

Nepal – India - China Trilateral Relations: Issues & Challenges

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Abstract

The trilateral relations between Nepal–India and China structurally have profound impact on international world politics today. This research emphasizes that how these countries come from different political structure and forms trilateral relations to achieve their political, military and economic desires. The author argues that why Nepal has been in so much of chaos? Is it because of the influence of the two booming world economies in Asia? Or is it because of the internal geopolitics happening in Nepal? Why dose India and China engulfs itself in the national affairs of Nepal? Is it because India’s prominent position among the SAARC countries? Or is it because of the China’s predominant position in the world affairs? Under the absolute monarchy, Nepali citizens were much healthier and secured. However why now under the current Maoist regime Nepal is facing unemployment, corruption, lacking in decision-making and forming public policy? As it is apparent, Nepal plays a vital role because of its geostrategic position in-between India and China. Hence the economic and the political stability of Nepal would be a key to enhance in evolving better trilateral relations among these powers.

Keywords: Trilateral, Political, geopolitics, China, Maoist

Introduction

In this essay author is emphasizing on trilateral relations between India-Nepal-China. Both the countries India and China are the world’s fastest major growing economy, and want to secure excellent strategic relationship within Asia especially with neighbors. At present the triangular countries have profound effect on international world politics because of their geographic position, the different styles of government and their diplomatic relations, etc. India and China are the world’s oldest civilization and the silk route was served as a major trade route, this route had also simplified the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia. Although three major military conflicts happened in-between China and India, the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the Chola incident in 1967, and the 1987 Sino-Indian skirmish. In the contemporary world both the countries are struggling hard to make their diplomatic, economic ties stronger and have also tried attempts to develop their military and strategic relations. Data has revealed that in 2008 china was the India’s largest trading partner but despite this both the countries overwhelm itself in the border disputes, heavy military has been installed in the boarders, albeit China do engage into military infiltration in Indian soil.

Nepal is a buffer state in between both countries but author is impressed that despite, Nepal is a Hindu kingdom, and transmission of Buddhism from Nepal to China; Nepal has never become satellite state. Nepal has been ruled under monarch but between (1996 -

2006), the igniting of Nepalese Civil War between the government forces and the rebellion forces of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) brought an end to the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. This homegrown Maoist insurgency has seized the attention of the international community. Another prominent occasion, which had destabilized the Nepalese monarchy, was the Nepalese royal family massacre, in which crown prince Dipendra shot and killed ten family members, including his father King Birendra. If you read till here you will find that, Why Nepal is getting so significant a place between India and China? Author says it is because of the geographic position of Nepal. China has always considered Nepal as the part of India's compass of inspiration. Once Birender designated for democracy and Maoist began a violent agitation to grab supremacy over Indian agenda. The conflict between Royal Nepalese Army, which has always been considered as a King's army opposed to a national army, and the Maoist rebels, has always intensified the situation, which resulted in a holocaust and annihilation.

Official Development Assistance in Nepal, Nepal has been receiving foreign aid since World War Second. United States Of America was the first country, which signed an agreement on January 23, 1951, for mutual respect, relationship of trust and commitment to the people of Nepal. For the first time USA provided more than \$1.2 billion in the development assistance. India and China were the second two countries that provided financial aid, recent statistics shows India had donated US \$ 50.7 million in 2010-2011 fiscal year but this was the starting of the trilateral relationship between India-Nepal-China. Most of the assistance was towards developing education, agriculture, transport and power generation, road construction, drinking water and peace and rehabilitation, although one third of the financial assistance was granted. Nepal Development Forum, previously known as "Nepal Aid Group" established in 1976. The meetings of NDF emphasized to enhance mutual understanding among development partners, government and civil society through interaction and effective communication. International financial institutions such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and international organizations like United Nations have played a prominent role in funding Nepal to get rid of financial difficulties and all of these institutions come under Nepal Development Forum. Despite the establishment of Official Development Assistance, Nepal is the only country in South Asia, which has not experienced any considerable recovery in micro and macro economic aspects. GDP growth rate has been decreased from 6.1 percent (2008) to 4.6 percent (2010) and unemployment rate increased from 42 percent (2004) to 46 percent in recent year.

Sino-Indian objectives toward Nepal are market oriented neo-liberal policies that will endorse their economy and fulfill their political interest. Many of the Indian aided projects are directly linked with northern India especially with the water resources management. On the other hand China's interest in Nepal at present is concerned with Tibet's safety, Nepal is a home of 20,000 Tibetan's refugees. Nepal had a Gentleman's Agreement of liberally permitting movement of Tibetan's across the borders. Although Nepal is not a 'signatory to the 1951 refugee convention or the 1967 Protocol; and does not have a 'domestic Refugee legislation; despite this Nepal is hosting a large number of refugees and asylum Tibetans. Realizing the strategic importance of Nepal, China's policy revolved on three major issues; Proximity to Tibet, India's leverages in Nepal and the development of economic influences in South Asia. China began constructively engage in Nepal by sending delegations, media, business, military, political stability and whole new vistas for trade and commerce

from 2008 onwards. China has also engaged itself in military affairs of Nepal by providing assistance in terms of weapons and in construction of a military hospitals other engagement are development of roads, rail network, transportation, water projects, and hydropower stations. "The statement by new Chinese envoy, Yang Haulan to chairman Pushpa kamal Dahal has reassured Nepal that China will never deviate from its policy of non-interference in the internal matters of Nepal". In 14, January 2012 Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao flew to Nepal, Wen distributed largesse of \$140 million in aid and in return pledge Nepal that they would tighten border controls and assess to Tibetans as also recognize and support of China's "One China Policy". China promised a \$ 117 million three-year grant, \$ 20 million to modernize the Nepal policy process, \$ 5 million for construction of the Pokhara airport.

India and Nepal share 1700 km of open borders. India has signed a treaty of peace and friendship in 1950 Article VI and VII of the treaty stipulate that citizens of both countries have equal rights in matters of residence, acquisition of property, employment and movement in each other's territory, thus providing for open border between the two countries. On the basis of current hypothesis 7 million Nepalese are residing in India, 40,000 Nepalese serving in Gorkha regiment, and approximately 120,000 Indian ex-servicemen are living in Nepal. The Chinese occupation of Tibet and the continued Chinese presence on the Indian borders have made India notice that Nepal occupies a vital strategic position in India's security system. India always wants stability of Nepal as a non-aligned country with strong bonds of friendship and cooperation with India. The trade and transit facilities provided by India constitute a determining factor of Nepalese economic and trade interest. Nepal realizes the importance like between security of India and its own security, Chinese presence in Tibet and existence of boundary rivalries between Nepal's two big neighbors-India and China have made Nepal highly conscious of its security and need to maintain friendly and good neighborly relations with India and China. On 6 December 1950, Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, in his speech in the parliament stated that," We recognize Nepal as an independent country and wish her well. But even other country can have as intimate a relationship with Nepal as ours is. We would like every other country to appreciate the intimate geographical and cultural relationship that exists between India and Nepal." India plays a pivotal role in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Nepal is one of the member state of SAARC. India always has a "big brother" attitude towards Nepal. In the 21-st century Indo – Nepal relation came under an acute pressure due to the active presence of Maoist revolutionaries turned democrats in Nepalese politics and government because Maoist always had an anti-Indian agenda.

On author's understanding Nepal is doing excellent diplomacy and diplomacy is the only device left for Nepal, author here is truly convinced with the saying of Alexander Wendt that "Anarchy is what state makes of it". Both China and India are competing for a global and regional influence and wants to secure their interest in their close neighborhoods. Both countries are struggling to have monopoly over Nepal, as they fear that Nepali soil can be used to harm their respective core interests. Nepal should change its foreign policy and should propose " trilateral security cooperation" as a new foreign policy to manage the growing China and India's strategic interest in Nepal. Nepal is turning its homeland into a battlefield for competing security interest of India – China, with its own domestic politics. There can be no similarities between Nepal and China or between Nepal and India in terms of power configuration, economic, military strength, territory and population. In

International arena or international relation: one country's defensive move is interpreted as an offensive approach by another country. Every move made by China in Nepal for example, the development of Lumbini, building of rail linkages from Tibet to Nepal will be regarded in suspicion by New Delhi, and this is in the nature of every state. Nepal should hold bilateral security meetings with India and China respectively; it would be wise to know to bring both the countries together in one forum and discuss their respective security concern in Nepal. This trilateral discussion would also help to further minimize the common threat perception of both countries against each other in Nepal. But Nepalese politicians and policy makers do not understand this, and believe that Nepal will only benefit from the economic increasing economic cooperation between India and China.

Terrorist and counterfeit are another problems, which are faced by India from the Nepal soil. The documents of Wiki leaks have revealed that Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence has created a number of terrorist fronts in Nepal and has also pushed in men and explosives through the border to carry out terror attack in India. The recent arrests of two high profile terrorists, Adul Karim Tunda and Mohammed Ahmed Sidibappa Alias Yasim Bhakal have brought the Indian-Nepal boarder under severe criticism. The arrest highlighted the fact that terrorist and criminal groups are increasingly using Nepal as a based because of the open border with India. Many hard-core criminals pursued by Indian law enforcement agencies escape into Nepal and setup smuggling gangs, drugs, fake Indian currency notes (FICN), trafficking of women and children, smuggling of Tibetan gold, arms and explosions. Recently India and Nepal have also prepared and enforced a Cross-Border Crime Control Action Plan 2013 to curb trans-border crimes.

Conclusion

Author argues that after millions of financial aid to Nepal from both sides no scope of development in education, military and political aspects have been seen. This clearly tells us that how weak the government and decision makers are in Nepal, Nepal has been engulfed in a dirty politics and within corruption. Till now 4 million voters are lacking citizenship cards and hence not being able to register. The feeling of insecurity from the two dominate powers in Asia; democracy that is India and other on is communist China, Nepal should play good diplomacy to achieve a handsome trilateral relationship through new foreign policy. According to a recent published report of Human Development Index, Nepal is placed in 157th position under the low Human Development category. Illiteracy and unemployment still remains in Nepal, although current analysis on literacy shows a little increase from 54.1 percent to 65.9 percent. Male literacy rate is 75.1 percent compared to female literacy rate of 57.4 percent. Author hopes that in 21st century the trilateral relations between India-Nepal-China will take a new divergent with a good and healthy relations in between them.

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