

# India and Nepal Relations During Narendra Modi Regime

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## Abstract

The paper attempt to highlight India's policy towards Nepal during Modi regime, the Bhartiya Janata Party Government takes great pride in the significant new strides the foreign policy of our country has made under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Narendra. The paper also focuses on India's Prime Minister Modi visit, Power Trade Agreement (PTA) oil visit, Sushma Swaraj visit and constitution problems and its implication on India.

**Keywords:** - Indo – Nepal relations, global security, development and governance, Power Trade Agreement (PTA)

## Introduction

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) under Narendra Modi came to power in May 2014 after defeating the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in the general elections. It marked the new era of India's approach towards her neighbours. After Narendra Modi's wave, some media members called Narendra Modi the "Shinzo Abe of India" while the westerners fear him as the "Indian Putin." Many believe that he might emerge as the "Indian Deng Xiaoping." Time would tell which name suits Modi best. However, Modi has a proactive foreign policy, possibly one driven by economy. Modi promised 'development and governance' to the peoples of India during his election campaign and he promised the people of India for the development and governance. The Nepalese economy too can harvest the benefits because it was closely linked with the Indian economy. The Prime Minister has persecute, anticipatory, and innovative foreign policy that was aligned with our Government's main goal of accelerating national economic development; and to fulfil India's global responsibilities as the world's most populous youth nation and largest democracy. Samman – dignity and honour; Samvad – greater engagement and dialogue; Saiddhi – shared prosperity; Suraksha – regional and global security; and Sanskriti evam Sabhyata – cultural and civilizational linkages; these five themes have become the Panchait - new pillars of our foreign policy. The manifesto of BJP is to assure that they would make friendly ties with all of India's neighbours but would not hesitate from taking stances and strong stride. There should be no compromise on the issues of national security and terrorism .it is a crystal clear signal to all neighbours. Modi's image as a determined leader and his party's 'nationalist' stand that Modi would be different from the previous governments India has had.

## Objective of study

- To analyze the India's Policy towards Nepal during the Bhartiya Janata Party Govt, (BJP).
- To find out India's political and economic relation between India and Nepal
- To assess the challenge and future prospects of Indo-Nepal relations.

## Methodology

The methodology undertaken in this research work includes historical and analytical methods. The historical records and official document were examined: primary as well as secondary sources that are available on the subject have been used. A primary source includes policy documents, reports, official statements and interview of policy makers. In the secondary sources, the major works of different distinguished authors in the field have also been included and analysed

## Sushma Swaraj Visit to Kathmandu

Sushma Sara Indian External Affairs Minister visited in Kathmandu for three-day official visit. SusSwaraj had bilateral talks with Foreign Minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey as she attended the third Indo-Nepal Joint Commission meeting in Kathmandu and to prepare the ground for a visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi within a few months. During her visit, India and Nepal discussed on construction hydroelectric projects and India's investment in infrastructure projects. . In November 2014 after the second Constituent Assembly elections held in this Himalayan nation. Sushma Swaraj was the first foreign official to visit Nepal. She said that "I am here two months after the formation of a new government in India," Sushma Swaraj said "speaking in Hindi, adding that the new government in India has accorded its ties with Nepal high priority. This visit helped to improve bilateral mutual understanding at the political level and strengthen mutual trust, said Nepal Foreign Minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey. Besides reviewing the status of bilateral projects, the joint commission will further actuate some three dozen mechanisms that exist between the two India and Nepal. The meeting, being held after a gap of 23 years, would review bilateral relations in their entirety. An apex mechanism, the joint

commission was mandated to review, assess and evaluated past agreements, project performance and the jobs carried out by the 32 mechanisms established at various levels between the two countries. The meeting is expected to seek a way to construct the channels and provide an impels to bilateral relations... Besides co-chairing the joint committee meeting with her Nepali counterpart Pandey, the Indian minister called the Nepali President Ram Baran Yadav and Prime Minister Sushil Koirala and other Nepali political leaders. According to Nepal's foreign ministry, the meeting was held about five core areas of cooperation between the neighbours: political, security, border and border management economic cooperation and transportation; trade and transit; energy and water resource; and culture, education and media. A joint statement was issued at the end of the meeting. Several rounds of meetings at the foreign ministry accompanied by political leaders and experts have contributed a lot for the joint commission's meeting.

### **Modi' Visit to Nepal: Renewing Relations:**

On 3-4<sup>th</sup> of August Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two day visit to Nepal, marked a new start in Indo-Nepal relations. Prime Minister Modi extended support to Nepalese constitution makers politicians and "conveyed best wishes of the government and people of India to the Nepalese leadership and people for their commitment to promulgate the new constitution by early next year." Nepal is facing constitutional crisis since 2012 when the Constituent Assembly was dissolved without drafting a new constitution. Prime Minister Modi hoped that the Constituent Assembly would draft a constitution to support federal and democratic political structure and promote impartiality in the country. Assuring the political leaders of Nepal, Prime Minister said "we are ready to extend all essential helps to bring the constitution on time". His address to the Constituent Assembly of Nepal was appreciated by many Nepalese leaders across the "political spectrum". Amusingly, Pushpa Kumar Dahal or Prachanda, who had been a strong critic of India, praised Prime Minister Modi for touching, inspirational, encouraging and hopeful speech. Prachanda, chairman of the United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), after the meeting with Prime Minister Modi, expressed confidence that "a new chapter has begun in Indo Nepal relations". Modi focusing on 4 C-S co-operation, connectivity, culture and constitution, which might develop bi-lateral relations with Nepal and Narinder Modi, is the first prime minister who visited Nepal after 17years Modi in a lofty rhetoric and vivid phrases, he referred that India and Nepal relations are as "older as Himalayas and the Ganga, he also stressed on constitutional structure of Nepal. He said to the Nepalese leadership president Ram Baran Yadav and prime minister Sushil Koirala in his quota Narendra Modi said that "you should not think about the party but the country Nepal need a constitution at the intial" Modi also assured Nepal that India did not want to impede in its internal affairs "Nepal is a truly sovereign nation we have always believed that it is not our job to interfere in what you do but to support you in the path you decide to take". While addressing the constituent assembly, the first time a guest had been invited to address a joint session of the constituent assembly and parliament in Kathmandu. He gave powerful 45 minutes speech to Nepal law makers. I am keen to take the affairs between India & Nepal to new height during my possession as prime minister. The Indian prime minister assured the Nepalese prime minister that the on-going peace process in Nepal was entirely a Nepalese matter should be concluded as Nepal's requirement. Modi also met Nepalese soldier's and he walked around him and greeting them. "We have had elation for many years because of political instability and political interference said Rajesh war Thapa On the people uplifting the PM convey "We hope Modi will change that India's Prime Minister Modi plans to give one billion dollars in loans to help construct infrastructure in Nepal. He assured that the work on Pancheswar multipurpose would begin in a year in the presence of two prime ministers the officials signed three agreements Ice Memorandum of the understanding (MOU)-tourism development in Nepal, Goitre, control program in Nepal, and co-operation between the state controlled televisions channels-doordarshan and Nepal television (NTP), They also exchanged reference for on Pancheswar development authority, Modi's visit has motivated unusual agreement here that Nepal set aside decades of mistrust and accepts Indian offers to help for construct up Nepal's hydropower and tourism potentials. A last-minute dispute over the diction of a major hydropower development accord that the two sides signed only minor agreements, but there is great hope that the power deal will materialize.

### **Power Trade Agreement (PTA) and India and Nepal relations:-**

On September 2014, The Power Trade Agreement (PTA) was signed between Nepal and India, Which was most important achievement of the 18<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit. This agreement had been supposed as a major advance in not just addressing the increasing power demand in India and Nepal but also as a major economic boost for Nepal Additionally, information-sharing and co-operation on water issues was also crucial. From both ends this was particularly due to high ambition coupled with a lack of apparition and cooperation. Therefore, it is important that the two countries look for to reach at a common framework on this subject. As the first step, joint mechanisms need to be evolved for water management and control. An inclusive approach would forge trust and make both countries accountable.

### **Bhatarai visit to Delhi**

India could not ignore the ongoing crisis in Nepal said Former Nepal Prime Minister Babur am Bhatarai at a conference in New Delhi. The leader of the opposition UCPN (Maoist) and former Prime Minister Babur am Bhatarai meet with President Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval there was broad conversation on bilateral issues. Babur am Bhatarai visit had given rise to rumour that Nepali opposition leaders are reaching out to India after efforts to formulate the new constitution collapsed last month. The Maoist party and the rest of the 30-member opposition coalition walked out of the talks over the government's decision to go for a vote over disputed issues in the constituent assembly rather than consensus, as the opposition demanded. The decision on a vote is one of several issues holding up the constitution that had missed repeated deadlines, including one on January 22, in the decade-long process of resolution. Speaking at a seminar organised by the Society for Policy Studies in Delhi, Bhatarai said India had a "role to play" in the constitution-making dispute in Nepal, and that a peaceful Nepal is in "India's national interest." At a speech in November 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Kathmandu that "The Constitution should be written on the basis of agreement. A Constitution written on numerical basis would not be in Nepal's interest." Modi's comments were welcomed by some but drew sharp criticism as "Indian interference" by leading newspapers and political leaders.

### **Constitution problem in Nepal and its implication on India**

Foreign Secretary of India S. Jaishankar conveyed New Delhi's desire to see political stability in Nepal so that, the country could move ahead on development. For this, India wanted the Nepali leadership to narrow down their differences over the new Constitution and draft constitution quickly. "India wants Nepal's political leadership to write the Constitution with the broadest possible compromise . and then Minister for External Affairs of India Sushma Swaraj said: "India is concerned over the ongoing protests and strife in Nepal. We urge continuing flexibility on the part of all the political forces so that any outstanding issues are addressed through dialogue, in an atmosphere free from violence." And violent protests in Nepal's southern plains led by the Madhesi parties protesting the seven province federal model have claimed nearly 40 lives including 11 police officers.

On 20 September 2015 Nepal adopting a new democratic constitution and asserted that change was an unavoidable reality in bilateral ties but India's senior diplomats extended a cold welcome to the Himalayan democracy underlying that this sort of change is not welcome. However, beyond these two positions, lies the spirit of democracy Nepal's new constitution had been based on the "entitlement approach" to rights. It guarantees fundamental rights as well as the right to food, right to education and right to protection from environmental degradation. In a move loaded with meaning, the constitution gives right of protection from human trafficking. The protection against human trafficking is symbolic and implies Nepal's current rulers are influenced by the powerful anti-trafficking movement that has taken roots in that country. Such had been the advance that Nepal's constitution was compared to the South Africa's post-Apartheid constitution due to its focus on social and economic justice. In seminar rooms of Delhi, in the last few weeks, Nepal's constitutional achievements were highly praised by large Indian audience.

The relations between India and Nepal plunging to an unparalleled low, the Congress saw an advantage in criticizing the ruling BJP for what it termed "a partial failure" of Indian diplomacy. The congress spokesman, Abhishek Singhvi said that "Through Congress regimes we have developed, cultivated and nurtured very warm and strategic ties with Nepal" he further said that, "Warm at the emotional level but strategic at all other levels with all neighbours and Nepal in particular and if we see that being diluted or decapitated, then obviously we are extremely concerned and must express our dismay." Since a significant number of people affiliated to Nepal's Madhesi community--which feels deprived of rights in the country's newly adopted Constitution— also live on the borders of poll-bound Bihar, Singhvi spoke cautiously, knowing that any word with a potential to hurt the community can backfire on the Congress during the elections.

On 8 October India reiterated that it had not imposed any blockage on Nepal and asked neighbours to put its house in order which expressing serious concern over the growing anti Indian sentiments in Nepal. The external affairs spokesman Vikas swarup said that, "we do recognize that there is growth of anti India sentiments and this is something we are seriously concerned about but who is responsible for this. ..." He further added that we hope that Nepal leadership do something about it so that the traditionally friendly relationship between India and Nepal can continue, and the problem of Nepal is their creation and said India never put any conditions on Nepal regarding their constitution.

On 6 December, United democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) leaders visited India for talk with Indian leaders on Nepal crises over the new constitution. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met Madhesi leaders, who were agitating against the country's new constitution adopted in September and insist on speedy political solution for restoring normalcy in the Nepal. External Affairs Minister met Madhesi morcha leaders reaffirm supports for an inclusive Nepal He further added that Sushma Swaraj called for a "broad based

ownership of constitution and encouraged speedy political solution and return to normalcy on that basis” The External Affairs Minister Sushma rejecting the allegation of adopting “big brotherly” approach towards Nepal. she said that India respect the sovereignty of Nepal and wants to see the neighbouring country itself resolve the present crises through consensus as violence could have impact even on India. External affairs minister refused the charge that India was imposing a blockade of supplies even as she asserted that the BJP government would follow the policy of the previous government with regard to its neighbour Nepal. The debate in Rajya Sabha on India-Nepal relations during which members expressed concerns over the worsening ties, she said that government shares their sentiments as also the worries of Nepal which has been hit by a blockade of supplies from India due to an agitation by Madhesi over the newly adopted constitution. Sushma Swaraj said that “Still a way can be found... we are doing the same... we want to see a resolution through consensus so that supplies could be resorted the earliest.”

the significant development, government of Nepal had agreed to set up a political mechanism to recommended solutions to disputes over new constitution which addresses two key demands of agitating Madhesis regarding proportional representation and constituency delimitation, a move was welcomed by India. They decided to move the forward with the bill to amend the new constitution which had been already tabled in the parliament. The bill had ensured proportional inclusive participation in various state organs as demanded by the agitating parties and had also proposed delimitation of electoral constituencies based on population. On the political mechanism it would recommend solutions to dispute over the proposed provincial boundaries within three months of the formation. On 22th December India welcomed the big political breakthrough in Nepal, setting the stage for return normalcy in the Himalayan nation with the lifting of a blockade on goods from India imposed by Madhesi. India described the first amendment of the Nepali constitution as a welcome development. The external affairs ministry expressed support for the legislative process and further added “we hope that other outstanding issues are slimly addressed in a constructive spirit.”

### **Nepali's Prime Ministers K. P Sharma Oli Visit to India**

Nepali Prime Minister K. P Sharma Oli paid a six day official visit to New Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016. It was his first visit to India after assuming charge of the office. He had extensive talks with Indian leadership with a major focuses on mending ties hit by issues related to Nepal new constitution. The external affairs minister of India received Oli accompanied by a 77 member delegation Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while recognizing the new constitution of Nepal told his Nepali counterpart K.P Oli that smooth functioning of Nepali government would depend on consensus and Dialogue. Modi hoped that Nepal become more peaceful by resolving the constitution issues through negotiation and by strengthening unity among different groups. The Madhesis had been protested against the new constitution and by blockading border areas. The agitation had affected Indo-Nepal relations.

India and Nepal signed seven agreements at a summit meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepal counterpart K.P. Sharma Oli, even as leaders of the Madhesi people in Nepal threatened one more blockade. After the signing ceremony at the Hyderabad House, Oli stated that both sides were determined to avoid the disruption of Nepal's transit facilities as experienced over the past five months. Referring to Nepal's dependence on India for receiving essential commodities, Oli further stated without naming Madhesi protesters, “Unscrupulous elements should not be allowed to abuse the open borders between Nepal and India”. Oli said that differences persisted between India and Nepal over how to address the aspirations of the blockade-enforcing Madhesis, the “unscrupulous elements”. Though both the sides tried to address the grievances of the pro-blockade agitators by agreeing to build a road network in the Madhes region, the leaders of the Madhesis are planning more agitation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked visiting Prime Minister of Nepal KPS Oli to adopt an “all inclusive” constitution in an “amicable” manner during their first ever bilateral talks. Both countries also signed seven agreements to strengthen economic ties. Modi stated “We discussed all issues of bilateral importance. Nepal had progressed steadily towards the path of democracy. Its adoption of the constitution is a significant step to that effort. But its success depends on agreement and dialogue. I hope Nepal will be able to achieve an all-inclusive constitution and that it will be done,” PM Oli, on the other hand, stated the main objective of visit to India is to “clear the misunderstandings” following the protests by Nepal's Madhesi population that led to the blockade of all borders between both countries, Nepal government accused India of imposing.

He said Nepal's prosperity and growth remains one of India's main priorities. Lauding the economic and trade ties between both countries, Modi said the pacts signed take bilateral business ties to the next level. the significant Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed between India and Nepal included utilization of Indian grant of \$250 million for post earth quake reconstruction, improving road infrastructure in Nepal's Terai area, cultural cooperation, transit routes between Nepal and Bangladesh through the Vishakhapatnam port, rail transit facility and construction of transport corridors. “We must realize that transport corridors between both countries can lead to highway of growth,” Both leaders on jointly inaugurated a power transmission line from

Muzaffarpur (India) to Dhalkebar (Nepal). That provided 80 MW of power to Nepal with immediate effect. That would gradually reach its full capacity of granting 600 MW of power to Nepal by December 2017. Modi also highlighted some of ongoing hydroelectric power projects on which both sides are working upon.

Nepal's new Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (commonly known as Prachanda), comes to office at a time when his country is facing serious internal and external challenges. He has to solve these issues to maintain political stability in the country. Prachanda was elected as the 39th PM of Nepal on August 3, replacing Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) Chairman K.P. Sharma Oli with backing from the Nepali Congress, Madheshi-based parties, and other fringe parties in Parliament. Prachanda secured 363 votes out of 573. His victory made him the first communist prime minister in Nepal who has been elected for a second term. Prachanda has face external challenges from his first days in power. The new PM has to pay careful attention to maintaining cordial relations with both India and China, the immediate neighbours of Nepal. When Prachanda was elected, these two neighbours were the first countries to extend their congratulations. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi telephoned Prachanda and invited him to visit India, assuring him of New Delhi's full cooperation. Similarly, the Chinese ambassador to Nepal reached Prachanda's residence within five minutes of the election in Parliament. Prachanda has the responsibility of maintaining good relations with India and China, Nepal's two giant neighbors, in order to bring in more investment for the development of the country. The previous prime minister was criticized for not paying attention to maintaining a good relationship with India. Now India expects that Prachanda would be favourable to New Delhi. Meanwhile, China expects that Prachanda has to implement the agreements signed by the Oli-led government, mainly related to trade and transit. The three-day state visit to India in September, Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal lauded his visit for creating fertile ground to elevate Nepal-India relations to new heights. The issuance of a 25-point joint statement this time around has been lauded as an achievement of the current premier's visit – a marker that bilateral relations are beginning to look more cordial. Hope for the relationship is so gloomy among the masses and political elites alike after the political head butting resulting from the undeclared blockade last year that the mere issuance of a joint statement is lauded more than any actual quantifiable progress.

### Conclusion

The Prime Minister has persecute, anticipatory, and innovative foreign policy that was aligned with our Government's main goal of accelerating national economic development; and to fulfil India's global responsibilities as the world's most populous youth nation and largest democracy. Samman – dignity and honour; Samvad – greater engagement and dialogue; Saiddhi – shared prosperity; Suraksha – regional and global security; and Sanskriti evam Sabhyata – cultural and civilizational linkages; these five themes have become the Panchait - new pillars of our foreign policy. The visit of Narendra Modi opened a fresh chapter in Indo- Nepal relations. By giving new idea of "federal and democratic republic", Prime Minister Modi dispelled fears in Nepal that the new government in India might work for the restoration of monarchy. The Power Trade Agreement (PTA) signed between Nepal and India in September 2014 was most important achievement of the 18th SAARC summit. This agreement has been perceived as a major advance in not just addressing the increasing power demand in India and Nepal but also as a major economic boost for Nepal. On 20 September 2015, Nepal adopted a new democratic constitution and asserted that change is an unavoidable reality in bilateral ties but India's senior diplomats extended a cold welcome to the Himalayan democracy underlying that this sort of change is not welcome. The visit K.P Oli opened a fresh chapter of Indo- Nepal relations which was soured due to new constitution adopted by Nepal. Nepali Prime Minister Oil and Indian prime minister signed nine agreements which may improve bilateral relation between the two countries'. India and Nepal are indispensable to each other. Right from the beginning they have been standing with each other in times of peace and distress. India-Nepal relations have been defined by their close proximity to each other and this continues till date. India-Nepal relations, however, experienced a paradigm shift with the biggest factor being Nepal's advancement towards stability in democracy. The voices of Nepalese people were heard for the first time in an influential way and that took Nepal steps to being a democratic republic.

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