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The Nature and Impacts of 2015 Indian Unofficial Blockade in Nepal

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LANDSAM

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Declaration

I, Jhabakhar Aryal, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

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Jhabakhar Aryal

Dedication:

To my parents and teachers

Abstract

This research analyses the nature of 2015 unofficial blockade in Nepal and finds out the impacts of it. For analysing the nature, the perception and experience of the respondents, Indian responses for blockade allegation and the ground on which blockade was lifted were analysed. The impacts of the blockade were discussed on political, social and economic aspects of the country. The study adopts qualitative research design. The data collected through semi structured interviews and document analysis and content analysis was the main technique used in data analysis. This study is based on colonial hangover perspective of postcolonial lens. So, it tries to see that if the legacy of colonialism persists in social, political and cultural aspects even after the political independence of colonized nations. The adoption of colonizers power to dominate and suppress by colonized in the search of independence as discussed by Freire (2000) was seen to have been materialized in 2015 blockade in Nepal. Normally the colonized countries are said to have been oppressed and undergone severe difficulties during their colonial period. India in this sense, could not have been exception. In an attempt of overcoming this inferiority, India was seen seeking the ability to influence others. The nature of the blockade, the consequences, the proposed amendments in the constitution, support given to the dissatisfied groups, division among the people within the country, etc. show that India wished to establish indirect rule in Nepal. From the analysis it is found that in 2015 unofficial blockade in Nepal Madhesis protestants were seen on the ground actively involved blocking supplies to Nepal for putting pressure to address their grievances through constitution amendment. However, despite the repeatedly denial of allegation from Indian side, the political leaders in executive and most of the respondents believed that India had hand behind the blockade. Blockade influenced policy making and external relation of the country. Not only on household, educational and medical sectors, the impacts of blockade were seen in agriculture, environment and social psychology as well. Major impacts of blockade were seen in the economy of the country. When state mechanism was about to cease to function, black market flourished, and many business industries were closed. The economic growth was lowered beyond the expectation. These all consequences of the blockade indicate that India seems to have followed colonizer's culture for keeping influence in its neighbouring state.

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1. Introduction

Nepal is geographically sandwiched between India and China; in south Asia. The country borders to India in the east, west and south and to China in the North. So, it has no access to the sea and locked by these two countries. Topographically, Nepal has three main regions; mountain, hills and plain. The mountain in the north borders with China and plain with India. Because of the high mountains in the north, Nepal does not have good trade link with China. So, with no access to the third country, Nepal has heavy economic dependence on India. A small issue of misunderstanding between India and Nepal can bring major impacts in Nepal. The relationship between India and Nepal is shaped by geographical, socio-cultural, economic and political-strategic factors. However, these factors sometimes give rise to the irritants and cause constraints in the relationship between these two countries. So, India and Nepal are often viewed as close but uneasy neighbours (Upreti 2003). To reach to the third country, Nepal must use the Indian port. As Nepal does not have any energy resources except potential hydroelectricity, it imports all petroleum products mainly from India. Nepal is not independent even in iron and steel metals. Besides, a lot of grains, food, vegetables and medicine are also imported from India every year. This heavy dependence cost expensive for Nepal when Indian government dissatisfies with issues of Nepal.

This paper analyses the nature and impacts of 2015 Indian blockade in Nepal. It begins with a brief history of Indo-Nepal relation since the stakeholders of 2015 blockade were these countries. The background section also describes the issues of Madhes movement which were the main root of blockade. Madhes is the low land southern fertile region of the country bordering the northern part of India. Madhesi are to some extent marginalized and disadvantaged people. Beyond the issues of Madhes, it also examines the concerns of India in the constitution of Nepal. The issues of Madhes movement keep changing with the change of time. Deprivation of citizenship, exclusion, internal colonialism, Hindi as an official language, identity, population-based constituencies, provincial demarcation, etc. are the issues related to Madhes movement (Gurung, 2017; Jaiswal, 2015). When Madhes-based parties failed to institutionalize these issues in 2015 constitution of Nepal, they went for strike. They focused their strikes at the Indo-Nepal border blocking the supplies to Nepal. Meanwhile the Indian government showed its deep concern on the strike at the border and asked the government of Nepal to address those issues. However, those issues were not fully addressed when the constitution was promulgated. Because of socio-cultural proximity to the low land region of Nepal, Indian government has always been supportive to the Madhesi

people (Gurung 2017). In 2015 Madhes movement India openly stood by the voices of the Madhesi and the Tharus not only because of their social cultural affinity but also for the security concerns caused by the strike at the border (Jaiswal, 2016). Gradually, the strike for sealing the border changed into blockade. Though the Madhes based parties took the responsibility of blockade, major political parties and people in the hills alleged Indian government that blockade could not have been possible without Indian government's tactic approval (Ghimire, 2015).

Chapter three introduces the conceptual framework. This section gives a brief introduction of blockade and presents some practices of blockades. Reviewing the literature, it is found that all the blockades were declared officially by one or more international actors for their own specific reasons unlike 2015 blockade in Nepal. As the blockade impairs the economy of the target country and brings social and humanitarian crisis, imposing blockade is assumed as an oppressive behaviour. So, the blockade would be looked through colonial hangover perspective of postcolonial lens. Das (2018) writes that even after seven decades of its independence, the British legacy continues almost all sectors of Indian governance— from judiciary to policing, military practices and even in parliament, the look, feel, protocol and practices still gives a glimpse of the colonial regime. She further underscores that India is practicing the colonial culture simply because it was under British Raj for more than 200 years. This study tries to analyse the nature and impacts of 2015 blockade to see if this blockade was imitation of dominating culture learnt from Britain.

Chapter four deals with the methodological part of this research. This is qualitative research in the sense that it attempts to understand how the respondents interpret their experiences and attribute meaning of their experiences during the blockade. The primary data were elicited from purposively sampled respondents having blockade experience and secondary data were collected from different books written about blockade, journals, images, news articles and reports published during blockade period and relevant to the topic. The news reports and articles of two Indian newspapers were read, reviewed and used to support and triangulate the primary data. So, the sample for the study was taken purposively. The whole data were analysed through proper content analysis. The limitations, ethical consideration and challenges and reflections are stated at the end of methodology.

Chapter five analyses the data collected from primary and secondary sources. This chapter broadly divided into two sub-categories. The first part attempts to find out the

political, social and economic impacts of the blockade and the second analyses the nature of blockade based on the experience of respondent, response from India and ground on which the blockade was lifted. The impacts of the blockade are analysed on political, social and economic aspects of Nepalese society. Nepal got very close to China because of the blockade. The impacts of blockade were observed in educational, medical, agricultural, tourism sectors beside the heightened anti-Indian sentiments. Many industries were closed, and people became jobless. The black market flourished so that the price of daily used items skyrocketed. The economic growth lowered below two percent because of blockade and preceding earthquake. Most of the respondents and leaders of then government alleged the Indian government for imposing the blockade against Nepal using the leaders of Madhes based parties. However, India claimed that such allegation was false and pointed towards Madhesi respondents being responsible for the blockade. The blockade was lifted on the ground of Prime Minister's visit to India, amendment of two provisions of the constitution and Nepal's growing closeness to China.

The nature of 2015 blockade against Nepal was quite different than the blockades in the other countries. The Madhes-based parties were dissatisfied with the constitution draft. India had sent an envoy to address the Madhesi concerns right before the promulgation of the constitution to avoid possible threats caused by Madhes protest. However, the constitution was promulgated as it was. India could have taken this incident very sensitively and helped the Madhesi protestants blocking supplies to Nepal. Nepal blamed India and India showed Madhesi protestants being responsible for the blockade. The Madhesi protestants took the responsibility for the blockade. However, from the data analysis it was found that most Nepalese including majority of the respondents believed it was indeed a blockade by India though not declared officially.

2. Background

2.1 Indo-Nepal Relation

Nepal and India established their diplomatic relation on 13th June 1947. Nevertheless, the relations between them have been growing since the eons of history which further strengthened after the India's independence from the British rule in 1947. The political and economic relations between these two countries have tremendously grown after they signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950; which confirmed that the border between these two countries would remain open for the great advantages to both countries (Jha, 2013).

People of both countries have a good access to education, trade, employment, health, etc. opportunities because of this open border since they do not need any visa and passport to enter and work in other country. Beside this open border, deep-rooted socio-cultural-religious similarities and geographical proximity underwired the relation between them.

History shows many ups and downs between these two countries. Both countries seem to be very conscious regarding the protection of their national interests and security always is a matter of great concern for India since its independence. There exists a kind of security dilemma in Indo-Nepal relation. India suspects every Nepalese activity possibly directed by China, Pakistan and any other western power against India and majority of the Nepalese look every Indian activity with great suspicion with the belief that India does not miss to fish in Nepal's troubled water whenever it gets such opportunity (Aryal, et al. 2011). Since the inception of the democracy, Nepal could not progress in the path of stable politics. In most of the major political changes in the country, India seems to have some role. For example, there were four movements for democracy in the country. Every movement got green signal from New Delhi to reach to the consensus(KC, 2016). First, in 1950 democracy was established ending up 104 years Rana dictatorship, the agreement was settled in New Delhi among King, Ranas and Congress. The democratic parties made alliance with King Tribhuvan and the Indian government to overthrow the Rana regime (Snellinger, 2015). The 1980 and the 1990 AD democratic movements were initiated in India. For democratic movements II in April 2006, the political leaders got enough support from India to kneel Kingship and establish country as republic state. The base of the movement "12 points agreement" was done in New Delhi (Snellinger, 2015). India even today looks at every political activities and movements in south Asia very closely and tries to influence them although there raise the issues of interfering the internal affairs (KC, 2016). In September, Nepal promulgated new constitution on 20th September 2015 despite the discontent of Madhes-based parties. The section below describes the Madhes Issues and strikes based on constitutional provisions and the response from India.

2.2 The Madhes Movement and Issues

Before discussing the Madhes movement and issues, we need to understand what the term "Madhes" means. Nepal has three main topographical regions: the mountains, the hills and the Tarai (Nayak 2011). Tarai is a low land fertile region bordered with northern India interchangeably called Madhes. Thus, Madhes is a geographical region in the southern Nepal

and “Madhesi” literally means the people living in Madhes. However, all people living in entire Tarai region do not believe themselves as Madhesi. The Madhesi population is composed of three major communities: the janajatis (Tharus); the original inhabitants, the Pahade Madhesi; who migrated to Madhes in the search of their livelihood, and Indian Madhesi; who migrated to Nepal from Bihar and Uttar provinces of India before 1950 (Nayak 2011). According to the Census report (2011) out total population in 75 districts, 50.27 percent people live in 20 districts of Tarai. So, Madhes is high density region of the country. Electoral constituencies based on population is one of the issues that the Madhes based parties raise in their movement.

A long history of a sense of discrimination and deprivation is the root of Madhes movement. Yvome (2007) writes that for more than five decades, Madhesi have been fighting against the discriminatory practices of the government, laws of citizenship and language and recruitment policies in bureaucracy and armed force. The issue of citizenship is the central issue. Many Madhesi people are still without citizenship since none of the citizenship legislations of 1950, 1960 and 1990 could solve the citizenship problem in Madhes (Gurung, 2017). Yadav (2015) argues that it is very difficult for some of the Madhesi people to buy and register land due to the lack of citizenship. Lack of citizenship certificates deprives them from different opportunities distributed around the country.

The issues raised in Madhesi movement include liberal policy in citizenship, official status to Hindi language, reservation in the employment in civil service, armed force and all other state mechanism, federal system of government for the recognition of their separate identity, electoral constituencies on the basis of population, only one province from east to west in entire Tarai region, (Yadav, 2015; Hachhethu, 2007; Jaisawal, 2015) etc. It is not easy for them to get the job opportunities in the governmental organizations. They have lost their rights to property many times in the history. Their land was also forcefully occupied by different land acts during king’s regime (Gurung, 2017). The cultural affiliation across the border (India) made them more difficult for their living. The provision of Nepali as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges and the language of office use is another problem they are facing in communication. Nayak (2011) claims that though 78 percent of total revenue comes from Tarai region, there prevails socio economic deprivation. Madhesi people are always deprived from good schools, universities, other infrastructures and health facilities (Gurung, 2017).

The history of Madhes movement goes back to the formation of Nepal Tarai Congress under the chairmanship of Bedananda Jha in 1951 with the aim of regional autonomy (Yvome (2007)). But this party failed to get people's endorsement in electoral politics since it lost all the seats in the parliamentary election of 1959 (Hachhethu, 2007). Raghunath Thakur formed Madhesi Mukti Andolan in 1956, Gajendra Narayan Singh established a Sadbhawana Council in 1983, later changed into Sadbhawana party and took part in the general elections of 1991, 1994 and 1999 to raise voice against the discrimination, deprivation and exploitation against Madhesi (Yvome 2007). Yvome further writes during these elections, the party had the manifesto of federal system of government, a separate Madhesi battalion in the army and a liberal policy of citizenship. The demand of federal system government shows that they were deprived of many opportunities by the centralized governance system and longing for more autonomy in different aspects. So, the Madhesi uprising of 2007 was not sudden.

After the overthrow of monarchy in 2006, an interim constitution was drafted and promulgated in 2007. Newer parties with the similar agenda appeared dramatically in Tarai-Madhes politics. Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) and some other Madhes based parties were dissatisfied with the provisions in the interim constitution for not addressing the questions of federalism and readjustment of electoral constituencies (Sijapati, 2012). It was claimed that the interim constitution failed to address the issues of Tarai since it was promulgated by hilly elites (Gurung, 2017). For the same reason, Madhes movement was started in the middle of January in 2007, continued for 21 days, during which not only private property and government offices were destroyed, 30 people were also killed and some 800 injured (Sijapati, 2012). One of the least reported and most significant changes in Nepalese politics after the people's movement in 2006, was the emergence of Madhes as a political force (Gurung, 2017). This claim was materialized in the results of 2008 CA election which gave them a remarkable presence in CA to influence the national politics. During the first constitutional assembly, the representatives of Madhes based parties struggled to establish their issues in the constitution. However, this constitutional assembly could not draft and promulgate the constitution and dissolved in 2012.

Another election of CA was held in November 2013. In this election, the size of Madhes based parties reduced drastically and their voice to establish their concerns in the constitution became weaker. But they kept on struggling to establish their concerns in the constitution. However, the priority of Madhes movement kept changing time to time. Coming to the year 2013, before the promulgation of the constitution, the Madhes based parties had a

list of concerns to be addressed. The concerns include the group of 20 districts of Tarai to be one province, delineation of electoral constituencies based on population, proportional inclusion in the state structures, re-demarcation of electoral constituencies every 10 years, equal treatment to both decent and naturalized citizenship (Gurung, 2017; Jaiswal, 2015). The constitution was promulgated without institutionalizing these concerns. As a result, Madhes based parties called for strike throughout the Madhes region. They tried to seal the border which finally changed into blockade. The section below describes more about the Nepalese constitutional provisions, the response from India and how the Madhesi movement changed into blockade.

2.3 Nepalese Constitution, Indian Concerns and Blockade

The constitutional development was started in Nepal with Nepal government Act in 1947. Between 1947 to 2015, seven different constitutions were drafted and implemented after each political change. This shows both political and constitutional instability in the country. The last constitution unlike all other preceding was drafted and promulgated by the constitutional assembly. The election of constitutional assembly (CA) was held for two times one after another in a row in Nepal. The first constitutional assembly was held in April 2008 and dissolved without drafting a new constitution in May 2012. Two competitive ideologies were observed during this CA tenure in structuring the federal states: single identity-based Vs multiple identity based (Sapkota, 2014). The political leaders of the major parties could not call for poll to decide this issue. Snellinger (2015) states that “the main reason the CA dissolved in 2012 was the top party leaders’ refusal to call a vote over the federal structure after consensus on state restructuring failed” p.1. Ethnic tag attached to proposed federal states, the issue of identity and various opinions on provincial demarcation were the main reasons for the dismissal of CA in 2012 (Sapkota, 2014). After the failure of the first constitutional assembly to promulgate new constitution, second constitutional assembly was held in November 2013. As there was growing dissatisfaction in public towards members of CA for their inability to draft the constitution, there was much pressure to them to draft the constitution in time. So, Nepalese leaders were seen committed to promulgate the constitution on the date they declared in advance. Nevertheless, it was not so easy to establish all issues in the constitution. The first dissolved CA indicated that “establishing a common political conception is difficult, especially if there is partial incommensurability over the most contentious issues” (Snellinger, 2015, p. 10). So, though the leaders of major political parties tried their best to address the issues of all marginalized and disadvantaged groups, the

circumstances showed that it was quite impossible to get total consensus among all the CA members.

Foreign secretary S. Jayshankar as a special envoy of the Prime minister had landed in Kathmandu 2 days before the constitution commencement. He made sincere effort to pursue the Nepalese leaders to accommodate the concerns of the dissatisfied groups in the constitution at the eleventh hour (Rai, 2017). His objective of visiting Kathmandu was to re-appeal the government for maintaining social harmony through the process of widest possible consensus to strengthen the climate of trust and confidence by postponing the promulgation day (Himalayan Times, 2015). But his attempt to bring all in widest possible consensus went in vein. The political leaders denied postponing the promulgation and the constitution was promulgated on 20th September 2015 as declared in advance. The Indian government took this incident very seriously and must felt insult. There was a deadlock in Indo-Nepal relation immediately after the promulgation of the 2015 constitution. Both Madhesi and Indian government tagged it to be non-inclusive (Jaiswal, 2016).

Muni (2015) underlines some distinguishing features of 2015 constitution of Nepal. For him, the constitution has protected the principle of republicanism, federalism, socialism based democratic values, secularism and inclusiveness. But he claims that the constitution is a highly controversial document; being disapproved by marginalized group-Madhesi, *Janajati* (Indigenous group) and women mainly in five areas; provincial demarcation, proportional representation, identity, citizenship right and ideological parameters. Madhesi believed that their genuine concerns were still ignored in the constitution and they still perceived being treated as the subjects of internal colonialism (Sha, 2015). Sha further argues that the main cause for such discrimination is their cultural, linguistic, racial and regional affinity with neighbouring India and the new constitution alienated the people living on the margin. They were compelled to revolt against the provisions of new constitution again for the same concerns.

The Madhes-based parties had already gone for strike before the promulgation of constitution to put pressure on addressing their grievances. The Modi government in India realized disruption at Indo-Nepal border may result threats in national security. However, India did not intervene the disturbances at the border rather “openly stood by the voices of the Madhesi and the Tharus, and there were two basic reasons for the same: first, India was witness to the 2008 agreement between the government and the Madhesi party and second, an

‘inclusive’ constitution would bring peace and stability in Nepal that will serve India’s security concerns” (Jaiswal, 2016). So, after the promulgation of constitution, the government of India echoed the voice of Madhes-based parties. The supporters of Madhes-based parties tried to seal the border and the Indian government not only became blind to the activities at the border but also started to cut down the supplies to Nepal. Gradually, the border sealing was changed into blockade.

The relationship between India and Nepal was degraded with the beginning of this blockade. The blockade was begun on September 23, 2015 and ended on 5th February 2016. The government of Nepal accused the Indian government for imposing the blockade that resulted severe humanitarian crisis. But those allegations were refuted by India stressing that the tensions in the border were caused by the Madhesi parties and all of them were the outcomes of internal politics in Nepal; the Nepalese government should resolve the issue as soon as possible to create a sense of security and harmony in Tarai and ensure uninterrupted supplies (Jaiswal, 2016).

Roy (2015) reported that Nepal needs to make seven changes in its constitution. He added that these amendments were conveyed to Nepal’s leadership by the Indian government through official channels Ranjit Rae, India’s ambassador to Nepal. The amendments echoed the voice of the leaders of Madhesh-based parties. Indian government was seen to be supportive to the agenda of Madhes based party not only because of socio-cultural proximity and border linkage but also because of the threats that can enter the Indian territory due to the violence at the border.

The most important thing to note here is what could be the Indian motives behind the amendments in the constitution? Why did India reach to the decision of supporting Madhes-based parties to block the supplies to Nepal? Why did the public have different opinion about the same blockade within the country? So, this research tries to analyse nature of this blockade and find out its impacts in Nepal. It attempts to find out how Nepalese were oppressed when India pressurized to amend the constitutional provisions through blockade.

3. Conceptual Framework

As stated in the background section the objective of this research is to analyse nature of 2015 Indian blockade and find out its impacts in Nepal. This research centres around the question: How did the undeclared 2015 Indian blockade influence in Nepal? There are two

theoretical assumptions in this question. First, imposing the blockade without declaring can be associated with an intention of using force with the mask of justice or right based issues. Blockade in a disguised form can be the worst practice of oppressor to oppress in the worst manner to the target population. Second, the experience and negative consequences of the blockade can be perceived as the examples of oppressive ones. Most of the Nepalese had taken it very seriously and called it an interference to the internal affairs of the sovereign state. However, the president of Rastriya Sadbhawana Party, Rajendra Mahato claimed it was an attempt to democratize the newly promulgated constitution and support to the marginalized and disadvantaged group. He added that the blockade was done by Madhesi people, India was only providing security to freight carriers as there was no security from Nepal side (The Tribune, 2015). However, it was not difficult to know that there was enough support of Indian government to the protestants at the border since the short of supplies continued almost for five months. So, the nature of this blockade quite different than the other blockades in the history. Many researches are carried out about officially declared blockades throughout the world and their consequences. Some of them are listed in the section below under the topic “Sanction and Blockade”. There is hardly any literature exists on unofficial blockade so far. So, this research analyses the nature and Impacts of 2015 Indian unofficial blockade in Nepal. This research perceives blockade as a force imposed by one country upon another to bring changes in policy or impair economy or influence the internal politics. Blockade not only brings economic and social crisis but also gives the way to humanitarian crisis as claimed by Nepalese government during the blockade. The section below introduces blockade along with its objectives and some practices.

3.1 Definition, Objectives and Practices of Blockade

3.1.1 Definition

Blockade can be defined as the action of one or more countries to impair the economy of other country or group of countries. Cambridge Business English Dictionary (2013) defines economic sanctions as “action taken by a country or organization against the economy of another country, such as refusing to trade with it, in order to force or obey the law or set of rules”. The actions can be initiated by one or multi-international actors against one or more of the other actors to punish the target state or group of states by preventing them from some values or make them obey with certain ethics the senders believe important (Galtung 1967).

3.1.2 Objectives of Blockade

According to Frank (2006) there are three general objectives for which sanctions are imposed in the target country. First and most important is national security objectives. When a country feels threat in its national security by the certain policy of another country, then the country which felt threat makes alliance and impose sanction against target country to reduce or remove the threat in the national security. This is generally exercised by deterring aggression, restricting weapons proliferation and punishing for sponsoring terrorism. Sanctions with this objective are imposed in those countries which are involved in nuclear weapon proliferation like in North Korea and Iraq. Second, sanctions are also imposed to meet the foreign policy objectives. If one country's internal or external policy impairs another country's foreign policy objectives, then there exists the sanction. Third, sanctions are also executed to achieve the objectives of international trade and investment which is also a part of foreign policy. In the global politics, most international relations are turning from political to economic. Economic interest has become stronger than political interest. Democratic nations are keeping a good relationship with communist nations when they have some economic interests. Besides these objectives, sanctions are also imposed for the promotion of democracy and human right.

The instrumental theory of sanctions states that sanctions are imposed to bring economic disruption and desired political changes in the target country (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988). However, political scientists and economists have expressed their substantial doubt on the success of economic interruption in the sense that such interruption not only cost high for the target country but cost heavy to sender country as well. The success of the sanctions depends mainly on the goals of the sender actor/s. Sanctions imposed to force the target state for making some concrete changes in its policies like the sanction in South Africa for ending apartheid seemed to be less successful than those which were imposed to destabilize the regime or punish for some other reasons like sanction against Cuba to weaken Castro's regime (Dashti-Gibson, Davis et al. 1997).

Economic sanctions in the target state do not always bring expected results. There are some reasons why economic sanctions do not work. First, economic sanctions usually impose remarkable human costs like in Iraq and Gulf war among the people of the target states including innocent those civilians who have little or no role in the behaviour of their

government. Second, the economic sanctions are unlikely to be successful for increasing the cost risks and costs of sender states and be compelled to uplift the force for rescuing the image of nation in international politics(Pape 1998).

Sanction is generally said to be successful when it produces an intended change in the policy of the target state in most of the cases altering the behaviour of the target (Morgan and Schwebach 1997). This concept sees everything on effectiveness of sanction for the success regardless of the costs on the part of both the sender and receiver country. In zero-sum game, the costs of sanction can be neglected since the costs one party are the benefits to the other, however in mixed-motive games, this cannot be true(Baldwin 2000).

There is a widespread discussion among the scholars if economic sanction can be used as an alternative of military force as a means of foreign policy. Baldwin (2000) believes that economic sanction can be imposed as the alternative of military force only when this is used independently without other measures. However, the relation between sanction and military force should be seen in terms of success rate, concept of success, costs and scope. Success rate of economic sanction as described in Tsebelis (1990) is 35 percent which is very low. But the success rate of military force ranges from 40 to 72 percent (Wang and Ray 1994). If the meaning of success is understood by zero-sum game resulting in the terms like deterrence, surrender, winner or loser, then the success rate mentioned above is right.

However, it is true from the lens of nonzero-sum game that all the losses of war are not recoverable. In this sense, the winner also loses lots of things when used force. Though it is not always true, sanction generally costs cheaper than the other use of forces. Military force is generally employed with economic sanction or diplomacy. But economic sanctions or diplomacy usually employed without military force. Sanctions can be used as the poor substitute of force. Nevertheless, with respect to the range of relevant issues to sanctions, the opposite comes to be true (Baldwin 2000).

3.1.3 Some Practices of Blockade

This research has assumed blockade as a kind of oppressive behaviour in the sense that it oppressed the people where it is imposed. Blockade not only brings economic and social crisis but also brings humanitarian crisis if imposed for a long time. So, an attempt to review some literature on blockades has been made here to find out their nature and impacts.

The history of blockade, economic sanctions or embargo, initiates from the ancient Greece. The most celebrated occasion of economic sanctions as stated in Hufbauer, Schott et al. (1990) was Pericle's Megarian decree, sanctioned in 432 BC in response to three kidnapping Aspasian women. The practices of sanctions before the world war first are less documented and the lesson form them are not quite relevant for coping with today's problem. Most of the blockades or sanctions in the history were imposed to the target countries for weakening economic capabilities and limiting the efficiency of military performance, restricting strategic exports and preventing the technological advancement in weaponry.

Sanction is one of the important elements in the exercise of international diplomacy which force the target countries respond the way the sender wishes. Sanction as a tool of international policy goes back to the aftermath of world war I when the president of the USA described sanctions as 'a peaceful, silent, deadly remedy' by which the league of Nations tried to avoid the war in the world(Frank 2006). Sanction presumes the interference in the decision-making process of another country and deterrence to formulate the policies which are objectionable. Some big powers are interested to pursue their foreign policy motives including the national security and weaponry of the other states through destabilization which become increasingly common before and after the world war II. However, some sanctions are targeted for the political changes along with the change in domestic and external policies.

The great and prolonged blockade in history include the blockade of Germany also called the blockade of Europe by allied powers targeted against the central powers during the World War I which began in 1914 and ended in 1919 only when the war was over. It was naval blockade in the sense that the blockade attempted to confine the maritime supplies to the Central Powers. This blockade proved to be a great weapon in defeating the Central Power(Osborne 2004). Since it obstructed the Germany's ability to import the goods and pushed the German people and its military starve. So, British interest behind this blockade was to topple the Central power down and rise as the great power itself. Germany faced similar blockade even in the World War II.

During 1948-1949, there was another blockade used by Soviet Union against Western allied powers to prevent their access to the sectors of Berlin which was in Western control. So, this was an attempt made by Soviet Union to limit the ability of the United States, France and Great Britain to travel in Russian occupied sectors of East of Germany. Thus, in this blockade too, Russian intended to hold the Status of big power limiting the ability of then big

powers(Davison 1980). Thus, from realistic point of view, this blockade is backed up with power politics.

There are some blockades in the history in which the United Nations and other big powers involved. United nations security council along with other western powers imposed economic sanction against Iraq in August 1990 after the Iraqi Invasion in Kuwait. The sanction did not end with the end of invasion. The security council continued sanction against it for Iraqi disarmament. After 12 years of regular sanction, they made a war against Iraq in March 2003 and swept away the Hussein regime. Thus, sanctioning against Iraq was for ending the Hussein regime in Iraq. O'Sullivan (2004) as cited in Drezner (2011) estimated that Iraq lost between \$ 175 billion and \$ 250 billion in oil revenues due to the sanction. Garfield (1999) estimated that the effects of sanctions caused minimum 100,000 to 227,000 deaths among young children during the first eight years of sanction. Commenting on prolonged sanction in Iraq Mueller & Mueller (1999) said that, "economic sanction may well have been necessary cause of deaths of more people in Iraq than have been slain by so called weapons of mass destruction throughout the history "p.51. Economic sanction against Iraq was marked as failure since it not only brought severe humanitarian crisis among innocent civilians, it encouraged for the creation of organized crime, syndicates and international smuggling networks weakening the rule of law of target and neighbouring countries as well (Andreas 2005). In the first five years of sanction it was claimed that the price for family food supply was increased 250 times (Brahimi, L. et al. 1997). The sanction in Iraq thus can be understood as the powerplay of big powers. In one hand, the US and UN security council along with other western world saw great threat to them from Iraq for their assumption that Iraq possessed nuclear weapon. Sanction and war against Iraq finally proved to be the manifestation of American egoism of superpower and its desire to disrupt the balance of power to maximize its security.

In late 1990s, the concept of smart sanction entered in the literature of blockade. This sanction aims to affect only an area of a country's activities or economy minimizing the adverse effects on general civilians and neighbouring countries (Drezner 2011). Smart sanctions have received only soft criticism from global civil society for minimizing human rights concerns and hampering less on the international trade flows (Craven 2002). Although smart sanctions solve some of the political problems of the target state, they do not solve the policy problem of forcing the target state into changing its policies(Drezner 2011). So, when

the big powers intend to change the policy of target country, they impose more comprehensive economic sanction rather than the smart ones.

Sanctions in the history were also used to enforce the agreement with their nuclear non-proliferation. The US and Canada in 1970s and 1980s used sanctions against the countries which were developing their nuclear weaponry. The sanctions by the US in South Africa, Taiwan, Argentina, India, Brazil, Pakistan were the efforts to prevent those countries from developing nuclear weaponry in 1970s (Hufbauer et al. 1990). North Korea is facing economic sanctions by the US and other western countries mainly for the four major reasons after its first nuclear test in 2006. First, United States saw North Korea as posing threat in its national security. Second, it is seen as the state sponsoring or supporting the international terrorism. Third, it is the communist state which is seen as the threat to the democratic western world and fourth, the country is engaged in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Rennack 2006). The concept of security dilemma applied in this blockade. America wants to prevent Korea from booming the nuclear weapons up and North Korea wants to be secure from America and other western power possessing some sort of nuclear weapons.

Blockade in the history had been imposed against terrorism. When Hamas won the 2006 Palestine legislative election, the US state department designated it as a foreign terrorist organization and Israel considered it as a terrorist group while Turkey along with some other countries and organizations considered Hamas as a democratically elected legislative representative of Palestinian people (Migdalovitz 2010). Migdalovitz further articulates that Hamas rise in politics heightened the rivalry with Fatah and prompted the United States to end up all foreign direct aids to Palestine. Israel imposed the air, land and sea blockade in Gaza strip for the self-protection so as preventing the Hamas's arms from reaching to Israel (Migdalovitz 2010). Ulutaş (2011) writes that the start of blockade in Gaza was illegal since Israel violated the international law documented in UNHCR report. However, Israel repeatedly claims that the blockade is necessary to protect its people from rocket attacks and other hostile activities of the terrorists. Analysing this blockade from the theory of international relation, Israel showed up being very sensitive to the security of its people; so, motivated by the realist assumptions of international relation.

Some sanctions are backed up by the reasons of democracy and human rights promotion and the protection of the sovereignty. After the Russian annexation of the Crimean

region of Ukraine, the US imposed economic sanctions several times against Russia in coordination with European Union. In response to the sanctions, Russia adopted counter-sanction measures by banning the imports from those countries who are involved in sanctions against it (Nelson 2015). It proved to be difficult to coordinate with the US to some of the member states of European Union since exports to Russia is very important for their economy (Gros and Mustilli 2015). So, the blockade could not produce the expected outcomes because of their reciprocal relationship in external trade.

In July 2017, there began a diplomatic crisis in Qatar when different Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia banned the airplanes and ships of Qatar from entering in their air space and sea routes (Ulrichsen, 2018). The main reason for their action is allege to terrorism violating the 2014 agreements of Gulf Cooperation Council. The countries involving in blockade demanded to reduce the diplomatic relation with Iran, closing the government owned Al-Jazeera news organization and ending up the military cooperation with Turkey. Qatar got the constant support not only from Iran and Turkey, but also from the US warning the Gulf states not to make uncompromising stance. Instead of joining to the alliance, the US asks for the cooperation and dialogues for solving the crisis. Even Pakistan, traditional partner of Saudi Arabia denied to join the coalition against Qatar and several European countries also seemed to be sympathetic to Qatar and called for the blockade to be lifted (Zafirov, 2017). The countries involved in this blockade against Qatar based the culture of anarchy on friendship and cooperation. There seems the cooperation not only interest based but also on shared understanding of building security community. So, this blockade was imposed with the constructivist assumptions of international relation theory.

In March 1989 there was virtual blockade in Nepal imposed by Rajiv Gandhi led Indian government because of the dispute between two governments based on trade and transit treaties and growing closeness to China. Referring to then minister of commerce and supply Nar Bahadur Budhathoki, Bhattarai (2015) writes that the transit treaty was expiring soon, rather than backslapping the Indian government, Nepal decided to import arms and petroleum products from other nations. The peace and friendship treaty 1950 had confirmed that India would be the primary supplier of arms and ammunition in Nepal. But India had put restriction on the amount and quality of arms. When Nepal asked anti-aircraft guns, India simply replied that it was unnecessary. As in the 1980s China was major arms exporter in the world, Nepal approached China in March 1988 and the arms reached to Kathmandu through Chinese built Araniko highway (Muni, 1988). India believed Nepal's arms purchase from

China as a threat to India. For the same reason, India declared official blockade against Nepal. This blockade continued for 15 months. India had shut down 13 of 15 border crossing points into the landlocked country claiming that the old treaty of trade between two countries had come to an end (Weintraub, 1989). When the government denied accommodating Indian wishes to renew the treaties, Indian leaders including former prime minister visited Nepalese leaders and pressurized to overthrow the Panchayat system. Then, Nepalese leaders united against the king and finally, Panchayat was overthrown (Bhattarai, 2015). This incident shows that a small dissatisfaction from Indian side can bring a great political change in Nepal.

Reviewing some literature of blockade, it is found that most of them were declared in advanced before they were imposed. So, these blockades are termed as official blockade of the sending country. But, from 2015 September, a new terminology entered in the literature as an unofficial blockade; the blockade which is not declared and accepted as blockade by the sending country. In Nepal, after the promulgation of 2015 constitution, India showed its discontent in some of the constitutional provisions. India had shown its solidarity to the grievances to the Madhes based parties, but their grievances were not fully institutionalized in the constitution. As a result, they went on strike to institutionalize their demands in the constitution. As Madhesis have old-aged affinity and relationship with India, India supported their strike, cutting down the supplies to Nepal (Pant 2018). However, India blamed the Madhes-based parties responsible for the obstruction of supplies and repeatedly denied its involvement in that blockade which Nepalese nationalists understood as a diplomatic move of India for protecting and establishing the concerns of pro Indian politician in Nepal. This paper tries to analyse the different nature of this blockade and find out the impacts of it. As the blockade resulted social and humanitarian crisis in the country, imposing blockade is seen as an oppressive behaviour. This study makes the use of colonial hangover perspective of postcolonial theory in international relations to analyse the total happenings during blockade.

3.2 Postcolonial Theory

The root of postcolonialism goes back to the colonial practices starting in 1500 with militaristic, economic and civilization dimensions. Colonialism is a policy or practices of extending the authority and control over other countries or territories and their people for seeking more trade opportunities. The colonizer for establishing its authority, imposed its religion, culture and social practices to modernize the natives and colonized world.

Modernity has had special powerful valance since it has been a model held up before colonized people who should aspire though they could never quite deserve (Cooper, 2005). This model gave way to development and industrialization not only within Europe but also in the most part of Asia and Africa. However, some scholars counter this Eurocentric belief of modernization arguing that colonialism as “the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods” (Loomba, 2007, p.2). Supporting to the same belief Veracini (2010) writes that colonialism is more about the domination culture in which the minority foreign invaders dominate and rule the indigenous majority to search their interests. Decolonization started by the end of the second World War. However, colonialism did not end with the end of colonization. Rather it aimed at overcoming the colonial conditions (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002).

Historically, the term postcolonialism refers to “the consciousness arising after the colonization from the countries that were once colonized and are now independent” (Ponzanesi, 2004). Thus, the postcolonial literature reflects the long-lasting impacts of colonization in the former colonized world. Focusing on the same point, Choudhary & Nair (2002) say that this theory “reflects the continuity and persistence of colonizing practices” p. 11. According to them in international relation, postcolonialism throws lights “into the ways in which the imperial juncture is implicated in the construction contemporary relation of power, hierarchy and domination” p.12. Postcolonialism seeks to reclaim the moral and emotional high ground in its interrogation of western modernity (Darby & Paolini 1994, p.379) and how knowledge works. In her seminal work “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak (1988) writes that knowledge is never produced innocent and it always serves the interests of its producers as western thinking is always seen to be supportive to western economic interests. Western academic, cultural and philosophical expressions protect and promote the idea of oriental backwardness and western superiority (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002). Knowledge produced from the western institutions like other goods is supplied from the west to the third world for financial, political and other benefits (Spivak, 1988). West behaved non- west either as a junior partner of power game or the trouble makers and non-west writings were assumed not as the significantly different from the west (Bilgin, 2008).

Postcolonialism is a critique of Eurocentric perspective. According to Hobson (2007) Eurocentrism is “the assumption that the West lies at the centre of all things in the world and that the West self-generates through its own endogenous ‘logic of immanence’, before projecting its global will-to-power outwards through a one-way diffusionism so as to remake

the world in its own image” p.93. Different intellectual strategies are designed to challenge the legacies established by European centralism. These strategies collectively demonstrate the mythical subject of ‘European model’ in history thorough challenging the primacy and exceptionalism that has been historically claimed. The centralized ‘subjects’ is seen to be pluralized in the study of world politics (Sabaratnam, 2011). Sabaratnam further says that the Eurocentric perspective failed to represent the experiences of other world since the primary subjects of analysing world politics remained only the western world. This exclusion is repetitive not only the literature but also in the western developmental aids and the UN peacebuilding missions. The west is always represented as coherent political subject seeking to universalize itself through modern forms of liberal governance. However, the attempts to establish liberal peace through liberal governance has been failed in many societies (Roberts, 2008). Thus, the knowledge produced in the west is not necessarily useful in the non-western world.

Some non- western scholars claim that conceptualizations of modern is not unsophisticated or misguided rather they clash with the common sense of the western academy and the western world tries to falsify or deviate these conceptualizations (Shilliam, 2010, p.15). Defining orientalism, Said as cited in Shilliam (2010) says it is the form of knowledge production of ‘other’ that constructs a despotic, sensual and stagnant Orient against the European self, a persona typified by reason, enlightenment and progress. Connell (2007) argues that critical thought from the west can never really be critical of its own if it ignores the thought from the non- west. However, Nandy (1988), Chakrabarty (2000) and Kaviraj (2005) confess that the concepts deployed by non- western scholars to guide the creation of post-colonial societies were often inherited from the colonizer’s blueprints of modern society and state. For example, in Indian political thought, a variety of different historical discourses of European concept has remained as an essential-although enigmatic-normative concept (Shilliam, 2010, p.16).

^ In early 1960s, the concepts and theories developed by the scholars of the US on development and modernization were exported to the non-west through different channels like bilateral training, scholarship and other exchange programme available for the students and policy practitioners (Bilgin, 2008). Bilgin further declares that ‘modernization’ and ‘national security’ were consistently included as policy tools in different parts of the world including the countries like India and Egypt where the US political influence is seen through the lens of scepticism. India has sought a regional leadership articulating the policy of

national security (Pasha, 1996). Introducing the concept of mimicry, Ling (2002) writes that the survival instinct of colonized allows trying a new accessory, colonizer's reflected superior and separate image. India tested a nuclear weapon in 1974 and conducted five more tests in 1998. The nuclear bomb is linked with the security in the minds of Indian scholars not only for the power politics concerns but also as the understanding of national security imported from the west after the second world war for serving ideology of modern Indian state (Bilgin, 2008). These tests show little puzzle about its security seeking behaviour through military means (Sridharan, 2005). So, the Indian possession of nuclear power one of the examples of this mimicry of the west. Even today, India emphasizes on the age-old realist concern of the search for power as driving Indian policies. India like the western world has sought the ability to influence others to behave as it wants them to and resist the unwelcome influence of others (Perkovich 2003). So, by the end of colonization, the decolonized world started imitating the culture of the west in general and its colonizer in particular. The section below discusses more about the colonial hangover to relate the focus of this study.

3.2.1 Colonial Hangover

This research is grounded on colonial hangover perspective of postcolonial theory in international relation. It attempts to see if once colonized country behaves like its colonizer upon its neighbouring states. Postcolonial theory states that aiming at overcoming colonial condition, the colonized world's feeling of inferiority leads to the imitation of the culture of the colonizer (Fanon, et al, 1963). As a result, colonized world starts acting like a colonizer. India was colonized by Britain more than 200 years (Das, 2018). It must be oppressed and undergone with feeling of inferiority due to the oppression in the entire colonial period. In an attempt of overcoming this inferiority, India is seen as seeking the ability to influence others act the ways it wants. So, the proposed amendments in the constitution by India and blockade followed when the amendments were not addressed would be analysed to see if its feeling of inferiority leads to imitation of the oppressive culture of its colonizer in the section below. Regarding the behaviour of the colonized after declaration of independence Freire (2000) writes that the colonized in the search of independence, takes ways the colonizers power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression. The countries with raising economy try to imitate the strategy adopted by the colonizer country to get the equal status of the eminent country; the colonizer. Freire further argues the colonized wants to possess the power and things possessed by the

colonizer; for the colonized, to be is to have. At a certain point, for the oppressed in their existential experience, to be is not to resemble the oppressor.

Postcolonial discourse shows how the legacy of colonialism persist in social, political and cultural aspects of then colonized states even after the political independence of colonized nations. Moreover, it illustrates the psychic recreation of colonizers by colonized people as Fanon, et al. (1963) say that mental colonization is very dangerous. Post colonialism imagines that the colonial domination continues in modern states but in implicit and indirect manner. Colonialism according to Fanon, et al. (1963) not only dominated the native with military power but rather they dominated the local people by making them accept their inferiority in epistemic sense which further helped strengthen the colonial hegemony in colonized states. In other words, by denying the language and culture of native people, the colonizers could create psychological colonization that again reinforce to justify the big brother attitude of colonizers in colonized states. According to Freire (2000), colonialism dehumanized the colonized so much so that they could not see themselves as independent and rational individuals. Similarly, Said (1991) claims that the western colonizers created a binary opposition between colonizer and colonized in polar opposites-colonizers as civilized, rational, progressive, standard and colonized on the other hand as barbaric, irrational, traditional, and uncivilized people. Said further says that this kind of biased representation was further institutionalized and disseminated in such a way that ultimately the colonized themselves start to accept these stereotypes created by the colonizers. In other words, the colonized modelled themselves behind the colonizers. To be precise, they started to think that to be a dignified human being the colonized must think and behave the same way as the colonizers. The oppressed themselves were conditioned to behave like the oppressor. The oppressor wishes to weaken the oppressed by isolating them and creating and deepening the rifts among them (Freire 2000). He explains varied means from the repressive methods of the government bureaucracy to the forms of cultural actions with which they manipulate the people by giving them the impression that they are being helped. When the people of a society are more alienated, it will be easier to divide them. The oppressors do not favour promoting the whole community, but rather a part of a community or giving support to the selected leaders. From the colonial perspective, the colonizers try to present themselves as the saviours of the people whom they divide and dehumanize. The main intention in doing so is preserving their own status quo (Freire 2000). Linking this to 2015 blockade, the Indian government imitating this behaviour of its former colonizer, makes use of dissatisfied and

marginalized group of the southern part of the country to institutionalize the amendments they proposed. The leaders and supporters of Madhes based parties were blamed to be used by India to raise voice against the government and block supplies to Nepal.

When the British government left India in 1947, they not merely left the big infrastructure they had built in India to ease their ruling, most importantly they also left the culture of dominating the inferior and the powerless (Perkovich 2003). This research tries to see if this claim was materialized post promulgation of the Nepalese 2015 constitution, during the blockade period. In other words, due to the mental and epistemic colonization of Indian people, they began to think of themselves as superior, civilized and powerful to validate civilizing mission of rulers in Nepal, a recreation and reimplementation of British policies in dominating the poor and powerless people. Nepal as a politically, economically and socially weaker has faced a lot of interventions after Indian independence. India tries to resemble with Britain wearing the mask for getting relief from its long history of suppression. Let's look an example from Fanon.

Fanon (1952) in his *Black Skin, White Masks* writes that

Man is human only to which he tries to impose his existence on another man to be recognize by him. As long as he has not been recognized by the other, that other will remain the theme of his actions. It is on that other being, on recognition by that other being, that his own human worth and reality depend. It is that other being in whom the meaning of his life is condensed. There is not an open conflict between white and black. One day the white master, without conflict, recognized the Negro slave. But the former slave wants to make himself recognized.

The colonized and the slave perspective the issue of recognition as one which is critical to politics has also been debated by those who have been historically considered as "other." Based on the colonized and slave perspective, Fanon states that the dialectic of the politics of recognition needs to be viewed differently. The difficulty with the Hegelian dialectic of recognition is that the master wishes work from the slave and not recognition, whereas the slave wants to end his oppression. Thus, the feeling of inferiority leads to imitation of the culture of the colonizers. For the Black person, there is only one goal; to have a white existence (Fanon, 1952).

Regarding the behaviour of the colonized after declaration of independence Freire (2000) writes that the colonized in the search of independence, takes ways the colonizers power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression. Accordingly, yesterdays oppressed have become today's oppressors.

Fanon (1952) states that the Black try to assimilate with the White with the help of language, culture and education, but the White never assumed their existence in the White world in one hand and the Black find themselves in dual existence. It is very difficult to concretely discover the oppressors and their consciousness, in such case the oppressed expressed their fatalistic attitudes to the situation they are living in. They dream to resemble the oppressors at any cost. So, they imitate and follow them. Countries with raising economy try to imitate the strategy adopted by the colonizer country to get the equal status of the eminent country; the colonizer. The colonized wants to possess the power and things possessed by the colonizer.

There are various strategies for oppressing the target population. It can be in the form of exploiting the natural resources, influencing the domestic or external policies, impairing the national economy, establishing the indirect rule, imposing assimilation policy for so called civilization, impairing the governance and trade, replacing indigenous hierarchy, dividing the population with the illusions of rights and justices and many more. But for the purpose of this paper, influencing the domestic and external policies and impairing the trade and economy using blockade as a tool have been focused.

3.3 Applying Postcolonialism

In most of the cases there is power politics behind the blockades. However, some blockades are unique to their context and specific to the country or the region. Blockade as a part and parcel in the exercise of international diplomacy, most of the them are imposed to influence or change the internal or external policies of the target country. During the blockade, the target country undergoes hardship and its people suffer from basic needs. What is found here is that those countries which were oppressed during the colonial period, are raising as the oppressors after the end of colonial era. They use different forms of operations including blockades.

This paper assumes that blockade is an important tool to oppress the people of receiving nation. People suffer from food shortage to medications and several other problems because of blockade. In the extreme cases of blockade, the governing protocol fails, and, in such chaos, there can be human casualties as well. So, blockade can be a tool to impair the economy and introduce sufferings in the target country. The powerful nations make the use of this tool for influencing and maintain their expectation in their target states.

When Nepal promulgated the constitution of Federal government on 20th September 2015, there were some dominate politics of identity going in low land of Nepal among

Madhesi people who consider themselves as marginalized in the country. They expressed their discontent with the government of Nepal and new constitution that they were denied the equal rights of inclusion. The Madhesi people represented by different Madhesi regional and ethnic parties, bear a lot of cultural and linguistic similarities with Northern part of Indian population. These Madhes based parties which seek favour from India, got support from mainstream political parties of India, mainly by the ruling party. Consequently, India imposed blockade in Nepal and the reason given by Indian government was that the constitution of Nepal was issued without the consent of Indian government. Like Freire (2000) said, Indian people once oppressed, assumed themselves as oppressor and behaved Nepalese people as oppressed. This research explores how Nepalese realized the oppressive behaviours of Indian government while imposing the unofficial 2015 blockade in Nepal.

4. Methodology

4.1. The Research Design

This research is qualitative in nature. So, it is associated with “understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p.5). According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998), qualitative research is a type of investigation in which the phenomenon is explored in the natural setting. Usually qualitative research makes the use of multiple methods for interpreting, understanding and explaining the phenomenon. It is believed that “there are multiple realities represented in participant perspective, and the context is crucial in providing an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated” (McMillian, 2008, p.271). This type of research discloses the meanings entrenched in people’s experiences. However, Merriam (2009) states that meaning is mostly explained through the researcher’s own perception. So, there seem the chances of subjective judgement of the investigator in inferring meaning. This research adopts qualitative research methods and design for interpreting and understanding the hurdles faced by Nepalese people during 2015 Indian blockade in Nepal. This study tries to recognize the experiences of those who really faced the difficulties and lived in Nepal during the blockade.

The main objective of this research is to analyse nature of 2015 Indian blockade and find out its impacts among Nepalese. To achieve this objective of this research the whole process is divided into two parts. First, finding out the nature of blockade analysing the ways of how all that happen. This part mainly discusses what could be the possible reasons for not

declaring the blockade officially. Second, the impacts of the blockade were observed among those Nepalese who experienced it by themselves. This research is based on the postcolonial theory of international relation described in chapter 3. By using this theory, the data will be analysed to see if India as the colonized country echoed the behaviour of its colonizer even after its independence in its neighbouring countries. Postcolonialism, in this paper is viewed as the continuation of the colonial culture which is practised by the colonized countries.

Both primary and secondary sources of data are used in this research. The primary sources of data were elicited from those Nepalese who are politically aware and experienced blockade. The personal experiences, opinion and perception of those people about 2015 blockade are used as the primary data. These data help the researcher to analyse the nature of blockade and find out the impacts of it. The social, economic and political impacts of the blockade were analysed based on their responses and some other secondary resources. The secondary data include the previous researches, journals, video interviews, news articles and reports, books, and some other documents. These data from the secondary sources help the researcher for triangulation of the primary data and provide more detail information about the blockade. In another word, the secondary data contribute the unbiased presentation of the primary data. All the accessed data are analysed through thematic analysis; a widely used method in qualitative research which helps in identifying, analysing and reporting the patterns of data within the dataset (Bryman, 2016). With the help of this approach data sources are assessed for finding and recording the relevant patterns and ideas.

4.2 Data Collection

In qualitative research data are collected through multiple methods. Survey, interview, observation, document analysis, etc. are some of the tools for collecting data in qualitative research. Among them observation and interview are widely used means in qualitative data collection (McMillan 2008). As this research is entirely qualitative in nature, data were collected mainly using two tools; interview and document analysis. The primary data were collected through semi-structured interview from the respondents. To find out the nature of the blockade and support the primary data, some documents were analysed, and relevant data were elicited. The rationale behind selection of these methods is that using multiple sources of evidences helps for the development of converging line of inquiry and provide detailed information (McMillan, 2008, Yin 2009). Thus, the findings from the personal interviews could be tallied against the information collected through document analysis.

4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

As interview is the main source of data collection, it needs to be framed very wisely to elicit the expected data. Anderson (1990) defines interview as “a specialized form of communication between specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter” p.222. The research interview aims at generating the information relevant to research objectives from its informants. Comparing the other sources, interview serves a very rich source of data collection since it explores not only the attitudes and experiences but also the emotions, insights, feelings and some other sensitive issues (Wisker 2001).

For the purpose of this research, semi-structured interview was used to collect data from primary sources. This type of interview was found to be suited for exploring the perception and opinions including some sensitive and complex issues and it is found very common in qualitative research in which the researchers have a list of questions based on key themes and issues. As a researcher, when I visited the field for interviewees, I did not use a detailed interview guide since semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask some additional questions, rephrase or explain the questions in case of confusion (Kajornboon, 2005). An interview guide with more open-ended questions was used. The interview guide was used only after pilot testing in 2 persons. After testing, it was administered in 12 respondents. However, the method of data collection was not strict, and the researcher was expected to be open to allow changes in his research design during data collection.

It was not so easy to go with a complete set of interview questions and conduct the interviews with some of less educated adults because the researcher had to ask some more questions based on their responses. To ease for them, the questions were asked in simple language, explained and repeated until the interviewees understood them. In some cases, when I found some clues for extra information relevant to the research, I probed for views and opinions of the interviewees. Probing is a way for the interview to explore new path which was not considered very important before (Gray, 2004). Probing was helpful to elicit better information since it allows clarification to get more relevant and interesting issues of the respondents (Hutchinson & Skodol Wilson 1992). The flexibility of interview setting and themes and issues in hand attracted me to use the semi-structured interview.

4.2.2 Document Analysis

Along with the semi-structured interview, document analysis was another method of data collection in this research. Document analysis is “a systematic procedure of reviewing or evaluating document-both printed and electronic material” (Bowen 2009, p.27). The document is not necessarily a text documents; it also includes the images as well. An analysis of the documents relevant to the study was the secondary sources of data of this research. It is argued that “virtual documents provide a rich and varied source of information for the researcher to analyse” (Bryman 2016, p. 567). The specific details accessed in the documents verifies the other sources of information (Yin 2009). As the other sources of information can be validated through document analysis, documents are the important sources of information. The documents analysis in research include “advertisements; agendas, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs (i.e., printed outlines); letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspapers press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organisational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records”(Bowen 2009, p.27-28). etc.

In this study some documents were analysed to supplement more data relevant to the topic. The analysed documents include the constitution of Nepal, Nepalese foreign policy, books written about blockade, journals, images, news articles and reports published during blockade period and relevant to the topic. The rationale behind using document analysis as a method of data collection in this research is triangulation. Triangulating in data is used to provide “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner 1991, p.110). Document analysis is not normally used as a single method of data collection in qualitative research. Denzin (2017) argues that it gives better results when used in combination with other qualitative methods in the study of same phenomenon. In this research, for the triangulation of the primary sources of information gathered from interview, and for unbiased presentation of the data, two leading Indian English newspapers were also chosen and the news and reports about 2015 Indian blockade in Nepal published and accessed online were reviewed, read and interpreted in this study as the supplementary research data.

4.3 Sampling, Data Analysis and Interpretation

In research, sample is a group of people or set of respondents or objects taken from a bigger population. Sampling is the process of selecting sample from the population. Sampling

is an important part in the research because it is not decent, possible and efficient to study the whole population. The main aim of quantitative sampling is to draw representative sample from the population and generalize the results back to its population (Marshall 1996). The sample size in quantitative research is relatively bigger than in qualitative researches. Although generalizability is the goal of good researches, the results of qualitative researches cannot always be generalized to the population. This is mainly because of the size of the sample and specific issues to be addressed.

There are different ways of sampling the population. As this research is qualitative in nature, purposive sampling was used to select the sample from the population. Bryman (2016) says that “the goal of purposive sampling is to sample the cases/participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research to the research question that are posed” p. 408. Purposive sampling as a non-probability judgement sampling selects the informants deliberately because of the specialist knowledge of informants on the research issues and the capacity and willingness to provide the information (Tongco 2007). So, the informants who are proficient and well informed with the phenomenon of interest were selected in the sample. There are seven provinces in Nepal today. The provinces are named by number from 1 to 7. In this research, the informants were selected only from three provinces. From provinces 2, 4 and 5, 12 respondents in total; 4 from each were purposively selected for this study. Entire province 2 is in the madhes zone, province 5 is composed of both madhes and hilly zones and province 4 is entirely in the hilly zone. The main criteria for the selection was the experience of blockade and inclusion of madhesi and non-madhesi people. A formal letter of request to help with information from the department of university helped a lot to access up to them. To avoid the biased presentation, two leading English newspaper published from India were selected based on their news coverage about blockade during blockade period. Reviewing some of English newspaper published during blockade period online from India, two newspapers were selected based on the news coverage about blockade.

Content analysis was the main technique used in data analysis. It is the widely used technique in qualitative researches. Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication” p.55. Content analysis technique is used to analyse also the covert meanings. Fearing (1954) as cited in Kassarian (1977) argues that “latent content as well as manifest content may be examined by content analysis, a series of judgements or descriptions

made under special defined conditions by judges trained in the use of objectively defined criteria”. Content analysis is used to analyse the message scientifically since it demands the rigorous and systematic analysis. In this research data collected through interviews, newspapers and other media were coded and interpreted for the evaluation of the content. Thus, for both understanding nature and impacts of blockade, proper content analysis of data was made for the findings of the research.

4.4 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

4.4.1 Limitations of the Study

This study is concerned about 2015 Indian blockade in Nepal. So, this is a kind of case study dealing the case of Nepal during the blockade with reference to Indian behaviour. The nature of the blockade would be analysed based on the perception of the people interviewed and news articles and reports of the 2 reviewed Indian newspaper accessed online. For understanding the behaviour of Indian government and the impacts of blockade, only 12 Nepalese who experienced the blockade were included in the study. The findings may not echo the perception of whole Nepalese. Hence the generalizability of its findings could be weak. Further, this study puts more emphasis on some provisions of Nepalese constitution and focus only the response of India on it. This study does not include the responses of other countries about constitutional provisions and blockade followed.

4.4.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are very important to be considered in the whole process of research. However, these issues become more important in the stage of data collection and writing and disseminating research reports (Creswell 2012). The major ethical issues concerning the respondents include the principle of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and protecting them from any sorts of harm (Cohen et al. 2007) during data collection and presenting the findings of the study. The principle of informed consent has been adopted in this research. Before the interview, the purpose of research and detail about the interview was explained to them. When they were agreed, only then interviews were carried out. So, the participation in the research process was voluntarily (Bryman 2016). The choice to deny or accept the participation was given.

The identity of the informants is kept anonymous. During the interview, the researcher did not show much interest to their personal details except some minor

conversation for rapport building. The choice for not respond or reject the question/s was given. They were ensured to withdraw the responses if they wished. Privacy and integrity of the respondents is maintained. This study does not reveal the identity of any respondents and all the data were handled, stored sensitively and deleted after analysis. The information provided by them would not be used any other purposes except this research. Hence, the autonomy of informants is maintained in this study.

The outcome of this research would not worsen the circumstances and there would not be any harm for the informants. Furthermore, the findings of this study would not affect the relation between India and Nepal. All the sources used in this research are credited appropriately. There is systematic and complete citation, quotation and referencing.

4.5 Challenges and Reflections

Carrying out the researches in the issues of two sovereign countries is a challenging job. There were some challenges in the stages of data collection. Before I approached to the real informants, I had tested the interview guide in two persons. The interview guide was flexible enough to include some more questions based on the context and information provided. However, there was some kind of fear inside me to start interviews with the strangers on the issues of blockade since there were people inside the country with the belief that it was not blockade rather a support to the movement of rights and justice. To avoid the fear of issues and new context, I started interview from my own place in province 4. After a couple of interviews, I built up confidence to engage in more interviews and got some more insights on the way of conducting interviews. I found two more people unknown to me in my own place for the interview, their support inspired me that interviews can be carried out easily among strangers as well. After interviewing the people of province 4, I moved province 5 which as stated above includes both madhesi and non-madhesi people. As I was confident enough to conduct interviews among strangers, I tried to get consent for interview with Madhesi people. One of the Madhesi denied talking about blockade. I accepted it and found other two, interviewed them and satisfied with their responses. After interviewing 4 people in province 5, I headed towards province 2 which was the most problematic during blockade. Most of the leaders and supporters of Madhes-based parties who sealed the border during blockade belong to the same province. However, I dared to find some people there. With the help of one of my friends of that province, I interviewed with one Madhesi. His opinion and perception of blockade was quite different than all the previous ones. I requested the same

interviewee to help me with another respondent. He referred me a woman and I interviewed with her. Her perception was different than the preceding one. Finally, I interviewed one with hilly origin and another Indigenous Madhesi (*Tharu*). All the responses were found different from each other in province 2.

Reaching to the real field for the data collection, I got some reflections from there. First, the respondents should have been informed earlier than I did so that they could get prepared with some more information about the blockade. I should have sampled the 50% respondents from Madhes for the balance. Though the respondents were politically aware, some of them said that the issue was old. Therefore, I could not get the enough information as I expected. So, now I realized that if I could interview some scholars of International relation or policy makers, I would get more insights on my topic.

5. Presentation of Data and Analysis

This section is broadly classified into two major sub-sections. The first section aims to find out the political, social and economic impacts of the blockade and the second analyses the nature of the blockade based on the experiences and perception of the informants, responses from Indian side, and the ground on which the blockade was lifted. Both the nature and impacts of the blockade are analysed through the postcolonial lens. It attempts to see if colonial hangover has been materialized in 2015 blockade in Nepal.

5.1 The Impacts of Blockade

This section describes the political, social and economic impacts of the blockade based on both primary and secondary data. It was seen that the blockade brought some changes in political dynamics. It had created social division based on region, race and origin. Because of the blockade, anti-Indian sentiment grew rapidly. Above all, the economy of the country turned into chaos when all the indicators of economic development became very weak and none of the targets were met.

5.1.1 The Political Impacts of the Blockade

Indian had imposed virtual blockade in Nepal in 1988-89 because of the dispute on trade and transit treaty renewal. Nepal wanted to renew only transit treaty and interested to extend the trade relation with other countries as well. So, the government had decided to build a second highway to China. As the government denied accommodating Indian interests to renew the treaties, India made a step throw out the Panchayat regime. Accordingly, the

leaders in Nepal were united against the King and Panchayat was overthrown (Bhattarai, 2015). This type of great political change was not seen in last blockade. However, most of the respondents replied that Indian interests in imposing blockade was to influence both internal and external policy of the country. Few replied that India put its eyes on the natural resources of Nepal and the blockade was imposed for the same reason. The rest two replied that India did not have any such political interest in supporting Madhesi movement. As most of the respondents replied that India favours Madhesi leaders and wanted them established in the major executive positions, the post blockade general election gave an opposite result. The size of Madhes-based parties in the parliament became smaller than before. Out of 165 constituencies, they were elected only in 21 seats (Election Commission, 2017).

The blockade compelled the political leaders of Nepal to think the alternative of India. Then Nepalese ambassador for India Dip Kumar Upadhyay said, “India should stop pushing Nepal to the wall. If pushed to the wall and India did not make an effective effort to lift the blockade, though difficult, Nepal would have no option to approach other countries including China” (Upadhyay, 2015). As he mentioned here, though it is not easy to develop good trade relation with China because of the geographical complexity, Nepal approached for it. In October 2015, Nepal signed fuel agreement with China for the first time in its history to import petroleum products. Accordingly, China provided 1.3 million litres in October and 1.4 million litres of fuel in December to Nepal which jittered India one after another. India seemed to have dug hole for itself in Nepal issue forcing its neighbour to look to China (Sodhi, 2015). Then prime minister of Nepal K. P. Sharma Oli criticised India for imposing unofficial blockade and praised China for helping with fuel and other essential commodities. He declared that Nepal’s trade volume would be enhanced and diversified (Ghimire, 2015).

Nepal’s immediate neighbours had two different approach about Nepal during blockade. India had repeatedly said that Madhes agitation was the political problem and needed political solution while China asserted that it would do everything to support Nepal’s geographical integrity and sovereignty (Ghimire, 2015). So, India was seen quite prescriptive and China as supportive during the blockade and Madhes strike. The blockade tried to push country further in political instability.

5.1.2 Social Impacts of the Blockade

The blockade which run for 5 months had brought great deviation in social life in Nepal. When the flow of the goods and fuel to Nepal was blocked at border check points, it

resulted humanitarian and social crisis in the country (Pant, 2018). The blockade hit the poorest section of the Nepalese society which suffered from fuel, medication, transportation and several essential items of daily life. Nepal imports fuel only from India. It can easily be imagined how life is affected without fuel. People suffered from cooking gas and depended heavily on firewood and timber. Aeroplane and all other means of transportation did not get their fuel enough to serve the public. So, movement of the people was highly affected by this blockade. Nearly 75 percent of the vehicles were grounded in the nation due to the lack of fuel (Jha, 2015). All the respondents replied that different aspects of society were badly hit by the effects of blockade. They replied that food, fuel and medicine ran out within a couple of months of blockade. They had to cut down their food consumption and needed to find out the alternative for fuel.

Besides the impacts on household, fuel shortage affected education sector as well. The fuel crisis deprived millions of students from going to school since the schools were closed for being unable to provide transportation to their students. The report by Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) and Democratic Freedom and Human Right Institute (DFHRI) presented that more than 1.6 million students were deprived of going to schools for 75 continuous days in nine districts of eastern and central Tarai (INSEC & DFHRI, 2016). One of the respondents had said that the school activities including exams were postponed at least for one month because of the blockade.

Health sector was another major sector hit by the blockade. Due to the shortage of oxygen, medicines and blood supply, health care services were affected. The hospital authorities declared that almost all public hospitals dispensaries would be unable to supply life-saving medicines if the blockade persisted any longer (Republica, 2015). Sixty percent of the total medicine consumed in Nepal is imported from India and other countries (INSEC & DFHRI, 2016). The Indian blockade not only blocked the medicinal supplies from India but also from other countries since Nepal is bound to use India as a transit to reach to the third country.

Nepalese agriculture is also depended on imports from India. Nepal imports chemical fertilizers used in farming from India. The production from agriculture decreased drastically because of blockade. I have interviewed with one of the farmers to know the effect on agriculture. He said that he could not get enough fertilizers and pesticides for his crops and harvest was one third of the previous year. He explained that all preceding years he sold the

grains and vegetables but in the year of blockade, he had to buy food for four months. It shows that the seller become buyer because of the blockade. The INSEC and DFHRI report proclaimed that the blockade reduced significantly the food production because of the lack of improved seeds, irrigation, fertilizers, pesticides and many other agricultural equipment and facilities.

Blockade created social division based on region, race and origin. The respondents representing from the hills blamed Madhesi to be pro-Indian. By sealing the border, they supported the Indian government and it was easy for Indian government to point them to be responsible for the blockade. So, they were used against their own country. Among the four Madhesi interviewed, two of them were against the other respondents. They said that so called sovereignty was used against them. Ruling leaders representing from hills created internal colony within the country. They prevented Madhesi from enjoying the similar rights, justice and opportunities. The Madhesi were united not only against the government but also against hilly people. So, during and even after the blockade, there was a clear division between the people of hills and Madhes.

Blockade brought change in social psychology as well. Right before blockade, there was a devastating earthquake in Nepal. During the disaster rescue phase, Indian help was praised by Nepalese. However, before the country was recovered from this disaster, India imposed blockade to protect pro Indian politician in Nepal. It was diplomatic move that India refused to accept it as a blockade, but it was indeed an unofficial blockade (Pant, 2018). This diplomatic move failed since anti-Indian sentiment was heightened throughout the country for imposing the blockade. In a meeting with former prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, then Indian ambassador to Nepal, Ranjeet Rae said that India was neither supporting to the Madhes-based parties in their protests nor imposing any kind of blockade against Nepal. He was surprised to see growing anti-Indian sentiments in the country and expressed his deep concern about it (The Indian Express, 2015).

Most of the respondents responded that India was a bad neighbour. It imposed blockade and pushed all Nepalese in great difficulties. One of the students whom I interviewed said that students from different college and schools had taken the streets with anti-Indian slogans and play cards written “Modi is Killer”, “Back off India” “Respect our Sovereignty”, etc. The intensified anti-Indian sentiments throughout the country was institutionalized in the general election after the blockade. The political parties which

criticized the blockade and took stand against India, bagged almost two third of the majority in the election. So, the election mandate proved that Indian move in Nepal after the promulgation of the constitution was wrong.

5.1.3 Economic Impacts of the Blockade

Although some blockades are imposed with political interests, most blockades aim to impair the economy of the target nation. India, to some extent was successful to achieve this objective. The blockade pushed the economic indicators of the country very low. Almost 2,200 industries were shut down and 400,000 people were out of their jobs because of the blockade (Maharjan, 2015). Besides industries, small businesses were also closed, and developmental activities and the construction of the infrastructures were stood still (Pant, 2018). Presenting the mid-term report, then finance minister said, the projected economic growth in the year 2015 was 6%. However, because of blockade, he made another projection of the economic growth lowering it to 2%. The government officials claimed the blockade would inflict bigger loss than the earthquake which resulted the loss of over 7 billion dollars (BBC, 2015). According to the report of Nepal Economic Forum (NEF) and Alliance for Social Dialogue, only the private sector lost 1.6 billion dollars during five months of blockade. The report said that the imports stuck at the border and fuel crisis badly hit the production, distribution and consumption process of economy (The Kathmandu Post, 2016, June 21).

Majority of respondents replied that the black market flourished during the blockade. One respondent said that he had to pay 15,000 rupees for cooking gas which cost 1,100 rupees before blockade. Another respondent said that people became millionaire overnight because black market was dominant during the blockade. The price of vegetables, foods, and other items of daily needs had increased several folds. Petrol was sold in five time more in the black market (Jha, 2015). As the government failed to provide the essential supplies, people were compelled to turn to the black market for the basic needs.

Tourism is one of the important aspects of Nepalese economy. This sector was badly hit first by the earthquake and later by blockade backed by Madhes strike in 2015. So, the tourism sector faced complexities throughout the year. Tourists flow reduced remarkably. On 8th October 2015 the US department of state advised its citizens to reconsider their plan to visit Nepal because of the ongoing protest in Tarai region and shortage of fuel and other

essentials due to blockages at the border with India (Kathmandu Post, 2015). Few of the respondents replied that they did not see any external tourists visiting Nepal during blockade.

5.2 The Nature of the Blockade

The 2015 blockade against Nepal was quite unique in its nature. It was begun with the interruption of the supplies by the protestants belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged group called 'Madhesi' within the country. The Madhes-based political parties were demanding their concerns to be institutionalized in the constitution. They were on strike before the promulgation of constitution. Finally, when they realized that their concerns were not fully addressed in the constitution, the madhesi protestants gathered at the border and tried to prevent the loaded trucks enter the country for blocking the supplies to Nepal. So, the Madhesi dissatisfaction in the constitutional provisions seems to be the root cause of this blockade. In this sense, the blockade was seen to be done by Madhesi protestants. At the same time, as India had sent a list of amendments in newly promulgated constitution through its official channel right after the promulgation (Roy, 2015) and those amendments seem to address Madhes concerns, there was suspicion that India could have some hand behind this blockade. Though a couple of respondents replied that the blockade was done by Madhesi protestants, majority of respondents believed India for having role behind this blockade. So, the nature of the blockade has been analysed here in three parameters; the perception and experience of the respondents, Indian response on allegation of blockade and the ground on which the blockade was lifted.

5.2.1. The Perception and Experience of Respondents

The starting of the blockade as stated above was the interruption of the supplies at the border by Madhesi protestants. When the problem at the border could not be solved for a long time, people in the country started to suffer from basics of day to day life. Though the sampled population completely do not represent whole Nepalese, the perception and experience of respondents is taken as one of the parameters for analysing the nature of blockade. To find out the perception and experience of respondents in the blockade, 12 people from Nepal who experienced blockade were interviewed. Most of them responded that blockade was imposed by India, very few respondents said that it was not an Indian blockade rather a support from India in the movement of democracy and justice. It shows that many of them believe Madhesi alone could not block supplies to Nepal and the cause of all the sufferings during the blockade was India.

Majority of the respondents replied that India used the leaders of Tarai-based parties to block supplies to Nepal. They said that India approached Madhesi leaders for two purposes in Nepal. First, because of sociocultural similarity, India believes that Madhesi are loyal to Indian government. Second, India wishes to promote those pro-Indian Madhesi leaders to the executive positions so that India can achieve its vested interests by using them. Few respondents replied conversely; the leaders of those parties got Indian support in blocking supplies to Nepal. They said as India believes Madhesi leaders loyal and supportive to Indian government, they also asked help from Indian government to put pressure to government in Nepal to address their concerns in the constitution through amendment. This is some kind of “give and take” game. The list of amendments sent to Nepal through the official channel by India (Roy, 2015) serves the same interests. The Madhesi respondents replied that India had no role in blocking supplies to Nepal and if there was blockade or border sealing, it was done by Madhesi people. This shows that people were divided in perceiving the blockade. For some respondents, blockade was good means to put pressure to the government for addressing their concerns and for others it was Madhesi troublemaker supported by Indian government. The non-Madhesi respondents blamed India for supporting Madhesi leaders and protestants ignoring the sufferings of non-Madhesi population. They claimed that instead of thinking welfare of the whole country which was recovering from devastation earthquake, India favoured only the part of it (the Madhes) and the selected leaders (the leaders of Madhes-based parties). A respondent from hilly origin said that once he had visited the Indian side of the border to buy some foods and daily needs during blockade time. He was treated differently than Madhesi at the border by border security force of India. He said that his luggage was checked thoroughly and allowed to take limited amount of sugar, salt, oil, etc. However, he said that he saw Madhesi people crossing the border unchecked. Madhesi people were seen privileged and non-Madhesi as disadvantaged. So, Madhes was Indian favoured region of the country and it was seen that India tried to isolate Madhes from Nepal. I had also interviewed one of the drivers who suffered a lot from this blockade. He said that there were hundreds of loaded trucks stuck at the border for more than two months including his own. According to him he was under pressure of both the protestants and the Indian government. Both threatened him not to drive across the border. He had to cook almost for a month by the side of street near his truck. He further said that if India wanted the trucks cross the border, it could be done within half an hour. For him the main intention of India for blocking the supplies, was helping the leaders of Madhes-based parties achieve the executive positions in Nepal and establish pro-Indian government in Nepal. It shows that both Madhesi

protestants and India helped each other in blocking the supplies to Nepal to achieve their interests. The other respondent also said that India could not ignore the desire of those Madhesi leaders having dual citizenships (Nepal and India). Their promotion to the executives could be an easy way to achieve Indian interest in Nepal.

Answering to the question, why there was blockade in Nepal, the respondents said that as India is rising economic and political power in global politics, it desires to check if the plans and policies of its neighbouring countries are threats to its national security. The respondents perceived this desire as big brother attitude of the Indian government. They explained that because of Indian disapproval of the constitution, Nepal suffered from five months long blockade. Thus, the plans and policies are expected to undergo Indian approval before their implementation. The informants perceived the intension behind doing this is not only avoid possible threats to Indian security but also keep influence at policy making level of the government. It is common to any government to be conscious about the threats to its security but desire to influence policy making is some sort of oppressive culture. As Bilgin (2008) writes that the West behaves non-west as a junior partner of power game or simply as a trouble maker, this thought can be seen in Indian mindset as well. India has found the constitution of Nepal non-inclusive (Muni, 2015) and a list sent for amending the constitutional provisions (Roy, 2015) to end the trouble at the border are some of the examples that India behaved Nepal as junior partner and trouble maker. There was a common understating among most of the respondents that India wants Nepal to use the same lens to see the other countries. Freire (2002) explains that colonizers do not see colonized as rational and independent actor, there is a perception that India does not see Nepal capable enough to cope the complex foreign relation of 21st century though India was never a colonizer.

The proposed amendments in the constitution can also be analysed through 'binary opposition relation' between colonized and colonizers as discussed by Said (1991). Said says that this kind of biased representation was further institutionalized and disseminated in such a way that ultimately the colonized themselves start to accept these stereotypes created by the colonizers. However, Fanon et al. (1963) says that the colonized world's feeling of inferiority leads to the imitation of the culture of the colonizer. Identifying the weakness in the constitution, blaming the constitution to be non-inclusive (Muni, 2015) and asking to amend the constitution indicate that India believes Nepal as an irrational, traditional and barbaric country. Had it believed Nepal as civilized and rational as India, there would not have been such intervention. If we accept the list of amendments as rational knowledge, Spivak (1988)

writes that knowledge is never produced innocent and it always serves the interests of its producer. So, the amendments sent to Nepal serves the Indian interests.

Perkovich (2003) says when the British government left India in 1947, they left the culture of dominating inferior and powerless along with the big infrastructure. Nepal is one of the least developed country in south Asia whereas India is emerging with rising economy and power in global politics. Most of the respondents said that Nepal is inferior and powerless than India. For the same reason, it is being dominated by India. Among the several other examples, 2015 Indian blockade was one of them.

One respondent in a rage replied, “India aims to give the impression that it has improved status than all other neighbouring countries and also enjoys domination...It has fully utilized the geographical complexity of Nepal to dominate us”. Freire (2000) said that the colonized in the search of independence, takes the colonizers power to dominate powerless and less powerful. India did the same in 2015 blockade in Nepal.

However, few respondents responded quite differently than others. For them, blockade was Madhesi response against discriminatory provisions and concerns not being addressed in the constitution. They added that they were protesting for right for proportional participation in all governmental mechanism, provincial autonomy, equal justice and opportunities to all citizens in the country which were never granted to them. They complained that they were suffered from internal colonization and behaved like second class citizens. They hoped to end all sorts of discriminations against them through this blockade. These Madhesi respondents also explained that India supported them not by blocking supplies in Nepal but by expressing solidarity in their issues and concerns. They stated that they had never tussle with Indian border security force when they were at the border. Because of the massive protesting people at the border, it was not possible for any loaded trucks enter across the border. They said that they were blocking supplies at the border to make Nepalese government listen their grievances. They were completely disagreed that the blockade was done by India. They said that India was supportive to the Madhesi movement of rights and justice. When Madhes issues were not institutionalized in the constitution and concerns were ignored, then, the Madhesi were compelled to protest the government and discriminatory constitutional provisions. They said that they sealed the border which later became like blockade when continued for a long time. Answering the question if they had got support from India during their protest, they said that when several rounds of talks with government

failed to produce the expected results, they felt deceived. So, they were compelled to ask for help with India and India helped in their agenda since the violence at the border could be threat for India too. To quote one of the statements, one said, “When the problems of the family were not solved at home, it is normal to ask help with the neighbour”. They claimed that Indian support to their agenda was neither an attack on Nepalese sovereignty nor the interference to the internal affairs.

5.2.2 Indian Response of the Blockade

When Nepal promulgated a new constitution on 20th September 2015, many countries welcomed it and they sent a note of congratulation for being successful to promulgate the constitution. However, India a close neighbour sent a cold note of being noticed about constitution promulgation and informally conveyed amendments on the following day (Pathak, 2015). Besides, a kind of interruption in the supplies to Nepal was seen after the promulgation of the constitution. The leaders and supporters of Madhes-based parties protested at the border trying to block the supplies to Nepal. Showing the same instance, Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj answered to the questions raised by the members of Upper House on December 7, 2015 claimed that it was not the blockade, India was not acting as the big brother and only desire of India was to keep its border calm preventing all sorts of riots and strike (The Times of India, 2015). Swaraj claimed that the disturbance in the supplies was caused by the protestants at the border.

Nepalese leaders in the executives and most of the Nepalese alleged that blockade would not have been possible without Indian government’s tactic approval (Ghimire 2015). As they believed that India had hand behind this blockade, different attempts were made to lift the blockade. Nepalese foreign minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey visited his counterpart in New Delhi. In this bilateral meeting Sworaj said, “the allegation that India had imposed blockade against Nepal was totally false” (The Indian Express, 2015). She further said that it was the Nepalese people and parties to find the mutually acceptable solution in the protest over the new constitution. There were long queues of loaded trucks in major border checking points, Vikas Swarup, spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs said that it was the responsibility of Nepalese side to ensure the safety and security of those 4,310 trucks to enter the other side (The Indian Express, 2015).

The chairperson of Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist, K P Sharma Oli; then aspirant of Prime Minister requested the Home Minister of India; Rajnath Singh to

lift the blockade saying that the undeclared blockade paralyzed the hospitals, schools, industries and general life in Nepal. In a response Rajnath insisted that the blockade was not from Indian side (Ghimire, 2015). Ghimire further writes that the chairperson of Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre Prachanda suggested Indian government to stop micro-managing Nepal affairs.

Nepalese then ambassador for India Upadhyay (2015) said India should stop ‘pushing Nepal to the wall’. He added, if pushed to the wall and India did not make an effective effort to lift the blockade, though difficult, Nepal would have no option to approach other countries including China. Nepalese leaders alleged the Indian government that blockade could not have been possible without Indian government’s tactic approval. However, then Indian ambassador Ranjit Rae had said that India had nothing to do with the blockade and nor it was unhappy with the constitution (Ghimire, 2015). Ghimire explains the possibility of Indian support stating that the Madhesi protestors had benefitted the most politically by Indian meditation and India had openly backed them and their agenda after 2006. The history of Indo-Nepal relation is a sort of ‘big brother’ and ‘small neighbour’ syndrome though they are intimately bounded by geographically dictated culture, religion, civilization and interdependence.

Senior fellow and founder director of *Pahle India Foundation*, Rajiv Kumar said that the visit of the Indian foreign secretary, only hours before the constitution was to be promulgated was abortive. The constitutional assembly had voted overwhelmingly in the favour of constitution. So, a sovereign parliament could not expect such overt outside pressure. Modi’s neighbourhood policy was about to suffer a mortal blow (Kumar, 2015). He further clarifies that most of the leaders of then Madhesi agitation had lost the election and so they did not represent the majority of Madhesi; another important point to be noted is among the 15 million people living in Tarai, madhesi with Indian origin are only 30-32 percent and the rest belong to the hilly people and *Janajati* who migrated to Tarai for their livelihood. So, India should not ignore a large section of Nepal blocking supplies and supporting a small section. India’s big brother attempt to enforce its will on a sovereign nation could not be justified (Kumar, 2015). General secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist), Sitaram Yechury also had the similar opinion. He said that the undeclared blockade in Nepal was India’s great mistake in its diplomacy which had tarnished India’s image in the world (Bhattarai, 2015)

Form the above explanation it is found that Indian authorities tried their best to justify that they had no hand behind the blockade. There are some questions to counter this justification. Why did India send a list of amendments? Why did Madhesi protestant say that India had no hand behind the blockade but had expressed solidarity to the movement of rights and justice? Why was Indian envoy S. Jayshankar came in Nepal right before the constitution promulgation? Why did the political parties in opposition raised question in Indian upper house about Nepal blockade? Why did Nepalese authorities repeated requested Indian authorities to lift the blockade? Is there any truth on Rajiv Kumar's and Sitaram Yechury's statements? When we try to find the answers of these questions, we can find that India was falsely legitimizing the blockade masking its role. This could be another form of oppressive behaviour practised by India during blockade.

5.1.3 Ground for Lifting the Blockade

The blockade which began in 23 September 2015 lasted almost for five months. The country had undergone severe difficulties during this period. The blockade was lifted without any genuine reason. The Madhes-based parties and their alliance for the movement United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) slowed down their strike during the first week of February 2016, ahead of prime minister KP Sharma Oli's trip to India. Releasing a statement UDMF said, "considering the current crisis facing the nation and public necessity and aspiration, the ongoing protest programmes of general strike, border blockade and government office shut down have been called off for now" (The Tribune, 2016). The leaders of political parties have established the legacy of visiting India after they take the seat of prime minister in Nepal. Despite the formal invitation from India, then prime minister had promised that he would not visit India until the blocked borders were opened. One of the reasons for lifting the blockade was to create the environment of PM's New Delhi visit in the third week of February (Ghimire, 2015)

Both Madhes-based parties and Indian government could have been looking for some reason in lifting the blockade. Meanwhile, the constitution of Nepal was amended on 23rd of January 2016 for solving the ongoing agitation of the Madhes-based parties. The amendments included the proportional representation and electoral constituencies based on population and geography (Koirala, 2016). Although the lawmakers of agitating Madhes-based parties had boycotted voting the amendment, the amendment was passed by two third of the legislature parliament. Despite of the dissatisfaction of agitating parties, Indian minister of external affairs Sushma Swaraj welcomed the Nepal's new constitution following the amendment of

January 23. She added that most of the Madhes-based parties concerns had been addressed in the amendment, the remaining could be resolved through dialogue among stakeholders. The Indian government which had sent a cold note of notice in the promulgation of constitution, Modi, prime minister of India said in a bilateral talk with Nepalese PM that Nepal's constitution was a 'significant achievement' in Nepal's democratic struggle (The Himalayan Times, 2016). The circumstances showed that with the amendments the Indian government seemed to be satisfied than the agitating groups. It can be inferred from responses in this visit that the amendments were desired by India.

Then prime minster of Nepal KP Sharma Oli had said that the blockade would be lifted without any formal announcement like it was imposed. His prediction came true. In lifting the blockade India did not make any formal statement about the 'improved security situation' in Nepal (Tiwari 2015). Tiwari declares two main reasons for lifting the blockade. First, India preferred to save its own degrading image in the world due to the blockade in Nepal rather than supporting the Madhesi issues and second, India realised Nepal's growing closeness to China could be more harmful than the threats from Madhesi protestants.

5.3 Discussion

From data presentation and analysis section above, it is not easy to allege India being responsible for the blockade. However, the impacts of the blockade were seen throughout the country. The amendment of constitution, fuel agreement between Nepal and China, Nepal's growing closeness to China, etc were the consequences of blockade. Despite the Madhesi disapproval in amendment, India welcomed it. Thus, the scene on the ground (Madhesi protest at the border) could be perceived as an illusion and the reality was behind the curtain (hidden actor). This welcoming can be the confession that India had some hand in the blockade and Nepal's leaning towards China can be best understood as an effort to reduce Indian influence in the country.

Scarcity of cooking gas, other basic grocery and life-saving medicine, closed hospitals and schools, reduced food consumption and search for food alternatives, growing dependence on firewood and timber, etc. indicate that blockade oppressed people in Nepal preventing them from basic needs. Very low economic growth of the country, closed industries, flourished black market, reduced agricultural production, job losing people, etc as discussed in the analysis section were resulted by the blockade. It shows that the normal condition of the country got chaos because of the blockade. People marching with play cards against India

(see appendix 3) and election mandate after the blockade show that most Nepalese perceived India had hand behind this blockade. As in the colonial period, there were several movements in India against British Raj, similar types of public sentiments seemed to grow throughout the country. This means that Nepal suffered like a colonized because of blockade and India on the other hand is seen to have been raised as colonizer.

Blockade had obviously created division in the country. During the blockade, there was a clear division of Madhesi and non-Madhesi. Madhesi were blamed to be used by India because of the belief that blockade would not have been possible without Indian tactic approval (Ghimire, 2015). India repeatedly denied the allegation for having hand behind the blockade and tried to justify differently as discussed in the section above. Freire (2000) says the oppressor wishes to weaken the oppressed by isolating them and creating and deepening the rifts among them. Few Madhesi respondents and the leaders of Madhes-based parties frequently said that India had no hand behind the blockade but supported in the movement of rights and justice and expressed solidarity to their concerns. This paradoxical remark denotes that India presented itself as the saviour of Madhesi people and was also involved in blocking supplies to Nepal. Indian government might have used the cultural action of manipulating the people giving the impression that they were being helped. So, as the colonizers tries to present themselves as the saviour of the people whom they divide and dehumanize with the intension of preserving their status quo (Freire, 2000), this culture could have been imitated by India during blockade.

A seven-points amendment conveyed to government of Nepal through Indian ambassador for Nepal (The Indian Express, 2015) had created a discussion among scholars during and after the blockade. Most of the respondents also emphasised that it was not good to demand the amendments in the constitution by another country since it was purely the internal matter of a sovereign country. Locating weaknesses in the Nepalese constitution could be an Indian attempt to present Nepal a traditional, irrational and barbaric society as Said (1991) discussed binary opposition relation created by western colonizers. If the list of amendments was forwarded as logical knowledge, it serves the Indian interests since Spivak (1988) writes that knowledge is never produced innocent and serves the interest of producer.

Increasing social and humanitarian crisis, growing intimacy between China and Nepal, mounting anti-Indian sentiments were seen to be harmful and counterproductive for India. So, the blockade was lifted without any genuine reason. According to Tiwari (2015)

two main reasons for lifting blockade were to save degrading image due to the blockade in Nepal rather than keep supporting the Madhes issues and second, India realized that Nepal's growing closeness to China and mounting anti-Indian sentiments could be more harmful than the threats from Madhesi protestants. This could be a cleaver move India adopted for ending the blockade.

Analysing the impacts of blockade, it is found that Nepalese society was really oppressed during blockade. The impaired economy, major deviation in the social life and political pressure to executives and legislative resulted because of the blockade. As India had undergone British colony almost for 200 years, the British culture of dominating others could have been deeply rooted in Indian mindset. This claim was observed in 2015 blockade as Fanon, et al. (1963) say colonized world's feeling of inferiority leads to the imitation of colonizer's dominating culture.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

In this research, the nature of 2015 blockade in Nepal has been analysed and the impacts of this blockade were explored using colonial hangover perspective of postcolonial lens. The nature of the blockade was analysed through the experience of purposively sampled respondents and some other secondary resources. Most of the respondents, Indian leaders in opposition and Nepalese leaders in the executives claimed that India imposed this blockade without disclosing its hand. However, few respondents, reports and articles from Indian newspapers and Indian authorities tried to legitimize that blockade was done by Madhesi protestants. As Madhes and India have close socio-cultural affinity, India was blamed listening Madhes issues and expressed solidarity to their concerns. This solidarity created division between Madhes and non-madhes which is perceived as a strategy of divide and rule to achieve the vested interests.

The impacts of blockade were seen in political, social and economic aspects of the country. Blockade influenced policy making and external relation of the country. Not only on household, educational and medical sectors, the impacts of blockade were seen in agriculture, environment and social psychology as well. Most awkward impacts were seen in the economy of the country. When state mechanism was about to cease to function, black market flourished, and many business industries were closed. The economic growth was lowered beyond the expectation. The production, consumption and distribution process of economy became chaos because of the blockade. These impacts show that Nepal must have been

oppressed during this blockade. As India had undergone British colony almost for 200 years, the impacts of the blockade reflect that India seems to have translated colonizer's oppressive culture in 2015 blockade in Nepal.

The leaders of political parties of Nepal need to learn lesson from this blockade. Nepal must find the alternative of India to import fuel and other commodities to end the heavy dependence. As in the history Nepal gave space to India to micromanage Nepalese politics, today's leaders should have one voice to protect national interests and safeguard sovereignty. The issues of different political parties and marginalized groups should be settled within the country rather than asking help from others. As India was colonized for many years in the past, it should understand the sufferings of the oppressed and respect the sovereignty of other country endowing the land-locked country's rights of trade and transit.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Example Guide for Semi-structured Interview

1. Preliminary Questions about:

- a. Interest in politics
- b. Indo-Nepal relation
- c. Positive and negative aspects of Indo-Nepal relation

2. Question about blockade

- a. When and How long?
- b. What did India do during blockade
- c. Any vested interests behind the blockade
- d. Problems faced during blockade
- e. Problems observed during blockade
- f. Measures adopted to overcome the problems

3. Perception about India

- a. Role played during blockade
- b. Reasons for imposing the blockade
- c. Attack on Sovereignty
- d. Democracy Prompter
- e. Right and Justice

4. Linking to theory

- a. How was blockade imposed? Any leaders or community within the country were used?
- b. Role: Saviour or intervene
- c. Any resemblance of its behaviour to its former colonizer
- d. Indian response of the blockade
- e. Internal colonization/ Mental colonization

Appendix 2

Respondents Detail and Their Perception of Blockade

<i>S. N.</i>	<i>Province</i>	<i>Background</i>	<i>Perception of Blockade</i>
1	4	Social and Human Right Activist	Blockade was imposed by India
2	4	Civil Servant	India supported Blockade
3	4	Driver	Blockade was done by India
4	4	Woman Representative	Blockade was done by India
5	5	Student	Blockade was imposed by India
6	5	Social Worker	Blockade was imposed by India
7	5	Farmer	Blockade was imposed by India
8	5	People's Representative (Man)	India supported blocking supplies
9	2	Madhesi with Indian Origin (Businessman and social worker)	Madhesi were responsible for blockade
10	2	Indigenous Madhesi (Tharu)	India supported blockade
11	2	Madhesi Woman (Housewife)	Madhesi were responsible for blockade
12	2	A businessman living in Madhes with hilly Origin	Blockade was imposed by India

Data Collected from Indian Newspapers

<i>S. N.</i>	<i>Name of the Newspapers</i>	<i>No. of Reviewed News Reports/Articles</i>
1.	The Indian Express	16
2.	The Tribune	30



Fuel Crisis: A long queue of cooking gas cylinders waiting to refill.

Source: Nirajan Shrestha



Fuel Shortage: Over-crowded Buses During Festival

Source: Hemanta Shrestha



Government Distributing Timber to Overcome Shortage of Cooking Gas Source: Subodh Khanal



People in Kathmandu Marching against the Indian Blockade

Source: Bhagirath Yogi



Hospital Staff Rallying Against Blockade

Source: BBC



People Protesting In front of Indian Embassy in Nepal

Source: Sagar BK

Seven Provinces and Madhes in the Map



Source: nepalsbuzzpage.com



Source: demrepubnepal.blogspot.com