

International Relations Class 12

27th January, 2024 at 9:00 AM

INTRODUCTION (09:10 AM)

- A Brief Review Of The Previous Class.

CRITICAL ISSUES IN INDO-NEPAL TREATY (09:12 AM)

- The Open border policy and Roti-Beti relationship between India and Nepal are even more manifested with this treaty.
- The treaty favors Nepal more than India.
- However Nepal still has certain critical issues regarding it.
- Nepal wants to revive this treaty keeping in mind the new growing realities at bilateral and regional levels based on the following arguments.
- Nepal argues that the Ranas who signed the treaty were extremely unpopular and were later ousted.
- They also argue that the signatory who signed from the Indian side was of lesser designation (Indian Ambassador to Nepal) than the Ranas who was the PM of Nepal at that time.
- Thus the treaty was seen as an insult to Nepal.

Issues regarding Articles 2, 6, and 7 of the treaty:

- Nepal has issues regarding Article 2 of the treaty which says that both governments should inform each other regarding any friction with neighbouring states likely to affect the relations between India and Nepal.
- Nepal considers this article as a violation of sovereign policymaking.
- **Articles 6 and 7 :**
- Articles 6 and 7 relate to the national treatment given to both citizens.
- Nepal has deeper reservations regarding these 2 articles.
- Nepal also wants to change that provision of the treaty which obliges it to inform India in case of the purchase of arms and military hardware from a 3rd country.
- It was post-1994 when UML started creating an anti-Indian Narrative and alleged that this treaty favored India more than Nepal.
- During our PM visit to Nepal in 2014, the demand for the revision was again raised by Nepal.
- India has accepted Nepal's request but due to the absence of consensus within Nepal, meaningful engagement has not occurred so far.
- India should carry forward the aspect of the **Gujral doctrine** like non-interference in internal matters to shed out the insecurity among SSS countries in this case Nepal.
- At the same time, high-impact community development programs without elements of reciprocity should continue from the Indian side.
- Along with this greater P-to-P contact should also be encouraged which can help in reducing this insecurity regarding the treaty.

Trade and Economy (Refer PPT)

Power sector cooperation:

- Nepal is driven by the idea of **hydro-led prosperity** and therefore expanding power trading with India to achieve this aspiration.
- From a geostrategic angle power cooperation between India and Nepal could have established India as a key partner of Nepal in the energy sector.
- Actually, the power sector is one of the flash points for the race of influence in SAR between India and China.
- Guided by the idea of hydro-led prosperity, collaboration in the power sector can bring a huge economic dividend to Nepal.
- At the same time, collaboration with Nepal in this regard would enable India to satisfy its energy demands, cement its ties with Nepal, and out maneuver China especially when the US now considers India as a counterweight to China in SAR.
- In this way, it will be a win-win situation for both.

Connectivity:

- **HIT Formula:** Emphasizing the importance of connectivity in India-Nepal cooperation, Prime Minister Modi proposed the "HIT" formula – Highways, Informationways, and Transways.
- **Key Agreements:** The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the MOU for an electric rail track linking Kathmandu and Raxaul are major milestones in connectivity projects.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Ongoing initiatives include developing inland waterways and constructing a new bridge over the Mahakali River.
- **BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement:** This agreement facilitates the seamless movement of goods and vehicles between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal.

Development Assistance:

- **Focus Areas:** India provides considerable assistance to Nepal in various fields, including infrastructure, health, water resources, education, and rural development.
- **Sister City Agreements:** Cultural ties are strengthened through sister-city agreements between Kathmandu-Varanasi, Lumbini-Bodhgaya, and Janakpur-Ayodhya.

Humanitarian Assistance:

- **Operation Maitri:** Following the 2015 Nepal earthquake, India's Operation Maitri exemplified its commitment to humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Multilateral Partnership:

- **Joint Initiatives:** Both countries actively collaborate on diverse multilateral issues, showcasing their strong partnership on the global stage.
- **BBIN, SAARC, BIMSTEC.**

CHALLENGES IN INDO-NEPAL RELATIONS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION (10:35 AM)

- Despite a long history of close ties, India-Nepal relations have faced their share of challenges in recent times.
- Here's a closer look at some key issues:

1. Territorial Disputes:

- **Kalapani:**
- **Issue:** Both India and Nepal claim the strategically important Kalapani region, leading to ongoing tensions.
- **Background:**
- Treaty of Sugauli (1816): Established Mahakali River as the boundary, but its origin remains disputed.
- Nepal claims Limpiyadhura as the source, making Kalapani Nepali territory.
- India considers Kalapani itself the source, placing it within Indian borders.
- The 2019 Indian map including Kalapani further strained relations.
- The 2020 Nepali map claiming Limpiyadhura to Kalapani exacerbated the dispute.
- **Susta:**
- Another contested area along the border is claimed by both countries.
- **Lipulekh Pass:**
- India's construction of a road through Lipulekh Pass in 2015 angered Nepal, violating previous agreements on border crossings.

2. Nepali Nationalism and Anti-India Sentiments:

- A growing sense of resentment towards perceived Indian interference in Nepal's internal affairs.
- Concerns about economic dependence on India and lack of balanced trade benefits.
- Historical baggage of past disagreements contributing to anti-India sentiment.

3. Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project:

- Proposed dam project on the Mahakali River for power generation and irrigation.
- Negotiations stalled due to disagreements over land ownership, technical aspects, and resource sharing.
- The project's future remains uncertain, hindering cooperation on water resource management.

4. Deeply Divided Internal Politics and Unstable Democracy:

- Nepal's political landscape, characterized by frequent changes in government and internal rivalries, hinders stable and long-term engagement with India.
- Difficulty in reaching and implementing agreements due to shifting political priorities.

5. China Factor:

- China's growing economic and political influence in Nepal raises concerns in India about a potential strategic shift.
- Nepal's balancing act between its two giant neighbors presents diplomatic challenges.

Nepal's new Constitution and Madhesi issue:

- Whenever India has overplayed its hand, its bilateral relationship has suffered. Comment.
- India's participation in Bangladesh's war of liberation and subsequent deteriorating relations with Pakistan.
- India's role in the Sri Lankan crisis and subsequent confrontation with LTTE led to the withdrawal of IPKF from Sri Lankan Land.
- India's interference with Nepal with Madhesi issues:
- It has been seen in history that whenever India has overplayed its relationship have suffered as happened between India and Nepal, when in 2015 India raised the
- Madhesi issue on the context of the newly formed Nepali constitution.
- In 2015, the new constitution of Nepal appeared to be discriminatory against the Madhesi population and gave greater benefits to the hilly people.
- India objected to this discrimination and even went for an economic blockade over Nepal.
- The Nepali government under PM Oli went to China for assistance which China agreed.
- According to some analyses this act of overplaying by India not only created issues between India and Nepal but also created new grounds for Chinese outreach in Nepal.

Why India Intervened in Madhesi Issues:

- India felt that this discrimination could lead to a greater influx of Madhesi in our territory.
- Madhesi could emerge as an important factor in establishing the strategic clout of India in Nepal, being the first layer of interaction at the border and manifesting the Roti-Beti Rishta.
- Any kind of instability over this issue could have a ripple effect in our bordering states.
- Also, Madhesi as a group is an important factor in local trade and economic interaction.
- Madhesi are also important for exhibiting India's soft diplomacy thereby reducing the trust deficit, keeping in my mind the India Out campaign in Nepal.
- The very fact that Madhesi is strategically and economically important for India, China has also started creating its en-route within the Madhesi population.
- In this regard, China has started initiating Mandarin education centers within the Madhesi area.
- Nepali nationalism and Indian sentiments:
- As far as anti-India sentiments in Nepal are concerned they could be both natural and manufactured.
- It is natural for a small state to suffer from insecurity, however many times this insecurity is also manufactured.
- In the case of Nepal, it is manufactured from China's well-thought policy and also from within a few sections of Nepali politics.
- for example: Propaganda by the UML party.
- All these have created the narrative of India as being 'the other' in Nepal's identity-making.

WAY FORWARD (11:20 AM)

- As far as natural insecurity is concerned India should try to behave like a generous big brother.
- The idea of initiating development projects without reciprocity within the Gujral doctrine could be a nice step.
- India needs to create goodwill and should target the Nepali Population through soft diplomacy like educational assistance medical help and greater p to p contacts.
- As far as manufactured insecurity is concerned Gujral doctrine again would be the most rational solution emphasising the idea of non-interference in the internal matters of Nepal.

Challenge concerning the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project:

- There is a very strong anti-Maha Kali treaty lobby that has questioned the feasibility of this project on the following grounds:
- Ecological concerns: Since this area lies in the tectonic belt it is pro to earthquakes.
- Also, there are concerns regarding environmental degradation once the construction of this project starts.
- Displacement of people: Concerns are regarding loss of livelihood and therefore demand for rehabilitation, compensation, and adequate employment have come.

Deeply divided Nepali politics and unstable democracy:

- The bilateral relations with India are suffering from the Trust deficit which arises from numerous challenges between 2 countries.
- The deeply divided internal politics and unstable democracy in Nepal are the reasons for such challenging relationships.
- This has also led to issues regarding the revision of Indo Nepal treaty.

Issues with Peace and Friendship treaty.

Demonetisation.

China angle:

Why is China is seen as a challenge by India in Nepal?

- **Indo-Nepal** relations underwent serious changes with the growing rapprochement between Nepal and China post-2016.
- Big development projects were initiated by China in Nepal.
- China is building a port facility for Nepal.
- providing access to trade and movement through the trans-Himalayan multipurpose connectivity project under BRI.
- Chinese build SEZs are also promised to Nepal.
- China is exhibiting soft diplomacy by opening Mandarin learning centers, especially in the Madhesis-occupied Tarai region.
- Both sides have agreed to finalize a FTA very soon.
- Nepal is seeking to take advantage of the rail infrastructure built by China in TAR.
- An agreement has been signed for the creation of road connectivity between Kathmandu and TAR.
- In the administrative field, a treaty has been signed that allows China to provide legal assistance to Nepal in criminal cases or in cases where Nepal is targeted.
- Nepal has already accepted the opening of Madan Bhandari univ in Nepal.
- All these development projects are seen by India as a challenge for settling boundary disputes with Nepal. (Nepal has already recognized Taiwan as an integral part of China).
- This will decrease Nepal's dependency on India and will reduce the leverage that India enjoys in settling border disputes with Nepal.

Reasons behind Nepal's growing proximity with China (11:56 AM)

- Unsettled border dispute between India and Nepal.
- Misunderstanding between India and Nepal.
- Rising anti-Indian Narrative in Nepal.
- Greater developmental initiatives offered by China.
- Nepal's attempt to reduce dependency on India.

Way forward:

- India should not view Nepal strictly through a security prism and at a bilateral level only as a transactional partner and part of the zero-sum game with China.
- India should therefore try to invest in a multifaceted relationship with Nepal and in this regard, soft diplomacy measures could serve as an advantage for India.
- Border dispute needs to be addressed on a priority basis.
- In this regard model of boundary dispute resolution between India and Bangladesh can serve as a model to be followed.
- Any negotiation in this regard should be on a permanent basis and not on an ad hoc basis.
- Issues regarding the Pancheshwar dam should be resolved with adequate attention given to ecological concerns and compensation demands.
- India should try to intervene less in the internal affairs of Nepal and adopt a cautious approach so that no vacuum is left for China to occupy.
- India should not be seen flexing muscle power rather should adopt a generous brotherly behaviour considering Nepal as an important partner in SAR.
- **It was said that India-Nepal relations are as strong and as ancient as the Himalayas.**
- On the recent visit of PM Modi to Nepal, India held that” **Our ties with Nepal are unparalleled. The civilizational and people-to-people contacts between India and Nepal form the enduring edifice of our close relationship.”**

(THE TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: INDO-BHUTAN RELATIONS)