

Geo-Political Condition of Indo-Nepal Border and Muslim Population



Kaustubh N Misra

Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Geography,
Buddha Post Graduate College,
(DDU Gorakhpur University)
Kushinagar, Gorakhpur, (U.P.),
India

Abstract

India-Nepal border has comparatively recent origin as its present boundary demarcation and delimitation took place not more than 100 years back. Meaning thereby Nepal is closely associated with India since the very beginning and related civilization, but not with China. The basic reason behind it is that, Nepal's boundary with India on three sides- west, south and east, the boundary between Nepal and China lies in the north only. The India-Nepal boundary which runs along three sides of Nepal is 1850 kilometers. So far as Nepal-India boundary is concerned, the mountainous portions of the boundary lies in Sikkim State and Darjeeling district of West Bengal State in the east. Nepal is a country, which totally depends on India for their day to day needs and about all the developmental processes; but it is unfortunate that the country like Nepal being used by the others negatively regarding India. As, world knows that Islamic fundamental behavior doing dirty work against the humanity as well as India. Indo-Nepal border is running very sensitive now-a-days. This study deals this situation and the repercussions behind it. In this regard the study uses the primary as well as secondary data for the discussion of the issue of Indo-Nepal border.

Keywords: Indo-Nepal, Nepal-China, Anglo-Nepal, Topographical, Delineating, Britishers, Bordering, Demarcation, Consolidation, East India Company, Boundary, Location.

Introduction

Prior to the domination of India by the British East India Company, both India and Nepal were divided into petty kingdoms and principalities; but India was the Nation in spite of any deformities. There is little information available regarding the extent of border as well as border disputes between India and Nepal. The British East India Company had already started the colonization, expansion, division and consolidation of Indian states and principalities through invasion and was planning to invade Nepal. Nepali PM Jung Bahadur spent two decades of his rule in solving these problems with his Indian counter-part. In his lifetime, he tried to settle all the problems affecting the boundary between Nepal and India, because he was apprehensive that in the future such problems might lead to friction between the two countries. The actual scientific demarcation of Nepal-India boundary started during the topographical survey of the whole of Nepal carried out by the Survey of India in 1926-27. As the survey carried out, from the lower altitudes of the mountain areas in the north, but it failed to delineate Nepal-China boundary in the north. This survey produced topographical maps for Nepal indicating India-Nepal boundary including the location and number of each boundary pillar together with topographical details of the Indian side in the maps as well.

In the process of industrialization in Nepal, Indians came in the forefront for investment by taking advantage of facilities such as foreign exchange to import machinery, general goods and raw materials, excise and tax exemption and foreign exchange bonus for the export of goods manufactured in Nepal. But the government's attempt to develop industries received a setback, because most of the Indian industrialists indulged in misappropriation of foreign exchange by importing second grade machinery and excessive raw materials to sell them in India. It will be no exaggeration to state that this is due to the existence of massive corruption in the government bureaucracy, ad hoc policies, rules and decisions based on them and lack of monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, there is no denying fact that customs on both sides of the border are involved in corrupt practices. So far as smuggling from Nepal to India is concerned, it is so disgusting.

Objectives of the Study

There is no agreement regarding movement of the people and the agreed routes for movement of people of both countries along the border. As for trade, there are 22 agreed transit and customs posts along the Indo-Nepal border. It is alleged that it is possible to have illegal movement of people and goods in collaboration with personnel deputed in those posts. There is no denying the fact that it is not unusual from the practical point of view to have illegal smuggling of goods, trafficking of girls to brothels in Indian cities, trafficking in narcotic drugs, arms and ammunition and movement of criminals and terrorists. Here, there is another man-made problem stands; which is closely associated to the ideologies works in India and Nepal. India suffers with Terrorist, Maoist and Naxals behavior since last four decades and Nepal unfortunately and unknowingly/knowingly provides the ground for that, these negative purposes. Pakistan creating problem via Terrorist activities and China creating problem via Maoist/Naxals activities; both the activities are anti-humanistic; but they are doing to dismantle the developmental and peace process/condition of India. This study goes through the details of this problem and this is the aim and objective of this study.

Review of the Literature

Aitchison C. U.¹ emphasized in 1863 in his book 'A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sands Relating to India and Neighboring Countries' very critically of this subject/issue and the same way Day, Alan J.² in 1982 deals the Border and Territorial Disputes of India and Nepal. Foreign Language Press has also pointed out the aim of this study in descriptive manner in 1962 & 1973 in Premier Chou En-Lai's Letter to the Leaders of Asian and African Countries on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question. It is the advancement of the issue mentioned in Foreign Language Press in 1960, 'New Development in Friendly Relations between India, China and Nepal'. In this concern the notable works directly or indirectly done by- Kansakar, Vidya Bir Singh³ 2001 'Nepal India Open Border: Problems and Challenges. The Swedish father and geo-political scientist Rudolf Kjellén⁴, who used the terminology geo-politics first time in 1899 (Encarta dictionary, 2004) described that the Geographical as well as physical features exert impact on relations between the states and nations. A German geographer Oyvind Osterud⁵ described in 1988 that 'Geo-politics indicates links and causal relationships between 'political power and geographic space'.

Kansakar, Vidya Bir Singh⁶ in 1997 expressed clearly that 'The decay of the value of distance has today diminished the relevance of geography and the nation's ability to gain power status by geographic means has markedly declined, even it has not disappeared completely'. Vaidya, Tulsi Ram, Jaya Prakash Malla⁷ 1992 & 96 stated that- The freedom of choice and type of external relations of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland is very limited because of economic dependence resulting largely from their land locked Geographical location vis-à-vis South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Similarly, the

geographical location of Nepal occupies and its economic dependence mainly with India and landlocked position limit the freedom to maneuver in its foreign policy. However, in the course of time Nepal had adopted foreign policy to protect itself by aligning with either of two of its neighbors. Only after the 1950s democratic movement, it has been basically adopting a non-aligned foreign policy. The basic guidelines on its foreign policy and geo-strategy remained same despite the changed domestic political situation in the last four-five decades. Though technological innovation changes in the global system, but the gap between the powerful and weak, wealthy and poor and big and small has still been widening. As Viotti and Kauppi⁸ emphasized in 1990 that- The Third World states are maintained in their subordinate position within the world capitalist economy.

Khadka⁹ said in 1997 that 'The size of a country is defined in terms of power. The power of a country derives from the size of its territory, the size of the population, national income, natural resources, military strength etc. As Mehata, Ashok K¹⁰ asked in 2001, 'by the existing standards of size and power, Nepal is small, weak and one of the least developed state. However, various writers argue that in terms of size, Nepal is not as small as it appears. Kansakar, Vidya Bir Singh¹¹ 2001 said that 'only because of its surrounding specially it's too geographically largest and most populous neighboring countries of the world. China and India contributed in creating the image of 'small' nation of this country. With an area of 147181 square kilometers, Nepal is bigger than some of its neighbors. According to the 1996 World Bank Atlas, only 041 countries out of 209 have a population larger than Nepal. As described by Nicholas Spykeman¹² in 1938 that, 'Geography is the most fundamental conditioning factor in the foreign policy, because it is the most permanent phenomenon.' Anything dictates Nepal's foreign policy that is its Geographical position described by various Nepalese and Indian writers. Ray, Jayanta Kumar¹³ noted in 2001 that once an Indian diplomat said that 'Geography dictates India-Nepal relations in many ways and different dimensions in between two largest Asian countries. The geographical factors attracted the late king Prithivi Narayan Shah to pronounce the country as a "Yam between two boulders".

In terms of military strength, it is a fact that Nepal's military capability is still larger than with a many number of other countries in the world. Nepal is often described as a "small Himalayan Kingdom". It is a perception that has been created to a country whose geographical size is larger than many of its immediate neighbors and its population is also bigger than of hundreds of other countries in the world. Tyagi, Sushila¹⁴ emphasized in 1997 that it's a defensive mentality that has been developed and somehow created because of its immediate neighbor India is twenty-three, and China sixty-eight bigger in size. As Chauhan¹⁵ described in 1992 that it is a perception needs to be changed in today's world where not only the theory of balance of power

determines the interstates relations but also equality, mutual respect as the theory of Panchasheel was failed and has no effect till date. Nepal has always been a safe market for Indian manufactured goods. Dikshit¹⁶ explained it in 1993 that the volume of two countries annual trade is also significant. There are considerable amount of Indian investment in Nepal. Due to the economic blockade imposed by India in 1989 and in 1990, the volume of trade between two countries was declined significantly, however after the reciprocal arrangement, it has been steadily increasing two countries trade and they signed a trade treaty in 1996 by widening the area of future trade between two countries which was regarded as one of the best treaties signed between two countries.

Nepal occupies pivotal position in the Himalayas; between the Central and South Asian regions as a part of Euro-Asian landmass, as Mackinder¹⁷ firstly used this terminology. So, Indo-Nepal border is very important by many ways. To the north of this monarchical kingdom is Tibet, the Autonomous Region of communized China; to the east, west, and south are the federal states— Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh of republican India. Srivastav V. K. & Rao V. P.¹⁸ says in 1992 that Nepal's position forms its geo-strategic setting critically important for India's security and stability of its heartland, the Gangetic belt, where an enormous share of its human and resources base is concentrated. It is the primary reason why India has been striving toward a firmer influence in Nepal for its territorial and political defense in areas that border on China, which Indian strategists perceive as the actual rival of India.

Discussion

These are the resultant factors behind the Terrorist, Moist and Naxal activities planted by the Pakistan and China through the Indo-Nepal border to target the India. Such a psychology as well as the projection of a country needs to be overcome and firstly the political leaderships must rise above such mentality and portray the image of the country as a player in the regional relations as well as in the international relations. The British Government kept the Nepal-India border open primarily for two purposes- First, to maintain unrestricted migration of the Nepalese hill people to India and to procure them for recruitment in the Indian army and second to maintain open border by the British was to have easy and free access of British and Indian manufactured goods into Nepal as well as to Tibet wherein Nepal was the only easy and accessible route from India before the discovery of Chumbi Valley route from Sikkim. The Anglo-Nepal War of 1814 and the subsequent treaty of peace signed between Nepal and the East India Company on December 8, 1816 resulted in the delimitation and delineation of India-Nepal border. The Mahakali River formed the western boundary, while the Mechi formed the east boundary along with ridges in the Darjeeling and Sikkim hills. The East India Company delineated and demarcated the southern boundary on its own. But no demarcation

was made for the Tarai region lying between the Mahakali River and the Arrah Nala.

In the beginning the movement of people of both countries was allowed, but they were neither allowed to purchase land nor entitled to have tenancy rights and settle in the Tarai. Nevertheless, Nepal has been the land of shelter for the refugees fleeing due to the fear from powerful enemies. Similarly, during the Muslim invasions of India, the Mallas and the Shahs are reported to have taken refuge in Nepal. The growing domination of India the British East India Company prompted the rulers of Nepal to restrict the movement of Indians into Nepal. The cattle herders of adjoining Indian territories of Champaran and other districts used to graze cattle annually for four months (October to January) by paying duty. Prior to 1789, the Nepal Government established bazaars on the border of Nepal and India for regulating trade and decided that trade could be conducted at decided points only.

It was almost impossible to control and regulate the movement of people along more than 1400 kilometers long border. Nevertheless, the main thoroughfare existed for social relations, cultural exchanges and trade and they constituted the major road junctions for levying customs duties. India-Nepal border is unique in the world in the sense that people of both the countries can cross it from any point, despite the existence of border check-posts at several locations. Illegal movement of goods and people is a common feature on both sides of the India-Nepal border. In this connection the study of border districts of both the country and activists evolve in this are necessary to discuss. As the data shows by the Census of India as well as the Census of Nepal, following are the concluding points from table 01 to 04. The entire following table says everything, as the Muslim population along the border side is so high and it is running continuous high; until that the average district wise Muslim population is so low in the other districts of the concern states in comparison to the border districts.

District wise Muslim Population Percentage on Indo-Nepal Border of Nepal's Districts.

Name of Border Districts	Population in 2001 in %	Population in 2011 in %	Population in 2017 in % Projected
Rautahat	17.35	19.72	22.41
Kapilvastu	16.25	18.15	20.27
Banke	15.85	18.98	22.73
Bara	12.15	13.04	14
Sunsari	10.25	11.53	12.97
Parsa	12.55	14.48	16.71
Mahottari	11.75	13.33	15.12
Rupandehi	7.32	8.23	9.25
Dhanusha	6.84	8.36	10.22
Sarlahi	5.96	7.79	10.18
Saptari	6.74	8.92	11.81
Siraha	6.54	7.46	8.51
Morang	3.72	4.74	6.04
Jhapa	2.78	3.21	3.71
Nawalparasi	2.23	3.75	6.31

Bardiya	2.12	2.61	3.21
Chitwan	0.89	1.16	1.51
Kailali	0.45	0.64	0.91
Dang	0.56	0.86	1.32
Kanchanpur	0.07	0.12	0.21
Average of Total Nepal	1.89	2.37	2.97

District wise Muslim Population Percentage on Indo-Nepal Border of Uttar Pradesh's Districts.

Name of Border Districts	Population in 2001 in %	Population in 2011 in %	Population in 2017 in % Projected
Pilibhit	21.23	24.11	27.38
L Kheeri	18.15	20.08	22.22
Behraich	31.22	33.51	35.97
Shrawasti	27.65	30.79	34.29
Balrampur	35.15	37.51	40.03
S Nagar	26.95	29.23	31.71
Mehrajganj	15.18	17.85	20.99
Kushinagar	15.75	17.82	20.16
Average of Total U P	15.05	17.11	19.45

District wise Muslim Population Percentage on Indo-Nepal Border of Bihar's Districts.

Name of Border Districts	Population in 2001 in %	Population in 2011 in %	Population in 2017 in % Projected
Araria	40.22	42.95	45.87
Kishanganj	65.57	67.98	70.48
Madhubani	17.45	18.25	19.09
Betiah	19.25	21.98	25.11
Motihari	17.22	19.42	21.91
Sitamarhi	18.25	21.62	25.61
Supaul	15.85	18.36	21.27
State of Bihar Average	13.56	16.26	19.51

District wise Muslim Population Percentage on Indo-Nepal Border of Uttarakhand's Districts.

Name of Border Districts	Population in 2001 in %	Population in 2011 in %	Population in 2017 in % Projected
Udham S Nagar	20.12	22.58	25.34
Champawat	2.55	3.35	4.41
Pithoragarh	1.14	1.24	1.35
State of Uttarakhand Av.	5.75	7.31	9.29

After the independence of India, no joint boundary survey has been conducted until the formation of a Joint Boundary Commission in 1981 with the composition of six boundary survey teams. However, the All Nepal Free Students' Union affiliated with the Nepal Communist Party (Marxist and Leninist) has indicated 61 disputed areas along the Nepal-India boundary; it is different that they are the disputer along the side. Out of the 26 districts of Nepal bordering India, the map indicates 20 districts having encroachment (problem) and the only 4

remaining districts having no boundary problems. Then the questions arises that, why the disputed and what are the disputes? The trend show and the surveys show that the Muslim agglomeration along with the Indo-Nepal border is the major issue and it is well planned by the China and Pakistan. In Muslim community moist and terrorists both the activists' survives and active along side. They are trained by China and Pakistan to dismantle the border and the Indian security. Both are using Nepali land and Nepali Government for this purpose.

It must be noted that the survey for the delineation of Nepal-China boundary in 1960-61 had to be carried out with several constraints. Firstly, the survey had to be carried out from lower altitude and there was no aerial survey. Secondly, the instruments and equipment for the survey, manpower as well as proper training for high altitude survey were completely lacking. Moreover, in the absence of on-the-spot survey of high altitude areas, the drawing of the boundary line through the survey was done by recording actual location of important peaks and then drawing boundary line tentatively between the two surveyed peaks. The Nepal-China border extends along the whole length of northern border of Nepal and the starting and ending point of Nepal-China boundary is the tri-junction of the boundary between Nepal, China and India. However, because of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute as well as India-Nepal dispute over the Kalapani on the source of the Mahakali River, the demarcation started 5 kilometers ahead of the tri-junction in the west and 5 kilometers behind the tri-junction in the east. But so far as the concern of border, it is entirely different and so, the following resultant calculation stands over here.

1. Indo-Nepal border has a different dimension; it has no connection like India-China, Nepal-China or any other boundaries; because of ever long cultural and locational connections. So, need not to be any practical boundary.
2. The theoretical boundary between India and Nepal has no bar or cause for nuisances stands alongside the boundary; it cannot be resolve only through the tuff boundary. This can be resolved though the cultural-social-location-economic bond between these two.
3. The Nepal-China border must be taken in different way and India, Nepal both the countries should adapt the joint venture. The Indo-Nepal cordial relation is must for both the countries benefit and security, so far as the concern of Geo-Strategic point of view and both the countries must acknowledge this thing each other. It is continuous process to take attention on the border.

Conclusion

Thus, there are some genuine and legitimate concerns on India's security viewpoint on Nepal. While Nepal pursues its foreign policy, it is utmost necessary for Nepal to consider that security sensitivity of India. It is also important to note that while giving due consideration for India's security concern does not mean that Nepal has to compromise

its sovereignty and independent stance and neutral foreign policies which Indian policy makers takes it in to proper consideration. But the unfortunate part is that Nepal being used by the China and Pakistan through Terrorist, Moist and Naxal's behavior. Therefore, the geographical location of Nepal has had important interests to the both neighbors and any problem that has emerged here is the matter of concerns for both the countries and attracts their serious concerns so far as the concern of Geo-Political consideration. So, here, it may conclude as follows.

1. The relationship of Nepal and China by anyway, is not good for India as well as Nepal and for the Geo-Political relationship of India and Nepal.
2. China uses Nepal, to tries harassment to India by ideological and by muscles.
3. The Moist and Naxals' activities running in Nepal planted and irrigated by the China by the different ways.
4. Muslims are the soft targeted for the Moist and Naxal activities across the Indo-Nepal boundary and by the relationship of China and Pakistan through Terrorism as well.
5. The Indian people, who are directly associated with ideology of Marx are directly/indirectly work for the ideology of China as well as the ideology of Marx and Mao. It is not better for India and for the betterment of the Indo-Nepal geo-political situation and relation on the boundary.

References

- Aitchison C. U.: *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighboring Countries*, Calcutta, Bengal Printing Press, 1863.
- Chauhan P. R.: *Rajnitik Bhoogol*, Vashundhara Prakashan, Gorakhpur, 1992.
- Dikshit S. K.: *Rajnitik Bhoogol*, Gyanodaya Prakashan, Gorakhpur, 1993.
- Day, Alan J.: *Border and Territorial Disputes*, Essex, Longman Group Limited. Foreign Language Press (1973), Premier Chou En-Lai's Letter to the Leaders of Asian and African Countries on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question (Nov 15, 1962), Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1982.
- Hari Khadga: *Local Democracy in South Asia: Micro Processes of Democratization in Nepal*, Kathmandu, 1997.
- Johan Rudolf Kjellén: *The Great Powers*, Leipzig Press, Sweden. 1905.

Kansakar, Vidya Bir Singh: 'Nepal India Open Border: Problems and Challenges,' keynote paper presented at the Seminar on Nepal India Open Border: Pros and Cons, organized by Institute of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu and sponsored by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, held in Nepalganj (19 April 2001), Biratnagar (3 May 2001) and Birganj (17 May 2001).

Kansakar, Vidya Bir Singh: *Nepal-India Relations: Aspects of Environment, India- Nepal Co-operation; Broadening Measures*, Edited by Jayanta Kumar Ray, Calcutta: K P Bagchi & Company, 1997.

Kansakar, Vidya Bir Singh: "Nepal India Open Border: Nature, Pattern and Socio-cultural Implications," in *India and Nepal: Aspects of Interdependent Relations*, edited by Ramakant and B. C. Upreti, Delhi, Kalinga Publications (pp. 1-14) 2001.

Mackinder Halford J: *The Geographical Pivot of History*, London, 1904.

Mehata, Ashok K.: "Problem of Terrorism and Other Illegal Activities on Indo-Nepal Border: Issues in Effective Border Management," in *India and Nepal: Aspects of Interdependent Relations*, edited by Ramakant and B. C. Upreti, Delhi, Kalinga Publications (pp. 1-14) 2001.

Nicholas J. Spykman & Hellen R. Nicholl: *Geography of the Peace*, Yale University, Institute of International Studies, Brace and Co., New York, 1944.

Oyvind Osterud: *Agrarian Structure and Peasant Politics in Scandinavia: A Comparative Study of Rural Response to Economic Change*, University Press, Oslo, 1978.

Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi: *International Relation Theory, Fifth Edition*, Denever University Press, Denever, 2012.

Ray, Jayanta Kumar: *India-Nepal Cooperation: Broadening Measures*, Calcutta, KP Bagchi & Company, Edt 1997.

Srivastav V. K. & Rao V. P.: *Bharat Ewm Sameepwanti Desh*, Basundhara Prakashan, Gorakhpur, India, 1992

Tyagi, Sushila: *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1858-1914*, Delhi, D.K. Publishing House (1974).

Vaidya, Tulsi Ram, Jaya Prakash Malla: *The Brave Malla King of Kantipur*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. 1992 & 1996.