

**MADAN BHANDARI'S CONCEPTION OF NEPAL'S FOREIGN  
POLICY: THOUGHTS ON PROTECTING NATIONAL  
INTERESTS AND CONDUCTING FOREIGN RELATIONS**

A Dissertation

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Upendra Shahi  
2021 December 23

### **Letter of Recommendation**

I certify that this dissertation entitled “Madan Bhandari's Conception of Nepal's Foreign Policy: Thoughts on Protecting National Interests and Conducting Foreign Relations” has been prepared by Upendra Shahi under my supervision. I hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the research committee at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in the fulfillment of the requirements for MIRD 526 Thesis for the Master's Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy.

.....

Assistant Professor Prem Raj Khanal

Supervisor

2021 December 23

## **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**

The ideas and opinions of the key leaders of major political parties play the crucial role in the determination of the foreign policy of any country. Madan Bhandari's thoughts mainly expressed in his noteworthy work of the people's multiparty democracy and his role in the protection of national interests is widely discussed. This dissertation has aimed to put light on the foreign policy prescription of Bhandari and his thoughts on protecting national interests and fostering cooperation and collaboration at the international level.

The research work has followed the qualitative research methodology under which descriptive or elaborative research method was used to collect and interpret data. The dissertation has collected data from the official political documents, speeches, interviews, articles and books. Document analysis method has been employed for the analysis of the data.

The research findings indicate that Bhandari recommended Nepal's foreign policy to be independent, non-aligned and progressive while being proactive and unfearful in the protection of its national interests. He advocated for the establishment and strengthening of the relations with all the countries on the basis of equality, mutual respect and independence. However, he has been criticized as an ultra-nationalist in his foreign policy perceptions. The research has concluded that Madan Bhandari was a staunch nationalist who believed in the "Pro-Nepal" policies without tilting towards any of the two large neighbors, India and China. He was the advocate of the practice of pragmatism at the international level. He favored the effective cooperation and execution of the policies of non-alignment and Panchasheel rather than using them just as rhetoric.

**Keywords:** *Madan Bhandari, Foreign Policy, Nepal, People's Multiparty Democracy*

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### **List of Abbreviations**

CCP	Communist Party of China
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
CPN (ML)	Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist)
CPN (UML)	Communist party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NSP	Nepal Sadbhawana Party
PMPD	People's multiparty democracy
PRC	People's Republic of China
RPP	Rastriya Prajatantra Party
UN	United Nations
ZOP	Zone of Peace

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

Foreign policy is generally considered as the policy of an international actor (commonly a state) towards the other international actors. Christopher Hill has defined foreign policy as, "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations" (Hill, 2003). As a result, foreign policy is a state's strategy or program of actions that sets the sum of the state's goals in the international system. To put it another way, they are a state's actions toward the outside world to achieve the national interests.

Foreign policy is determined by the various external and internal factors (Bojang, 2018). The global order or structures of power, international law, international institutions, alliances, and military strength or arms race are among the most important external elements that influence a state's foreign policy. The internal factors include culture, history, geography, population, political system, military capabilities, political parties, and personality of leaders among others. Leaders and political parties play significant role in the determination of the foreign policies of the countries. Prominent leaders of the major parties impact and shape the politics and thereby, the foreign policies of the countries for the long period of time. Madan Kumar Bhandari (1951-1993), the then popular leader and general secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) is among such leaders in Nepal (Oli, 2070).

Madan Kumar Bhandari was born on Asar 14, 2009 BS (27 June, 1951 AD) in Dhungesanghu village of Taplejung district in Eastern Nepal (Nepal, 2019). Madan, initially received education in his home. His formal education started at the age of seven at his village school in 2015 BS (Oli, 2070). In 2020 B.S., he was admitted to the Bal Subodhini Sanskrit Pradhan Pathshala in class six (Nepal, 2019). After receiving secondary level education in Nepal, he went to India for higher studies (Rai, 2078). In 1973, he completed Aacharya (post-graduation) in the Sanskrit literature from Sadhubela Sanskrit Mahabidhyalay, Varanasi, India (Nepal, 2019). Madan Bhandari married Bidhya Devi Pandey of the Bhojpur district on Shrawan 24, 2039 B.S. (Rai, 2078). Bidhya was the junior

political cadre of the party at the time of the marriage. She later became the first female president of the country (Office of the president of Nepal, 2021).

Madan Bhandari became one of the most influential political leader in the aftermath of the 1990's people's revolution that led to the reinstatement of the multiparty democracy in Nepal (Dhakal, 2020). He is well known for his unwavering nationalist stance and his ideological framework of People's Multiparty Democracy, which argued that communists could achieve socialism or socialist aims by popular mandate or elections instead of the armed struggle.

Influenced by the leftist ideology from his young age, he joined the Janabadi Sanskritik Morcha (Democratic Cultural Front), a student association founded by Pushpa Lal Shrestha, a pioneer communist leader and founding general secretary of Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Sapkota, 2018). After coming into contact with the communist party in 2025 B.S., Madan became the member of the Pushpalal led communist party in 2027 B.S. (Sapkota, 2016). Bhandari later formed the Mukti Morcha Samuha (Liberation front group) along with Modnath Prasit and Jiwaraj Ashrit, leaving the Pushpa Lal Shrestha's communist party (Dhakal, 2020). In 2034 B.S., this group merged with the Co-Coordination committee and formed All Nepal Communist Revolutionary Coordination Committee (Marxist-Leninist) (Pokharel, 2078). Madan was elected the central committee member of this organization. After one year, the national convention of the united organization took place in the Itahara of the Morang district in 2035 B.S. which converted the coordination Committee into Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) (Oli, 2070). He was elected central committee member of the party. In 2041 B.S., Madan was promoted to the politburo of the party (Pokharel, 2078). From the fourth national congress of the CPN (ML) in Bhadra, 2046 B.S., he was elected general secretary (Rai, 2078). After the advent of the multiparty democracy, CPN (ML) merged with Communist party of Nepal (Marxist) forming Communist party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) or CPN (UML) which kept Manmohan Adhikari as the Chairman and Madan Bhandari as the general secretary of the party (Sapkota, 2016). From the fifth national congress of CPN (UML) in Magh, 2049 B.S., Madan was re-elected as the general secretary of the party. Under the leadership of Madan Bhandari, Communist party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) rose to become one of the

key parties in the Nepali politics. Madan died at a young age of 41 in a mysterious car accident which many believe to be a murder (Nepal, 2019).

During his short time in parliamentary politics, Madan Bhandari visited only three countries, People's Republic of China (PRC), Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and India. He visited China leading the fifteen member high level delegation of the CPN (UML) from 5<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Baishaikh, 2050 B.S (Rai, 2078). While returning from China, Madan Bhandari had visited Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) (S. Pyakurel, personal communication, December 20, 2021). Apart from China and North Korea, he visited the southern neighbor, India from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> Baishaikh, 2050 B.S. During his visit to India, he presented a paper among the 42 delegates of 21 parties from the 19 countries (MBF, 2021).

Madan Bhandari was the key player behind the rise of communist forces as the major players in the politics of Nepal (Rai, 2078). He was known as the devoted nationalist who advocated for the revision of the unequal treaties between Nepal and India. His relentless raising of voice in the Tanakpur Barrage agreement is well remembered which is considered as the beginning point of searching the origin of Mahakali river and discovering the land encroachment of Nepal in the Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani area (Aryal, 2078). Apart from that, his thoughts and opinions on various aspects of Nepal's foreign policy are extremely important, since the ideals articulated by him in his notable work of People's multiparty democracy are a guiding principle of one of Nepal's main parties, the CPN (UML). This research work explores thoughts and opinions of Madan Bhandari on the foreign policy of Nepal.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

Madan Bhandari's most well-known political theory, *Janatako Bahudaliye Janabad* (People's multiparty democracy), has had a significant effect on Nepal's communist political philosophy and general communist movement (Bhusal, 2012). He believed that a true revolution did not have to be violent. The theory proposed that the elections and popular mandate were the most appropriate medium for the communists to achieve their socialist goals in the changing scenario. He advocated that any opportunity to participate in the government should be utilized by the communists to push ahead the progressive agendas. Madan Bhandari not only played a leading role in the democratization of the leftist movement in Nepal, rather he strongly advocated for alliance with the other parties and players on the matters of national interest. He played the key role in establishing the leftist alliance with the Nepali Congress for the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 (Sapkota, 2016). Furthermore, he advocated for alliance and coordination among all the players on the issues of nationality, sovereignty and independence. However, he has been criticized as an ultra-nationalist who would exploit anti-India sentiments as Nepali nationalism (Khadka, 1993). Similarly, Anirudh Gupta (1993) has stated that several communist parties in Nepal equate Nepali nationalism as independence from India.

The literature on Madan Bhandari either portray him as the true icon of Nepali nationalism or criticize his work as ultra-nationalism. Additionally, foreign policy literature lacks the academic and grounded research on the foreign policy perspectives of Madan Bhandari. The views of Nepali leaders, particularly those after the people's revolution of 1990 A.D., on Nepal's foreign relations are extremely important for diplomats, legislators, and anybody else working in the field of foreign affairs. Their thoughts on the foreign relations of Nepal are scattered on the various articles, interviews, speeches, newspapers, party documents and other different media. They lack the systematic research work and logical presentation of the information. Collection, compilation, analysis and systematic presentation of those thoughts is very necessary for the creation of the foreign policy prescription of the leaders.

To get a fuller understanding of Madan Bhandari's thoughts on the foreign policy of Nepal, an in-depth qualitative research is required. Learning about Madan Bhandari's

opinions on Nepal's foreign policy will help understand the evolution of communist parties' positions on many areas of Nepal's foreign policy, which can be useful for anticipating stances of communist parties in future. Furthermore, it will significantly contribute to Nepal's foreign policy literature. Therefore, this research aims to gain a deeper and academic understanding of Madan Bhandari's thoughts on the foreign policy of Nepal.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The research questions are:

- 1) What were the basic tenets of Madan Bhandari's concept on conducting foreign relations of Nepal with other countries?
- 2) How are Madan Bhandari's views on the protection and promotion of national interests useful for Nepal?
- 3) Why are Madan Bhandari's views regarding international cooperation and collaboration patriotic in nature?

### **1.4. Research Objectives**

The general objective of the research has been to analyze Madan Bhandari's thoughts on the foreign policy of Nepal in the context of protecting and promoting the national interest of the country. The specific objectives of the research work has been as follows:-

- To assess the basic tenets of Madan Bhandari's thought on conducting foreign relations of Nepal with other countries.
- To analyze Madan Bhandari's views on the protection and promotion of national interests while conducting foreign relations.
- To examine Madan Bhandari's views regarding international cooperation and collaboration in conduction of foreign relations.

## **1.5. Significance of the Research**

CPN (UML) rose to become the major party in the Nepali political arena when the communist parties around the world were in the defensive positions. Amrit Kumar Shrestha (2020) states that communist parties are losing favor in many nations around the world, and their numbers are dwindling. The revolutionary communist forces are on the defensive, while the reformist communists have not fared well in the elections (Shrestha, 2020). In wealthy countries, communist parties are fighting just to stay alive. Even in underdeveloped countries, they do not have a decisive position. Nonetheless, Nepal's communists are gaining public support through the elections.

In many countries, communist parties contesting in the multiparty democratic systems are struggling to become the major players in their countries. Leftist front under the leadership of Communist party of India (Marxist) which ruled West Bengal for more than three decades has lost parliamentary elections miserably and there appears no sign of its revival (Basu & Majumder, 2013). However, in Nepal, the communist parties in general and CPN (UML) in particular has established itself as the major political force. CPN (UML) is one of the two main political parties in Nepal which secured the first position in the federal and provincial elections in 2017 (Election commission, Nepal, 2018). The rise and continued existence of the CPN (UML) as the major political force is attributed to the charismatic personality and ideology put forwarded by the Madan Bhandari. The proposition of Bhandari that communists could participate in the multiparty democracy instead of single party dictatorship has been an important weapon for regular survival and success of communist parties in Nepal. The parties in Nepal appear to still adhere to his ideals on nationalism, hegemony, and imperialism.

The research has contributed in the knowledge production by researching on the thoughts of one of leader of major political party post-1990. Thus, this has added significant knowledge in the area of the foreign policy of Nepal. Furthermore, the research output has been highly valuable for understanding the prominence of the leftist forces in general and CPN (UML) in particular in Nepal.



Additionally, the research is motivated from the fact that there are very less academic research on the area of the foreign policy by the different thinkers of Nepal. It can be observed that Late King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who is considered as the unifier of Modern Nepal gave his valuable advices to his successors regarding the foreign policy of Nepal. It can be seen in the Dipyoupadesh, his advices regarding state affairs in his last days. Similarly, the first elected prime minister of Nepal B.P. Koirala has also provided his thoughts in regards to the foreign relations of Nepal. However, Nepal lacks the systematic and proper research on these works of the prominent political figures of Nepal. Madan Bhandari was another such prominent leader who propounded People's Multiparty Democracy, essentially democratizing the leftist movement in Nepal and establishing the leftist forces as carriers of nationalist and progressive agendas. Thus, this research work's significance lies in the fact that this research tried to shed light on the foreign policy thoughts of leftist leader Madan Bhandari. Further, this study has aided in understanding Nepali communists' nationalist beliefs and positions. Hence, this academic work has advanced the literature on the foreign affairs of Nepal through the lens of one of the most prominent leaders of the post-1990's history of Nepal.

## **1.6. Chapter Organization**

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. The present chapter contains the background of the study which briefly discusses about the life of Madan Bhandari. The chapter further includes the statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives and significance of the study. Chapter two comprises of the review of the various literatures relevant for the thesis along with the conceptual framework. This provides a comprehensive account of the various academic research regarding various aspects of Madan Bhandari. The chapter provides the analysis on the different documents written on the Bhandari's life and his work. It focuses on the foreign visits of the Madan Bhandari and his thoughts regarding the foreign relations of Nepal with the other countries. The conceptual framework discusses the impact of individual leaders on shaping the foreign policy and elaborates on the variables of the study. It further divulges into the leader level or individual level of analysis in foreign policy. Chapter three discusses the research methodology employed in this dissertation in detail. The research has employed the qualitative research method. Chapter four discusses and elaborates on the evolution of foreign policy of Nepal. Chapter five discusses, assesses and examines the data and various information regarding the thoughts of Madan Bhandari on foreign affairs of Nepal. Chapter six analyses the data in reflection with the research questions. The study's summary of findings and conclusions are presented in chapter seven. In addition, the final chapter summarizes the entire research work briefly mentioning the shortcomings and the research methodology.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literatures and Conceptual Framework**

### **2.1. Review of Literatures**

There were few academic articles or other works relating to Madan Bhandari's views on Nepal's international affairs that the researcher could discover. The majority of the materials produced are on his life and contribution to the democratization of the communist movement. His personality is also highlighted in the papers, as is his role to the democratic development and triumph of the communist movement in Nepal at a time when communists throughout the globe were on the defensive. The researcher looked at many works regarding Madan Bhandari and his works, focusing on the chapters, sections, and aspects about foreign affairs. Various journal papers, documents, and reports have also been scrutinized. Newspaper pieces produced by eminent academics have also been examined.

Kundan Aryal (2078) writes about the contribution of Madan Bhandari on the discovery of the land encroachment by India on the Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani area of Nepal. He provides arguments to support the claim that it was Madan Bhandari's direction and initiation to find the details about the land encroachment in the far western region of Nepal that led to the disclosure of the information about the false claim of India regarding the origin of Kali River (Aryal, 2078). Kundan Aryal (2078) claims that the debate initiated on the leadership of Madan Bhandari on the issue of Tanakpur barrage project helped discover the truth about the origin of Kali River. This finally led to the second amendment of the constitution of Nepal, 2015 on 18th June, 2020 A.D. which amended the national emblem of Nepal and released a new map of the country including the Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani area of Nepal in it (Ghimire, 2020).

To support his claim, Aryal (2078) writes that Madan had given the direction to the Bir Bahadur Thagunna in presence of Bishnu Poudel, Bhim Kathayat and Prem Singh Dhami to carry out a field survey to get a detailed information about the land encroachment. Aryal has stated that Bir Bahadur Thagunna had submitted the report on Mangsir, 2049 to the General Secretary Bhandari in Kathmandu. Madan Bhandari was in search of the concrete evidence to prove this when he claimed that not one inch land of the country shall be compromised in the parliament, according to Kundan Aryal. The document states that Bhandari followed the policy of maintaining friendship with the neighboring countries while prioritizing the national interest of the country.

The document explores the debacle of the Tanakpur barrage accord in detail and explains the role of Bhandari in demanding that the benefits from the project must be shared equally between countries. Furthermore, it notes his role in compelling the government for abiding the constitution of the country.

Madan Bhandari's nationalist side shines through in this paper. It depicts Madan's foresight, since the issue was addressed through amendment in the Nepal's constitution after 28 years on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 (Ghimire, 2020). The paper, however, lacks substantial proof that Madan was seriously considering the Mahakali River's origin.

Madan Bhandari, according to Tika Dhakal, was given an international platform to promote his creative interpretation of Marxism while attending the historic Calcutta conference commemorating Karl Marx's 175th birthday on fifth to seventh May, 1993 (MBF, 2021). Dhakal notes that the convention had forty two delegates representing the twenty one parties from the nineteen countries. In that light, Madan Bhandari presented his idea of "People's multiparty democracy" based on the Marxist thought. According to Dhakal, this platform provided Madan Bhandari with the opportunity to share about the development and evolution of communist movement in Nepal. The forum consolidated him as international figure amongst the representatives from the nineteen countries. Madan Bhandari suggested at the conference that Marxism should be applied in countries around the world based on their ground realities. Madan Bhandari, according to Tika Dhakal, was a theoretician who embraced Marxism through concrete analysis of Nepal's objective situations. He further argues that Bhandari was the national figure who bravely championed the national interests and aspirations of the Nepalese people and the country, and that Bhandari was the leader who fearlessly upheld the banner of persistent democracy (Dhakal, 2020).

Radha Krishna Mainali, the then CPN (UML) leader mentions that even though Madan Bhandari was a communist, he kept nation and national interests above the principles of communism (Dhungana, 2077). Bhandari was in favor of utilizing Marxist principles in the upliftment of the nation. Mainali remembers Madan Bhandari as a leader who believed in the economic prosperity and independence of the country. Mainali argues that death of Madan Bhandari is related to the nationalist movement in the country. Mainali

asserts that Madan Bhandari had become the target after he started raising the issue of Tanakpur treaty in the vigorous manner. Mainali considers that the movement that started in the leadership of Madan Bhandari against the Tanakpur treaty was significant from the perspective of protection of the sovereignty and independence. This points to the Bhandari's unfeared and uncompromising nature for the progress, prosperity and dignity of the country.

Ramesh Ruchen Rai (2078) has attempted to investigate Nepalese communist politics through the lives of one of the main characters. In his book, Swetsardul, Rai (2078) has dedicated three chapters that are particularly noteworthy from the aspect of foreign relations. One chapter focuses on Madan Bhandari's many acts and opinions on the Tanakpur Treaty, one of Nepal's most contentious agreements with India. The other two chapters deal with Madan Bhandari's interactions with Nepal's two neighbors, India and China.

The foremost chapter, titled "Tanakpur ko tantan (Tension of Tanakpur)" is about the stand of CPN (UML) under the leadership of its general secretary Madan Bhandari regarding the issue of Tanakpur treaty with India. According to the book, the then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala visited India on the invitation of the Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasingh Rao from 5th to 10th December, 1991 A.D. During this visit, he did an agreement with the Indian side regarding the water resources of Mahakali River. On returning back to the country, opposition in the country contended that the agreement was the "treaty" while Prime Minister Koirala insisted that it was just an understanding.

The book mentions that Madan spoke in the House of Representatives on the treaty, explaining that it must be presented in the joint session of parliament, not simply the House of Representatives. He brought up the subject in several venues, urging that the treaty be "updated to ensure the preservation of Nepal's national interests and as a standard practice governing the usage of the country's rivers and water resources in the future. (Rai, 2078)"

The book notes the contribution of Madan Bhandari in bringing the "Tanakpur Barrage Project" to public attention and making it a matter of national debate. His stance in the entire debate demonstrates his nationalist stance as well as his pragmatic approach to the conservation and proper use of Nepal's natural resources. Furthermore, Madan

Bhandari was wary of the southern neighbor's intentions. The literature lacks a thorough examination of Madan Bhandari's opposition to the project. Was he prepared to accept the Tanakpur Treaty with the changes? If so, what were the reforms that he and his party, the CPN (UML), were seeking?

Another chapter titled, "Uttar ko Yatra (Visit to the North)" details the visit of Madan Bhandari to the northern neighbor of Nepal, People's Republic of China. On the invitation of the Communist party of China (CCP), high-level delegation on the leadership of general secretary Madan Bhandari left for China. The book mentions that Madan Bhandari was interested to learn about the economic growth of the China, party organization of CCP and party-state relations. Additionally, Madan Bhandari was interested to foster the relations of CPN (UML) with the CCP. Rai (2078) mentions that the high level delegation had meeting with the standing committee member of the CCP, Hu Jin Tao, who later became the president of the country. They exchanged their thoughts about the history and development of their respective parties, the current situation and future goals. The meeting was successful in strengthening the relations between the two parties. The author has tried to show the importance China gave to the Madan Bhandari led delegation. It also shows the interest of Madan to learn about the Chinese model of socialism. The chapter titled, "Dakshin ko Yatra (Visit to the south)" details the visit of Madan to the southern neighbor of Nepal, India. The book notes that Madan Bhandari went to India three times after coming into open politics.

Even though the book is a biography of Madan Bhandari, it elaborately presents the engagement of Madan Bhandari in the international arena. The book reflects the international personality of Madan Bhandari as he involves with the leaders from the world. During this time, he got an opportunity to learn about the foreign world by meeting the leaders from different countries in person which shaped his views towards those nations. However, the book fails to elaborately present his observation and policy towards the China, India, western countries and communist countries. It is more or less just a brief summary of his visits to southern and northern neighbor of Nepal.

Rajendra Sthapit (2075) has also written a memoir about Madan Bhandari's visit to the southern neighbor, India. Sthapit mentions that he and Madan Bhandari went to the Calcutta, India to participate in the fifth national congress of Communist party of India

(Marxist liberation) on 26 December, 1992 (Sthapit, 2075). Madan Bhandari addressed the national congress with a short speech in Hindi. In the memoir, Rajendra Sthapit mentions about their short meeting with Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu. Madan Bhandari had intended to discuss about the issue of Tanakpur, choice of Indian ambassador to Nepal and communist movement in South Asia. Madan intended to ask Basu about the position of his party in the issue of Tanakpur. Additionally, Madan had wanted to request him that the Indian ambassador to Nepal should not be from the adjoining Indian states of Nepal because they would carry interests of their states in addition to the interest of entire India. However, Jyoti Basu was reluctant to listen to them. Rajendra Sthapit recollects that they felt humiliated and meeting became unsuccessful.

Anirudha Gupta (1993) discusses a tendency in Nepali politics, saying that while in power, political parties in Nepal pursue pro-India policies, but once out of power, they pursue anti-India policies. He claims that Nepali communists have been the most successful in this game of India-baiting because (a) they have never been in power, with the exception of a brief stint in the interim government, and (b) they have made the defense of Nepal's independence and territorial integrity a central tenet of their political ideology. He believes that communists have been vehemently anti-India since their origin. According to Anirudha Gupta (1993), when the Rana administration fell as a result of the Delhi Agreement (January 1951), communists denounced the deal as a "sell-out to the Nehru government," (Gupta, 1993). Thus, Gupta postulates that since then, several elements in the Nepali communist movement have held the belief that "to be nationalist means to be independent of India."

In the case of Madan Bhandari, Anirudha Gupta's claim cannot be independently examined as Madan Bhandari did not have any opportunity to participate in the government. However, it can be said that Madan Bhandari was genuinely concerned about the protection of national interest as Rajendra Sthapit (2075) has mentioned that Bhandari tried his best to raise the issue of Tankapur agreement and choice of Indian ambassador to Nepal with the Jyoti Basu (Sthapit, 2075).

*Madan Bhandari: Jiwani ra Byaktitwa* (Biography and personality) is the biography written by Subarna Oli in 2070, elaborating on her Master's thesis about the contribution of Madan Bhandari on the field of literature. The book discusses about the various sides of

Madan Bhandari's personality. The book has attempted to bring out the different facets of Madan's personality while establishing him as a versatile person and a person of many talents. The book consists of two sections describing about the Madan Bhandari's life in regards to the international political sphere.

The section titled, "International personality" tries to highlight the life of Madan Bhandari from the eyes of international community. The section discusses about the various works done by Madan Bhandari and his position regarding the international issues. Furthermore, the section mentions about the international coverage and fame that Madan had earned in a short time that he spent in the open parliamentary politics.

Oli (2070) mentions about the interview that Madan Bhandari gave to the internationally renowned newspaper Newsweek, which published it under the title, 'Nepal: Where Karl Marx is Alive'. The book notes that the interview took place after Madan defeated incumbent Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in the first parliamentary elections after the restoration of democracy in 1990 A.D. Also, this section in the book mentions about his popularity among the Nepali living worldwide. It details the internet survey conducted jointly by the Kantipur Publication and Nepal home page which chose Madan Bhandari as the man of the century. Furthermore, this section emphasizes the nationalist personality of Madan Bhandari in his stance against the Tanakpur treaty. Despite any hurdles, he strongly raised the various concerns regarding the Tanakpur treaty in parliament. Another section, titled "Foreign visits" explains in detail about the visit of Madan Bhandari to the neighboring countries, India and China.

The book by Oli (2070) tries to emphasize the rising international personality of Madan Bhandari as he is provided with the spotlight in the seminars in India as well as his meeting with the future president of China, Hu Jin Tao. Furthermore, it shows his closeness to the other communist parties around the world while emphasizing the need to carry out the revolution based on the ground reality of each nation. This indicates his view of detachment from the internal affairs of the other countries and communist parties in those countries. His argument for the acceptance and adoption of multiparty democracy in Nepal based on the ground reality of the country shows that he was for the creative adoption of Marxism in the different countries according to their need.



In the book titled, "Philosophical beliefs of People's multiparty democracy", Beduram Bhusal stresses that the People's multiparty democracy (PMPD) proposes non-aligned, independent and balanced foreign policy for Nepal (Bhusal, 2012). Furthermore, PMPD argues that the establishment of the socialist state by force without adequate development of sovereign and independent national economy shall lead to the early demise of such state as observed from different events in history. Thus, it reflects the nationalist stance by emphasizing the need to establish the national economy.

However, Narayan Khadka (1993) has criticized the role of Madan Bhandari and his party in the issue of Tanakpur issue. He compares the issue with the Gandak and Koshi agreement and opines that the criticism towards the Tanakapur is by far the harshest (Khadka, 1993). Khadka notes that members of the main opposition and other opposition parties boycotted several of the early sessions of the parliament's winter session, which began on February 21, 1992. The opposition parties urged that the administration lay forth all relevant documents related to the water-resources agreement with India. The UML-led opposition has questioned the validity of certain of the agreements. It has also questioned the legitimacy of various other agreements negotiated with India, as well as the benefits claimed by the government for Nepal. The article mentions that since the 1950s, the use and benefit sharing of water resources between Nepal and India has been a major source of dispute.

Narayan Khadka (1993) blames the Communists of having used India as a scapegoat for many of the country's problems in the general election. Furthermore, Khadka asserts that the majority of Communist parties regard India as primarily hegemonistic and expansionist, and anti-Indianism is equated with Nepali nationalism. This kind of rhetoric, he believes, is detrimental to the country. Khadka mentions that the trade and transit accords, as well as the memorandum of understanding on sharing water resources signed by Nepal's prime minister in December 1991, have been opposed by different Communist groups. Narayan Khadka (1993) undermines the capacity and charisma of Madan Bhandari, saying, "-a man who rose from obscurity to popularity because of his election victory over Mr. K.P. Bhattarai" Khadka (1993). He mentions that the UML's concept of Nepal's balanced and equitable ties with India and China is ambiguous. Khadka claims that a big number of youthful and radical members are determined to overthrow the government and install a Communist administration in its stead. Furthermore, Khadka believes that the

future orientation of Nepal's Communist parties' India policy will be determined by the nature of Sino-Indian relations. Through this, Khadka (1993) asserts that Nepali communists cannot think independently and that Nepali communists give more preference to the Chinese interests in their dealings with foreign countries.

Some of the literatures such as (Aryal (2078), Dhakal (2020), Oli (2070), Rai (2078), Sthapit (2075), Bhusal (2012)) depict Madan Bhandari as the staunch Nepali nationalist leader. His contributions are elaborately mentioned in them. Other literatures Khadka (1993), Gupta (1993) has criticized the role of Nepali communists accusing them as using anti-India sentiments to gain political advantage. Thus, some pro-left writers and the leftist leaders portray Madan Bhandari as the loyal Nepali nationalist leader while in some other literatures, his policies has been criticized for being unreasonably anti-Indian. These both types of literatures present the two ends of Madan Bhandari's concepts on dealing with foreign countries lacking the independent appraisal of his work and ideas. Hence, this study has been attempted to provide an independent assessment of his thoughts on the foreign affairs of Nepal.

## 2.2. Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories. It provides information on the research, which is one of the most important aspects of the total study. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that conceptual framework “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them”. This research is based on the theory that the role of individual leader is significant in shaping the foreign policy of a country. Different views on this proposition has been discussed in this section. Furthermore, this section explains the different variables operated in this research work.

Individual decision-makers have been disregarded in studies of foreign-policy reform. Some theories concentrate only on how environmental changes, such as shifts in the balance of power or changes in domestic political systems, influence foreign policy change (Cason & Power, 2009). These theories do not take into account the role of individual at all.

Another set of theories includes the individual decision-maker as one of a number of independent variables (Kleistra & Mayer, 2001). Bureaucratic advocacy, domestic restructuring, foreign shocks, and leader-driven change are the four 'agents of change' introduced by Charles F. Hermann (1990). When a policy is modified, he emphasizes the importance of a leader's vision and conviction.

Another new wave of research in this field has emphasized the importance of leaders and is assisting in the reintroduction of the leader level into international political frameworks (Horowitz & Fuhrmann, 2018). These studies suggest that observing leaders rather than governments as a unit of observation can teach us a lot. Marijke Breuning (2007) has presented the example of Belgian King Leopold II as the evidence of the influence of an individual leader in shaping the foreign policy and historical trajectory of a nation. King Leopold II was a king of a small European state, Belgium whose ambition and motivation led him to gain a huge colonial possession of Congo in the African continent (Breuning, 2007).

Chris Alden and Amnon Aran (2017) present political parties as one of the key factor in the foreign policy decisions. They argue that political parties can be considered as the focal point for a variety of activities attributed to domestic foreign policy sources in the foreign policy analysis (Alden & Aron, 2017). These include political parties' dual roles as agenda setters in foreign policy (via ideological discourses expressing their distinct political leaning (e.g., rightist or leftist), agenda supporters in foreign policy (via ideological narratives reflecting their distinctive political affiliation (e.g., rightist or leftist), and interest aggregators (via the endorsement they court from inside domestic society).

This research is based on this view that grants importance to the leader level arguing that leaders are the critical factors in shaping the national behavior. Furthermore, the research will explore the history of Nepal on foreign relations. Students of International Relations can use history to critically assess and reflect on the enormous complexity of the past—including countless agents, contingencies, and many unforeseen consequences—and how all of these factors contributed to the contemporary world as it known today (Fowler, 2021).

Major historical figures and their thoughts on the foreign affairs has guided their organizations (political and non-political) and countries in the matters of foreign policy. According to Valerie M. Hudson, foreign policy analysis's most significant contribution to IR theory is the identification of the theoretical intersection between the major drivers of state behavior: material and ideational forces. Human decision-makers, not the state, are the point of junction (Hudson, 2005).

In this research, various ideas and opinions of Madan Bhandari on the issue of foreign policy of Nepal have been explored. His thoughts have been obtained from his various interviews, his speeches, his political documents, his articles and from the interviews with the experts. Furthermore, it can be interpreted from his actions and initiatives on the various issues concerning the foreign affairs such as the Tanakpur Barrage agreement. Additionally, his visits to the two neighboring countries also provide insight into his thoughts on foreign policy. These information form the concepts of Madan Bhandari in regards to the foreign policy of Nepal. These concepts, in turn reflect his thoughts on the protection of national interest of Nepal. These are also his guiding thoughts on the conduction of foreign relations of Nepal.

For the purpose of this study, national interest has been defined based on the realist accounts. International politics, according to realists, differs from domestic politics due to its chaotic nature (Weldes, 1996). The lack of a supranational "Leviathan" state results in a never-ending competition known as the security dilemma. As a result, nations must worry about their own survival. The general content of national interest is thus decided deductively; it is deduced from the international system's anarchic, self-help nature. For Morgenthau, this meant that any state's primary national interest was to defend its physical, political, and cultural integrity from outside incursion.

Foreign policy, in this study has been defined as the different ideas and actions of Madan Bhandari in relation to the foreign affairs of Nepal. These are obtained from different sources which are defined as ahead.

The dissertation uses a variety of sources to explore Madan Bhandari's foreign policy, including official party documents, speeches, interviews, memoirs, media coverage, and secondary research. The goal was to triangulate various sources in order to get the most accurate image of Bhandari's foreign policy concepts as possible.

Political documents and reports, as well as speeches delivered by Bhandari and other party members at meetings and congresses, make up the official party documents. Speeches and interviews refer to his public speeches, which include those delivered in the legislature.

Media coverage of Madan Bhandari during his lifetime, obtained from a variety of national and international newspapers was also used. This data has been useful in attempting to replicate aspects of the existing political climate as well as gaining new insights into historical events.

Secondary research comprises books and articles about Madan Bhandari's thoughts and viewpoints, as well as works on his personal traits. Biographies, memoirs and books about Madan Bhandari's life and activities were also used in the piece. One flaw in this material is that biographies may exaggerate events and Madan Bhandari's personality, and they are likely to leave out Bhandari's flaws.

Another issue is that people prefer to exaggerate Madan Bhandari's personality. Furthermore, the writers may have ulterior objectives in portraying historical events in a certain light. As a result, this information was handled with extreme caution, and it was cross-checked and corroborated by additional sources. Furthermore, it's vital not to rely on a single, ostensibly authoritative analysis of the case by a historian while doing secondary research. As a result, due caution has been exercised, and the researcher has attempted to validate the findings using a variety of sources.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

Qualitative research approach has been used to carry out the research under which descriptive research methods have been employed. According to Robin Fireman Karmer (1985), exploration is the goal of a descriptive research study: to develop acquaintance with a phenomenon or to get new insights (Kramer, 1985). In order to build new knowledge in an area where past work is insufficient or incomplete, the researcher will notice, describe, explore, and analyze characteristics. Descriptive or exploratory research is the first phase in the generation of new knowledge, and it might lead to a preliminary hypothesis for future testing or an idea for a conceptual framework to describe how variables interact. The sort of research design, data collection methods, and analysis of the findings are all determined by the level of research.

This research design follows the document analysis method. In contrast to traditional document analysis methodologies, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, argument analysis, and metaphor analysis have all been increasingly used in recent years, all of which focus specifically on the quality of the documents as texts (Karppinen & Moe, 2012). This does not always imply that the language of the documents is the focus of attention. Rather, regardless of traditional institutional explanations, it is presumed that the ideas and discourses conveyed, as well as the framing of policy challenges they communicate, are somehow politically relevant.

Other information such as interview, books, reports, etc. has been collected and processed on the qualitative research approach. In addition to that, various audio-video materials has been used for the research work. The data has been collected and analyzed through document analysis. According to Bowen (2009), "The qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence; that is, to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods. Apart from documents, such sources include interviews, participant or non-participant observation, and physical artifacts" (Bowen, 2009). Further, document analysis is appropriate for this research because it is efficient, cost-effective, and stable and there is a lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity.

The additional information for the article comes from secondary sources such as books, reports, and articles, as well as qualitative sources. As a result, this paper employs descriptive and explanatory study designs.

### **3.2. Research Site**

For the collection of primary data, various interviews have been taken for which appropriate places have been used as per the need. It can be offices of political parties or research institutions or other organizations related to Madan Bhandari such as Madan Bhandari Foundation, Madan Ashrit Memorial Foundation. In order to collect secondary data, various libraries, internet and organizations can be taken as research site.

### **3.3. Data Collection Methods**

The research has utilized primary and secondary data. The use of the terms, primary and secondary requires the definition which describes the kind of data that falls under primary and the other kind that falls under secondary data. As written by Kari Karppinen and Hallvard Moe (2012), the study's primary documents are the study's real participants, whereas secondary documents are the records or reports of the primary documents (Karppinen & Moe, 2012). The writings of those who were directly involved in the process detailed in the text are referred to as primary documents. This also helps to explain why records are commonly used as primary sources of 'facts.' whereas literature is considered as secondary or background material that provides 'interpretation.' The distinction is based on the fact that documents reveal something actual about the outer world in a more unmediated or honest manner. They are thus considered more trustworthy than research literature, as it is impossible to know if the latter accurately or impartially chronicles what actually occurred or what is included in the "original" documents.

The primary data has been collected from the various audio-visual documents as well as interview of Madan Bhandari with various newspapers. Furthermore, interview with his contemporaries and experts on the field of the research has been conducted. The different essays, seminar papers and speeches on the different issues related to the foreign



relations of Nepal are the important source of primary data for the research work. These essays and papers have been collected and published in the form of books by different institutions such as Madan Bhandari Foundation and Madan Ashrit Memorial Foundation which serve as an important resource material for the research work. This helps to understand the original thought of Madan Bhandari on these varying topics of international nature.

Additionally, secondary data has been collected from the various books, biographies, memoirs, articles, journals, reports and other official documents. Although, there is lack of resource materials focusing on the foreign policy thoughts of Madan Bhandari, many books, newspaper articles and other documents have been written on the life and work of Madan Bhandari. All of these works have certain chapters or sections that explain about the engagement of Madan Bhandari with the foreign countries and his observation and thoughts regarding Nepal's relation with them. These are important resources of information for the completion of this research work.

### **3.4. Data Analysis Methods**

The data has been analyzed through document analysis method. It is a systematic method for analyzing or assessing documents—both in printed and electronic form. Document analysis, like all qualitative research approaches, necessitates the examination and interpretation of data in order to garner meaning, acquire knowledge, and build empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This method includes skimming, reading and interpretation of the documents. Furthermore, this includes the elaboration and description of the data for the proper analysis. Document analysis involves arranging data and information into categories relevant to the research's core question.

According to Kari Karppinen and Hallvard Moe (2012), document analysis refers to a variety of textual analytic approaches of texts as sources or study objects. The 'documents as sources' method depicts ideas as political actors' sources, making it much easier to track and examine policy developments (Karppinen & Moe, 2012). Document analysis entails locating relevant documents and accurately interpreting their contents. Complementing document analysis with other methodologies, such as interviews with key

policy actors or other informants, is one of the most common means of familiarizing oneself with the context.

As per Robin Fireman Kramer, similarities and patterns are reported, summarized, and grouped according to themes or categories in content or document analysis (Kramer, 1985). Human subject replies are often recorded accurately and examined on two levels: 1) the linguistic content of the actual response; and 2) the transmitted sentiment or attitude. Because the researcher understands so little about the events being researched, this time-consuming and thorough type of analysis is regarded one of the most difficult.

### **3.5. Ethical Concerns**

The research has been carried out giving proper attention to ethical concerns. All the data received from any source has been properly cited. The primary data has been collected on the voluntary basis with proper clarity to the respondent regarding its use and publication. Proper ethical concerns such as informing the purpose and use of the data from the interview, permission for recording and its presentation wherever required has been carried out with due concern. The anonymity has been maintained properly wherever needed.

### **3.6. Limitations of the Study**

As every other researches, this research work also has certain limitations. The research work has only covered the study related to one prominent leader, Madan Bhandari. Therefore, it does not include holistic view of Nepalese foreign policy. The person of interest i.e. Madan Bhandari did not serve in any high level executive position in the government. He was the general secretary of CPN (UML), the main opposition party in the parliament after the election of 2048 B.S. (Sapkota, 2016). Therefore, the research might not reflect the foreign policy of Nepal. It only reflects his ideas on foreign policy of Nepal. The research has been carried out based on publicly available information and interviews of experts. The publicly available information especially biographies, memoirs and newspaper articles can be biased as they might exaggerate his thoughts and contributions or undermine it. Additionally, the research has only covered time period of Madan Bhandari which lacks the recent changes in politics and foreign policy of Nepal. The world order, geopolitics and political actors have significantly changed since his death which might decrease the significance of this research work. Finally, it is a time-bound research as it has to be completed within the certain time as per the requirement of the university. This limits the amount of the information that can be collected and analyzed for the research work.

## **Chapter 4: Evolution of Nepal's Foreign Policy**

The present day Nepal came to existence as an independent state after the unification campaign led by Late King Prithvi Narayan Shah in the Eighteenth century (Baral, 2020). Since then, Nepal has adopted different approaches to its foreign policy which has kept Nepal as an independent state in South Asia. The foreign policy of a country evolves along with the domestic policy and the major actors determining it. In order to gain deeper understanding of concept of Madan Bhandari on the Nepal's foreign policy, it is important to understand the evolution of Nepal's foreign policy which helps place Madan Bhandari's thoughts and ideas on the broader context.

The foreign policy of Nepal can be studied by considering Nepal as a small state. By using multiple standards, Dhurba Raj Adhikari (2018) has considered Nepal as a small state in the study of its foreign policy. The policies of any country are the results of a long-term process. These policies emerge as the country emerges according to the domestic as well as global needs. The foreign policy of Nepal since the unification is discussed below by studying the relations of Nepal with foreign nations at different periods of time.

### **Independent Foreign Policy**

King Prithvi Narayan Shah began a campaign to unite small states into modern day Nepal, conquering Kathmandu in 1768 A.D. (Khanal & Paudel, 2021). He suggested maintaining strategic relations between two big empires while adopting independent foreign relations. His famous saying: "Nepal is like a gourd between two rocks. Maintain a treaty of friendship with the emperor of China. Keep also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of southern sea (the company)", is still quoted while discussing the foreign policy of Nepal and is also taken as the foundation of foreign policy in Nepal (Baral, 2020). However, at the time British-India was expanding its territory in Asia and China was also trying to maintain its tributary relation with its neighbours. Nepal missed the balancing act outlined by Prithvi Narayan Shah and was forced to make concessions after the defeat with China in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and with British India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Adhikari, 2018). These events caused the shrinkage of the Nepal's land and the Sugauli treaty signed between Nepal and British-India in 1816, started the crises of independent foreign relations laid out by P.N. Shah. The Sugauli Treaty has impacted the foreign policy of Nepal until this

modern day. During this entire period, Nepal followed a policy of independence in the foreign affairs.

### **Isolationist Foreign Policy**

The bloodshed took place on the night of September 14, 1846 A.D. at a place called Kot, an arsenal and meeting hall which gave rise to the powerful Rana Prime Minister Jang Bahadur Rana beginning the period of oligarchic Rana Regime in Nepal (Vaidya, 1970). Jang Bahadur began an isolationist foreign policy that kept Nepal's foreign relations closed to all the countries except Britain (Khanal, 2019). He began appeasement of the British and aligned themselves with the British foreign policy. In 1857 A.D., he supported the British in the suppression of the sepoy mutiny for the preservation of the British rule in India (Khanal & Paudel, 2021).

The subsequent ruler of the Rana Regime had a constant risk of being overthrown by different groups within the Rana clan. To maintain the hold of power within the country their foreign policy was inclined in the favour of the British-India. The recruitment of Gurkhas in the British Army was permitted in 1885 and during world wars, Gurkha troops fought on the British side (Rose, 1971). During Chandra Shamsher's regime, Nepal started receiving a yearly gift of one million as a mark of gratitude for the services provided by Gurkhas in the British army (Muni, 1973). Thus, Nepal followed a policy of isolation while being pro-British during the period of Rana regime.

### **Special Relations with India**

During the Rana period, Nepal bandwagoned with British colonialists in India. However, with the independence of India in 1947, the foreign policy was aligned with independent India. The alignment was termed as 'special relation' and was formalized in "The Treaty of Peace and Friendship" between the Government of India and Government of Nepal on 31 July 1950 (Adhikari, 2018) . During that time foreign policy of Nepal was dominated and directed by the Indian Government. Gopal Khanal (2019) states that during the period of King Tribhuvan from 1951 to 1955, there was no official foreign policy of Nepal and in international forum, Nepal was represented by India (Khanal, 2019).

Furthermore, the nomination of Indian civil servant Govind Narayan as King Tribhuvan's private secretary demonstrated India's influence in Nepal after the country's democratic transition (Rose, 1971).

After being democratic, Nepal was keen to diversify its foreign relation by establishing its relations with countries other than India. However, India repeatedly influenced Nepal's policy by blocking it from extending its foreign relations. In 1951, the US was seeking approval to establish its embassy in Nepal, which was turned down because of Indian influence (Adhikari, 2018). Similarly, Nepal rejected a proposal from the Chinese government in the same year on India's behest (Dai, 1963). Therefore, during the period from 1951 to 1955, Nepal can be said to have pro-Indian or special relations with India.

### **Diversification of foreign policy**

Nepal started witnessing the diversification of its foreign relation after the death of King Tribhuvan and the ascension of his son King Mahendra in 1955 to the throne (Khanal & Paudel, 2021). Global politics were also changing at those periods, and the initiation of the relation was done both by King Mahendra and by foreign countries (Adhikari, 2018). The first democratic constitution of Nepal was adopted in early 1959, and B.P Koirala, the leader of the Nepali Congress, was elected as the country's first prime minister (Khanal, 2019). Gopal Khanal (2019) notes that after dissolving the parliament in 1960, King Mahendra gained control of the country and he began a new era in the foreign relations of Nepal.

During his reign, Nepal extended its diplomatic relation with China in 1955, the Chinese embassy was established in Nepal in 1960, and in the same year historic 'Sino Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty' was signed by BP Koirala with China (Khanal, 2019). The Embassy of the United States was established in 1959. The German embassy in Kathmandu and Nepalese embassy in Germany was established in 1963 and 1965 respectively (Adhikari, 2018). During the reign of King Mahendra, Nepal established its diplomatic relations with almost 50 countries only in the 1960s (Adhikari, 2018). By the end of the decade, Nepal had its embassy established in 12 countries, and 11 countries had their embassies in Nepal. In the same period, Nepal got the membership of the United

Nations, became a member of the Afro-Asian community, and also participated in Bandung Conference.

### **Non-alignment and Zone of Peace**

While Nepal was diversifying its foreign policy from 1955, it had also started to establish Nepal as a non-align nation in the era of cold war. The Bandung Conference of Asian and African Countries, which took place in Indonesia from April 18 to 24, 1955, was a watershed moment in the development of non-alignment policy (Adhikari, 2018). The First Conference of Heads of States or Governments of Non-Aligned Countries, on the other hand, was held in Belgrade from September 1-6, 1961 (Baral, 1981). King Mahendra himself participated in the first conference of Head of states of Non-aligned countries representing Nepal which signified the amount of importance Nepal adhered to the Non-Alignment Movement. During this period, the slogan was first set to 'equal friendship to all' (Khanal, 2019). However, it was gradually interpreted as equal friendship with India and China. Nepal tried to balance its diplomatic relations with India and China despite the dissatisfaction from the Indian side. Nepal used the NAM forum to draw attention to global inequity and the importance of economic growth in Asian and African countries (Adhikari, 2018). Nepal also raised voice for equal justice in international affairs.

In his coronation ceremony in 1975, King Birendra forwarded the proposal of "Zone of Peace" emphasizing the Nepal's foreign policy of neutrality and non-alignment (Lohani, 1976). According to Prakash C. Lohani (1976), as a concept, this proposal highlights two of Nepal's most positive aspects in foreign policy. First, it suggests that Nepal will never try to pit its colossal neighbors to the north and south against one another for whatever reason. The King has consistently stressed this facet of Nepal's foreign policy. The proposal for a peace zone formalizes and expresses this policy in a more positive way. Second, the concept of a peace zone strongly implies that Nepal will never allow any country to utilize Nepali soil against the interests of another country.

The proposal was immediately accepted by China, the US, the Soviet Union, and Pakistan. Later total of 116 Nations supported this proposal but it was not endorsed after the immediate rejection from India (Acharya, 2014). The initiative fell through because

India saw it as a blatant attempt to undermine the treaty of 1950, which it considered as having established special relations between the two countries (Adhikari, 2018).

### **Democratic Era Foreign policy**

People's revolution in 1990 led to the restoration of multiparty democracy effectively ending the direct rule of King under the party less Panchayat system (Khanal, 2019). Dhurba Raj Adhikari (2018) writes that Nepal attempted to revive special relations' with India for a brief period while following the restoration of democracy in 1990, and Nepal's internal and regional/international politics became increasingly entangled during the multi-party system period (1990-2005). With the advent of democracy, different outstanding issues such as past treaties with India raised by the communist parties came to the forefront. Similarly, water resources agreement with India by the Girija Prasad Koirala government received a huge backlash from the opposition parties (Whelpton, 1999). However, Bhekh B. Thapa (1992) writes that Koirala government formed after the first election under the new constitution expressed its foreign policy conforming with the established principles of non-alignment, mutual respect, sovereign equality of all nations and adherence to the United Nations charter.

Under the assistance of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Nepal began liberalization and privatization after the restoration of democracy (Adhikari, 2018). Not long after the advent of multiparty democracy, there was a rise of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) which launched the 'People's War' against the then establishment (Khanal & Paudel, 2021). The war aimed at establishing a new People's Republic system in Nepal. Nepalese government declared these domestic rebels as a terrorist and sought help from the international community for the fight against these rebels. Among the international community, the US provided funds as well as military training to fight against these rebels (Adhikari, 2018).

After the shocking massacre of the royal family, King Gyanendra ascended the throne, who dissolved the parliament and took power in his hands (Khanal & Paudel, 2021). This step of King Gyanendra contributed to the formation of the alliance between the parties including CPN (Maoist). It is believed that the alliance was mediated by India. The



alliance resulted in the new people's movement, second Janaandolan in 2006. During this movement, the international community either remained neutral or indirectly supported the public. The result of the Janaandolan was the overthrowing of the King and the establishment of a new Republic system in the country.

### **Foreign policy of Federal Republic Era**

After the establishment of Federal Democratic Republic in Nepal, mainly three concepts in regards to foreign policy of Nepal had been discussed. Those were the concept of equidistance, concept of equi-proximity and concept of Trilateralism.

K.C. and Bhattarai (2018) write that from ideological standpoint, equidistance is a Cold War strategy used by small countries in a bipolar world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. In Nepal, this strategy was implemented by the Panchayat regime which intended to keep both China and India at equal distance along with other global powers (Dahal, 2012). However, today's world is multipolar rendering the concept itself as obsolete. After the election of constituent assembly, UCPN (Maoist) emerged as the largest party in the parliament which advocated for the policy of equi-proximity rather than traditional concept of equidistance with the both neighbours (Dahal, 2012). According to Dhurba Raj Adhikari (2018), the term 'equiproximity' is favored over 'equidistance,' because the former refers to having an equally close relationship with both China and India in order to seek collaboration in Nepal's economic and infrastructure development, whilst the latter has a more strategic and security meaning (Adhikari, 2018). For Nepal's growth and progress, it is necessary to have good connections with both China and India.

After the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015, India imposed a blockade on Nepal (K.C. & Bhattarai, 2018). In response, the then Prime Minister K.P. Oli signed the trade and transit agreement with China in Beijing which helped in diversifying Nepal's connectivity (Khanal, 2019). With this, the concept of trilateral cooperation between Nepal, India and China has emerged. K.C. and Bhattarai (2018) consider the concept of trilateralism as a medium of implementation of the traditional concept of equidistance. Trilateralism prioritizes cooperation between China, India, and Nepal on a variety of issues, including trade, the economy, and security (K.C. & Bhattarai, 2018). It is a three-way

partnership based on reciprocity and dependency. Adhikari (2018) notes that during KP Sharma Oli's visit to China in 2018, he expressed his desire to become a bridge between India and China. Earlier, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai had also expressed the similar desire of establishing Nepal's role as bridge between the two giant neighbors (Dahal, 2012). On 12 May 2017, Nepal already signed China's 'One Belt One Road' project and tried to convince India to take part in the project as an attempt at trilateralism (Adhikari, 2018). Similarly, Nepal has signed agreements for railway linkages with both of its neighbours, China and India (Khanal, 2019). However, K.C and Bhattarai (2018) argue that Nepal has not carried out any concrete preparations for the realization of trilateralism between the three countries.

Since the unification, Nepal has been trying to adopt the independent foreign policy laid out by Prithvi Narayan Shah. It has been trying to balance its relations with giant neighbors. But due to the frequent change in the government system within Nepal, it was not able to maintain its independent policy. There has been a shift in policy from the independent to isolated to special relation to again independent. Up until 1950, Nepal was just trying to maintain its relation with its neighbors with exception of the British. After 1950, Nepal successfully diversified and maintained its relations with large number of countries around the globe. Nepal also became a member of multiple global institutions and has been offering its service to institutions.

Amidst the rising economies of two giant neighbors, Nepal is opting to benefit from the progress of these two great civilizations through the delicate balance of addressing their concerns while protecting its own sovereignty and achieving prosperity.

## **Chapter 5: Madan Bhandari's Views on Nepal's Foreign Policy**

This part elaborately discusses about the various ideas and beliefs of Madan Bhandari on the different facets of foreign policy of Nepal. Madan Bhandari's thoughts on the formulation and execution of foreign policy and maintaining appropriate foreign relations can be found in his innovative proposal of people's multiparty democracy (PMPD), political documents presented in the party congress, his different articles, papers presented in the international seminars and in his interviews. These ideas has been thoroughly discussed in the following sections of this work. Furthermore, the thoughts has been substantiated and presented in the most accurate manner possible with the supporting documents.

### **5.1. Madan Bhandari's Conception on Nepal's Foreign Policy**

CPN (UML) adopted the *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad* (People's multiparty democracy) as a program for Nepal's revolution in the fifth general congress held from 27 January-2 February, 1993 (CPN UML, 1993). The then general secretary of the party, Madan Bhandari was the proponent of this ideological line. This viewpoint rejects the traditional notion of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party in favor of a multi-party democratic system. It is regarded as a continuation of Marxism-Leninism and is centered on Nepalese domestic politics.

Mukunda Raj Kattel (2020), commenting on the idea, claims that for him, "PMPD is the theory of "socialism from below," as Hal Draper puts it." It allows the general public – not just party leaders and activists – to take part in a competitive process of establishing and transforming social, economic, political, and cultural institutions in order to obtain the freedoms and liberties required to take control of their own destiny (Kattel, 2020). To borrow a phrase from Marx, the 'working class' is actively engaged in the 'emancipation of their own.' In today's context, the accomplishment of liberty, equality, brotherhood, and democracy, which the French and American revolutions promised but failed to provide, is referred to as "emancipation". Kattel (2020) notes that Marx devoted his entire life to achieving this goal.

Article 3.9 of the political document adopted by the fifth national congress of CPN (UML) details the foreign policy to be implemented by the party (CPN UML, 1993). The document states that CPN (UML) shall follow the non-aligned, independent and progressive foreign policy. It shall publicize and renew any secret treaties carried out with any foreign country or International Organizations as per the principles of Panchasheel. It shall develop relations with neighboring countries China and India based on the principles of Panchasheel and further deepen the good friendly relationship with both the countries. It shall establish friendly relations with all the countries around the world on the basis of national interests. Particularly, it shall strengthen relations with the countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and formulate policy to promote and consolidate SAARC as a regional organization. It shall promote south-south cooperation and work towards establishing the free and independent transit rights granted to landlocked countries as per international conventions. It shall establish and promote economic, political, cultural, technical and commercial relations with all the countries around the world on the basis of independence, equality and mutual benefit. Furthermore, it shall extend support to the United Nations (UN) and work towards making it independent, fair, efficient and effective. Additionally, it aims to support institutional development of peace, independence, equality and national sovereignty while resisting imperialism, neo-colonialism, racial bias (apartheid), foreign intervention and interference. The document states that CPN (UML) will actively support non-aligned movement, socialism, proletariat revolution, national and social liberation movements while standing against world war, regional conflicts, aggressions and activity against peace and harmony. On the issues of worldwide human rights and environment protection campaigns, it shall actively support and cooperate with them.

The foreign policy outlined in the PMPD by Madan Bhandari chiefly emphasize the three goals. First, the document stresses the need for Nepal to remain sovereign and non-aligned without taking side of any power blocks in the international arena. This line of thought emphasized the need to maintain foreign relations according to the principles of Panchasheel (Bhandari, 2048). Despite being a communist party, CPN (UML) doesn't favour unnecessarily close relations with its northern communist neighbor, People's Republic of China nor with any other communist nation. Rather, it emphasizes equal relations with all countries taking into the geopolitical situation of Nepal. In doing so, it

stresses the need to focus on the national interests of the country. Second, it prioritizes the cooperation and coordination among the poor and backward countries. For this, it proposes greater regional cooperation in the SAARC area and south-south cooperation. Further, it emphasizes the need to secure the transit rights of the landlocked countries. He advocated gaining international support from the direct initiative of oneself (Bhandari, 2048). Third, it underscores the need for the international peace and harmony based on equality among the world nations. To achieve this, Nepal along with other nations should extend support to United Nations Organization (UN) while making attempts to make it more independent, impartial, efficient and effective. Thus, it condemns any kind of exploitation and injustice around the world.

Madan Bhandari not only proposed the principle of the equal relations between the two neighboring countries, but advocated for its practice publicly. In his interview with the Spotlight newspaper (Thapa, 2014), he stated that his party strongly opposed the policy of tilting towards one any one of the two neighbor. He stated that such distinct tilts would hurt the nation and national interests. At the time, CPN (UML) was accusing Nepali congress of tilting towards India (Baral, 1995). He stated that the Nepali Congress government had not adopted a policy that advances the nation's interests, whether in its dealings with the south, north, or even friendly countries. He went on to say that a clear alignment in the Girija government's policies was harmful to the national interests and must be opposed. This was later reiterated by Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari, accusing former Prime Minister G.P. Koirala of purposefully moving toward India in order to save his political career (Hachhethu, 1999).

In the same interview, Madan Bhandari advocated for the proactive foreign policy in the matters of national interest. In the case of Bhutanese refugees, he urged the government to settle the issue with the India instead of being just an observer (Thapa, 2014). He says, "So, you see, the Girija government has not been able to make any nationalist end decisive step. And this is simply because they cannot annoy a certain group. Therefore, the kind of one sidedness this government is showing in the pursuance of the foreign policy is very much objectionable (Thapa, 2014)."

The Royal Government of Bhutan chose to implement a number of laws in order to protect its integration policies and the philosophy of 'one nation, one people,' as well as to stem the flow of illegal Nepali immigrants into Bhutan (Kharat, 2003). These included issuing a no objection letter (NOC) as a condition for receiving basic government services, evicting anyone suspected of participating in human rights demonstrations, dismissing relatives of Ngolops from the civil service, and legitimizing forcible evictions using VMFs (voluntary migration forms) written in Dzongkha. This led to the large number of Bhutanese refugees flowing into Nepal through India.

According to the interview given in Sunday Newspaper in January, 1993, Bhandari supported the movement for democracy in Bhutan and condemned the injustices being committed there (Thapa, 2014). He urged the three nations, India, Nepal, and Bhutan, to work together to solve the issue. Bhutan and India have a special connection, particularly in terms of foreign policy (which in case of Bhutan, is determined in consultation with India). Aside from that, Nepalis from Bhutan come through India. Madan Bhandari accused the Indian government of evading responsibility by claiming that the issue was a bilateral one between the two countries, while failing to play the part that it should in finding a solution.

Bhandari's foreign policy of proactive behavior may also be seen in Rajendra Sthapit's recollection of his visit to India with Madan Bhandari. According to Sthapit (2075), Madan intended to raise the issue of Tanakpur treaty with the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu, and offer suggestions on the appointment of an Indian ambassador to Nepal. Jyoti Basu was the partner in the central government of India at the time, and he had the power to influence the central government's policy (Ramakrishnan, 2010). Madan wanted to question Basu about his party's position on the Tanakpur issue, which could provide Madan with an opportunity to persuade Basu to act in Nepal's best interests. Additionally, Madan had wanted to request Jyoti Basu that the Indian ambassador to Nepal should not be from one of Nepal's neighboring Indian states because they would be representing their states' interests as well as the interests of India as a whole. This demonstrates Madan Bhandari's proactive nature in safeguarding national interests.

Bhandari believed that foreign policy should not be guided only by the prejudices of the principles without taking into consideration the concrete practical issues of revolution and development (Bhandari, 2048). He made it clear that his party was opposed to any aggression or meddling, whether from a communist or non-communist country. He claimed in an interview with newspaper, international forum that the beliefs that Nepalese communists can tolerate Chinese aggression or meddling in Nepal are false (Thapa, 2014). He stated explicitly that his party strongly opposes all forms of aggression or meddling, whether Chinese, Indian, American, or Russian.

In the eyes of Sushil Pyakurel, a prominent human rights activist and member of CPN(UML), Madan Bhandari was "more of the nationalist than an internationalist" (S. Pyakurel, personal communication, December 20, 2021). According to Pyakurel, Bhandari had a strong belief in the non-interference of the internal affairs of any country. Pyakurel mentions that Madan Bhandari was critical of the Soviet Union's intervention in the Afghanistan in 1979 (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999). Pyakurel says that Madan Bhandari did not like the Chinese government's action in regards to Tiananmen Square protests but refrained from officially commenting on it because he regarded it as the interference in the internal affairs of another state. The Tiananmen Square incident occurred in China in the spring of 1989, when a series of protests and rallies resulted in a government crackdown on demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square (Mason & Clements, 2002). In this incident, protests for reform and democracy by the students was met with severe persecution throughout the country. Therefore, Madan Bhandari advocated and practiced the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of the country.

Radha Krishna Mainali has mentioned that Madan Bhandari was against any kind of foreign assistance in the internal movement of the country (R.K. Mainali, personal communication, December 22, 2021). According to Mainali, some leaders in the then underground party, CPN (ML) advocated for the revolution to make Nepal a republic country with the assistance of India or China. However, Madan Bhandari raised his voice against such proposal arguing that any support taken from foreign powers would be detrimental for the party and nation. Sushil Pyakurel also reaffirmed this thought of Madan Bhandari mentioning that Bhandari believed that the invitation for intervention to foreign

powers in the domestic affairs of the country would deteriorate the relationship between the countries in the long run (S. Pyakurel, personal communication, December 20, 2021).

According to Sushil Pyakurel, Madan Bhandari had positive views towards the foreign aid and assistance from the other countries (S. Pyakurel, personal communication, December 20, 2021). Pyakurel mentions that Madan Bhandari had the view that Nepal must be vigilant in receiving those aid ensuring that the aid doesn't compromise our national interests. In response to the question regarding foreign aid from Newsweek, he responded, "there is no reason for foreign aid to stop if communists come to power. But we will not ask for aid at the cost of our country's freedom, independence, dignity and sovereignty. These things are more important than foreign aid (Litvin, 1991)."

This approach of Nepal's foreign policy was stated by Madan Bhandari in his first public appearance in the CPN (ML)'s central party office at Bagbazar, Kathmandu (R. R. Lumsali, personal communication, December 11, 2021). In this first public appearance as the spokesperson of the party, Bhandari clearly mentioned that his party was neither pro-India nor pro-China. In fact, it was not against any of the countries. Instead, he clearly stated that his party's basic foreign policy was a policy of being pro-Nepal. It is a testament of his unwavering stance on the protection of national interest.

Madan Bhandari also spoke on the country's economic issues. While the Nepali Congress advocated for privatization and the involvement of local and international investors in the development of specific industries, the CPN (UML) was devoted to ending all forms of foreign monopoly in the Nepalese economy (Baral, 1995). However, it did not plan to close the foreign capital and technology at the policy level (Bhandari, 2048). It advocated investment, protection and use of foreign capital and technology within the premises of the constitution and laws considering the national interest of the country.

Additionally, Madan Bhandari's thoughts on the proposal of zone of peace, brought forward by King Birendra in his coronation ceremony is also significant. The Zone of Peace (ZOP) proposal was the cornerstone of king Birendra's foreign policy (Adhikari, 2018).



This was the new shift in the foreign policy of Nepal during the Panchayati era. The concept for a zone of peace (ZOP) essentially expressed Nepal's wish to be free of conflict and antagonism while ensuring a smooth path for development based on peace and harmony (Sharma, 2004). While speaking to delegates of various nations at his coronation ceremony in February 1975, King Birendra proposed Nepal as a "Zone of Peace." King Birendra made the following statement in his address to international dignitaries:

*As heirs to one of the most ancient civilizations in Asia, our natural concern is to preserve our independence—a legacy handed down to us by history. The absence of peace will delay, make more difficult and even deform our development. Just as a world without peace will jeopardize our traditional independence.* (King Birendra cited in (Sharma, 2004), p. 47)

Madan Bhandari was however, critical about the concept of zone of peace proposal citing the engagement of Nepalese human resources in the military alliances of the western countries (Thapa, 2014). Bhandari again questioned the contradictory reality against generally accepted principle of zone of peace in his interview with the international forum (Thapa, 2014). He clarified that he opposed such initiative which was self-contradictory. However, he was willing to support the proposal of zone of peace, "if both our neighbors should desire to see this small country as an internationally accepted zone of peace". His insistence that both neighbors recognize Nepal's status as a zone of peace before receiving international recognition might be interpreted as his realistic approach to international relations. After all, Nepal was unable to execute the idea at the international level due to India's refusal (Adhikari, 2018).

## **5.2. 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of peace and friendship**

In the first general election after the promulgation of the constitution of Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, Madan Bhandari won the constituency number one of Kathmandu defeating the incumbent prime minister and leader of Nepali Congress, Krishna P. Bhattarai (Rai, 2078). This was a surprise to the world when the entire communist movement in the world was in defensive position after the fall of Soviet Union. In this backdrop, Newsweek, the famous American newspaper published interview of Madan Bhandari in 1991 on the title, "In Nepal, Karl Marx Lives" (Litvin, 1991). In that famous interview, Madan Bhandari

resonates the value his party adheres to the sovereignty and dignity of the country. In the interview, Madan Bhandari stressed the need to review and renew the unequal treaties with India, removing the provisions that are unequal and insulting (Litvin, 1991). He underlined that his party aspires to have "very good relations" with both India and China, without being unduly close to either of them.

In another interview published in Sunday Dispatch on 26 August, 1990 A.D., Bhandari emphasizes the importance of resolving previous treaties with India, claiming that there are some long-standing issues in Nepal-India relations that have yet to be resolved (Thapa, 2014). He claims that his party has scrutinized the communique issued following the meeting of the two prime ministers and discovered something linked to Nepal's sovereignty that his party deems disagreeable, while also expressing his gratitude for the meeting's outcome, which was the cessation of hostilities. He emphasizes that the resolution of the two countries' problems and the formation of new relations must be deep-rooted and based on mutual understanding and equality. (Thapa, 2014). Previously, he stated that any relationship with a foreign country should be based on Panchasheel mentioning his suggestion to the constitution commission. He also stated that any treaty with a foreign government must be ratified by the legislature.

At the time when other parties were not being able to raise the concerns of Nepal related to the unequal treaties of past, CPN (UML) was vocal about it (Baral, 1995). The major parties agreed on the basic principles of Nepal's foreign policy in general, but varied on particular. The Nepali Congress chose to reform India's multifaceted relations on the basis of reality and objectivity, while the CPN (UML), which is committed to developing equal relations with both India and China, said it would review all "unequal treaties and agreements," including the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India. Furthermore, the CPN (UML) was more unequivocal about establishing a work permit system for foreign employees, whilst the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) just stated that it would take necessary actions to reduce the entry of foreigners. The Nepal Sadbhawan Party (NSP), on the other hand, was determined to forging closer ties with India, in stark contrast to the CPN (UML)'s vehement condemnation of the NC's apparent "tilt toward India source"

### **5.3. Tanakpur Understanding versus Treaty**

Madan Bhandari's position and opinions on the Tanakpur Barrage project can be a valuable resource for understanding his perspectives on protecting Nepal's national interests. According to Dhungel and Pun (2014), in the early 1980s, India began unilaterally building the Tanakpur barrage to replace the aging Sarada Banbasa barrage, which was built in 1928. Despite Nepal's complaints, India claimed that the Tanakpur barrage and its related afflux bunds were being constructed entirely within Indian Territory, with no negative consequences for Nepal. However, the Mahakali River began to gnaw the left bank upstream of the Tanakpur barrier in a manner identical to that of 1910 during the British rule. This compelled Prime Minister Chandra Shekar to solicit Nepal's support on May 17, 1991, in the same way that the British did in 1916 (Dhungel & Pun, 2014). The contentious Tanakpur MOU of 1991 signed by Prime Minister Grijia Prasad Koirala allowed India to use 11.9 ha of Nepalese lands (2.9 ha in Jimuwa village + 9 ha pondage area) so that India's left afflux bund could be carried upstream and connected to the higher Nepalese holdings. The actual issue about the project arose from a disagreement about the project's status (Bhattachan, 1994). The administration of Prime Minister Grijia Prasad Koirala contended that the project was merely a simple agreement between the two nations, but the opposition said it was a treaty that needed to be adopted by parliament in order to become legally binding.

From the 3rd to the 5th Kartik, 2049 B.S., Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasingh Rao paid a goodwill visit to Nepal (Rai, 2078). During the visit, the two prime ministers issued a joint press release. Madan Bhandari, after the politburo meeting of the main opposition party CPN (UML), issued a press note regarding the arrival of Indian Prime Minister Rao and the joint press release by the two Prime Ministers. According to Bhandari, the clarifications in the joint press statement represent recognition of the significant faults in the Tanakpur accord that his party had previously raised. He went on to say that the key concerns, such as deciding on the Mahakali River's status and thereby ensuring Nepal's advantages from the project, were still to be resolved.

The report of the Evaluation-cum-Advisory Committee on Tanakpur accord, led by Lok Raj Baral, issued a report on February 26, 1993 concluding that the Tanakpur

agreement was of an "ordinary nature" with no major implications for Nepal's future exploitation of its natural resources (Bhattachan, 1994). The opposition parties and several other Nepalese slammed the Baral report.

Addressing the House of Representatives, Madan Bhandari raised certain major issues as follows (Aryal, 2078):

- 1) According to the section 4 of article 126 of constitution of the kingdom of Nepal 1990, any work impacting the geographic integrity of Nepal cannot be carried out even by the entire parliament. In the Tanakpur Barrage project, land has been provided for the construction of the barrage. Does the constitution permit the government with majority or the party with the majority in parliament to provide such land?
- 2) The section 2 of the article 126 of constitution of the kingdom of Nepal 1990 states that any agreement related to the use and distribution of the natural resources of Nepal should be presented and passed from the two-third majority of the joint session of the parliament. This is the clear constitutional provision. Therefore, the government must present the Tanakpur Barrage agreement to the joint session of the parliament and it should not be discussed in the House of Representatives.

Madan Bhandari himself went on the field visit of the Tanakpur project. He stated clearly that he was not against the project itself but against the certain provisions which were not in the favor of Nepal. His standpoint in this case was loud and clear. The facts, he stated showed that he was not using the case just for political rhetoric. In a January 1993 interview with the spotlight newspaper, he indicated that the prime minister's statements were neither valid nor founded on facts (Thapa, 2014). He claimed that the Prime Minister's views on the Tanakpur matter were neither historically true nor representative of the situation. There has been use of Nepalese territory there, and the area involved is significantly larger. It isn't just 5.77 meters long. He states that, "I went there and saw it. And I can say it is not less than 1400 meters. The officials say there would be no water in the lean season. But it touches Nepali territory at 244 M or EL. But even now, there is water at 246.3 meters and that much Nepali territory will be inundated (Thapa, 2014). He further said, "The power is being generated for the last eight months. But so far Nepal has not received even one unit neither one cusec of water. And there is no possibility either. The

left afflux bund is an inseparable part of the India project and this not been constructed for stopping flooding in Nepali territory. But is not it natural that any bound would stop flooding? But if there were no Tanakpur project, our territory would never be inundated. So, it is clear that Nepali congress government has shamelessly taken the people and the country for a ride by hiding truth and gone out of their way to support Indian interests and if that is the way things are to be done here and our national interests are to be side tracked, not to say anything about 25 years, our water resources can never be developed (Thapa, 2014)"

Another significant thought of Madan Bhandari is the idea of "national consensus" on the major issues concerning the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nepal. After the decision of Supreme Court that the Tanakpur accord was indeed the treaty and that it should be passed from the parliament, Bhandari urged Prime Minister G.P. Koirala to resign (Rai, 2078). He stated that national consensus among the political parties would add greater weight to the matter when re-negotiating it with India. He noted that Nepalese had become more conscious of their rights and time has changed since the Koshi and Gandak agreements. According to Surya Thapa (2014), Bhandari proposes engaging with the government based on the constitution's provisions addressing the country's sovereignty, borders, and natural resources protection. Bhandari is eager to engage in discussions with another member of the ruling Nepali Congress party demanding that the incumbent Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala to step down. It's clear that Bhandari wants to reach a national consensus on such a contentious matter after talking with experts. Bhandari makes two points about the subject. One, the status of the Mahakali River must be established, and two, Nepalese rights to the river and their ability to exercise those rights must be established. In the same interview (Thapa, 2014), Bhandari further adds, "And if it is necessary, we have to share the expenses involved. Say if it is 5 billion. We have to shoulder 2.5 billion and again if 20 thousand cusec of water is available for irrigation. Ten thousand cusec must come to Nepal for the 1, 70,000 acre of land to be irrigated Mahakali, and we may need 5.7 thousand cusec. Anything in excess, we may sell to India." This shows his attitude of national self-respect and willingness to bear one's own burden. This can explain his idea on the protection of dignity and respect of the country.

During this entire debate on Tanakpur Barrage agreement, Bhandari consistently advocated for the "national consensus" among the political parties in the countries. He appears to have the view that only national consensus could make the case of Nepal strong in its dealings with the foreign countries. He reaffirmed his advocacy of the "national consensus" with the Samakaiin Tisari Duniya Newspaper in 1993 (Thapa, 2014). He blamed external factors for dividing the political parties saying, "In fact, Nepali congress changed its behavior drastically after American Senator Stephen Solarej who was looking after South Asian Affairs visited Nepal. The US Congress man said, "Leftists should not be incorporated even in this interim government." He further added, "Communists are losing in the battles across the world. So, they should not be promoted even in Nepal". His prediction was that the victory of leftist forces will pose serious threat to democracy (Thapa, 2014)"

CPN (UML) decided that two issues must be solved in the case of Tanakpur barrage agreement. The first was that the status of the Mahakali River must be ascertained. Second, the benefits that Nepal would get from the project should be guaranteed.

Another noteworthy insight of Madan Bhandari in the Tanakpur Barrage Agreement is his far-sightedness. His continuous insistence on deciding the "status of Mahakali River" before concluding any agreements with India had deep deep-rooted issues of land encroachment India.

Aryal (2078) has argued that Bhandari had known the issue of land encroachment by India on the eastern part of Kali River and he was in search of concrete evidence to raise the issue with India. Bir Bahadur Thagunna was tasked with bringing a report on the Indian encroachment of the land. Thagunna even submitted the report to Madan Bhandari as a general secretary at the central office of CPN (UML). Unfortunately, before Bhandari could take any further actions, he died in a mysterious car accident in Dasdhunga (Rai, 2078). Furthermore, Rishi Raj Lumsali, who was actively engaged with Madan Bhandari during the Tanakpur accord case reiterated that Bhandari was well-briefed by their local team including Prem Singh Dhami about the land encroachment by India on the eastern side of Mahakali River (R. R. Lumsali, personal communication, December 11, 2021). He states

that when Bhandari was insisting on determining the status of Mahakali River, he was actually raising the issue of origin of Mahakali River which would prove the land encroachment by India. In the task of determining the status of Mahakali River, Bhandari wanted to ensure the river as the major border between the two countries, Nepal and India while establishing that Mahakali River originated from the Limpiyadhura. In this way, India would be compelled to move back into its territory as per historical proofs. These initiatives can be clearly observed as the far-sightedness of Bhandari which led to the amendment of the constitution of Nepal after 28 years (Aryal, 2078).

While addressing the Kaski District Convention of his party CPN (UML), Madan Bhandari clarified his position for the last time before his death (Oli, 2070). In the convention, he stated that they were willing to pass the Tanakpur barrage project if it was improved to reflect and address the national interests of Nepal. They were not blocking the project on the political biasness and that would not be a responsible act of any politician or political party. However, they will not let the project to pass without necessary improvements in the clauses of the agreement. Bhandari clarified that the improvements in the treaty were needed as the precedents for the future as well. Because the current treaty will be used as a reference in the future agreements related to the use of the natural resources including the water resources between Nepal and other countries.

Bhandari was in favor of maintaining effective foreign relations between the countries which would be beneficial to the people on the both side of border. In the interview with the Sunday newspaper in January of 1993, he shared his belief that only the people in Nepal and India could consolidate the relationship between the two countries (Thapa, 2014). It would only be conceivable if both nations' citizens' concerns were recognized. At the official level, ties are founded on the ruling classes' interests. They are not in the people's best interests. Hence, Madan Bhandari believed in the people to people relations and focused on their wellbeing and benefits in the foreign policy dealings.

#### 5.4. SAARC

The collapse of the post-World War II international system has necessitated the creation of new cooperation structures among states (Milner, 1992). While cooperation may not always be advantageous depending on the subject and one's point of view, initiatives by nations to limit the negative impacts of their policies on one another can benefit the overall welfare. There has been an explosion of various types of regionalism and regionalist organizations all across the world since the late 1980s (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2006). Many regionalization processes can be seen in other parts of the world, as evidenced by the (re)emergence, revitalization, or expansion of regional projects and organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern Common Market (Mercosur), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

In South Asia, the initiative for regional cooperation began with the establishment of SAARC. SAARC was founded three and a half decades ago with the goal of increasing regional cooperation and securing greater regional integration for the member nations' and region's fast socioeconomic growth (Bhattarai, 2021). Afghanistan became the organization's eighth member in 2007. SAARC's main goals are to enhance the well-being of South Asians, accelerate economic growth, social advancement, and cultural development, give all people the chance to live in dignity and reach their full potential, and promote and deepen collective self-reliance. Madan Bhandari, like many others, was dissatisfied with SAARC's performance.

Madan Bhandari acknowledged the organization's value to the nations of South Asia in an interview published in the Spotlight in 1993 (Thapa, 2014). He does, however, believe that SAARC's productivity must be sufficient to justify its existence. He insists, "The crucial thing to remember in this regard is that it must be capable of resolving both regional and bilateral issues. The importance of India's position in this organization cannot be overstated. As things stand, it appears that it will be unable to engage in any bilateral interactions with other member countries source" Because India is the region's largest country, Bhandari clearly said in the political document of the CPN (UML)'s fifth national



Congress that SAARC will not be particularly beneficial until India adopts an attitude of equality, respect for sovereignty, and mutual cooperation toward its neighbors (CPN UML, 1993). He underlines that India was attempting to establish a monopoly over Nepal's natural resources in order to strengthen its' economic and market position in the country. As a result, he contends that India must halt its hegemonic activities in order for all countries to move forward in pursuit of common interests by fostering regional linkages, cooperation, and organization at the grassroots level.

### **5.5. Non-Aligned Movement**

Madan Bhandari also took a critical look at the Non-alignment and Panchasheel practices. He recognized the importance of the Non-Alignment Movement as a platform for fighting imperialism, hegemony, racism, colonialism, aggression, interference, nuclear proliferation, and war (CPN UML, 1993). Furthermore, the movement was notable for its support for social liberty and national independence. He, on the other hand, considered that these inherently good concepts were only discussed in the text and not put into practice in the real world. In his interview published in international forum in 1991, Bhandari says, "During the last 30 years, non-alignment and Panchasheel remained only on paper. Such a philosophy never has been put into practice. It is regarded only as a sub system of international neo-colonistic capitalistic imperialism. For example, the Indo-Nepal secret treaty of 1965 can be taken into account. It was against the principle of non-alignment and on more than a panchayati (mandale) nationalism or national capitulation. In this perspective, our foreign policy goal would be revised and cancel all the previous treaties with bargain Nepal's national independence and territorial integrity source (Thapa, 2014)." Thus, Bhandari focused on the effective implementation of the ideas of Non-Aligned Movement and Panchasheel in practice.

Bhandari was referring to the "secret" Arms Assistance Agreement signed between Nepal and India in 1965 (Subedi, 1994). Following the Sino-Indian border war of 1962, India agreed to "supply arms, ammunition, and equipment for the entire Nepalese Army," as well as "replace the existing Nepalese stock with modern weapons as soon as possible," as well as "provide maintenance and replacement for the equipment to be supplied by them." Despite this, Nepal was "Free to import weaponry, ammunition, any warlike

material and equipment required for Nepal's security from or via Indian territory. The method for putting this agreement into effect will be worked out by the two governments in collaboration." However, from India's perspective, the agreement did not include the import of weapons by Nepal from or via China, because it was India's obligation to supply weapons to the whole Nepalese army and replace old stock with new equipment. Bhandari considered this treaty the violation of the principles of non-alignment and Panchasheel.

Madan Bhandari argued that the UN should be autonomous, fair, efficient, and effective (CPN UML, 1993). These were his requirements for fully supporting the organization's objectives. His desire for an autonomous and successful UN reflected his fear that the organization may be used as a weapon by powerful countries to achieve their foreign policy aims while ignoring the concerns of small and weak countries.

Madan Bhandari continuously insisted on effective cooperation and collaboration among states that would benefit all the countries. He opposed any kind of policies that were just reflected on the paper and not practiced in the reality.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis of Madan Bhandari's Thoughts**

Madan Bhandari spent most of his political career as an underground political activist until the restoration of democracy through the popular people's movement in 1990 (Pokharel, 2078). As per the words of general secretary of the Communist party of India (Marxist-Leninist-Liberation), Binod Mishra, Madan Bhandari came to prominence when Nepal was going through a great historical turnaround which required a thinker that could merge the sovereign thoughts of Marxism into the ground reality of the country like Nepal (Oli, 2070). In this way, Nepal found a leader who would look after the problems of the people while raising the flag of Nepali sovereignty and independence high. After coming out of underground into open politics, Bhandari got to spent short time transitioning his party into parliamentary politics and taking initiatives as a parliamentarian before his untimely death in the car accident. During this short interval, Bhandari has shared his views and opinions on the issue of foreign relations and global politics through different mediums. Those thoughts have been extensively analyzed in the earlier section of this chapter.

According to Mukunda Raj Kattel (2020), Madan led the party during a period when the Western world was celebrating "the end of history," with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolizing Marxism's obsolescence. Kattel (2020) remarks that it was the beginning of 'history,' not the end, in Nepal. The fact that Francis Fukuyama, who declared the end of history, was proven wrong by Bhandari should have startled him.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold war, when the entire communist movement was in the defensive position, Bhandari led the communist in Nepal to unexpected gain in the parliamentary elections in Nepal (Oli, 2070). He was a staunch nationalist who advocated for the nullification and renewal of all the unequal and humiliating treaties. He clarified that the communists in Nepal were not receiving any foreign monetary support and advocated for the balanced relation with the neighboring states. His views guide not only CPN (UML) but other leftist parties as well till day (Dhakal, 2020).

Based on the analysis, his idea on the foreign policy of Nepal can be outlined in the findings ahead. According to Madan Bhandari, Nepal should pursue a foreign policy that is non-aligned, autonomous, and progressive. Any previous treaties that conflict with these principles should be annulled, and this should be done in practice rather than just on paper. Nepal should not pursue pro-China or pro-India policies nor should it pursue any policies against India and China. It should pursue only pro-Nepal policies. Any secret treaties signed with foreign countries or international organizations should be made public and renewed in accordance with Panchasheel principles. In this sense, earlier treaties with India that were unequal should be renegotiated and amended on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. The issue of renewing the unequal treaties was raised by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari during his visit to India (Thapliyal, 2012). Later, the government of K.P. Sharma Oli was successful in reaching an agreement with the Indian government that led to the formation of the Eminent Personality Group (EPG) that was tasked with providing recommendations for renewing the unequal treaties of past (Haider & Bhattacharjee, 2017). This shows that the continued advocacy for renewal of the unequal treaties was not just a rhetoric for Madan Bhandari and his party. Rather, it was the genuine concern for the protection of national interest. Hence, this discards the claim of Anirudha Gupta that Nepali communists only raise the issue when they are out of government. Furthermore, these shows the significance of his thoughts on protection and promotion of national interests of the country in an uncompromising manner.

In negotiations with other nations, the emphasis must be on building national consensus among the country's political players so that one can negotiate with more authenticity and weight. Nepal should maintain relations with neighboring countries China and India on the principles of Panchasheel and further deepen the good friendly relationship with both countries. Nepal should pursue proactive and bold foreign policy on the issues of safeguarding its national interests. Nepal should establish friendly relations with all the countries around the world prioritizing the national interest of the country.

Furthermore, SAARC's position should be bolstered, and the organization's effectiveness should be sufficient to justify its existence. Policies to promote and solidify SAARC as a regional organization should be developed. South-south cooperation must be

expanded. Nepal should work to establish the free and independent transit rights granted to landlocked countries under international conventions, as well as establish and promote economic, political, cultural, technical, and commercial relations with all countries around the world based on independence, equality, and mutual benefit. The United Nations (UN) should be made autonomous, fair, efficient, and effective while extending support to it.

Additionally, while resisting imperialism, neo-colonialism, racial prejudice (apartheid), foreign intervention, and interference, Nepal should encourage institutional development of peace, independence, equality, and national sovereignty. Nepal should actively support the non-aligned movement, socialism, the proletarian revolution, national and social liberation movements, all while opposing world wars, regional disputes, aggressions, and other activities that threaten peace and harmony. Nepal should support and collaborate actively with movements raising international human rights and environmental causes. Political autonomy is built on the foundation of economic autonomy. As a result, Nepal should concentrate on achieving economic autonomy, with a greater emphasis on economic independence. This shows that his views on the international cooperation and collaboration were patriotic in nature.

As a leftist leader, it is natural for Madan Bhandari's thoughts and opinion to be influenced by the leftist ideology. However, he appears to have biasness in regards to the behavior of communist countries. He claims communist countries do not interfere in the internal affairs of other states citing China as an example (Thapa, 2014). He states that since China became a socialist state, it has not intervened in Nepal's domestic affairs. However, communist countries also intervene in the domestic affairs of other countries. Soviet Union's intervention in the Afghanistan in December 1979 can be taken as an example (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999). He claims in an interview published in an international forum (Thapa, 2014), that communists are always motivated by national interests and concepts, and that they are always speaking out against peasant oppression and feudalistic atrocities against the country. He goes on to say that communists are always criticizing imperialism and any form of interference. In regards to Nepalese communists, he states, "Furthermore, Nepalese communists are constantly fighting all types of imperialism and neocolonialist international capitalism, as well as its impacts (Thapa, 2014)". However, Narayan Khadka

(1993) has accused communists in Nepal of using anti-India sentiments as the essence of Nepali nationalism (Khadka, 1993). Similarly, Anirudha Gupta (1991) has stated that the CPN (UML) was formed with the blessings of CPI (M) leaders by merging the two communist parties CPN (ML) and CPN (Marxist) (Gupta, 1991). Prior to the merger, CPI (Marxist) leader H. K. Surjeet attended a politburo meeting of the Nepal Communist Party (Marxist). Similarly, West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu had maintained close contact with the Sahana-Adhikari faction's leaders. This shows the intimate contact between the communist parties of India and Nepal influencing even their merger.

When analyzing different documents, articles, speeches, interviews and seminar papers created by Madan Bhandari, it can be found that national interest was the top priority for him in his dealings with the foreign countries. His actions also corroborate his thinking in protection and promotion of national interest. In the political document adopted by the fifth national congress of CPN (UML), Bhandari has clearly stated that, "National independence and equal relation with neighbors are indispensable elements of our foreign policy (CPN (UML), 1993)." Bhandari advocated for independence, dignity, equality, and national consensus, uncompromising stance on sovereignty and geographic integrity, relations based on mutual benefit and economic independence to safeguard and promote the national interests of Nepal.

Bhandari held the national interests of the country above anything else. In response to the accusations by rivals of taking financial and material support from communist parties of other countries, Bhandari strongly denied taking any kind of such support and aid from the communist parties in China, Korea, India or any other country (Litvin, 1993). Furthermore, he clarifies his relation with the other communist leaders and parties of the world. In regards to the North Korean leader Kim IL Sung, he says that he Kim contributed for the revolution and development of his country. Other than that, he has no any admiration for him. The interview further clarifies his observation towards the communist movements in the other countries. He observes that they are all engaged in the establishment of the new society based on emancipation, equality and justice. He says that communist movement in each country has evolved on their own way. In china, they liberated their country through armed struggle while in Nepal, it is the peaceful movement. Similarly, he says that foreign

hegemony and hostility have been directed at North Korea and China. He states that his party is also speaking out against foreign aggression, imperialism, and regional hegemony in Nepal.

This shows that although he has good wishes for the communist movements around the world, he is not in favor of supporting or engaging in the communist revolutions of any country in any way. In that respect, he expects the same from the other countries and wants to act strictly confined inside the national boundary on the basis of national interests.

Apart from diplomatic and political independence, Bhandari advocated for the economic independence as well. In his interview with the Spotlight newspaper, he mentions that Nepal's economy is in the least developed state. Furthermore, Nepal's trade, commercial, and industrial strategies have become extensions of India's strategy. He continued by saying, "Our business has become an extension of the Indian market, with Indian money controlling it. It's a branch economy, and policies like this don't help our nation grow an independent, self-sufficient economy; instead, they create major roadblocks (Thapa, 2014)." This viewpoint echoes his desire for a strong and independent economy, which is a critical component in safeguarding the country's national interests.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

Madan Bhandari was a prominent thinker and leader who influenced the trajectory of Nepali politics in a significant manner. In an internet survey by Kantipur Publication and Nepal home page, people voted him the "man of century" who had the most impact in the Nepali politics in the last 20<sup>th</sup> century. He began his political career as an underground cadre of the leftist party and rose to popularity after the popular people's movement of 1990. His role in the formation of united front of Nepali Congress and Left alliance for the success of the people's movement in 1990 is significant which led to the restoration of multiparty democracy.

Bhandari's most noteworthy contribution is his political ideology of People's Multiparty democracy (PMPD), which was adopted by the fifth national congress of CPN (UML) in 2049 B.S. Based on this extension of Marxism-Leninism, Bhandari led his party to become a major political force in Nepal. The democratization of communist ideology and subsequent success of communist forces in Nepal garnered the attention of entire world.

The study broadly aimed to investigate on the thoughts and ideas of Madan Bhandari on the foreign policy of Nepal. Further, it intended to focus on the Bhandari's policies on the protection of national interests and his ideas on the cooperation and collaboration at the international level. This study aimed to assess the usefulness of Madan Bhandari's thoughts on protecting national interests of Nepal while examining the patriotic nature of his ideas on cooperation and collaboration at international level.

Madan Bhandari advocated for the independent, non-aligned and progressive foreign policy. He emphasized the need to actually follow those policies in practice rather than mentioning only on paper. He placed national interest above all in his dealings with foreign countries. He vocally advocated for the revision of the unequal treaties between Nepal and India. He preached national consensus on the major issues of foreign affairs and encouraged proactive foreign policy in matters of national interests. He was in favor of strengthening relations with both the neighbors, India and China without favoring either of them. He emphasized forming relationship with all the countries around the world with the focus on the protection and promotion of national interest. He was nationalist at heart and



pragmatist on his dealings with the foreign countries without being biased on the basis of ideological affinity.

In the foreign policy prescription of Madan Bhandari, it can be consistently observed that he advocates for equality, mutual respect and independence. Similarly, Madan Bhandari prioritizes the dignity and sovereignty of the country irrespective of its size. His relentless, unfearful and pragmatic approach in foreign policy are highly important in regards to securing benefits from the foreign countries. Therefore, his thoughts can be rendered very useful in protection and promotion of national interests as they focus on the sovereignty, national independence and progress of the country.

He was in favor of effective cooperation and collaboration with the different countries and organizations at the international level. He favored the strong relations with the countries of SAARC and advocated for strengthening the role of the organization for the regional cooperation and development. Similarly, he emphasized the need to follow the policy of non-alignment and independence not only on paper but on practice. He emphasized the need to prioritize the protection and promotion of national interests in the cooperation and collaboration at international level which imparts the patriotism embedded in his thoughts.

The policies of Madan Bhandari are the directing principle for one of the major political party of Nepal, CPN (UML). Therefore, his ideas, opinions and standpoint on the matters of foreign relations are of significant value for Nepal. Additionally, this adds to the literature on the policies of Nepali leaders on the foreign policy of Nepal.

The dissertation was carried out within a limited time period and is based on the publicly available resources about Madan Bhandari. Furthermore, the research is centered on the concepts of one leader which might not depict the overall foreign policy of Nepal. Further research can be carried out on the specific aspect of the foreign policy of Madan Bhandari and this dissertation can work as a groundwork for further research on the policies of other leaders.

To conclude, the study found that Bhandari was a devoted nationalist who advocated for the pragmatist policies while making no any compromise on the national interests of the country. He broadly advocated for "pro-Nepal" policies without fear, favor or prejudice. At international and regional level, he supported effective and impactful cooperation and collaboration rather than barren political rhetoric. Therefore, his thoughts are patriotic in nature and useful for the protection and promotion of national interests of Nepal.

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