

India's Infringement over Nepal Border Area

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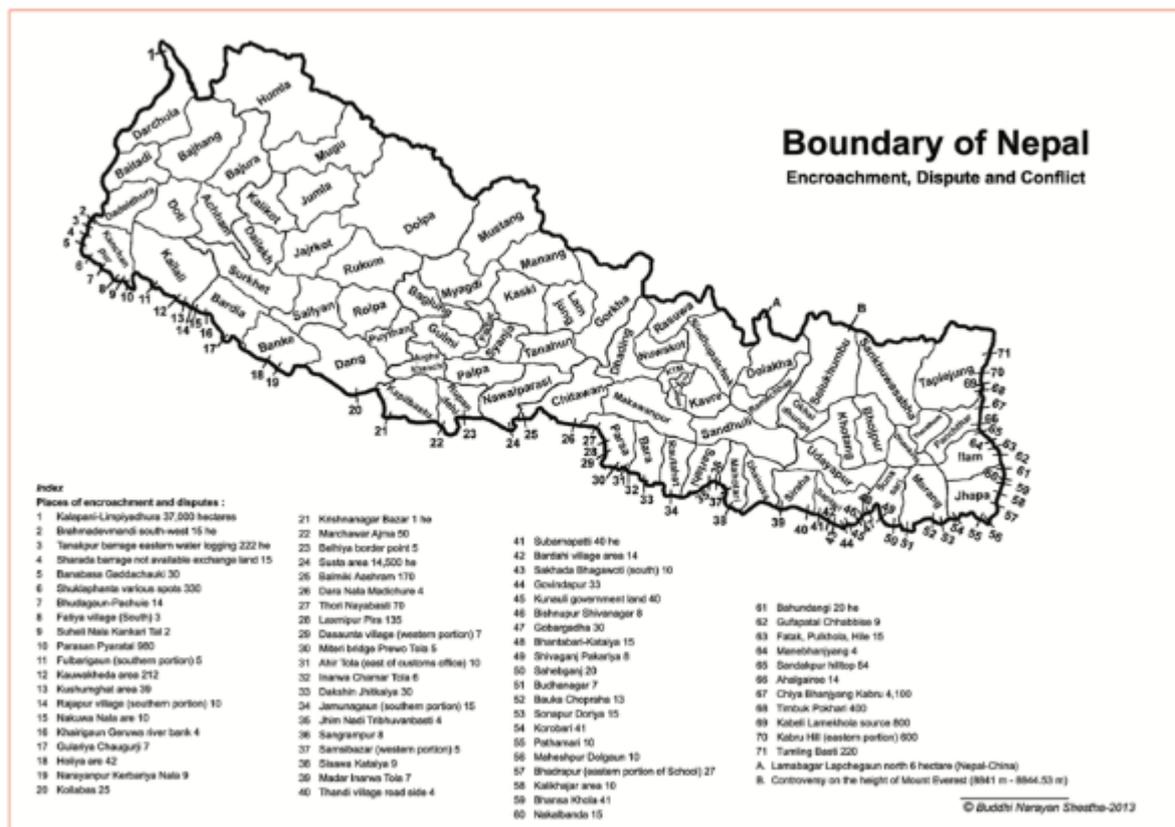
As Nepal prepares to fix a date for holding talks with India to resolve the border issue, the seriousness of resolve on Indian side and depth of the issue must be realized.

The history of demarcation of India-Nepal border began on March 4th, 1816, after the signing of the "Sugauli Treaty" between the then British India and the state of Nepal, which declares River Mahakali, of Nepal, as the border-line between both the countries. The Treaty was expected to resolve the border issues, but it did not. Even after such a long time, the dispute regarding the border and the no-man's land area is being ensued now and then in different areas of Nepali border. The reason for the continuation of such dispute is that the rivers, counted on as border, diverged from their courses several times in the past. Interestingly, around 600 Km of the border is defined by rivers. Mechi in the East, Mahakali in the West and Naryani in the Susta area, and the unavailability of old maps and documents to revise demarcations has made the situation more significant. The Central government of India deputed its Para-military security guards of special services bureau (Shastra Seema Bal) along the border where as to counter guard the Nepali side of border-line, presence of Nepali security is almost nil!. Taking advantage of the ignorant attitude of Nepalese towards border guard, India started encroachment of the border land. She has said to encroach over 61,000 hectares in 26 of the bordering districts, by now. There has been a lot of hue and cry over the encroachment by Nepali people which unfortunately never fell on the deaf ears of the giant called India.

India surrounds Nepal from the East, West and South. There is a 1,808 km long border (September 2019 Wikipedia shows as 1,758 km) between Nepal and India, where out of 75 districts adjoining Indian territory, 26 have been encroached, marking 71 areas of disputes altogether. The major ones include Kalapani- Limpiyahura, Susta, Mechi and Tanakpur. There is often found an opportunistic overtone in both countries regarding the ownership of such disputed border points. Hence, to resolve the issue, an India-Nepal Joint Technical Level Boundary Committee has been set up in motion which is still to find a reasonable solution for this false encroachment issue.

The encroachment by India started right after the Indo-Sino border war of November 1962. After facing defeat the Indian army set-up a camp inside Nepali's territory at Kalapani to monitor the Chinese activities. But now they claim that the area belongs to them. However, reports prepared by Buddhi Narayan Shrestha, former director general of the Department of Survey Nepal, corroborates that the maps of 1850 and 1856 prepared by the Survey of India with the participation of Nepalese authority clearly states that the river originates from Limpiyadhura, 16 km North-West of Kalapani, which proves that Kalapani belongs to Nepal. But India refuses to accept those maps as proof. They say that the map prepared by them in 1875 should be considered as proof which shows river Mahakali origin is beyond Kalapani. Interestingly, the said map does not have Nepal's certification.

The other disputed area situated in the East of Naryani River, is the Susta area, which is the tensest area owing to encroachment. Some time ago, over one thousand Indian villagers backed by Indian border police force (SSB) had forcibly entered the Nepali territory in Susta. They completely destroyed sugarcane in about ten hectares of land and also manhandled men and women. Where the locals of Susta complain such incidents are rampant in the area. The main reason behind the dispute is the changing course of Naryani River, over the past decades. The river has said to change its course towards the Nepalese side in the West. India has encroached about 14,500 hectares of the reclaimed land because of this. The intrusion happened in stages over a period of decades. According to reports, lands disputes among locals are usually won by Indian nationals who have the support of the armed Indian Border Police Force - the Seema Sashastra Bal. Considering the situation, the people of Nepal had launched a "save Susta campaign". The organizers requested students of Nepal to join them and launch a valley wide campaign from Nepal's capital Katmandu. The purpose of the campaign was to inform the world about the wicked plans of her "polite" neighbor India. Actually the reason to start off the border dispute at Susta side is that Susta is surrounded by Indian Territory on three sides -the North, South and East, and on the West it is the Naryani River. Hence, cutting off Susta from its mother land becomes much easier for India to occupy it which will pave her closer to the "Greater India" dream of Hindus.



The other most talked about point of dispute is Mechi. India's disapproval of "Junge pillars" as the main boundary pillars has sparked the Mechi border dispute. The map published by the British India right after the Sauguli Treaty clearly indicates those pillars to be the main boundary pillars. Even history is evident that British had erected those pillars as monuments of Nepal-India border. But the credit goes to the Indian desire of getting control over weak and tiny neighbours which made her to incite the dispute by denying the original Sauguli Treaty signed by the British and the Nepal Kingdom.

According to the official records, Nepal covers a total area of 147,181 Sq Km. But in reality,

the territory of Nepal is gradually shrinking because of the increasing encroachment by India. The Maoists Young Communist league (YCL) once submitted a memorandum to the Indian embassy Katmandu, demanding immediate return of the encroached land by the Indians in Susta area but later the political havoc in Nepal made everything go vanish for some time. They demanded that scientific demarcation of the border land must be done as per historical maps, the encroached territories should be given back to Nepal and the bilateral bordering area should be regulated. The district level of Nepal and India earlier agreed not to allow the use of encroached land for any purpose and put the issue at the central level for the resolution of the problem. But despite the agreement Indian farmers have been cultivating in the disputed area.

The Nepal-India joint Technical level Boundary Committee has supposed to have completed 97% of the task of strip-mapping the border, as per 1874 Persian map adopted by the committee. According to them all the disputes, except Susta and Kalapani, have been resolved. But when the border is traced in the field, many instances of encroachment are found. The unwisely decision of Nepalese side of accepting the Persian map as the basis of demarcation has made them deprived of 1630 hectares of their own land, which now lies in Indian territory. The border committee somehow, could not act the way it ought to. It failed to take firm decisions regarding border disputes at several places, such as the presence of Indian Paramilitary force in Kalapani since 1962.

India has many interests in Nepal to fulfill which it has gradually made her strong political, diplomatic, economic and cultural influence there, all due to RAW's efforts. Her main strategy is to keep Nepal instable and always dependent towards India. In this regard, she has supported arms to the establishment as well as anti-establishment groups in Nepal, according to the former Prime Minister BP Koirala's biography. India has a history for formulating efforts on multiple fronts to weaken the already fragile country to facilitate its swallowing. It is high time when all the Nepalese, currently divided among various political affiliations, should come together against the onslaught, instigated by India, in Nepalese territory and understand the game-plan of their hegemonic neighbor. And India also should realize that the flame she has ignited in Nepal can very well extend to its own northern flank and the unstable southern part as well. Keeping in mind the on-going protests in India on account of CAB and changed status of Kashmir and Ladakh, this possibility is too real and near both.

Author's note: This research article appeared in author's blog in the year 2009, unfortunately still stands accurate. Updated the figures and current situation India is facing at home.

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