

CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES (CLAWS)
WEBINAR
SOFT POWER DIMENSION: INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS
ON 17 DEC 2020
CONCEPT NOTE

1. **Background.** India-Nepal relations have civilisational ties rooted in history, culture, traditions and a strong religious connect. The two countries share an open international border, a testament to the strength of the bilateral relationship. The people to people ties is perhaps the deepest shared by any two countries in the region. The soft power dimension of the relations has several important tenets.
2. **Historical and Civilisational Bonds: Can They Withstand the Geo-economic and Geo-strategic Pressures of Modern Regional Politics.** The relations between the two countries go back thousands of years. Until recent years, the historical and civilisational bond was considered the backbone of the ties between India and Nepal. But a capital driven neoliberal outlook is displacing the historical connect as the centre point of the bilateral relationship.
3. **India-Nepal Military Diplomacy: an Anchor for the Bilateral Relations.** Gurkhas from Nepal have a rich and proud history of working in the Indian Army, fighting alongside Indian soldiers during several military campaigns. The military bond goes well beyond the hard power element, with the sense of brotherhood being the prime feature. Military diplomacy between the two countries has often come to the fore as an anchor that has kept the overall relations strong and stable.
4. **Climate Change and Disaster Management: The Future of Indo-Nepal Cooperation.** Natural disasters exacerbated by climate change are becoming an increasingly worrisome matter for countries. India and Nepal are no exception with both countries falling in disaster prone areas, especially for earthquakes and floods. The 2015 Nepal earthquake, the immense destruction caused and the subsequent successful humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) cooperation between India and Nepal makes a strong case for future collaboration in matters of disaster management.
5. **Religious Tourism as Soft Power: Strengthening India-Nepal Ties.** Religion plays a central role in the lives of the people of both India and Nepal. A sacred thread that runs from Pashupati to Gaya adds depth and meaning to the bilateral relations.

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8. **Objectives of the Webinar.** In light of the background given above, the objectives of the webinar are as under:

- (a) Recollect the historical and civilisational aspects of the relationship and how the centrality of these aspects is being affected by economic and political factors prevalent in these countries and the region at large.
- (b) To appraise the role played by military diplomacy in the broader bilateral relations.
- (c) Exploring future opportunities for cooperation on matters of climate change and disaster management.
- (d) Exploring religious tourism to further bolster the ties between India and Nepal.

9. **Conduct of Webinar.** Through this webinar the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) intends to bring together academicians promote soft power cooperation and collaboration between India and Nepal.

Miscellaneous Details

10. **Participants.** The participants will be from the strategic and diplomatic community, veterans, media, students from schools and colleges and academia.

11. **Venue.** Webinar at Chanakya Hall, CLAWS.

12. **Project Coordinator.** Dr. Jyoti M. Pathania, Senior Fellow, CLAWS.

13. **Rapporteurs.** Under arrangement of CLAWS.

14. **MC.** Under arrangement of CLAWS.