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## Importance of Bilateral Agreements in Foreign Relations: Historical Perspectives of India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh

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*"India's foreign policy was rooted in India's civilisation and traditions, India's struggle for freedom, India's geographical; position, and India's quest for peace, security, development and a place in the sun".*

—Jawaharlal Nehru, 1947 (V.P. Dutt, p.1)<sup>1</sup>

### Overview

The historical relationship of India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh are unique in every dimension. The geographical proximity helps them to co-operate with each other through bilateral agreements. Each country has its ruling model, though without any negligence, countries sign agreements based on 'common goal'.

The paper splits into three heads. The first part exemplified the evolution of signing bilateral agreements between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh. Why are these countries exclusive in the world and helps to promote cordial relationships? The second parts examine the broad historical background of the bilateral relationship between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh since their origin 1947-2016 and 1971-2016 respectively and exemplify about the total outlay of India-Nepal-Bangladesh connections. Lastly, the concluding part demonstrates why the water issue has been a significant matter in bilateral relations between India-Bangladesh and India-Nepal as compare with the other bilateral agreements. However, these countries have signed multiple agreements into different fields, but why water issues/treaties become excluded since their origin between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh.

### Evolution of Bilateral Agreements between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh

The evolution of bilateral relationships between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh are diverse in many ways. The historical relations between India-Nepal are much older than Bangladesh also its interwoven linkages emanating from the socio-cultural integrity through political, economic, religious and linguistic affinities were possible just because of an open border between India-Nepal. The Indo-Nepal shares an open border for more than a thousand years (Upreti, 2009: 127-131).<sup>2</sup> The inception of Bangladesh can be seen in the early nineteen seventies, which seemed contrary to Nepal in many ways. Interesting, after the onset of Bangladesh, India-Bangladesh relations also became gracious, but complex, multifaceted and unique in

<sup>1</sup> Dutt, V. P. (2015), "The Nehru Era", *India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, India. p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Upreti, B. C. (2009), "The India-Nepal open border: nature, issues and problems", K. Warikoo (eds.) *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, geo-political and strategic perspectives*, New York: Routledge. pp. 122-135

character and scope.<sup>3</sup> The relations between the two countries have acquired new dimensions and dynamics over the years (ibid: 94).<sup>4</sup>

The two countries Nepal and Bangladesh share its borders with India, but precisely Nepal shares its border with India and China and enjoys with them historical and friendly relations that are 'under more scrutiny than unusual'.<sup>5</sup> That's why many scholars proclaimed that Nepal as a Yam between India and China.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Bangladesh shares its boundaries with India, and it's known as India locked country appropriately. The geographical proximity of India coordinates to maintain huge bilateral ties up with Nepal and Bangladesh. Since Prithvi Narayan Shah<sup>7</sup> (belongs to Sisodia Rajput community of Rajasthan) rule in Nepal and Mujib-ur-Rahman<sup>8</sup> regime in Bangladesh was played a stepping stone on bilateral relations with India. Ever since Nepal was unified in 1769, politics and external links of Nepal have witnessed the significant changes, new dimensions and dynamics. There has been a rise and fall of ruling families in Nepali politics. History is full of internecine conflicts and conspiratorial politics within the ruling families for power struggle taking the forms of coups, counter-coups, plots, and counterplots against each other. The battle for power within the ruling establishment paved the ways for outsiders, the East India Company, to influence the evolution of internal politics and weaken the country's external freedom and manoeuvres. The Rana family of Nepal had ruled 104 years (1847-1951) with an iron hand; they sought British support to perpetuate its autocratic rule and kept the country in isolation from the rest of the world (Ghosh, 2015: 74).

The first diplomatic Treaty of Segauli<sup>9</sup> (1815-16) was signed between India-Nepal during the British regime in India<sup>10</sup> and Shah's dynasty<sup>11</sup> in Nepal. Later, the Treaty of 1860 and 1923<sup>12</sup> was considered as a

<sup>3</sup> Rahman, M, Ashique (2015), "Rising India and Bangladesh-India Relations: Mutual Perceptions and Exceptions", in Vishal Chandra (eds.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press. p.100

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p.94

<sup>5</sup> "Nepal and its Neighbours: Yam Yesterday, Yam Today", *The Economist*, 18<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2012 [Online: web] Assessed 17 May 2019 URL: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2012/01/nepal-and-its-neighbours?zid=360&ah=1b164dbd3ba0cb27a0d4c3b12a5e227>

<sup>6</sup> Lama, Mahendra P. (2016), "Repositioning Nepal", [Online: Web] Accessed 3 June. 2016 URL: <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-06-01/repositioning-nepal.html>; Malone, David (2012), "A Yam between two Boulders: Nepal's foreign policy caught between India and China", in David M. Malone, Sebastian von Einsiedel and Suman Pradhan (eds.) *Nepal in Transition: From people's war to fragile peace*, New York: Cambridge University Press. pp.287-312. There are many eminent scholars who proclaiming that Nepal is a Yam between India and China.

<sup>7</sup> Prithvi Narayan Shah was the first King who established its kingdom in Nepal famous as Gorkha Kingdom in eighteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> Mujib-ur-Rahman was the first leader who raised its voice against totalitarian rule of West Pakistan over East Pakistan. Also, he won the election after the separation from West Pakistan and held the power as Prime Minister.

<sup>9</sup> Muni, S. (2015), "India's Nepal Policy", Malone, D. et. al. *Indian Foreign Policy*, UK: OUP. pp.398. According to Muni, he explained that Segauli treaty were changed the demarcation line between India-Nepal borders.

<sup>10</sup> In 1600 period counts under the intrusion of *EAST INDIA COMPANY* in India. The British succeeded to spread its empire in Indian territory. According to many well known scholars like Ian Talbot (2010), "India and Pakistan", Brass., P. (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal*, New York: Routledge. pp.27-40.; Peter Calvo-coressi (2009), *World Politics Since 1945*, UK: Pearson Logman. pp. 425-453; and Ramchandra Guha (2010), *After Gandhi: The History of World's Largest Democracy*, London: Pan Book; and many other have been proclaimed in their volumes and research papers that British came in India to improve their inter-linkages in commerce sector but they converted their inter-linkage policy into as overruled to India.

<sup>11</sup> The British had analysed about the changing nature of World environment during 1700s-1800s. Nepal played crucial existence in the eyes of British because of geo-strategic point of view. They had a fear of Russia's expansionist policy thereby they recruit Gorkha in Indian army. Interestingly, the *Gorkha's* fighting tricks became law of attraction to British government. The King, Prithvinarayan Shah, was considered as the establisher of Shah dynasty, he won the rest of the country of Nepal and after his death in 1774 his successors carried the Nepalese flag beyond the frontiers of Nepal. In the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nepalese had brought Kumaon, Gharwal, the Dun valley and the Shimla Hill States under their control. In the east, towards Teesta river they overran as far as possibility occurred but by the aftermath of the Anglo-Nepalese war in 1814-1816 the Nepalese were pushed back into the mountains. After that, the first and foremost *Treaty of Segauli 1816* were signed between British India (East India Company) and Nepalese Shah's dynasty. According to the Article II of the same treaty Nepal were expelled from the whole Terai region also it has to return the said areas to British. Although, after the 1857 mutiny in India, the Government of British decided to returned western Tarai land to Nepal. This could be completed through a Treaty in 1860. There was some dispute over land boundary between Mondai ghat and Banbassa in Mahakali region which was eventually resolved in 1875. Thus, the Indo-Nepal border dispute completed..

significant milestone for a fruitful bilateral relation between India-Nepal. When India got independence from the British, then independent India signed its first *Treaty of Peace and Friendship*<sup>13</sup> (1950) with Nepal to promote the friendly and co-operative relationship between both of them (Bhasin, 1994: 38-40). Similarly, India-Bangladesh has signed its first Treaty on the *Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace* in 1972 (Bhasin, 2003).<sup>14</sup> The nature of these two treaties is parallel, but to some extent, their objectives, vary with each other. As a result, after these two, the respective countries agreed to sign further bilateral agreements, treaties, MoUs, protocols etc. in diverse fields.

### **Historical Background of Bilateral Relations of India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh: 1947-2015**

There are numerous bilateral agreements signed between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh since 1947-2016 and 1971-2016 respectively on various issues and distinct fields. The following sub-parts demonstrated about the bilateral relationship between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh.

#### ***Decades of Crisis: 1947-1990***

This phase has experienced tremendous upheavals between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh. The changes have not even happened in national and regional levels, but the global state of affairs also affected. These three states have been seen domestic as well as global transformations which affected the bilateral relationship between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh.

At the international level, the concept of regionalism, security, threat perceptions, a significant shift from bipolar to the unipolar world, the realm of great power politics have emerged. At the regional level, political instability, ideological differentiation within political parties and counterbalancing tendencies could be seen during that phase.

In the same period, bilateral agreements have been signed between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh under favourable and unfavourable periods. India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh have played partly amicable and partly hostile relations under the fields of political issues, sharing river water, economic and commerce, trade and transit. India-Nepal has signed twenty (20) bilateral agreements, whereas India-Bangladesh authorised thirty-one (31) deals.

In the 1947- 1960s,<sup>15</sup> after independence, India became an independent state and entered into two treaties with Nepal. One, Treaty of Peace and Friendship<sup>16</sup> (TOPF) in 1950 and other, Treaty of Trade during the Rana<sup>17</sup> and Nehru<sup>18</sup> regime. The noteworthy turning point in their relationship could be seen when the Nepali Congress (NC) party overthrown Rana's oligarchy (Dhungel, D. N. and S. B. Pun, 2009: 15).<sup>19</sup> After that, the "Delhi Agreement" was signed between India-Nepal which supported the transition of democracy

<sup>12</sup> Many scholars of India and Nepal proclaimed that the 1923 "*Treaty of Friendship*" represented the culmination of the trends of co-operation, inter-linkages and interdependence between the British and Rana rule in Nepal. This treaty worked as to fulfilling and satisfying the Rana government in Nepal. The entire trade barriers were removed, the political framework comes under British government and the treaty dealt that no third party relations with Nepal. According to Muni, he stated that "Nepal became fully dependent to India".

<sup>13</sup> The treaty was concluded between Chandreshwar Prasad Narain Singh by Government of India and Mohun Shamshet Jang Bahadur Rana from the Government of Nepal on July 31, 1950.

<sup>14</sup> The Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace has four basic tenets like Alignment, peaceful co-existence, mutual Co-operation, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for national integrity and sovereignty. The treaty concluded between Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India and Mr. Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman on March 17, 1972.

<sup>15</sup> Within these two decades there was no existence of Bangladesh because it was a part of Pakistan.

<sup>16</sup> The TOPF cancelled all the previous treaties, agreements and laid the foundations of fresh relationship.

<sup>17</sup> He was the last Rana who ruled under monarchy in this period. Rana and Nehru signed TOPF but due to internal chaos in Nepal by leftist or Maoists party they emphasised to Rana to leave the dynasty and grant parliamentary rule, democracy.

<sup>18</sup> Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India who ruled since 1950-1964 period. He has known as 'Charismatic Leader' of India. Moreover, he was a follower of idealistic approach by that sought out many domestic as well as international disputes in India.

<sup>19</sup> Dhungel, D. N. and S. B. Pun (2009), *The India-Nepal Water Resources Relationship: Challenge*, Kathmandu: Springer. p. 15.



in Nepal.<sup>20</sup> The post-1951 Nepalese governments decided to concluded three treaties with India, two on River in between 1954 and 1959: the Kosi Treaty 1954 (revised in 1966) and the Gandak Treaty 1959 (revised in 1964) and other on Trade and Transit (Bhasin, 2005).<sup>21</sup> Both India-Nepal faced a significant flood in the Mahakali<sup>22</sup> 1953, India extended the left afflux bund of the Sharda barrage about a 100 m into Nepali territory beyond the border pillar BP 6A between 1954 and 1958.<sup>23</sup> According to Gyawali (1999: 553), he elucidated that Nepal felt cheated by India. But according to the Treaty India has built the embankment there.

In the 1960s, the significant decisive moment highlighted when the King Mahendra of Nepal dissolved the first constitution of the country, abolished an elected parliament and imprisoned the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr B.P. Koirala (1959-1960).<sup>24</sup> But soon after, settled a Panchayat system or party-less government under the control of the monarchy. King Mahendra's changed its foreign policy which was against India.<sup>25</sup> He had opened up its foreign relations to outside the world, including China and Pakistan.<sup>26</sup> Thereby, India assumed it utterly against to TOFP also harms cooperation, nonetheless, during the same period India humiliated by a tug of war with China in 1962 (Rose 1972, Thapliyal 1988, Muni, 1973).<sup>27</sup> The action provides an advantage to Nepal to negotiate or bargain the bilateral agreements with India. According to Gaige (1975) pointed out that India had paid more attention to regional security concerns rather than establishing a democratic parliamentary government in Nepal.<sup>28</sup>

On the geostrategic and geo-political point of view, the Indo-China war considered as a thunderstorm over India. The expansionist policy of China severely hurt pandit J.N. Nehru.<sup>29</sup> Before that event, India-China has faced unending controversies over two frontiers- northern and northeastern that is Aksai-Chin and Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>30</sup> Mao wanted to resolve the dispute, but Pandit J. N. Nehru rejected the Chinese proposal by not answering it. In 1961, India adopted the "*Forward Policy*", it's also known as "*Nehru's Forward Policy*", which means the Government of India wanted to go beyond its outposts nearby western frontier and China's leader (Mao) took it as an Indian Seizure of Chinese controlled territory.<sup>31</sup> In response to India's activities, Mao said that "*You wave a gun, and I'll wave a gun. We'll stand face to face and can each practice our courage*". Mao defined the policy as "*armed Co-existence*".<sup>32</sup> China made its geostrategic lobby to defeat India by using "tit for tat policy".<sup>33</sup> After the terrifying incident in 1962, Nepal's geostrategic importance between the two boulders increased to India and China. In short, the role of China became

<sup>20</sup> Parajulee, R. P. (2000), *The Democratic Transition in Nepal*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher.

<sup>21</sup> Bhasin, Avtar S. (2005), *Nepal-India Nepal-China Relations Documents 1947-June 2005 Vol. II*, New Delhi: Geetika Publications.

<sup>22</sup> Mahakali is an international boundary river between India-Nepal at Western region of Nepal.

<sup>23</sup> Gyawali, D and Ajay, D. (1999), "Mahakali Impasse and Indo-Nepal Water Conflict", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 9. pp. 553-564. Gyawali mentioned in his article that the government of Nepal didn't reveal the matter as publicly, if it was happened then the government of Nepal won't control any protest.

<sup>24</sup> B.P. Koirala was a Communist leader, against to monarchial rule of Rana and supporter of parliamentary democracy. Koirala came out from jail and took shelter in India but after so much changes he went back into the territory of Nepal.

<sup>25</sup> Hachhethu, K. & Gellner, David, N (2009), "Nepal: Trajectories of democracy and restructuring of the state", Paul Brass (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of South Asia*, New York: Routledge, pp.131-134.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p. 137.

<sup>27</sup> Rose, L. E. (1972), *Nepal: Strategy for Survival*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Thapliyal, S. (1998), *Mutual Security: The Case of India-Nepal*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers; and Muni, S. D. (1992), *India-Nepal: A Changing Relationship*, New Delhi: Konark.

<sup>28</sup> Gaige, F. H. (1975), *Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal*, Berkeley: University of California Press. p.91.

<sup>29</sup> Just a year before India-China has signed Panchsheel doctrine in 1951 and echoed in same way as "Hind Chin Bhai Bhai" which means 'India and China has brotherhood relationship'. According to the doctrine, China abolished its principles overtly through guerilla warfare.

<sup>30</sup> Basically, The Aksai-Chin situated in the northern frontier of Himalaya closely attached to Chinese boundary line. The Aksai-Chin is nearby Leh and Ladakh. The northeastern frontier means Arunachal Pradesh is also targeted by China. In the today's relevance, these two remain unresolved.

<sup>31</sup> Kissinger, H. (2011), *On China*, USA: Penguin Press. p. 188; Garver, J. China's decision for war with India in 1962, [Online: web] Assessed 06 May 2019, URL: <http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/china%20decision%20for%201962%20war%202003.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* p.188.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 189.

significant in many dimensions. Within this phase, India-Nepal relations became antagonistic, and India-China relations emerged into two rivalry power.

In the 1970s and 1980s, these two decades have experienced and visualised regional to global transformations. The "tilt" policy originates by the United States; US showed the most vigorous opposition to India over the emergence of Bangladesh;<sup>34</sup> reappearance of the new country within South Asia; a significant shift towards regionalism; political instability, threats etc. has been faced between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh. In the volume of *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*,<sup>35</sup> the protagonist highlighted the history of Bangladesh chronologically and revealed broad principles of grand strategies and praiseworthy role of India in the International arena, and also unwrapped Nixon<sup>36</sup> and Kissinger's diplomatic policy in South Asia. Interestingly, the early 1970 phase was so crucial that the origin of Bangladesh<sup>37</sup> directly impacts upon regional and global changes through the involvement of three countries such as India, Pakistan and the United States. India represented itself as a superpower during the liberation war of Bangladesh with Pakistan.<sup>38</sup> The geostrategic act flabbergasted to its (means India) rival powers.<sup>39</sup>

On December 6 1971, India granted recognition<sup>40</sup> to Bangladesh and signed many treaties on diverse fields. The Treaty of Friendship and Peace in 1972 paved the ways to sign bilateral agreements/treaties on the border dispute. It had signed a demarcation of a land boundary agreement with the Prime Minister of

<sup>34</sup> Muni, Sukh D., (2016), The poet diplomat: Story of Former Indian Foreign Secretary M.K. Rasgotra, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 18/06/2016. Assessed on 19 June 2019 [Online: web] URL: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/books/the-poet-diplomat-the-story-of-former-indian-foreign-secretary-mk-rasgotra/story-GcwLCQza8Kz7LEe1IQ3qZO.html>; Jacob, Jayanth (2016), "Rasgotra, Nehru and N word: History with a Twist", *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 14/06/2016. In this newspaper, the author gave another dimension to understand about India's situation. Assessed on 20 June 2019 [Online: web] URL: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rasgotra-nehru-and-the-n-word-history-with-a-twist/story-ArRPoBOESLqmILZ1lzDnsJ.html>

<sup>35</sup> Raghavan, S. (2013), *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, Ranikhet Cantt: Permanent Black. pp.235-263.

<sup>36</sup> Nixon holds the US administration in January 1969 and its interest grew after read foreign policy reports of US Congress in 1970 and 1971. The report revealed about the condition of South Asia. Interestingly, he took interest in South Asian politics which can called as US strategic interest in South Asia. Kissinger and Nixon played a diplomatic role to support Pakistan during liberation war of Bangladesh with India. The Prime Minister of China, China Zhou Enlai showed his bias attitude against India. He wanted "save" Pakistan. In short, Pakistan directly supported by United States and China moreover, China gained support through US as well. Dutt, V.P. (2015), *India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, India. p.39.

<sup>37</sup> Bangladesh, before independence, known as "EAST-PAKISTAN". The entire political, institutional, and, official system of East Pakistan (EP) governed by West Pakistan (present, Pakistan). EP were literally annihilated, subjugated and subordinated by the West Pakistani government, although, Mujib, considered as an anti-activist of West Pakistan. The Mujib hold the leadership of mass mobilisation against West Pakistan. The Government of West Pakistan (Yahya Khan) had been decided to attempt nefarious attack against Eastern province just because of Mujib's radical movements and his plea of separate sovereign country. Under this occurrence, the situation was thoroughly changed Indian government had stand as wall on the front of East Bangladesh by many reasons. Then, Pakistani military decided to target India on 3 December 1971, it is known as third *Indo-Pak war*. India had supported by Russia under the Indo-Soviet '*Treaty of Indo-Russia Peace, Friendship and Co-operation*' the government of Soviet Union was ready to support Indian government under the article 9 of this treaty. Both the respective nations have been signed bilateral treaty on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1971. Strategically, This treaty was important for India (Sachdeva, G., (2011), "India's relations with Russia", David Scott (eds.) *Handbook of India's International Relations*, UK, Routledge, pp. 214); Anderson, P. (2012), "After Nehru", Canada: *London Review of Books*, Vol.34 (15), URL: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v34/n15/perry-anderson/after-nehru>. Soviet assisted to India throughout the war period. However, the former Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira government skillfully and patiently decided to support the guerilla liberation of war of Bangladesh after the consultation of Indian army and politicians. Some scholars have articulated that she had applied '*realpolitik*' or '*Hard realism*' for the security measures as well as for ruthless in her pursuit of power (Mansingh, S. (2015), "Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy", Malone, D. M. et. al. (eds.), *The handbook of India's Foreign Policy*, United Kingdom: OUP, pp. 105-114). In short, the aftermath of Bangladesh was achieved through the efforts of Indian Arms Forces (IAF) and it held parliamentary government.

<sup>38</sup> Ganguly, S. (2011), "Indian Defence Policy", Nirja Jayal Gopal, Pratap Bhanu Mehta (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to Politics in India*, New Delhi: OUP. According to Ganguly Mrs. Indira played astonishing role while guerilla warfare with Pakistan. Geo-strategically, the smashing attacks done by Indian Arm Forces which upsets US and China.

<sup>39</sup> The rival powers targeted India international Law and Order. India was a member of United Nations so according to its Charter India didn't take permission through General Assembly of U.N.

<sup>40</sup> Bhutan was the first country who given recognition to Bangladesh. Later, India and by most of the sovereign states of the world including Pakistan by the end of 1974 given. China and Saudi Arabia were only among the important countries, which formally recognised Bangladesh after the assassination of the Sheikh, had been on the process of recognising the country during the ending months of his rule. The world famous organisation, UNO, enrolled Bangladesh as a member country of UNO in 1974.

Sheikh. Hasina was also successfully resolved trade and inland water transit issues even the fencing and telecommunications agreements came into existence. Later on, though interim, the augmentation of Ganges water from Farakka barrage was signed.<sup>41</sup>

The internal political chaos of Bangladesh directly hits to a relationship with India. Some army officers brutally assassinated Mujib-ur-Rahman along with his family members. According to Tikekar (2014: 231-238) pointed out that after Mujib assassination a series of the coup took place in 1975, at the end of emerged General Zia-ur-Rahman (1977-81) as the de facto ruler.<sup>42</sup> Zia-ur-Rahman amended a constitution by adding a clause which directed the government to strive for unique relations with the Islamic countries. According to Sukha Ranjan Chakravarty, 1994, mentioned, in *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, that during Rahman regime, his policy was marred by his anti-Indian and anti-USSR overtures. The contentious issue of Gange's water dispute blown up at international level.<sup>43</sup> He had contributed his efforts in terms of regional integration and cooperation of South Asia through established the SAARC in 1985.<sup>44</sup>

In the context of Nepal, King Birendra, with his accession to the throne in 1972, witnessed the partition of Pakistan and upsurge against *Panchayat* system in Nepal. During his reign, the hangover of India's dominance and Nepal's quest for national identity remained as before. It took manifestation in the form of declaring Nepal a 'Zone of Peace'. This proposal aimed at seeking all benefits from India and disregarding India's security interests in Nepal. Nepal's bid to revise or suspend 1950 treaty of Friendship, establish air link between Kathmandu and Tibet in 1976, built road in western Tarai with the help of China in 1985 and import arms from China in 1988, thus harming India's security interests made India non-responsive to Nepal's proposal of 'Zone of Peace' (Bhattarai, D. 2015).<sup>45</sup> The clash between former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi and King Birendra which gave rise to a situation was Indo-Nepal relations collapsed based on two renewals of trade and transit treaties between the two countries (Shukla, D. 2006: 364-365).<sup>46</sup> According to Parth Ghosh (2015), this phase is seen as 'sharp disagreements' on economic and security matters.<sup>47</sup> But both countries have signed two agreements on the renovation and extension of the Chandra Canal system, construction of a pumped canal and distribution system of the Western Kosi in Nepal on April 7, 1978, and other on the structure of Kohalpur-Mahakali sector of the Mahendra Raj Marg signed on September 28, 1985 (Bhasin, 2003).

Nevertheless, Nepal is a country rich in water resources, so in 1983, both the governments agreed for multipurpose projects in Karnali, Pancheshwar and West Rapti rivers. The impasse of 1989-90 led by the expiry of trade and transit treaties and no primary supplies exported to Nepal. Meanwhile, Tanakpur Barrage and Mahakali Treaty in Nepal again slowed down the progress in the field of utilisation of river water. According to Riaz & Basu (2007), the underdevelopment of bilateral relations between India-Nepal was due to India's expansionist design.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Mukherji, D. (2007), "Distant neighbours: India and Bangladesh", Sinha, A. & Mohta, M., *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, New Delhi: Academic Foundation. pp.558-560.

<sup>42</sup> Patthanaik, Smruti, S. (2014), "Bangladesh Army and its role in shaping political order" in Maneesha Tikekar (eds.) *Constitutionalism and Democracy in South Asia: Political developments in India's Neighbourhood*, New Delhi: OUP. pp.231-238.

<sup>43</sup> Chakravarty, Sukh R. (1994), "Introduction", Sukh Ranjan Chakravarty (eds.), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications. p.17.

<sup>44</sup> South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation, SAARC, established on 1985 by Zia-ur-Rahman. Presently, there are eight member countries- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The Central Asia and European Countries, mainly European Union, were integrated and co-operated in terms of trade. Though, Rahman decided to established the SAARC in South Asia. This had changed the value of South Asia.

<sup>45</sup> Bhattarai (2015), "Changing Dynamics in Nepal-India Relations", Vishal Chandra (eds.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press.

<sup>46</sup> Shukla, D. (2006), "India-Nepal Relations: Problems and Prospects", *Indian Political Science Association*, Vol. 67, No. 2, p: 364

<sup>47</sup> Ghosh, P.S. (2015), "Perceptions and Memories: Making Sense of Bangladesh's India Outlook", Vishal Chandra (eds.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press.

<sup>48</sup> Riaz, A & Basu, S. (2007), *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal*, Maryland: Lexington Books. p. 133.



### ***Democratic Phase: 1991-2000***

This particular phase is vital into two ways- historical and eventual manner. During this phase, the regional and global level transformation occurred. During this phase, the world is witnessed for end of bipolar world and establishment of parliamentary democracy, the emergence of globalisation, power politics etc.

After H.M. Ershad,<sup>49</sup> Mrs Khaleda Zia<sup>50</sup> held power and tried to improve bilateral relations with India. She had resolved two significant issues- the Tin Bigha and Chakma refugee problems after signed bilateral agreements, but it paid several ups and downs to Mrs Zia government. The bilateral relations came under strain due to violent reactions in Bangladesh, which are repercussions to the demolition of Babari Mosque incident of December 06, 1992.<sup>51</sup> The link between India-Bangladesh remained frozen. Despite this anti-India posture, India took one positive step when the Government of Bangladesh recognised the sovereignty of India over Tin Bigha. India was handed over the Tin Bigha on a lease and opened it for passengers and vehicle in 1992.<sup>52</sup>

On December 1996, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited in India, the long outstanding issue relating to the sharing of water resources was resolved through the signing of a landmark Treaty on Sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farakka. The PM of India, Gujral persuaded to Jyoti Basu, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, to negotiate a settlement on the issue of utilisation of Ganges/Ganga Water.<sup>53</sup> The Treaty will run for thirty years and will meet the minimum needs of both sides. The Bangladesh Minister for Water Resources, Mr Abdur Razzak, visited India in April 1999 in connection with the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC). The Joint Committee of Experts on Sharing of Waters of Common Rivers met twice during that year when discussions were held on the sharing of Teesta waters. This incident underlined as to *counterbalancing the relationship*. According to Ghosh (2015: 61), the water issue is a *cusps zone* element between India-Bangladesh relationships. The visit by the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh in January 1997 consolidated the enhanced bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh.

The Minister for Commerce and Industries of Bangladesh, Mr Tofail Ahmed visited India for bilateral talks on trade issues from 19<sup>th</sup> to May 24 1999. The Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Mr Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, visited India from 9<sup>th</sup> to August 15 1999. Fresh impetus has been given to economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries. The Government of India decided to extend tariff concessions and remove quantitative restrictions on the import of goods in fourteen sectors of interest to Bangladesh. In the bilateral relations over commerce, the deficit grew most visibly in the 1990s when India and Bangladesh started to liberalise at a rapid pace with the deficit in formal trade rising from Rs 200 million to about Rs 1 billion within the last ten years. The Research Director, CPD, Mustafizur Rahman shows in his study that the yearly trade gap between the two counties has increased 9.5 times while imports from India has increased 15 times over the last ten years. Therefore, Bangladesh's trade got imbalanced with India in these ten years (1990-91 to 1999-2000) which stood about \$6.5 billion.<sup>54</sup> The area of Chittagong, which touches the boundary of Tripura and Bay of Bengal, also became highly critical area between India-Bangladesh. India contributed to facilitating the repatriation of Chakma refugees from Tripura to Bangladesh, and about 12,000 refugees voluntarily returned to Bangladesh.<sup>55</sup>

In the same phase, the relations of India-Nepal partly became amicable and somewhat hostile. The political instability and Jan Andolan I affected their relations. The Tanakpur issue became election matter, but new congress government headed by Girija Prasad Koirala as a Prime Minister of Nepal. G.P. visited India

<sup>49</sup> General H.M. Ershad was the second military ruler in Bangladesh, who continued his predecessor's foreign policy.

<sup>50</sup> Khaleda Zia, the widow of Zia-ur-Rahman was installed in the power after the election.

<sup>51</sup> On the communal grounds India-Bangladesh relations became unmovable. Though, in India the burning issue on Babari Mosque and in Bangladesh there were Hindu temples were demolished under communal riots. The SAARC meeting was held at Bangladesh on the same year and Madam Prime Minister of Bangladesh raised its voice against India.

<sup>52</sup> Government of India (1994), *Annual Report 1992-93*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. p.15

<sup>53</sup> Bhardwaj, S. (2003), "Bangladesh Foreign Policy vis-a-vis India", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 27 (2): 273.

<sup>54</sup> Zaki, E. (2000), *Liberalization in the shadow of a large Neighbour: A Case Study of Bangladesh-India Economic relations*, Dhaka: UPL. pp.2-3.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* p.4

through the invitation of Narsimha Rao, Prime Minister of India. They seventy-two member strong official delegation decided over Tanakpur Barrage issue, and the Nepalese government allowed India to use 577 m of Nepali territory for constructing a bund. Article 126<sup>56</sup> became major hurdle while approving Mahakali and Tanakpur barrage treaties. Although, a historic multipurpose treaty on Mahakali in 1996 as integrated development of the Mahakali River which included Sharda Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage and Pancheshwar Project signed between India-Nepal (Gyawali, 1999: 555, 557).<sup>57</sup> It envisages joint exploitation of the water resources and has the potential to open up tremendous possibilities for economic cooperation between the two countries.<sup>58</sup> The bilateral Trade Treaty was modified and renewed for a further period of five years. It resulted in the entry of Nepalese manufactured goods sans customs duty and quantitative restrictions. These developments symbolise the commitment of India and Nepal to strengthen their economic cooperation.

In 2000, major projects being funded by the Government of India in Nepal which included the construction of twenty-two (22) bridges on the Kohalpur-Mahakali sector of the East-West Highway, construction of an Emergency and Trauma Centre at Bir Hospital in Kathmandu, construction of Raxaul-Sirsiya Rail Link, construction of Tanakpur-Mahendranagar Link Road and several other projects that form part of India's commitment under the Mahakali Treaty.<sup>59</sup> A Joint India-Nepal Coordination meeting was held, in Kathmandu from December 9 to 10<sup>th</sup> of 1999, to finalise the technical modalities for energising the 132 KV Tanakpur-Mahendranagar line to supply 70 million units of energy per annum, free of cost, to Nepal, under India's commitment under the Mahakali Treaty<sup>60</sup> At present, still, they are in under process for implementation. It was agreed to commence the power supply with effect from January 1, 2000. Bilateral trade during 1998-99 amounted to Rs. 1225.56 Crores. In April-July 1999, the two-way trade was Rs. 461.24 Crores, while the figure for the corresponding period in the previous year was Rs. 304.26 Crores.<sup>61</sup>

#### ***Trust Deficit Phase: 2001-2010***

This phase has emerged a trust deficit between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh. Nepal faced Jan Andolan II (2005-2006) and thereby India's northern belt affected by it. In Bangladesh, once again Khaleda Zia elected as Prime Minister of Bangladesh, communal violence, Islamic fundamentalism ruin internal as well as external relations. India-Nepal has had signed eight agreements on different fields like commerce and trade and transit except for water and political issues. Similarly, India-Bangladesh has signed agreements on business, refugees, trade and transit except on water, political and border fields.

The relations of India with Nepal became fragile because of the Maoist movement. Muni (2015) highlighted that ten years of Maoist insurgency (1996-2006) are continuing uncertainty on constitution building in Nepal has also adversely affected cooperation between the two countries. The northern, Bihar, region of India, which attached to Nepal border, was positively affected. The open border is badly affected by India's northern states like Bihar. The Maoists got assistance like weapons, workforce and financial help through the Bihar region, but some areas were affected.<sup>62</sup>

Some Maoist leaders in June 2002 assured the Indian leaders that they wanted to ready to maintain harmonious relations with India would not act anything to harm its critical interest.<sup>63</sup> In the same period,

<sup>56</sup> The Article 126 required any resource sharing agreements has to be ratified by a two-thirds majority in parliament if it was of "pervasive, serious and long-nature". It was became a rock between Mahakali and Tanakpur agreements.

<sup>57</sup> Gyawali, D and Ajay, D. (1999), "Mahakali Impasse and Indo-Nepal Water Conflict", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol., 34, No. 9. pp. 553-564.

<sup>58</sup> Bhasin, Avtar S. (2005), *Nepal-India Nepal-China Relations Documents 1947-June 2005 Vol. II*, New Delhi: Geetika Publications. p. 1624.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* p. 1634.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* pp.1698-1699

<sup>61</sup> Government of India (1994), *Annual Report 1992-93*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

<sup>62</sup> Chaudhary, P. K. (2003), "Maoists' bases in Bihar likely", *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 15/10/2003. [Online: web] Accessed 2 June, 2016. URL: <http://timesofindia.indiatimesa.com/city/patna/Maoists-bases-in-N-Bihar-likely/articleshow/233956.cms>

<sup>63</sup> Muni, Sukh, D. (2012), "Bringing the Maoists down from the Hills: India's Role", in Sebastian Von Einsiedel, David M. Malone and Suman Pradhan (eds.), *Nepal in Transition: From People's War to Fragile Peace*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press. p.321.



Maoists succeed to maintain links with some Indian states such as Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar and its ties reached with ULFA group (United Liberation Front of Assam) this mass mobilisation hits the government of India. So, India decided to intervene in Nepalese domestic politics (Bhattarai, 2015: 77).<sup>64</sup> The incident was harming India's national security. Although Indo-US strategic partnership starts firming on Nepal, The United Nations and India were jointly decided to overlay the Nepal situation. Ban Ki-Moon "*thanked India*".<sup>65</sup> Thus, India's relations were stuck on stopping a terrorist attack, fake currencies, drugs trafficking, to find out the criminals. By that, some scholars highlighted that India security personal crosses into Nepal to carry out their searches and arrests without informing Nepali authorities. Politicians and Scholars alike often take up border issues with nationalism. Nevertheless, *Pusha Kamal Dhal* uses the term "*Foreign Lords*" for India.<sup>66</sup> The reason behind his resignation this reason has predominantly existed. The bilateral relations on sharing water, hydroelectricity, trade and commerce was severely disturbed. There was no progress on any river water, hydroelectricity treaties. Trade and transit were also affected.

According to S. D. Muni (2015), India's policy that contributed to its diplomatic breakdowns in Nepal was low use of India's soft power, particularly economic support for strategic objectives. India has not been able to undertake any significant infrastructural projects since the 1960s, except the East-West Highway (Mahendra Rajmarg), which in any case was forced on India by Nepal's use of so-called China Card. In part, this is explained by Nepal's failure to move on hydropower development and infrastructure projects. India's proposals for linking Nepal with India's vast rail network through north-south link roads Tarai getting delayed bureaucratically.<sup>67</sup>

The relationship of Bangladesh-India was upset when military confrontation raised negative acts between the boundaries of India-Bangladesh. The Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) harm external affairs. The issue of border demarcation between the two countries became critical after the clashes between Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) at a border outpost in Kurigram in April 2001. India accused Bangladeshi troops of occupying the border village of Pyrdirwh, forcing its residents to flee. This incident left 16 BSF personnel dead. Though low-key clashes between Indian and Bangladeshi border forces were expected, the conflict at the Kurigram was severest between the border guards of the two countries in the last 30 years. This incident seriously affected the bilateral relationship between countries, and its impact can be seen on the bilateral agreements. The border issue has three sub-parts-- the un-demarcate 5.5 Km long tract, the existence of enclaves in each other territory and the areas in adverse possession on the two sides. India is not averse to encouraging anti-state movements in Bangladesh, seen after Mujib's death and the support to Shanti Bahini in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The trigger-happy Border Security Force indiscriminately kills Bangladeshi at the border. Indians cannot be trusted.<sup>68</sup> Both the sides have agreed to solve the border issue through diplomatic means, but very little progress has been made. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina set up an anti task force to address the problems that had intensified after 2001. The arrests of various retired military officials for their involvement in the transfer of arms through a fresh probe of the Chittagong arms haul case of 2004 established the linkages between

<sup>64</sup> Bhattarai (2015), "Changing Dynamics in Nepal-India Relations", Vishal Chandra (eds.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press. p. 77

<sup>65</sup> Acharya, M. (2012), "India's role in Peace Process Crucial: Ban", *The Kathmandu Post*, New Delhi, 28/04/2012. [Online: web] Accessed 2 June, 2019, URL: <http://www.ekantipur.com/2012/04/28/top-story/indias-role-in-peace-process-crucial-ban/353087.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Shrestha, Buddhi, N. (2013). "India has encroached border at 71 places: Scholars", *The Kathmandu Post*, Kathmandu, 05/04/2013. [Online: web] Accessed 2 June, 2019. URL: <http://www.ekantipur.com/2013/04/05top-story/india-hs-encroached-border-at-71-places-scholars/369536.html>.

<sup>67</sup> Muni, Sukh D. (2015), "India's Nepal Policy", Malone, D. et. al. *Indian Foreign Policy*, UK: OUP. p.408

<sup>68</sup> Human Rights Watch (2006), "*Trigger Happy*": *Excessive Use of Force by Indian Troops at the Bangladesh Border*, Odhikar: Dhaka.

Bangladesh security agencies and militants operating in India.<sup>69</sup> Only 6.5 km out of 41, 100 Km is undemarcated, it created an immense problem in the bilateral relationship (Habib 2005).<sup>70</sup>

There was no progress in foreign relations of both the governments because the terrorist attacks, border dispute of enclaves, illegal activities through Chittagong Hills Tracts (CHT),<sup>71</sup> water sharing dispute on the Ganges, became contention in their relations. The threat and security perceptions raised by both countries.<sup>72</sup> The matter of CHT is turbulent, crucial, and geostrategically significant in many ways. According to Amena Mohsin (2003) described in, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: On the Difficult Road to Peace*, the CHT have caused a national as well as a human security problem. Bangladesh alleges northeastern India and Myanmar are the sources of this contraband. Subsequently, India claimed that Bangladesh is the source of small arms entry into its northeastern region.<sup>73</sup>

Bangladesh wanted to improve its trade deficit through other channels though it also harms the sentiments of India. Bangladesh increases its relations with other countries like- China, Gulf countries, Pakistan etc. except India. According to the MEA (Ministry of External Affairs Report, 2005-06, 2006-07) reports revealed that in the mid-2000s the Bangladesh-India formal trade, which stood at about the US \$3.5 billion and was nearly matched by the informal trade totalling US \$ 7 billion, were in the deficit was almost US \$ 6 billion. Whereas, China played its role as a trading partner of Bangladesh (GoI (2006), *Annual Report 2005-06*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi; GoI (2008), *Annual Report 2006-07*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi).<sup>74</sup>

### ***Benign Powers and Challenges Ahead: 2011-2015***

Under this phase, it was immensely crucial into various dimensions. But highly crucial because of China and US influence in South Asia as for diplomacy and geostrategic purposes. The total number of signed bilateral agreements between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh are eight and twenty-two, respectively. Interestingly, under this phase, new perceptions like threats, new geo-strategies, incensement in military expenditure, challenges to human security, water resource security, no proper management on sharing water dispute, environment degradation, terrorism, etc., are emerging as the new security concerns, without active participation they wouldn't be resolved anymore (Rahman 2015:101; Bhattarai, 2015: 87).<sup>75</sup>

Nepal and Bangladesh have been playing a decisive role in foreign relations with India. Their porous borders, similar civilisations, history, socio-cultural, economic, geostrategic, and political terrains stand uniqueness in South Asia in general and the world in particular. Also, geographical locations are the central epitome to attract not even to South Asian countries like Pakistan, India, Bhutan, but for China, the United States America and other countries such as Gulf, Central Asia, Southeast Asia countries<sup>76</sup> also attracted by the geographical features of South Asia (Dutta: 2015). They are trying to push their policies towards South Asian Countries- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka or vice-

<sup>69</sup> Datta S. & Krishnan S. (2015), "Bangladesh", Malone, D. et. al. *Indian Foreign Policy*, UK: OUP. pp.388-389.

<sup>70</sup> Haroon Habib (2005), "BSF officer killed as BDR opens fire", *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 18/04/2005. [Online: web] Accessed 18 April. URL:

[http://googleweblight.com/?litre\\_url=http://www.thehindu.com/2005/04/18/stories/2005041805211300.htm&ei=Bp1oBhi&lc=en=IN&s=1&host=www.google.com.in&ts=1466343988&sig=AKOVD650EDsEc9ycOcuWD8v1k47mQvGK-Q](http://googleweblight.com/?litre_url=http://www.thehindu.com/2005/04/18/stories/2005041805211300.htm&ei=Bp1oBhi&lc=en=IN&s=1&host=www.google.com.in&ts=1466343988&sig=AKOVD650EDsEc9ycOcuWD8v1k47mQvGK-Q)

<sup>71</sup> Mohsin A. (2003), "In Search of Peace: Policy Recommendations", Amena Mohsin, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: On the difficult Road to Peace*. pp.95-104.

<sup>72</sup> Rahman, M, Ashique (2015), "Rising India and Bangladesh-India Relations: Mutual Perceptions and Exceptions", in Vishal Chandra (eds.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press. p.100

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p.103

<sup>74</sup> GoI (2006), *Annual Report 2005-06*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi; GoI (2008), *Annual Report 2006-07*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

<sup>75</sup> Bhattarai, D. (2015), "Changing Dynamics in Nepal-India Relations", pp. pp.87; Rahman, M, A. (2015), "Rising India and Bangladesh-India Relations: Mutual Perceptions and Exceptions", p.101, Vishal Chandra (eds.), *India and South Asia: Exploring Regional Perceptions*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press.

<sup>76</sup> Dutt, V. P. (2015), *India's Foreign Policy: Since Independence*, New Delhi: National Book Trust India.

versa. Bangladesh deep seaports- Chittagong,<sup>77</sup> Mongala, Sonadia and Matarbari, are highly significant for strategic purposes.

Similarly, Sri Lanka's Hambantota port is also included in this list. China wanted to invest the amount to build their ports to easily imports and exports. The recent news revealed by *The Diplomat Magazine* that China already snatches the deep seaport for infrastructural assistance. The US, Japan and India wanted to finance, but Bangladesh once again plays hide and seek a role with India and other countries. Consequently, this is making the Silk route, One Belt or Road, or One economic corridor with China.<sup>78</sup> The Parya port is a part of the 'encirclement policy of China' to India from geo (Himalayan) to ocean pours (Indian Ocean); thus, Nepal and Bangladesh are involved in China's strategy. Chang (2016) disclosed that Currently serving naval officers are hesitant about specifically naming the Chinese state, but retired ones are more forthright. "We should be worried the way we have run down our submarine fleet", says Arun Prakash, former head of the Indian navy, to Reuters at the end of 2014. "But with China is bearing down on us, the way it is in the Himalayas, the South China Sea, and now the Indian Ocean, we should be even more worried." "Bearing down" in the Indian Ocean is apt. China's activity in that immense body of water has increased "exponentially," *Admiral R.K. Dhowan, India's Navy Chief*, told New Delhi Television in December 2014. China's military modernisation and its impact on India (Chang: 2016: 237).<sup>79</sup>

The starting phase of 2011 for India-Bangladesh became a landmark success because both the governments had been opened up Haats facilities Kalaichar/Baliamari on the India border. Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina and Prime Minister of India Dr Manmohan have signed on various agreements on education, renewable energy cooperation, conservation of Sunderban, the Protocol on Land Border, culture and so on. A joint venture power plant was also concluded between NTPC and BPDB in Khulna, Bangladesh approval for 1320 MW.<sup>80</sup> In the relationship of Nepal-India, they have shared their proposals for further implementation.

Competition in the Indian Ocean: Rajat Pandit demonstrated that In August 2012, the then Indian Navy Chief Admiral Nirmal Verma said his country's "primary" area of strategic focus was the stretch of water between the Malacca Strait in the east, and *the Cape of Good Hope* in the west.<sup>81</sup> It would be natural for an Indian naval officer to think that way. However, these seas have preoccupied Chinese planners as well—and they have been looming larger in importance in recent years. For one thing, as China's navy has grown more extensive and more capable, its admirals have been able to think about operating in the Indian Ocean regularly. Yet, there is a more practical reason for Beijing's interest: about four-fifths of China's oil passes through that body of water. In short, Chinese planners feel an increasing urgency to protect their country's critical supply line. It became precarious for India and its neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. China is maintaining its ocean corridor through the encirclement.

In the last year, Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina finally resolved the matter on Land Boundary dispute. Both the nations signed multiple agreements and MoUs but the importance of sharing water of Ganges still in under process for implementation. Many scholars addressed that the federal structure of India became a rock for the Ganges treaty. According to Kathryn Jacques (2000), in the volume of *"Bangladesh, India and Pakistan: International Relations and Regional Tensions in South Asia"*, highlighted that the relationship on water shows belligerence and insensitivity of India's part and oversensitivity and suspicion on the part of Bangladesh.<sup>82</sup> Wang then

<sup>77</sup> Chittagong port is a famous port many scholar have been said that Iban Batuta and the great man the Columbus have had visited the place (Chittagong).

<sup>78</sup> Shepard, W. (2016), "Bangladesh's Deep Sea Port Problem", *The Diplomat*, New Delhi, 07/06/2016.

<sup>79</sup> Chang, Gordon, G. (2016), "China's Military Modernisation and its impact on India", Namrata Goswami, *India's Approach to Asia: Strategy, Geo-politics, and Responsibility*, New Delhi: Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, p.237.

<sup>80</sup> Government of India, *Annual Report 2011-2012* Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. pp.4-5

<sup>81</sup> Pandit, Rajat, (2012), "India's Exclusive Nuclear Triad will be operational soon: Navy Chief", Times of India, Mumbai, [August 8, 2012]. [Online: web] Accessed 14 June 2019, URL: <http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indias-exclusive-nuclear-raid-will-be-operational-soon-Navy-chief/articleshow/15396539.cms?referral=PM>

<sup>82</sup> Jacques, K. (2000), *Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan: International Relations and Regional Tensions in South Asia*, New York: St. Martin Press. pp-3-24.



travelled to Bangladesh, offering a free trade agreement and stating, in the words of the *Dhaka Tribune*, that "China would always remain beside Bangladesh in its development needs.". Beijing has been attempting to pry the country [away] from India's embrace by ramping up assistance.

In the said phase, According to the bilateral agreements, Nepal demanded to increase electricity supply from India. India agreed to provide more than 1,700 scholarships to Nepalese students that are known as 'Soft Power',<sup>83</sup> Maoist leaders "Prachanda" and other political leaders were met and discussed new strategies for relations.<sup>84</sup> From 2010 to 2014, as noted earlier, there was some policy paralysis in India, and its image dipped down as to whether India would be able to deliver on its foreign policy goals. The Prime Minister Modi's regime is trying to undo that image, but it remains to be seen to what extent the hopes and expectations aroused out of India can be sustained, and much would depend upon what it does at home. For the success of its foreign policy and to maintain its standing in Asia and the world, India has to remain plural and democratic; India has to stay very active on the growth trajectory and India has to modernise its own capabilities. If it fails on either of these counts, India's image will suffer a dent.

The Corridors—perhaps the most instructive case study of China's economic, military initiatives—is indeed ambitious. The transport and communication links—roads, railways, cable, and oil and gas pipelines—will stretch 2,700 kilometres from Gwadar, a strategically located port on the Arabian Sea near the Iran border, to the Khunjerab Pass. So, the Karakoram Highway leaves Kashmir and enters China, not far from the Chinese city of Kashgar the same pattern is evident elsewhere along India's land borders. For instance, at the end of December 2014, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Kathmandu for a three-day visit to deliver help to Nepal—especially assistance in generating electricity. Beijing pledged to increase official annual aid fivefold, from US\$24 million to US\$128 million.<sup>85</sup>

India-Nepal Friendship and cooperation have been characterised by open borders, extensive people-to-people ties and multifaceted socio-economic interaction. India was at the forefront of providing relief and rehabilitation assistance to Nepal following the earthquake in April 2015, being the first country to respond to its most massive disaster ever relief operation appropriately called "*Operation Maitri*". External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj participated in the International Donor's Conference in Nepal for post-earthquake reconstruction in June 2015 and announced an assistance of US\$1 billion to Nepal (one-fourth of which is in the form of grants), the largest pledge among all international donors, over and above our existing assistance to Nepal of US\$1 billion over the next five years.<sup>86</sup> India continues to support Nepal in its transition to a prosperous, peaceful, stable and democratic country. Because of the violence and agitation in the Terai areas of Nepal in the run-up to and after the promulgation of the new Constitution in Nepal on September 20 2015, India reiterated that the issues facing Nepal were political and internal to Nepal and should be resolved through dialogue in an atmosphere free from violence, and institutionalised in a manner that would enable broad-based ownership and acceptance. India has also clarified that there is no hindrance by India to supplies going to Nepal and obstructions are from the Nepalese population on the Nepalese side, in which GoI cannot interfere.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi congratulated newly elected PM Shri K.P.S. Oli on October 11, 2015, and hoped that he would carry all sections of society along, so there are peace and stability in Nepal. A similar message was conveyed during the visits of the Deputy PM and Foreign Minister of Nepal, Mr Kamal Thapa, in October 2015 and December 2015. The Parliament of Nepal passed two Constitutional Amendments on the issues of proportional inclusion and constituency delimitation on January 23 2016.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Muni, S. (2015), "India's Nepal Policy", Malone, D. et. al. *Indian Foreign Policy*, UK: OUP. p. 409. Basically, Soft power means India granted education scholarships and fellowships for human resource development in Nepal. Thus, according to Muni he stated that this is known as 'Soft Power'.

<sup>84</sup> Government of India, *Annual Report 2011-2012* Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. pp.10-12.

<sup>85</sup> "Wang: China to Remain beside Bangladesh," (2014), *Dhaka Tribune*, [29/12/2014], [Online: web] Accessed 14 June 2016 URL: <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2014/dec/28/china-remain-beside-bangladesh-wang>

<sup>86</sup> [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)

<sup>87</sup> Bhattacharjee, Kalol (2016), "India welcomes amendments in Nepal Constitution", *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 24/01/2019.

India regarded this as a positive development and hoped that other outstanding issues would be similarly settled in a constructive spirit. Prime Minister of Nepal Shri K.P. Sharma Oli, in his first visit abroad after assuming office, visited India from 19-24 February 2016. It was preceded by a preparatory visit to India by the Finance Minister of Nepal Shri Bishnu Poudel on 7-8 February 2016. During PM Oli's visit, wide-ranging discussions on the entire gamut of India-Nepal relations were held, including developments in Nepal, as well as bilateral cooperation in the areas of reconstruction, energy and culture. Interestingly, India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh have a cordial relationship on every aspect, but the water issues, illegal immigration, illegal activities, drug trafficking, Chittagong Hills, Islamist fundamentalist issues become a bone of contention for bilateral relationships.

### *Conclusion*

In a nutshell, the present scenario has changed if comparing it with the late nineteen forties or fifties, so each country has to change its policies to fulfil their basic needs. That's why they sign agreements and treaties. The overall paper highlights the nature, diplomacy, diverse tendencies for how to control over another state. For instance, as aforementioned said that how China has changed its policies to control over India's growth and development is pressing address to the Government of India and its neighbouring countries to think about him collectively. Its encirclement policy through interference and connectivity emphasised us to think it over. However, the paper gives details about the bilateral relationship between India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh. But the relations on water treaties became aloof. Nepal, still, facing numerous troubles, because of the political parties of Nepal themselves, is responsible for its steady growth. There is a need to take a practical decision.

Many eminent scholars point out that Nepal has considerable potentiality to produce hydropower electricity. Thus, Nepal has to think about win-win policy so he may be conquering to represent better future aspects. Suppose Nepal provide ample amount of water so India supply water during dry seasons. Also, the federal structure of India became a hurdle for it by West Bengal, India, due to the federal system.

Although, India-Nepal and India-Bangladesh have resolved many disputes over the land boundary, trade and transit, commerce, political issues but water issue still become vital between them. No one signed an agreement on water management. Equitable sharing of water wouldn't be possible, but at least countries have needed to take any affirmative action related to water issues. Water has no substitute. Water is precious to all of us. According to Brahma Chellaney and R. Iyer proclaimed in their volumes that the next world war would happen on the water, thus, can we wait for future war once again? or do we need to take positive action on this matter. Thereby, we can easily assume that how these three countries are not severe for river water treaties. According to Xun Wu, Marc Jeuland, Claudina Sadoff and Dale Whittington (2013) in "Interdependence in water resource development in the Ganges an economic analysis", they highlighted about a better understanding of actual and prospective effects of interdependence not only changes the calculus of the benefits and costs of different scenarios of infrastructure development but might also allow riparian countries to move closer to benefits positions that are mutually acceptable.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Wu, X. et. al., (2013), "Interdependence in water resource development in the Ganges and economic analysis", *Water Policy* 15, pp.89-100.