

Contemporary Nepal-India Relations: From Constitution Proclamation to Cartographic Dispute

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Abstract

This paper explores the reasons behind Indian dissatisfaction with Nepal's 2015 federal constitution and the cartographic controversy, focusing on contemporary Nepal-India relations. Nepal and India's shared history, culture, and geography are strained by territorial disputes over Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura, causing geopolitical strains and diplomatic standoffs. The ongoing territorial dispute significantly impacts political, economic, and social relations in South Asia, potentially affecting regional stability. The data has been gathered from systematic reviews of articles published on this theme, utilizing abstracts, keywords, Google, and e-resource searches. The author has utilized various methods, including desk work, online interviews, YouTube videos, archived opinions, and descriptive and analytical data interpretation, to gather the necessary information. The findings reveals that the Sugauli Treaty established a stable border between Nepal and the Indian states of West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, covering over 1850 kilometers. About ten years ago, tension between Nepal and India arose due to the Indian political map updated in November 2019, which included Nepal's territories in Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani. India's dissatisfaction with Nepal's federal constitution, excluding a few Madhesh-centric groups, is disrespectful to the entire sovereign Nepali citizens and the Nepalese Constituent Assembly. This issue is crucial for developing policies that foster peaceful coexistence and mutual respect for regional sovereignty. The focus of the article is to address the facts as well as the rumors underlying Nepal-India relations in regard to events and actions that have occurred in the last ten years.

Keywords: Nepal-India relations, discontentment, cartographic dispute, claim and counter claim.

Introduction

This paper explores the intricate relationship between Nepal and India, addressing underlying issues like disagreements and cartographic disputes. The Nepal -India relations are the bilateral relations between the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal and the Republic of India. The 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship established security relations between the two nations and governed trade in and out of the Indian Territory. General Bipin Rawat (2015) emphasized the unique and centuries-old relationship between India and Nepal, describing the strong and pure bonds as unbreakable. However, Nepal and India have a complex and enduring relationship rooted in shared history, culture, and geography, transcending diplomatic formalities. Over centuries, these ties have evolved into economic cooperation, security agreements, and socio-cultural exchanges. The relationship has faced significant challenges, especially regarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Karki and K.C. (2020) highlight the robust bilateral relations between Nepal and India, characterized by strong interpersonal, linguistic, marital, religious, and cultural ties, especially during the 1950s. But in contrary, Savada (1991) highlighted Nepal's dissatisfaction with the 1952 Nepalese Citizenship Act, which allowed Indians easy immigration and citizenship until the 1962 constitution amendment with restrictive measures. In 1952, an Indian military mission was established in Nepal, raising the number of personnel to 197. The Nepali royal family expressed dissatisfaction with India's growing influence. As a result of Indian hegemonic relation, Nepal made overtures to China to counterbalance India, demonstrating its independence in a serious geopolitical situation while maintaining its own politics and administration. India views Nepal as a small, landlocked country with an open border and believes it should be loyal to India in influencing Nepal's political landscape and seeking unjustified benefits (Savada, 1991).

The main point of contention in Nepal-India ties is border encroachment, but things got worse when India released a new political map in November 2019. In 2007, 182 strip maps representing 98% of the border- aside from Kalapani and Susta—were submitted for confirmation by both nations by the Joint Technical Level Nepal-India Boundary Committee (JTLNIBC). Both countries, however, rejected the maps; India urged Nepal to support them, while Nepal said they could not ratify until the disagreements were settled. The drawing of the India-Nepal border was delayed due to ratification issues. Further an 80-kilometer road opened in 2020 increased tensions, leading Nepal to claim it crossed its territory. India denied this claim, claiming it was on Indian territory (Peri, 2020, May 8).

In Nepal, a new constitution adopted after eight years of discussion has been ratified by democratically elected officials, marking the eighth constitution enacted in 67 years, causing concerns in India. Rawat (2015) claimed that New Delhi has requested seven changes to the constitution of Nepal to address concerns of minority communities, Janjatis and Madhesis. The constitution was ratified with overwhelming support, but some Madhesis and Janjatis abstained. India's response to the constitution has caught many off guard, as it may be pushing its opinions on Nepal. (Bagchi, 2015, September 21) On May 8, 2020, India's Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh, officially opened a crucial road. Nepal claimed the route passed through its territory during the inauguration, but India denied this claim, claiming the route was within Indian territory.

The boundary disputes between Nepal and India, particularly in the areas of Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura, have heightened nationalistic sentiments in both nations. Nepal's inclusion of territories in 2020 sparked diplomatic standoff due to differing interpretations of historical treaties and colonial documents, despite multiple negotiations and exchanges. The ongoing territorial dispute between two nations has significantly impacted their political, economic, and social relationships, with potential implications for regional stability in South Asia. In this context, this paper addresses the lack of comprehensive understanding of how historical treaties, colonial legacy, and geopolitical dynamics shape Nepal-India relations in the context of cartographic disputes. This issue is crucial for developing policies that foster peaceful coexistence and mutual respect for regional sovereignty. The purpose of this paper is to examine the historical, political, and diplomatic dynamics of territorial claims on Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura, using qualitative methods. It aims to contribute to South Asian geopolitics and offer conflict resolution recommendations focusing on diplomacy and sovereignty respect.

The relationship between Nepal and India has been strained due to territorial claims arising from discrepancies in their cartographic representations since the 2015 constitutional proclamation and subsequent administrative assertions. The dispute over the representation of territories like Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura on Nepalese and Indian maps has exposed underlying geopolitical and strategic issues complicating the relationship. The ongoing debates have sparked extensive debate among policymakers, scholars, and the public, prompting calls for clear, equitable resolution mechanisms based on historical records, legal treaties, and diplomatic negotiations.

Analyzing the general situation between Nepal and India in the wake of the federal constitution's unveiling and India's refusal to compromise on the current cartographic difficulties is the main goal of this article. Finding the causes of cartographic disputes

and Indian dissatisfaction with Nepal's federal constitution, as well as evaluating Nepal's perception of India's stance on these two issues, are the explicit goals, though.

Methods and Materials

This paper uses a critical paradigm to examine power dynamics, colonial legacies, and the influence of nationalism and geopolitics on boundary dispute narratives. This method could reveal how power structures and political interests influence perceptions and decisions, potentially revealing regional disparities and the impact of historical treaties. The best interpretation of this issue can be achieved by selecting any of the provided options. The paper employs a historical-comparative design (HCD) to analyze the evolution of a dispute over time, tracing the impact of historical treaties, colonial influences, and political changes on contemporary perceptions. The historical-comparative approach could involve examining past documents, treaties, policies, and maps issued by both nations alongside recent ones.

Results and Discussion

Historical and legal foundation of the border disputes

Chaturvedy and Malone (2012) in Einsiedel, S. V.; Malone, D.M and Pradhan S. (eds.) have described that East India Company (EIC) established its principal bases in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay in the course of the 18th century. The East India Company began extending the region northward during the early 1800s. They get closer to the Palpa district. Known as the Anglo-war, the conflict between the East India Company and Nepal to expand their territory lasted from November 1, 1814, to March 4, 1816. In March 1816, the Gorkhas and the EIC signed a pact that put an end to the war. Nepal lost territory from the Mechi to Tista in the east, from the Mahakali to Satalaj in the west, and from the Chure range to the plain Tarai in the south as a result of the Sugauli pact. (pp. 287-312)

In this regard Khanduri and Chandra (1995) have written that the East Indian Company gave Nepal back some of the land that had been seized from the Sugauli Treaty of the eastern Terai on December 11, 1816 (125-137). Similar to this, on November 1, 1860 AD, the British company, pleased with Junga Bahadur Rana who had assisted the British people in the soldiers' revolution, returned the western Terai (known as the new nation; the districts are *Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, and Kanchapur*) to Nepal as a supplemental boundary treaty. The current border has been maintained since this treaty. Nepal -India share an open, porous border spanning 1880 kilometers. Along the border between India and Nepal, there are no artificial fences or walls.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inclined to view Nepal's high Himalayas as India's northern sentinel after the British left India in 1947. Therefore, Nehru said right away that an attack on Nepal would be seen as an attack on India when a Sino-Nepalese border skirmish occurred in Mustang in 1959. Nehru was quickly refuted by the astute Prime Minister BP Koirala, who said that Nepal was capable of managing this border dispute on her own as a sovereign, independent country (Shrestha, Thapa, Tamang, & Thapa, 2020, September). Actually, on March 21, 1960, the first Sino-Nepalese border agreement was reached, which served as the foundation for the demarcation of the two nations' borders and the signing of a border protocol on October 5, 1961.

In the same line authors (2020, September) have claimed that according to the Department of Survey, Government of Nepal, the land boundary of the 1,880-kilometer Indo-Nepal border is 1,240 km, while the river boundary is the remaining 640 km. This 1,880-kilometer Indo-Nepal border has faced a number of issues, some of which have been severe, some of which have been small, and some of which have persisted for an excessive amount of time. The opinion of concered is "Up until recently, individuals and organizations in Nepal have claimed that there are up to 54 disputed areas with roughly 60,000 hectares encroached by India." However, the mapographic dissatisfaction between India and Nepal from November to 2020 has severely damaged Nepal-India relations, worse than at any other time in their history Asian relations. India has asserted that, based on nationality and ethnicity, it ought to support the Madhesi people.

Nationalism, identity, and sovereignty in Nepal-India relations

Nepal's claim of territorial nationalism has significant ramifications for its bilateral ties with India. The once-dominant narrative of upper-caste Hindu Parbatiya nationalism is rapidly coming into contact with opposing narratives from Nepal's Madhesis and marginalized Janajatis. As a result, a number of nationality emotions that were previously marginalized are now prominent. Although the role of India in these conflicting interpretations of Nepalese nationalist discourses seems minor, though significant, the expanding geographical aspects of it always place India at the center (Behera, Nayak, & Hari, 2024, January 18).

Baral (1992) has written that the framework of India-Nepal relations has been established by the geopolitical limitations of Nepal as well as the demands of its rulers. Reading the Treaties of Friendship with British India and India in 1923, the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950 and the Letter that accompanied it, and the "secret agreement" in 1965 can help you better understand this. Similar to this, Shaha (1990) opined that other economic treaties must be the result of both geographic realities and the ingrained

conviction that the regimes produced and maintained wealth for their own and their families' benefit. The rulers were also credited for maintaining Nepal's independence while implementing such policies.

India started dominating Nepal's sovereignty with the 1950 treaty that established certain reciprocal duties by declaring that the "two governments hereby undertake to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighboring state likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two governments" (Article 2), acknowledging fully the other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

Article 5 states: "The Government of Nepal shall have the freedom to import weapons, ammunition, or other warlike material and equipment required for Nepal's security, from or through the territory of India."	According to Article 6, "each Government undertakes, in token of the neighborly friendship between India and Nepal, to give to the nationals of the other, in its territory, national treatment with regard to participation in industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development."
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Nonetheless, Article 5 states that India should be informed of all the armor we import; does this paragraph show our full sovereignty? Due to the huge demographic difference between the two nations, the article 6 clause is also extremely unfair and cannot take into account the sensitivity of Nepal, a small country.

Border disputes and cartographic tensions

Although there have been many ups and downs in the territorial relationship since the Sugauli Treaty of 1815, the unofficial economic blockade in 2015 and the current engagement are the two recent disputes that have brought the two countries' relations to an impasse. In 2015, Nepal ratified a new constitution, but the political parties located in the Madhesh went on strike to be cautious about resolving their issues. While India was undoubtedly concerned about the riots along the open border between India and Nepal, Nepal feels that India's economic blockade during that time stemmed from their own concerns over the country's constitution. Antagonism existed between the two statuses, so India's concern was to amend the constitution by CA to include "Madhesh issues, electoral constituencies based on population, geography, and special characteristics." Later, Nepal asserted its right to manage its internal affairs independently. Nepal alleges the blockade was initiated by India. The Indian administration, however, refuted any claims of participation in the blockade and said that Nepalese individuals manning the border posts were to blame for the supply shortages. Additionally, former Indian

External Affairs Minister ShumaSworaj stated in the Indian parliament that "India desires to see the neighboring country resolve the current crisis and respects Nepal's sovereignty" (Pulami&Panwar, 2020, June 26), paragraphs 1-2. Without caring equal independency and sovereignty India proposed amending the constitution based on the following ideas:

The Indian Express, a daily newspaper in India, reports that the Indian government has issued a seven-point proposal to the Nepali government to modify the country's constitution. The daily claims that the proposition was sent informally. The proposal's complete wording has been published by The Indian Daily. In this tune Roy (2015, September 24) writes:

1. India wants the electoral constituencies in Madhes to be based on population.
2. India wants the word 'proportional' be inserted in the Article 42 of the new constitution.
3. The amendment three in on the Article 283 regarding the special provisions relating to Citizenship of the office-bearers. Delhi says this should be amended to include citizenship by birth or naturalization.

The amendment three is on the Article 283 regarding the special provisions relating to Citizenship of the office-bearers. The article states that the only those who have a citizenship by descent will be entitled to the position of president, vice president, PM, chief justice, speaker of the parliament, chairperson of National Assembly, head of the province, chief minister, speaker of provincial assembly and chief of security bodies.

4. India wants representation in the National Assembly to be based on the population of the provinces.
5. India wants the five disputed districts-Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Kanchanpur and Kailali- be [sic] included in Madhes Provinces.
6. India wants that the delineation of electoral constituencies be put to review every 10 years.
7. The Article 11 (6) states that a foreign woman married to a Nepali citizen may acquire naturalized citizenship of Nepal as provided for in a federal law. Madhsi parties want acquisition of naturalized citizenship to be automatic on application. This also finds favour with Delhi.

Any sovereign nation would find it intolerable that India would so blatantly meddle in Nepal's own affairs. The government led by SushialKoirala, with support from the CPN (UML) and Maoist Center, wisely steered clear of the Indian vested interest that

was propagated on the back of the Madhes movement (2015). Conversely, P.M. Oli's coalition administration with the Nepali Congress garnered popular popularity and steadfastly upheld the country's position against the Indian economic blockade. K P Oli received widespread support for his strong stance against the blockade, and the CPN (UML) and Maoist Center formed an alliance for the 2017 general election, which saw a landslide victory. KP Sharma Oli was elected as Nepal's prime minister with nearly a two-thirds majority.

Following his return from a three-day state visit to India on April 7-9, 2018, PM Oli stated that his discussions with Indian leaders had been amicable and constructive. The two nations also decided to expand inland waterways and build a railway connection from Raxual, India to Kathmandu, Nepal. His visit has further cemented ties between the two countries. He concentrated on Indian aid in border security, connectivity, trade, and agriculture. Both Oli and Modi broke ground on the Motihari-Amlekhgunj cross-border petroleum products pipeline at Motihari and opened a checkpoint at Birgunj, Nepal (DD News, 2018 April 9).

In this line Chaudhury (2018, April 10) writes that the three-day visit gave the two nations a chance to discuss issues that had come up in the previous few years, and it resulted in the fast-tracking of pending infrastructure projects and even the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which will assist Nepal deal with its dual landlocked predicament. In actuality, Oli's journey to India—his first overseas travel since winning reelection as prime minister—was incredibly helpful since it supplemented the visit made by Foreign Minister Susmha Sworaj following the election results. The visit was visionary and established the framework for collaboration in development. When Oli met with PM Narendra Modi in Delhi, India consciously offered Nepal plans for faster access to sea via interior waterways.

As a result, after Oli's government was formed, relations between Nepal and India were becoming routine since India wanted to restore the goodwill that had been damaged since the economic embargo in 2015. It was, in some way, moving toward what both countries desired.

Cartographic disputes

After India unveiled a revised political map on November 2, 2019, ties between Nepal and India deteriorated since the map showed a region known as Kalapani, which is disputed by Nepal. A press statement objecting to Kalapani's inclusion in the Indian map was issued by Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs four days after the map's distribution.



The official map of India, which depicted Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as union regions under Pakistani administration, was issued. According to Trivedi (2017), August 9, the map additionally depicts Kalapani in Pithoragarh as a district of the Indian state of Uttarakhand, which shares a 344-kilometer border with China and 80.5 kilometers of porous border with Nepal. This has angered Nepal because Kalapani is located within its Darchula district in the Sudurpashchim Province.

Source: <https://www.surveyofindia.gov.in/documents/pol4m121020PR.jpg>

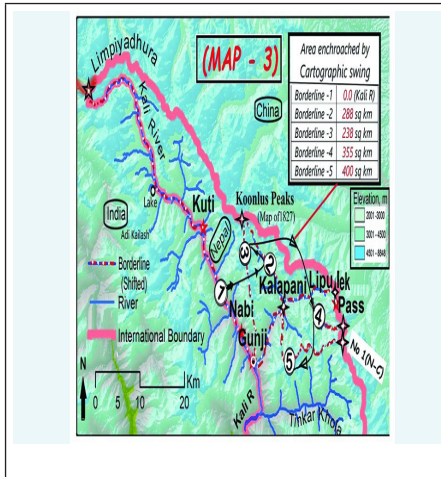
Protests broke out in Kathmandu and other regions of Nepal in November 2019 following reports that Kalapani was included in the most recent version of the Indian map, according to Nepalese media. Protests were organized in Kathmandu by the ruling Nepal Communist Party of Nepal's student arm, the All Nepal National Free Students Union. In response, the opposition party, the Nepali Congress, through its student branch, the Nepal Students' Union, organized a demonstration in front of the Indian embassy in Kathmandu. They sang chants denouncing what they perceived as India's "encroachment" or "occupation" of Nepalese territory. In a news release, the Nepali government claims that Kalapani is indigenous to the country and advocates for diplomatic channels to be used to settle boundary disputes between India and Nepal, citing historical records and verifiable proof.

India's spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, Anurag Srivastav, refuted all such claims of territorial "encroachment", saying that India's map correctly shows the sovereign boundaries of India. Our border with Nepal has not been altered in any way by the new map. He continued by emphasizing:

"Under the current mechanism, the Boundary Delineation Exercise with Nepal is ongoing." In the spirit of our warmer, bilateral relations, we reaffirm our commitment to using communication to find a solution. Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that both sides should protect against special interests that want to draw distinctions between the two nations (MoFA, GoI, 2019, 7 November).

As the demonstrations in Nepal grew, Oli stated that the Kalapani region belonged to Nepal and that "India should immediately withdraw its army from there" during a gathering of the ruling Nepal Communist Party's youth wing, Nepal YuvaSangam (Nepal Youth Meet) (Ghimire, 2019, November 18). Additionally, he declared, "We will not permit any nation to occupy even a single square inch of our land or territory." India has to leave it. Talks won't start until India "withdraws its army from our land," he continued (Ranjan, 2019, December 7).

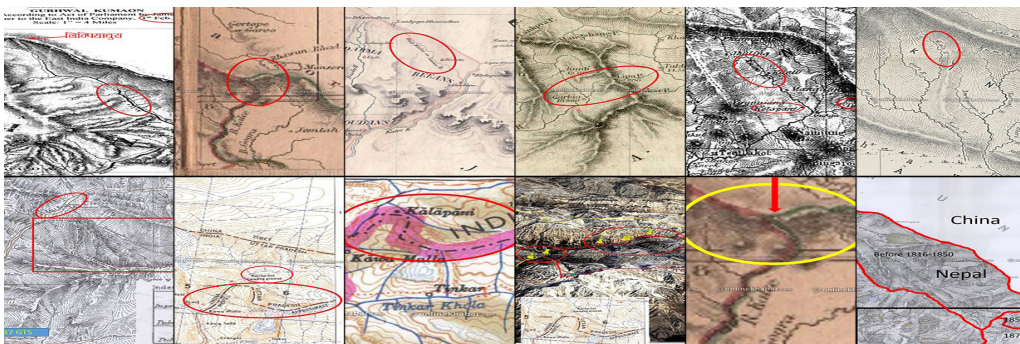
Map of Kalapani prepared in 1827



The boundary dispute in the areas of Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura caused friction in the principles of the relationship between Nepal and India. According to the Sugauli Treaty (1816) between Nepal and the British East India Company, which indicates that the Kali River is the boundary, Nepal claims the territory. It also cites Limpiyadhura as the location of the Kali River's origin and makes reference to maps published by the British Surveyor General of India in 1827 and 1856.

Source: <https://risingnepaldaily.com>

Maps of Kalapani prepared in 1856



Source: <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/nepal-india-Map.jpg>. Accessed on 6th may 2020

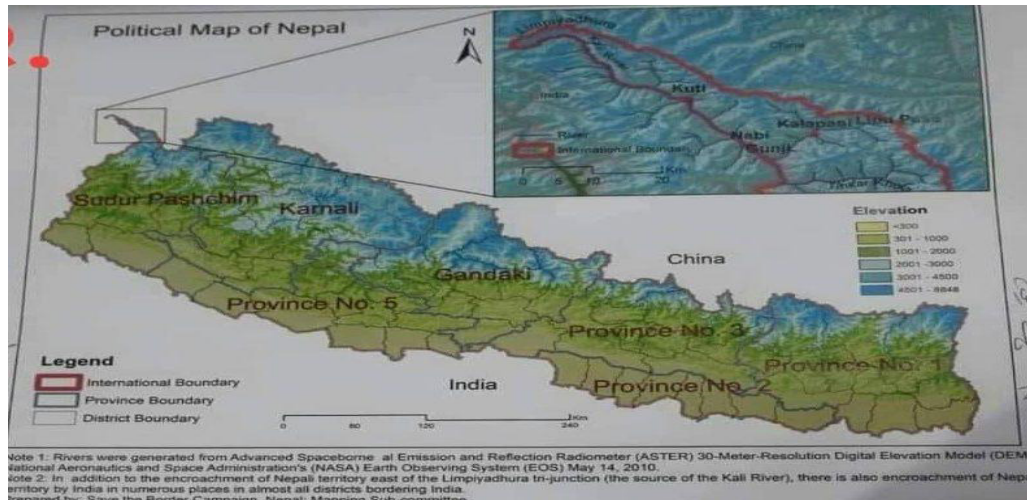
The Limpidiyadhura-Lipulekh-Kalapani region is clearly depicted as Nepal's territory on maps created by the East India Authority at various points in time. The Kali River's source is also clearly shown to be in Nepal. This data is adequate to identify the disputed regions between Nepal and India with relation to Pitthouragadh in India and Darchula district in Nepal.

"The way the border dispute in Mechi was resolved may be a better way to resolve the Kalapani issue as well". However, India appears uninterested in finding an everlasting resolution to the border disputes between Nepal and India because it wishes to influence Nepali geopolitical feelings when negotiating a deal on the matter.

Following the Sugauli Treaty, Nepal and the Company government disagreed on the border's markings in a number of locations. Ownership of the Antu Hill was a point of contention between Sikkim and Nepal. There were two rivers that sprang from the northwest and northeast of the Antu Hill, and they were related to the Mechi River's source. According to Sikkim's claim, the Antu hill should be theirs since the Mechi River originates from a river that originates in the northwest. In the end, the British hypothesised that the River-which is deeper, larger, and longer-would be considered the primary river, while the others would be considered its tributaries. The Kalapani problem can be resolved using the same theory that Antu Hill brought to Nepal (Timalsia, 2023).

The government of Nepal passed a new map on May 18, 2020, which added Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyahura. It was released on May 20, 2020. Additionally, on June 13, 2020, the national emblem was updated with the new map. On May 2, 2024 the cabinet of Nepal chose to use the most recent map of the country on the new 100-rupee note. The addition of the territories of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani to Nepal's map occurred in August 2020 (NIPRe, 2024, May 29).

New map of Nepal known as *chuche* map



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=new+map+of+nepal>

Geopolitical impacts of regional power dynamics

Adhikari (2024, February) opined that being a relatively small landlocked nation that is surrounded by two of the most populous nations in the world, Nepal faces a difficult geopolitical environment that is also full with potential for growth and success. Traditionally, non-aligned Nepal must carefully navigate the choppy geopolitical seas as China and India's regional rivalry continues to heat up in order to prevent itself from becoming a strategic pawn in a larger regional power struggle. Rather, it must maintain its autonomy and accomplish its own objectives for social and economic advancement.

Domestic political unrest and volatility prevent Nepal from fully using the economic prospects, despite the dynamic geopolitical and geoeconomic objectives at stake. A concept that the participants found particularly compelling each other in their claims. Participants, on the other hand, believed that the rivalry between China and India also hindered the nation's efforts to establish itself as a link and a land bridge between these two economies.

There is a need to intensify efforts to improve connectivity and regional integration processes, despite lab participants' worries that the regional rivalry can turn into a regional hegemonic battle that jeopardizes Nepal's longstanding position as a neutral player. Nepal is also at a crossroads in its economy, trying to figure out how to accelerate growth, use natural resources, alleviate social inequality, and retrain its workers.

FES Asia (2022, March 03) has written that two extremes of the new trends for Nepal are worries about the decline of a global rules-based order in the geopolitical sphere on the one hand, and the effects of automation and their effects on low-skilled labor on the other. Nepal would have to negotiate a complicated India-US-China triangle as a result of the former, which is situated within the framework of the regional competition and the wider US-China rivalry. According to some participants, this would pave the door for new developments and chances for small and middling powers to collaborate with entities like the EU. To address many other difficult problems, such as climate change and the ensuing regional water disputes, the emergence of disruptive technologies, and regional migrant movements, they felt that greater cooperation amongst them was essential.

Furthermore, FES Asia (2022, March 03) writes that the focus shifted back to Nepal's home front and the necessity of developing foreign policies that are based on a sustained non-aligned regional attitude, utilizing Nepal's soft power and diverse partnerships, as the conversations shifted to the best set of policy options for the country. One important element that can contribute to stability is the complete implementation of the constitution, which has taken time and is still up for debate. Many expressed their desire for Nepal to actively and significantly contribute to the development of regional cooperation in all areas, from economic connections to climate cooperation. In this manner, Nepal can take advantage of its geopolitical location and transform from a landlocked nation to a significant bridge and land-linked nation in Asia.

Interest of India and beyond

The Kathmandu Post (2020, May 9) has written that when Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted about how happy he was to "open the link Road to Mansarovar Yatra" on May 8, 2020, chaos broke out in Nepal because the route went across land that the country claims as its own. Indian Army Chief Manoj Mukunda Naravane suggested China was to blame in a statement he released on May 15, when protests in Nepal broke out despite the pandemic. Giri (2020, May 15) described that Naravane said, "There is reason to believe that Nepal might have raised this issue at the behest of someone else", seemingly alluding to China's potential involvement in the situation. According to him, there was no disagreement at all between India and Nepal in the region, and the road was mostly on Indian Territory (Sharma, 2020, May 20).

India has described the unveiling of a new political map with Kalapani as Nepali territory as an "unjustified Cartographic assertion" which will not be accepted". Nepal's cabinet approved this Chuche map on 18th May, 2020 that includes Lipulekh, Kalapani

and Limpiyadhura. India gave its official response right after Nepal's cabinet approved the new map. In a strongly worded statement, MoFA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava has said "the government of Nepal has released a revised official map of Nepal that includes the parts of Indian Territory. This unilateral act is not based on historical facts and evidence". Asserting this move was contrary to "bilateral understanding" to resolve issues through dialogue, Srivastava asserted, "such artificial enlargement of territorial claims will not be accepted by India (The Wire South Asia, 2020, May 20).

Declaring Kalapani to be Nepali territory on a recently unveiled political map has been referred to by India as a "unjustified Cartographic assertion" that would not be tolerated. On May 18, 2020, the cabinet of Nepal approved the Chuche map, which contains Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura. Not long after the new map was accepted by the government of Nepal, India released its official response.

"The government of Nepal has produced a revised official map of Nepal that includes the areas of Indian Territory," MoFA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava stated in a sharply worded statement. There is no historical basis or supporting documentation for this unilateral action. Srivastava asserted that this action went against the "bilateral understanding" that calls for conflict resolution through negotiation and that "India will not accept such artificial enlargement of territorial claims" (The Wire South Asia, 2020, May 20). He stated that Nepal respects India's territorial integrity and sovereignty and is well aware of India's persistent stance. He went on, "We hope that the Nepalese leadership will foster an environment that is conducive to diplomatic dialogue in order to resolve the outstanding boundary issues."

China's foreign ministry responded sharply on May 20, 2020, but otherwise has said very little about this controversy. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lizan stated, "We hope the two nations will properly resolve their differences through friendly consultations and refrain from taking any unilateral action that may complicate the situation." "Unilateral action" was used, implying criticism of India's actions.

On March 15, 2020, Nepal gave the diplomatic note to Vinay Mohan Kwatra, the Indian ambassador to Nepal. The diplomatic message, which expressed dissatisfaction about the construction of a road link via the disputed area of Lipulekh, was given to Ambassador Kwatra by Pradeep Gyawali. The term "unilateral action" suggested criticism of India's actions.

On a video conference from Washington, D.C., departing US acting assistant secretary of state Alice Wells expressed her confidence that Nepal could talk for itself to media.

"I'm confident that Nepal is a sovereign nation that will not submit to Chinese dictates". The diplomatic message comes after a statement from the ministry of foreign affairs protesting India's decision to build a road link to Lipulekh. In addition, he requested diplomatic discussions at the foreign secretary level to settle boundary concerns as soon as feasible.

Discussion

Both India and Nepal, who are neighbors with similar sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, are being criticized both internally and outside for their failure to find a lasting solution to the Kalapani border conflict. Nepal, the victim party, has likely requested dates for talks to resolve outstanding border disputes three times since India included Kalapani in its updated political map in November in response to New Delhi's decision to split Jammu and Kashmir. Nepali side is claiming that they are prepared to have discussions with India at whatever level, be it foreign secretary or prime minister. Since China, India, and Nepal have not yet determined the triangular Lipulekh, we will speak with China after our discussions with India (The Kathmandu Post, 2020, May 11).

India miscalculated by not taking the EPG report seriously, but as it grows more concerned about China's growing influence in Nepal, it has subsequently taken a more forgiving stance in starting bilateral talks to resolve the dispute. On October 24, 2020, Samanta Kumar Goel of the Research and Analysis Wing (Raw) paid an unauthorized visit to Nepal, and Manoj Mukunda Naravane laid the foundation for further travels and conversations. The stalemate in India-Nepal ties is actually due to a cartographic issue (Nov 2, 2019). In an attempt to strengthen the two nations' bilateral ties, Nepal's Prime Minister Oli called on India on August 15, 2020, the anniversary of its independence. Focusing on broad partnerships, Foreign Secretary Harsha Vardhan Shringla invited External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyanwali to visit India for Joint Commission meeting. According to a Nepali diplomat in Delhi, Gyawali and Jaishankar held a closed-door discussion at Hyderabad House before to the Joint Commission meeting, when important topics were discussed, including cooperation on the Covid-19 vaccine and boundaries (Neupane & Giri, 2021, January 15). Gyawali's is the first high level visit to Delhi from Kathmandu in over a year which saw bilateral ties hitting a rock bottom.

However, Delhi was reluctant to deal with the border issue. Indians also believe that China's influence in Nepal has increased dramatically in recent years, given that the country has been in a state of non-communication with India for approximately a year because of the border dispute. (Poudel, 2021, January 17). According to the analysis,

nationalistic views on border delineation are the result of historical interpretations and colonial legacies that have shaped contemporary conceptions of sovereignty. Nepal-India relations are also influenced by nationalism and identity, especially when it comes to the territorial dispute over Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura. According to the analysis, public opinion, governmental decisions, diplomatic initiatives, and regional stability are all significantly impacted by national pride and collective memory. Examining national narratives and claims justifications, the boundary disputes include those involving Kalapani, Limpiyadhura, and Lipulekh regions. By analyzing the balance of power in South Asia, this study investigated the geopolitical effects of regional power dynamics, specifically China's influence in Nepal, on Nepal-India relations.

Conclusion

Despite their longstanding relationship together, India wants to unfairly take advantage of Nepal's territorial constraints and has a clear interest in establishing controlled stability there. When it sees an obstacle to its covert goals, it imposes an economic blockade, which Nepal has already gone through three times. Relations between Nepal and India reached a very low point as a result of the border conflicts between the two countries over Kalapani. Since six million Nepalis work in India, the rupee is fixed to India's, and Nepal is landlocked and dependent on Indian ports for trade, India is obligated to educate its citizens about its economic dependence on India under the dependency theory of IR. It occasionally employs the constructivist approach to international relations, demonstrates the interest of the Madhesi people and the relationship between the *Roti and Beti*, and exerts pressure on the Nepali government to act in their favor. However, both India and Nepal must understand that letting this border dispute continue for longer than necessary could have dire consequences. As a result, they must immediately begin engaging in productive dialogue. The public in Nepal perceived the Indian strategy to settle the border conflict as emanating from print and broadcast media, rather than diplomatic dialogue.

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