Soft Security Strategies to Enhance Nepal's National Security

GP Acharya

Abstract

Due to the existing geo-location, geo-political advancement, and geo-strategic cum geo-political interests of powerful nations, the national security milieu of Nepal is constantly under a 'state of flux'. The changing dynamics of the regional politics have also induced specific geo-political challenges to Nepal's national security. Nepal has adopted an essence of "Amity with all and enmity with none" on its foreign policy, which is based on the spirit of its long standing 'Non-Aligned Foreign Policy'. Since Nepal does not acquire any substantial intelligence, counter intelligence or strategic intelligence mechanisms, and has not been fortified with any defense technology yet; Nepal must foster 'Soft Security Strategies' that not only enhances its national security, but also help promote its national power capability. Based on various literature reviews, it suggests that the idea of reckoning the impact of soft security approach is an indicative defensive measure of addressing the contemporary security issues in national security. Nevertheless, the main objectives of this research article are to identify the emerging security threat, and assess the 'Soft Security Strategies' to enhance Nepal's national security. This article discourses the geo-strategic prospects in conceiving national security, and explores the potential instruments of Nepal's national power. The first part deals with apparent challenges to Nepal's national security, and the second part deals with whether the existing 'National Security Policy' is aligned with its corresponding 'National Security Strategy'. Finally, this paper aims to identify how the small power like Nepal can strengthen the instruments of national power and enhance national security.

Keywords: National-security, non-traditional-security-threats, soft-security-issues, geo-location, geo-politics, national-power-capability, soft-security-strategies

1. Introduction

Amid the universal prominence of globalization and calibre of digital revolution, the threat perceptions- both from state and non-state actors- have also multiplied. The higher the countries develop intelligent machines, the more complex geo-politics and technological warfare is getting (Schwab, 2016). This may be because of the mixed impact of democratization of technology, globalization of markets and economy, changing dynamics of world politics, and 'conflicting geo- strategic cum geo- political interests of powerful nations' (Ishaque, Rehman, & Fatima, 2019, pp.16-22). Accordingly, the National Security of many nations is under the 'mist of uncertainty lurk'

(Shahid, 2014, p.1) despite their prolific national power capability and gamut of intelligence.

The contemporary narrative of national security is largely centered on societal perspectives. Buzan (1991) has emphasized the individual, societal and systematic security as part of national security (pp.18-20). While Snow (2016) focused on physical security as well as the 'sense of security' of nationals as the core elements of national security. The physical security is an objective approach of providing security- specifically provided by the state agencies and its laws, while the 'sense of security' is a subjective phenomenon that differs from people to people. The subjective security is particularly focused on the 'human element of security' (Nishikawa, 2010, pp.2-4) that puts people at the 'focal point' of security concern. Baldwin (1997) supports that national security needs to be observed beyond the territorial security and political independence, while the values of individual people and society within the state needs to be protected.

The prospects of national security, however, becomes 'sanctuary' to one nation, while it may become 'menace' to other. The national security of one nation goes in peril by the powerful existence of the other nation (Buzan, 1919, pp.1-2). Thus, the notion of national security itself is a 'threat' as well as a 'security', while it is threat to the weaker nations and security to the powerful ones.

Considering the geo-political advancement as well as the 'sense of threats' to national security, Nepal should determine whether the prospects of its national security is aligned with its policies and strategies. The primary question for this research is: Is Nepal's national capability adequate enough to handle the crucial issues related to national security?

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The study aims to interlink the complementarity of Nepal's national power capability and national security, which response the threats to national security- both from internal and external sphere. The main purpose of this study is to examine the soft security issues in Nepal's national security spectrum. This research article is the continuation of several previous studies on national security that emphasize geo-strategic and geo-political quandary existed in Nepal's geo-location, explores the potential strategies to overcome the security threats, and aims to project soft security approach through specific understanding of soft security strategies.

1.2 Research Questions

As the study is on the assessment of soft security strategies to enhance Nepal's national security, the research questions include:

·   What are the various dimensions of national security and the instruments of Nepal's National Power?

·   What are the emerging threats to Nepal's national security?

·   How may the strategies be assessed in addressing emerging threats to Nepal's national security?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

As per guide by the need and the research questions for this study, the main objectives of this research are-

·   To ascertain the theoretical overview of various dimensions of national security and the potential instruments of Nepal's National Power.

· To identify the emerging threats to Nepal's national security.

· To assess the possible strategies to address the emerging threats to Nepal's national security.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study is grounded on qualitative research. To address the specified research objectives, the study focuses on systematic, subjective and holistic method.

In this research, 'Soft Security Strategies' are considered as independent variable, whereas 'National Security' as dependent variable to the former one. And, 'National Security' is the function of 'Soft Security Strategies' as:

National Security = f (Soft Security Strategies)

Here, the analysis and evaluation of functional relationship between 'Soft Security Strategies' and 'National Security' results in qualitative research.

2.2 Sources of Data

The analysis of this study is predominantly based on the open source data rather than hush-hush intelligence. This research is limited to the handiness of hush-hush information or manifestation of intelligence.

The study however considers both the primary and secondary data for analysis. The primary data are employed through government and semi-government sources or authorized agencies, while the secondary sources include books, academic journals, magazines, theses, digital publications, websites, news reports, newspaper articles and bulletins among others.

2.3 Method

Methodologically, this research is based on descriptive, critical and analytical study, particularly focusing on empirical data, facts, and historical anecdotes. The nature of this research is investigative and the author has especially focused on analytical-descriptive method to examine the correlation between 'national power capability' and 'national security', and between 'national security' and 'soft security strategies'.

Theoretically, the study includes constructivist ideas followed by realist approach. And, the study incorporates ideas, assumptions and analysis from theoretical perspectives in National Security and Security Studies.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Nepal's soft security strategies comprise the elements of national power, soft power, soft potentials and soft diplomacy. The soft security strategies include both the soft potentials and soft capitals. This research is based on the conceptual framework of analyzing complementarity of Nepal's national power capability and national security, which is conceived to address the contemporary issues to Nepal's national security.
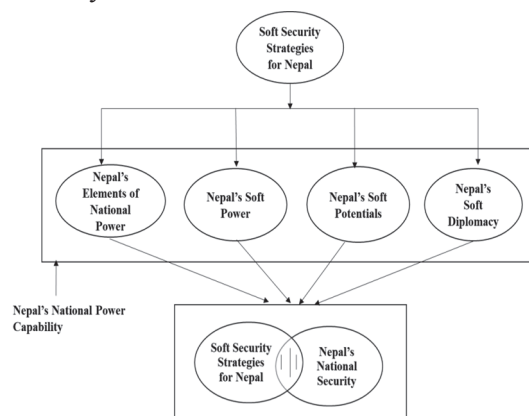
Figure: Nepal's Soft Security Strategy and National Security

3. Literature Review

3.1 Defining National Security

The definition of national security have substantially altered along with the prominence of globalization and advancement of technology, while the national security strategies differ from state to state based on geo-political situation cum reality of states.

Hoffman (1981) defines national security as "Protection of a nation from physical attack and safeguarding its economic activities from devastating outside blow" (pp.4-5). Buzan (1991) describes National Security as a sensitive issue that is largely centered on self-excelling mechanisms particularly focusing on national interest, national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation-states (pp.4-5). Louw (1978) outlines that "National Security includes traditional defense policy and also the non-military actions of a state to ensure its total capacity to survive as a political entity in order to influence and to carry out its internal and international objectives" (p.6).

National security, however, is a strategy adopted by a state to prevent or ease the latent effects of threats against it. The national security strategy is comprised of coordinated and interconnected dimensions-political, socio-cultural, economic, military, geographical and historical (Rothery, 2018, pp.37-38). Most important, national security is an apparatus undertaken by a State to ensure its survival, security, wellbeing, and to defend its national interests that help attain state's ambitions.

3.2 National Security- A Historical Perspective

The core concept of National Security started in the 17th century at the time when Europe was witnessing 'Three Decades War' and England was struggling with the 'Civil War' (Holmes, 2015, p.17). Meanwhile the 'Peace of Westphalia' came up with an idea that national security of states is not only concerned with the sovereign control over domestic affairs, but also to the safeguarding of sovereignty and territorial integrity from the external threats.

The western notion of national security was military subjugated and was specifically centered with an essence of preventing war (Gandhi, 2010, p.2). The military centric traditional realist model largely dominated the national security scenes during the World Wars- I and II, and Cold War (Sharma Wagle, 2020, p.58). Following the emergence of nationhood, states massively exercised military and economic potency as hard power to address the concerns of national security. Bajpai (2002) claims that the nation-states are the main actors in international politics, while the security of state guarantees the security of all living within it (pp.3-5).

In the Pre-Cold War era, states considered another nation-state as conventional foe; while in the Post-Cold War years, the notion of national security significantly changed following the emergence of various transnational cum unconventional issues. Citizen's well-being including psychological security become major concern of many nation-states. Subsequently, national security emerged as crucial challenge to small and weaker states.

3.3 National Security Strategy- An International Context

National Security, which emerged in the post-World War II era, is mostly a western concept while America championed in launching national security apparatus in 1949 (Gandhi,

2010, p.1). Prior to this, the National Security Act of 1947 established the National Security Council in the US, which was then retained in the Office of the President ("US National Security History", n.d.).

The US National Security Strategy 2020 sets greater vision to promote American prosperity; protect the people, homeland, and American legacy; preserve peace through strength; and enhance American influence throughout the world ("National Strategy for Critical and Emerging Technologies", 2020). The National Security Strategy (Mortimore, 2020) is accentuating emerging technologies including Advanced Computing, AI, Advanced Sensing, Data Science and Storage and Quantum Information Science among others for overall economic growth and security.

Russian National Security Strategy (2015) has aimed of attaining its national interest focusing particularly on the strategic national priorities- national defense; state and public security; economic growth; science, technology, and education; healthcare; culture; the ecology of living systems and the rational use of natural resources; strategic stability and equal strategic partnership.

The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom (2008) aims to address the interrelated conventional aspects of security challenges to protect the nation, citizens, prosperity and their way of life (pp.3-5). The UK has broadened the concept of national security and emphasized to the security of their individual citizens and their wellbeing, and to the 'integrity and interests' of the state. Considering the huge potential of cyberspace, the UK (National Security Through Technology, 2012) has aimed to make it one of the most secured places in

the world for cyberspace businesses, more buoyant to cyber-attack and resilient to defend its interests in cyberspace (pp.7-10).

China's National Defense Policy (2019) is mostly defensive and is based "In the Service of Building of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind". In addition to the conventional security strategy, China has massively focused on soft security strategies including human security, tech and cyber security and security intelligence. Considering the huge concern of national security, China has massively invested on AI, Quantum Computing and other technologies as part of its national priority (Coulthart, Lorri, ... & Elizabeth, 2018, pp.14-15). China has considered technology companies as the key source of its economic dynamism and soft power, and information and data security as the crucial components of its national security.

By analyzing the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Security Policy (NSP) of the powerful nations, it can be figured out that these countries have massively focused on soft security issues including human security, health and well-being of their nationals; tech and cyber security; and security intelligence besides their conventional security mechanisms.

3.4 National Security- A Policy of Nepal

Nepal witnessed numerous threats on its national security, and struggled hard to defend sovereignty and territorial integrity since its inception. The Nepali rulers defended nation's territory with extra-ordinary brave in the 18th and early 19th century. But, the Nepali politics largely revolved around a narrow periphery of power-politics in the late 19th, 20th and 21st century (until now). Nepal's national security even today has been a precarious issues as

ever. Nepal did not have particular national security policy until 2016. Had Nepal been successful enough to draft a specific national security policy in advance and the rulers were sensitive on security issues, perhaps, Nepal's national security posture would have been much stronger.

Nepal, however, has constituted its National Security Policy 2016 after the promulgation of constitution in 2015. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) has made provision of 'National Security Council' that is to be headed under the chairmanship of Prime Minister, which shall formulate overall policy regarding national interest, security and defense, and the mobilization and control of the Nepal Army (pp.185-187). The National Security Policy (2016) specifies national security as a comprehensive approach of safeguarding the nation through geographical, demographic, economic, social, cultural, political and diplomatic prospects. It also emphasizes other traditional measures including military security and controlling of external influence (pp.2-25). Considering the emerging dimensions of national security, the government in 2019 revised the existing National Security Policy 2016 (Ghimire, 2019) and drafted a renewed NSP, yet not disclosed officially.

Despite partaking a constitutional provision of national security policy, Nepal could not properly address the crucial issues of security challenges both in internal and external matters. One of the major reasons of this may be that the National Security Policy 2016 could not be concrete, cohesive and inclusive in the domestic sphere (Sharma Wagle, 2020, p.60). The political elites then might be less futuristic and constricted with narrow vision in executing dynamic security policy. The NSP however has to be guided by the core

requisite of the nation, and to be based on the changing dynamics of politics- domestic, regional and global. Essentially, soft security strategies could be the best approach in strengthening national power capability to country like Nepal that can help enhance Nepal's national security.

4. **Analysis**

4.1 National Security- A Context of Nepal

Geographically, Nepal is located between the two giant nuclear powers cum rising global economies- India and China.

Physically, Nepal shares an open border of 1880 kilometers boundary with its southern neighbor, India; and 1439.18 kilometers boundary land with northern neighbor, China (Shrestha, 2013, pp.309-324). Nepal's National security is crucial due to existing geo-location, dynamics of geo-politics and its asymmetric relations with immediate neighbors- India and China, while Nepal's physical position is quite significant in the entire Asia.

Psychologically, Nepal has been mostly stressed by psychological and political warfare, and influenced by the geo-political meddling. Due to the changing dynamics of geo-politics in the region and beyond, the powerful countries like the US, China and India have been relentlessly increasing their activities in Nepal and are likely to push their interest through various strategies including IPS and MCC (Indo-Pacific Strategy and Millennium Challenge Corporation), or B3W (Build Back Better, World), BRI (Belt and Road Initiative), or Neighborhood First Policy into Nepal. Subsequently, the security concern of Nepal has become more challenging.
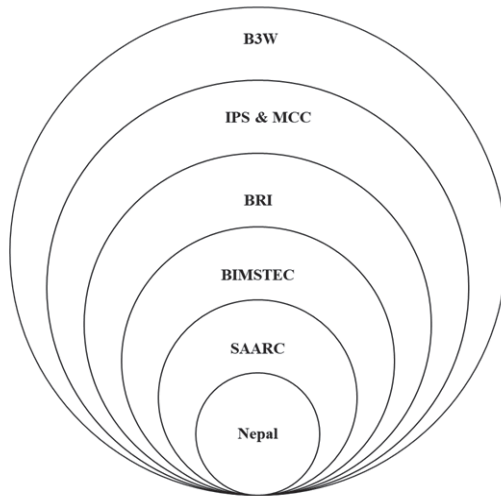
Figure: Logical Geo-Political Situation of Nepal (Source: Author)

Logically, Nepal is held to be under the sensitive geo-political chess-game and is at the center of the political chess-board as shown in the diagram below:

Diplomatically, considering the geo-political sensitivities, Nepal should conserve its geo-strategic magnitude and balance the expectations projected under various initiatives as mentioned above, which is possible only through soft strategies. Nepal can equally leverage from all the powers and maintain a poise relations through inclusive political interaction, partnership and cooperation, and balancing or strategic hedging as Nepal is in a 'system affecting position' right now.

Nepal has stood as one of the sixteenth nations in the world which has ever never been colonized in the world's history (TRN, 2018b, p.4). King Prithivi Narayan Shah, who led the basic tenets of Nepal's foreign and security policy, said "Great friendship should be maintained with the Chinese Emperor. Friendship should also be maintained with the Emperor of the Southern Seas, but he is very clever. Do not engage in an offensive attack, fighting should be done on a defensive basis. If it is found difficult to resist in the fight, then even means of persuasion, tact, and deceit should be employed" (NFA, 2019e). Shah emphasized defensive policy as the guiding principal of security policy of Nepal. Mentioned in the 'DibyaUpades', Shah projected Nepal as a "gourd between two boulders" and backed the defensive strategy as most appropriate policy to protect Nepal's sovereignty and territorial integrity (Acharya, 2019, pp.5-9). Even though, the sensitivities and magnitude of Nepal's geo-strategic credence multiply, the essence of soft (defensive) security policy is equally pertinent, today.

4.2 Soft Security Strategies- A Perspective for Nepal

The various non-military issues are dominating the security scenes in many nation-states in the Post-Cold War era. As the dimensions and manifestations of threat are varied in nature, the concept of national security is also reconceived (Gandhi, 2010, pp. i-xvi). The Realists and Neo-Realists school of thoughts were constricted within narrow periphery of the military issues, while the cognizance of other non-military issues such as 'socio-economic structures', and 'the ethnic composition of a nation-state and its relations with the security environment' were lacking (Bhattarai, 2013, p.12). Most important, the crucial issues regarding the interests, passion, knowledge, health and wellbeing of people and their freedom from 'fear' and 'want' were not considered.

A country can enhance its national security through various mechanisms and tools essentially influenced by three major types of power: military, economic and attraction (Yazdanfam, 2009). Attraction is such kind

of power that can be induced under soft security strategy, which focuses on political, diplomatic and policy mechanisms such that it could well define national values, identify national power, perceive and assess threats and vulnerabilities, well mobilize resources, screen and implement rational policies, and adopt diplomatic tools to resolve conflicting issues (Gandhi, 2010, p.71). National Security, however, should be observed through a comprehensive lens of strategic and non-strategic views.

In the Nepalese context, national security takes its meaning on both the traditional and non-traditional security challenges. In the long term, Nepal's security lies on the three key aspects (Upreti, 2012b):

— Security (State, Human, Societal)

— Peace (Equity, Justice, Human Rights, Dignity)

— Stability (Political, Economic, Social) (pp.93-101)

Nevertheless, Nepal's security strategy must incorporate the pooled application of the political, economic, social, informational, intelligence and security apparatus of national power. Nepal can enhance its national security, particularly focusing on specific security issues such as issues related to- Territorial Security, Water Security, Cyber Security, and Human Security (Economic and Food, Community and Cultural, Ecological, Bio, and Health, Wellbeing and Psychological Security) among others.

Territorial Security: The safeguarding of Nepal's territory and sovereignty is a crucial aspect of national security. Territorial security includes physical security of Nepali territory, territorial waters and mountains, borders, customs and economic zones. Territorial

threats may induce flow of terrorism, smuggling of drugs and gold, organized crime, human trafficking, illegal migration and disease, which may generate new agenda for border security (Nicklin, 2017, pp.180-198). Territorial security can be enhanced in a defensive mechanism through diplomatic and high level political interactions as well as coordinated and cooperative approach between Security and Intelligence Agencies, Nepali Army, Armed Police Force, Central Bureau of Intelligence, Custom Service, and Local Communities.

Water Security: UN Water ("Water Security and the Global Water Agenda", 2013) defines water security as "the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability" (p.1).

Amid the rise in global temperature, the frequency of natural disasters such as tsunami, hurricane, landslides, flooding along with earthquakes and wars are repeatedly striking (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009, p.403) - which is causing huge loss of safe drinking water to tens of millions of people worldwide. Water induced threats triggered by climate change, global warming and melting of glaciers are also causing huge loss of land, soil and bio-diversities in Nepal, which is altering the balance of ecosystem.

The strategic value of water as most essential resource is rising with the rise in global population. One-fifth of the global population have no access to safe drinking water, while more than 80 countries are suffering from

water shortages (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009, p.405). Nearly 2.5 billion people are likely to suffer from water stress and water scarcity in South Asia by 2050 (Kelkar & Bhadwal, 2007). Almost 2.9 billion people in 48 countries around the world are likely to face acute water shortages in the next decade, and "Water terrorism" is going to be the major threat to global security, warned US intelligence agencies ("U.S. National Security Depends on "Soft Power"", n.d.).

Many wars were fought over the strategic value of oil or water as resources, reveals the history. For an instance, India-Pakistan first war of 1948 was because of Indian concern of water (Wagner, 2013, pp.81-97). The Pacific War of 1941-45, the Iraq-Iran war of 1980- one of which purpose was to control the Shatt-al-Arab waterway (an access to Persian Gulf) because of the commercial and strategic value of that water access (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009, p.177). The powerful cum hostile nations may attempt for "fishing" in Nepal for political gains, or induce psychological and political warfare, or push for unprecedented war to acquire Nepal's resources, rivers, lakes, water wells, glacier lakes and icy Himalayas.

Nevertheless, Nepal can exploit the potentials of the larger Hindu Kush and Himalayan snow pack (Dahal, 2021), which offers enormous resources of pure Himalayan water that can quench the thirst of entire population in South Asia and Arab World if it is processed and promoted well. Nepal possess more than 50,000MW hydropower potential, which can be the deed of 'strategic commodity' for Nepal's survival, progress, energy and security (Dahal, 2021). The recurrent sources of water from Nepal's major rivers- Koshi, Gandaki, Karnali and Mahakali- contribute about 46 percent of the average annual flows of the Ganges River and nearly 71 percent of the dry season flows (Wagner, 2013, pp.81-97). Since Nepal shares 647 kilometers riverine boundary- which comprises 60 rivers, streams, rivulets and brooks as open border rivers- with India (Shrestha, 2013, pp.309-324); it may pose serious security problems for Nepal in the future if those sensitive issues of shared resources and borders are not resolved permanently.

Considering the severity of water crisis, Nepal should initiate a water cooperation framework in the region and beyond and promote Hydro-Diplomacy, whereby Nepal can devise crucial strategies to enhance 'water security' and prevent water from 'weaponizing'. Also, the Discriminative Water Treaty between India and Nepal needs to be revised. The future of Nepal lies on the prominence of 'Water Technology', and it must be viewed through a 'water lenses'. A concept of 'Water Governance' could be highly significant to make a prominent influence in the region and beyond.

Cyber Security: Nepal has often witnessed cyber security threats in banks, power-grids, telecom, airport and foreign missions due to the weak digital infrastructures. Delhi based Nepalese mission and Ambassador remain under Cyber surveillance through the use of spyware in the recent past (Bhattacherjee, 2021). This kind of conspiracy concern may pose grave signal of threat to Nepal's national security. Since there is high possibility of cyber-battles between immediate neighboring economic-rivals India and China, Nepal should plan for better and stronger cyber security architecture. For this, Nepal needs to envision a resilient national security apparatus and rational 'cyber intelligence' mechanism such that it could help establish a resilient cyber space. Essentially, the various

legislative policies regarding big data, data protection, privacy, intellectual property, cyber-crime and cyber-terrorism among others should be revised and updated such that it can timely address the contemporary needs of the society and nation.

Human Security: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) introduced the approach of human security in 1994 that focused on two major aspects of human security- 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want', while the General Assembly (GA) Resolution in 2012 (Gomez & Gasper, n.d., p.2) emphasized the role of "Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to survival, livelihood and dignity of their people". Human security is a broader concept that address both aspects of human- development and threats. The 1994 HDR listed seven crucial dimensions of human security: Economic, Food, Health, Environmental, Personal, Community, and Political Security (ibid, p.2).

Economic Security: Even though Nepal has significantly scaled-up in Human Development Index (HDI) in the recent years, many people still are suffering from some forms of human deprivation, claims the "Human Development Report" (2020). Nepal's poverty, low literacy, unemployment, weak economy, poor living conditions and lack of socio-emotional or socio-cultural cohesion among others are triggering for such deprivation (ibid, pp.243-246). Poverty is one of the critical components of threat to human security in Nepal. Nepal Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (2021) shows that 17.4 percent people (one in four) are poor in Nepal, while 22 percent children (one in five) are under poverty (p.65). To enhance the human security, Nepalese basic needs for health, wellbeing, financial literacy, decent and dignified living must be met.

The economic security of Nepal most likely depend upon the honest and patriotic answer to this question: Has Nepal's economic policy been set to achieve the goal of 'economic patriotism' and national security?

Food Security: The Constitution of Nepal (2015) has recognized 'Food Security' where 'Right to food is a fundamental right' and 'every citizen shall have the right to food sovereignty' (p.21). Yet, Nepal has to be practical enough with respect to the implementation of various dimensions of food security such as availability, accesses, utilization and stability.

More than 60 percent of Nepalese households are not capable enough in producing food to feed their family members and about 4 in 5 households have food insufficiency for the last 3 months of the year (Uprety, 2013a, p.197). Data (Pahari, 2011, pp.41-49) shows that nearly 35 percent of the population are lacking minimum calorie intake; 49 percent of the children under five are stunted, which indicates the chronic malnutrition, which makes significant impact on physical and mental development in the long run; 39 percent of the children below five are underweight; and nearly 13 percent of the children under five are wasted.

Considering the vulnerability of pandemics, natural disasters, possible wars, and the severity of the financial crisis; Nepal should ensure 'Food Security' such that it can well-fed and nourish the citizens (Gandhi, 2010, p.237), which can make the notion of national security more meaningful in the long run.

Ecological Security: Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world (Maplecroft, 2010). More than 1 million people are directly under climatic threats including droughts, landslides and floods every year, while more than 4,000 people die due to climate disasters in every decade that causes an economic loss of about $5.34 billion (ibid, pp.193-196). The chances of glacial lake outbursts are higher with the change in climate and rise in temperature; while out of 2,323 glacial lakes, more than 25 are said to be highly vulnerable for outburst in Nepal (Kelkar & Bhadwal, 2007, pp.16-19). Recently, Mustang witnessed huge avalanche that injured a dozen of people and made hundreds of mountain cows disappeared (TRN, 2021). Massive avalanche of this kind may cause greater humanitarian crisis. The global temperature is getting warmer by 0.2 Degree Celsius per decade for the next two decades, while the temperature in the Himalayan region is more likely to increase rapidly (0.6 Degree Celsius per decade) than the global average, which may make significant influence on mountain and fresh water ecosystems, which will largely impact on natural phenomenon, agricultural productions, livelihood, vegetation resources and health and wellbeing of people in Nepal (Adhikari, 2021). Eventually, ecological security saves huge national wealth.

Bio Security: The climatic and geological hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, flooding, global warming, glacier melting, acid rain and ecological imbalance among others are making catastrophic impact on Nepal's national security (NFA, 2020). More than 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture as a main source of income, employment, and food in Nepal (Adhikari, 2021); above two-third population depends on agriculture, forestry and biodiversity; while agricultural sectors contributed nearly 27 percent to the GDP in FY 2018/19 (Ghimire, & Baral, 2011, pp.70-80; Prasain, 2019). Around one-third of the land of Nepal is covered by forests that is massively rich in herbs (ibid, pp.70-80), while Nepal reserves nearly three percent of world's total natural resources (Sangroula, 2018, pp.359-360). Nepal possess one of the richest genetic bio-diversities in the world, which need to be preserved through bio-dynamics (Republica, 2019c, p.6). Due to its outstanding altitudinal variation, Nepal has many opportunities to farm any kinds of plants from any parts of the globe. The healthy soil or fertile land, which strengthens biodiversity and increases agricultural productions, is the strategic assets of nation (Ngumbi, 2020, p.7). Nepal has to tap and harness all those natural resources and enhance the bio-security for its economic development.

Community and Cultural Security: Since culture is 'central to national identity and politics' around the world (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009, p.376), Nepalese culture can also be transformed into another economic product. Along with unique geography, history, culture, and altitudinal variation; there are more than 125 ethnic and caste groups, 123 languages and more than 150 religious cults in Nepal (Dahal, 2021). The Mithila region and Kathmandu valley possess one of the richest cultures in the world, while Kathmandu itself is known as the "living cultural museum of the world" (Republica, 2019c, p.6). Nepal can build a strong transnational community through tourism, while Nepal's tourism can be one of the best export industries globally.

International tourists are said to cross the intercontinental borders nearly 500 million

times a year (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009, p.376). Nepal can entice millions of tourists from around the world because of its existing geo-location, weather and environment. Nepal can be the perfect destination and venue for film, yoga and medical tourism. By promoting Nepali culture, tourism and internal values, Nepal can win the hearts, minds and spirits of tens of millions of people around the globe, which can help achieve some of Nepal's foreign policy goals.

Health, Wellbeing and Psychological Security: When we analyze the global geo-politics and technological advancement, it can be perceived that numerous transnational issues are creating huge havoc around the world, which have been all time high (post 2000) since the end of WW-II (TDS, 2019b; Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009), which have made direct impact on every individual, society and nation.

The incivility in workplaces and institutions is fostering a wide gap in human to human connection and eroding mental and emotional health (Pearson & Porath, 2009); which is affecting the attention and brain, disrupting energy and enthusiasm in many creative minds, and lessening overall performance; which is challenging the 'present vitality' and 'future prosperity' of every society (Porath, 2016). Since there is a direct causal link between workplaces wellbeing and productivity, the personal wellbeing of nationals can induce significant difference on national productivity (Hoge, 2019). The health and wellbeing of future generations, society and nation depend upon the wellbeing of the existing one.

To embrace the greater vision of a "Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali", Nepal should first put value to the well-being of every citizen.

The health, well-being and psychological security of every citizen directly reflect the national wellbeing, while healthy and strong Nepalis are more likely to uphold Nepal's national interest. Considering the soft potentials, Nepal should focus on preparing 'Compassionate Future Generations' and 'World Class Citizens' that could ultimately result a huge 'Soft Power' for Nepal.

4.3 Enhancing the Instruments of National Power

The efficacy of national security strategy of a nation depends upon the wise exploitation of national power capability. The national power capability of nation, especially for a country like Nepal, comprises of diverse conceptions of power: power as resources, ability, and outcomes (Tellis, 2015, pp.1-21). The various instruments of national power could be- political and legal, informational and intelligence, technological, economic, demographic and diplomatic among others ("National Security Strategy", 2018, pp.26-27). These elements of national power can be converted into vibrant national performance through strategic dynamism.

Political and Legal: How well a country can sustain its political life and abide by 'political intelligence' and lawful deeds in the domestic sphere will determine the status of its national security ("National Security Strategy", 2018, p.27). The strong political and legal instruments are likely to strengthen overall governance capability including policy formulation, organization, legislation and implementation (ibid). These mechanisms are expected to address the bureaucratic weaknesses, loopholes and ambiguity in governance.

Nepal is frequently witnessing threat to its

sovereignty and territorial integrity, while the struggle for power (in domestic politics) is still the main functional objective of the political elites. The ruling party (2018-2021) witnessed biggest threat from within and lost its nearly two-third majority in the parliament. Look as if, Nepal's national security is more endangered due to domestic threats than the fear-psychoses of external threats. Domestic integration, however, is the constituent of national power, which will enhance national security.

Informational and Intelligence: As part of informational instrument, strategic communications are essential to promote the effective governance ("National Security Strategy", 2018, p.28). Intelligence is a crucial instrument of national power that help apprehend national goals, aims, vision and enhance national well-being.

Learning from the past failures on political and diplomatic intelligence, Nepal should take pragmatic steps in upgrading the intelligence mechanisms and develop a sound intelligence culture, which could help in advancing various tools- diplomatic, intelligence, economic and defense (Gurung, 2020; NFA, 2019d; Gandhi, 2010, p.23). Improved communication itself could be an intelligence mechanism that can support to NSS (Buzan, 1987, p.25). So, technically, an advanced intelligence unit should be set up such that it can provide time-sensitive data on Real-Time basis.

Technological: The technology, especially information technology (IT), started playing a dominant role in 'state of affairs' since the 1980s (Perry, 2003). IT can help Nepal to sense the potential threats and cyber-attacks, share information, adopt protective mechanisms, and develop essential capabilities (Yeganegi, Arbabi & Hussein, 2020). Considering the sensitive geo-location and geo-tech environment, Nepal needs to move ahead into the sphere of AI and Big Data. Nepal can acquire power capability and wealth through data and technological sovereignty, and potentially gain power by a 'wider spectrum of technological capabilities based on digitization' (Fischer, 2019, p.7). Technology can be a key instrument for a country like Nepal which can help attain economic and security success (Gandhi, 2010, p.63). Amid the pace of fourth industrial revolution (4IR), Nepal needs to grasp some of the elements of the 4IR such as knowledge economy (KE) (knowledge-based economy, digital economy, tech economy, and information economy), which is largely fuelled by data and information (Ghimire, 2021). A tech cooperation framework in the region and beyond could be a pragmatic idea that can help in coaxing 'techno-economic cooperation' (Republica, 2021). Considering the adjacent linkage between technological development and diplomatic affairs, Nepal should initiate sensible tech diplomacy.

Economic: Nepal must preserve and best utilize its resources particularly- waters, rivers, lakes, Himalayas, forests, herbs, precious stones, mines, strategic minerals, energy and genetic bio-diversity. Water and green technology can greatly contribute to boost the economy. The survey and research findings on natural resources has claimed that the upper Mustang and surrounding region contains huge quantity of Uranium (Sangroula, 2018, p.360). Uranium is used as fuel to enrich nuclear energy, while Nepal can supply Uranium to the nuclear powers. Uranium, gold, precious stones and rare Himalayan herbs- which are 'fungible forms of power' (Goldstein & Pevehouse,

2009, p.140) - could be equivalent to hard currency reserve to enhance Nepal's national power capability. Nepal is one of the few countries in the world where rare herbal plant cum medicine 'Yarsha Gumba' (Ophiocordyceps sinensis), and one of the world's most expensive mushrooms 'Morel Mushrooms' (Morchella esculenta) are available in the Himalayan regions (Shahi, 2020). The professional farming, production and promotion of these highly expensive and useful herbs can significantly contribute on nation's economy.

Nepal's average age of youth is 22 years, which is a very dynamic age to be economically active; while nearly 94 percent of the males and 66 percent females of the age group 26-40 are economically active in Nepal ("Nepali Youth in Figure", 2014). The research (Wesley & Peterson, 2017) on population and demography claims that there is a significant connection between fertility (growth of population) and economic growth. The higher the fertility in young population, the more dynamism and growth can be achieved (ibid). The vigorous, intelligent, educated, dynamic and fertile population is an element of national power (Gandhi, 2010, p.237) that can augment dynamism to accelerate nation's economic growth and share energy and vitality in national economy.

Diplomatic: The diplomatic instrument is an essence of 'outward looking position' of a country within the bounds of norms, values and international laws ("National Security Strategy", 2018, p.27), which heightens bilateral relations, strengthen partnership, promote national interest and enhance foreign relations in a multifarious way.

Diplomacy is one of the most appropriate instruments of national power that functions in diverse ways such as recognizing the foreign landscape and language, enhancing communication and culture, and projecting negotiation and national interests. The various pillars of diplomacy include 'protection of people', 'promotion of prosperity' and 'preferment of national prominence' (Bhattarai & Bhattarai, 2021), while "Skilled diplomats are assets that increase a state's power" (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2009, p.134). Nepali Diplomats should play a pertinent role in mustering soft powers by conveying promotional messages, while the 'soft diplomacy' and 'diplomatic intelligence' should be marshaled through tact, trust and tolerance.

5. Discussion and Results

The main aim of this study was to explore the link between Soft Security strategies and National Security, and to examine the correlation between 'national power capability' and 'national security. The study identifies various emerging threats to Nepal's national security, and explores most appropriate soft security strategies to address them. The study revealed that small power like Nepal can enhance its national security through soft security strategies. The study shown that by strengthening the instruments of national power, Nepal can enhance its national power capability, which subsequently enrich national security.

Nepal's national security, development and future course most likely depend (Khatri, 2012) on the conduct, role and morale of domestic political parties; the extent and adherence of the involvement of international community in Nepal's domestic affairs; the access and impact of technology on economic, social and political affairs; and the sense of intelligence and deeds of the Nepali nationals vis-à-vis the state.

Owing to the sensible geo-location, national security of Nepal has specific limitations. The author felt that the generalized concept of security may not fit 100 percent for Nepal. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that Nepal must employ tact, trust, strategic hedging, partnership and cooperation, and maximize soft potentials to influence powerful nations.

National security, however, is a dynamic process which depends upon the enormous diversity of national power capability and soft potentials. Yet, the national capability of Nepal is not adequate enough to handle the crucial issues related to national security despite having enormous potential of elements of national power. The main reason of this is due to ambiguity in its security policy and reluctance in accentuating corresponding soft security strategies. In addition, pragmatic steps are not taken to upgrade the intelligence mechanisms and to overcome the past failures on political, diplomatic and security intelligence. Essentially, Nepal has not concretely traced the line between economic and national security to minimize the possible threats to its overall security.

6. Conclusion

Nepal's national security largely depends upon the domestic socio-politico-economic stability, political culture, quality of state's bureaucracy, deployment of capabilities, rely on 'self-help', economic patriotism, defense driven leadership, political intelligence, state's rationality, intelligence capability, educated and healthy population, diplomatic skills and soft potentials that advance national interest and influence powerful nations. Considering the sensitivities of regional and global geo-political environment, Nepal should act with tact, trust, tone, tolerance and steadiness with the emerging powers and superpowers. Since 'the geo-politics itself is one of the elements of power', Nepal should be able enough to capitalize on its location and preserve the geo-integrity.

Yet, Nepal should not see national security only through the traditional lens of 'national defense' and 'regime survival', but it has to have a notion of overall wellbeing of nation including safeguarding of sovereignty and territorial integrity, accelerating economic development, and exploiting the instruments of national power. Indeed, Nepal's national security strategy should be based on soft stratagems that incorporate concrete policy, strategic adjustments and implementation plan which could integrate the people, society and nation. Essentially, the future of Nepal lies on the prominence of soft potentials, which must be viewed through a 'strategic-soft lenses'.

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