

# **Role of Civil Service in Foreign Policy: A Case Study of India-Nepal Relations**

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The civil service is an institutional mechanism to support the government in executing its tasks and realizing the goals of the nation state. It is a collective term comprise a defined structure which organized on the basis of legal rationality and consist professionals who are selected on the basis of merit. It tends to demand the persons with specified educational backgrounds and expertise related to the agencies or department to which they are assigned. J. S. Mill quoted to civil service as ‘a distinct form of government, separate from representative democracy’. Technically civil servants refer to the bureaucrats who work in a bureaucratic structure. Wilson in his essay “The Study of Administration”, argued ‘the bureaucracy is a professional cadre which stay away from the hasty politics’.

Civil Service plays a vibrant role in executing the goal of a country. Although policies are made by the political representative but they are executed by the civil service. Currently, due to technical and complex arrangements, policy making is also being done by the civil service, politicians make only tentative framework. The civil service serves as the essential link between the political authorities and society. In his book “Bureaucracy”, Ludwig von Mises argued that ‘bureaucracy is an indispensable way for social organization, for it is the only system by which the purpose of law can be achieved. The civil service has also an important role in foreign affairs along with administrative functions. It does not only provide data, facts, ideas, etc. to political executive about foreign affairs but also the success of foreign policy made by them depends on the role of civil services.

## **Role of Civil Service in Foreign Policy**

The civil service being a permanent organization has knowledge of the complexity of various national and international issues as well as experience of policy making and implementation. The successful functioning of democracy largely depends on how civil service construct administrative

policies based on their efficiency with political executive. Civil servants are central to effective governance in developing countries. They deliver essential services to citizens, commission infrastructure, regulate economic activity and engage in diplomacy with foreign countries.

The civil service is the basic factor in administration through which the will of the state is expressed. It makes drafts of foreign policies under the vision of the country. Civil servants run the state administration and manage public affairs. They are the pillars of a country. They play a crucial role in meeting the objectives of foreign policy. They are required to manage national and international issues in such a manner that the negative impact is minimized to a great extent.

A country's foreign policy consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its own goals through relations with other countries. Foreign policy is designed to protect the national interest of the state. Modern foreign policy has become quite complex. Currently foreign policy encompasses trade, finance human rights, environment and cultural issues. All of these issues, in some way, impact how countries interact with one another and how they pursue their national interests worldwide.

Under the impact of globalization, the hold of the governments on economies is slackening. The influence of international bodies, multinational corporations and external agencies is on the ascendance. The developing countries invite and accept foreign funds to develop their infrastructure and thereby the control of local resources is taken over by multinational corporate houses that acquire uncontrolled access to local economic resources. In this way the civil service guides to the political executive, helping them in policy making by keeping in view the national interest and the welfare of the people.

Due to globalization an effective foreign policy is essential for economic progress, peace and development, which depends on services and talents of an efficient, dedicated and committed bureaucracy. The civil service is expected to lead and have the responsibility to hold the scales even and do what is good for the country. It is required to gear up the administration and create stability by keeping themselves politically neutral and dedicated to the cause of the people. Therefore, to be successful in a globalized system of world, bureaucrats have to strike a fine balance between national interest of the country and international relations.

Related to international concerned the civil servant as a diplomat has to do some important functions at national level. A diplomat is someone who is appointed by a nation state to represent and protect that nation's interests abroad. The first and foremost function of diplomat is representation of his country. He represents his nation in foreign countries. He is the agent of his home government. He extends and receives congratulations and condolences upon events. He has to function as a two-way process interpreter between the home government and foreign government. It is his duty to represent his nation in international gatherings, meetings, celebrations, ceremonies and seminars.

As the political representative of his nation he has to aid, advice and assist the Foreign Minister, Prime Minister, Head of the State, Foreign Officials etc., in formulating the foreign policy. He is also a legal representative of the sending state. His acts possess legal value. As a legal representative he has to act according to the statutes, rules, terms, conditions and law. He has to protect, safeguard and defend the interest of the nations and its nationals. It is his important duty to look after, protect and promote the interest of his country. He has to protect the interests of the nationals who are living or residing abroad.

### **Bilateral concerns of Indo-Nepal & Indian Bureaucracy**

Over a period of time, Nepal and India have been bound together through historical, religious, social, cultural, economic and political relations. Nepal is an important neighbor of India and occupies special significance in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages/ties that span centuries. Yet, certain developments show that Nepal is trying to distance itself from India. Along with this, the current political statements of Nepal created tension between India and Nepal. Recently the parliament of Nepal has increased the tension more by passing disputed map related to land come in Indian territory.

On 5th August, India abrogated Article 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution whereby Kashmir ceased its special status; it was given the same status on par with other states of India. Most of the countries of the world, except Pakistan and China, supported India's move on the ground that it was its internal affair. In South Asia itself, countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh and Bhutan immediately supported this move. But Nepal is yet to support this move.

It was not long ago that certain Nepalese leaders advocated for China's membership in SAARC, though it was not a South Asian country. Nepal government also signed China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2016 to construct railway lines and other roads to ensure further connectivity with China and also to reduce the country's dependence on India.

Economics factors are also increasing anti-Indianism sentiments against India. Water has been a contentious issue between the two countries because of the controversies surrounding the water treaties on Kosi, Gandak and Mahakali. As a result, Indian investors in the hydropower sector in Nepal face problems on several times. Border disputes between two countries are another contentious issue that occasionally creates friction in bilateral relations. Contrary to the belief in India, the Nepalese people argue that the India is benefiting more from it than Nepal.

Another problem remains with Madheshis's settlement. The Madheshis are commonly regarded as people of Indian origin and hence regarded as a pro-Indian constituency in Nepal. There is a suspicion amongst the Pahadis and major political leaders in Nepal that India is out to balkanise Nepal. The Madheshis, on the other hand, believe that India's policy towards Nepal is Kathmandu centric. The role of external powers in fomenting anti-India feelings in Nepal has not been investigated so far. There are reports that both China and Pakistan are providing financial support to media houses who add fuel to the anti-India fire in Nepal.

## **Way forward**

Every country has its own interests and it tries to follow the foreign policy which serves its interests but, when it comes to the matter of a stable relationship between any two countries, both need to find convergence of interests. Civil servants as the diplomats can play an important role in bilateral affairs and collaborate extensively with other government and international organization.

In this way Indian civil service needs to formulate a comprehensive and long-term policy for Indo-Nepal relation. Shaping of perceptions should be an integral part of this strategy. Indian Civil Service should strengthen its relationship with political authority as well as Army, Civil Society, NGOs, Labor organization, Media etc. in Nepal. It needs to be recognized the factors that can control the growing aspects against India in Nepal.

Conventional security certainly cannot be the sole basis of India- Nepal relations. Closing the border is an impractical proposition due to the nature of the landscape and the conflicting public reaction on both sides of the border. The solution is not to close down the open border but to regulate it to make it more secure. Therefore, the 1950 Treaty should be revisited to not only address Nepal's concerns but also to include India's concerns about non-conventional threats that have emerged in recent years. One cannot erase the anti-India sentiment in Nepal; however, this can be minimized considerably.

Firstly, India should identify the anti-India forces and control them. These elements are present within the political parties, NGOs, pressure groups, Nepalese Army and other Non-State actors. India should try to correct the perception through a dialogue with Nepal. A special emphasis should be given to the Terai region to counter Chinese influence in the region.

Secondly, by the survey India should be identify the development projects which mostly people want to be implemented in Nepal. Only those projects which find public acceptance must be taken up. New Delhi need to connect to Kathmandu via rail and run special trains for people visiting Nepal. That will generate goodwill for India and strengthen people-to-people contacts further. The train can be named the 'Nepal-India Maitri' train.

Fourth, there is a need to shape the perceptions of the people of Nepal regarding the benefits to be gained by them from joint hydropower projects. Efforts must be made to dispel unreasonable fears/suspicious about India's intentions. The welfare and development orientation of the projects need to be highlighted.

Fifth, keeping Nepalese sensitivities in mind, India must be ready to revise/modify some of the existing contentious water treaties with Nepal. For future hydro-power treaties, funding from multinational agencies and involvement of companies from third countries as lead developers may help.

Sixth, India should maintain the policy of keeping away from internal affairs of Nepal, meanwhile in the spirit of friendship India should guide the nation towards more inclusive rhetoric.

Last but not least the we will have to bring positive change in the behaviour of our diplomats and officials who deal with officials and people of Nepal on a regular basis. Therefore, government should undertake capacity building programmes like commando training, intelligence gathering, etc. In this way a new chapter will begin in Indo- Nepal relations.

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