



Mains Practice Question

Q. Analyze how the India-Nepal Joint Commission can effectively address common concerns and promote mutual interests between Nepal and India. (150 Words)

09 Jan, 2024 GS Paper 2 International Relations

Approach

- Write a Brief Introduction about the India-Nepal joint commission.
- Write joint commission's effectiveness in addressing shared concerns.
- Write a conclusion.

The **India-Nepal Joint Commission** is a bilateral mechanism at the **Foreign Ministers' level** that reviews the entire spectrum of **Nepal-India relations**. It was established in **1987** and has held seven meetings so far, the latest one being in **January 2024**.

Body

Challenges associated with India-Nepal Relations:

- **Boundary Issue:**
 - The Indo-Nepal ties face a significant challenge in the **Kalapani boundary dispute**, stemming from conflicting interpretations of historical agreements. The **2019** escalation, marked by India's new political map and Nepal's counter-map, underscores the ongoing tension over territorial claims.
- **Treaty of Peace and Friendship:** The 1950 treaty between India and Nepal grants special privileges and rights to the citizens of both countries, such as free movement, trade, and employment.
 - However, some sections of Nepalese society view the treaty as unequal and outdated and demand its revision or abrogation.
- **Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) report:** In 2016, India and Nepal established the EPG to **review bilateral relations** and suggest improvements. The group submitted its report in 2018, proposing various recommendations such as the **Revision of the 1950 Nepal-India Treaty** of Peace and Friendship and enhanced economic cooperation. But the report remains officially unimplemented, adding to the frustration in India-Nepal relations.
- **Development Projects:** Indo-Nepal ties face challenges with delayed and problematic development projects, including **Pancheshwar Multipurpose** and **Arun III Hydropower**. Concerns also arise from a growing **trade deficit**, **limited market access**, and non-tariff barriers, impacting major initiatives like **Integrated Check Posts** and **Cross-Border Railways**.

Joint Commission's Role in India-Nepal Relations:

- The **Joint Commission** can facilitate resolution by initiating **dialogue**, expediting the Joint **Technical Committee's work** on boundary demarcation, and promoting trust by refraining from unilateral actions.
- The Commission can **aid EPG report** implementation by addressing India's concerns on treaty revision, recognizing positive aspects, and monitoring progress for fostering cooperation and

mutual benefits.

- The Joint Commission can advance projects by facilitating cross-country coordination, addressing technical and financial hurdles, and ensuring transparency. It should also enhance **trade cooperation, remove barriers**, and explore new collaborative areas like **digital connectivity, health, education, tourism, and agriculture**.

Conclusion

The unique India-Nepal relationship requires nurturing through the Joint Commission, addressing challenges, fostering dialogue, and promoting mutual interests. Leveraging cooperation opportunities, enhancing connectivity, and upholding principles of mutual respect and non-interference are key to strengthening this special bond.

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