

Chinese Public Diplomacy in Nepal

Research Report



नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान
Policy Research Institute



Kathmandu, Nepal

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ACRONYMS

AWS	: Automatic Weather Stations
BRI	: Belt and Road Initiative
CAS	: Chinese Academy of Sciences
CDG	: Central Department of Geography
CDHM	: Central Department of Hydrology and Meteorology
CI	: Confucius Institute
CIKU	: Confucius Institute Kathmandu University
CRI	: China Radio International
CSC	: Chinese Scholarship Council
EMIMDPs-ISs	: English-Medium Master's Degree Programmes for International Students
GSM	: Geographic Society of Nepal
HANBAN	: Chinese Language Council International
HUEB	: Hebei University of Economics and Business
ICIMOD	: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICT	: Information and Communication Technology
IMHE-CAS	: Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment, Chinese Academy of Science
IRBM	: Integrated River Basin Management
ITP	: Institute of Tibetan Plateau
KCRE	: Kathmandu Centre for Research and Education

MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
NAST	: Nepal Academy of Science and Technology
NGO	: Non-governmental Organization
PD	: Public Diplomacy
PRI	: Policy Research Institute
RADI	: Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth
TU	: Tribhuvan University
UN	: United Nations

FOREWORD

Diplomacy in general is still understood as a foreign policy tool managing relations between and among states. In spite of their remarkable roles in modern-day foreign affairs, the non-state actors and the general publics are yet to be accepted by many states as real actors in foreign affairs. Such practice is more prevalent among developing countries. Though many of the developed countries have been making use of the publics in other countries in achieving their foreign policy objectives, developing countries are yet to have sufficient skills and resources to use public diplomacy as a useful foreign policy tool. Public diplomacy is relatively a less-travelled terrain in Nepal's case as well.

In November 2022, the PRI published the report of a study on Public Diplomacy. The study introduced the theoretical aspects of public diplomacy. It also looked into the Nepali practice in the area of public diplomacy and made recommendations for the Government of Nepal for making public diplomacy a useful tool of Nepali diplomacy.

Effective and meaningful use of public diplomacy requires not only theoretical knowledge about the subject but also clear objective, resources, and skills as well as some understanding of its practical aspects. We can learn from the experiences of other countries- both from their success- and failure- stories- how public diplomacy can be used in a better manner. The People's Republic of China is one of the countries which have implemented public diplomacy effectively and have used public diplomacy for the enhancement of the country's image abroad as well as to promote and strengthen the bilateral relationship. It is expected that Nepal, too, can benefit from some of the best practices of China in this area.

As I have mentioned in my Foreword for the earlier study on public diplomacy, the PRI has a plan to gradually study the practices of other countries in public diplomacy. This time, we have looked into Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal. We intend to conduct such studies with respect to other important countries in the days ahead.

Dr. Lila Nyaichyai and Dr. Khaga Nath Adhikari have ventured into this study. I thank the authors and the Publication Review and Recommendation Committee of the PRI for their hard work.

Bishnu Raj Upreti, PhD
Executive Chairperson
Janaury 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The origin of public diplomacy can be traced back to the 19th century, but it has now become an effective and useful tool of foreign policy. Traditional diplomacy used to focus on state-to-state relations, but modern diplomacy has made people one of the actors and factors in diplomacy. The development of democracy around the world, globalization and the increasing importance of public opinion have made public diplomacy an important tool of modern diplomacy.

Public diplomacy is to understand, inform and influence foreign publics. It is also a means to influence foreign governments through their people. It involves a number of actors and networks. It also involves a number of activities including explaining and advocating the government's policies in foreign countries; providing information about the country, its people, values, and institutions; building lasting relationships and mutual understanding through the exchange of people and ideas; and advising the home government on foreign attitudes and their implications for its policies. The major tools of public diplomacy are information, education and culture; and its targeted audiences include journalists, government officials, academics, think-tanks, non-governmental organization workers, business leaders, and art societies . It broadly exists in three forms: public-private partnership; citizen diplomacy; and the domestic dimension of public diplomacy.

In Nepal's case, public diplomacy is relatively a new phenomenon, which was introduced after the restoration of democracy. The Constitution of Nepal promulgated in 2015 has made it a mandatory process by including "enhancing the dignity of the nation in the world community" as one of the guiding principles of the state on foreign relations. The Foreign Policy of the Government of Nepal announced in October 2020 has recognized public diplomacy as a tool of Nepali diplomacy, and has institutionalized it by including it in a separate section in the policy document. Nepal has good possibilities of using public diplomacy to the benefit of the country. The proud history and culture, epoch-changing political developments, natural beauty, active involvement in the maintenance of world peace, etc. can be used as sources of soft power for the country.

The People's Republic of China is considered one of the countries that have conducted public diplomacy successfully. It has been using various instruments of public diplomacy, such as domestic and foreign media in the English language, the internet, events and projects to increase Chinese visibility abroad, celebrities,

educational and cultural exchanges, and Chinese gardens abroad. The instruments for Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal mainly consist of higher education, cultural exchanges and participation, and many other activities through Confucius Institute.

China is a good friend and well-wisher of Nepal. It has applied various means and strategies to improve and strengthen its cooperation with its southern neighbour. One of the strategies is China's developmental infrastructure assistance to Nepal, which China calls South-South cooperation, and has a more direct connection with Nepali society. Another such strategy is China's 'good neighbour' policy which exceeds the political sphere and has reached Nepali society and social issues. For China, the South Asian region as a whole carries significance. China is an observer of SAARC, has historical connections with South Asia, and has substantial trade with this region. Although China and the countries in South Asia have different cultures, languages and social values, there are factors linking the two.

China's ascending self-confidence in the world is yet another factor that has created a good impact on Nepal and the Nepali people. Besides news media, which have been helpful in spreading China's good image, Chinese language teaching, economic assistance, trade, investment, education, student exchanges, and visits of politicians, businessmen, journalists, civil servants and other people from different spheres of the Nepali society have been contributing to enhancing understanding between the people of the two countries

Public diplomacy practices are boosting and reshaping the bilateral relations between Nepal and China. A true reflection of Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal was seen in the aftermath of the earthquake of 2015. China extended help through many Chinese organizations (both governmental and non-governmental) in the rescue and relief of earthquake victims. Among other support, the Chinese Government provided three billion Yuan for Nepal's reconstruction (MoFA, 2022).

Higher education is an emerging and useful tool for promoting Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal, which basically aims at promoting mutual understanding, cooperation and exchanges between China and other countries. Nepali students are gradually interested in achieving higher education in China. The scholarship programme has directly contributed to increasing familiarity with China in general, the Chinese higher education system, the Chinese language and Chinese society among Nepali youths. Similarly, Chinese universities have also been exchanging students with Nepal: both sending students to Nepal and receiving Nepali students for higher education in China.

In Nepal, the Confucius Institute (CI), which was established in February 2007 under Kathmandu University as an academic institute, has emerged as an effective mechanism for promoting the Chinese language and culture in Nepal. The CI's activities include celebrating Chinese festivals, participating in festival celebrations organized by other Chinese offices in Nepal, and co-organizing festivals with Nepali organizations. Chinese volunteer teachers also play an important role in introducing Chinese dance, songs and music that is special to particular Chinese festivals in Nepal. Thus the Confucius Institute has made remarkable contributions to building internal and external relationships.

Other actors that have been instrumental in strengthening public diplomacy between Nepal and China are the universities in both countries. The universities exchange students and faculties and run joint projects. These activities have not only helped the students in making academic advancements through scientific and educational collaborations but also in promoting understanding between the two countries.

Thus, public diplomacy has been used by China as a useful and effective tool for its foreign policy. It has been instrumental in promoting cooperation, helping Nepal in various fields and promoting understanding between the two countries and their people.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, diplomacy was understood as intended interactions and exchanges between and among states and governments. People were neither the subjects of diplomacy nor were they given any role in it. It was all the responsibility of the government. However, the traditional approach to diplomacy has now undergone profound changes, and the monopoly of the elites, the so-called “wise men”, is now over. In the new international context, people have emerged as important factors, and actors, in diplomacy and foreign relations. Foreign policy decision-making is moving away from the centre of government and out into society. This public-centric approach in diplomacy has been given a new name: Public Diplomacy.

Public Diplomacy, as the name itself suggests, is a form of diplomacy targeted at foreign publics. It, however, is not a very new concept. Public diplomacy has been found mentioned and practised by different leaders/governments at different times in different contexts. The term ‘public diplomacy’ is found to have been used from as early as the 19th century. This phrase is found to have been used by the ‘Times’ of London on 15 January 1856 (Cull, 2009). Although mentioned in speeches and writings but rarely practised in earlier times, public diplomacy was effectively practised after the end of the 2nd World War (Cull, 2009, p. 21). More specifically, its use followed the beginning of the Cold War. The United States ran propaganda campaigns through the United States Information Agency (USIA). The main objective was to run campaigns against the Soviet bloc and in support of the US and its allies.

In the beginning, the term ‘propaganda’ was used to mean public diplomacy. Gradually, this term gained a negative connotation and started losing the appeal it once carried. Efforts were made to search for a more benign, meaningful and attractive phrase to replace the term ‘propaganda’. In 1965, Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, found the phrase “public diplomacy”, more appealing than the word “propaganda”. A brochure of the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, which was established by Edmund Gullion, defines public diplomacy in the following words:

“Public diplomacy...deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of

international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.” (Cull, 2009, p. 19).

The University of Southern California (USC) Centre on Public Diplomacy has defined public diplomacy as “the public, interactive dimension of diplomacy which is not only global in nature, but also involves a multitude of actors and networks” (*What’s PD?*, n.d). The US Department of State aims at using public diplomacy for “...informing and influencing foreign publics and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and Government of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world” (US Department of State, 2022).

Public diplomacy is to understand, inform and influence foreign publics (Smith, 1998). It aims at winning the hearts and minds of the foreign public (Tiedeman, 2005). The real objective is to influence foreign governments through their people. The global wave of democracy, increasing globalization, increased influence of private sectors, a revolution in information and communications technology, etc. have made people all over the world more influential. At the same time, international relations are being socialized, exceeding the limit of the political sphere (Wang, 2014). People’s increased interest and stake in a country’s foreign affairs and international relations make public diplomacy more relevant and important. Public perceptions, opinions and discussions are vital for any country these days; and the foreign publics’ attitude is also a determining factor in a country’s image-building, attracting foreign investment, and the country’s involvement in, and engagement with, other countries.

Traditional diplomacy is a G2G phenomenon, i.e. it is conducted through government-to-government interactions. On the other hand, public diplomacy includes a ‘public’ component. Even public diplomacy has been divided into two types: traditional public diplomacy and New Public Diplomacy. Traditional public diplomacy follows a one-way approach, i. e. “telling” people. It is about “governments talking to global publics” (Snow, 2009, p. 6). In this sense, this is a G2P phenomenon. The New Public Diplomacy, on the other hand, is a two-way traffic which directly involves governments and people interacting between and contacting with, each other. This can be termed a P2P phenomenon, meaning efforts at the people’s level.

In the modern-day world, understanding foreign publics, informing them about one's own country and influencing their opinions in support of one's country is of great importance. Understanding the opinions and feelings of the people in other countries is very important. It is interesting to note the conclusion of the 2003 Report of the US Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World. The Report says-

“We have failed to listen and failed to persuade. We have not taken the time to understand our audience, and we have not bothered to help them understand us. We cannot afford such shortcomings”. (Report of the US Advisory Group... 2003, p. 24).

Nancy Snow quotes then-US President George Bush as having said one month after 9/11: *“I’m amazed that there is such misunderstanding about what our country is about. We’ve got to do a better job of making our case”* (Snow, 2009, p. 7).

Informing, engaging and influencing foreign publics are equally important. Two-way communication and listening to others are crucial for this purpose. Traditional public diplomacy focused on informing others rather than listening to other people. The use of propaganda is basically for this purpose. The new public diplomacy takes others' views into consideration. The new public diplomacy has further raised the importance of the publics in foreign affairs, and thus in public diplomacy.

In diplomatic studies, public diplomacy has become “a metaphor for the democratization of diplomacy, with multiple actors playing a role in what was once an area restricted to a few” (Melissen, 2013, p 436). The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution has made people more aware and interested in foreign affairs. The development of a curious middle class, especially among developing countries, has raised the interest and influence of the people in foreign affairs. No democratic government can now ignore broader public opinion while taking foreign policy decisions. Even authoritarian regimes are now concerned with public opinions at home and abroad, and have been engaged in public diplomacy.

The concept of public diplomacy gained further momentum after 9/11 (Copeland, 2011 p. 163). After 9/11, the West has come to a general conclusion that poverty and underdevelopment were among the major causes of misunderstanding and ignorance of, and prejudices against, the West, which was demonstrated in the attacks on US installations. This necessitated more interaction with, and help for, Third World countries, and closer contacts with the people there. This realization encouraged

many countries, big or small, to use public diplomacy as a tool for achieving their national interests. Needless to say, public diplomacy is not solely political in nature; it is a multifaceted and multidisciplinary subject (Zhao, 2015).

It was, again, after 9/11 that the idea of ‘New Public Diplomacy’ got prominence. The new public diplomacy requires two-way ‘dialogue’ with the people, not only one-way ‘propaganda’ as practised in traditional public diplomacy. The 9/11 attacks made the developed world feel a need for enhanced dialogue with the people in other countries, especially the people in developing countries (Melissen, 2013, pp 441-42).

After the end of the 2nd World War, public diplomacy has passed through three broad phases. Initially, public diplomacy took the form of propaganda which highlighted one’s strengths and ‘other sides’ weaknesses. With the end of the Cold War, the inception of globalization, and the event of 9/11, public diplomacy became an imperative, which focused on informing and convincing foreign publics. This can be termed the 2nd phase of public diplomacy. The 3rd phase of public diplomacy was the new public diplomacy, which required two-way communication with the publics in other countries, listening to them and taking their views into consideration.

Public diplomacy basically serves two purposes. First, it is used for promotional purposes. Promoting the image, products, and values of a country is the first objective of public diplomacy. This helps promote the prestige of a country. It also helps in promoting a country’s exports and attracting tourists and foreign investments. The second objective of public diplomacy is to influence foreign governments through their people. This helps in achieving other issues of national interest, including political objectives. It will be very difficult for any government to take a decision against the interests of a country which its people like so much. Herein lies the crux of public diplomacy. It is thus ‘diplomacy by other means’.

The major tools of public diplomacy are information, education and culture. And its targeted audiences include journalists, government officials, academics, think tanks, non-governmental organization workers, business leaders, and the arts society (Smith, 1998).

Public Diplomacy broadly consists of three forms: public-private partnership; citizen diplomacy; and the domestic dimension of public diplomacy (Melissen, 2013). Any government has to work with private sector organizations and civil societies to make public diplomacy effective. Similarly, citizens also can be used in public diplomacy. Many countries have been employing the services of their people

to cultivate relationships with foreign publics. This can be done through various forms of exchanges, interactions, contacts, homestays and other methods. The domestic dimension of public diplomacy seeks to use people and other resources available in the country for the purpose of public diplomacy. This dimension may also be useful in countering unwanted foreign propaganda. Soft power, national branding and purposeful advocacy can be useful and effective in public diplomacy.

1.1 Nepali Context

As among other countries, diplomacy was traditionally a prerogative of the elite in Nepal as well. General people did not take much interest in foreign affairs and diplomacy. It was with the gradual democratization of polity that the Nepali people started taking interest in foreign affairs and diplomacy. This was glaringly visible after 1989/90, when democracy was restored in the country. Many international developments such as the end of the Cold War and the global waves of democracy, liberalization, globalization, etc. greatly contributed to making people more aware of and concerned about foreign affairs and diplomacy. In Nepal, too, diplomacy is in the process of 'democratization'. This has become more visible after the promulgation of the new Constitution in September 2015. Article 50 (4) of the Constitution has made “enhancing the dignity of the nation in the world community” one of the guiding principles of the state on foreign relations. Public diplomacy can be an effective tool in this regard. Though the Constitution has made foreign affairs the responsibility of the Federal Government, many factors such as the federal structure of the state, the parliamentary committee on foreign relations, and many national and international developments have brought the Nepali people closer to foreign affairs. And, public diplomacy is one of the areas that Nepali ambassadors are required to work on. This is also a fact that many people and different sections of society are yet to have a good understanding of the concept of public diplomacy; and, it is yet to become a popular topic of public discussion in Nepal.

The Foreign Policy of the Government of Nepal, which was announced in October 2020, has a separate section on Public Diplomacy. However, a lot more has to be done to publicize the concept and suggest measures for the effective use of this dimension of foreign policy. Nepal is very rich in natural and civilizational heritages. It has a history that it can be proud of. With the negotiated and peaceful resolution of the decade-long Maoist conflict, Nepal has made epoch-changing developments in the areas of conflict resolution and institutionalization of democracy that can be examples for the whole world. But, these achievements need to be marketed for national benefit. Public diplomacy can be an effective tool towards this end. Nepal

has to develop an effective combination of public diplomacy, soft power and digital diplomacy to use its civilizational, historical and natural heritages and democratic gains to the nation's benefit.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Though many other countries, especially the developed ones (the US for example), have been using public diplomacy for a long time for different purposes, it is relatively a new area for Nepal. Nepal has now identified public diplomacy as a tool of its foreign policy and, through the Foreign Policy of the Government of Nepal announced in October 2020, has devised some measures for its implementation.

Public diplomacy has now been included as a component of diplomacy within Nepal's Foreign Policy. In this context, it is imperative that Nepal learns from the best practices of other countries in the area of public diplomacy. The People's Republic of China is one of the countries conducting public diplomacy successfully. Some of the best practices of China could be useful for Nepal to learn from. This study has tried to fill this gap, and it is expected to be useful for Nepali diplomacy.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This Study has a two-pronged objective.

- i. First, discuss public diplomacy of the People's Republic of China, with a focus on Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal.
- ii. And second, identify some of the measures, based on the best practices of China, that the Government of Nepal can apply in its own public diplomacy.

1.4 Research Methodology

The study is basically qualitative in nature. Data were collected through a synthesis of available literature and interactions with academics, university faculties and students of public diplomacy. Similarly, inputs were gathered through a webinar hosted by the Policy Research Institute on 6 September 2021, during which one of the authors also made a presentation on Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal. Comments were made by three Nepali experts on foreign affairs.

The study Report was peer-reviewed by internal and external experts. The Publication Review and Recommendation Committee of the PRI, too, thoroughly reviewed this report. The comments and opinions of the reviewers have been incorporated into the report.

CHAPTER TWO

CHINESE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In China's historical course, public diplomacy was not considered as important as in present-day China. Wang (2008) has stated that China perceived foreign policy merely as an extension of domestic policy. China believed that once domestic affairs function well, international concerns and respect towards the nation will automatically upgrade. But, present-day China has focused a lot of attention on public diplomacy.

Wang Yiwei (2008) identified three stages of Chinese public diplomacy. They are: (i) reveal the new China and garner support for the change, (ii) reform, adopt an open system and safeguard world peace, and (iii) promote peaceful development of China. These stages are related to the historical, evolutionary and revolutionary phases of China. Along with these phases, Chinese public diplomacy has shifted its paradigm. It means that China was initially found inactive in international image-making activities but in contemporary times, China is found actively involved in the image-building course in the international arena. After the Covid-19 pandemic, China is more worried about the deteriorating national image in Western countries (Wang, 2022).

The objectives of Chinese public diplomacy are described by Song and Wang (2011) as dissuading negative perceptions and making foreigners understand China's policies, practices and domestic concerns. Chinese public diplomacy is expanded in Europe through political leaders, media, think tanks, and elite Chinese. The authors viewed that Chinese public diplomacy in Europe is launched with three goals in three phases: short-term goal (correcting the wrong perception and description of China); mid-term goal (cooperation in various strategic projects), and long-term goal (construction of good image). The authors evaluated the Chinese soft power use in Europe is in a defensive stage (Song & Wang, 2011). The efforts of Chinese public diplomacy were examined as less effective in presenting a positive image of China or improving the Western understanding of China, hence, it was recommended that Chinese think tanks play an additional role (Li & Wong, 2018).

Scholars have analyzed President Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping's speeches that signified the value of public diplomacy for China. (Hartig, 2015). As China launched international projects like the Chinese Dream and One Belt One Road, public

diplomacy became more important for China for winning support from the global citizenry. Shen (2016) strongly recommended upgrading public relations capabilities, and cooperation between the Chinese think tanks on one hand and foreign counterparts and media on the other in organizing various seminars and workshops. The author emphasised maximum utilization of Chinese public diplomacy sources like the China Cultural Centre under the Ministry of Culture and the Confucius Institute affiliated with the Ministry of Education. Confucious Institute has been identified and described as one of the major efforts of Chinese public diplomacy (Hartig, 2014, 2015; Yang, 2010; Yang, 2020; Zaharna et al., 2014)

Besides, with their special authority, personalities and personal charm, the Head of State and the First Lady, too, are special sources of China's public diplomacy. With the recognition of the significance of public diplomacy, China established public diplomacy office in the Ministry of Foreign Affair in 2010 (Shen, 2016). Shen (2016) emphasised the publicity of the Chinese values that form the base for Chinese development, incorporation of state and non-state actors, utilization of traditional and non-traditional media platforms and people-to-people interactions as some other means to launch public diplomacy activities in foreign countries.

It is also understood and accepted in China that China should sincerely help developing countries pursue the development path suitable to their national conditions. Public diplomacy is an area that is more practice-oriented than theory. Hence, Chinese public diplomacy is more a 'project-driven diplomacy'. Therefore, the Chinese opine that a particular project, whether educational, information communication, cultural exchanges, or government public relations, is needed for implementing public diplomacy. Chinese public diplomacy grew based on these practices.

Likewise, the gradual growth of scholarly publications on this issue has suggested the significance of public diplomacy for China after 2001. In the year 2001, there was only one article published on public diplomacy. This number increased in the following years and reached 214 articles published on public diplomacy. China's study on public diplomacy has shifted from 'the early stage to a developing stage'(Niu et al., 2015). Yet, Qu (2010) preferred to state that Chinese public diplomacy is still in an initial phase. Public diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is yet to be developed on theoretical bases.

With an instance of comparison and contrast between the visit to Australia by two heads of state, from China and the US, Kurlantzick (2008) proclaimed that Chinese

new public diplomacy is winning the foreign publics. His study claimed that China uses both formal and informal diplomatic tools. The use of younger generations as China's diplomats, a win-win set of values, being everyone's friend, non-interference doctrine, relying more on soft power, priority for the relationships with the developing countries, etc., are some new approaches that China has maintained. However, the author preferred to use terms like 'lure', 'showcase', 'pressure', etc., which can have negative connotations, while describing China's public diplomatic activities. It created a sense of suspicion over China's growing application of public diplomacy.

There are multiple means applied to Chinese public diplomacy. One such means is the arrangement of scholarships for international students. The provision of scholarships for students from developing countries assisted in creating a positive attitude toward China (Myungsik & Elaine, 2018). The authors argued that the good perception of China is positively related to the successful socialization of its soft power, and it also enhanced its overall national power. Chinese scholarships have prevented the assumption of a 'China threat' significantly. The mechanism of scholarship for foreign students is identified as proactive public diplomacy.

However, Song and Wang (2011) observed that Chinese public diplomacy mostly fell as a defensive act in developed European countries whereas Myungsik and Elaine (2018) found inherent proactive characteristics of China's public diplomacy. However, the reason behind the increasing soft power of China is due to China's growing economy rather than its culture, which is mostly deemed to be for the creation and advancement of soft power. The power of economic growth seems to be hard power rather than soft power.

Yağci (2018) identified China's economic power as the major source of China's public diplomacy rather than China's culture and values, particularly in regard to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He applied behavioural and contextual approaches to analyzing China's public diplomacy activities and effectiveness in 60 different countries linked to BRI. He argued that China's public diplomacy activities themed on promoting globalization, free trade, infrastructure investment, and win-win cooperation are basically parts of economic diplomacy, which bears larger political and strategic implications. For achieving these goals, China incorporated soft power and hard power, which together constitute a 'smart power'. The author also categorized China's public diplomacy along the BRI line as proactive soft power diplomacy.

In this way, the studies on China's public diplomacy suggested two different arguments: Chinese scholars underscore the necessity of utilizing the Chinese language, culture and values for China's soft power that gave the ground for its public diplomacy, whereas foreign scholars find the economic capacity and economic development programmes in many countries as the major source of China's public diplomacy in foreign countries. However, the theoretical bases employed in the research of China's public diplomacy by Chinese and foreign scholars are rather less.

2.1 Role of Education in Chinese Public Diplomacy

Education stands as a strength both to prepare own citizens and persuade foreign citizens. The importance and capability of education inside and outside the country are always significant for countries. In the case of China, it used to import western education earlier; but from the early 2000s, China started exporting its knowledge, culture, and language. Now, China receives more foreign students than the Chinese students going abroad (Yang, 2010). Through the means of education, China is able to influence foreign citizens in their own land. Such international education became China's soft power (Kuroda, 2014). China's economic growth and significant presence in global affairs are the major factors in attracting international students. As Kuroda (2014) has squeezed out, the major objectives of Chinese international education are 'cooperative relationship', 'internationalization', 'sharing China's knowledge', 'successful experience', 'dissemination of Chinese achievements', 'better understanding of China,' 'learning true China', and 'serving national interest'. Similarly, Chen (2010) has discussed that Chinese international education is "an efficient way to promote soft power". Education acts as one of the sources of soft power in public diplomacy.

2.2 Chinese Public Diplomacy in Nepal

Even though there were no good road connections and no means of communication like today, people made travels from China to Nepal and vice versa, particularly in the quest for knowledge, which was in the ancient time named as religious hunting of knowledge. There was a rare motive of explaining their own country to foreigners. But eventually, the Chinese scholars' travel introduced China to Nepal and India. Nevertheless, those travels took place some thousand years ago. To discuss those events is revisiting the far past that indicated the possibility of human exchanges even in harsh circumstances. It visualized the background for the present Nepal-China relationship, particularly the people-to-people relationship.

One of the most significant events in the history of Nepal-China cultural relations was the introduction of Buddhism in China in 67 A.D. After their rise to power in the fourth century, the Emperors of the Qing dynasty worked to promote Buddhist ideals by constructing monasteries. The fifth century was also a remarkable period in the history of Nepal-China cultural relations as it witnessed a marshalling of activities designed to promote Buddhism on the part of Nepalese and Chinese monk scholars. For instance, the Chinese monk Pao Yun came to Kashmir at Mauthyan Tholo Vihar (Buddhist Monks' institute) and requested to provide learned Buddhist scholars for China. Respecting his request the chief of the Vihar sent Buddhahadra, a Nepali Buddhist scholar, to China with Pao Yun in 406 AD. Afterwards, Buddhahadra spent 21 years of his life in China translating Buddhist manuscripts from Sanskrit and Pali into Chinese. Similarly, the Chinese monk Fa Xian also stayed 15 years (399-414 AD) of his life in Nepal and India for learning and teaching Buddhist knowledge in Nepal and India.

Thus, cultural relations existed and developed between Nepal and China from historical times. The cultural artefacts, Buddhism, trade relations, and exchanges of Buddhist scholars were the historic foundations for bilateral relations between Nepal and China. Formal diplomatic relations between Nepal and China were established on 1st August 1955. With this documented timeline, it could be noticed that China's official presence in Nepal started in the middle of the 1950s. When BP Koirala visited Beijing, he expressed how fascinated he was to see the then China's development (Peking Review, 1960). The political, economic and social revolution in China was the alluring motivation for the Nepali agrarian society. Till now, China commands the respect of many Nepalis. Some Nepalis have shared political ideological belongingness with China, and some have perceived it as a better economic model for Nepal, if not political ideology. Anyway, China grasped a significant attraction among Nepali people. In reality, China has achieved a good perception from Nepal because of the following reasons:

First, China's developmental infrastructure assistance to Nepal has become a role model for Nepal-China friendship which, though limited in amount, is more directly linked with Nepali society. China calls such cooperation as South-South cooperation. The developing China in the 1960s extended their friendly token assistance towards a less developed country, Nepal. Building the first Highway (Araniko Highway) connecting Nepal with China (Tibet) was the aspiring initiation for Nepalis to link with another neighbour, apart from India.

Secondly, after the 1990s, with the advent of economic growth and political reform, China strengthened neighbourly relations with Nepal, under China's 'good neighbour policy'. The bilateral relations have exceeded the political sphere and have reached Nepali society and social issues. For China, the South Asian region, where mostly developing countries are located, carries significance. China and the countries in South Asia have their own special culture, language and social values; however, there are factors linking the two. The paradigm of world trade is inclining towards China. One instance is the condition of all the South Asian countries having increased economic ties with China.

Thirdly, China is enjoying an ascending international self-confidence in the world (Rudd, 2018). It has a good impact on Nepal and the Nepali people. China does not merely depend on news media to propagate its good image but is dealing much with direct engagements with Nepal through Chinese language teaching, economic assistance, trade, investment, education, student exchanges, and visits of politicians, the business community, journalists, civil servants and other people from different spheres of the Nepali society. The Chinese visit Nepal for touristic purposes and investments in small to larger projects. These bilateral exchanges in the cultural and other social fields have enhanced the Chinese public diplomacy practices in Nepal.

Public diplomacy refers to direct relations with foreign publics through education, information, social welfare activities, culture, etc., which aim to influence foreign governments by influencing their citizens (Frederick, 1993). While checking Chinese diplomacy under these backgrounds in the context of Nepal-China relations, very limited studies endeavour to define and discover the issues.

Public diplomacy practices are boosting and reshaping the bilateral relations between Nepal and China (A. R. Bhattarai, personal communication, November 15, 2017). The bilateral relations were majorly apparent during high-level visits. Now, it has been observed in every walk of life in Nepal. As the consequence, Nepal increasingly finds China in political, economic and social fields. Similarly, in the investment sector, in the fiscal year 2004/2005 (2062/062 BS), there were only seven industries registered by Chinese citizens, which had grown to 849 industries in 2014/2015 (2071/072 BS) (Department of Industries, 2005, 2015). In this way, the speed of growth within a decade is more than 100 times. These are some examples of how Chinese engagements have increased in Nepal at the beginning of the 21st century.

Similar traces of increased involvement was found during the earthquake of 2015 in Nepal. It was a disastrous tragedy for Nepal and Nepal was in dire need of international help. China did not lose a single moment to help Nepal during that time of need (Thapa, 2015; Xinhua, 2015a, 2015b). In this regard, it was the true reflection of Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal. In a similar manner, China did for West Africa during the Ebola epidemic (Wu & Yang, 2017). There were 73 Chinese organizations (both governmental and non-governmental) playing their roles in supporting the earthquake victims in Nepal (Nyaichyai, 2019).

Apart from utilizing such emergency situations for promoting the benevolent image of the country, China has supported them on a regular basis, too. Organizing regular trade fairs in China and in Nepal, Chinese language teaching and Chinese language classrooms, scholarships to Nepali students, exchange of visits between different Nepali and Chinese universities, and research collaborations are some of the major activities of Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal.

2.3 Chinese Public Diplomacy Targeting Nepali Youths in Chinese Universities.

Higher education has been a diplomatic project for China in South Asia. Nepali students are pursuing higher education in China for their ‘career prospects and to enhance the education system’ (Gauttam et al., 2021). Nepali students are encouraged to pursue Chinese universities through different scholarship programmes. Chinese ambassador Hou Yangqi reported that 6,400 Nepali students had secured Chinese government scholarships (Xinhua, 2019). Through the scholarship, China aimed for mutual cooperation and exchanges between China and other countries (PRC Ministry of Education, 2009). The aim set in CSC reflected the practices of Chinese public diplomacy in the world because scholars have highlighted the “mutuality and establishment of stable relationship” as the distinct nature of Chinese public diplomacy (Melissen, 2005). The CSC has seven different scholarship schemes dedicated to various parts of the world in various fields; and, 289 Chinese universities are conducting higher education and research programmes for foreigners in China. In 2017, China received 489,200 international students from 204 countries in 935 Chinese higher education institutes located in 31 provinces. Among them, 58,600 foreign students from 180 countries were awarded CSC, which was 11.97% of the total foreign students in China (PRC Ministry of Education, 2018).

Nepali students are also gradually interested to achieve higher education in China. Moreover, different scholarship programmes in China have encouraged Nepali

students to approach China for higher studies. Based on the responses made in 2016-2017 by Nepali students in China, the scholarship programme has directly contributed to increasing familiarity with China, Chinese higher education, the Chinese language and Chinese society, culture and values among Nepali youths.

China has emphasized relations with developing countries and promoted the practices of new public diplomacy activities like cultural exchanges, hosting scholars and politicians, setting-up networks for informal summits, scholarship for students from developing countries and so on (Kurlantzick, 2007). Hence, China has been showing interest and giving importance to its relationship with one of its close neighbours, Nepal.

During the research on public diplomacy, it was noticed that Nepali students were enrolled in different Chinese Universities. One of the Nepali students pursuing education in China was Niranjana Bhattarai, who first studied the Chinese language at Banaras Hindu University in 1951 and later studied at Beijing University in 1958. He was introduced by Tanka Prasad Acharya and farewelled by BP Koirala for the study (Bhattarai, 2016). It could be one of the special cases for Nepal because every general public may not be recommended by the former Prime Minister for foreign study. Due to the socio-economic condition of Nepal in the 1950s, for general Nepali people, access to university education was very rare. Access to education was gradually extended afterwards.

The accessibility to education has changed in China as well. After the reform of China in the 1980s, the Chinese government is proactive in 'improving the international political and educational relation' (Pan, 2013a). The number of Nepali students had also gradually increased in China for higher education. Medical students and Engineering students were comparatively more. The alumni association of scholars and experts who graduated from Chinese universities, named Araniko Society, has all executives and general members belonging to either the medicine or engineering field. The association was established on October 24th, 1981 (Araniko Society, 2022). At present, Nepali students are ever-growing in number in China. According to Nepal government data, China is the sixth most selected destination country by Nepali students. In 2009, the Ministry of Education (MoE) of China listed Nepal among the top countries whose citizens were having higher education in China, up above thousands in number (PRC Ministry of Education, 2009).

Authors have identified that education provides a significant context for exchange. Moreover, foreign citizens could be influenced through education (Peterson, 2014).

Educational exchange is described as a distinct example of ‘exchange diplomatic practice’ in public diplomacy (Cull, 2008).

2.4 Chinese Public Diplomacy through Confucius Institute (CI) in Nepal

On 5 February 2007, the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu and Kathmandu University (KU) signed an agreement to establish Confucius Institute in Nepal. According to the agreement, the KU and Hebei University of Economics and Business were assigned to be co-partners under the guidance of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) (Confucius Institute of Kathmandu University (CIKU), 2007). After unveiling the CIKU on the 13th of July 2007, it has conducted different activities and has participated in various programmes. Altogether, 199 activities are found listed on the official website of CIKU. These activities were categorized into three approaches to cultural diplomacy. The Confucius Institute (CI) was established as academia, with the aim of working on expanding the Chinese language and culture (*News and Events*, n.d.). In August 2022, the second Confucius Institute was opened in Tribhuvan University. This Institute, too, aims at, among others, promoting Chinese language teaching in Nepal and enhancing cultural exchanges between Nepal and China.

Confucius Institute has been characterized as the main source for promoting the Chinese language, culture, and knowledge in the rest of the world (Neubauer & Zhang, 2015). Some European and American explanations are filled with a kind of scepticism toward CI and its soft power generation (Paradise, 2014). However, researchers also found the different relational approach of public diplomacy through CI, which was particularly appreciated for such systematic and multi-layer relationship building in a foreign land (Zaharna et al., 2013). Relationship building with foreign citizens is one of the major objectives of public diplomacy.

Confucius Institutes, named after the Chinese philosopher who lived from 551 to 479 BCE, are centres for language study linked with universities around the world. The network of such institutes is a significant tool that China has used to expand its international influence and promote its model of governance via the promotion of the Chinese language and culture. This move is arguably China’s most systematically planned soft power initiative. CI, partnering with Chinese universities, connected with central Hanban (Chinese language class office) along with relations with cross-border CIs and local Chinese classrooms, was depicted as a multi-layered network. One of the major tasks of CI in promoting the Chinese language and culture in the

rest of the world was analyzed by Zaharna et al. (2013) as a “network public diplomacy” approach. This network functioned by evaluating the network structure, network synergy and network strategy, the three interrelated dimensions of network communication. The partnership between CI of various host countries and Chinese universities was observed as one of the means for internationalizing Chinese educational institutions (Paradise, 2014).

The Confucius Institutes are established in the host country mostly within existing institutions and universities that had already established relationships with Chinese universities. But, the speciality of CI is that at first, it evaluates the social condition, where the classes are to be launched and set the language course and class accordingly, which is different from particular academic course programmes (Starr, 2009). Hence, CI is analyzed along with its outer activities, out of the Chinese class activities. Teaching activities and cultural activities (like celebrating Chinese festivals, singing and dancing to Chinese music, and cooking Chinese food) merged into actions that produce bonding among various individuals (Zaharna et al., 2014). Such mass engagement with local communities helps in promoting culture, exposing Chinese culture to the targeted elite class, and presenting CI as the centre for a harmonious replica of China. It was described as the cultural diplomacy approach (Pan, 2013a). Education and culture are complementary components in human society and at the same time, they are sustainable means for people-to-people relations.

2.4.1 Engaging with Local Communities

Celebrating various Chinese festivals organized by CIKU, participating in festival celebrations organized by other Chinese offices in Nepal, and co-organizing festivals with Nepali organizations are some of the frequently held activities of the Confucius Institute in Nepal (*News and Events*, n.d.). In the celebration of festivals, there is the involvement of the local people. Chinese volunteer teachers play an important role in introducing Chinese dance, songs and music that is special to particular festivals. Similarly, special Chinese food items are prepared during such celebrations, which help Nepali locals get acquainted with Chinese festivals and food culture. Celebrating Chinese National Day, Autumn Festival, Spring Festival, and International Women’s Day, organizing cultural and calligraphy lectures and many others are examples of activities that CIKU annually organizes to promote Chinese celebrations with Nepali local communities. Other programmes that the CIKU conducts targeting local Nepalis include refreshment training classes for local Chinese language teachers. They have regular discussion meetings among Confucius class teachers

and schools. Applying various teaching methodologies, the CIKU holds cultural tours, picnics and field trips for teaching the Chinese language properly and interestingly. These seemingly tiny activities worked like cement for cultural interaction among Nepali students and local people. As it was clearly stated “... China will place culture construction at a more prominent strategic position, pay more attention to cultural soft power construction, and expand the breadth and depth of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries...” (Liu, 2016).

2.4.2 Targeting Elite Classes

Important figures like politicians, university vice-chancellors, rectors, scientists, etc., are invited to China on various occasions. Similarly, ministers, deans, mayors, university heads, ambassadors and scholars from China have visited CIKU. Chinese Ambassadors in Nepal have paid visits to CIKU many times and have had meetings with the vice-chancellor, dean and rector of the KU. A Joint Conference of the Asian Confucius Institute was held in Jakarta in 2014, in which CIKU Director Prof. Dr. Bhola Thapa and Director Prof. Dr. Wang Shengli participated. In the annually organized Confucius conferences, too, representatives from Nepal have been participating. In addition, head teachers of the schools that have Chinese classes were brought to visit the Hebei University of Economics and Business (HUEB), Peking Language University and Tsinghua University. The Nepali team highly appreciated the splendid development of the HUEB library and other facilities.

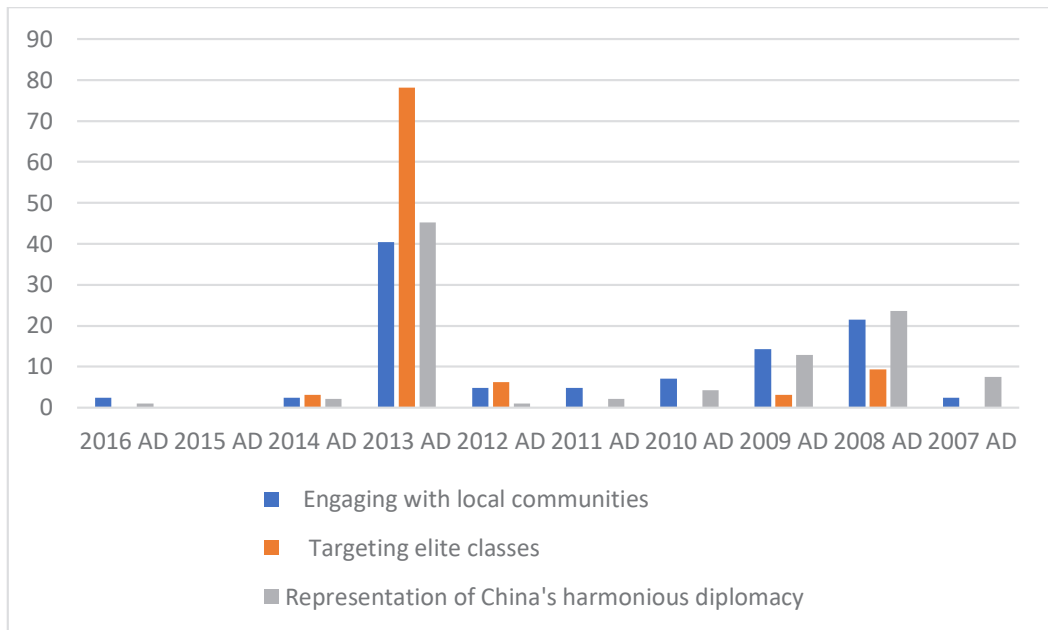
2.4.3 Representation of China’s Harmonious Diplomacy

Most of the activities of Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal are related either to teaching language, training local and Chinese teachers or introducing Chinese culture in various ways. There are some lectures about Chinese culture and language. On some occasions, the CIKU organizes discussions on similarities and differences between Nepali and Chinese cultures and festivals. Chinese teachers have even started to learn the Nepali language. It shows that the CIKU aims to achieve mutual understanding in better ways. The yearly activities of the CIKU have become helpful in friendly engagements between Nepal and China. The HUEB artist group also visited and conducted Chinese art classes in Nepal. It seems there are daily interactions on Chinese culture and language. The classes were not limited to nine Confucius classes but CIKU kept contacts in various colleges that were located in different parts of Nepal. For instance, the CIKU facilitated the teaching of the

Chinese language at Hotel Management College in Pokhara. Pokhara is one of the most popular tourist places for Chinese nationals.

Figure 1 below depicts the density of activities in each of the three approaches of CIKU's cultural diplomacy in Nepal.

Figure 1 Activities of CIKU Categorized into Three Approaches of Networks



2.4.4 Chinese Language and Culture: Soft Power to Nepal

Soft power promotion through Confucius Institute is viewed by scholars of international relations as a major activity of China all over the world (Hartig, 2015). The motive of cultural exchanges is to add up to the soft power of the country. Culture presents the country in a positive light (Dutta-Bergman, 2006). Nye (2004) strongly recommends for America that “soft power grows out of culture, out of domestic values and policies...increase the exchanges across societies... the most effective communication often occurs...in face-to-face contacts...the best communicators are often not governments but civilian surrogates...more educational exchanges, encourage more students to study abroad” (p.267).

It seems that Nye's recommendations are heard by China in the context of the Confucius Institute that “it trained 20,000 Chinese language teachers and volunteers

to teach more than three million students...they explained China through their own actions and were acclaimed as ‘civil Chinese ambassadors’...CI attaches importance to both Chinese language teaching and the spreading of Chinese culture...these efforts had contributed to enhancing understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and the people of different countries, opening up new channels for China’s public diplomacy, and improving China’s national ‘soft power’ (Zhao, 2012, p.152). Scholars noticed that China seemed highly influenced by Nye’s soft power thesis (Flew, 2016). The dissemination of Chinese culture has aimed at being coherently mixed up with foreigners’ culture and values, too and similarly, Chinese culture be equally influenced by the world’s culture and values. China’s former President Hu Jintao proclaimed that the Chinese culture belongs not only to the Chinese but to the whole world. Similarly, present President Xi Jinping reiterated that “Confucius Institute belongs not only to the Chinese but to the whole world” (Confucius Institute, 2017).

CIKU activities demonstrated that when they celebrate Chinese festivals with a variety of foods, Chinese songs, and dances, many Nepalis participated in them. Chinese language students and teachers performed beyond the classrooms and took a broader stage. Cultural events are the mediums to extend the relationship with foreign publics and they can reinforce a country’s impression of foreigners (Otmazgin, 2008). At first, people get acquainted with foreign culture, which will pave the way for cultivating good views and inspire more engagement with the country (Holden, 2013). As CI is basically an educational institute (Hanban, 2016), its integral and main responsibility is teaching the Chinese language that will promote a high level of culture, education, literature, research and higher studies in China.

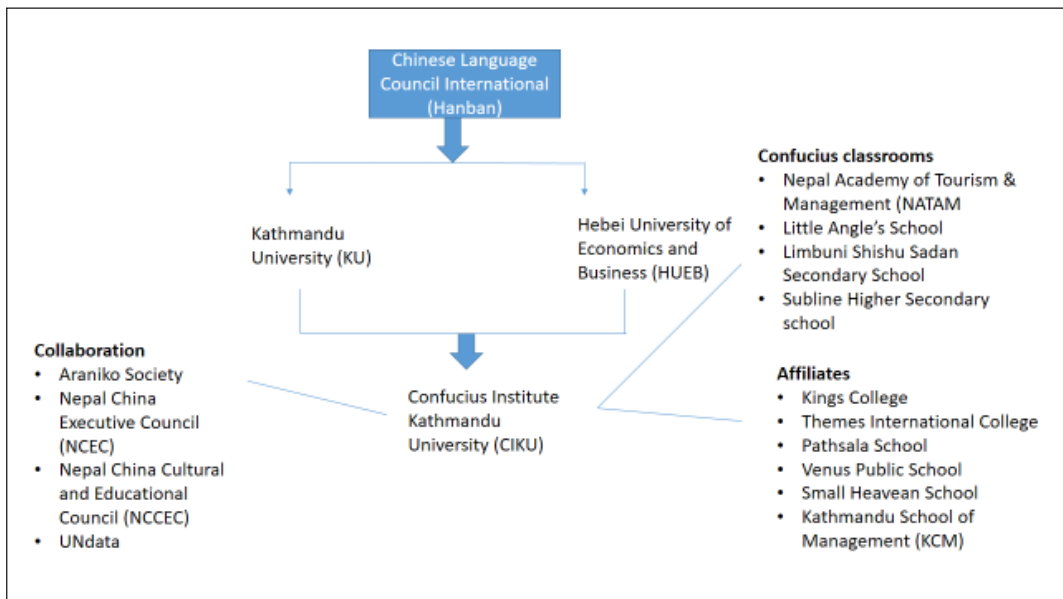
The regulations provided by the Hanban statute can be summarized in the following points:

- Confucius Institute (CI) is an educational institute
- Its aim is to develop multiculturalism and construct a harmonious world
- It promotes educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other international communities
- It abides by the laws of host countries
- Every CI will receive funds from Hanban
- The board of directors is formed with Chinese and overseas partners (Hanban, 2016).

As Pan (2013a) argued, this kind of partnership gives Confucius Institute a ‘starring role’ in the world’s academia. Zaharna et al. (2013) described it as the foundation of a ‘multi-dimensional’ and ‘multi-layered’ worldwide network. She mentioned that partnership between the host country and Chinese universities promotes “direct interpersonal communication and sustained, long-term relationship-building” because the partnership paves the way for regular official visits, exchange of students and faculties, and possible collaboration in research (Zaharna et al., 2013, p. 16). The CI activities are not just linked culturally, but linked to internal and external relationship that paves the way for collaboration.

The Confucius Institute of Kathmandu University has 4 Confucius classes, 9 teaching points and 6 affiliated colleges for a Chinese language class. It has collaborations with 3 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nepal, too. Hence, it has organizational and structural relations with multiple academic and social actors in Nepal. The organizational structure of CIKU is depicted in the following figure:

Figure 2 The Organizational Structure of CIKU



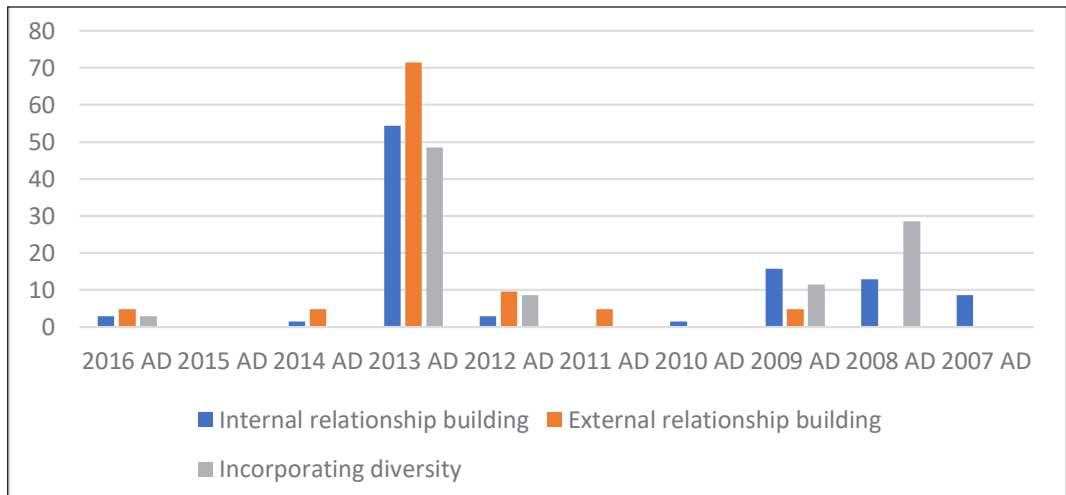
The Confucius Institute in Nepal is partnered with Kathmandu University (KU), established in 1990 and has a good reputation in Nepal. The early CIs were established in prestigious institutions in order to create aspirational meaning for

other institutions to collaborate with (Zaharna et al., 2014). The CIKU has extended its relationship with other local schools and colleges that are also privately owned academic institutions, and relatively elite-class Nepalis are accessible from those institutions. The CIKU maintained collaborative relationships with four civil organizations in Nepal. Apart from UNdata, all three organizations are chaired by city leaders who returned to their respective professions after completing their higher education in China. They have a good societal position in Nepal.

Individual members of the network can be changed into a dynamic team through the internal relationship-building process. Diversity is achieved through internal and external relationship building. When the relationship reaches the expansion of network resources, and association with other local and international organizations, the external relationship will extend.

The activities of these three types of practices can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 3 CIKU Activities in Three Dimensions of Network Synergy Practices from 2007-2016



2.4.5 Internal Relationship Building

The CIKU has a mechanism to establish and strengthen relationships among internal members through a number of periodic meetings, experience sharing, cultural tours and internship programmes. These are the process and programmes through which CIKU attempts to build an internal relationship. The regular interactions among

Chinese language teachers (Nepali and Chinese) have helped to generate professional enrichment and content enrichment too. The internal relationship is maintained among Kathmandu University's authorities, classroom managers, and teachers. These regular exchanges would build and promote trust, transparency and the development of the relationship. It also replicates China's working mechanism through which they tried to earn the trust of Nepali authors of KU. Speaking about and sharing own's intentions and planning has knitted the fabric of trust. Even country leaders express their views in media for the foreign citizens for obtaining trust (Mogensen, 2015). Trust building is the major attempt of public diplomacy.

2.4.6. External Relationship Building

Participation in annual CI conferences, Asian CI conferences, occasional visits from Chinese scholars and Nepali distinguished persons, periodic conferences and numerous cultural programmes are the CIKU activities that contribute to external relationship building. The CIKU has also established a relationship with China Radio International (CRI) through participation in CRI's annual programmes. Similarly, the CIKU presented one Chinese language cultural performance to International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) office in Nepal. They have concluded an agreement for conducting such programmes regularly. There are some Chinese-speaking clubs formed and functioning regularly in Kathmandu. Such programmes help get familiarized with the various arrays of Nepali society. Zaharna et al. (2013) pointed out that the external relationship seeks contacts with local communities, and cross-border interactions, and even counts the digital connections through social media and online portals.

2.4.7 Incorporating Diversity

Diversity makes networks creative and able to utilize resources in new ways. In particular, the CIKU was found to incorporate Nepali athletes who had participated in Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. It also briefed Nepali athletes and sports authorities before going to Beijing and also organized a farewell programme for those athletes. Participation in world poetry day, women and children's days, talk programmes with Chinese tour guides, academic talk programmes on Confucius and Buddha, the efforts made for incorporating the Chinese language in Nepali curricula, Chinese language for media persons and so on are some other examples that contributed to incorporating various spectrum of Nepali society.

The CIKU's activities are based on an annual routine programme, which includes the recommendation for a Confucius Scholarship for Nepali students studying in

China and the selection of students from various schools and colleges in Nepal for summer or winter camps in China. It is bridging Nepal and China either through Nepali students studying in various universities of China or by introducing China to young students through their own experiences.

In the case of the CIKU, there was a regular sharing of Chinese language class management, teaching materials, and teaching experience among local Chinese language teachers. As the CI statute requires following local laws and customs while preparing teaching materials, it helps in creating locally suitable teaching materials as well. The CIKU has organized exchange programmes like comparing differences and similarities in Chinese and Nepali festivals, organizing visits for the representatives of Nepali national museums to gather more knowledge on Nepal, learning the Nepali language by Chinese teachers, and visiting and teaching during various cultural tour programmes. These are the activities that the CIKU attempted for localization and exchanges on a practical basis.

2.5 The Relation between Tribhuvan University (TU) and Chinese Academic Institutions

Educational exchanges used to be very exclusive during the Cold War era; and it was synonymously applied to cultural relations. The universities of underdeveloped countries were the main means for a plethora of exchanges between the USA and underdeveloped countries, which received different American technical assistance (Bu, 1999).

In international relations, China is sensitive and concerned about equality and mutual respect from the very beginning of the modern Chinese government's policy (after 1949 AD); and it remains almost unchanged even with the changes in China's economic power during various periods. King (2007) has detailed and analyzed China's support to the developing countries in Africa. He found that, through the experience of educational exchange between China and Africa, Chinese support for developing countries is based on the principle of 'friendship, peace, cooperation and exchange' (p.338), China encouraged 'two-way exchange rather than a one-way offer of scholarship and short-term professional training in China' (p. 342), and that China particularly avoided 'aid' kind of word, aiming not to present itself as a 'donor' country.

China has been extending and promoting relations with almost all countries around the world. Moreover, modern China (after 1949) has a history of the systematic

establishment of international relations. After President Xi Jinping came to power, China started giving more priority to neighbouring countries. Nepal is one of the important neighbours for China. The strategically located geography of Nepal has made China consider Nepal with due significance. The geo-strategic importance of Nepal for China is true, not merely for Nepal but for the whole of the South Asian region (Bhattarai, 2016). As Zhao Enlai said, ‘no matter is small in foreign relations’ (as cited in Zhao, 2015), 66 times smaller sized Nepal is an equally significant country for Chinese foreign relations.

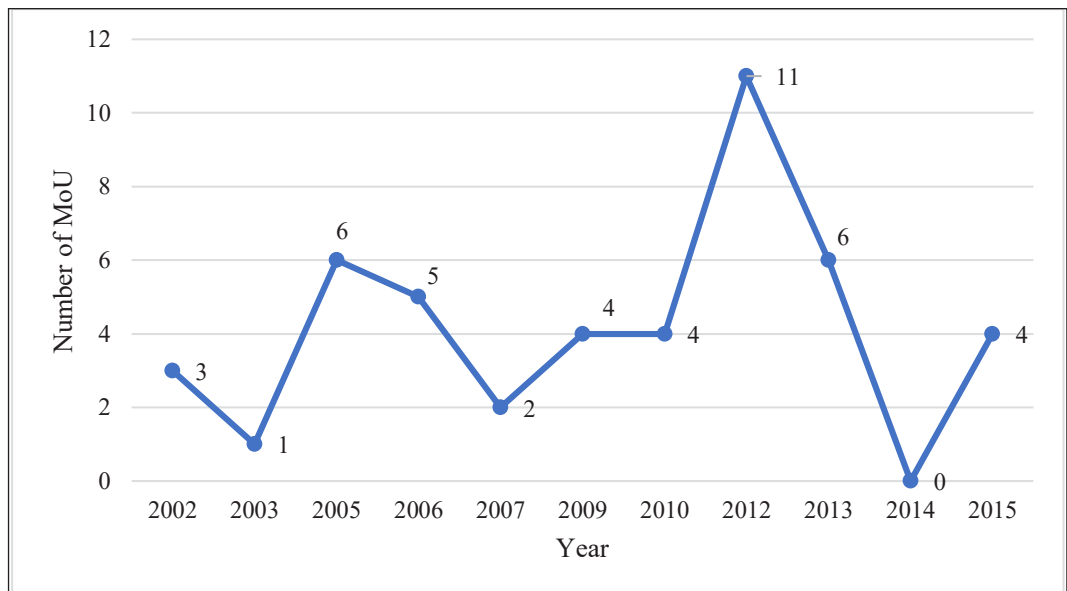
Today, Nepali intellectuals view that Nepal-China relations have flourished also at the non-governmental and people-to-people levels which incorporated apolitical areas like arts, culture, literature, education, sports and so on (Bhattarai, 2016). China perceived public diplomacy as an idea of ‘relying on the people and placing hope on them’ (Zhang, 2010). Shrestha (2015) wrote that Nepal and China hold a long history of public diplomacy before modern formal relations were initiated between the two countries through the exchanges of Buddhist scholars; and the linkages date back to the 5th century. It is a proven fact that educational exchanges were made since historical times for cross-border relations. Shrestha further figured out that, at present, more than 2500 Nepali students are studying in 540 universities in China. Similarly, he has also highlighted the fact that Chinese nationals who have completed higher education from the Tribhuvan University in Nepal achieved good jobs in China. Students’ exchange across the border is an effective means of public diplomacy. Nonetheless, apart from student exchanges, collaborative academic activities are also being practised. Such activities also fulfil the objectives of public diplomacy. After all, as Zhao Qizheng believed, the key to public diplomacy is practice (Zhao, 2012).

In the modern context, Universities are the centres for exchanges of nationals and culture. For the universities of Nepal and Nepali teachers, students, and university administration, China is now being a closer and nearer partner with which various collaborative tasks are running. In Nepal, Tribhuvan University (TU) has been a milestone in initiating higher education and still continues to be the largest institution with wide education networks in the country. It is approached by many foreign universities and foreign academies. Chinese universities, Chinese academic institutions, research centres and scholars have gradually taken an approach of establishing academic relations and exchanges in research and development with the TU. The TU started International Relations Center in April 1998, which has planned for more international exchanges in order to have educational excellence,

upgrade the standard of educational activities and develop human resources (Center for International Relations TU, 2015). In the existing favourable context, along with other foreign higher educational institutions, Chinese higher educational presence is very significant for TU. Similarly, Chinese officials viewed Chinese Universities as better actors for influencing foreign people directly, easily and sustainably. When people from foreign lands come into contact with Chinese universities, professors, students and the general public, foreigners will encounter real China and Chinese people directly. It helps foreigners understand China and the Chinese people better.

Figure 4 showing the relationship established with TU during the various time periods:

Figure 4 Number of MoU between TU and Chinese Universities



Source: Bulletin of International Relation Centre, TU

Based on the published information from TU, there was an increased interest of Chinese universities in making engagement with TU. The MoU are the initial approach made for engagement. Chinese Universities may not have a direct link with foreign policy, but they are capable of disseminating a good image and perception of the country. As China was expanding relations through all means, one such means is education and Universities. The highest number of engagements

between Nepal and China was in the year 2012. One notable point in this regard is that the MoUs signed between the TU and Chinese universities in 2016 and 2017 are not included in this figure, as they have not been published yet (learned through TU International Centre).

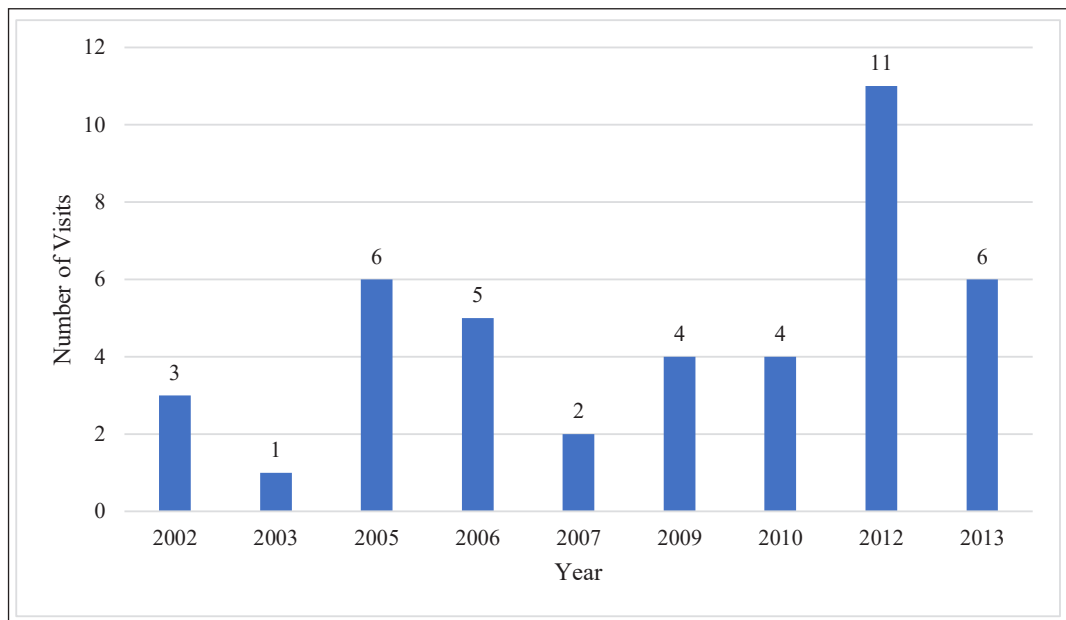
Describing the trend of internationalization of Chinese education, Huang (2003) analyzed the years 1972-1992 as the first phase that China mainly dealt with dispatching students, scholars and the members of faculties abroad for further studies, while after 1993 China sought cooperation with foreign higher educational institutions and foreign students coming to China. It also wanted its own citizens who went overseas to study to return back to China. Huang's description of the Chinese government's preferences also proved close to the reality in practice since the Chinese universities took a corresponding approach from 1998-2007, with added emphasis from 2008 to 2017. It seems true in Nepal too because the number of MoU with TU increased after 2000.

SN	Chinese Universities and institutes which have concluded MoUs with the TU
1	Hainan University
2	China Three Gorges University
3	Yunnan University of Finance and Economics
4	Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences
5	Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment
6	Chinese Academy of Science (IMHE-CAS)
7	Shenyang Aerospace University
8	Hebei University of Science and Technology
9	Department of Land Use/Cover Change and Land Resources Institute of Geographic Sciences
10	Natural Resources Research, Kunming Institute of Zoology
11	Xinyu University
12	Communication University of China
13	Institute of Tibetan Plateau (ITP)
14	Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth (RADI)
15	Sichuan University

The MoUs with Chinese universities envisioned faculties' and students' exchanges, joint study projects and sharing of academic knowledge. However, for the scholarly exchanges, MoUs were not the only responsible factors. Personal approaches of individual faculties, applications for international seminars and meetings, and invitations from foreign universities are also relevant factors in this regard.

Academic engagement is visible in the exchange of students, scholars, and faculty members, and some collaborative tasks between TU and Chinese academia. Educators are more interested in the long-term academic relationship because they argued that academic exchanges could bear fruits only after a long-term co-working (Bu, 1999). Therefore, this study has incorporated the activities in which TU's faculty members and administrative staff participated in various workshops, visiting lectures, seminars, conferences and so on in China. These activities provided opportunities to introduce members of faculties between Nepal and China. It also included Chinese leaders, scholars, researchers and students who came to TU on various occasions, besides MoU signing ceremonies.

Figure 5 Frequencies of Visits for Workshops, Seminars, Visiting Lectures etc. from TU to China



The above diagram has attempted to show the frequencies of interaction every year. In the diagram, the year 2004 is absent because of the unavailability of published

data. There is no regular pattern of such interaction between TU and China. However, such interactions are very important for face-to-face communications between the TU and Chinese academicians.

The TU authorities and faculties have visited the above-mentioned Chinese academic institutions in connection with various workshops, meetings, conferences and other occasions. From China, academic institutions' authorities, faculties, government officials, and researchers have come to Nepal for visits to TU, research, discussions, and for developing new areas of joint projects in Nepal. Between 2007 and 2017, such visits from TU to China occurred 21 times, and 19 times from China to TU and affiliated institutions. The frequencies of those kinds of academic exchanges are growing year by year between TU and Chinese academic institutions, but not in a regular pattern. It indicates that the engagement between academics between Nepal and China is deepening. China is now one of the centres of attraction for Nepali academics, students, and technicians for learning new developments in academia and research. Such activities have generated the bottom-up mechanism for Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal through academia.

2.5.1 Scientific and Educational Collaboration between TU and China's Academic Institutes

The present study has identified educational exchanges as a significant tool that focuses on Chinese academic institutions, universities and research institutions coming to Nepal, particularly the TU, and working in collaboration. There have been Chinese academicians and academic authorities visiting TU on various occasions and exchanging views on different issues. With the TU, Chinese research institutes affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS) have been working on a collaborative basis, with a focus on scientific research collaborations with the Central Department of Hydrology and Metrology (CDHM) and with the Central Department of Geography (CDG).

The then Chief of the Center of International Relations of the TU, Prof. Dr. Bhupa Prasad Dhamala, evaluated the MoU with CAS and its institutions and found them more fruitful because they could be traced in real actions. He viewed that specific agreements, rather than general agreements, are more feasible to be executed (Bhupa Prasad Dhamala, personal communication, January 10, 2018). His views echoed the need for specific goals and objectives of the MoU. The general agreements are not much effective because they do not specify any particular objectives, though it was expressed that agreements were also significant for

enhancing relations with Chinese academic institutions (Bhupa Prasad Dhamala, personal communication, January 10, 2018).

There have been scientific collaborative projects between TU and CAS. There are seven Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) signed between TU and CAS, out of the 23 total MoUs concluded with Chinese institutions. And very importantly, those MoUs are in implementation, too. There is the Sino-Nepal Joint Research Centre for Geography, which collaborates between CAS and TU's Central Department of Geography.

The Head of the Central Department of Geography (CDG), Prof. Dr. Narendra Raj Khanal explained:

“We have joint projects with Yunnan University- Water Resources Institute. We studied ‘climate change adaptation through water resource management: a comparative study between Yellow River and Koshi River Basins’ on 20 May 2012.” (Narendra Raj Khanal, personal communication, September 7, 2017)

For that joint study, Prof. Dr. Xiaoliu Yang, Executive Secretary of the Research Centre for IRBM, Peking University, and his team came to Nepal (Center for International Relations TU, 2012). where a Nepali team from CDG, TU joined with them.

According to Prof. Khanal, there is now a relationship between the Geographic Society of Nepal (GSN) and China, too:

“The joint research obviously helped to understand the studied geographic condition. Moreover, the comparative geographic study helped to understand the similarities and differences in the river systems of the two countries. There have been geographer-to-geographer relations established during various joint ventures like field observation, data collection, information sharing, workshops, conferences, etc. They have developed the understanding of one another's working system.” (Narendra Raj Khanal, personal communication, September 7, 2017),

Similarly, there is a joint project between the Institute of Tibetan Plateau (ITP) Research, the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS) and the Central Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (CDHM), TU that conducts collaborative research in Tibet and surrounding regions including Nepal. Both have jointly started the research on climate change, paleoclimate, land use change and mountain hazards.

There are three Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) installed at Kyanning Gomba (Langtang Valley), Tarahara (Eastern Terai) and Diktel (Central Mountain Region) in Nepal (“Third Pole Environment Centre in TU,” 2014).

These scientific researches are very important not only for academia but for the economy, natural disasters, and daily life of the people. At the same time, these sorts of environmental issues are never-ending issues, too. Hence, joint collaborations have long-lasting value. The Member Secretary of Kathmandu Centre for Research and Education (KCRE), Dr. Binod Dawadi (personal communication, November 7, 2017), who completed his Ph.D. in China with CAS scholarship, analyzed the various activities that promote scientific research, researchers and students. He explained:

“There were personal contacts in 1984 between two scientists, Prof. Dr. Yao Tao Dong and Prof. Dr. Lochan Prasad Devkota, who met at a conference in the USA. In 2008, Prof. Dr. Yao was invited by the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) as a Glaciologist keynote speaker. Then, he initiated a meeting with his old friend Dr. Devkota. Their meetings resulted in a joint scientific collaboration between Nepal and China.”

Hence, personal contacts were developed into institutional relation build-up, which accomplished many joint expeditions and studies in China and Nepal. Later on, an agreement between TU and CAS was concluded on the building of a permanent station in Kathmandu for scientific research (B. Dawadi, personal communication, November 7, 2017). The levels of the relationship were developed from personal to institutional, and are now heading towards enhancing regional-level centres in Kathmandu.

International scientific cooperation is utilized as a tool for fulfilling four purposes: as an agent to manage conflict, improve global understanding, build mutual respect, and capacity building. Institute of Tibetan Plateau (ITP), Kathmandu Center, meeting on 3 July 2015 decided to:

- Build capacity of the South Asian countries
- Cooperate with ITP and other South Asian country centres

Moreover, President Prof. Yao Tan Dong emphasized that CAS and overseas centres should meet the broader Chinese Belt and Road national strategies (*CAS Kathmandu Center held a kick-off meeting in Beijing*, 2016). A similar tone was echoed in the first administrative and academic meeting of the Chinese Academy

of Science (CAS)-Kathmandu Center on 3 July 2015, at the Institute of Tibetan Plateau (ITP).

2.6 Image of China: Explaining the Attitudes of Nepali Students in China

How do Nepali students studying in China view China?

The idea of people-to-people relations suggests that students who study in China can talk about Nepal in China and can bring the image of China back to Nepal; or it is also possible that if some of them choose to stay in China for a longer time, they can play a bridging role between Nepal and China.

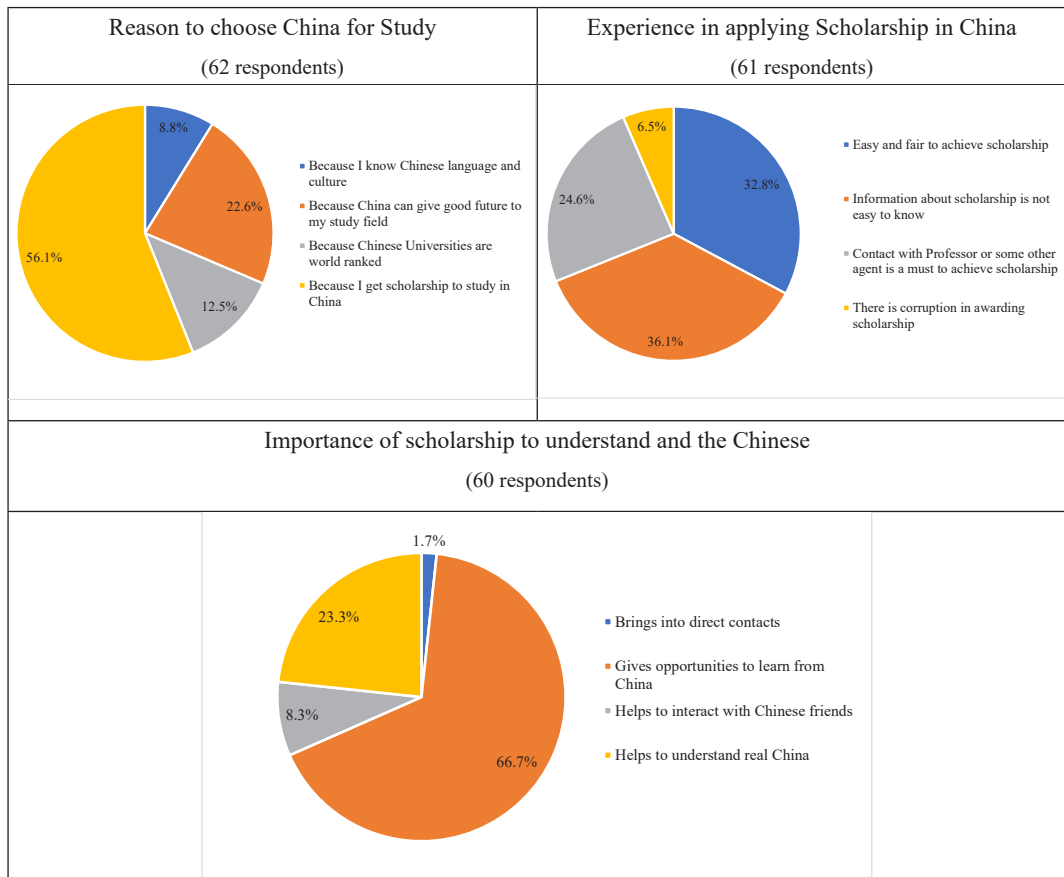
The number of Nepali students studying in China is increasing every year and will increase more in the future because both governments have agreed on people-to-people relations. This type of educational exchange generates soft power. The overseas study gives students broader views and experiences. Students' own values, foreign experiences, and socioeconomic conditions impact the perception of the students studying abroad. Generally, students are positive toward their host country (Han et al., 2013). "Students entering foreign universities could be deeply influenced by their 'host' country's values... If such students returned home, they could strengthen links to their 'host' country, or at the very least, be better informed about their host country's value system" (Han & Zweig, 2010).

Relational public diplomacy requires a longer time for harvesting and it establishes a person-to-person relationship (Golan, 2013). In other words, long-term relationships make foreigners understand and respect the country's values and culture and learn from theirs, too (Leonard et al., 2002). One of the long-term relationship-building public diplomacy tools in academia. Its returns, too, can be seen only in the long term (Waithaka & Maluki, 2016).

2.7 Chinese Scholarships

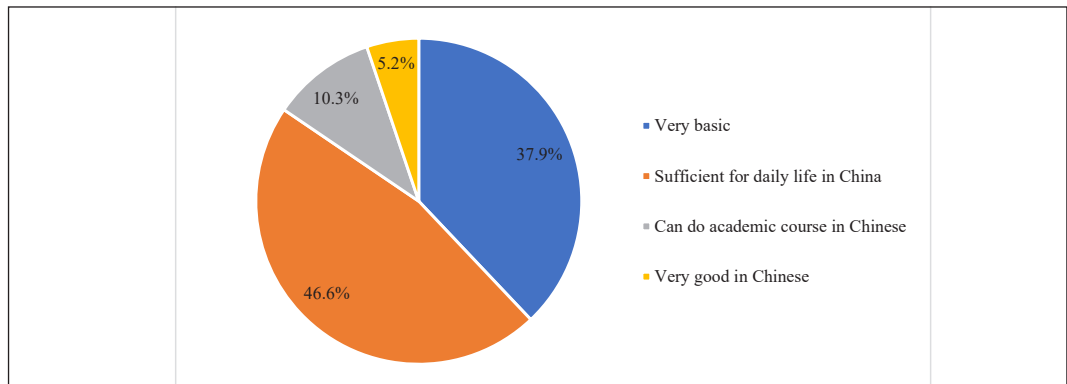
Many Nepali students came to study in their respective universities because they were awarded Chinese Government scholarships. The scholarships have been the major cause for their being in China. Apart from that, the majority of students experienced that the selection procedure for the scholarships is fair and easy to apply. However, about 35 per cent of students expressed difficulty getting access to information about the scholarship notice. Sixty-six per cent of Nepali students viewed that they knew China better after coming to China to study.

Figure 6 Familiarity with the Chinese Language



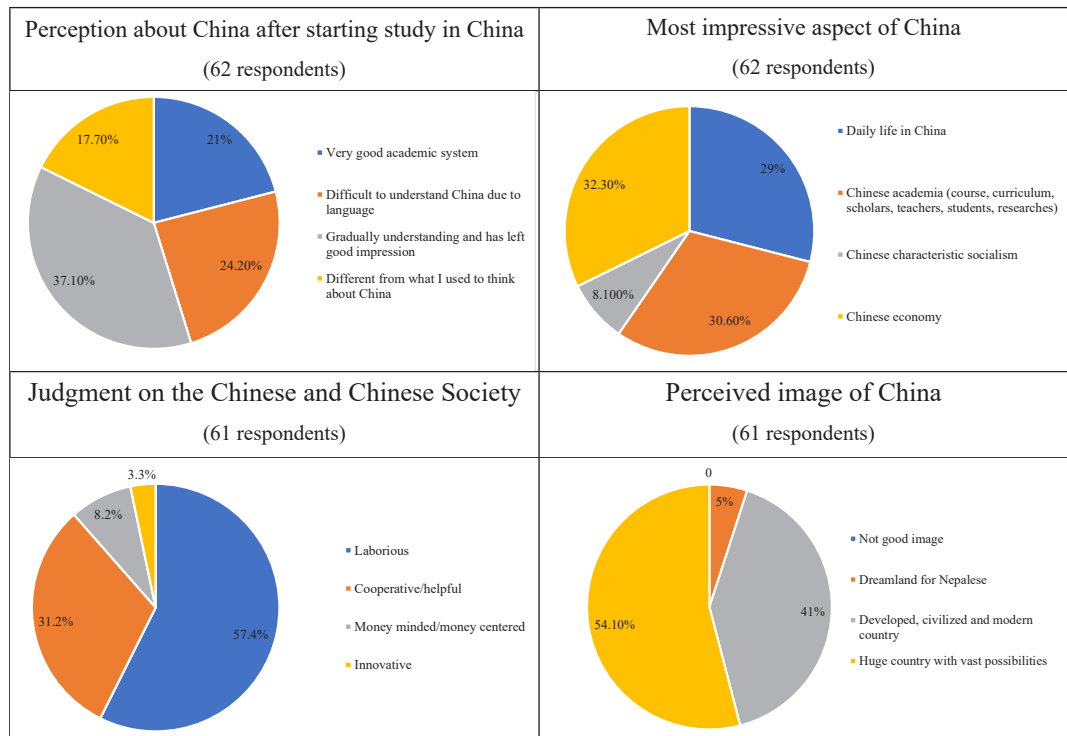
Chinese universities have compulsory Chinese language classes for international students. So, once international students enrol in a Chinese university, they learn the language too, though the level of the language is basic. The Chinese language of most Nepali students is sufficient for running daily life only. The ability of the rest is very basic, and very few have a good command of the Chinese language. It also means that majority of the Nepali students have acquired insufficient quality to have free interactions with Chinese students and teachers. Most of the courses they enrol for are English-medium. It is one of the possible reasons for the students not knowing Chinese sufficiently.

Figure 7 The Ability of Chinese Language among Nepali Students (58 respondents)



Source: Data collection through a questionnaire

Figure 8 Image of China among Nepali Students



The perception of students towards China before arriving there was found to change after living in China. One student explained that he had a low perception towards China before arriving there. It was also because of the less durability of Chinese commodities, and lack of guarantee. But, when he arrived in China to study, he got bewildered instantly just after he had landed in China. Huge and strong infrastructure instantly changed his previous perception towards China (Personal communication).

Many students found that their views gradually changed into positive impressions after coming to China. Similarly, they viewed Chinese people either as very hard-working or cooperative and helpful. Every society and country is characterized by the nature of its people. Since Nepali students found the Chinese people laborious, that contributed to giving them a good impression towards the Chinese people. However, good knowledge of the Chinese language can make a significant improvement in understanding Chinese society and people.

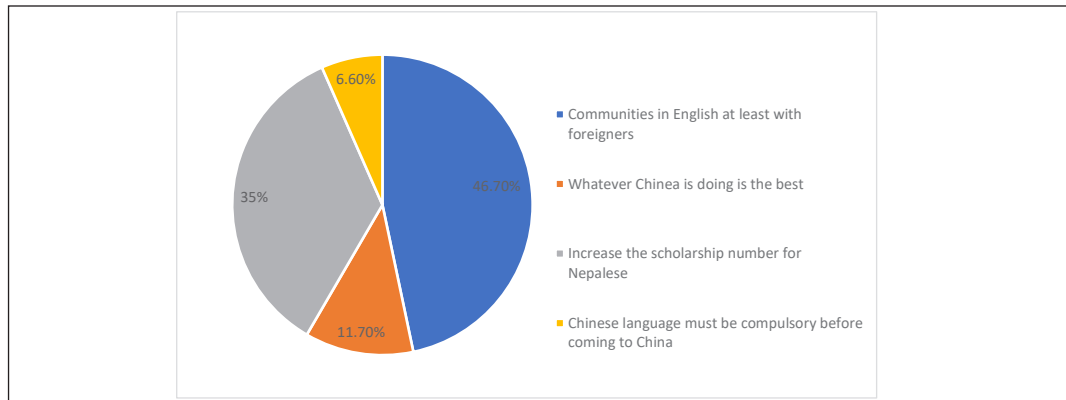
China's rapidly growing economy, as well as the excellent academia including curriculum, scholars, and teachers, are the sources of main attraction towards China for Nepali students. They viewed China with the image of a 'huge country with vast possibilities' and as a 'developed, civilized and modern country'. Similar views were collected from Tanzanian students, too. During foreign students' stay for their study and training in China, students were impressed by Chinese academic authorities and trainers though they have critical views about the difficulties in understanding the Chinese language. (Makundi et al., 2017).

2.8 Expectations from China

Most of the Nepali students (46.7%) preferred to communicate in English since their Chinese proficiency is rather low. In view of this, some students even suggested making the Chinese language compulsory for applying for Chinese scholarships. On the other hand, Nepali students expected an increase in the number of scholarships for Nepali students, too. Language is found primarily important to study and learn well in China and in the Chinese academic environment. There are new efforts for foreign students, but learning is not limited to the classroom environment alone. Interaction with Chinese students provides a much better opportunity for a foreigner because such interaction would help foreigners know varieties of academic activities held inside the universities, to which the foreigners would not get access otherwise due to language constrain. If foreigners were able to learn the Chinese language in Chinese universities, they could learn better. In a programme in Kathmandu, many doctors, who have graduated from China in Chinese language medium, expressed

their better experience in China learning in Chinese language and with Chinese friends. Today, after the internationalization of Chinese universities, the teaching language is English for foreign students, but as they expressed, they are missing the perfections of learning in a Chinese university, as it used to be while learning the Chinese language. So, the Chinese language is a key factor for learning in China.

Figure 9 Expectations from China (60 respondents)



For Nepalis, China is more popular for higher education in medicine and engineering. There is increasing interest nowadays in social science and Hotel Management studies, too. The Nepali students in China are now in their 20s and 30s; thus, they represent the youth of Nepal. They have the chance to lead in their respective professional sectors in the future.

The people who studied in China in the 1970s and 1980s have now achieved distinguished positions in their respective fields; and they felt a warm affiliation with Chinese culture and society. One of the doctors and civilian leaders, Dr. Harish Chandra Shah, who studied at the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine between 1977-1985, felt Beijing as his ‘hometown’. Such warm affection towards China is similar for currently passed-out Nepali students too, as they expressed. Moreover, Nepali students have also learnt from the hard work of the Chinese students and the cooperative and helpful nature of the Chinese people. Each individual is responsible for shaping the national image for foreigners in some manner.

Against the above background, added efforts for teaching the Chinese language to Nepalis seem necessary. The CIKU can play a bridging role in teaching and learning Chinese for Nepali students. The CIKU can have relationships with other general public schools to teach the Chinese language to the general public.

On the other hand, the university-level relation must march forward beyond the formal signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). More Chinese students can do their academic courses in Nepal, too. Collaborative research in social science, applied science, and natural science should be encouraged for fostering people-to-people level relations between Nepal and China.

2.9 Private Business Organizations Promoting Chinese Commercial Diplomacy in Nepal

Commercial exchanges are one of the pillars of public diplomacy. They help promote and strengthen bilateral relations at the people's level. Nepal-China public diplomacy in the commercial sector aims to achieve commercial advances by promoting exports, attracting inward investment, and preserving outward investment opportunities. The commercial sector is broader in the sense that it incorporates trade, investment, tourism and intellectual properties, too (Kostecki & Naray, 2007). Nepal has some commercial organizations established to promote commercial relations between Nepal and China. One such organization is Nepal China Executive Council (NCEC). Its president is Anoop Ranjan Bhattarai who explained how they initiated NCEC. They were graduate students from China. He had headed alumni associations of scholars and experts who graduated from China before. He explained how they facilitated Nepali business groups visiting China and facilitated business exchanges between them. They helped in organising visits of Chinese authorities to Nepal as well.

Here, diplomacy is not through government apparatus but by the means of civil organizations that are focused on Nepal-China commercial engagements. Apart from government diplomats like commercial counsellors, commercial attachés, and trade and commercial representatives, civil organizations are found promoting commercial diplomacy at the private level. Bondarouk & Ruël have highlighted the scope of commercial diplomacy exceeding governmental diplomatic status. They cover local staff in the host country working in the economic department of an embassy. Similar experiences were shared by one of the senior engineers of Nepal Telecom Corporation (NTC), who shared his experience of how a local individual bridged between NTC and Chinese Companies first hand. A local organization helped a Chinese company win a tender in Nepal and thus made it able to sell technological equipment. It continues with human resource training and so on. A local agent thus turns out to be a commercial 'diplomat' for a foreign company.

So, the existence of various types of commercial ‘diplomats’ is found in international commercial engagements. Kostecki & Naray(2007) identified three dominant types of commercial diplomats: civil servants, generalists and business promoters. NCEC and other similar organizations in Nepal are business promoters for China. Gathering market data, bridging in the development of partnerships between businesses and government, and promoting products and services from the home nation (for example, through trade fairs), and assisting businesses in conflicts are the functions of commercial diplomacy. (Bondarouk, E., & Ruël, H, 2012).

Apart from the bilateral forum, there is the Nepal China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCCI) established in 1999 aiming for closer connections with the Chinese business community. Bilateral chambers can bridge between foreign companies and local official representatives. NCCCI’s assistance is much useful for practical services, in getting access to a wider range of events while approaching a local network of trusted partners and developing contacts with different market actors.

NCCI promotes the importance and urgency of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Nepal. It had also given inputs in making a positive assessment of the BRI before the agreement was signed between Nepal and China. With the aim of ‘unleashing the potential of economic advantage to Nepal’, the NCCI formed a 17-member committee named ‘Silk Road Chamber of Commerce Council’ (SRCCC) on the 22nd of August 2016. Basically, its objectives are concentrated on Nepal-China trade, commerce, and industries. By maintaining harmonious trade relations, having a bilateral relationship between different chambers, federations and their member companies, and exchanging information regarding economic and commercial legislation and arbitration practice to solve trade disputes, the NCCCI and its co-business organizations in China are enhancing the bilateral economic relations between Nepal and China. Business is the medium for NCCCI to develop mutual friendships between the two countries. NCCCI also aims to diversify Nepal-China trade and industry, joint ventures, and tourism. NCCCI, as a business organization, intends to advise the governments to expand trade and economic relations between Nepal and China.

The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) is the co-partnering organization of NCCCI that has established relations with 13 sub-councils of CCPIT. Yiwu China Commodity City Exhibition Co. Ltd., Shanghai Chamber of International Commerce, Jiangsu Chamber of Commerce, and Tibet Federation of Industry and Commerce have also established relations with NCCCI.

Various interaction programmes, trade fairs participation, visiting China with various trade delegations, receiving Chinese delegations in Nepal, etc. are significant activities of the NCCCI.

These Nepali business organizations, specified for Chinese trade and business, pointed out four major consequences: firstly, Nepali business organizations are playing a bridging role in promoting Nepal-China trade and business relations. Second, rather than any particular Chinese business organizations acting directly, they co-work with Nepali business organizations for hosting commercial diplomatic activities in Nepal's commercial sector. Third, they localize Chinese public diplomacy in the economic sector of Nepal. And, finally, they have helped the localization of commercial diplomatic activities that prepare a stronger foundation for sustainable people-to-people relations between Nepal and China.

Such cooperation between the private sectors has germinated roots in the wide array of bilateral relations between Nepal and China.

CHAPTER THREE

LEARNING FROM THE BEST PRACTICES OF CHINA

Public diplomacy is a skill used to influence foreign publics so that it could contribute to achieving a country's foreign policy agenda. However, the tactics and strategies vary from country to country. Some countries may use money, propaganda and other incentives to influence foreign publics. Others may make use of their soft power. The objectives of public diplomacy, too, may vary depending on a country's foreign policy priorities vis-à-vis another country. Some countries may aim at promoting their trade and commerce through branding. Others may use public diplomacy to influence foreign governments and achieve certain political, economic or other types of objectives. Still, others may use public diplomacy in the form of propaganda and try to influence the people of targeted countries with some political objectives and motives. Public diplomacy can be a useful tool for all these purposes.

The People's Republic of China has been making use of public diplomacy to achieve some of its foreign policy agendas. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, the major objectives of Chinese public diplomacy include international publicity of China's modernization and achievements in different fields. Similarly, China also wants to use public diplomacy as an incentive for domestic reform, adopt an open system and safeguard world peace, and promote peaceful development of China. China expects that the growing interest of the foreign publics in affairs in China would further encourage it to accelerate the reform process. At the same time, China aims to use its public diplomacy for dissuading negative perceptions among foreigners and making them understand China's policies, practices and domestic concerns.

Some of the best practices of China can be useful for Nepal as well. It is true that every country is different from others, and there is no 'one fits all' formula. National priorities, domestic realities, international situations, expectations from other countries, and many other factors dictate a country's foreign policy behaviour. However, there might be some activities in Chinese public diplomacy that might be of interest and useful for Nepal as well. They can be enumerated as follows.

1. Defined Objectives and Programmes: The above description has shown that China has defined the objectives of public diplomacy. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, the objectives of Chinese public diplomacy include dissuading negative

perceptions and making foreigners understand China's policies, practices and domestic concerns. Similarly, Chinese public diplomacy in Europe has three broad goals in three phases: short-term goal (correcting the wrong perception and description of China); mid-term goal (cooperation in various strategic projects), and long-term goal (construction of a good image). Nepal's Foreign Policy document has identified two broad objectives of Nepal's public diplomacy: (i) winning the support, help and goodwill of the international community by promoting the image and special identity of the country as soft power; and (ii) preserving Nepal's national interest through the use of newest dimensions of information and communications technology in the implementation of foreign policy (MoFA, 2022). It would be appropriate for Nepal to streamline public diplomacy in overall diplomacy, make the objectives more specific, and devise means to achieve those objectives.

2. Purposeful Publicity of Nepal's Prides and Achievements: Nepal could make better use of public diplomacy by purposeful publicity of the facts of its historical and cultural/religious pride, its achievements in democratization, and its natural beauty. The Government of Nepal could identify countries where each of these areas could be more influential, and run targeted publicity programmes accordingly. This will have a good impact on the foreign publics, and would contribute to achieving some of Nepal's foreign policy objectives.

3. Education Targeting Foreign Students: There are foreign students studying in Nepal, but their number so far is not much remarkable. However, there are opportunities for attracting more foreign students in areas such as traditional medicine, highland farming, tourism and hotel management, yoga and healthcare, etc. Good infrastructure and thoughtfully designed courses on such subjects would attract foreign students, which in turn would contribute to promoting Nepal's economy and its image.

4. Establishing Nepal Centres in Foreign Universities: There is a growing international practice of opening a country's 'centre' in foreign universities. Such centres help local and foreign students learn more about the country. The government needs to provide sufficient reading materials about the country covering many areas. Arrangements of 'Fellowship' or 'Chairs' at selected countries and universities would make this programme truly effective. Nepali missions abroad need to work in this area.

5. Exchange of Visits: Nepal should make a purposeful exchange of visits. It can invite teachers, students, journalists, travel and tour operators, industrialists, artists

including actors, musicians and performers, scientists and experts, etc. to visit Nepal. They can build lasting relationships between people. Nepali missions can be of great help in this area. They can include some of such visits in their “Fam Trips”.¹

6. Celebrations of Nepali Festivals Abroad: Nepali cultural and other festivals are celebrated abroad by Nepali missions and Nepali communities there. Only a few local people participate in such celebrations. Increased participation of local people in the celebrations of Nepali festivals would help promote Nepali culture in the host countries. At the same time, local participation can also promote understanding and relationships between Nepali missions, Nepali communities and the local communities. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal should instruct its missions abroad to include local citizens in the celebrations of Nepali festivals.

7. Organising Cultural and other Programmes Abroad: The Nepali missions abroad organize cultural programmes in the host capital occasionally, during National day celebrations, for example. They also organize other such programmes on important occasions such as the Buddha Jayanti; Nepal Tourism Board organizes road shows, in cooperation with Nepali missions; some Nepali travel and tour associations also host such programmes in foreign countries. The Government of Nepal should make arrangements for organizing more of such programmes in foreign countries, with the involvement of more people from both (home and host) countries.

8. Hosting Seminars and Discussion Programmes: Nepali missions abroad should be instructed to host a few seminars or other types of discussions in the host countries. The topics should be selected depending on the interests of the local people. The local people and people’s associations should be encouraged to participate in such discussions. For example, the Embassy of Nepal organized Everest Day in 2018 in Bangkok in which the Thai summiters of Mount Everest were invited to share their experiences. The programme was very popular and attracted a large crowd.

9. Budgetary Arrangements: Every programme needs a budget. Only a very few programmes can be organized without spending money, by working with other organizations. The Government of Nepal has so far not allocated a budget for public diplomacy. Therefore, the Government of Nepal needs to allocate a budget for public diplomacy. Budgetary allocations need to accompany clear guidelines and

1. Fam Trips are a popular, short form of “Familiarization Trips”. Nepali missions abroad select popular and influential persons in their host countries, and send them to Nepal for a few days or weeks to see and understand the country. Nepal Tourism Board makes arrangements for their visits inside the country.

instructions for Nepali missions on the priority areas in their countries and suggested types of programmes under public diplomacy.

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