Non-Traditional Security Threats in Shaping Civil-Military Relations in Nepal

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Abstract

The concept of security has expanded beyond traditional military threats to encompass various non-traditional security challenges. The security, stability, and defense of a nation are significantly influenced by its armed forces. However, the military entities do not operate in isolation; they are an integral part of the larger society they serve. Throughout history, military institutions have not only been responsible for safeguarding a nation's security but also played a pivotal role in shaping societal values, norms, and cohesion. The practical realm of interactions between civilians and the military encompasses both direct and indirect engagements that ordinary individuals and institutions have with the armed forces which involves discussions within legislative bodies regarding the allocation of funds, regulations, and the utilization of the military, as well as intricate negotiations between civilian and military leaders aimed at shaping and executing national security policies. Drawing on existing literature and contextual analysis with a qualitative approach, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between non-traditional security dynamics and civil-military interactions in Nepal. Commencing with an exploration of the concept of non-traditional security and its applicability within Nepal, this study identifies a spectrum of non-traditional security challenges confronting the nation. Furthermore, this paper explains the intricate interplay between non-traditional security issues and the evolution of civil-military relations in Nepal.

Keywords: Non-traditional security, civil-military interactions, security challenges, armed forces, societal values

Introduction

The primary role of the military across the world is to safeguard the nation's territorial boundaries. However, in the contemporary global landscape, the definition of security has transcended conventional boundaries, expanding its horizons to encompass numerous non-traditional challenges. In contemporary nation-states, military institutions serve both as protectors of national security and influencers shaping societal values, norms, and unity. In a liberal democratic nation, the relationship between the civilian government and the military

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is typically designed to ensure civilian control in their interactions. However, Schiff (2008, p. 4) mentioned that the relationship between the military and society has always been critical during the process of building or rebuilding a nation. Despite the theoretical advancement suggesting a shift away from traditional military strategies in contemporary democracy, in the wake of the devastating terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, America's subsequent response underscored the indispensable nature of military power in preserving national security. Pant (2021, pp. 216-217) claims that nations under authoritarian regimes are unlikely to exhibit strong civil-military relations (CMR). Democratic systems inherently promote transparency, accountability, and civilian control over the military, fostering mutual trust between society and the armed forces. In democracies, where power is vested in elected representatives, the military operates under civilian oversight, ensuring a balanced and accountable security apparatus. In contrast, under authoritarian regimes, where power is concentrated in a few hands, CMR tends to be weaker due to limited civilian control. Therefore, the presence of democracy not only signifies people's participation in governance but also lays the foundation for robust and harmonious civil-military relations, crucial for a nation's stability and progress.

Janowitch (2017, p. lvii) stated that "civilian control over military affairs remains intact and fundamentally acceptable to the military; any imbalance in military contributions to politico-military affairs – domestic or international – is therefore often the result of default by the civilian political leadership." National security policy involves making essential decisions and taking actions necessary to safeguard core domestic values from external threats (Bock & Berkowitz, 1966, P. 122). The way the military and the civilians work together is a part of national security policy which aims to safeguard a nation's social, economic, and political institutions from the dangers that come from other sovereign states (Huntington, 1957, pp. 1-4). These definitions highlight the intricate relationship between civilian and military spheres within the framework of national security policy. Effective collaboration and communication between civilian leaders and the military are imperative. When imbalances occur, they often stem from failures in civilian leadership, emphasizing the need for strong, informed, and responsible civilian control over military affairs to ensure the protection of a nation's fundamental values and institutions.

The tradition of civil-military relations in Nepal has historical roots dating back to the unification of modern Nepal under King Prithivi Narayan Shah, marking the inception of the nation-state concept. Differentiating the military and the civilian authority in terms of their duty, responsibility, incentives and privilege, King Prithivi Narayan Shah clearly demonstrated the wisdom of a dynamic ruler prioritizing national interest, defining the role of people in governance and well maintaining external relations (Nepal Law Commission, 2018). CMR encompasses approaches or methods that enable civil society and the military to coexist in an environment characterized by mutual respect, trust, understanding, and control, particularly in terms of civil oversight over the military. Concerning ideal and stable civil-military relations in a nation-state, K.C. mentioned that:

> To achieve stable CMR and effective civilian control, various combinations of civilian and military stability can be enforced depending upon the power-sharing agreement and other factors. The CMR does not comprise democratic civilian control; further focuses on; effectiveness in achieving roles and missions; and the

efficiency of the armed forces. Such a neo-institutional framework asserts that the essence of CMR is not just the "civilian control of the military," it is rather an effective use of the military as an instrument of national power by civilians to realize national interests. Without effectiveness, mere democratic control may not serve the purpose of stable CMR and national interests. Yet civilian control is the primary requirement for stable CMR (K.C., 2014, p. 25).

In the realm of political theory and social analysis, the CMR encapsulates the intricate dynamics between a nation's military, political leadership, society, and institutional frameworks. The depth of their interconnections becomes particularly apparent during pivotal moments in history. Scholars and policymakers frequently rely on established theories to interpret complex political and social scenarios, often neglecting the crucial influence of individual citizens and their unique cultural backgrounds. It's essential to recognize that societal expectations and unexpected developments are deeply rooted in the diverse perspectives and behaviors of ordinary people, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of CMR beyond the theoretical framework (Schiff, 2008, pp. 1-3). Therefore, Understanding CMR requires acknowledging the complexity of societal expectations and unforeseen events, necessitating a nuanced approach that goes beyond theoretical frameworks and considers the diverse perspectives and behaviors of ordinary people.

Review of Literature

Wolfers (1962, p. 51) stated that Security, objectively, signifies the absence of threats to valued possessions, while subjectively, it refers to the absence of fear that these possessions will be endangered. Security is a complex field encompassing various aspects, including social, economic, and political factors. Preserving territorial integrity, sovereignty, and national independence is just one aspect of national security (Rana, 2009, p. 78).

Booth (2007, p. 14) stated that despite global system overload and the anticipation of more challenges due to increasing populations with rising expectations, traditional conflicts between and within nations endure. The highly praised borderless world of globalization has not eradicated fundamental struggles over land ownership. The dominant trend in security studies after 1990, rooted in liberal ideology and broader security principles, emphasized the consideration of both traditional and non-traditional security aspects.

Dollah et al. (2023, p. 154) claimed that although the term 'human security' was coined in 1896, it was the International Red Cross' efforts that led to its universal adoption as a fundamental goal outlined in the United Nations Charter in 1945, between World War I and the Cold War era, the majority of security studies literature concentrated on national interests and security concerns of nation-states. The idea of human security emerged only in the aftermath of the Cold War suggesting a shift from a nation-state to the human individual as a primary referent object. According to UNDP (1994), human security is defined as protection from persistent threats like hunger, disease, and repression, as well as safeguarding individuals from sudden and disruptive disruptions in their daily lives.

One of the various theoretical approaches that emerged, challenging the traditional state-centric view of security and significantly influencing the evolution of Human Security, is the concept of non-traditional security (Caballero-Anthony, 2015, p.7). Non-traditional security concerns encompass threats to the survival and welfare of both individuals and nations,

stemming predominantly from non-military factors such as climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking, and transnational crime, etc.

The post-colonial socio-economic changes, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, led to a shift in focus towards international regimes, blurring traditional world divisions. The end of the Cold War accelerated this shift, expanding the study of civil-military relations to include globalization and a global civil society. Military roles transformed from national defense to global humanitarian intervention. These changes redefine the role of states and the use of armed forces in foreign policy, involving various actors like states, social movements, NGOs, and international organizations (Segell, 2000, p. 6). The key aspect of Non-Traditional Security politics is the effort to shift governance from the national level to various new spatial arenas, driven by the perception that Non-Traditional Security issues are transnational and require broader, multilevel approaches. This shift challenges traditional nation-state governance, reflecting the changing global political economy since the 1970s. This transformation weakens the importance of the national scale, making alternative governance claims associated with the Non-Traditional Security agenda more credible and necessary (Hameiri & Jones, 2013, p. 465).

The evolution of security discourse from a state-centric and military-focused approach to one that includes a broader array of concerns,- places a higher value on human security, and addresses non-traditional security threats demonstrates a significant paradigm shift. This shift recognizes the complexities of contemporary global challenges and the need for multifaceted, multilevel, and transnational approaches to security.

Theoretical Framework

Human Security is a paradigm that places the security and well-being of individuals at the center of the security discourse, shifting the focus from state-centric approaches to a more people-centered perspective. It emerged in response to the limitations of traditional security concepts that predominantly focused on protecting states from external threats. Human Security, in contrast, emphasizes the protection of individuals and communities from a wide range of challenges, including not only military threats but also non-traditional security issues.

Human Security recognizes that security is multi-dimensional and extends beyond traditional military concerns. It encompasses economic, social, environmental, and political dimensions, considering factors such as poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and political instability.

The primary unit of analysis in Human Security is the individual. The well-being and safety of individuals are central, and policies are designed to ensure the protection of people from various threats.

Human Security aims to provide individuals with freedom from both physical threats and conditions that undermine their basic needs and dignity. It addresses issues like poverty, disease, violence, and environmental degradation.Human Security promotes a preventive approach, seeking to address issues before they escalate into crises. Early intervention and addressing root causes are key components of the human security agenda.

Principle agent theory explores issues of agency, control, and the challenges that arise when there is a misalignment of interests between the principal and the agent. It provides a

framework for analyzing the dynamics of control, accountability, and the mechanisms used to address information asymmetry in the civil-military relationship.

Institutional theory is a sociological and organizational theory that focuses on the role of institutions in shaping individual and organizational behavior. It examines how formal and informal rules, norms, and structures influence the actions and strategies of actors within a given social context. The theory provides insights into the dynamics of organizational behavior, decision-making processes, and the role of institutions in influencing civil-military interactions.

In the context of civil-military relations and non-traditional security dynamics, the Human Security framework can be applied to understand how the military and civilian authorities work together to address challenges that directly affect individuals, such as natural disasters, public health crises, or social unrest. It encourages a broader and more inclusive approach to security that goes beyond traditional military concerns and prioritizes the well-being of people in diverse and complex contexts.

Research Methods

This paper attempts to reflect on the relationship between non-traditional security dynamics and civil-military interactions in Nepal. It also tries to explain the shifting dynamics of civil-military relations in connection with the non-traditional security threats in Nepal. Drawing on existing literature and contextual analysis with a qualitative approach, this paper attempts to analyze CMR from the descriptive method. To describe the non-traditional security threats influencing CMR in Nepal, the deductive method has been applied in this study. Several published literature on the area of study, as well as national and international research articles, have been analyzed as a secondary source of information to draw conclusions which are intended for the eyes of policymakers and scholars.

Discussion and Analysis

According to the Human Development Report 1994, human security encompasses multiple dimensions, including economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, political security, and cultural security. These dimensions emphasize the importance of ensuring access to basic needs, healthcare, environmental sustainability, protection from violence, political freedoms, and the preservation of cultural identity. The Human Development Report underscores the interconnectedness of these dimensions, advocating for comprehensive approaches to promote the well-being, dignity, and safety of individuals and communities worldwide (Arinze, 1995, pp. 84-89). The integration of new security challenges, particularly non-military threats, primarily originating from non-state entities like international terrorism, organized crime, pandemics, natural disasters, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, has become a significant part of national security agendas. This shift has presented states with novel challenges and potentially new opportunities. Globalization, which has reshaped the role of nation-states, has similarly transformed the concept of national security. Many of these emerging threats are non-state in nature, leading proponents of hyperglobalism to question the nation-state's ability to effectively handle such cross-border challenges (Fjader, 2014, p. 117).

National Security Policy (2016), the last published National Security Policy of Nepal, has defined security as a multifaceted concept covering sovereignty, national integrity, physical

and social safety, economic stability, culture, and humanitarian concerns. Security policies protect public and private norms, national honor, lives, property, environment, governance, development, and human rights. By implementing these policies, nations safeguard their key interests, minimizing potential risks across various areas, including military security. The policy has categorized the threats and challenges to Nepal's national security into seven broad categories: Political challenges and threats, Challenges and threats related to law and order, Socio-economic challenges and threats, Challenges and threats related to disasters and natural resources, Challenges and threats posed by extremism, External challenges and threats and Strengthened and capacitated state machinery for facing challenges and threats with subsequent sub-categories which covers both traditional and non-traditional aspects of security.

The National Security Policy (2016) of Nepal outlines strategic objectives focused on safeguarding the nation's people, independence, and sovereignty. It aims to defend Nepal's land, water, and airspace, promote democratic values, and control organized crimes. The policy emphasizes the rule of law, security from violence and terrorism, and active participation in regional and international security efforts. Additionally, it focuses on economic development, environmental conservation, information system enhancement, and citizen participation in security management. The policy seeks to preserve Nepal's cultural heritage, citizens' rights, and freedoms while encouraging technological advancement. It also prioritizes the well-being of Nepali citizens and future generations and opposes unlawful armed activities. All four security agencies i.e., Nepal Army, Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, Nepal, and National Investigation Department, have been delegated responsibilities to contribute significantly to national security with appropriate coordination with the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary and other constitutional bodies.

Non-Traditional Threats to Human Insecurity in Nepal

Human security is the state where people experience minimal or no insecurities. Insecurity arises when two key elements are present: a threat, denoting circumstances that can significantly harm humans, and vulnerability, indicating exposure to these harmful developments without effective means to prevent, limit, or cope with potential damage (Soroos, 2008). In simpler terms, when people face threats that can seriously harm them, and they lack the resources or means to protect themselves from these threats, they experience insecurity. Achieving human security means reducing these insecurities to the lowest possible level or eliminating them entirely.

Economic Insecurity

Economic insecurity poses a significant threat to human security, affecting well-being and access to vital resources. Addressing poverty involves enhancing skills, improving education, healthcare, and social support, and combating issues like illiteracy and social discrimination. Despite progress in poverty reduction since Nepal's shift to democracy in 1990, disparities persist, particularly between rural and urban areas and different social groups. The concentration of political and economic power in urban elites' hands has marginalized remote populations, women, and disadvantaged minorities, leading to ongoing human insecurity (Khatiwada, 2013, p.56). Despite advancements in reducing poverty since the restoration of democracy in 1990, the progress has been uneven, creating significant disparities in living standards

among different regions and social groups. Rural areas, various geographical regions, and certain social groups continue to experience vastly different living conditions compared to urban areas and privileged sections of society. The concentration of political, economic, and social power among urban elites, coupled with the influence of patriarchal and caste-based societal structures, has perpetuated the marginalization of people in remote areas, women, and disadvantaged minorities. This ongoing inequality has resulted in economic insecurity for these marginalized groups, highlighting the persisting need for more inclusive development policies (Khatiwada, 2014, p.21).

Health Insecurity
Ensuring health security is an essential aspect of human security, yet Nepal's health sector faces significant challenges. These challenges encompass child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS, both communicable and non-communicable diseases, poverty-related health issues, potential health crises triggered by disasters, and societal inequalities. It is imperative for the state to play a central role in guaranteeing health security by implementing suitable policies, establishing institutional frameworks, improving service delivery, enforcing regulations, and providing social protection measures. This role becomes even more crucial in developing nations like Nepal, where healthcare systems are not sufficiently established to offer basic protection, especially concerning the well-being of women, children, and vulnerable populations (Adhikari, 2013, p. 155). Low-income countries, housing approximately 500 million people, receive a mere 1% of the global health expenditure. In these nations, healthcare costs are primarily covered through individual out-of-pocket payments, causing financial strain. Although Nepal is committed to achieving universal health coverage and has an extensive healthcare network, accessibility remains a challenge; only two-thirds of the population can easily access healthcare. Despite subsidies and pilot insurance programs, almost half of Nepal's health expenditure relies on individual out-of-pocket payments (Shah et al., 2022).

Environmental Insecurity
Global environmental change refers to a series of alterations in the interconnected human-environment system. These changes pose a threat to the sustainability of both ecological and social systems (Steffen et al., 2005, p. 4). Environmental insecurities encompass various concerns related to the environment, natural resources, climate change, etc. Assigning monetary value to climate change impacts like loss of life, cultural heritage, and ecosystem services is challenging. However, understanding the economic impact on aspects of human security is essential. The United Nations chief Guterres (2023) urged developed countries to increase support like Nepal that are hard-hit by the impacts of climate change saying "Nepal is also caught in a blizzard of global crisis not of its making: the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and the enormous threat posed by climate chaos." Climate change is visibly affecting Nepal's environment, leading to significant shifts in species' habitats to higher altitudes, the melting of glaciers, and an increase in extreme precipitation events. Moreover, natural disasters like droughts, heatwaves, river floods, and glacial lake outbursts are expected to intensify, potentially escalating disaster risks and endangering human lives. World Bank and Asian Development Bank (2020) claim that Nepal's warming rate is anticipated to surpass the global average, with projections indicating a temperature rise between 1.2°C to 4.2°C by

the 2080s. This highlights the insecurity of the Nepali population in the face of global climate change phenomena.

Food Insecurity

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights acknowledged the right to food in 1948 stating in article 25.1 "Everyone has the right to a standard of living that ensures the health and well-being of themselves and their family, including access to food". Food security means that everyone consistently has both the physical and economic means to obtain sufficient safe and nutritious food that aligns with their dietary preferences and requirements for a healthy and active life (World Food Summit, 1996). Nepal has faced food insufficiency due to its slower production growth rate compared to its population growth rate resulting in food insufficiency for a large population.

Personal Insecurity

Viewed through the lens of human security, any factor that poses a significant risk to life and livelihood is considered a security threat, regardless of its origin. If individual security is the focus, it is feasible to recognize and categorize every physical threat (Newman, 2010, p. 82). Personal security focuses on safeguarding individuals from physical violence, whether it originates from the state, non-state actors, criminal groups, or individuals. For citizens worldwide, the most significant source of concern is violent crime and conflict, highlighting the universal desire for safety and protection from physical harm and criminal activities (UNDP, 1994). Individual security aims to safeguard people from severe and life-threatening hazards, irrespective of whether these dangers originate from human-made actions or natural occurrences, whether they occur within or beyond national borders, and whether they are direct or systemic. This approach prioritizes individuals and communities, emphasizing their freedom from fear, danger, and threats. A state's provision of security is a fundamental requirement in ensuring the safety of its citizens from all kinds of threats. The open border between the low-lying areas of Nepal and India raises concerns about increased insecurity in the region. Criminals smuggle weapons and goods across the border, posing a threat to the citizens of Nepal.

Community Insecurity

Social protection, according to the International Labor Organization (2000), encompasses a range of actions implemented by society to address the needs of its members who find themselves in vulnerable economic and social situations. These vulnerable circumstances might stem from various factors such as unemployment, poverty, illness, disability, or old age. Social protection programs and policies are designed to alleviate the suffering caused by these vulnerabilities. In practical terms, social protection measures can include financial assistance, healthcare services, unemployment benefits, disability support, and pensions for the elderly. The goal is to provide a safety net, ensuring that individuals and families facing economic hardships or unexpected life events have access to essential resources and services. By offering this support, societies aim to enhance the well-being and dignity of their members, promoting social inclusion and stability. Social protection is a crucial aspect of social welfare systems, contributing significantly to the overall quality of life for individuals and communities.
Social protection is vital for every individual, but it is crucial to prioritize the poor and

disadvantaged. In countries like Nepal, where there is a significant wealth disparity, it is especially important to focus on creating social protection mechanisms, particularly related to livelihood and income generation, to meet the basic needs of the impoverished population (K. C., & Upreti, 2013, p. 83).

Political Insecurity

Countries marred by conflict, underdevelopment, or those in post-conflict stages often find themselves trapped in a cycle of war, violence, political insecurity, suppression, human rights abuses, and absence of justice and security, leading to enduring political instability. The United Nations' definition of human security emphasizes that the security of an individual, regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, sexuality, class, or group affiliation, is the focal point of political security (Thakur, 2016, p. 81). To safeguard citizens from political oppression, the state must respect fundamental human rights.

Other Insecurities

Beyond the human security issues outlined previously, nations are grappling with a myriad of other insecurities that directly affect their citizens. These challenges stem from several contemporary factors.

1.   **Migration Patterns:** The movement of people across borders, whether due to conflict, economic opportunities, or environmental factors, can strain social and economic systems in both the host and origin countries. This migration often leads to social integration challenges and can create tensions among different communities.

2.   **Road Traffic Accidents:** High rates of road accidents contribute significantly to insecurity, causing loss of lives and property damage. Insufficient infrastructure, lax enforcement of traffic regulations, and reckless driving behaviors are common contributing factors.

3.   **Demographic Changes:** Shifts in the age, gender, and ethnic composition of a society can impact social cohesion and strain existing resources. For example, an aging population might strain healthcare and social welfare systems, while a youthful demographic might face challenges related to education and employment opportunities.

4.   **Influence of Mass/ Social Media:** The rapid dissemination of information, often through social media platforms, can lead to the spread of misinformation, propaganda, and social unrest. Manipulative use of media can incite violence, deepen societal divides, and erode trust in institutions.

5.   **Role of Interest Groups:** Various interest groups, representing political, religious, or cultural ideologies, can sometimes push their agendas aggressively, leading to societal tension and potential conflict. Competing interests within a society can create instability if not managed properly.

6.   **International/Non-Governmental Organizations:** While many international organizations and NGOs work toward positive goals, their activities can sometimes be perceived as intrusive by local populations. This perception can lead to resistance, mistrust, and social discord.

In essence, these challenges collectively create an intricate web of insecurities for nations to navigate. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies that involve collaboration between governments, civil society, and security organizations. Social cohesion, improved infrastructure, effective regulation, and media literacy are among the measures that can help mitigate these insecurities, fostering a safer environment for citizens.

Interrelationship between Non-Conventional Security Challenges and Civil-Military Dynamics in Nepal

In today's complex global landscape, traditional security threats are no longer the sole concern of nations. Non-conventional security challenges discussed above have become increasingly prominent. Understanding the intricate relationship between these non-conventional security challenges and civil-military dynamics is crucial in crafting effective strategies for national security and stability.

Nepal, due to its special geographical placement, faces a distinctive array of non-conventional security challenges. From environmental vulnerabilities and floods to transnational issues, Nepal's security concerns extend beyond traditional military threats. Understanding the interrelation between these challenges and civil-military dynamics is pivotal for the nation's security apparatus.

Recent global events have highlighted the importance of CMR in emergency pandemic preparedness. Nepal, like many nations, faced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil-military dynamics played a significant role in managing the crisis. Gautam (2020) states that the strategic deployment of the Nepal Army and Armed Police Force, Nepal in the battle against COVID-19, aimed at safeguarding our borders and key international entry and exit points such as airports, represents an exemplary intersection between national security imperatives and the preservation of human well-being. Nepali Army, Armed Police Force, Nepal along with Nepal Police collaboratively aided in medical logistics, setting up field hospitals, setting up and managing quarantine facilities and enforcing lockdown measures, etc. In addition to that, the exclusive responsibility for managing the deceased bodies of COVID-19 victims has been assumed entirely by the Nepal Army. Such collaboration ensured a swift and organized response, mitigating the pandemic's impact on public health.

Commencing in 1959 with the construction of the "Kanti Rajpath," the Nepal Army initiated its engagement in Nepal's economic development, marking the inception of its active role in nation-building endeavors. Article 267 of the Constitution of Nepal stipulates that the Nepal Army can engage in a multifaceted role encompassing development construction, disaster management activities, and upholding national security, reflecting the comprehensive scope of its responsibilities (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015).

S. N.	Project	Distance in Kilometer
1	Kanti Rajpath	105
2	Kharipati – Nagarkot Road	20
3	Katari – Okhaldhunga Road	88
4	Trishuli – Somdang Road	105
5	Hile – Leghuwaghat Road	28

6	Salyan – Musikot Road	86
7	Surkhet – Jumla Road	232
8	Baglung – Beni – Jomsom Road	91
9	Drabya Shah Marga	45
10	Satdobato – Niwel – Baluwa Road	37
11	Gorkha – Manakamana Road	39
12	Besi Shahar – Chame Road	65
13	Chhinchu – Jajarkot Road	107
14	Jajarkot – Dolpa Road	112
15	Devasthal – Chourjahari Road	31
16	Syaphrubesi – Mailung Road Section	17
17	Musikot – Burtibang Road	145
18	Lalibagar – Dullikuna Road Section	7
19	Badrigaon – Bhukka Khola Road Section	13
20	Khandbari – Kimathanka Road Section	10.51
21	Ridi – Maldhunga Road Section	75.4
22	Kalikot – Humla Road Section	122.75
23	Benighat – Arughat Road Section	92
24	Khandbari – Kimathanka Road Section	14
25	Nagma – Gamgadhi Road	91
26	Darchula – Tinkar Road Section	87
27	Nijgadh – Kathmandu Fast Track	81.8
28	32 Bailey Bridges in Different Places	1.4

Source: Compiled from various sources by the author

Mitigating the formidable challenge of safeguarding Nepal's forests and their diverse biodiversity, the Nepali Army has been actively engaged in environmental protection since 1975. Their mission focuses on preserving the ecological equilibrium, safeguarding endangered species, plant life, and the nation's natural heritage. Over the years, the Nepali Army has assumed responsibility for safeguarding 12 of the 22 designated protected forests, employing 12 Battalions and Independent Companies, which collectively comprise approximately 6,778 troops. This dedicated force works diligently to protect forested areas spanning around 9,767 square kilometers (Nepal Army, 2023).

The role of armed forces in humanitarian assistance serves as a cornerstone of civil-military relations. By leveraging their expertise, resources, and rapid response capabilities, the armed forces contribute significantly to alleviating human suffering during crises, reinforcing the importance of a harmonious relationship between civilian and military entities in ensuring national resilience and security. Adhikari (2016) states that while the 2015 earthquake struck on Saturday afternoon, government agencies remained closed due to the public holiday, prompting security forces to initiate rescue operations independently. The concerned ministries faced

delays in becoming operational, leading to a situation where the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, Nepal, and Nepal Police had already commenced rescue operations before the ministries could fully supervise and coordinate response activities.

As an example, in response to the 2015 earthquake, a staggering 66,069 Nepal Army, 44629 Nepal Police, and 24,775 Armed Police Force, Nepal personnel were deployed leading to the successful rescue of 23,594 individuals and dead body management of 8553 deceased. Among these, 2,928 others were airlifted to safety using Nepal Army helicopters. Furthermore, the Nepal Army extended medical assistance to 85,954 individuals in the 14 most severely affected districts and distributed a substantial 5,707 tons of relief supplies across 20 districts grappling with the disaster's aftermath. The rescuers from the Armed Police Force, Nepal successfully extricated a trapped victim from the debris even after 120 hours, utilizing specially trained sniffing dogs to locate the person in need (Shrestha & Pathranarakul, 2018; Bhattarai et al., 2023, pp. 94-95).

Since 1958, the Nepali Army has consistently played a proactive role in international affairs, aligning with Nepal's foreign policy emphasizing global peace and harmony. This active engagement underscores Nepal's strong belief in and commitment to the United Nations. Nepal's enduring commitment to international peacekeeping initiatives is evident through its unwavering participation. The nation stands as the second-largest contributor of troops and police personnel, currently participating in 12 missions. Remarkably, over 151,000 Nepali peacekeepers including the Nepali Army, Armed Police Force, Nepal, and Nepal Police personnel have served under the UN banner, showcasing their resolute dedication, professionalism, and exceptional performance throughout their tenure (Rijal, 2021).

In civil-military relations dynamics, transparency, accountability, and democratic oversight are vital. The armed forces of any nation-states plays vital roles in any dimensions of security within civil-military relations dynamics by providing defense against external threats, assisting in internal security and disaster relief, contributing to economic stability, and serving as a stabilizing force in society.

From Nepal's unification until the present day, the Nepalese army has made significant contributions to personal, social, and political security. One notable instance of their valuable contribution was the disarming of Tibetan Khampas in 1971 in the districts of Manang and Mustang. Additionally, their role in counterinsurgency operations during the ten-year internal conflict from 1996 to 2006 stands as another noteworthy example. The military, in collaboration with the Armed Police Force, Nepal, and Nepal Police, conducted a resolute counterinsurgency operation against the Maoists, ultimately attaining remarkable success. This operation compelled the insurgents to forsake violence and embrace the path of competitive democratic processes (Rana, 2009, p. 87).

Conclusion

Researchers, policy experts, and Civil Society Organizations, as well as military establishments globally, have engaged in ongoing discussions about civil-military relations. The multitude of ideas and interactions between civilians and military authorities creates a context-specific scenario. This relationship is seen as deeply rooted in factors such as democracy, historical context, constitutionalism, orientation, and adherence to the rule of law.

The nature of a nation-state's CMR is influenced by its political system, foreign policy

and the intentions of its leaders. Throught its history, Nepal has witnessed varying perspectives on CMR due to regime change and significant political movements. The constitutions of 1959, 1962, 1990, and 2007 introduced various institutional mechanisms that influenced the nature of CMR in Nepal.

The interrelation between non-conventional security challenges and civil-military dynamics underscores the need for adaptive, collaborative, and multidisciplinary approaches to ensure national security. By harnessing the expertise of both civilian and military sectors, nations can proactively address emerging threats, enhance resilience, and safeguard the well-being of their citizens in an ever-changing world.

There exists a complex interplay between non-traditional security threats and civil-military relations in Nepal. The analysis of various non-traditional security challenges, including environmental, economic, and social factors, has revealed their significant impact on the dynamics between the civilian government and the armed forces.

Nepal's experience serves as a compelling case study, highlighting the need for policymakers, military leaders, and civil society to collaborate closely in addressing these multifaceted challenges. By recognizing the intricate connections between non-traditional security threats and civil-military relations, Nepal can develop more effective strategies and policies to enhance its national security apparatus. There is a necessity for a holistic understanding of security, one that extends beyond conventional military threats to encompass a broader range of issues that directly affect the well-being and stability of the nation.

By fostering cooperation, promoting comprehensive security approaches, and investing in the well-being of its citizens, Nepal can forge a more secure and resilient future, ensuring the stability and prosperity of the nation in the years to come. A strong partnership between civil society and the military, promoting active engagement in addressing the actual needs of the people can serve as a cornerstone for Nepal's development, aligning national security efforts with the genuine requirements of its diverse population.

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