

**INDIAN ECONOMIC BLOCKADE ON NEPAL: A STUDY
OF COERCIVE DIPLOMATIC TACTIC**

A

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

I certify that this dissertation entitled "**INDIAN ECONOMIC BLOCKADE ON NEPAL: A STUDY OF COERCIVE DIPLOMATIC TACTIC**" was prepared by Ms. Dina Bohara under my guidance and supervision. I hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the research committee Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER'S IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY.

.....

Apekshya Shah

Supervisor

Date: August, 2020

LETTER OF APPROVAL

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind and any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

.....

Dina Bohara

Date: August, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Centuries old friendly relations with porous border makes the Indo Nepal relations one of a kind and most celebrated bilateral relations in the international community. Nonetheless, the palsy-walsy relation turns fickle at times as witnessed during the blockade imposed by India on Nepal during 1970, 1989 and 2015 A.D.

The 2015 blockade by India, tout de suite after the adaptation of new constitution by Nepal, was neither declared nor admitted by the India even though Nepal took the matter to various international forums. Despite negating the accusatory remarks by Nepal and other concerned authorities, the lack of flow of goods especially at the southern border demonstrated otherwise. India taciturnly supported the Madhesi agitator halting the goods loaded trucks on the borders.

The impact was huge, especially because Nepal was trying to resuscitate from the massive earthquake. It created political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Nepal. Both the life of people and economy suffered. Moreover, it once again commoved the social division based on region, race and origin. Above all, substantial outcome came in the form of disenchantment among Nepali people about the Indo Nepal relation, Indian Big Brotherly outlook towards Nepal and the fickle status of Nepal's diplomacy.

The blockade have been characterised by the power imbalance between Nepal and India where India is way ahead in the power game because of its accelerative global reach. And in Nepal's case dependence upon India fueled by low level of development, foreign aid has coalesced India's position in Nepali affairs, leading to repeated intrusion on Nepali domestic issues.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	:	Association of South East Asian Nations
BRICS	:	Brazil Russia India China and South Africa
CPN (UML)	:	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
DFHRI	:	Democratic Freedom and Human Rights Institute
EU	:	European Union
INSEC	:	Informal Sector Service Centre
MP	:	Member of Parliament
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PM	:	Prime Minister
SAARC	:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
U.S.	:	United States
UCPN	:	Unified Communist Party of Nepal
UDMF	:	United Democratic Madhesi Front
UN	:	United Nations

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Nepal, a land-locked country sandwiched between two giants-China in northern and India on Eastern, Western and Southern border maintained an isolated foreign policy towards rest of the world including its neighbors for a long period of time. The free movement of people and an open border between the two countries were forged since the Kingdom of Nepal was founded in 1789 by Prithvi Narayan Shah (Chand, 2018). The Treaty of Peace and Friendship and Treaty of Trade and Commerce, signed in 1950 embarked the era of cooperation between the two countries. This treaty among others, provided the freedom for the citizens of both the countries to work, live and buy property in each other's territory. Although in the treaty no preferential treatment was given to Nepalese exports to India, India granted transit for goods to be imported and exported by Nepal via India. Subsequently, different treaties were signed between the two countries in 1971, 1978, 1996, 2002 and 2009. Apart from the treaties, cooperation between the two countries has been built on the foundation of mutual trust and friendship resulting in stable relationships for most of the times. Since then Nepal-India relationship has evolved encompassing not only political factors but the whole gamut of cultural social and economic factors as well. From having open border between two nations to making an agreement to collaborate on matters of defense and foreign affairs, the relation between these two South Asian countries is certainly one of a kind. On Indian front relationship with Nepal has always been considered of great importance primarily because of its geo-strategic location which acts as a "buffer" zone between Tibetan plateau, china's autonomous region and the Indian plain.

Through times the relationship has been evolved as exigent yet so problematical and sometimes equivocal too. “This age-old relation between the two countries has confessed many misunderstandings from time to time so much so that at times India has imposed trade embargoes on Nepal” (Chand, 2018). It is quite an irony that despite India and Nepal being the proximate neighbors claimed to have peaceful and friendly relations time and again, India has imposed blockade multiple times straining the bilateral relationship.

The blockade of 2015, right after the adoption of the Constitution of Nepal, was unofficial since it was never declared by the Indian government. While the world wholeheartedly welcomed the new constitution India was in dismissive terms and raised objections too. At the same time, owing to the disagreement towards certain provisions of constitution, rebellions in the terai regions of Nepal invoked protests demanding change in the constitution. The protest was accompanied with blockade which created crisis in earthquake crippled country. Officially, India did not accepted its role in the blockade. India in fact, kept on claiming that it was the Nepali protestors who had blocked the entry-exit points on the Indo-Nepal border due to which Indian trucks could not ferry fuel and supplies into Nepal and trade had to be halted. However, Nepal was clear that the India was to blame for the blockade. Nepal government called for help from the members of international community for the violation of the transit rights of Land-locked country. For instance, during UN General Assembly Nepal “appealed to the international community to ensure that land- locked countries' freedom of transit is not curtailed” (The Press Trust of India Ltd., 2015)

The tussle lasted for approximately five months. Ultimately, the demand of agitating UDMF was addressed with the necessary amendments in constitution particularly Article 42 and 286. Subsequently, the blockade ended too. During this period, Nepal suffered and the relation between these two countries suffered too. Nepal realized its limitations and India faced anti India sentiments from Nepali people.

1.2. Statement of problem

In over half a century period, India has allegedly blocked the borders with Nepal for three times. This has not only affected the Nepal's economy and Nepali sentiments but have impacted the centuries old stable relationship that both countries shared. Tensions came ahead in the mid-1970s, when Nepal pressed for substantial amendments in its favor in the trade and transit treaty and openly criticized India's annexation of Sikkim as an Indian state. In 1975, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev proposed that Nepal be recognized internationally as a zone of peace; he received support from China and Pakistan. In New Delhi's view, if the King's proposal did not contradict the 1950 treaty and was merely an extension of nonalignment, it was unnecessary; if it was a repudiation of the special relationship, it represented a possible threat to India's security and could not be endorsed. In 1984, Nepal repeated the proposal, but there was no reaction from India. Nepal continuously promoted the proposal in international forums, with the Chinese support. Remarkably, in 1978, India agreed to separate trade and transit treaties, satisfying a long – term Nepalese demand. In 1988, when the two treaties were up for renewal, Nepal's refusal to accommodate India's wishes on the transit treaty caused India to call for a single trade and transit treaty. Thereafter, Nepal took a hard- line position that led to a serious crisis in India-Nepal relations. After two extensions, the two treaties expired on

March 23, 1989, resulting in a virtual Indian economic blockade of Nepal that lasted until late April 1990 (Kavitha K K, 2016).

In 2015, right after the promulgation of Constitution of Nepal 2015 Nepal faced a severe shortages of fuels, medicines and other supplies because of the blockade in the Birgunj checkpoint through which most of the Nepal's foreign trade including India is conducted. Nepal government and every Nepali citizens including academicians and scholars termed the whole situation as Economic blockade by India which Indian government kept on denying the accusation and arguing that the unrest was a result of dissatisfaction of ethnic Madhesis who felt discriminated in the constitution.

In this backdrop, the question arises of whether the iterative Indian blockades might be a coercive tactic to sway Nepal as per the wishes and command of India; or is it simply the consequences of our own deed.

1.3. Research Questions

With reference to the statement of problem of this research, the following research questions are set to be assessed:

- What were the reasons behind the 1969, 1989 and 2015 blockade?
- What were the basis for confirming the 2015 blockade despite the denial from the southern neighbor?
- How those blockades were a tactic for coercive diplomacy?

1.4. Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were:

- To analyze the blockades imposed on Nepal in terms of its socio-economic and political impact.
- To explain it in terms of coercive diplomatic practice.
- To identify the future potential action plan that Nepal can adopt in order to avoid such an act from our proximate neighbor.

1.5. Significance of Study

Indian involvement in Nepali political affairs is not a rare sight. In fact, India has been vocal about its Big Brother approach towards Nepal. Nepal however, seldom opposed such interference. However, Indian dismissiveness towards the much awaited constitution of Nepal followed by the undeclared blockade led to changes in opinions from Nepali side. Therefore, the research accesses the Indian involvement in the blockade despite its constant denial along with the impacts on Nepal.

1.6. Delimitations

Given the pool of events of economic blockades in international political sphere there exist ample opportunities to analyze the Indian blockade from multiple spheres and dimensions. In doing so the research may get deviated from its core objectives. Thus, in order to keep up with the need, the research fundamentally concentrates on the analysis of Indian blockade on Nepal. More particularly, the study focuses more on Unofficial Indian Blockade post the implementation of Constitution of Nepal 2015 in tandem with the past blockades of 1970 and 1989. However, the case study of other similar blockades has been taken in consideration in order to draw the conclusion.

Overall, the research faced the scarcity of resources on Indian perspective since there are very few accessible writings by Indian scholars.

1.7. Research Methodology

The research is based on descriptive and analytical tools.

- a. Research Design: This research adopted explanatory research design with some quantified data.
- b. Unit of Analysis: The evolving Indo Nepal relations in context of political, economic and other dimension is the area of study.

- c. Nature and Sources of Data: The nature of the data is Secondary. The data have been collected from books, thesis on similar topics, journals, reports of Government of Nepal and materials available in websites.
- d. Tools and Techniques of Data Collection: Secondary data will be used in this research. Content analysis of documents and texts like articles, journals, reports, books, online videos and the collected data will be analyzed through the theoretical aspect.

1.7. Organization of Thesis

The first chapter gives an introduction and historical background of the topic along with the detail introduction. The second chapter reviews the related literature that consists of reviewing the various aspects, scenario of coercive diplomacy and economic blockade. The third chapter provides the conceptual framework. Fourth chapter analyzes the Indian sphere of influence in South Asian region and Nepal. Fifth chapter focuses on the assessment of past blockades and their impacts. Sixth chapter discusses about the coercive nature of the blockade and also provides future courses of action. At last, seventh chapter a conclusion, sums up the research findings with final comments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 On International System and State Sovereignty

International system is complex interplay and interactions among various political entities, which are mostly states. Roberts O. Keohane in *LILLIPUTIANS' DILEMMAS* categorizes such states as system-determining, system-influencing, system-affecting, system-inaffectual states which according to him can be referred to briefly, in conformity with traditional usage, as “great,” “secondary,” “middle,” and “small” powers respectively. In his word the definition of each of these types are:

A “system-determining” state plays a critical role in shaping the system: The “imperial power” in a unipolar system and the two Great Powers in a bipolar system are examples. In a second category are “system influencing” states which cannot expect individually to dominate a system but may nevertheless be able significantly to influence its nature through unilateral as well as multilateral actions. Thirdly, some states that cannot hope to affect the system acting alone can nevertheless exert significant impact on the system by working through small groups or alliances or through universal or regional international organizations. These may be labeled “system-affecting” states. Finally, most international systems contain some states that can do little to influence the system-wide forces that affect them, except in groups which are so large that each state has minimal influence and which may themselves be dominated by larger powers. For these small, “system-ineffectual” states foreign policy is adjustment to reality, not rearrangement of it. (2006, p.59)

Along with this discussion the concept of sovereignty holds great deal of significance in international system. Jean Bodin, father of modern theory of

sovereignty developed the idea of absolute sovereignty suggesting it as a supreme, perpetual, and indivisible power, marked by the ability to make law without the consent of any other. However, in this regard Jaques Maritain in *The Concept of Sovereignty* suggests “For Bodin the king did not possess supra-mundane Sovereignty, a sovereignty which has absolutely nothing above itself; God was above the king, and the supreme power of the king over his subjects was itself submitted to “the law of God and nature”, to the requirements of the moral order. But the king was possessed of human Sovereignty” (1950, p.344).

Furthermore, Sovereignty was formalized in international system by the treaty of Peace of Westphalia, 1648 and acquired the status of defining principle in international state system. “The Peace of Westphalia brought to a well-deliberated end the Thirty Years War, a conflict that had ravaged and blackened a Europe rent wide open by the possibilities of self-determination in identity and government. From then on, ‘Westphalia’ has become shorthand for a state management system that has held sway over international relations generating the received wisdom that history and long-standing is able to imbue. ‘1648’, as with all dates of significance, has increasingly run the gauntlet of de-contextualized reference, generating a reified and static dominant meaning.”(Hayman, 2006)

Since then the concept of sovereignty has gone through various transformations. Engraved in various international laws and charters of international institutions modern day sovereignty is largely confined within principle of non-interference and mutual respect for political jurisdiction. In other words, today sovereignty holds the idea that all states regardless of their differences putatively possess legal equality in principal. However the idea of sovereign equality has been often criticized by various theorists for lacking pragmatism. In this connection, Iver

B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstohl in their article Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?

Write:

From a legal point of view, all sovereign states, great or small, are equal before the law. From a political stance, however, they are far from equal. From the very beginning, the recognition of the great powers' special position in the international system at the Congress of Vienna coexisted uneasily with the system's major principle of the formal equality of sovereign states, which was to prevent the great powers from formalizing their preponderance. (2006, p.5)

Further, David Vital (2006, p.77) argues that "While the formal equality of states is a valuable and, on the whole, valued convention of international relations, it is evident that in peace, no less than in war, differences of size have political consequences for both large and small nations. All things being equal, the state with great economic resources and a large population has more influence on events outside its frontiers, greater security from pressure and attack, more prestige, and a larger element of choice in respect of the national policy it pursues. A small state is more vulnerable to pressure, more likely to give way under stress, more limited in respect of the political options open to it, and subject to tighter connection between domestic and external affairs."

2.2. Power Asymmetries

What is power? What are its dimensions? What are the approaches to the measurement of power? Robert A. Dahl propounded the most cited definition of power as "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" in *The Concept of Power*. Although several other definitions abound, it is opined that none can beat its widespread acceptability. Frank R. Pfetsch and Alice Landau in *Symmetry and Asymmetry in International Negotiations* have

identified three dimensions of power: Power-as-a-possession (Thomas Hobbes), power-as-relation (John Locke), and power-as-relativity (Karl W. Deutsch). The first results from resources, the second from social and political relations, and the third from the relative position a negotiator occupies compared to the others. All three dimensions are due to perceptions by politicians and interpretations by scholars. (2000, p.27). Furthermore, Jeffrey Hart has identified three main approaches to the observation and measurement of power: 1) control over resources, 2) control over actors, and 3) control over events and outcomes (1976, p.289).

Asymmetry is a structure one can find among most social and political relations and in relations between unequal parties. Asymmetry is a relationship between the small and the great, the weak and the strong, and the rich and the poor (Pfetsch, 2011). According to him, “In asymmetric relationships, actor A wins at the expense of actor B (zero-sum). The unequal allocation of power resources can lead to a point where the most powerful party makes threats and exerts pressure.” Basically, power asymmetry refers to a clear disparity in capabilities among state actors (Kuik 2013). Perceived asymmetries may contribute to highly destructive waging and ending of conflicts due to their effects on the dominating and on the dominated side in conflicts. Members of the dominant group may seek to impose their will and exploit those they can intimidate, giving little credence to their interests. Furthermore, the party that considers itself to be much stronger than its adversary may be tempted to demand so much from its adversary that it overreaches, with damaging consequences. This may occur as a result of conflict escalation that becomes self-destructive. On the other hand, the people who consider themselves to be weaker and dominated by another party also often conduct themselves in ways that make an equitable and enduring accommodation less likely, and even self-destructive. They may believe that

they must accept oppressive conditions, and that belief in their inferiority can contribute to a self-defeating sense of being powerless victims. (Kriesberg, 2009)

Moreover, Conventional wisdom in international relations suggests that a rising power is an inherent threat, which is bound to expand its national interests and augment its foreign influence (Ding, 2012). And regarding the small states it has been suggested that “the most obvious fact about small powers is that their foreign policy is governed by the policy of others” (Handel, 2016). In South-Asian context, many researches and scholarly writings suggest that India has huge potential and means to take a meaningful leadership role in the region. India dominates the region in physical, strategic and economic terms. (Joshi, 2008).

In this Context Puran Ghale (2010, p.20) argues “In South Asia, the Indo-centric asymmetric power balance has raised security concerns among the smaller states leading to mistrust and suspicion of Indian motives. In such a scenario, one can argue that regional cooperation has certainly been a problematic affair. As Feroz Khan asserts, “In this asymmetric environment, security concerns are the primary obstacle to [regional] integration.” India is considerably superior in geographic size, economic resources, and military capabilities than the other SAARC countries. This disparity has raised security concerns among the smaller countries of the region: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives.” He further adds:

With the strategic mindset, India largely perceived itself as the incumbent custodian of the security of the Indian sub-continent and with a destiny to play a major role in regional and world affairs commensurate with its geographical placement, historical experience, and power potential. Many observers believe that this strategic thinking has remained the cornerstone of Indian security perceptions for most parts of the post-colonial period. Sabur points out that the perception was

reflected in the India Doctrine that was promulgated during the prime-minister ship of Indira Gandhi in the 1980s. He further argues that the doctrine can be regarded as a South Asian version of the Monroe Doctrine, “wherein India views the entire region as single strategic unit and herself as its sole custodian of security and stability.”

According to C. K. Lal, “[The] doctrine claimed India’s pre-eminent right to intervene in the internal affairs of neighboring countries if disorder threatened to extend beyond national boundaries. (p.21).

2.3. Coercive Diplomacy

Various definitions of coercive diplomacy has been provided by scholars depicting various facets of it. Peter Viggo Jakobsen defines it as the use of military threats and/or limited force in support of diplomatic negotiations. He further adds that for diplomacy to be coercive one it must meet three requirements: First, they must include both sticks and carrots in their conceptualization of the strategy and study their interaction. Second, they must define the objective of the strategy as war avoidance, that is, as a strategy that actors employ in order to achieve their goals without resorting to war. Third, they must aspire to be policy relevant and seek to bridge the gap between theory and practice that is characterizing much contemporary international relations theory. While talking about coercive diplomacy it is equally important to distinguish it from war since in both events there is use of some kind of forces. Peter Viggo Jakobsen, in his book *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy after the Cold War*, has made an effort to juxtapose the difference between them which is shown in the following table:

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Military coercion</i>		
	<i>Diplomacy</i>	<i>Coercive diplomacy</i>	<i>Compellence/ coercive war</i>	<i>Full-scale war</i>
Instruments	Persuasion, positive incentives and assurances	(Military) threats and/or symbolic use of force coupled with carrots and assurances	Military threats and use of limited force	Decisive or brute force
Purpose	Peaceful settlement of disputes	Obtain compliance without escalating beyond symbolic use of force	Obtain compliance without defeating the enemy	Impose compliance through military defeat
Requirements for success	Adversary cooperation and overlapping interests	Adversary cooperation and overlapping interests	Adversary cooperation and overlapping interests	Control: adversary cooperation and common interests not required

Source: (Jakobsen, 2016)

Also, coercion is often interchangeably used with influence or power. Michael

I. Handel delineates the differences among influence, power and coercion quoting Robert Dahl: defines influence as “a relation among actors in which one actor induces other actors to act in some way they would not otherwise act,” power as “a special case of influence involving severe losses for noncompliance,” and coercion as “a form of power that exists whenever A compels B to comply by confronting him only with alternatives involving severe deprivation.”(p.245)

Coercive diplomacy refers to any efforts by one international actor to get another international actor to act in a way that the second international actor would not otherwise choose to act (Feaver & Lorber, 2010). In the international relations literature, coercive diplomacy, at its core, has two characteristics: first, it is meant to change the target’s behavior; and second, it does so by threatening pain (including, but not necessarily the use of force) in limited amounts (Art & Cronin, 2003).

Talking about the prospects of Coercive Diplomacy Jakobsen predicts that the resort to coercive diplomacy will increase simply because the number of actors willing and capable to use military coercion and force in pursuit of their objectives is rising. He further argues that the increasing number of actors and their different nature (state and non-state) will further complicate the use of coercive diplomacy and that

they can employ a variety of overt and covert military (conventional, irregular and terrorist), economic and political methods in an integrated way to achieve their objectives. He supports his argument briefing the case of Russia and Ukraine:

“The Ukraine crisis erupting in 2014 is a case in point as Russia skilfully integrated the actions of Ukrainian separatists in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine with its own use of conventional, irregular, political, economic, cyber and informational means in order to coerce the Ukrainian government to end its rapprochement with the EU and NATO and accept its place in a Russian sphere of influence.”

The article 2(4) of the UN (the international governing organization) charter refrains all members in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations and advocates the peaceful settlement of any disputes among them. However, the hypocrisy was visible when UN sanctioned Iran on 9th June 2010 for its uranium enrichment activities. Similarly UN has not been successful to deter the blockade against Qatar. The blockade was started three years ago by four Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and trade ties with Doha, and imposed a sea, land and air blockade on Qatar, claiming it supported "terrorism" and was too close to Iran (Al Jazeera, 2020).

2.4. Economic Blockade

Collins English Dictionary defines economic blockade as an embargo on trade with a country, esp. one which prohibits receipt of exports from that country, with the intention of disrupting the country's economy. Most of the coercive Diplomacy involves pressure short of the use of force and the use of economic sanctions looms (Feaver & Lorber, 2010). While discussing about almost fifty-year old U.S. economic

policy towards Cuba since Fidel Castro rose to power, Hernandez-Truyol argues, “To those antagonistic to the revolution the policy is an embargo - an economic sanction constituting a legitimate government action that legally restricts the flow of goods, services and capital to the island in order to try to influence the Castro regime into changing its undemocratic ways. Such lawful restrictions simply signal justifiable disapproval of another country's policy with the goal of changing the state's behavior that is perceived as a threat to the sanction-imposing state's national security or economic well-being. To those supportive of the regime, however, the U.S. action is a "blockade," an illegitimate use of power to try to make the state march to a different tune - one not of its own sovereign imagination or desire.” (2009, p. 55). Economic blockades can be defined by many analysts as a set of the procedures that can be taken by a nation (nations) against another nation for economic, political, or ethical reasons in order to change its behavior to a specific direction. (Gomaa, 2006)

Reviews of various literatures exhibits that over times the meaning of blockade has changed. According to Frank J. Merli and Robert H. Ferrell:

Everything has depended upon the nation with available power, whether that nation wished to employ it for its own benefit or that of the international community. At the time when international law was a novelty, the time of Grotius, there was no such thing as an international community. In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, blockade was a point of argument governed by power and, for the United States, by hope—trust that trading nations could make their ways without interference. After World War I the word "blockade" tended to go out of style. The international organizations created after the world wars anticipated the prevention of conflicts through the cordoning off of "aggressor" nations by multilateral action and not by the traditional bilateral maneuvers involving blockade. Then, too, other

words—"quarantine," "interdiction," "interception"—have seemed less provocative than "blockade" and also would not automatically involve inconvenient rules and practices of the not-too-distant past. As to the future of blockade, it may not have one. New words from the late twentieth century give indication that it is a concept of the past.

Be it the Athenian blockade of the island of Aegina in the Saronic Gulf during the First Peloponnesian War during 458–457 BCE or the ongoing Qatar Blockade from U.A.E, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt, blockade in one form or other has continued to exist as a powerful diplomatic tactic to change the behavior of the targeted nation. Generally the trend in international community shows that the economic sanctions are imposed by powerful nations such as United States' long-term embargo on Cuba, a group of nations such as ongoing Qatar Blockade from U.A.E, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt, or/ and by the international or regional organizations such as the UN Security Council's comprehensive sanctions against Iraq just four days after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Although the application of economic sanctions against weak states has not always been effective, it has nevertheless been one more weapon in the arsenal of the great powers, not available to the weak states (Handel, 2016).

Despite availability of pool of resources on Coercive Diplomacy and economic blockade, there exists a gap in the availability of resources from Nepali point of view. Thus, this research is an attempt to fulfill that gap.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Research Methodology

As this study pertains to the Indian Economic Blockades on Nepal: A Study of Coercive Diplomatic Tactics, the research is based on descriptive and analytical tools.

- a. Research Design: This research will adopt explanatory research design with some quantified data where is necessary.
- b. Unit of Analysis: The study area will focus on relationship between Nepal and India specifically during 1969/1989/2016 blockade.
- c. Nature and Sources of Data: The nature of the data is Secondary. Such data will be collected from books, thesis on similar topics, journals, reports and other materials available in websites.

Library Method: the study has been conducted through the library method reviewing the wide range of research, articles and reports.

Comparative Review Method: comparative review method is the method of comparing reviews. Different reviews are compared from Indian and Nepali sides to analyze the socioeconomic impacts of unofficial blocked.

- d. Tools and Techniques of Data Collection: Secondary data will be used in this research. Content analysis of documents and texts like articles, journals, reports, books, online videos and the collected data will be analyzed though qualitative, historical analytical method, tables, graphs, bar diagrams and pie charts.

3.2. Conceptual Framework

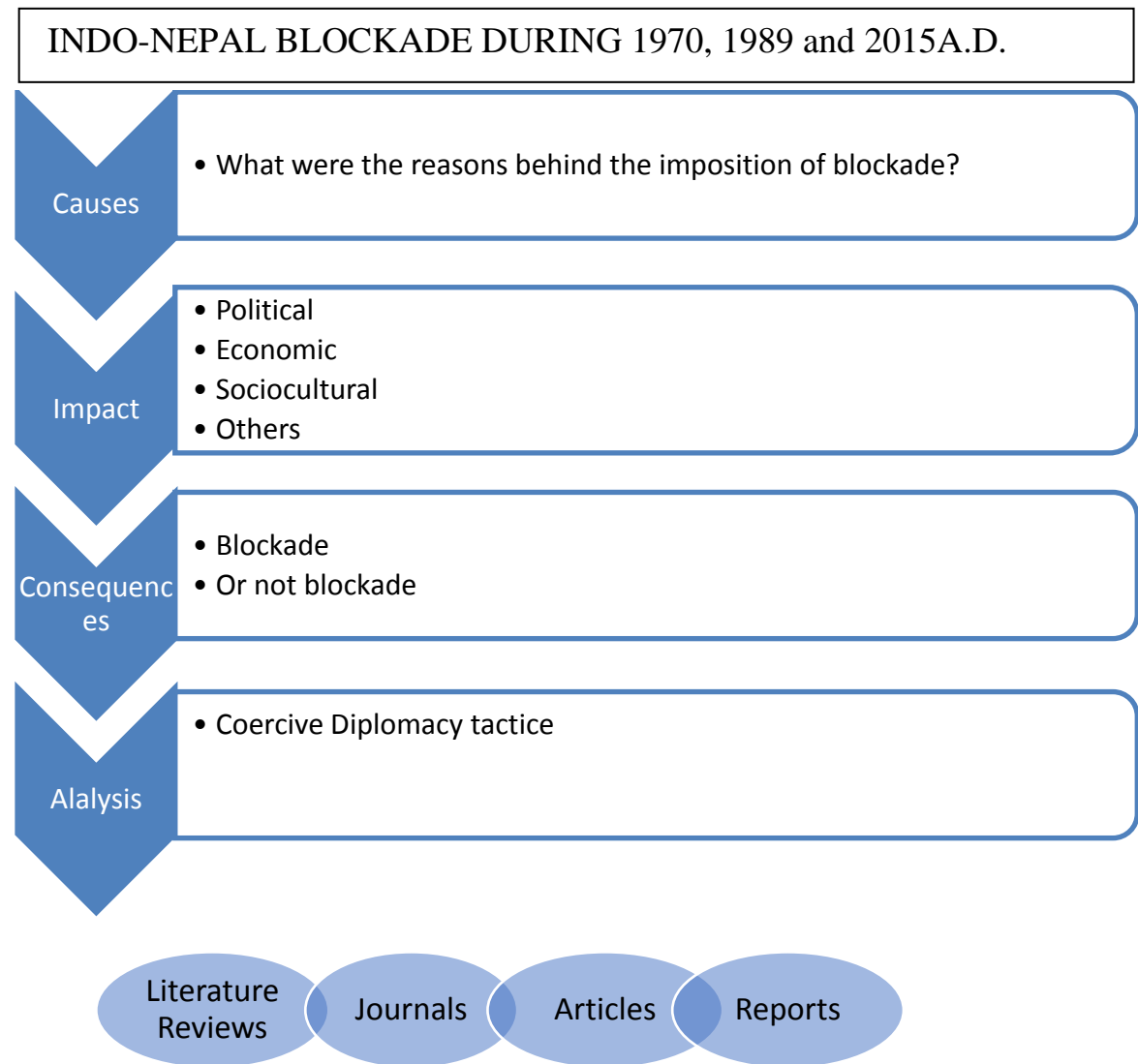


FIGURE1: Conceptual Framework adopted for the Research

The research focuses on the study of three blockades imposed by India in 1970, 1989 and 2015 A.D. on Nepal. The idea is to study those blockades from the perspective of Coercive Diplomacy tactic. For this purpose, identification and understanding of the underlying causes that induced Nepal's closest neighbor to take such step against the small Landlocked Himalayan neighbor. Subsequently, the study of impacts is equally important to understand the severity of the blockade on one of the least developed nation in the world. Thus, the research studies those impacts particularly from the political, economic and social perspective.

Also, given the premise that the blockade of 2015 was never officially declared by India, the research builds up the foundation upon which the conformity of the blockade is laid. Finally, on the basis of overall study the research analyses the coercive nature of Indian blockades.

CHAPTER 4

INDIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AND NEPAL

4.1 India's Role in South Asia

India, among south Asian countries stands out particularly in terms of size, population and its growing influence around the globe. It is the member of many of the significant organizations and groups such as G-4, G-20, BRICS, BIMSTEC, ASEAN+6 to name a few. Countries in the south Asian region surrounding India, such as Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Maldives are smaller than India with regard to size and population. Likewise, it is the only South Asian country that shares a border or a coast line with Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka while none of them have common borders with each other. “It has only helped India use its geographic advantage to build up its power. India’s geographical bounty makes it a necessary component of survival of South Asia’s landlocked states like Nepal and Bhutan. Similarly the origins of the water systems of Pakistan and Bangladesh also pass through Indian territory making them too dependent on it” (Falak, 2017).

India’s fundamental policy goal in South Asia is to preserve and strengthen its dominance of a regionand has pursued its policy of hegemony at the expense of good relations with the smaller and far weaker neighbors (Office of Near East-South Asia Analysis, 2011). Furthermore, Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech addressed at Indian Council of World Affairs in 1949 remarked that India by virtue of her practical position and other reasons, she is bound to play an important part in Asia. The speeches made by him was later compiled and published in a book named *Jawaharlal Nehru's speeches* in 1958. He said:

“It is so situated that because of past history, traditions etc., in regard to any problem of a country or a group of countries of Asia, India has to be considered. Whether it is a problem of defense or trade or industry or economy policy, India cannot be ignored because.... her geographical position is a compelling reason. She cannot be ignored also, because of her actual or potential power and resources....India is potentially a very powerful country and possesses the qualities and factors that go a long way to make a country grow strong, healthy and prosperous.”(Nehru, 1958)

These profound beliefs of earlier leaders of independent India have played dominant role in shaping the Indian foreign policies regarding South Asia. It has indeed evolved with the change in leaders and their individual perception but has hardly deviated from the perceived belief that India plays crucial role in Asia and that it is opined that “if South Asia is to get itself out of the crippling binds of conflicts and cleavages, the six will have to accept the bigness of the seventh. And the seventh, that is India, will have to prove to the six that big can indeed be beautiful.” (Gupta, 1984, p.122).

However this claimed leadership of India is perceived as hegemony by the neighbors. The perception among neighbors is that India demonstrates a “big brother” attitude and tries to impose policy constraints especially to safeguard its own security interest in the region. (KHOBRADE, 2016). This “big brother” attitude was evident in Bangladesh’s controversial border management and the bilateral economic imbalance, Sri Lanka’s civil war and Indian military involvement. India even today looks at every political activities and movements in south Asia very closely and tries to influence them although there raise the issues of interfering the internal affairs (KC, 2016).

Also it cannot be denied that no south Asian country are willing to upset the diplomatic relations with India. Even though relation between India and Pakistan is often hostile given their prolonged territorial conflicts, the brute reality is that the two countries are radically different in their national capabilities. India is more than four times Pakistan's size, is more than six times larger in population, has an economy that is over eight times bigger when measured by the nominal gross domestic product, and fields military forces that outmatch Pakistan's by any measure other than deployable nuclear weapons (Tellis, 2017). While India has struggled to play a fully hegemonic regional role, notably against challenges from Pakistan and China, it is undoubtedly the most powerful South Asian actor.

4.2. Causes of Nepal's Dependency on India

Nepal is known to be heavily reliant on India. The major causes are said to be:

Landlockedness and Topography and Geographical proximity: Nepal is a landlocked mountainous country which has created defacto dependency upon its neighbor for trade and transit facilities. Because of the high mountains and low levels of infrastructure development, it is difficult to access to the Northern neighbor and transit via the Chinese route is not considered feasible.

Commerce and Trade relations: India is the largest trading partner of Nepal where above 60 percent of Nepali products and exported. Also, Nepal is dependent on India for the import of wide ranges of products ranging from basic commodities to arm and ammunities.

Low level of Development and need for assistance: Nepal is one of the least developed countries in the world struggling to uplift its position by achieving high economic growth and sustainable economic development. However, due to the resources gap it has to rely on foreign assistance. India has been extending economic

and technical support to Nepal for almost for decades since 1951. Beginning with major irrigation projects such as the Koshi and Gandaki barrages, Indian assistance has significantly contributed to the development of the economic structure in Nepal. Today, such assistance has been extended to the development of every sector such as hydropower, roads, irrigation projects, airports, railways etc.

Moreover, the cultural and historical and social ties, pegged exchange rate system, open border system and other socio-cultural, economic and political-strategic factors has also increased Nepal's dependency on India. However, these factors sometimes causes disagreement and dissatisfaction in the relationship between these two countries changing the "special relation" to "complex relation".

4.3. India Nepal Relations

The formal relation between Nepal and then British governed India was initiated in 1816 with Treaty of Sugauli amidst "the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-16)". As per the treaty provisions, Nepal lost Sikkim, the territories west of the Kali River (Kumaon and Garhwal), and most of its lands in the Terai which was returned back to Nepal later. The diplomatic relations between Nepal and independent India was established on 13th June 1947 which was further institutionalized with The Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the Treaty of Trade and Commerce in 1950. While the Treaty of Peace and Friendship recognized and made commitments from both the side to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, to continue diplomatic relations. The treaty of trade and commerce allows Nepal full and unrestricted right of commercial transit of all goods and manufactures through the territory and ports of India. Even though these treaties were signed during Rana regime which collapsed within a year after the treaty was signed, treaty is still in enforcement providing framework for what is described as a "special relationship"

between the two countries and sets out various provisions relating to security, economic and commercial matters, in a manner conducive to Indian interests (Muni, 1992). The treaty emphasizes the close strategic relationship between these two countries. As a result of this treaty, the Nepal-India border is an open one with no restriction on movement of people of Nepal to India and vice versa since 1950.

Despite being committed to the friendly relationship as engraved in those treaties, it seemed to be driven by security dilemma rather than trust. While India suspects every Nepalese activity possibly directed by China, Pakistan and any other western power against India and majority of the Nepalese look every Indian activity with great suspicion with the belief that India does not miss to fish in Nepal's troubled water whenever it gets such opportunity (Aryal, et al. 2011).

4.4. Indian Role in Nepal

After independence, the role of India became apparent in the affairs of Nepal. This stems from landlocked Nepal's longstanding economic dependence on India, for trade, significant aid, diplomatic support, essential supplies, and investment (Anderson, 2014). Also because between Nepal's two proximate neighbours, India provides cost and time effective route for trade and transit with other countries since the high-altitude mountainous Himalayan terrain of the Chinese border offers few substantial, usable routes, which has significantly limited economic, and other, Sino-Nepali relations.

Indian involvement is quite evident particularly in political affairs of Nepal. Looking back in history, India seems to have some role in most of the important political events in Nepal. Nepal went through four major democratic movements and each of these movements got green signal from New Delhi to reach to the consensus (KC, 2016). India played crucial role in the restoration of monarchy and

establishment of democracy ending up 104 years Rana dictatorship in 1950 A.D. The agreement itself was settled in New Delhi among King, Ranas and Congress. The democratic parties made alliance with King Tribhuvan and the Indian government to overthrow the Rana regime (Snellinger, 2015). In this context, a compromise deal for Nepal's political future was envisaged by India.....which included a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution and an interim government with “popular” representation, but with a Rana prime minister and recognition of King Tribhuwan” (Mishra, 2004). As a deal result of this deal, the very first constitution of Nepal titled ‘Government of Nepal Act, 1948 was drafted with the involvement of three Indian Scholars namely Prakash Gupta, Raghunath Singh and Ram Ugra Singh. In Dhruba Kumar’s words India “midwifed” the birth of democracy in Nepal.

In the early years Nepal sought Indian advices in almost every spheres. However, following the growing dependence of Nepal with India, King Mahendra tried to diversify Nepal’s diplomatic relations with other countries and expand international presence. This policy was followed under King Birendra’s reign, from 1972 until 2001. Birendra’s government unprecedentedly planned to impose visas on Indian workers; this, along with Nepal’s diplomatically neutralizing “zone of peace” declaration, was perceived by Delhi as retreating from their special relationship (Anderson, 2014). Later in 1989 when Nepal purchased weapons from China, India argued that this was against the provision of Treaty of Peace and Friendship and refused to sell aircraft weapon to Nepal. This disagreement led Indian government to impose economic sanctions on Nepal and closed down 19 Of 21 trade routes and 13 of 15 transit routes used by Nepal. Although India provided the reasons of expiration of trade and transit treaties, underlying cause was Nepal’s attempt to diversify the foreign relations and India’s fear of losing Nepal from its sphere of influence. This

blockade became one of the underlying reasons to initiate the very first mass movement in Nepal against the Panchayat System initiated by King Mahendra and continued in Birendra's regime too. The movement was supported by India where 207 members of the Indian Parliament appealed to the Indian government to help the restoration of democracy in Nepal: an all-party Nepal fund was established to support the pro-democracy movement. However Indian commitment to re-establishment democracy in Nepal, as Mishra puts it, was an idealistic veil intended to cover its true intentions, which were focused on securing an agreement which would allow Indian interference in crucial factors in Nepal such as import of arms and ammunitions, training of armed personnel, exploitation of Nepal's water resources. Later, after the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990, India sent two of its legal experts Dr. L.M. Sanghvi and A.G. Noorani, to help in drafting the constitution. In fact, the 1990 AD democratic movements was initiated in India. The base of the movement "12 points agreement" was done in New Delhi (Snellinger, 2015) between the Seven Political Parties and Nepal Communist Party (Maoists) which ended decade long insurgency in Nepal.

4.5. Indian Interest in Nepal

India has multiple interests in Nepal. Delhi's traditional "buffer region" perception of the Himalayan region persists, and limiting external influence remains a key objective, particularly of rival neighbours but also of other states and international agencies perceived as Western-biased (Anderson, 2014).

The porous Indo-Nepali border remains a security concern, particularly regarding cross-border criminal networks and militants in poorer northern Indian states, which have an already strained capacity to fight high crime levels; indeed,

following bomb attacks in early 2013 attempts were made to tighten border security (Economic Times 2013).

According to various reports on Nepal's water resources, Nepal possesses about 2.27% of the world's water resources, and it is estimated that there are altogether 6,000 rivers, including rivulets and tributaries. Nepal possesses enormous potential for hydropower development and India always has an interest in it and there are no significant rivers left where Nepal and India have not signed the collaboration agreement in various form (Lama, 2019). Both the countries have been involved in various water sharing treaties and projects such as Mahakali Treaty, Pancheswor Multipurpose project, construction of Tanakpur-Mahendranagar link road up to India Nepal border, release of irrigation water for Chandani-Dodhara area, Sapta Kosi High Dam Multipurpose project and Sun Kosi Storage Cum diversion scheme, Gandak Project. Similarly, the interconnectedness of border region communities, though, is such that it would also benefit Indian localities to further develop economic links.

Thus there exists plurality of interests on both part. Nepal views India as a friendly neighbor that has the potential to help it pursue its developmental goals, Delhi's perception of Nepal has consistently been heavily informed by security interests and the desire for a stable, cooperative Himalayan neighbor (Anderson, 2014).

CHAPTER 5

ASSESSMENT OF ITERATIVE BLOCKADE AND IMPACTS

5.1 Brief overview of Past Blockades

The 1970 Blockade

India imposed blockade on Nepal in 1970 after Nepal built the Araniko Highway linking Kathmandu with China, and opened Tatopani as a trade route with China. Relatively, it lasted for a shorter period of time as compared to other two blockades. The first obstruction occurred during 1969 after the expiration of the 1950 Trade and Transit Treaty; where the Indian government imposed quantitative restrictions on cross border transactions (Pant, Volume I Issue 1, 2018 May).

The 1989 Blockade

The 1989 Indian Blockade on Nepal was imposed on the ground of Nepals decision of buying Chinese weapons in 1988. Moreover, there were outburst of various events and subsequent tension emerging out of them which also acted as catalyst in the imposition of blockade. During that period, India did not endorse Nepal as Zone of peace. Similarly, in 1987, when India expelled Nepali-speaking people from Meghalaya, Nepal retaliated by introducing work permit system for Indians in 1988. When the treaty of trade and transit was up for renewal, which by this point had been separated into two different treaties i.e. Treaty of Trade and Treaty of Transit, Nepal refused to accommodate India's wishes on the transit treaty. This caused India to call for a single trade and transit treaty. Thereafter, Nepalese leaders asserted that as per the UN charter, transit privileges were "a fundamental and a permanent right of a land-locked country" and thus India's demand for a single treaty was unacceptable. These lingering arguments between then PM Rajiv Gandhi and then King Birendra led to the lapse of a transit trade agreement between them. When those two treaties

expired on 23 March 1989, Indian government imposed economic blockade on Nepal that lasted until late April 1990 and lasted for about 15 months creating shortages of essential commodities. The underlying cause of this blockade was Nepali government's decision of buying Chinese weapons (Pant, Volume I Issue 1, 2018 May).

5.2 Assessment of the Blockade-2015

A Brief Overview

The constitution Of Nepal 2015 went through several hurdles before it was finally promulgated on September 20, 2015 .The first Constituent Assembly established after the Peoples Mass Movement II could not make the Constitution even though the tenure was extended several times. The second Constituent Assembly too was on the verge of dissolution due to the disagreement between the political parties involved, chiefly in respect of the issues relating to arms management and integration of the Maoist armed forces in the national army, governance system of the State, federalism, electoral process and the judicial system. However, they came too an agreement to execute a 16-Point political understanding on June 8, 2015 creating the foundation for enactment and promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal.

The constitution was adopted by a majority of votes in the Constituent Assembly. Out of the 598 members of the Constituent Assembly, 507 voted in favor, 25 voted against, and 66 abstained. While most Nepali happily celebrated the historic event, Madesh region was agitated and accused that the newly formed constitution failed to address their concerns which included: a) the group of 20 districts of Tarai to be one province, b) delineation of electoral constituencies based on population, proportional inclusion in the state structures, c) re-demarcation of electoral constituencies every 10 years, d) equal treatment to both decent and naturalized

citizenship. The discontentment towards the constitution agitated certain groups which resulted to strike throughout the Madhes region and the rebellions tried to seal the border.

India in Picture

Two days after Nepal's constituent assembly endorsed new constitution, Indian foreign secretary S Jaishankar arrived in Kathmandu on Friday morning as a special envoy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Parasar, 2015). He made sincere effort to pursue the Nepalese leaders to accommodate the concerns of the dissatisfied groups in the constitution at the eleventh hour (Rai, 2017). However, his effort went in vein when Nepal promulgated the constitution on 20th September 2015 as declared in advance. Regarding the visit Sushani Haider wrote on The Hindu that India sent Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar on a last-minute mission in calling off the Constitution, that was guaranteed to fail. And then it followed that up with a concerted effort to keep Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli out of power, which also failed. Roy (2015) reported that Nepal needs to make seven changes in its constitution. He added that these amendments were conveyed to Nepal's leadership by the Indian government through official channels Ranjit Rae, India's ambassador to Nepal. The amendments echoed the voice of the leaders of Madhesh-based parties.

After these failed attempts, India clearly supported Madesh protest and gradually started to cut down supplies to Nepal. Gradually, the border sealing by the protestors was changed into blockade. The blockade begun on September 23, 2015 and ended on 5th February 2016. The government of Nepal accused the Indian government for imposing the blockade. But the Indian government denied the imposition of economic blockade and blamed the agitated parties at border for restricting the passage of goods from India to Nepal. However, at the border points,

its agencies, the customs offices and Sima Surakshya Bal (SSB), did not allow passage to Nepal-bound containers (Tiwari, 2015) which affected earthquake hitten Nepal severely. Despite the continual denial of Modi government many India scholars and politicians criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for such an inhumane act. Shashi Tharoor, Congress MP, author and Former UN under-secretary-general, critiqued, “Despite its increasingly feeble denials, India’s de facto blockade of Nepal has choked the country’s economy, cut off its oil supplies, caused genuine hardship and provoked a groundswell of hostility against our country – from the one place on the planet whose relationship with us is so fraternal that we maintain open borders with it.” He reasoned the blockade was understandable because the people of the Terai (or the Madhes, as Indians prefer to call the region south of the hills abutting indian border) are in many ways kin to – and essentially indistinguishable from – their brethren on indian side of the frontier.

Similarly, leaders from various countries and the international organizations through their statements made it clear that it indeed was blockade though undeclared. India.com on 11th November 2019 reported about the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s concern over the obstruction of essential supplies on the Nepal-India border has reiterated his concern over the obstruction of essential supplies on the Nepal-India border underlining the landlocked country’s right to free transit. It added that the Secretary General called UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on all sides to lift the obstructions without further delay. Discussing the multilateral dimension of the blockade between Nepal and India, Tofail Ahmed, Minister of Commerce, Bangladesh, told The Hindu that the blockade which has been hurting Nepal’s economy, should end at the earliest (Bhattacharjee, 2015). On 23rd October 2015, European Parliament issued a formal statement by Jean Lambert, Chair of European

Parliament Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia on situation at Nepalese border. “While acknowledging that there are certainly areas for improvement in the newly adopted Constitution, Ms. Lambert made the point that the unofficial 'blockade' at the Nepali border only serves to hurt the Nepalese people who are still recovering from the devastating earthquakes earlier this year” the statement continues.

While India denied the imposition of blockade whole time, the fact that there was no passage of goods from India to Nepal depicted different scenario. "From 23rd September 2015 there was a complete blockade of vehicles carrying commodities at several Nepali checkpoints. It was deliberate, as there was no report of agitations, and continued for more than three months” (Roy, et al., "Report on Fact-Finding on Impact of Blockade along Indo-Nepal Border"). Surendra Bhandari wrote on Kathmandu post on 12th October, 2015, “The main features of a blockade include the act of closure of official ports, customs, and transit points or systemic slowing down of the vehicular movements. The undeclared blockade on Nepal by the Indian government has actually restricted all the trading opportunities of Nepal, including that of essential consumable goods, gasoline, and liquefied petroleum gas, among others.

Therefore, the act of the Indian government qualifies as a blockade.”

Governments and multinational bodies impose economic sanctions to try to alter the strategic decisions of state and non-state actors that threaten their interests or violate international norms of behavior (Masters, 2019). In the case of 2015 blockade India had the motive to bring changes in the newly promulgated constitution as per the indian comfort disguised in the demand of protestors. Based on these contexts, one

can safely conclude that the sealing of border by India right after the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal is an act of blockade.

5.3 Impact of Blockade

The blockade created huge setback as well as humanitarian crisis in Nepal. Since Nepal is “IndiaLocked” on three sides and was trying to recover from the major earthquake that hit the land on April 2015, the implications of blockade was huge.

Political Impacts

The blockade brewed the anti-India sentiments in Nepal igniting nationalistic outrage against India among Nepali people. This time even political leaders seemed affected by Indian action. For the first time Nepali leaders became vocal about the wrong deed and warned the southern neighbor that Nepal have the option to turn to the north if things go wrong down south. “Nepal asked India not to "push it to the wall" by choking petroleum and other essential supplies which could compel it to turn to China despite logistical difficulties” (Economic Times, 2015).

Despite the geographical complexity, Nepal approached China to rescue nation from ongoing shortages. Nepal signed fuel agreement with China for the first time in October 2015, to import petroleum products breaking the monopoly of Indian Oil Corporation. Accordingly, China provided 1.3 million litres in October and 1.4 million litres of fuel in December to Nepal (Aryal, 2019). Then prime minister of Nepal K. P. Sharma Oli criticised India for imposing unofficial blockade and praised China for helping with fuel and other essential commodities. He declared that Nepal’s trade volume would be enhanced and diversified (Ghimire, 2015).

Economic Impacts

The blockade continued from September 2015 to February 2016 halting the supply of goods and fuel to Nepal for approximately four and half months. The four

months period is equivalent to one quarter of a fiscal year. This not only affected the consumption but also production and distribution process of economy.

Nepal was reviving from the destruction of severe earthquake (7.8Magnitude) which hit the country on 25th April 2015. The blockade, approximately after four months of such disaster, crippled the country severely. The government officials claimed the blockade would inflict bigger loss than the earthquake which resulted the loss of over 7 billion dollars (BBC, 2015).

The Nepal economic Forum had conducted a study on Post Disaster Assessment: Blockade 2015/16, published on June 2016 to comprehend the depth and breadth of the impact of economic blockade on important sectors of economy. The key findings of the report has been listed below:

- A sharp rise in inflation- as high as 12%, stark drop in international trade,
- Increased cost of input for farmers due to lack of access to chemical fertilizers and fuel at regular prices
- Nepal's private sector suffered losses totalling a staggering Rs202.5 billion (\$1.96 billion) as a result of the blockade
- The tourism sector that was starting to recover slightly following a devastating earthquake saw arrivals plunge to a six-year low after the blockade.
- The blockade also led to an expansion of the black market. "This came at a huge cost in terms of exorbitantly priced fuel, lost revenues for the government and adverse social implications.

The blockade pushed the economic indicators of the country very low. Almost 2,200 industries were shut down and 400,000 people were out of their jobs because of the blockade (Maharjan, 2015). The economic growth which was predicted to be around 6% was revised to 2% due to the impact of blockade.

It is clear that each and every sector of the economy was affected by the blockade. Various research shows that the agricultural sector was affected the most. The INSEC and DFHRI report proclaimed that the blockade reduced significantly the food production because of the lack of improved seeds, irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides and many other agricultural equipment and facilities (Aryal, 2019). But more than any other sector, the strike gave a death blow to the agricultural sector in the Terai, which is the backbone of Nepal's economy (Jha, 2018). Thus, the blockade choked the economic sector of Nepal to the point that suffocated the economy for a significant period of time.

Social Impact

The blockade had prodigious consequences on social spectrum too. First and foremost, lack of supply of essential goods including food, fuel and health essentials impacted the life of people especially the vulnerable section of the society.

As a landlocked nation, Nepal imports all its fuel supplies from India. Thus, the fuel crisis created by blockade affected several households especially because it was the festive season in Nepal. The impact was obvious on transportation and movement of people. Similarly, education sector too was severely affected. According to the report by INSEC and DFHRI, more than 1.6 million students were deprived of going to schools for 75 continuous days in nine districts of eastern and central Terai (INSEC & DFHRI, 2016). Health sector was another major sector affected by the blockade. Due to the shortage of oxygen, medicines and blood supply, health care services were affected since Sixty percent of the total medicine consumed in Nepal is imported from India and other countries (INSEC & DFHRI, 2016). The Indian blockade not only blocked the medicinal supplies from India but also from other countries since Nepal is bound to use India as a transit to reach to the third country.

Likewise, it also halted the reconstruction of projects and distribution of relief to the earthquake affected people. While there were ongoing political and diplomatic talks between Nepal and India, distribution of food and shelter aid to those affected by the earthquake was halted and no reconstruction materials could be provided (Budhathoki & Gelband, 2016).

Beside these explicit consequences, Blockade fueled social division on the basis of origin and race to some extent. The Agitators at Madhes were termed pro-Indian. “By sealing the border, they supported the Indian government and it was easy for Indian government to point them to be responsible for the blockade.... they were used against their own country.... Ruling leaders representing from hills created internal colony within the country....The Madhesi were united not only against the government but also against hilly people....So, during and even after the blockade, there was a clear division between the people of hills and Madhes” (Aryal, 2019). Adding more on the situation, Pathak(2015) canvassed that,

Student organizations affiliated with ruling parties such as Nepali Congress and CPN (UML), as well as the main opposition party UCPN-Maoist, staged protest rallies against the blockade in Kathmandu, Gulariya and several parts of the country. Hundreds of local people near Bhairahawa’s custom checkpoint chased away the agitators who were sitting on the Nepo-India border to obstruct the Sunauli border point. Local people at Buddha Chowk in Bhairahawa burnt the effigies of Madhesi parties’ leaders. Two agitating leaders, namely Upendra Yadav and Rajendra Mahato, were termed as the compradors of India. The protestors of Dhangadi in Kailali district claimed, “India never wants to see a peaceful and prosperous Nepal”. People staged protest against India’s blockade in Jumla, Kanchanpur, Rupendehi,

Nawalparasi, Kaski, Syangja, Lamjung, Palpa, Gulmi, Itahari and others in Nepal and burned the effigies of PM Modi and Indian flags. The Nationalist Civil Forum staged a demonstration against the blockade in Kakarvita custom in Jhapa district on September 28, 2015. The protestors chanted anti-India and anti-Modi slogans.

The blockade indeed was a huge setback on the economy and the life of Nepali people. Moreover, the intervention this time in the form of undeclared blockade was rather perceived coercive unlike the previous ones when such interventions were actually perceived as Big Brotherly action.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Indian Blockade: A Tactic of Coercive Diplomacy

Coercive diplomacy refers to any act of a country (or group of countries or international/regional organizations) backed by the use of or threat to use force/pressure (e.g. economic blockade) , forced upon target to make them act in certain way favourable to the former, which the later would not otherwise do. Based on this definition and the discussions made above, the Indian blockades on Nepal imposed on several events can be identified as a Tactic of Coercive Diplomacy. This can further be elucidated on the basis of following points:

Use of force/Pressure: The form of pressure/force that India chose to impose on Nepal in 1970, 1989 and 2015 A.D. was Economic Blockade characterised as the obstruction in the easy flow of goods and services to the target country i.e. Nepal.

Purpose: In these three events, India had distinct purpose though not explicit one. The 1970 blockade was the Indian reaction on Nepal's construction of Araniko Highway that linked Nepal to China. Similarly, the 1989 blockade amidst several proximate causes, was the result of Nepal's decision to purchase arms from Chinese government. In both the events, the purpose was to deter Nepal's growing closeness with China.

The 2015 blockade was different since the blockade was neither accepted nor the purpose was explicit. However, it became quite clear that India had discontentment towards Nepal's newly promulgated and wanted amendments accordingly. India wanted to secure the rights of the Madhesi people (who have close ties with people across the border in India) in the new constitution. The Indian establishment didn't think that the constitution that came out on September 20, 2015 — whose

promulgation India merely “noted” even as the rest of the world readily welcomed it—was in the interest of the Madhesi community (Baral, 2016). Moreover, India wanted the constitution promulgation postponed to address its own political interest under the cover of the Terai agitation (Gautam, 2015).

End of the Blockade: The movements of goods from India into Nepal were halted since September 20, 2015, the day of promulgation of new constitution. And Goods from the blocked Raxaul-Birjung border started to flow in from February 3, 2016. After Nepal ensured India about the amendments in the constitution as per the demands of the agitators in Madesh.

Thus, India by means of invoking economic blockade on Nepal as a tactic of coercive diplomacy, made an (successful) effort to change the political environment of Nepal favourable to its own needs.

6.2 Future Course of Action

The three blockades on Nepal seriously undermined the sovereignty of the country. Moreover, they were against trade and transit rights of the landlocked nation and against the human rights of people. Needless to say, the political cultural and socio economic spectra of the country were seriously damaged. The impact was huge, particularly because Nepal is a landlocked country and is dependent on India for 90% of its imports.

Since India already has imposed three blockades on Nepal, we cannot be certain that another blockade is improbable. Thus, we must prepare ourselves in such a way that the impact of the probable blockade can be minimized. The possible course of actions can be:

- Diversification of the relations especially trade and transit relations. Nepal must find the alternative of India to import fuel and other commodities to end

the heavy dependence. The lately enrichment of Nepal-China relation is plausible.

- Revamping of Nepali foreign policy and enhancement of Nepali diplomatic resources. Priority should be given to institutional strengthening, qualified staffing, research and diplomatic discourses. Also Nepal should upgrade the existing strategies on international relations.
- The government of Nepal should focus on the settlement of internal issues such as poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, marginalization.
- Nepal should make bona fide attempts to reassure Indian government for the amendments in the unequal provisions of the treaties and agreements between Nepal and India specially the provision of trade and transit treaty.
- Nepal should strengthen its position in international community so that its voice can be heard when needed. Nepal must engage a fully resourced body to have our foreign policy's impact wider.

Lastly, there is no doubt that the need to diversify Nepal away from India has never been higher. But it is also true that Nepal cannot afford to sour relation with India. Cooperative and balanced relation with India is important for Nepal especially when Nepal holds the vision of Prosperity through high economic growth and sustainable development. Thus, any action of Nepal should not lead to a situation which could jeopardise Nepal's future.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Blockade is one of the coercive diplomatic tactic which is considered a weapon of powerful nation used on the weaker states. Usually, blockade is officially declared. In this regard, this research sought to find out the the reasons behind the 1970, 1989 and 2015 blockade, the basis for confirming the 2015 blockade despite the denial from the southern neighbor and India's vested interest behind the iterative blockades.

India, among south Asian countries stands out particularly in terms of size, population and its growing influence around the globe. India's fundamental policy goal in South Asia is to preserve and strengthen its dominance of a region and has pursued its policy of hegemony at the expense of good relations with the smaller and far weaker. Nepal is no exception and is known to be heavily reliant on India particularly because of Landlockedness and Topography and Geographical proximity, Commerce and Trade relations Low level of Development and need for assistance. Moreover, the cultural and historical and social ties, pegged exchange rate system, open border system and other socio-cultural, economic and political-strategic factors has also increased Nepal's dependency on India. Likewise, India has multiple interests in Nepal. Delhi's traditional "buffer region" perception towards Nepal continues as of today too. There exists a kind of security dilemma in Indo-Nepal relation. India suspects Nepal to be influenced by others specially China, Pakistan. Thus, it seeks to limit external influence which emanates from the desire for a stable cooperative neighbor. As a result, India demonstrates a "big brother" attitude and tries to impose policy constraints especially to safeguard its own security interest. This "big brother" attitude was evident in several cases sometimes in the form of

blockades. India imposed blockade on Nepal in 1970 after Nepal built the Araniko Highway linking Kathmandu with China, and opened Tatopani as a trade route with China. Similarly, the 1989 Indian Blockade as discussed earlier was outburst of various events and subsequent tension emerging out of them. But the underlying cause of this blockade was Nepal government's decision to buy Chinese weapons.

The source of 2015 unofficial blockade was the discontentment towards the newly formed constitution of Nepal which resulted to strike throughout the Madhes region and the rebellions tried to seal the border. This is where India came in picture trying to settle down the agitation. However, after several failed attempts, India clearly supported Madesh protest and gradually started to cut down supplies to Nepal. Gradually, the border sealing by the protestors was changed into blockade. The blockade begun on September 23, 2015 and ended on 5th February 2016. The government of Nepal accused the Indian government for imposing the blockade. But the Indian government denied the imposition of economic blockade and blamed the agitated parties at border for restricting the passage of goods from India to Nepal. However, at the border points, the easy passage of Nepal-bound containers were restricted by Indian agencies which affected earthquake hit Nepal severely. The act was condemned globally.

The blockade was largely driven by the power imbalance and the undeclared authority deriving from that power. With this blockade came some sort of realizations in Nepal. It made Nepal realize that it's over dependence on India for everything needs to be minimized and that it is the high time that Nepal needs to really work on the diversification of the foreign relation not just on paper but on each and every potential dimensions – economic, political and others. It also depicted the weak status of Nepali diplomacy and diplomatic structure. Even though organizations such as UN,

EU spoke for us, neither could it stop India from meddling in our internal affairs in the name of “security concern” nor force India to remove the blockade as soon as possible.

The 2015 Indian Blockade on Nepal coined new terminology in the literature of International political affair i.e. Unofficial Blockade. The 2015 Blockade was termed unofficial because the country which imposed the blockade never officially declared it. However, it possessed all the characteristics that defined the act as blockade. The Indian officials halted the containers and restricted them to enter into Nepal, thereby creating shortages of fuels, basic essentials, medicinal and other products. Declared or not, restrictions on free movements of goods in today’s liberalized and globalized world is blockade.

Appendix A



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

STATEMENT BY JEAN LAMBERT
CHAIR OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS
WITH THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA

Brussels, 23/10/2015

Chair of Parliament's South Asia Delegation on the situation at the Nepalese border

Following an event to mark the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal, Jean Lambert, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia, highlighted the need for regional solidarity in this new phase of Nepal's development.

While acknowledging that there are certainly areas for improvement in the newly-adopted Constitution, Ms. Lambert made the point that the unofficial 'blockade' at the Nepali border only serves to hurt the Nepalese people who are still recovering from the devastating earthquakes earlier this year. The fuel shortages as a result of the blockade are also having an impact on tourism in what is usually the peak season in Nepal, causing further damage to the economy of the country and the livelihoods of many.

Ms. Lambert welcomed reports earlier this week that the new Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. KP Oli is seeking talks with Madheshi groups to address grievances with the Constitution, and calls on India - as a good neighbour - to help ensure essential supplies reach Nepal and that cross-border trade is not impeded.

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Appendix B: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S OFFICIAL STANDS AND STATEMENTS

Statement on Nepal

December 21, 2015

1. External Affairs Minister was informed by Nepal's Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa today that the Nepalese Cabinet has taken some important decisions to address and resolve demands regarding the Constitution raised by agitating Madhes-based parties.
2. These decisions include amendments to the Constitution on participation in the state organs on the basis of proportionate inclusiveness and delineation of electoral constituencies on the basis of population. The demarcation of provinces is also to be addressed through an appropriate arrangement in the Constitution on the basis of political consensus. Similarly, others demands including citizenship are to be resolved through negotiations and consensus.
3. Government of India welcomes these developments as positive steps that help create the basis for a resolution of the current impasse in Nepal. As a neighbour and well-wisher, India was deeply concerned at the unrest stemming from internal differences in Nepal on the Constitution. We urge all Nepali political forces to now demonstrate the necessary maturity and flexibility to find a satisfactory solution to the Constitutional issues through constructive dialogue in an agreed timeframe.
4. We are confident that a return to normalcy in Nepal would create a more secure and predictable climate for unimpeded commerce between our two countries.

New Delhi,

December 21, 2015

**Statement by External Affairs Minister on Calling Attention Motion on
"Situation in Nepal and State of Indo-Nepal Relation" in Rajya Sabha
(December 03, 2015)**

December 03, 2015

Hon'ble Chairman,

1. I rise to make a statement on the Calling Attention Motion on "Situation in Nepal and the State of Indo-Nepal Relations". Hon'ble Members would agree that India and Nepal share a unique relationship of centuries-old civilizational ties based on shared geography, history, culture, language and religion. The two countries have close political relations, wide-ranging economic cooperation and deep-rooted people-to-people friendship. India provides Nepal broad-based development assistance for infrastructural projects in health, water resources, agriculture, irrigation, education, culture, and rural & community development. Our 1950 Friendship Treaty provides for open borders, free movement, and gives Nepalese citizens effective 'national treatment' in terms of education and employment in India, including in our Army as well as in some civil services, where they are allowed to compete along with Indians.
2. India has always stood for a peaceful conclusion to Nepal's on-going political transition after decades of instability and violence. At times, at the request of Nepali political parties, we have actively facilitated that process. Throughout the process of Constitution making in Nepal, there has been a political consensus in India on providing unstinting moral and material support to

Nepal in its efforts to establish a peaceful, stable and Constitutional democracy. We have remained closely engaged with Nepal during its ongoing political transition and have consistently supported early promulgation of a broad-based, inclusive and durable Constitution. Prime Minister emphasized this during his two visits to Nepal in 2014, when he advised Nepal's leadership to work with a 'rishi-man' to frame a Constitution based on 'sahmat' rather than 'bahumat'. I believe that this advice, of a neighbour and will-wisher, reflects the broad opinion of the House as well as our polity.

3. Soon after assuming office in May 2014, our Government has embarked on a rejuvenated partnership with Nepal, injecting a new sense of optimism in this vital relationship. There was significant progress in the area of hydropower cooperation and connectivity. Prime Minister visited Nepal in August 2014 on the first PM-level bilateral visit in 17 years, and again in November 2014 for the SAARC Summit. I myself visited Nepal in July 2014 to co-Chair the Joint Commission, which met after 23 years. When a devastating earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015, India was the first responder with its largest ever disaster relief operation appropriately called 'Operation Maitri'. For the long-term rehabilitation phase, India's commitment of US\$ 1 billion (1/4th of which would be as grant), was announced on 25 June 2015 in Kathmandu, which was the largest pledge among all international donors. It is over and above our existing commitment of another US\$ 1 billion, 40% of which would be grant, over the next five years. India will continue to extend all assistance, in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Nepal, for peace, stability and socio-economic development of the country. This should leave no one in any doubt of our care, concern and heart-felt friendship for our northern neighbor.

4. Prime Minister's call for consensus and broad-based ownership, conveyed during his two visits to Nepal, in August and November 2014, was strongly and consistently conveyed by Government both before, and after the draft Constitution was put out for public consultations from June-August 2015. Our advice was reiterated on several occasions including the visits by CPN-UML Vice-Chairperson Smt. Bidya Bhandari in January 2015, UCPN(M) senior leader Shri Baburam Bhattarai in March 2015, UCPN(M) Chairman Shri Prachanda in July 2015, senior leader of Nepali Congress Shri Sher Bahadur Deuba in August 2015, as well as other visitors from Nepal. I personally re-emphasized our advice during my visit to Nepal in June 2015, and Prime Minister re-stated it during his telephone conversation with PM Sushil Koirala in August 2015. Our Ambassador in Kathmandu was also in regular touch with Nepali political parties in this matter. Therefore, any suggestion that our position lacked clarity or that there was lack of engagement simply has no basis.
5. The draft Constitution that finally emerged was perceived as non-inclusive by several sections of the Nepalese society, particularly in the Terai, who became restive and came out in protest from mid-August 2015 onwards. Several contentious provisions in key areas - such as constituency delimitation, inclusion for needy sections of the society and provincial boundaries - were apparently incorporated in the draft, either at a late stage without due debate and discussion, or by diluting important provisions of the 2007 Interim Constitution under which two successful elections had already been held in 2008 and 2013.

6. In an effort to head off what clearly was a looming crisis, Foreign Secretary travelled to Nepal on 18-19 September as Prime Minister's Special Envoy. He advised the Nepalese political leadership to (a) give more time for dialogue to bring about broad-based acceptance; (b) send a positive signal to the disaffected sections of the Nepalese population that their grievances will be addressed; (c) reflect on our assessment that if the protests were not addressed politically, the agitation in the Terai areas could intensify; and (d) prevent a further deterioration of the situation in the Terai and on the India-Nepal border. Regrettably, these cautions passed unheeded.
7. As a result, the Constitution adopted on 20 September 2015 was perceived by large sections of Nepal's population as non-inclusive and diluting the representation already available to Nepal's ethnic and social groups since 2007. Unrest in the Terai escalated sharply, causing over 55 deaths and injuries to hundreds since August. The agitation, which completed 100 days on 23 November 2015, has seen protestors obstructing movements of cargo trucks across India-Nepal border crossings, thereby affecting supplies of fuel and other essential commodities from India to Nepal.
8. The Constitution was expected to mark the culmination of Nepal's peace process and political transition after decades of violent instability. That the new Constitution established Nepal as a federal democratic republic was duly noted and recognized by us. But we could not ignore the fact that several sections of the Nepalese society felt that their interests had not been taken care of. Our position, without being prescriptive, is that remaining issues about perceived under-representation, should be resolved through dialogue in an atmosphere free from violence and intimidation, and institutionalized in a

manner that would enable broad-based ownership of the Constitution. The then Government of Nepal, led by former PM Shri Sushil Koirala, had also approved two important constitutional amendments on constituency delimitation on the basis of population and inclusion for needy sections, by the Cabinet on 2 October 2015. But the new government has not yet moved forward on these amendments.

9. This has caused continues resentment among the disaffected sections of the Nepalese population, and the situation in many parts of the country bordering India remains violent. With a 1751-km long open border with the five Indian States of Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim, India is directly affected by developments in the Terai. The unfortunate use of force on 2 November, to forcibly remove protestors obstructing the Raxaul-Birganj route, and thereafter on 22 November against protestors in Saptari, has further vitiated the atmosphere. An Indian citizen was also killed, and we have sought an investigation into his death.
10. Leading members of the international community as well as many in Nepal have increasingly taken a position similar to ours. The USA, UK, EU and UN have spoken about the need to ensure an inclusive Constitution and address fundamental issues through dialogue. Moreover, India's ties with Nepal have always stood on their own merits and will continue to be so. Even as protests continued in Nepal, India has maintained constant touch with its leadership. On 11 October 2015, Hon'ble Prime Minister called PM Shri K.P. Oli following his election and conveyed his hearty congratulations. I hosted the Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Shri Kamal Thapa on 18 October 2015. Hon'ble Prime Minister again spoke to PM Shri K.P. Oli on 2 November

2015. In addition, our officials including the Ambassador closely monitor the situation.

11. Let me take this opportunity to also clarify to Hon'ble Members that contrary to some canards on this issue, there is no blockade by India, which we have repeatedly clarified, of supplies going to Nepal. Obstructions are by the Nepalese population on the Nepalese side, in which GoI cannot interfere. There were incidents of violence resulting in death and injury in regions of Nepal bordering India following the promulgation of this Constitution. Our freight companies and transporters also voiced complaints about difficulties of movement and security within Nepal.
12. In fact, Government of India has facilitated supplies wherever possible. Several thousand trucks have remained stranded for weeks, waiting on the Indian side of the border crossings. We have kept them there to respond quickly if the blockages on the Nepal side are peacefully lifted. The primary crossing of Raxaul-Birgunj, which accounts for two-thirds of our trade, remains closed from the Nepali side for more than two months. However, every day, several hundred cargo trucks have still been passing through those crossing points that are open and available. Despite constraints, Indian Oil Corporation has delivered POL supplies to the extent possible. More than 400 medical consignments were cleared through the India-Nepal border in November 2015. We are also assisting in re-routing stranded POL tankers and vehicles carrying medical supplies through other available crossing points, as also airlift. But there are also logistical constraints and the best remedy remains a political solution leading to the end of the agitation.

Hon'ble Chairman,

13. Yesterday, I had another good meeting with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Nepal, Shri Kamal Thapa. He assured me that there has been progress in the dialogue on the contentious issues with the agitating parties. This gives us hope that an early resolution would be found for the political problems facing Nepal. We will continue to encourage all sides to come to a solution sooner rather than later.
14. The causes underlying the present state of confrontation in Nepal need to be addressed credibly and effectively by the political parties and people of Nepal themselves. India's only interest is in a peaceful, united and stable Nepal. And our approach to the present crisis is completely consistent with these objectives. There has also been the broadest goodwill for Nepal in India and full political consensus on our policy. In that tradition, I would urge the House to consider the merits of a visit to Nepal by an All Party delegation. The Government will be guided by the sentiments of the House.

Thank you.

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