarantee safety from natural calamities.

Similarly the government of Nepal should seek financial as well as technical support from international societies to construct underways and bridges which will ultimately narrow down the distance, ensure safe highways and also well manage roads. The threat of Tibetan refugee movement in China after construction of the road remains a challenge and government of Nepal should sought rational solution to overcome this

issue. Otherwise China may not show interest in this road project. Nepal and China government can establish advance security check points to monitor the movement of people.

Nepal should endeavour to promote trilateral cooperation through these roads and attract maximum mobility from India and China which will keep road fully functioning and busy. The government should further work on forming policy and trade protocols with which Nepal get maximum benefit instead of being just a transit. Conditioned by the bad history of governmental inconsistency and political instability Nepal should be able to give political assurance to its both neighbors. Likewise, as Nepali export can't compete with core Chinese product, the intelligent solution would be to trade the goods in Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) instead of main cities in China. And in internal front the government must consider investing in domestic industries so that the production would meet international standard and also save home industries from cheap imported goods.

The availability of storage facilities and supply centers near Shigatse or somewhere near to the Nepal border would give feasible ground for import and export which consequently do away with the compulsion to travel far-away cities like Shanghai, Tianjin or Guangzhou.

Nepal and China should have an agreement to use the following six ports of China through the discussed highways and other also with more routes where the trade between China and Nepal would be constructed/completed in the near future.

- i. Guangzhou (sea port, near Hong Kong)
- ii. Hangzhou (sea port, near Shanghai)
- iii. Tianjin (sea port, near Beijing)

- iv. Chongqing (river port, near Chengdu)
- v. Horgos/Khorgos (land port, China-Kazakhstan border) for Nepal's Trade with European countries,
- vi. Kashgar (land port, near China-Pakistan border) for Nepal's trade with Pakistan, Iran, Gulf countries and African countries

Both government should work on settling the protocols for trade and transit agreement with due consideration to the national interest of each state. In April, 2019, Nepal and China signed the protocol on implementing the Trade and Transit Agreement, which meant Nepal, could use seven Chinese sea and land ports for third-country trade. However the feasibility challenge regarding cost and distance remaining at the edge should be solved in policy level. Furthermore the government of China and Nepal should systematically host table talk to negotiate border related dispute and strive to open more border connectivity.

The road connectivity alone cannot hold the human and goods mobility in long future so both governments should focus constructing rail connectivity. During the Nepali prime ministerial visit in 2016 agreed on terms to connect China-Nepal through railway and on 2018 prime ministerial visit, the modality of rail has been agreed. The government should try completed these project as soon as possible so that it will enhance the effectiveness and volume of trade as well as peoples mobility between two countries.

Considering the importance of road connectivity for Nepal the five highways would benefit Nepal through every possible way. In the economic front, it will give platform for Nepal to expand and diversify its trade relation with growing economies like China. On diplomatic front, this road connectivity would foster the relation between

two governments in administrative level and also the people-to-people relation would find new height after easy road access. Furthermore, these projects could be the milestone in terms of trade and infrastructural linkage between Nepal and China and also plays a crucial role in implementing the trilateral relationship between Nepal, China and India.

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