

## IMPACT OF TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME ON BORDER SECURITY IN NEPAL: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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### ABSTRACT

The paper explores the geopolitical factors influencing Nepal, which significantly contribute to opportunities for cross-border crime and thereby pose both internal and external security risks. It identifies different interest groups, both visible and hidden, operating within Nepal, each with their own agendas that unintentionally create opportunities for organized criminal networks. The study employs secondary data, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, to examine this issue.

In its findings, the paper underscores how Nepal's strategic location and its relationships with neighboring countries influence the proliferation of cross-border criminal activities. It emphasizes the interplay of supply and demand factors involving Nepal and its neighbors, demonstrating how geopolitical considerations contribute to the facilitation of organized crime through and within Nepal. The research also highlights how changing political and economic conditions in the region, combined with geographical factors, create fertile ground for the operations of organized criminal networks in Nepal. In essence, the study reveals that Nepal's geopolitical landscape, shaped by its relationships with neighboring states and internal interest dynamics, plays a crucial role in exacerbating cross-border crime, thereby impacting both national security and regional stability.

**KEYWORDS:** considerations, dynamics, operations, proliferation, stability

### INTRODUCTION

Transnational crime refers to unlawful acts conducted by people or groups that transcend national boundaries, driven by economic gain or political motives (Lo, 2009, p. 3). In the border regions between India and Nepal, there is growing apprehension regarding the rise in criminal activities, particularly those crossing borders illegally. Reports highlight the participation of organized criminal syndicates in drug trafficking, counterfeiting, kidnapping, and extortion, often facilitated by connections between politicians and these criminal groups (KC, 2016). This nexus exploits vulnerable populations susceptible to criminal activities.

Smuggling is a widespread phenomenon at border crossings globally, often conducted in an organized manner. The illegal transportation of everyday goods across borders is driven by the imposition of import or export taxes, which incentivizes the smuggling of prohibited items. Reckless (1967) identifies smuggling as a prominent feature of transnational crime (p. 117). Moreover, he explains that the presence of import/export duties and the physical demarcation of national borders serve as significant attractions and facilitators for illegal traders.

Milletts (2007) highlights the importance of borders in maintaining societal cohesion and cultural integrity, but also points out their marginalization from central regions, which creates openings for criminal gangs to operate. These organized crime groups can take advantage of local vulnerabilities, both geographic and social, to gain support and further their objectives. Conway (2002) emphasizes the role of modern technology in facilitating cross-border crime, noting that technological progress and its rapid spread across borders contribute to the rise of criminal activities. Aas (2007) introduces the term 'transnationalism' to describe the changing nature of social relationships in this context that influence the nature of crime, highlighting its transformative role in criminal behavior.

Devetak (2008) argues that in the twenty-first century, cross-border crime has evolved into a flourishing illegal enterprise, with the movement of goods, capital, people, information, ideologies, as well as arms, drugs, criminals, terrorists, and pollutants occurring more rapidly and in greater volumes than ever before. Thachuk (2007) notes that smuggling and trafficking have expanded significantly in this period, reaching levels beyond those seen in the past (p. 3). In the current age of rapid globalization, there are heightened incentives for engaging in cross-border crime as criminals exploit new opportunities beyond traditional borders to maximize illicit gains. Organized crime networks have expanded globally, undermining the sovereignty of nation-states and facilitating the smuggling and proliferation of illicit goods across borders.

The strategic geographical position of Nepal, situated between the influential nations of India and China, facilitates cross-border crime, thereby impacting the country's internal security. Legal and illicit goods traverse Nepal's land and air routes, turning the nation into a conduit for criminal activities bridging India and Nepal. Emerging forms of cross-border crime are noted to contribute to the growth of organized criminal activities within Nepal. Additionally, the motivations behind such crimes often extend beyond monetary gain to include political interests as well.

Several key studies have explored the socio-economic conditions of the Indo-Nepal border regions. Nayak (2011) examines how economic vulnerability in Nepal's Ta region is intensified by high unemployment rates. THRDA (2011) links rising crime rates to youth unemployment. ICG (2007) discusses the shift in Tarai society from agriculture to industrial activities, while IAFP (2008) highlights the lack of opportunities for youth in Tarai, which contributes to increased criminal behavior. Additionally, IAFP (2007) addresses the frustration among Eastern Tarai youth due to restricted educational and economic prospects. Housden (2009) characterizes Tarai as Nepal's most unstable region, marked by widespread lawlessness stemming from historical neglect and limited opportunities, which push marginalized groups towards criminal activities. Malian (2008) points to factors such as inadequate state capacity, porous borders, and financial incentives that promote criminality in Tarai. IAFP (2008) also notes that young people with few prospects become targets for criminal gangs, who exploit them for their own benefit. SEESAC (2003) emphasizes, in the context of Africa, the connection between limited opportunities and serious crimes, particularly in facilitating the trafficking of small arms across borders.

Loudi (2004) studied the situation in Sri Lanka, emphasizing how armed conflict drives youth to participate in related criminal activities. Stucky (2006) contends that political factors are a significant contributor to increasing crime rates. THRDA (2011) investigates how young people who exit armed groups in Terai frequently become involved in criminal activities. UNICEF (2009) highlights the recruitment of children and adolescents into armed activities in Tarai, linking this trend to political factors that affect vulnerable populations. KC (2017a) contends that cross-border smuggling has become ingrained in the daily lives of many residents along the Indo-Nepal border, suggesting that geographical opportunities and social circumstances motivate involvement in crime. Similar studies conducted in conflict zones around the world serve as crucial benchmarks for understanding crime dynamics during transitional periods. The political instability and turbulent conditions in Tarai create an environment where organized criminal groups can operate with little restraint. There has been a substantial body of research focused on cross-border crime, yet there is a notable dearth of studies examining its geopolitical

dimensions. Moreover, insufficient attention has been directed towards understanding how the geographical significance of borders influences crime and subsequently gives rise to social challenges. Consequently, there appears to be a lack of comprehensive findings specifically addressing Indo-Nepal cross-border crime. While challenges posed by cross-border crime have been acknowledged, there remains a scarcity of scholarly investigation in this area.

Discussing about the impact of transnational organized crime on border Security in Nepal and the challenges and strategies has turned out as complicated work since it has been attempted to balance and control the crime in Nepal. It has become as hard as Adhikari et al (2020) have claimed in keeping the ecology and the environment of the world in a balanced form for security of humanity and it is as complex as Adhikari et al (2022) have discussed about the global condition of the system of the government and it has turned out as beyond the control as Adhikari (2020) has analyzed about the existing condition of the world's deteriorating system of the environment and ecology due to the governments of the world. However, the impact of transnational organized crime on border Security in Nepal and the challenges and strategies has to be managed for the security of the nation. But the researchers have not brought the way of enhancing the transnational crime's control and strengthening the security in the country properly and effectively for the overall development of the administrative reformation yet. So, the research has attempted to fulfil the gap of the research by answering the following research questions;

### **Statements of Problems**

Impact of Transnational Organized Crime on Border Security in Nepal and its Challenges and Strategies are the burning issues between Nepal and India and the scholars have not discussed about it in detail yet. Hence, this research has attempted to fill the gap by answering the following research questions.

- A. What are the impacts of transnational organized crimes on border security in Nepal and India?
- B. What are the various challenges of the organized crime on border security in Nepal and India?
- C. How can the transnational organized crime in between the border of Nepal and India be addressed?

### **Objectives of the Research**

The main objectives of the research are the identify the organized crimes that can take place in between Nepal and India and to address them through the security provisions. The specific objectives are:

- A. To identify the impacts of transnational organized crimes on border security in Nepal and India.
- B. To investigate the various challenges of the organized crime on border security in Nepal and India.
- C. To explore the concept of how the transnational organized crime in between the border of Nepal and India be addressed.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher utilized document analysis, a qualitative research method known for its efficiency in gathering secondary data, to apply strategies for studying the impact of cross-border crime on Nepal's internal security. The study involved a thorough review and analysis of documents from 1936 to 2018. These materials, encompassing public records, personal documents, and physical evidence, were obtained from a range of sources, including books, libraries, government offices, e-libraries, and online search engines. The documents offered extensive information and broad data coverage, helping to place the research in the appropriate context within its field. The study also highlighted key questions regarding the implications of cross-border crime on Nepal's security landscape. The researchers have collected information from a diverse range of sources, including newspapers, official reports from Nepal's Armed Police Force and Nepal Police, as well as media outlets and independent

reports. The data also included academic journals, research papers, and books focused on cross-border crime and security issues pertinent to Nepal's borders with India and China. In addition, the researcher reviewed papers presented at seminars, unpublished manuscripts, and reports from various newspapers.

The study identifies gaps in previous research, particularly in the availability of government and non-governmental data. It analyzed factors contributing to cross-border crime between India and Nepal, highlighting the complexities involved.

The research provides an extensive examination of cross-border crimes and their connections to security issues. It comprehensively explores various aspects related to its title, encompassing the geographical features of the Nepal-India border and the activities of relevant interest groups in that region. The study meticulously addresses credibility through the implementation of strategies and ethical considerations, such as handling confidential documents responsibly.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The research has applied various lenses of various theoretical perspectives of how the organized border security crimes take place in between Nepal and India. The research has been observed and analyzed on the basis of the theoretical lenses as adopted on the issue-based principles as mentioned below.

### **Environmental Considerations: Exploring Impacts and Solutions**

Environment plays a crucial role in influencing individuals towards criminal behavior. While it presents opportunities for crime, its impact on motivating individuals to engage in criminal acts varies. Wooley (2008, p. 15) defines environmental terminology in relation to crime, focusing on crime patterns and their explanation through environmental influences rather than criminality itself. Coleman (1989, p. 109) suggests that environmental factors and cultural attitudes can rapidly change, potentially fostering a disposition towards crime. Lee (1997, p. 20) argues that society is shaped by individual actions constrained or enabled by their environment, which also applies to crime, as certain environments can either promote or discourage criminal behavior. Skinner (1953) acknowledges that criminal acts require opportunity, highlighting its essential role, though not sufficient on its own, in the commission of crime. The environment cannot be overlooked as it influences individuals towards lawful or unlawful behavior based on the availability of opportunities and their ability to exploit them. Social members are prompted by their surroundings to engage in activities that may conform to or violate legal norms, driven by the opportunities presented and their capacity to seize these opportunities.

### **Exploring Geographical Dynamics: Impacts and Considerations**

Park and Burgess (1936) focused on the geographical aspects influencing crime rates rather than the individuals' committing crimes. They proposed that urban development follows a socially patterned and naturally evolving concentric zone model. This model emphasizes how geographical factors shape the occurrence of criminal activities within society. Brantingham (1981) asserts that any crime involves four elements: rules or the law, the people who offend, the goal, and the area (p. 4). The geographical dimension, in particular, is crucial as it provides conducive conditions for crime and influences the social dynamics of communities. Geography shapes social relationships by connecting and disconnecting societies, and it can exacerbate social issues such as crime. As a determinant of social structure, geography can contribute to the occurrence of criminal activities. Borders, as geographical demarcations separating nation-states, play a significant role in influencing the behaviors of the members of the society. This perspective has moreover elucidated by Carter and Jones (1989), who argue that crime has been largely influenced by locality rather than solely by the characteristics of residents (p. 83).

Geography enhances social connections among people living across borders, resulting in both beneficial and adverse effects. It promotes socio-cultural similarities while also making regions susceptible to shared social issues. Bondeson (2005) noted that Scandinavian countries, despite their developed welfare systems, have

experienced similar crime trends over the past fifty years. Similarly, geographically connected countries like India and Nepal share comparable crime trends rooted in analogous social issues. These shared problems and crime patterns can transcend borders through various networks, leveraging socio-cultural connections.

Nepal's geographical location, situated between populous and culturally diverse nations like China and India, significantly shapes its societal dynamics. Understanding the complexities of Indo-Nepal cross-border crime requires an analysis that considers not only geographical features but also socio-cultural, socio-economic factors, and external influences affecting its internal social structures. Yadav (1992, p. 28) emphasizes Nepal's pivotal position in Asia, being landlocked between its southern neighbor India and northern neighbor China. This geopolitical setting influences the socio-political landscape, facilitating both trade and social interactions among communities residing near these international borders. Eagle (1999) points out that Nepal is situated between two distinct civilizations, China and India, which differ culturally, linguistically, and racially (pp. 272-327). Despite these differences, the southern edge of Nepal shares more geographical and socio-cultural similarities with its southern neighbor India compared to other parts of the border with China. Nepal shares borders with five Indian states: Bihar and Uttar Pradesh being the longest and most significant, along with Uttaranchal, West Bengal, and Sikkim (ICG, 2007, p. 25).

Researchers have highlighted the Indo-Nepal border regions, especially the Tarai region in southern Nepal stretching from the Indian border to the foothills, as a unique geographical area. However, they have often overlooked the historical importance of socio-cultural similarities. Both Nepal and China grapple with issues related to organized crime, with extensive networks operating throughout the area. The Indo-Nepal border regions, particularly the Tarai, are heavily impacted by cross-border criminal activities such as smuggling and illegal arms trading. The Tarai region faces a mix of challenges including limited state capacity, porous borders, easy access to weapons, financial incentives for crime, and the presence of violent groups (Miklian, 2008, p. 2). Balibar (2002) contends that borders are a pivotal geographical concept influencing mobility, identity, and economic dynamics. These three elements are intricately linked within the social context, shaping border societies significantly. Houtum (2010, p. 37-58) suggests that borders serve both as practical demarcations and symbolic representations of place-making. Chiara (2009, pp. 582-88) contends that borders are socio-political constructs where social communities share symbolic, historical, and religious values, integrating them into a cohesive societal structure.

The shared values and close geographical proximity unify border societies, fostering social, political, and economic interactions. Along the Indo-Nepal border, geographic attachment has become central to issues of mobility, identity, and economic activities. Border regions, like those between India and Nepal, exhibit common social practices due to their shared cultural heritage and open, porous boundaries. Residents near these borders often seek to benefit from economic activities occurring across national lines.

While geographical attachment and cultural similarities promote cross-border interactions and societal cohesion, they also provide opportunities for criminal activities. Communities in border areas maintain strong interpersonal connections while remaining susceptible to global influences. Globalization has accelerated economic and political activities across these borders, facilitated by advancements in technology and communication, further intertwining the societies of India and Nepal. Lakshman and Jha (2001) contend that the close ethno-cultural ties between populations on both sides of the Indo-Bangladesh border, coupled with inadequate physical barriers and lax security oversight, have facilitated illicit cross-border trade. Despite efforts to enforce strict border security and erect fencing, the strong socio-cultural affinity has proven capable of circumventing these measures, undermining law enforcement efforts and contributing to cross-border criminal

activities. They note that the successful achievement of compounding initiatives along the Indo-Pak border in Punjab affected the decision of the government to implement similar measures across the entire India-Bangladesh



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border. Crime in these border regions tends to be organized and driven by economic motivations.

### **Affinities as Opportunities: Exploring Potential Synergies**

Communities residing on either side of the Indo-Nepal border share comparable identities and social structures. While border societies are prioritized for security reasons, their significance in terms of social cohesion is often neglected. This oversight has potential implications, as politically segregated regions, despite their social and cultural similarities, may face challenges and issues. The issue of cross-border crime becomes particularly complex given the stringent security measures in these border areas.

Cross-border crime involves the coordinated activities of various groups across borders, linking up to foster transnational organized crime (KC, 2013a, p. 59). This phenomenon has expanded significantly, reflecting the global market dynamics of supply and demand, as argued by Duynne (1996, p. 342). The trafficking methods have modernized to cater to evolving supply and demand dynamics, enhancing the sophistication of organized criminal operations worldwide (Vlaesis, 2000, p. 10).

People living in border areas are particularly vulnerable, susceptible to being coerced into criminal activities. Criminal groups seek to infiltrate leadership levels, including influential political and ethnic leaders, to exploit socially vulnerable groups in risky endeavors. The transnational nature of crime between India and Nepal has a longstanding history, with close social ties through familial and marital relationships. This familiarity allows criminals from one side of the border to understand and operate within the other side, potentially evading legal authorities by crossing borders when necessary (KC, 2013a, p. 63). Worldwide production, technological advancements, and robust discussion networks further empower cross-border organized crime, providing significant advantages to cross-border criminals operating in Indo-Nepal border regions. These criminals leverage existing socio-cultural similarities across borders to facilitate their illicit activities. Numerous cross-border crimes, including human trafficking and drug trafficking, significantly impact the youth population of Nepal. There is a continuous outflow of Nepalese youth to third countries, often trafficked and rescued in Indian cities. Additionally, organized criminal syndicates exploit Nepal's territory for activities such as counterfeit currency operations. Moreover, internal instability within Nepal exacerbates conditions, providing fertile ground for organized criminal activities.

### **Challenges on the border between India and Nepal**

The issue of border crime along the Indo-Nepal border is not a unique phenomenon, as border-related crimes have been observed globally. Das (2008) discusses the drawbacks of the open border system between India and Nepal, which create opportunities for various illegal activities such as smuggling, drug and arms trafficking, and activities involving terrorists, insurgents, and petty criminals. Watson and Crozier (2009) contend that the open border between Nepal and India plays a major role in the elevated crime rates in the Terai regions (p. 15). Shrestha (2017) further notes that the lack of border restrictions has disrupted the security dynamics of both Nepal and India, with increasing challenges originating from outside Nepal in the current context (p. 264).

Criticism directed at border characteristics such as geography, local populace, cultural interactions, and the seamless nature of borders often unfairly stereotypes these regions as hubs of criminal activity. Braun (2010) identifies porous borders as a factor contributing to cocaine trafficking in West Africa (p. 4), while Lo (2009) attributes persistent cross-border crime in Greater China to the borderless nature of the region (p. 187). Upreti (2010) highlights about the interconnectedness of criminal people across the Indo-Nepal border areas (p. 249-50). Contrary to assumptions, the adjacency of a border does not necessarily indicate high crime rates, as evidenced by El Paso, Texas, adjacent to Mexico—a city considered one of America's safest despite Mexico's reputation for crime (Shashikumar, 2008). Regarding the Nepal-Bihar border, described by McDonald and Vaughn (2013) as porous, and termed an "open border" rather than "porous" by Baral and Pyakurel (2013), KC (2013a) challenges biased

arguments that blame the open border with India as the primary cause of the transnational crime between India and Nepal (p. 86). According to research conducted by the Department of Customs in 2007, the cross-border movement between India and Nepal averages 13,283 people daily, while the daily value of smuggled goods, legal and illegal, amounts to NRs. 44,600,000. Annually, the estimated cost of stolen and smuggled items reaches NRs. 13,810,000,000. This situation highlights Nepal's role as a demand hub and India's role as a supply hub for goods smuggled illicitly across their shared border. Both countries see illegal goods trafficked in response to market demands and opportunities driven by vested interests on either side.

**Organized crime in border regions encompasses various significant categories:**

- Drug trafficking
- Human trafficking
- Smuggling of small arms
- Illicit trade in CITES-listed species
- Gold smuggling
- Counterfeiting
- Kidnapping

According to Nordstrom (2004, p. 133), organized crime operates with more efficiency than governmental entities. In the Indo-Nepal border regions, organized crime networks have expanded their operations, focusing on activities such as drug production and distribution, gold smuggling, trafficking in counterfeit currency, human trafficking, crimes involving CITES (wildlife), and the illegal smuggling of goods. A report by Global Financial Integrity states that Nepal experienced a significant capital flight amounting to 8.7 billion US dollars between 2003 and 2012 (Kar & Spanjers, 2014, p. 44). Furthermore, specific incidents in 2009 and 2010 saw millions and 1.8 billion dollars diverted from the country, respectively (KC, 2013b, p. 86). Lo (2009, p. 6) argues that Criminal elements can embed themselves within any political system by forming alliances with politicians and government officials. The phenomenon of politicized crime is observed globally. In Nepal, corruption is increasingly identified as a major issue. The bureaucratic systems in Nepal and India are particularly vulnerable to corruption, potentially facilitating the infiltration of organized criminals from local to higher levels of bureaucracy in the border regions between Nepal and India.

**The Challenges of Threats**

The intention behind the transnational crime include:

Earning and gaining

The power and politics

The goal of the community Support

Nepal has faced various challenges related to cross-border crime, which are closely tied to organized criminal activities. There has been a rise in incidents involving gold smuggling, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and wildlife crimes (see Table I). The presence of well-organized criminal networks in these activities presents a serious threat to the nation's internal security. Regarding gold smuggling, KC (2018) argues that Nepal has become a central point for the illegal transit of goods, including drugs, endangered species, gold, and even people, to other countries.

**Table 1** (The Cases Filed as of the Organized and the Crimes of the Economic in Nepal Police.)

| Year    | The Filed number of Cases` |
|---------|----------------------------|
| 2072/73 | 3288                       |
| 2073/74 | 3824                       |
| 2074/75 | 3694                       |
| 2075/76 | 4757                       |

*Source: Nepal Police, 2019*

The activities of counterfeit currency rackets cater to particular vested interests. KC (2017b) proposes that regional power struggles are reflected in counterfeit currency operations within Nepal's Terai region, underscoring the role of external actors in organized cross-border crime. Likewise, the smuggling of red sandalwood indicates the active involvement of organized criminal groups in these illicit activities in participation of highly organized criminal syndicates in the illicit trade between India and China, with Nepal serving as a conduit for their illegal operations.

Islamic fundamentalists and separatists are active in the border regions between India and Nepal, driven by their political agendas. KC (2017) notes that several figures such as Yasin Bhatkal, Tunda, and Niranjana Hojai, who are associated with fundamentalist and separatist movements against India, were apprehended in Nepal (p. 77). This highlights the possible connection between trans-border crime and terrorism. In the case of Niranjana Hojai, a leader of an Indian separatist group who was arrested in Kathmandu, there are claims of his involvement in money laundering (KC, 2013, p. 68). The arrest of Indian fugitives and terrorist organization members on Nepali territory represents a serious threat to national security. Baral (2018) notes that cross-border crime and terrorism strain the relationship between Nepal and India, leading to calls for enhanced cooperation to tackle these issues. Despite this, Nepal has shown a firm position against organized crime and terrorism, as observed by KC (2017c, p. 17). Security forces are particularly concerned about the actions of both violent and non-violent separatist groups in the Terai region. Baral and Shah (2018) report that armed separatist groups in the Terai are actively involved in violent activities, with transnational criminal organizations taking advantage of these groups to further their own objectives. Members of these separatist factions are vulnerable to criminal activities and pose a potential threat to internal security.

### **Intervention of the Government**

Both countries have deployed border police to protect their respective border areas, supplemented by additional security forces operating in both official and unofficial capacities. India has stationed the Border Security Force (BSF) along the entire Nepal-India border, with armed posts set up approximately every three kilometers. Conversely, Nepal has deployed the Armed Police Force (APF), with their posts positioned at intervals of 15 to 20 kilometers (Baral & Pyakurel, 2013, p. 6). The primary goals of these border forces include curbing smuggling, intercepting criminals attempting to cross the border, combating human trafficking, and addressing the illegal trade of counterfeit currency, arms, and goods, while also securing customs checkpoints. Despite increasing the number of border personnel and tightening regulations at checkpoints, incidents of smuggling and illegal cross-border trade have continued to rise. Informal extradition practices for criminals seeking refuge across the border have also been noted. However, the effectiveness of these regulatory measures and extradition practices in addressing cross-border crime has fallen short of expectations.

**Table 2** (Armed Police Force of Nepal Deployed in Nepal China Border.)

| S.N. | Provinces of Nepal | The Number of the institutions | Remarks                            |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1    | 1                  | 4                              | Per institutions-<br>165 personnel |
| 2    | 3                  | 5                              |                                    |



|   |                    |                        |                                 |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3   | Koshi              | 4                      |                                 |
| 4   | Lumbini            | 4                      |                                 |
| 5   | Bagmati            | 3                      |                                 |
|   | Total              | 20                     |                                 |
| Table No. 3: Number of Border Security Stations |                    |                        |                                 |
| S.N.  | Provinces of Nepal | Number of Institutions | Remarks                         |
| 1   | Karnali            | 18                     | Boarder out posts personnel -40 |
| 2   | Gandaki            | 50                     |                                 |
| 3   | Sudur Paschim      | 4                      |                                 |
| 5   | Lumbini            | 18                     |                                 |
| 6   | Madhesh            | 6                      |                                 |
|   | Total              | 96                     |                                 |

*Armed Police Force Nepal, 2019*

The situation along the Indo-Nepal border and its adjacent regions is rapidly evolving (KC, 2017, p. 168). The government has increased funding to improve security measures rather than prioritizing social development. By 2014, the Nepalese government had set up 21-Armed Police Force (APF) border security offices and 48 border outposts to address cross-border crime (KC, 2016, p. 48). To counter concerns about criminal infiltration and enhance security, Nepal plans to strengthen its border presence with India and China. The APF currently operates 96 Border Outposts (BOPs) along the Indian border and 15 companies along the Chinese border (see Tables 2 & 3). The government aims to expand this to about 125 BOPs along the Indian border and add 12 more along the northern Chinese border. Presently, there are only two APF outposts due to security concerns. The APF plans to increase the number of BOPs to 200 along the international border within the next two years. Additionally, operations in the Terai region have been launched to address small arms crimes, involving joint efforts by the APF and Nepal Police, as well as separate operations in Tatopani and Rasuwagadhi. The number of BOPs will be increased in districts affected by these operations, with a focus on combating small arms-related crimes. Surprise checkpoints, mobile patrols, and foot patrols are also being emphasized. According to KC (2019), organized crime groups and their activities pose further security threats to the South Asian region, thereby enhancing the capabilities of terrorist organizations. Thus, addressing these issues requires efforts beyond Nepal's alone. Despite this, Nepal remains committed to implementing strategies and policies to strengthen its security forces.

**Table 4** (Capture of Goods, Weapons, Drugs and other Items in Border.)

| <b>Year</b>                               | <b>Tentative price of the captured Goods (NRs)</b> |
|---|--|
| <b>2075/76</b>                            | <b>28,00,00,000</b>                                |
| <b>2076/77 Up to Falgun</b>               | <b>7,00,00,000</b>                                 |
| <b>Source: APF, 2019</b>                  |  |
| <b>Chart No. 5: Captured Illegal Gold</b> |  |
| <b>Year</b>                               | <b>Captured Gold (kg)</b>                          |
| <b>2072/73</b>                            | <b>112.44</b>                                      |
| <b>2073/74</b>                            | <b>69.50</b>                                       |
| <b>2074/75</b>                            | <b>92.38</b>                                       |

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| 2075/76          | 179.12 |
| Source APF, 2019 |        |

In efforts to enhance border security and deploy forces along the Nepal-India and Nepal-China borders, the Armed Police Force (APF) has confiscated substantial amounts of illegal goods. During the fiscal year 2074/75, the APF seized contraband valued at approximately 280 million Nepalese Rupees. However, this figure represents only a small portion of the actual smuggled goods crossing Nepal's borders. In the same period, the Nepal Police confiscated 179 kilograms of gold, worth about 980 million Nepalese Rupees, which is often smuggled into Nepal with the intent of reaching India. The increasing number of organized crime cases reported further highlights the extent of criminal activity at the border. Despite enhanced security measures and a greater deployment of forces, cross-border crime remains on the rise. This indicates that merely increasing the number of security personnel is not a complete solution. In addition to strengthening security measures and boosting the presence of security forces, the government needs to address various factors contributing to cross-border crime.

## CONCLUSION

Nepal, located between the economically and politically significant nations of India and China, has a strategic geographical position that facilitates cross-border crime and impacts its internal security. The flow of both legal and illegal goods and funds through Nepal by land and air makes it a key conduit for criminal activities connecting India and China. Various forms of cross-border crime have strengthened organized crime networks within Nepal, with motives often extending beyond financial gain to include political agendas. The challenges of organized crime are faced collectively by Nepal, India, and China, with well-established criminal networks operating throughout the region. The border areas between India and Nepal are particularly affected, with notable issues including smuggling and crimes involving small arms.

The interaction between supply and demand plays a crucial role in shaping cross-border criminal activities. This dynamic emphasizes Nepal's position as a destination for smuggled goods, with India being the primary source via land routes. However, illegal goods are trafficked in both directions, driven by market conditions and profit opportunities. The evolving political and economic environment in the region, combined with Nepal's geographical advantages, provides favorable conditions for organized criminal groups. These cross-border crimes pose a serious threat to Nepal's domestic security. Criminals frequently use Nepal as a transit point to move illicit goods such as drugs, endangered species, gold, and even humans to neighboring and other countries. Organized crime syndicates exploit Nepal's strategic location between India and China to facilitate their illegal operations.

Illegal extremist groups and separatists are operational in the Indo-Nepal border regions, motivated by their political agendas and affiliations with organized criminal networks. The rising incidence of organized crime cases reported at police stations underscores the severity of criminal activities along the border. Despite government efforts to enhance security by tightening policies and increasing deployment of security forces, cross-border crime continues to escalate, indicating that simply deploying more security forces is not a definitive solution.

The movement and interconnectedness across borders serve as a catalyst globally, facilitating criminal activities worldwide. Borders, whether open or closed, tend to remain porous due to the entrenched presence of organized crime, particularly in border regions. Combating cross-border crime proves challenging due to the robust networks among smugglers, political figures, security personnel, bureaucrats, and criminals. Interestingly, modern technologies have become advantageous for organized crime, enabling them to operate without geographical

constraints. In Nepal's frontier regions, new complexities are emerging concerning cross-border criminal activities. Therefore, security remains a paramount concern that cannot be sacrificed in favor of economic development or short-term gains. Internal security is indispensable for a nation's economic progress. Nepal cannot achieve prosperity unless its borders are secure and fortified.

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