


President Xi Jinping in the World and Regional Order and rethinking the Nepal-China Relations

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Abstract

The leader of ambitious, President Xi Jinping, has developed their goodwill relations both in the world and regional order. Hence, under the Xi Jinping leadership, Nepal-China bilateral relations are deliberate friendly relationships with cordial manners. Therefore, in the words of American scholar Mark Borthwick, the twenty-first century was dubbed the “Pacific Century,” implying that the center of the world’s political and economic arena had shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. For this, Nepal has strengthened their South-North neighbor’s relations with equidistance and cordial position and boosted its interest. Currently, the BRI connectivity and cooperation incorporated Nepal-China relations and initiated Nepal’s economic prosperity. The old-aged relations initiated as a new height after President Xi’s leadership. In his period of Nepal-China, more than 33 high-level visits have been made, while over the two dozen agreements, MoUs were exchanged and treaties were signed. Under the ambitious mega-project of BRI, 64 cooperation and connectivity projects were agreed upon by Nepal and China. Besides this, 35 were on the economic corridor, 14 on multilateral initiative (now revised nine), and 15 on other relevant efforts. However, the MoUs on transit connectivity of the Kyirung-Kathmandu railway changed the dimension of Nepal-China relations with a new approach of landlocked to the railway linked in the trans-Himalayan region. Twenty-three years later, after President Jiang Zemin, President Xi started Nepal’s visit with new bilateral cooperation and a longstanding relationship. Methodologically, it is based on the secondary sources of data to analyze the Nepal-China relation from the perspective of Xi Leadership both in global and regional order, i.e., south Asia. Thus, closeness with Nepal, BRI, and Xi Jinping Thought incorporates Nepal’s political, economic, military assistance, and another dimension to enhance the Nepal-China relationship within prosperous and win-win situations. Therefore, one-China policy commitment is a significant factor for enhancing Nepal-China relations.

Keywords: Nepal, China, Xi Jinping, BRI, trans-Himalayan region, South Asia.

Introduction

The relations between Nepal and China have always as a reliable, trustworthy and all weather good and deep-rooted relations. Inevitably, the discourse of Nepal-China relations has been interdependence and

sharing northern side of Himalayan frontiers. Both are the member states of global south in terms of Third world. Despite of age-old relations, classical culture ties shaped the Nepal-China relations named as a “fine balance” (Mulmi, 2022, p.12) in a modern days. Another portion, Nepal has also emphasizes their balance relations its two evergreen neighbors to the approach of survival strategies (Bhattarai, 2022, p.xii). As per this, current linearity and changeable global order, the relations is necessary to revive a new way in Trans-Himalayan route. Thus, the Nepal-China relations is much closer its political ties as well as economic prosperity. Even though, current engagements of China in Nepal on the basis of soft power diplomacy, it is clear that “China is trying to draw Nepal into becoming a strategic partner” (Tiwari, 2013, p.216). For this, Nepal-China have been nourishing to established deep-rooted cordial relations. The connectivity and transit route is also being based on friendly and reciprocal to consolidate relations in a traditional-cum-modern approach. Therefore, in modern times, there is a need for confidence and credibility to move forward the contemporary relations between Nepal-China. After India, a relation with China is also significant, that they are close and “immediate neighbours” (Goh, 2016, p.92). Today’s Kathmandu must balance its ties with New Delhi and Beijing (Kathju, 2024). Thus, Nepal-China has guided their bilateralism based on the theory of “peaceful co-existence” (aka *Panchasheel*). Nowadays, it is one of the equidistance matters of Nepal's foreign policy.

During the period of Xi Jinping, Nepal-China relations has being more optimistic and hopeful. The future ties contain a new height in political, economic and culture aspects. The Sino-Nepali statesman, scholars, and leaders were struggling to repair goodwill relationships as "intimacies with equanimity" (Indian Express, 2019). There is something happening new in the Xi Jinping period. Since 23 years later, President Xi visited Nepal. There is a new reflection of corridor development saw between Nepal-China friendships. It has also accelerated the development of an ambitious dream of a trans-Himalayan project titled "Railway Diplomacy. Thus, the existing friendly bilateral relations took a new outlook. For this, the relations doesn't dependent only in bilateral ties. There is also “the deepening of bilateral security cooperation” (Mohan, 2019). The new relations had tested a security and soft power diplomatic relations during Xi era. In the issue of Nepal is expanding ties with China as it seeks to reduce its overreliance on India (Vaughn, 2020, p.2) and shared the idea and vision of Xi Jinping Thought in between as Communist Party of Nepal and Communist Party of China. Under the President Xi period, also signed a dream project called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2016. China has also expanded other instruments such as the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Civilizational Initiative (GCI), and Global Security Initiative (GSI) (Bhatta, 2024, p. 91). However, Nepal is only the partner of GDI and GCI.

The two saga Himalayan states; Nepal and China have century long and multifaceted relations. The relations always consistently respected both states sovereignty and integrity. Formally, the diplomatic ties had established on 1st August 1955. In terms of China had strong equities in Nepal, with a comprehensive culturally, socially and economically conditions (The Economic Weekly, 1955, p.1062). Back to the aged-old relations till onwards, there is wide-range of China engagements in Nepal, currently their influence in Nepal’s economy and defense system also (Kathju, 2024). Further, there engagements in the name of Confucius Institute in KU, hydropower and airports and is pushing to employ soft power tools under the platform called the “Silk Roadster” (Chaudhury, 2023). Nepal has also as the member of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and holds observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). One of the commitment relations is to voice of one-China

policy and against not to allowing Free-Tibet voice in the soil of Nepal. They have increased their concept of bilateralism and engaged in various discourse of Boa Forum, culture exchange, security cooperation and educational Forum. Now, China is the top source of FDI and second largest trading partner for Nepal (Prasain and The Kathmandu Post, 2024). Thus, during Xi period, Nepal-China relationships and friendship in the 21st century "lauded as special and unique for centuries and all-weather friendliness (Bhattarai, 2015; Malla, 2022, p.15).

Earlier, Chinese leaders; Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai to Xi Jinping have heightened to strengthening ties of good neighbour. As in the part of Nepal, the leaders like B.P. Koirala to absolute monarchial kings (King Mahendra, Birendra, and Gyanendra) to current K.P. Sharma Oli have also boosted the Nepal-China relations with a new framework. Beijing and Kathmandu enshrined balanced bilateral relations. In 1960, PM Koirala wrote to Premier Zhou Enlai, saying "Nepal-China friendship is of paramount importance for maintaining peace in Asia in the first instance and the world peace in the last analysis. Nepal would spare no effort to make our relations closer and stronger every day" (Bhattarai, 2018). For this, the two ancient cultured states, Nepal-China have to upgrade their relationship continuously. The relations is strongly enhancing day-to-day. For this, Narayan Man Bijukchhe, leader of the Nepal Workers and Peasant Party believed that China's attitude "has made people admire the country" (Xinhua, 2019). Tracked to the historical and cultural relations, the early 5th and 7th centuries recorded the Nepal-China relation. Both sides' scholars and monks such as Buddhahadra, Fa Xian (Jin Dynasty), and Xuan Zang (Tang Dynasty), have signified to build bricks of strong relationships with the philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism. Nepal and China are "together to promote pragmatic cooperation" (Weiduo, 2019). Despite that, Xi has faced the challenges of autocratic ruled and power hegemony. However, "leader Xi Jinping is beset by economic, foreign policy and domestic political challenges (Indian Express, 2018).

This research paper focuses on President Xi Jinping's roles in the South Asian region and how they maintain their relations with Nepal. As per this, the Nepal-China relationship during the period of Xi Jinping has reached new heights. Significantly, this period Nepal increased their engagements in economic diplomacy, joined the membership of BRI, and made wide-ranging exchange visits with a cordial level. Objectively, the researcher aptly discussed this paper on why China's involvement in Nepal is more significant and wide-ranging engaged in various aspects during President Xi than their former leaders. This paper structurally covers the three portions. Mainly, it includes the Xi Jinping leadership in the global as well as South Asian region. Further, it discussed the Nepal-China relations going after the Xi Jinping leadership, the exchange of bilateral visits, and Nepal in the BRI and thereof.

Literature Review

In the standpoint of a review of Nepal and China relations, most of the scholars and experts have defined relations as unique and long-standing friendships. Historically, both are coupled states having mutual cooperation and understanding. Some scholars, Bhattarai (2015) and Mulmi (2022), explore that Nepal's engagement in the Northern Alliance is durable and all weather goodwill relations; others, such as Raju (2022), posit that today China's relations in the South Asian region have been exhibiting a new avenue of BRI flavor. He also asserted that emerging trends in the ties between China and South Asia in the geopolitical, geostrategic, and geo-economics context look at opportunities for

collaboration and connectivity between them. Similarly, scholar Gill (2022) examines that under President Xi's leadership, China had developed its global as well as regional strength in terms of various aspects. Mainly, in the patterns of economically, technologically, diplomatically, and militarily establishing their emerging power and also influencing people's hearts and minds. Further, he defines Xi as personifying the country's foreign policy agenda under the theme of national rejuvenation and underlying Beijing's international behavior. Panigrahi (2016) discusses China's power dimension in the Himalayan region, including Nepal. He also tells us about the reality of the Himalayan route and how they reflect their idea of culture and strategy between South Asian countries. Meanwhile, scholar Lee (2023) eloquently asserted a balanced and comprehensive account of Xi Jinping's rule, shedding light on the complexities of his leadership and the implications for the world. Likewise, scholar Atique (1983) examined the foreign policy of Nepal from its unification in 1769 onwards. Nepal has invariably determined its policy by its geographic settings and economic backwardness. It also maintains its independent foreign policy on the principle of the constitution and incorporates the principle of non-alignment. The writer also studied Nepal's foreign policy based on its geographic connection with China and India. Rama Kant (1994) mentioned that Nepal-China needed a contiguity relationship. The history, culture, socio-economic, political, and geographical inextricably is the key aspects of Nepal and China. The relationship examined the crucial variables of Nepal's relations with India, contiguity with the autonomous region of Tibet (ART), states of Sino-Indian relations, and Nepal's domestic politics. The domestic politics of Nepal examined the relationship between Nepal and China. It also reiterated that the King and his supporters, the Nepali Congress, and the communists would determine Nepal's relations with China (p. 162) and other factors to analyze the significant influence in Nepal's foreign policy. Thus, Nepal's foreign policy has different perceptions from China but always maintains a cordial and committed one-China policy. Upadhya (2016) explain that there is a complex relationship between Nepal and their neighboring countries. It also seemed to dominate Nepal's policies and interfere with the political dimension. Nepal always amalgamates the specific geo-strategic mechanism of Sino-Indian. Today, the radicalizations of the Tibetan diaspora and border issues are bound to sweep the Himalayan disputes on the world front page. Nepal's political news peg could depend on the chronic political turmoil elements of Sino-Indian rivalry. Thus, Nepal portrays a key factor for determining the effective role for balancing India-China relations. Furthermore, Mayer (2018) argued that during the era of Xi Jinping, the initiative idea of BRI determined China developed its national rejuvenation dream. China has explored their economic and political strategies in their neighboring countries to the global level. As per this, "back in the early 1960s, India reacted quite strongly to Beijing's construction of a friendship highway to Nepal (p. 86), which expanded the railway connectivity under BRI initiative. Nepal is also part of China's initiative to boost its relationship within a more dynamic portion. Khadka (1999) describes the Nepal and China relations are old-aged. China's relations with Nepal have witnessed many twists and turns in the Cold War years since the resumption of the diplomatic tie (p. 61). It also discussed China's strategic interest in Nepal. "Chinese interest in Nepal was not as strong as its interest in Tibet, but communist China found itself in direct rivalry, both ideologically and militarily with India (p. 65). Thus, the review studied examined the economic objectives of Nepal and China. Nowadays, Nepal and China relations consolidate the political and economic ties to the new strategy of the BRI initiative. In terms of Global Times (2019) asserted that the Xi Jinping period has extended to upgrade Nepal-China relations. Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli has remarkably expressed his desire to uphold the One-China policy, while Chinese President Xi Jinping committed to safeguarding Nepali security and expanding exchanges and

cooperation. Overall, the review study of Nepal-China relations is going in a positive direction in the era of President Xi Jinping. For instance, The Kathmandu Post (2019) confers the recent development of Nepal-China relations. There is the consolidate form of Xi Jinping thought in the Nepali political arena. China has also influence their Xi thought in Nepal. Especially in the Nepal communist parties consolidate the idea of Xi thought. However, some of the experts object to the idea of Xi doctrine. Scholar Economy (2022) studied that the President Xi Jinping leadership changed the pattern of global politics. During the Xi period, China had occupied a position of centrality in the international system. It is the world's largest trading power and it boasts the world's largest population and military; and it has become a global center of innovation (p. 52). In addition, Xi's path to a reordered world begins by redrawing the map of China.

In the above review examined, the approach is needed for Xi Jinping leadership which impact to the connection of Nepal-China relations. Mainly, the studies focused on Xi Jinping leadership proclaimed their ambitious roles and consolidating the power. These two variables illustrate the Xi Jinping on South Asia, Nepal-China relations, exchange of high-level visits, and idea of BRI on Nepal.

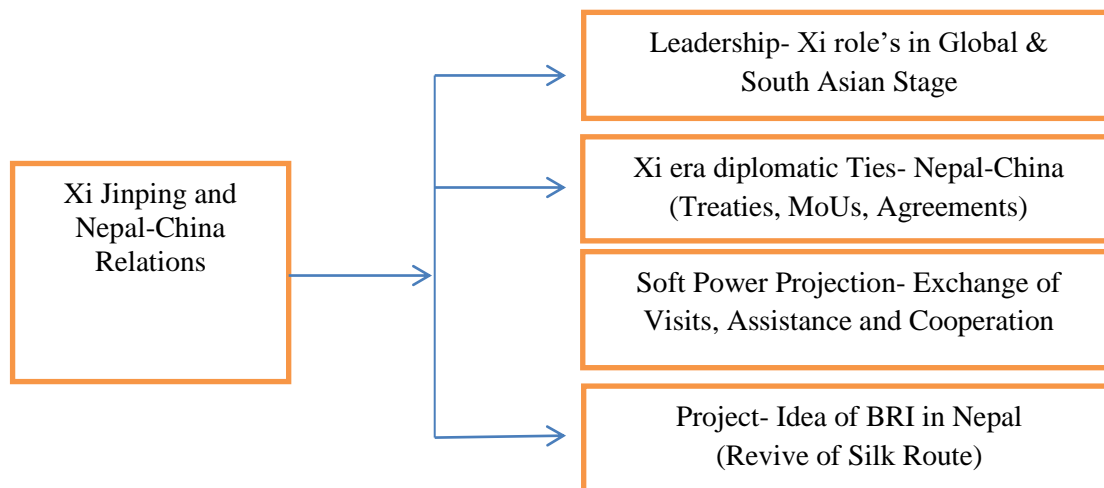


Figure: Author itself [**Framework of the Study**]

Research Gap

In terms of the research gap, there have been various prior studies done. Most of the scholars and experts are doing their research on the Nepal-China relations within different patterns. Despite that, this study is new from the perspective of Nepal-China due to adding their relations under the President Xi Jinping era. This is a new and unexplored area of study in the Nepali context.

Research Method

Simply put, the researcher has critically analyzes this paper based on their individual judgment and value. In the pragmatist philosophy, the researcher analyzed the factual and valuable notion of this study. Therefore, this research has adopted a descriptive research design (Dulock, 1993), describing an accurate and systematic description of any matter or discourse. The nature of the data is qualitative

method procedures. The researcher collected data from this source through reviewing prior research. The review of various documents, reports, textual books, and other sources is applied in this research paper. The use of secondary sources is published/unpublished journals with dissertations, magazines, and scholarly articles, as well as the use of the Internet/website (JSTOR, Google Scholar), newspapers, and thereof. Furthermore, it also cited the sources of bilateral treaties/agreements (MoUs), joint statements, and agreements of high-level visits between Nepal-China relations. Lastly, the limitation of the study is based on President Xi's leadership and how they rethink Nepal-China relations.

Data Presentation

The research analytically synthesizes the Nepal and China comprehensive engagements in diplomatic ties during the Xi era. The overall objective of the research is that Nepal and China could gain a new height of cooperation and coordination to develop a win-win situation between Nepal-China relations. Furthermore, President Xi Jinping is a self-confident and "most powerful person in the world. At China's 20th Communist Party congress in October, he secured a third term as party chief and may rule China for the rest of his life" (The Economist, 2023). President Xi Jinping's leadership and their role influence the world order with the rise of China as an upcoming superpower. Thus, this research explores renewing friendship and exploring cooperation to draw up a new blueprint for our bilateral ties (Sarkar, 2019). During Xi period, in 2017 trade ratio of Nepal with China is to export was \$17.85m while import was \$966.96m (Agrawal and Salam, 2021). Some of the signed agreements are as follows;

Name of the Signed Agreements/MoUs/Statement	
1.	Signed 20 Agreements in 2019
2.	Joint statements in 2019 -when President Xi Jinping visited Nepal
3.	2018 (when then-Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli visited China)
4.	2023 (when Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal visited China)
5.	

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal-MoFA (2024).

Xi Jinping in the World Order and Regional Order in South Asia

Since 2012 the 18th Communist Party of China, the National People's Congress was enshrined by President Xi Jinping Era in the country-People's Republic of China (PRC). For Xi, the PRC could dominate the world's political power. There was somewhat difference in China and World politics after the emergence of Xi Jinping. China has opened a new path of political dimension based on its norms, values, and diversity of Chinese Civilization; Silk route to the concept of BRI. President Xi Jinping, the most powerful PRC leader since Mao Zedong. In his leadership, PRC has transformed and rejuvenates the institutions of the Chinese dream. China has now been modernized and guided by the Xi Jinping Thought of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. For this, *Stein Ringen*, Professor at the University of Oxford, concludes that "under the new leadership of Xi Jinping, the system of government has been transformed into a new regime radically harder and more ideological than the

legacy of Deng Xiaoping” (Ringen, 2016). President Xi, China has changed and transformed his style of leadership in the global volume.

“Mr. Xi has very clear ambitions. His ambition not only remains in the Asia-Pacific region but also looking to remake global order and rule of the road to pursuit China more (Albert et.al, 2020). In that sense, after a long and bitter relation with his rivals’ western part, especially the United States, however, Xi Jinping has boosted to strengthen PRC diplomatic connection and relations in the worldwide arena. The rise of Xi Jinping is the major headache for the United States. In the Forbes magazine ranked, Xi to the top, none of the American presidents top the rank after Xi. Furthermore, Xi Jinping has continuously participated in the international forum, conference, and signed a lot of agreements such as the 2015 Iran Nuclear agreement (out of five countries, the PRC is one of the signatory nation). As per this, the engagement of PRC in the global stage under the leadership of President Xi is fruitful and influential. In terms of this, the *Economist Magazine* entitled Xi leadership is significant and termed him as the world’s most powerful man, whereas President Barak Obama also addressed that Xi consolidated power faster and more comprehensively than probably anybody since Deng Xiaoping (Brown, 2018).

Present-day, the PRC has also changed its outlook in the South Asian region. They have been seriously measuring the geopolitical parameter. Moreover, since June 16, 2020, the border disputes between China and India, PRC leadership boosted their relations with South Asia. The involvement and influence of China is growing more in SAARC and its member countries after Xi Jinping’s leadership. Eventually not only in Nepal, but China has also a strong presence in all other South Asian nations. The PRC has developed its steady diplomatic relationship and cooperation with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, and the Maldives. President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on October 18, 2017. He had made further progress in China’s diplomacy on all fronts. Thus, Xi Jinping expressed as;

“The PRC pursuit advancing Chinese characteristics led diplomatic agenda with comprehensive, multilevel, multifaceted way and creating a favorable external environment. The Belt and Road Initiative initiated the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, set up the Silk Road Fund, and hosted the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting, the G20 2016 Summit in Hangzhou, the BRICS Summit in Xiamen, and the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia could examine how China has contributions in global peace and development. Thus, under Xi Jinping, China has championed global governance (Xinhua, 2017).”

Xi Jinping made a closer relationship with his neighbor, both in the Southeast and South Asian countries. Despite that, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has losing the “neighborhood” strategy (Jacob, 2020). Manish Tewari, Distinguished Senior Fellow, South Asia Center, Atlantic Council, and Spokesperson, Congress had strongly criticized the PM Modi neighbourhood policy. He argued that “Modi government neighbourhood policy has been catastrophic. India has never been isolated like this (Tewari, 2018). India has yet to be hegemony attributes for its neighbouring countries which are not suitable for the 21st-century world. For the Modi second and third PM inauguration, he boycotted Pakistan, which is not good for the South Asian region even India itself also. So far, China is taking much more advantage and success than Modi in neighbouring policy. “China never bound to seek hegemony when it grows in strength (BBC, 2014). Similarly, with the elevation of President Xi, the

PRC also ensured the balancing of foreign relations and diplomatic ties with world countries. Also, most of the time, President Xi used the soft type of diplomatic tool. The silk route strategy of One Belt and One Road (OBOR) and BRI resurgence his heavyweight and astonishing presence as the major world power leader. Therefore, “China stands ready to sign such a treaty with all its neighbors and to provide strong support for the bilateral relations as well as prosperity and stability in the region (The Economic Times, 2015). Therefore, President Xi also maintains its goodwill relations with South Asian countries.

Xi Jinping and the Nepal-China Relations

Over the past 65 years of diplomatic ties, the relation has been steady, stable, and progressive. Nepal is firmly committed to the one-China Policy, promising not to allow any external forces to use its territory against China. The diplomatic relations are reaching new heights simultaneously. Their bilateral relationship is of critical significance after President Xi Jinping visited Nepal in October 2019. The two countries developed and enhanced relationships as a “strategic partnership of cooperation” (Panda, 2019). Over the years, Nepal and China have pursued their cooperation in the areas of strengthening people-to-people connectivity, infrastructure construction, and people’s livelihoods.

The relationship between Nepal-China has a historic connection. Nepal and China share the deepest culture of Buddhism and politically all-time stand by the vision of one-China policy. Mostly, the relationship depends on the principles of Panchasheel and understanding mutual aspirations, respect, and buildup confidence ratio. While in the period of President Xi Jinping, there is a confidential relationship set up in a new direction line and reflected the image of goodwill friendship. Meanwhile, State Councilor, Mr. Yang Jiechi visited Nepal and said the relationship was “Nepal is not only a dear friend and close neighbor but an excellent partner of China” (Bhattarai, 2014, p. 10). In this regard, the researcher notifies that the present scenario of China formed a new type of connection link of economic corridor, Silk route, BRI initiative, or AIIB; Nepal has entered into the new strategic relationship with China. In which it is the goodwill message of a new relationship of China under the leadership of Xi Jinping in the portion of Nepal in the international arena.

Nepali politicians view have also showcased that present leadership of Xi Jinping and his thought which is also work citing in the Nepalese relation and boosted up the “big opportunity to rebuild Nepal” (Subedi,2018, China.org.cn). Further, it also illustrates by the opinion of Vice-Chairman of NCP (UML) leader Yuba Raj Gaywali, “Though China is a big country, and it has never interfered in the internal affairs of small neighbors. So we very much appreciative in this foreign policy envisaged by Xi Jinping Thought” (Ibid). So that it also provides a positive reaction for making the goodwill relation of Nepal- China under Xi Jinping leadership. Recently, in modern relations, Nepal has lots of opportunities, and “China flagship project of OBOR initiative could be a starting point for such opportunities” (Adhikari, 2017, p.138). Therefore, now it’s a real start to the modern relationship of Nepal-China.

Similarly, President Xi Jinping vows that “the country would continue to support Nepal’s efforts to safeguard state independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity” (Zhou, 2017, South China Morning Post). The researcher examined the new types of relationships and new types of facing opportunities. According to this source, it also added the “respect and take care of each other’s core interests and concerns to boost the political foundation of bilateral ties” (Ibid). Likewise, on the side of Nepal’s Prime Minister, Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli vowed that our great friend, China, has astonished the

world by attaining unprecedented progress in many spheres” (Bhattarai and The Diplomat, 2018). In this position, both sides have ready to form the new transformation of historic relations in the modern era in the 21st century. Under the Xi leadership and Nepal PM Oli leadership set up a new height of neighboring relationship between Nepal-China relations. During PM Oli tenure, Nepal-China relations heightened a new flight of development of relationship. China has made significant inroads in developing ties with Nepal since India’s unofficial blockade in 2015. Beside this, some of the key agreements and projects held during the period of President Xi Jinping are as;

S.N.	Name of the Project/connectivity between Nepal and China
1.	MoU under the BRI on 12 May 2017
2.	Agreement on Boundary management system
3.	MoU on Promoting key projects of investment and cooperation
4.	Agreement on establishment of Confucius Institute at Tribuvan University
5.	Agreed to exchange ideas and proposals on constructing cross-border railways and railways network
6.	Ongoing projects under Chinese Assistance are 20 including Pokhara International Regional Airport (completed)
7.	Opening of the Lizi-Nechung port and the reopening of the Zhangmu-Khasa port to passenger services
8.	MoU to review and modify the Trade and Payment Agreement

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal-MoFA (2024).

In the above table, few projects are mentioned. However, there have been further projects held between Nepal and China. Similarly, both the Himalayan nations have shared exchanges of high-level visits, meetings, and consultations with bilateral ties too. Even though, there has formal and informal visits are held constantly. After the Xi Jinping era, many official visits were held between Nepal and China. The quantity of visits has increased more after President Xi. During the Xi period, more than 33 high-level visits were held by Nepal-China. The high-level visits exchange examine the Nepal-China relations are unique and good. The exchange visits are continuously going on without change of political system and political instability, especially in Nepal. In the case of Nepal, three prime ministers of Nepal and various high-level delegates exchanged visits during the leadership of Xi Jinping in the PRC.

S.N.	Exchange of Visit (2012-20)	Date (IN)	Title of the Dignitaries of the PRC and Nepal	
	<i>Dignitaries from PRC (official visit)</i>			
1.	General Wei Fenghe	2020	State Councilor and Minister of National Defense	Nov.
2.	Xi Jinping	2019	President of the PRC	Oct.
3.	Wang Yi	2019	State Councilor and Minister for Foreign	Sep.

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			Affairs	
4.	Luo Shugang	2018	Minister of Culture and Tourism	Nov.
5.	Wang Yi	2017	Minister for Foreign Affairs	Sep.
6.	Wang Yang	2017	Vice-Premier of the State Council	Aug.
7.	Kong Xuanyou	2017	Asst. Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	June
8.	General Chang Wanquan	2017	State Councilor, and Defense Minister	March
9.	Liu Qibao	2016	Member of the Politburo of the CPC	Dec.
10.	Wang Yi	2015	Minister for Foreign Affairs	June
11.	Yang Jiechi	2013	State Councilor	June
12.	Wen Jiabao	2012	Premier of the PRC	Jan.
<i>Dignitaries from Nepal (official visit)</i>				
1.	Pradeep Kumar Gyawali	2019	Minister for Foreign Affairs	July
2.	Bidya Devi Bhandari	2019	President of Nepal	April
3.	Ishwar Pokhrel	2018	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense	Oct.
4.	Nanda Bahadur Pun	2018	Vice-President of Nepal	Sep.
5.	Krishna Bahadur Mahara	2018	Speaker, HoR	Sep.
6.	Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli	2018	Prime Minister of Nepal	June
7.	Pradeep Kumar Gyawali	2018	Minister for Foreign Affairs	April
8.	Krishna Bahadur Mahara	2017	Deputy PM & Minister of Foreign Affairs	Sep.
9.	Rabindra Adhikari (led by)	2017	Nepali Parliamentary delegation team	Aug.
10.	Nanda Bahadur Pun	2017	Vice-President of Nepal	July
11.	Krishna Bahadur Mahara	2017	Deputy PM & Minister of Finance	May
12.	Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'	2017	Prime Minister of Nepal	March
13.	Krishna Bahadur Mahara	2016	Deputy PM & Minister of Finance	Sep.
14.	Krishna Bahadur Mahara	2016	Deputy PM & Minister of Finance	July
15.	Nanda Bahadur Pun	2016	Vice-President of Nepal	June
16.	Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli	2016	Prime Minister of Nepal	March

17.	Kamal Thapa	2015	Deputy PM & Minister of Foreign Affairs	Dec.
18.	Paramananda Jha	2015	Vice President of Nepal	Sep.
19.	Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	2015	President of Nepal	-
20.	Sushil Koirala	2014	Prime Minister of Nepal	-
21.	Paramananda Jha	2013	Vice-President of Nepal	-

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal (2020).

In the above tables of exchanges, visits illustrate that Nepal-China bilateral relations is distinctive. Both sides exchange and expand visits to assist in the consolidation of the political and economic development of Nepal and China. In the above table, there is an equidistance of relations between Nepal-China relations. Both sides' delegates were visited to exchange their relations during the era of Xi Jinping. In the portion of China, at least 12 high-level delegates visited Nepal. On the other side, at least 21 high-level delegates visited China at different times during the period of Xi Jinping. As per this period, "Nepal and China agreed on to upgrade their relations to a strategic partnership of cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity" (Xinhau, 2019). Thus, during the Xi era, Nepal-China enhanced not only political treaties and agreements but also ensured the Trans-Himalayan economic corridors.

Nepal and the BRI

Since its inception in 2013, the BRI initiative has changed the world dimension dramatically. It is one of the successor megaprojects of the Chinese Dream to achieve the national rejuvenation goal and objectives. West to East countries has welcomed the One Belt, One Road since it was initiated. Even though, the Asian, African, and European countries join to shake hands with this multidimensional project. Under this, the BRI initiative China emphasizes its soft power diplomacy at the global level. The BRI enhancing and promotes the cooperation characters of communication, infrastructure connectivity, trade and transit and people to people contact, and so on. According to the data of McKinsey & Co., by 2050, the regions along the OBOR will contribute about 80% of the increment of global GDP and will become the upcoming main driving engine for the world's economic development (Zhang, 2018, p. 104). The BRI enhances the possibility of China's dominant economic power in the trans-Himalayan region, which is also important for the neighboring nation, Nepal. The above report of McKinsey also provides the world dependency ratio over China. It's the ambitious project of China's to revive the ancient Silk Road trade route and connectivity.

From the Nepalese point of view, the BRI is the sole project for the development of infrastructure and accelerates economic growth. The trans-Himalayan region is strategically, politically, and economically significant. For this, it is important for Nepal's development and access to its impact on world affairs. Under the significant importance of the trans-Himalayan region and located between two major economic powerhouse countries (China and India), PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) expressed his wish to develop Nepal into "Asia's Switzerland (Hu, 2018). The trans-Himalayan region is more prosperous and needs Nepal's development. Amid this, as members of BRI, Nepal and China have robust connectivity and infrastructure projects as the strategy of win-win cooperation.

Nepal is the member of BRI. The BRI diversifies Nepal in terms of trade, connectivity, access to the sea, and different other aspects (The Himalayan Times, 2018). Officially, Nepal has the connectivity part of BRI on 12 May 2017. Incumbent Foreign Secretary Shankar Das Bairagi and Chinese Ambassador Yu Hung signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Xi Jinping Foreign Policy Initiative BRI project. In the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, 'the Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network also committed to developing Nepal-China collaboration under the BRI initiative. "The communiqué lists 64 projects, of which 35 will be launched under the 'economic corridors and other projects catalyzed and supported by connectivity.' Other 14 are sectorial multilateral initiatives and platforms, whereas 15 are 'other relevant efforts referred to by partners' (Onlinekhabar, 2019). For this, Nepal-China worked on the BRI initiative in a positive direction.

Similarly, "after a prolonged discussion, in January 2019, Nepal once again revised the earlier list and proposed nine multi-sectoral projects, including the Kyrirung-Kathmandu Railway (KKR) line to be constructed under the BRI (Nayak, 2019). For this, BRI changes the dimension of Nepal's roadway dependency to rail connectivity and also provides a new opportunity for interconnecting their transit route. Lastly, in the part of BRI, Nepal is already associated with the BRI connectivity. If Nepal also engages in any other alliance to focus on the issue of regional connectivity, especially increasing the forum of SAARC and BIMSTEC only, other connectivity may suffer the China and Nepal relationship. So, Nepal has to carefully and seriously handle the recent geo-strategic dimensions between the two giant states, China and India.

Conclusion

China is Nepal's closer neighbor. The modern China has expanded its exchange and cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally. Xi Jinping and BRI are synonymous in Chinese current affairs. President Xi Jinping's continuous visits put an impact on their influences in the regional and international environment. Similarly, BRI also followed the same strategy as President Xi. Today, trade, transit, cooperation, and connectivity under the BRI initiative are the determinant factors of China's foreign policy. Thus, closeness with Nepal, BRI, and Xi Jinping Thought incorporates Nepal's political, economic, military assistance, and another dimension to enhance the Nepal-China relationship within prosperous and win-win situations. Furthermore, both are trans-Himalayan nations. Ideologically, China is a communist nation, while Nepal is a federal democratic state. Besides this, China is the world's most populated nation, the second-largest economy, and a rising superpower of the global volume. Nepal is landlocked with a buffer state and is considered the least developing nation. However, Nepal and China's mutual relationship is very necessary for the 21st century in many aspects for both nations.

As part of the Xi Jinping visits and agreements ratio, it also changes the dimension of global parameters. In the South Asian region, President Xi has also developed goodwill relations. Economically, Xi has strengthened their cooperation and connectivity with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Pakistan Economic Corridor (PEC) is one of the sole projects of the BRI initiative flagship. Similarly, President Xi also initiated his leadership role, influence, and impacts in this region with strong confidence. As per this, except India, most of the South Asian countries were the members of AIIB and incorporated China's flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

For Nepal, it's an opportunity for economic development. "From a practical-development perspective, BRI will positively impact all sides, justifying Nepal's desire to move forward decisively and quickly (Simkhada, 2018:345). On the other hand, it's a chance to enter Nepal's trade and transit route in the global market and end the dependency and monopoly ratio of India. Thus, under the President Xi period, Nepal also changed the parameters of bilateral and multilateral ways. In the 21st century, China and India are the rising powers of global order. For this, Nepal also strengthens their South-North neighbor's relations with equidistance and cordial position and boosts its interest. However, Nepal's political stability is the sole factor for maintaining equilibrium relations with both China and India. Therefore, after the rise of President Xi, Nepal-China relations enhanced to develop new heights and significantly transformed the connectivity of political, socio-economic, and cultural approaches in the trans-Himalayan region. For China, the growing interest in domestic political matters and so on. As per this, it seems to assist and support Nepal's various projects and sectors. Similarly, it also looks to have committed one-China policy and established old-age relations with new dimensions and approaches. Currently, the BRI connectivity and cooperation incorporated Nepal-China relations and initiated Nepal's economic prosperity.

Hence, under the Xi Jinping leadership, Nepal-China bilateral relations are deliberate friendly relationships with goodwill manners. Therefore, in the words of American scholar Mark Borthwick, the twenty-first century was dubbed the "Pacific Century," implying that the center of the world's political and economic arena had shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Hua and Guo, 2007). It seems to analyze that the rise of China in the 21st century is also significant for Nepal. As the power centered in the Pacific region of China and India, at that time Nepal is the heartland area of the global volume. So, under the Xi Jinping leadership, Nepal-China strengthens its bilateral relations for more prosperity and to develop the link of connectivity and cooperation.

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