

Case Study: Nepal–India Border Management and Its Challenges and Opportunities

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SUMMARY

Case Study : Nepal-India border management and its challenges and opportunities - Buddhi Narayan Shrestha* Abstract Nepal and India has a very good relationship in people to people level since centuries. There is an open border regime between the two countries. Nepal-India border is unique in the world in the sense that people of both the countries can cross the international border from any point, many times a day, without any interrogation; despite the existence of border check-posts at 21 locations. The objective of this paper is to analyze the challenges and opportunities of free and unrestricted movement of people of Nepal and India across the international border, even after the subsequent demarcation. Convenience in movement, quick emergency response and medical services facility is the opportunities of the open border. On the other side of the coin, there are many challenges, such as criminals commit crime in one frontier and they easily cross the international border to hide on the other side of the border. Terrorists have succeeded in bringing small arms and gun-powder hiding on the border. Narcotic drug traffickers, smuggling of goods and machinery, girls and women traffickers have misused the open border. It is the ground truth that Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Afghan, members of Laskar-e-Taiba, and Mujahiddin terrorist member cross the international border to Nepal in the disguise of Indian citizens. Because their face, attire, habit, language and way of life are similar to the Indian nationals. They create disturbances, terror and horror to the local people. The purpose of this paper is to make a case study of Belahi-Nautanuwa, one of those international border crossing points. It examines how the international open border has been misused by unwanted elements, its negative and positive impact on both the countries, past incidents and analysis on the actions taken by the border authorities. This paper concludes that the existing open border regime has malfunctioned. Illegal cross-border activities have always shown special challenges to both the government. So it needs an alternative measure to resolve the challenges. These are- to introduce the Identity Card system, to densify border security forces, and to fence the frontier with the joint decision. This paper tries to suggest that both Nepal and India have to adopt these alternative measures in a phase wise basis to restrict the cross-border terrorists, control smugglers, arrest criminals, obstruct girl traffickers, and to check narcotic holders.