

Indo- Bhutan Relations from Developmental Cooperation to Strategic Partnership

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Abstract: Bhutan is a protected state but not a protectorate of India because of the historically close ties between the two countries and their shared commitment to "developmental cooperation." India and Bhutan's cooperative and peaceful partnership is an exceptional example of a South Asian bilateral relationship. They have been able to maintain a relationship that is both emotionally stable and functional throughout the years. With India's help, Bhutan has been able to forge its own route to economic development, one that prioritizes citizens' happiness rather than GDP. In recent years, Bhutan's economy has expanded significantly. It is impossible to overstate the significance of a country's neighbours in shaping public opinion on its foreign policy. Because it frequently needs to account for and work within the framework established by the foreign policy perceptions of other governments, Indian national interests are greatly aided by the stability and growth of the smaller states in its vicinity. But their proximity to India's borders makes them strategically significant to India's defence. Given India's tense relationships with China and Pakistan, the significance of India's cordial connections with them is accentuated. However, the historical and economic linkages between the two countries create common ties of interest that have served as the foundation for cordial relations. But curiously, it is precisely these connections that have often proven to be a source of conflict. The geostrategic position of these smaller governments has also made them the battleground for strategic competitors. The majority of these issues were also problems in Bhutan. The tiny landlocked kingdom of Bhutan sits between two of Asia's most formidable powers: China and India. For vital reasons, India and China require a cordial or friendly Bhutan. This is the primary influence on the formulation of its foreign policy and the most significant consequence of its location. The shifting geopolitical climate in Bhutan is one of the most significant issues that policymakers in India must address right away. This study aims to thoroughly examine the two nations' developmental cooperation and strategic partnership, illuminating the intricacies and changes in their relationship and their future prospects in the process.

Keywords: Indo- Bhutan Relations, Treaties, Developmental Cooperation, Strategic Partnership.

Introduction

The Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan is in the Himalayas. Both geographically and in terms of its economic and military might, it is a relatively small nation. Bhutan was spared the immediate repercussions of the two world wars and the cold war, which threw the world into an atmosphere of instability and alliances. Unlike its neighbours in the region, Bhutan was never colonized; as a result, it was spared the direct effects of these conflicts. However, for the entirety of the nation's history, the fight to preserve Bhutan's sovereign independence and territorial integrity has been a never-ending one. Additionally, Bhutanese culture

has a long history of being unusually sensitive to matters pertaining to national security.

This is partly because the community was able to maintain its cohesiveness by using a strategy of self-isolation up to the second half of the 20th century and by preserving and fostering a strong sense of identity. Bhutan has avoided the conflicts and political unrest that have befallen other nations, such as the legacy of hatred and mistrust left behind by the division of British India into the nations of India and Pakistan. The consequences of the cold war or either of the two world wars had no direct impact on the nation's population. Because of the "special relationship" and the historically

close ties that have existed between the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan and the Republic of India, India views Bhutan as a protected state rather than a protectorate. India continues to exert significant influence over Bhutan's corporate, foreign policy, and public security sectors. Following the appointment of a permanent Indian representative in Thimphu in 1968, the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Republic of India established diplomatic relations. Our political officer in Sikkim previously oversaw our relations with Bhutan.

Sikkim can be found to the east of Bhutan. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between India and Bhutan, which was first signed in 1949 and was later revised and resigned during His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck's visit to India in February 2007, provides the fundamental legal foundation for the two nations' interactions with one another.

It is generally accepted that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, and His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan at the time, were the driving forces behind the development of the Indo-Bhutanese relationship into the one that it is today. The conversation that led to development cooperation began when they met in the 1950s. We can see that Indian support for Bhutan's development and socioeconomic growth has significantly increased over the decades that have passed since then. This has taken place while the current king, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, is still in charge. India keeps giving Bhutan the most complete aid package possible, which includes many different kinds of help. Relations between the two countries continue to grow on every level, and they are often held up as a "shining" example of friendship and cooperation between a big country and a smaller neighbor.

The proximity of Bhutan and India is the primary reason for Bhutan's significance to India. It is located between India and China and is encircled by the Himalayas on all sides. As a result, it plays the role of a buffer between the two giants in Asia. After China's annexation of Tibet in 1951, Bhutan's role as a buffer zone increased significantly. As the crisis that occurred in the Doklam region in 2017 made clear, India will vigorously oppose, even to the point of using military force, any attempt by

China to exert sovereignty over the Doklam region. It should come as no surprise that India places a high priority on the securing of Bhutan's current borders, particularly its western border. If a hostile group took control of Doklam, it would make the Siliguri Corridor in India much more dangerous.

India and its northeastern states are connected by this narrow strip of land known as the corridor. India has stationed a large, permanent military garrison and an army hospital in the Haa district, where Doklam is located, due to its significance to the country's defense. Additionally, Bhutan has a significant economic impact on India. It provides a location where Indian investments can be made and a market for various Indian goods. Additionally, India sees Bhutan as a potential significant hydropower supplier. The political stability of Bhutan is a top priority for India. Not only would this jeopardize India's interests in Bhutan, but it would also provide a haven for activities that are hostile to India and militant groups that are hostile to India. The political stability of Bhutan is a top priority for India. Anti-Indian activities and militant groups can find refuge in Bhutan when the country is in a state of instability and unrest.

Research Objectives

India and Bhutan enjoy a one-of-a-kind and distinctive relationship that has been established by links of geography, history, and culture. India and Bhutan are bound by common interests and shared prosperity. This article analyzes the strategic partnership that exists between India and Bhutan as well as evaluate the areas of development cooperation that exist between the two countries.

Research Methodology

This article takes a document and analytical approach to its investigation. This research study relies heavily on information that was gathered from official government websites, such as articles, books, the internet, and official documents obtained from the ministry of external affairs of India. The majority of the content in this research study was derived from this information. Documentary research was utilized as a method for exhaustively investigating and explaining the facts

as well as the relationships that exist between them. We compiled and examined qualitative data so that we could make an objective assessment of the situation. In addition to this, the research is qualitative in character, and a thematic analysis is being utilized in order to qualitatively evaluate the quality of secondary data.

Result and Discussion

Areas of mutually beneficial development collaboration between India and Bhutan

In the areas of hydropower, development cooperation, safety, border administration, commerce, economic transit, and water resource management, various institutional frameworks facilitate interactions between India and Bhutan. Ministerial and official delegations, Parliamentary delegations, and other delegations have frequently exchanged places with the intention of strengthening partnerships in a variety of cooperation areas.

There is a procedure that reports to the Secretary for border management and security issues. The most recent and final meeting on the subject took place in November 2017 in New Delhi. In addition, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and the neighbouring states have established a Border District Collaboration Meeting (BDCM) Mechanism to promote coordination on border management and other issues related to it. The 23rd BDCM was held in Thimphu from October 24–25, 2017, and it was co-hosted by the State of West Bengal and the Royal Government of Bhutan. The 10th BDCM between RGoB and Assam took place in Bongaigaon, which is in Assam, on January 28 and 29, 2015.

The development of hydroelectric projects is profoundly influenced by India's active engagement in these endeavors. As a consequence of this, not only do people living in Bhutan have access to energy for their homes, but the country as a whole also enjoys financial benefits as a result of the sale of excess power to India. At this moment, the government of India has established three hydroelectric projects (HEPs) in the country of Bhutan. At the moment, India is assisting Bhutan in the construction of a power plant on the Mangdechhu Stream that it will use to generate electricity. The Agreement on Cooperation in

Hydropower from 2006 serves as the foundation for this power-sharing system using hydropower. India has committed, as part of the protocol for this agreement, to assisting Bhutan in the construction of 10,000 megawatts of hydropower and to importing excess electricity from the same sources by the year 2020. In addition, India and Bhutan have collaborated to establish what is known as a "Joint Group of Experts (JGE)" on the subject of flood management. The purpose of the Joint Group of Experts (JGE) on Flood Management between India and Bhutan is to discuss and evaluate the likely causes and effects of the recurrent floods and erosion in the southern foothills of Bhutan and the plains that are adjacent in India, as well as to make recommendations to the governments of both countries regarding the best course of action. Furthermore, the JGE intends to discuss and evaluate the likely causes and effects of recurring floods and erosion in Bhutan's southern foothills and plains. In addition, representatives from the Royal Government of Bhutan will be present at the JGE. The final gathering of the Joint Governmental Experts took place in the capital city of Bhutan, Thimphu, in April of 2017.

India exports goods to Bhutan because the country serves as a market for these goods in addition to being a destination for investments. India is the Kingdom of Bhutan's most significant economic partner. Since the beginning of Bhutan's first five-year plan in 1961, India has been providing the country's FYPs with financial support. India would contribute a total of 4,500 crore rupees to Bhutan's 12th Five-Year Plan. The majority of the foundation for the relationship between India and Bhutan is based on economic ties that are beneficial to both countries. India continues to be Bhutan's most significant economic and technological ally. Bhutan's organised efforts toward its planned growth began in the early 1960s. Bhutan began implementing its first five-year plan in 1961. The five-year plan that Bhutan has been working on has received financial support from India ever since.

Bhutan's primary source of financial support for its socioeconomic development will continue to be India. Ten iterations of Bhutan's Five-Year Plans have been carried out successfully up until this point, with India providing complete funding for two of those iterations (the first and

second). In addition to taking part in the expansion of Bhutan through its Five-Year Plans, India has also made an important contribution to the country's overall development. A demonstration of India's participation in each plan through the allocation of funds by the Royal Government Penden Cement Plant, Paro Airport, Bhutan Broadcasting Station, Major Highways, Electricity Transmission and Distribution System, Indo-Bhutan Microwave Link, Exploration of Mineral Resources, and Mapping and Surveying are some of the major projects that India has assisted Bhutan in finishing in the past. Other projects that India has assisted Bhutan in finishing include mapping and surveying. Other important projects include the Chukha Hydroelectric Project, which has a capacity of 336 megawatts; the Tala Hydroelectric Project, which has a capacity of 1020 megawatts; the Kurichhu Hydroelectric Project, which has a capacity of 60 megawatts; and the Chukha Hydroelectric Project.

Since 1972, India and Bhutan have conducted their commercial activities in accordance with the guidelines outlined in a document that was most recently revised in November of 2016. The agreement between the two countries creates a free-trade zone between them and enables the movement of Bhutanese commodities to other countries without the payment of duty. Bhutan's primary trading partner is India. The value of all the goods and services that were traded between two countries in the first half of 2018 came to a total of Rs. 4318.59 crore. Mineral products, electrical equipment, machinery, mechanical appliances, and other commodities that are very similar to one another are the types of goods that are sent from India to Bhutan the most frequently. On the other hand, electricity, ferrosilicon, and Portland cement are some of the commodities that are exported from Bhutan to India the most frequently.

The India–Bhutan Friendship Treaty of 2007 went through its most recent revision in 2007, and it featured measures for strengthening trade cooperation between the two countries. This was the most current revision of the treaty. According to Article III of the Treaty, "There shall, as there has been up to this point, be unhindered trade and commerce between the territories of the Government of Bhutan and the Government of

India." The status quo must be maintained. Both nations' governments are obligated to fully collaborate with one another and support one another in all aspects of commercial and economic concerns. India is Bhutan's key economic development partner, and it is also Bhutan's most significant trading partner. Because of these facts, India and Bhutan are the primary partners. There is a free trade agreement in place between the two countries of India and Bhutan. The trade and commerce agreement that was initially signed between the two countries in 1972 has been in effect ever since it was first signed.

This agreement was prolonged for a further ten years in 2006, bringing its total length to twenty. At this time, the most important commodities that are exported from Bhutan to India are: power (obtained from the Tala, Chukha, and Kurichhu hydroelectric activities), base metals and articles, minerals, vegetable fats and oils, cocktails, synthetics, concrete, lumber, and wood items, cardamom, natural product items, potatoes, oranges, and apples, crude silk, plastic, and elastic items. Petroleum products, mineral products, base metals and articles, machinery, automobiles and spare parts, vegetables, nuts, spices, processed food and animal products, chemicals, wood, plastic, and rubber are among the most important exports from India to Bhutan. Other important exports include base metals and articles.

The Agreement on Trade and Commerce not only makes it possible for Bhutanese commodities to transit duty-free, but it also makes it easier for Bhutan to trade with third-world nations. The Trade Agreement between the two countries outlines the entry and departure points for any bilateral trade that takes place between the two countries. The value of all commodities and services that were traded between India and Bhutan in 2000–2001 and 2018–2019 has increased by more than four times what it was in the previous year. The degree of economic and commercial integration between the two countries, in addition to the rapid expansion of both economies, has been a significant factor in the increase in the volume of commerce that takes place between the two countries. Even though India has been in the lead in terms of the trade balance for the previous eight years, the gap between India's exports to Bhutan

and imports from Bhutan has continued to widen over the course of recent history.

Despite this, India sustained a trade deficit with Bhutan from 2006–07 to 2010–11 due to increased imports of wires made of refined copper and wires made from refined palm oil and derivatives (HS 151190). (HS 740811). This was due to the fact that India experienced an increase in the quantity of imports of these products in the years 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. In the years that followed, India's imports of these two commodities plummeted dramatically. On the other hand, India's imports of ferrosilicon (HS 720221) and calcium carbides (HS 284910) rose quickly and were the primary reason why its imports were higher than its exports to Bhutan. Both of these products fall under the Harmonized System category 720221. The fact that the volume of our exports to Bhutan has been increasing throughout the most recent period is evident in both the overall trade as well as the trade balance that has occurred between our two countries.

For their education, many Bhutanese students attend colleges in India. A number of Indian government scholarships are available to Bhutanese students. Consistently, both nations take part in cultural exchanges that benefit both sides. One of the essential objectives of the India-Bhutan Establishment, which was made in 2003, is to empower more prominent social trade between the two nations' populations. Every year, undergraduate students from Bhutan receive scholarships from the Indian government that enable them to attend prestigious Indian educational establishments. As part of the XI Five-Year Plan, this programme has provided 450 places for Bhutanese students to attend undergraduate schools in India.

Consequently, the Indian government provides ninety (90) meritorious Bhutanese students pursuing higher education in a variety of professional fields with fully funded scholarships, including but not limited to MBBS (at AIIMS), engineering, LLB, B.Sc. (Nursing), B.Sc. (Agriculture), and BDS, among others. A total of 370 students were selected to receive this award between 2013 and 2017. 87 Bhutanese students utilized the scholarship during the 2018–19 academic years. The prestigious Nehru-Wangchuk

Scholarship is currently awarded to brilliant Bhutanese students who wish to continue their education at prestigious Indian educational institutions of their choice. A total of 74 scholarships have been awarded since the program's inception in 2010; this number does not include the eight scholarships that were given out for the upcoming academic year (2018–2019) as part of this scheme. The Ambassador's Scholarship is awarded on an independent financial basis to academically outstanding and deserving Bhutanese students who are currently enrolled full-time in one of the numerous schools or universities in India, in addition to other candidates who meet the requirements. In 2013, 668 Bhutanese students who were self-supporting their education received the Ambassador's Scholarship. The amount of money set aside for this scholarship has since been increased to a staggering Rs. 4 crore annually. The Ambassador Scholarship was awarded to 866 students in the 2016–17 academic years, but only 843 students received it in the 2017–18 academic year.

Through the ITEC program, Bhutan is eligible to receive thirty open lecturer positions. For the 2018–2019 academic year, 11 Indian lecturers were sent to work in various Bhutanese colleges. There are currently twelve Indian CP lecturers working in Bhutan. The prerequisites spread out by the Regal Administration of Bhutan are utilized to figure out which teachers will be deputed.

The majority of the approximately 60,000 Indian nationals who live in Bhutan—the so-called "floating population"—have jobs in the construction, road, and hydroelectric power generation sectors. Additionally, every day, between 8,000 and 10,000 employees enter and exit Bhutan through the border cities. Since the beginning of development plans in the 1960s, expatriates, particularly Indians, have filled Bhutan's need for semi-skilled and unskilled labor, first in the construction of roads and then in mining, agro-based industries, and hydropower projects as development priorities have changed. Most of these jobs have been held by Indian expats. This dependence developed as a result of a lack of technical skills and equipment, as well as local knowledge and expertise in road construction. 119 Indian personnel and laborers, primarily from

adjacent Indian states, were recruited in large numbers. Local Bhutanese laborers, the majority of whom were farmers, were not required to complete all of the construction work, although Indian labourers were hired to work on Bhutanese roads. All things being equal, they were spared this obligation. Currently, Project Dantak is in charge of most of Bhutan's public road maintenance. The organization has an average of 2,000 Indian labourers working on roads throughout the country at any given time.

The Bhutanese government hired a large number of Indians in the 1960s to fill administrative positions and other positions related to development programmes because the country's modern formal education system did not begin until after 1955 and the first generation of qualified Bhutanese did not enter the civil service until a few decades later. This was because formal education in Bhutan did not begin in the modern way until after 1955. Even though Indians have been steadily replaced in these positions by Bhutanese citizens, many Indians continue to work in public corporations and the civil service to this day. However, a turning point has occurred, and this is the point at which the achievements of modern education have contributed to the gradual replacement of Indian expats in a variety of occupations, including teaching, medical care, engineering, accounting, and administrative work.

The Current Situation and the Prospects for the Future

Despite the recent escalation in geopolitical tensions, the Kingdom of Bhutan has continued to be India's most reliable friend. This is a position that has never been called into doubt, and it has also never been altered. In order to protect both Bhutan and India's national security, Druk King Jigme Singye Wangchuck personally led his troops into battle against Indian insurgent organizations. This was done with the purpose of preserving Bhutan's and India's independence. Additionally, Bhutan has certainly kept its ties to India throughout the years. It has, for example, avoided playing the China card, worked openly with India to make use of India's hydropower assets, avoided hurting India's reputation in the area, and protected India's interests in terms of national

security. The relationship between Bhutan and India transitioned into a new phase of partnership in 2007 following the signing of a treaty between the two countries. The earlier version of the pact did not recognize Bhutan's commitment to preserving its territorial integrity or sovereignty; however, the most recent treaty does accept Bhutan's commitment to doing so.

In addition, the treaty can be seen as a roadmap for future interactions; it places an emphasis on constructive cooperation rather than ties based on economic reliance. The relationship between India and Bhutan is maybe the only bilateral engagement in South Asia that has stayed relatively unchanged over the course of time. Bhutan has expressed its gratitude to India for the economic support it has provided over the course of all of these years and has actively partnered with India on the front lines of security throughout all of these years. On the other side, India has been attentive to Bhutan's needs for its entire development. Bhutan has been able to make significant progress as a result. In formal communication, Bhutan has made it very clear that India's interests will be protected at all times, and this reassurance is appreciated by India. Because of this relationship, Bhutan has been able to pave its own way toward economic progress by focusing on the notion of gross national happiness (GNH), which stands for gross national happiness. Over the course of the last few years, the economy of Bhutan has undergone a considerable period of boom. India has been a vital development partner for Bhutan for a number of years, and the country's relationship with India dates back quite some time. Regarding the practise of bilateralism in the area, Bhutan continues to serve as a model for India's other South Asian neighbours to follow. This country is still the nation's most important trading partner. There have been times when India has been willing to back Bhutan in its quest to grow its economy. In June of 2014, India extended a standby credit facility to Bhutan in the sum of 700 billion rupees in order to offer the country assistance in overcoming its significant shortage of rupees. For the past few years, Bhutan has faced a lack of liquid assets, but with support from India, it has been able to solve this challenge so far. For example, in March 2009, India extended a standby credit facility to

Bhutan in the amount of 300 crore rupees in order to assist the government in overcoming its lack of available currency.

This limit was increased to a total of 600 billion rupees the following year (2011). In a manner comparable to this, India extended to Bhutan in June 2012 an offer of a credit line with a total value of 10 billion rupees and an annual interest rate of 5%. This offer was made after the crisis that occurred with the rupee. In addition, the Indian government reimburses Bhutan for the excise duty that Bhutan must pay in order to purchase manufactured goods from India. This refund is provided by India to Bhutan. In the realm of education, India awards fifty full scholarships to students from Bhutan each year so that they can participate in the education system in India and attend universities and other educational institutes there. As part of the Colombo Plan, an additional fifty scholarships will be made available to deserving students. The Nehru-Wangchuk scholarship, which was founded in 2009, will have its funding increased by a factor of four, and Prime Minister Modi has committed to establishing digital libraries in each of Bhutan's 20 administrative districts. The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) provides the Royal Bhutan Army with instruction, equipment, and preparation for participation in a variety of training programmes in the field of defence that are held at Indian military training sites. These programmes are held at Indian military training sites. This is accomplished in conjunction with the Royal Bhutan Army. India is responsible for the financing and maintenance of Bhutan's hydroelectric offices, and it is India that purchases the power that is generated as a result of these offices.

In contrast to Bhutan's negative experiences with Nepal regarding the Kosi and Gandak rivers, the success of one project in Bhutan has resulted in the development of another project based on confidence, economic viability, and shared benefits. This is in contrast to Bhutan's previous experiences with Nepal. A new agreement has been made between the two nations to create ten hydroelectric projects in Bhutan by the year 2020, with a total capacity of 11,800 megawatts (MW). In Bhutan's attempts to strengthen its energy security and water resource management,

the successful exploitation of hydropower in close coordination with India marked the beginning of bilateral cooperation. This accomplishment served as a milestone in Bhutan's efforts. The hydropower industry was responsible for 17.05 percent of the total revenue generated in the country in 2011, making it the sector that made the greatest contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. As a direct consequence of this, Bhutan has earned resources that have contributed to the Himalayan nation's rise to the position of state with the highest GDP per capita in the area. In July 2014, Prime Minister Modi participated in the laying of the foundation stone for the 650 MW Kholongchu hydroelectric plants. This was done in order to broaden the scope of participation in the cooperation. 30 It appears that both countries are dedicated to meeting the 10,000 MW targets by the year 2020.

Strategic Partnership between indo-Bhutan

Bhutan and India have strong links with one another in both the armed forces and the economy. The Indian armed forces "are virtually responsible for protecting Bhutan from foreign and domestic threats," and in order to achieve this objective, the Indian Army and Air Force's Eastern Command have incorporated Bhutan's defence within their missions and responsibilities. India's role in the region is essentially contingent on Bhutan's defence. Training for Bhutanese law enforcement and military personnel is also provided by the Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT). The Bhutanese economy is mostly under the control of India. India is the most important trade partner for Bhutan, providing a market for 90 percent of the country's exports and 79 percent of the country's total imports. In addition, India is the principal source of help from other countries for Bhutan. Between the years 2000 and 2017, India provided assistance to Bhutan in the amount of \$4.7 billion. This constituted the majority of India's overall contributions to international aid. Relationships between India and Bhutan: The Takshashila Policy Advisory is sometimes referred to as the Takshashila Strategic Analysis. Developing a Partnership or Relationship Page 4 out of 9 pages first appearing in May of 2018 Additionally, Bhutan's five-year plans have benefited from

India's financial assistance, which has been substantial. It is possible to determine the significance of its contribution by considering the fact that the US\$750 million that it donated to Bhutan's Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2013–2018) constituted 68% of the entire aid that Bhutan got from foreign sources. This exemplifies the significance of the contribution that it has made. In addition, India is having a significant impact on the improvement of Bhutan's foundation by constructing streets and dealing with hydroelectric ventures. These activities are being carried out in Bhutan. The development of hydropower has resulted in a surplus of electricity that has been sold to India. This is in addition to the fact that the Bhutanese people now have access to electricity for their own usage. Power exports to India account for forty percent of the total revenue collected by Bhutan and contribute twenty-five percent to the country's GDP.

The relationship that exists between India and Bhutan is one that is recognised by both countries as being "special" and "extraordinary" in nature. Both India and Bhutan are generally aware of the issues held by the other country, such as India's reservations over Bhutan's sovereignty and Bhutan's anxieties regarding India's safety. Bhutan's request to operate as a fully sovereign state was met with a favourable answer from India, despite the fact that it came in quite a bit later than expected. It was no longer required for Bhutan to "be led by the advice" of India in the conduct of its foreign policy or to seek its "approval" on armament purchases after this change to the 1949 Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship was enacted in 2007. This change was implemented in 2007. In fact, equality was included in the framework of their relationship when they signed the Treaty of Friendship in 2007. It stipulates that neither country "should tolerate the use of its territory for actions harmful to the other's national security and interests." As for Bhutan, it has come to the conclusion that it will not be accepting the all-encompassing settlement that China presented to it in 1996 as a means of resolving the disagreement regarding the borders of the two countries. It would appear that China is willing to back down from its claims to the Jakurlung and Pasamlung Valleys, located in the northwest corner

of Bhutan, in exchange for Bhutan handing over sovereignty of the Doklam region. If Bhutan agrees to this plan, then its borders may be defined more precisely. On the other hand, Thimphu has not yet given its approval to the conditions of this contract in order to take India's security concerns into account.

Challenges

India's meddling in Bhutan's internal affairs may be traced back to a few specific incidents that occurred over the years. As a consequence of this, a significant number of people in Bhutan have formed an unfavorable opinion of India in their minds. There is a growing sense in Bhutan that India's growth of hydropower production in Bhutan is motivated by India's own self-interest. This is due to the fact that India is acquiring Bhutan's surplus power at rates that are very low for India. The economic concerns that Bhutan has regarding the viability of its hydroelectric projects have come to the forefront as a result of India's shift toward the use of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, amongst others. The illegal establishment of camps by terrorist organisations in the dense woods of south-east Bhutan should cause both governments to be concerned because it constitutes a threat to their respective internal security. China's unwavering claims of sovereignty over strategically significant border regions such as Chumbi Valley and Doklam, as well as China's unwavering efforts to forge robust diplomatic and economic ties with Bhutan, continue to be a source of concern for India. India's concerns stem from both of these factors. India has been experiencing a consistent level of unease as a direct result of both of these reasons.

The Follow-Up Actions

The efforts that are being made by India to make public the benefits that accrue to Bhutan as a result of advancements in India need to have a greater emphasis placed on them. It is essential that India keep an eye out for possible new areas of cooperation with Bhutan. Taking a step in the right direction is the Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) intention to create a ground station in Bhutan. Because of the station, it would

be much simpler for Bhutan to disseminate weather-related information to the more remote parts of its territory. India should make every effort to keep out of the internal affairs of Bhutan and should attempt to avoid doing so as much as possible, despite the fact that it can serve as a mentor to the country. Both nations are worried about China's influence on the safety of their respective borders. As a direct consequence of this, there is a requirement for cooperation between the two camps on this subject. In addition to this, it is imperative that border regions be kept free of militants at all costs. This cannot be stressed enough. Because they are geographically close to one another, it is vitally important for both nations to continue to recognize the significance of the other. It is necessary for both parties to make frequent high-level visits in order to make progress toward this objective.

Conclusion

In 1968, India initiated diplomatic links with Bhutan by establishing a special office in Thimphu, which marked the beginning of India's relationship with Bhutan. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was initially signed in 1949 and most recently revised in February 2007, serves as the primary legal basis for India and Bhutan's dealings with one another. India and Bhutan jointly organised a number of celebrations in 2018 to honour the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations. The unique relationship that exists between India and Bhutan has been around for a significant amount of time and has managed to persist over this period of time. The highest levels of trust and kindness, as well as a comprehensive understanding between the two parties, distinguish this connection. The long-standing history of regular high-level exchanges and visits that the two countries have maintained over the years has helped to contribute to the maintenance of their unique connection. The government of India has stated on multiple occasions that it is committed to supporting the social and economic development of Bhutan. The way in which these two countries have worked together on hydroelectric projects is a fantastic example of cooperation that benefits both parties. Over the course of the past six decades,

strong political and economic links have been established between Bhutan and India, thanks in large part to the diplomatic efforts of India. The relationship between India and Bhutan can be summed up as cordial, amicable, and characterized by trust and confidence on both sides of the border. The relationship between India and Bhutan is maybe the only bilateral engagement in South Asia that has stayed relatively unchanged over the course of time. As a direct result of this relationship, Bhutan has been given the opportunity to carve out its own unique route toward growth that is oriented on gross national happiness (GNH). India and Bhutan's continued high-level political interactions, which take place on a monthly basis, are extremely important to the process of building bilateral ties. Interactions such as these are one of the distinguishing aspects of the bilateral relationships that exist between the two countries. Because of its small size, lack of advanced technology, and limited military defence capabilities, Bhutan has been obliged to adopt different means of protection in order to protect its citizens. These forms of security can be exemplified by phrases such as "national identity for cultural coherence and neutrality to rebuild its long-term security." Its natural location in the Himalayas, which fits with India's strategic security objectives and has added to its strength and provided chances for the country's internal growth, is in the Himalayas.

It is possible to say that India and Bhutan's relations have a strong historical foundation for a number of reasons, one of which is the fact that both countries have historically responded favorably to one another's interests and concerns. This is one of the reasons why it is possible to say that India-Bhutan relations have a solid historical foundation. It is believed that a relationship between the two nations that is interactive, helpful to both parties, and cooperative is advantageous to both countries. As a consequence of this, it is in the best interests of both countries to maintain their collaborative efforts. On the other hand, India needs to be on the watch for Bhutan due to the fact that that country's strategic location is relatively close to sections of India's border that are prone to violence. It is not in the best interest of the nation to disregard any growth that could be harmful to

the nation's overall interests if it is occurring on the periphery of the nation. The connection between India and Bhutan was once referred to as "developmental cooperation," but it has subsequently transitioned into a "strategic partnership" in recent years.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that they have no known financial or interpersonal conflicts that would have appeared to have an impact on the research presented in this study.

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