CHAPTER - 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter recapitulates the problem of the study and summarizes the major conclusions of the study and the implications. During the course of the study, the issue of identity has been evidently highlighted. The study has identified three categories, often indifferently treated as, ‘Indians’ or of ‘Indian origin’ people in Nepal. The first category consists of the ‘Indian migrants’ who are Indian nationals. The second category comprises of the ‘Madhesis’. And the third category includes the non-Madhesi Nepalese settled in Nepal for many years, such as the Mawaris. This study has used the term Indo-Nepalese to refer to the second and third categories.

Alternative Discourse

This study disputes the existing approach of treating all of the categories as ‘migrants’ thereby trapping them in a ‘migratory discourse’. This study, thus, has attempted to provide an alternative discourse to the study of the Indo-Nepalese in Nepal. This kind of discourse has reinforced the traditional view of treating the Indo-Nepalese as ‘Indian migrants’. Secondly, in the face of Nepal’s nation-building process, which was based on the notion of constructing Nepal’s national identity different from India during the Panchayat period, the Indo-Nepalese had been made politically vulnerable because of their socio-cultural similarities and
ties with people on the Indian side of the border. The Indo-Nepalese today prefer to be called as Nepalese rather than treated as people of 'Indian origin'. This is understandable because of their vulnerable position in the context of Nepal. It has been argued that in the context of this political vulnerability, they have been reconstructing their identity based on geography, history, and culture under a regional Madhesi identity.

The Notion of 'Indian'

On the notion of 'Indian', this study has led to the conclusion that the term 'Indian' seems to connote two notions. The first is understood in cultural sense and seems to include the culture of the South Asian communities to mean an identity of being 'Indian'. This idea of being 'Indian' seems to be the notion of the western world in referring to the 'cultural identity' of the 'Indian sub-continent' as being 'Indian'. As such, this notion of 'Indian' cultural identity is more easily accepted in the western world than in South Asia. The second notion of 'Indian' is more recent and narrower in scope than the first notion. This notion is in political sense and stands to mean the nationals of the country of India that come to exist as a nation-state in 1947. This notion seems to prevail in the contemporary South Asian context. The cultural notion of 'Indian origin' would also mean a person from South Asia who shares similar culture with the South Asian communities regardless of its nationality. However, the political notion of 'Indian origin' would mean a person migrated from India after 1947.
This study has identified that 'Indians' are generally categorized on three bases. The first category is based on the period of migration, which may be called periodic categorization. That is whether migration of a person occurred in the ancient and medieval times or in modern 'recent' period. The second category comprise of 'Indians' who had migrated in the 'recent' past and who have settled permanently in Nepal (Periodic). This group of people had acquired or has the desire to acquire Nepali citizenship (Legal). This category of people still maintains ties with India (Cultural). And the third includes a person's culture, language, dress and ties with India as determinants. This is cultural categorization. Besides, a standard view also does not exist in identifying the persons of 'Indian origin'. For instance, in Chapter I, we have noted the opinions of the following persons on this question. Krishna Khannel opined that even though the 'caste groups' are considered as people of 'Indian origin' in Nepal not all caste groups are of Indian origin. Mahanth Thakur has pointed out that there is confusion among the people of treating 'all people in the Tarai are of Indian origin', which is, according to him, not correct. Dilli Ram Dahal used the term 'Indian ethnic groups' to refer to the caste-groups of Tarai. C. K. Lal has pointed out that the term 'Indian origin' is filled with 'ambiguity.' While Krishna Hachhethu said that to identify a person of Indian origin in Nepal is difficult. Thus, this study concluded that in Nepal, 'Indians' connotes different meaning to different people.
The Indian Diaspora

The study has argued that the term 'Indian Diaspora' is yet to be established as a well-defined concept. We have seen that Indian Diaspora is composed of 'Non-Residents Indians' (NRIs) and 'Persons of Indian Origin' (PIOs) and refers also to their descendants (see Chapter I). In the study, three aspects of the definition of Indian Diaspora has been identified: (1) a migrated population; (2) a territorial limit; (3) and a composition of people. However, this study has argued that the validity of the definition of Indian diaspora is debatable when specificities are questioned.

The origin of the term India has 'long and complex histories' and the notion 'Indian' seems to have come about only in the modern time. The second aspect pertains to territorial boundaries. In contemporary times, India having demarcated borders provides a territorial identity. Hence, a person moving out from the Indian territory could be said to be an Indian immigrant. However, like the first aspect, it also becomes problematic when the question of ancient period is raised. The third aspect of the definition pertains to the composition of Indian diaspora, namely, 'Non-Resident Indians' (NRIs) and 'People of Indian origin' (PIOs) including their descendents. This fails to include the stateless people of 'Indian origin'. The study, thus, argues that the notion 'Indian diaspora' seems to refer to people who have cultural, racial and ancestral linkages with India. The linkages are seen through socio-religious ties such as 'dress', 'social practices', 'family nexus', 'Indian
arranged marriage, 'Indian food', 'Indian cinema', etc. However, the study also noted that the Indian diaspora is not a 'monolithic' community.

The Concept of Madhesi Identity

An analysis of the Madhesis identity of the Tarai has led to the conclusion that there are some notable themes emerging in the way the Madhesis conceptualizes their identity today. In Chapter I we have discussed that the first important premise that they stress is their cultural identity - based on dress, language, food habits, religious practices - shared by both people across the border of Nepal and India. Secondly, another important marker of the identity that they stress is the language - Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, and Hindi as the link language - spoken as mother tongue. Thirdly, they consider Madhesi community in two categories - 'Nepali origin Madhesi' and 'Indian origin Madhesi'. In this sense, the Indian origin Madhesi forms a diaspora group, while the Nepali origin Madhesi remains an as 'indigenous' community. However, the Nepali origin Madhesi may be considered as a diaspora group, in as far as the nature of their treatment from the state, and the conditions, which they undergo, are similar to that of a diasporic community in its traditional notion.

Furthermore, the concept of Madhesi is deterritorialized. In this conception, the traditional notion of Madhesi that has been a territorial reference stands insignificant. In its cotemporary notion, a person settled outside Tarai or Madhesh owns his/her Madhesi identity, based on culture, language, dress, etc. This conception becomes problematic when it comes to other communities who have
settled in the Tarai for centuries but maintains their own culture and language. The Marwaris of the Tarai can be cited as an example. While this conception of the Madhesi easily includes Indian nationals who share the same culture with the Madhesis of Nepal, it rejects people who do not share the same culture with the Madhesis, despite being settled in the Tarai or Madhesh. Hence, the territorial identity is not a major marker in the contemporary conception of the Madhesi identity.

Thus, it can be said that the concept of Madhesi has become both inclusive and exclusive in nature and is a deterritorialised and transnational identity.

**History of Tarai settlement of the Indo-Nepalese**

From available information on the settlement of the Indo-Nepalese in the Tarai in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the study observed that some of the Indo-Nepalese who had come to settle in the Tarai for cultivation which was encouraged by the then rulers of Nepal (see Chapter II). During this period several factors were responsible for migration from India to Nepal. The role of governments in India and Nepal during this period was an important factor. British government in India was responsible for both decrease and increase of migration of population from India to Nepal.

In Nepal, the Gurkhal Nepali rulers also followed the kings of Palpa, Makwanpur, and Bijayapur who tried to reclaim the Tarai forest for cultivation through the ‘immigrants’ from the other side of the border. The early British official accounts on the Tarai of had described the forest of Tarai as a ‘great forest’
with very few settlements and with the eastern Tarai more populated than the western Tarai that had almost inexhaustible forests. In Chapter II, we have discussed that the few settlements of the Tarai, described by Kirkpatrick have similar conclusions with researches on the settlement of the Tarai. Based on the arguments of Frederick Gaige and Durga P. Ojha the Tarai forest served as a defensive barrier and settlements in the Tarai increased with growth of cultivators. It might be suggested that people moved in for settlement in the Tarai from the India side during this period (see Chapter II). For instance, the settlement policies of both the Shah and Rana regimes had encouraged migration of people from India to the Tarai region of Nepal during this period. The economic potential of the Tarai region, encouraged the Shah rulers to settle its subjects in the Tarai to enhance the state revenue. Initially, the Nepali ‘government tried to reclaim waste lands directly through forced labour’ and encouraged the Paharis (hill residents) to migrate to the Tarai plains for settlement. This led the Nepali government to ‘actively pursued a policy of encouraging Indian immigrants into Tarai for settlement’ and adopt ‘indirect methods’. The government allotted wastelands to ‘Indian immigrants’ for reclamation through the local administration and Jimidars (revenue collectors) were often instructed to settle a specific number of immigrants every year. Towards the end of the 18th century, King Rana Bahadur Shah issued a new land resettlement policy that stated Nepal’s desire to attract migrants from India to develop cultivation in the Tarai. After the Anglo-Nepal war in 1814-16, the government stopped ‘direct and concerted efforts for land settlement’. When
the Ranas came to power in 1846, they continued the traditional policy of encouraging settlement of people in the Tarai region. However, the Ranas also confronted the difficulty in attracting the hill people on a large scale, like the Shah rulers. Hence, because of the reluctance of the hill people to migrate, the Rana government adopted liberal immigration policy. The Rana government continued the traditional policy of encouraging immigration from the adjoining areas of northern India also.

During the 18th century, the British government in India introduced new land tenure system in India known as the 'permanent settlement'. As a result, many poor peasants from Bengal and Bihar migrated to Tarai where land-ownership opportunities were offered by the Rana government in Nepal. During the mid-nineteenth century, when relations between the British government in India and the Nepal had improved, the Nepal rulers encouraged clearance of the Tarai jungle for cultivation. In 1857, when the Indian Mutiny erupted against the British rule in India, Nepal ruler, Jung Bahadur Rana, assisted the British in quelling the revolt. Large number of 'Indians' fled to Nepal to seek for shelter. Jung Bahadur, however, assured the East India Company that there would be no threat of any kind to them on account of the asylum given to the Indian refugees in Nepal. During the mid-nineteenth century, Jung Bahadur Rana made the first legal code that allowed foreigners to buy land in Nepal and also permitted Indian traders to conduct business at specific points in the Tarai. Realising the possibility of reclaiming the Tarai through immigrants from India, Jung Bahadur made provision in the first
legal code of the country entitling the alienation of land through sale or purchase to
the foreign nationals residing in Nepal. Since then the reclamation of the Tarai
forest for cultivation started in immigration of the Indian from Bihar and United
Provinces in a large number. During this time some Bengali teachers from India
went to Nepal to impart education to the Rana families. However, the liberal policy
of the Rana government changed by the turn of the 20th century. During the 1920s,
the Nepali government banned purchase of land by ‘Indians’. It may be mentioned
here that the political developments in India during the 1920s, particularly the
India Civil Disobedience movement launched in 1920, had a great impact on the
Rana rulers in regard to the Indian immigrants in the Tarai. The Ranas feared that
if revolutionary ideologies get spilled over to Nepal side of the Tarai, it could be
dangerous to their rule as the Tarai settlers were mostly of ‘Indian origin’ and their
loyalty to the Nepali government was doubtful. During the early 20th century, some
population from India migrated to Nepal to embark on trade in the Tarai and
Kathmandu Valley. Furthermore, the signing of British India’s treaty with Nepal in
1923 opened fresh avenues for the migration of Indian traders, entrepreneurs,
skilled and unskilled labourers to the Nepal Tarai and other parts of the kingdom.
Subsequently, Indian traders and businessmen, particularly the Marwaris, extended
their businesses in Nepal and began to migrate to Nepal.

To sum up, some of the Indo-Nepalese had moved into the Nepal Tarai
from India to increase cultivation. However, the settlement history of the Indo-
Nepalese in the Nepal Tarai needs further research as the subject is controversial
and there are different views that are now emerging among the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai. They argue that they had lived in the Tarai from time immemorial. This argument finds some basis when the question of the kingdoms that flourished in the Tarai region during this period is raised. However, because of lack of information to examine this argument, this study concludes to say that more anthropological and archeological studies on the region will throw more light on the subject.

The Indo-Nepalese Communities

The study has argued that the Indo-Nepalese people are a diverse community in terms of religion, language, culture, and region. Hence, to frame them with a single identity is neither possible nor attempted. However, the study has led to the conclusion that, perhaps one aspect common to all in the context of Nepal is, the unfortunate reality that they have been all at one point or the other treated as 'Indians' and some had been 'victims' of anti-India elements.

Two dominant cultural trends can be identified among the Indo-Nepalese. These trends could be a result and influence of their socio-economic status and place of settlement. First, while they are open to other cultures, their own identity is preserved. Under this category, the case of Marwaris settled in Kathmandu could be an example. While they have mixed with other cultures, they have also kept their culture intact. One of the most prosperous communities among the Indo-Nepalese, the Marwaris socio-cultural traditions, such as their food-habits and religious practices are still intact and they continue to maintain marital ties with
their community in India till today. Hence, their socio-cultural identity is community-based. However, as for their political identity is concerned, they consider themselves as Nepalese and desire to be considered as Nepalese by other communities.

The second category is the Madhesis of the Tarai. The Madhesis have been asserting their identity with the aim to make acceptable in the Nepal’s public domain. This assertion could be because their culture, unlike the Marwaris, is seen in Nepal as an extension of ‘Indian culture’. The assertion of their identity is an effort to carve out a space in the cultural imagination of Nepal and also to create a sense in the general perception, that their culture is a part and parcel of Nepali culture.

**Causes and Factors of Discrimination**

This study has identified certain causes and factors of discrimination against the Indo-Nepalese in Chapter IV. Historically, the Indo-Nepalese is said to have favoured the British against the Gurkha rulers during the Anglo-Nepal war. This could be one factor of the suspicion of the Nepali rulers towards the Indo-Nepalese. The existence of the passport system for the Indo-Nepalese and the Tarai people till the 1950s to visit Kathmandu could be a reason for such an apprehension. Besides, The Indo-Nepalese community is considered as the most efficient business community whose interests have been only for economic benefits. This could be another factor of the result of suspicion of loyalty of the Indo-Nepalese towards Nepal rulers. These social perceptions of the Paharis
towards the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai as socially uncivilized by demeaningly referring them as Madhesis may have been reinforced by the climatic conditions of the Tarai, that was once seen as a ‘place of dead’ due to the existent of virulent Malaria.

Furthermore, the domestic politics in Nepal during the Panchayat period also contributed in political alienation of the Indo-Nepalese. In January 1962, King Mahendra escaped an assassination attempt in the Tarai. The democratic forces that mainly concentrated their activities in the Tarai region, against the monarchy, might be one the factors for the king’s regime to take more hostile policies towards the Indo-Nepalese of the Tarai. The Indo-Nepalese close affinity with India was also a factor in seeing them with suspicion, because they were considered as an extension of ‘Indian culture’. The Rana rulers, for instance, had doubted the Indo-Nepalese for their ‘Indian origin’.

The study has argued that historical, social, cultural, political, and geographical factors have played critical roles in the development of discrimination of the Nepali ruling-elite against the Indo-Nepalese often reinforced by one factor or the other.

Areas of Discrimination in the Constitution

The study has identified three provisions of ‘discrimination’ in the present 1990 Constitution against the Indo-Nepalese, namely, the provisions on religion; on language; and on citizenship (see Chapter IV). An important change in the 1990 Constitution was the inclusion of ‘multi-ethnic, multilingual, democratic,
independent, indivisible, sovereign, Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom' [Article 4(1)] of the 1990 Constitution. The Constitution, for the first time recognized Nepal as a multi-ethnic and multilingual nation. Though the Constitution recognizes the minorities as ethnic and linguistic groups it declared Nepal a 'Hindu Kingdom'. Ethnic and religious minority group activists and scholars argue that by declaring Nepal as Hindu Kingdom, other religions are being 'discriminated'. They also point out that Hindu norms and values have become the norms and values of the State. Many of the festivals and traditions have been interpreted with tinge of Hindu culture. Books on Hindu religion is published and distributed by the Royal Nepal Academy, whereas books on other religions are not given due consideration. Program on Hindu religion gets 90 percent of the time allocated for religion in the state owned Radio Nepal, while some religions do not get any time at all.

Another area that has been identified is Article 6(1) of the Constitution that declares Nepali 'in Devnagari script' as 'the official language'. Whereas, 'All the languages of the nation' as 'national languages' [Article 6(2)]. Critics points out that the Constitution is 'ambiguous in its treatment of language'. While Nepal is defined as a multilingual state in Article 4, the other languages (122 living languages) are treated differently. Likewise, only the Devnagari script has been treated as the Nepali script while other scripts of the country are not. Although Article 18(2) of the Constitution says: 'Each community shall have the right to establish schools for imparting education in the mother tongue of the concerned
child’, the constitution provides no ‘guarantee of support from the state for their
development’.

The provisions on citizenship in the Constitution are identified as
discriminatory by the study. Article 8 of the 1990 Constitution states that ‘a person
who is a citizen of Nepal, pursuant to the provision of either Article 7 of the
According to this Article, a person whose parents had acquired Nepali citizenship
before 1962 can only acquire birth citizenship of the country. Thus, limiting
birthright citizenship to the year 1962. Some Indo-Nepalese, mostly of the lower
strata of the society were denied citizenship because their parents did not hold
citizenship certificates. Furthermore, according to article 9.4.a of the Constitution,
only those foreigners/persons can acquire Nepali citizenship who knows Khas-
Nepali language written in Devnagiri script. Most of the Indo-Nepalese speak
languages other than Nepali as their first or second language. The consequence of
denial of citizenship has created numerous problems for those without it, as they
were denied the right to hold immovable property, as no person without citizenship
can purchase land in Nepal.

Nepal-India Relations
The special relationship that India enjoyed with Nepal till the mid-1950s and the
policies of Nepali government’s towards the Indo-Nepalese till the mid-1950s were
important factors that determined India’s policy towards the Indo-Nepalese. This
has been discussed in Chapter V. India’s concern began with the restrictive policies
adopted by the Nepali government since the late 1950s, which also marked the beginning of deteriorating relations between India and Nepal. India criticized the king's action. The policies adopted during the Panchayat period were 'discriminatory' against the Indo-Nepalese, partly because a large number of Indo-Nepalese supported the democratic movement against the king's regime by taking shelter in India. India's overwhelming presence in Nepal in the 1950s, on the one hand and King Mahendra's consolidation of Nepal's nationalism based on 'anti-Indianism', on the other, had a deep impact on the Indo-Nepalese in Nepal. India's attention was first caught by the Nepalese government's orders in October 1957 that made citizenship mandatory for all school teachers in Nepal. During the visit of Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to Nepal in October 1966, the subject of the rights and privileges of 'Indians' living in Nepal as provided under the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 between India and Nepal caught attention. Presumably, the Indian Prime Minister had deliberately talked only of the Indian nationals living in Nepal because the issue of Indo-Nepalese had not assumed critical from India's point of view and also India had treated the Indo-Nepalese of the Tarai as 'Indians'.

The Nepali Government passed several legislations that had put the Indo-Nepalese and Indian nationals in great difficulties as requirement of citizenship documents was made compulsory for foreigners including 'Indians'. The debates in the Indian Parliament suggest that India's concern for the Indo-Nepalese became evident in 1967. Although members of Parliament rarely distinguish between
Indian nationals and the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai, their reference to the people who had settled in Nepal for over fifty years clearly imply their concern for the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai. The Indian government had taken a stand that the Indo-Nepalese are Nepali nationals and India has 'limited' role to play in the internal matters of another country. A number of Indian press carried reports of the difficulties faced by 'Indians' in Nepal because of citizenship. The Government of India, through its Embassy exercised general supervision over the interest of Indian nationals residents in Nepal. In matters of free movement within Nepal, Indian nationals were permitted entry from the northern frontier of Nepal.

It is apparent that although India had maintained that the Indo-Nepalese were Nepali citizens and therefore had limited role for direct intervention, India had, in many occasions, shown its concern known to the Nepali government for the well-being of the Indo-Nepalese of Nepal Tarai.

The study has argued that the relation between India and Nepal has been an important factor in determining Nepal’s policy towards the Indo-Nepalese. This has been seen on three occasions. In the early 1950s, when Nepal and India had enjoyed a good relation in the aftermath of Nepal’s political change in which India had played an important role to resolving the political crisis of 1950, the period show a 'non-discriminatory’ policy of the state towards the Indo-Nepalese. The change of Nepal’s policy came with the change in the bilateral relations between India and Nepal in 1960 when King Mahendra took power in Nepal. India and Nepal relations saw its lowest level of relation during the 30 years of the Panchayat
period. It was during this time that the government of Nepal had enacted number of legislations that were against the interests of the Indo-Nepalese, if not discriminatory. In the third occasion, when democracy was restored in Nepal in 1990, the relations between India and Nepal had improved and this period also show the removal of some restrictive laws that had created difficulties for the Indo-Nepalese.

**Issues and Challenges**

The major issues of the Indo-Nepalese are seen in representation, citizenship, language, and hill migration to the Tarai, discussed in Chapter IV. The Indo-Nepalese have been expressing deep resentments on these being treated as 'second class citizens'. A glance of the position of the Indo-Nepalese in the highest decision-making bodies would show that the number of the Indo-Nepalese people has been poorly represented. The Indo-Nepalese numbered 13 (9.62 percent) in the National Panchayat of 135 in 1977. In 2000, the Indo-Nepalese in the lower house of Parliament numbered about 41 (20 per cent) of the 205 members of Parliament. Again, the proportion of the Indo-Nepalese in the Nepalese army and police is negligible. In the administration also the number of Indo-Nepalese is very less compared to the hill people.

The report of the National-language Policy Advisory Committee, 1993 has enumerated 36 languages based on the censuses. Linguistically, the Indo-Nepalese belong to the Indo-Aryan language family. The Indo-Nepalese speak Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Urdu, Bengali, Marwari and Hindi. Hindi is the *lingua franca*.
of the Indo-Nepalese and spoken in the entire Tarai region. An examination of Nepal’s language planning and policy suggests that perhaps, the Nepali government had been insensitive towards the languages of the minorities. Since post-1990, the government adopted a ‘liberal’ language policy. Although critics have pointed out that despite the change, the government has not shown enough interest to promote the languages of the ethnic and indigenous groups. The study argues that while the recognition of the minorities’ languages in the 1990 Constitution, the promotional level of these languages from the part of the government remains sluggish.

Another controversial issue as far as the Indo-Nepalese are concerned is the citizenship issue. This study has argued that Nepal’s citizenship laws are discriminatory in nature against the Indo-Nepalese because the Indo-Nepalese are perceived as ‘Indian migrants’. The Citizenship Act of 1952 declared any person as a citizen who was born in Nepal, who permanently settled in Nepal, who had at least one parent in Nepal, or any woman married to a citizen. Articles 7 and 8 of the 1962 Constitution on citizenship include provision that pertains to the knowledge of Nepali language as mandatory has been against the Indo-Nepalese. During the early 1960s, the interaction between the Indo-Nepalese and the Nepali speakers were very little and many had their education in Hindi language. As a result, the knowledge of Nepali language among the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai seems negligible. The Citizenship Act of 1964 retained the twelve-year stay in Nepal for persons of ‘non-Nepali origin’ as an essential qualification for the acquisition of

It is alleged that citizenship certificates were denied to Indo-Nepalese on various pretexts that they were recent immigrants from India. Many Indian citizens from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh go to Nepal as migrants in search of jobs. This study has noted that this has also created a problem for the Nepali officials concerned with distribution of citizenship certificates to identify who is a local Nepali and who is an Indian citizen. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the government has taken some steps to resolve the citizenship problem. In May 1992, a new Nepal Citizenship Regulation 1992 to simplify the procedures of acquiring citizenship was announced. Then in 1994, the government constituted a High-Level Citizenship Committee to look into the problem of citizenship. In 2000, an estimated 4 million were without citizenship. Citizenship remains a thorny issue and a major challenge for the Indo-Nepalese. Although there has been realization by the state of the grievances of the Tarai people, no concerted efforts have been made to resolve the chronic issues and problems. The measures taken to redress the problems that began after 1990 have been slow in its implementation. All major political parties have raised the problems of the Indo-Nepalese but have not been able to find any concrete solutions to the problems and have also raise these issues for political reasons sometimes.
Another problem of the Indo-Nepalese emanates from the large population of hill people migrating to the Tarai region. It has been argued that the magnitude of migration of Hill people or Paharis into the Tarai has been creating political and social tensions between Paharis and Madhesis in the Tarai. In the course of examining the relations between the Paharis and the Madhesis, the study has led to the conclusion that at the core of Madhesi and Pahari cleavage seem to emanate from the state’s resettlement of the large number of Paharis in the Tarai in the past few decades.

Emerging Trends

The study has noted that there exists a strong resentment among the Indo-Nepalese of Tarai against the long ‘discriminatory’ treatment meted-out to them by the state. This resentment has been gradually become more vocal. This is evident from the way the Madhesis today see a change in the attitude of the younger generation. During interactions with the Madhesis in Birgunj and Janakpur, they have pointed out there is a change of attitude between the older generation and the present generation. They are of the view that the former has lived by accepting the ‘second citizenship status’. But that opines that after democracy was re-instituted ‘things have changed’. They also pointed out that people have not openly share their ‘feelings of resentments’ during the Panchayat period.

If the present trends are any indication, the Madhesi issue may result into serious social and political unrest in the event of a strong united Madhesi movement. Such a united force stands a remote possibility because of the internal
divisions within the Madhesi communities. However, the possibility cannot be ruled out if one seriously takes the views of the people there. In Birgunj and Janakpur, many of the persons interviewed said that their Madhesi struggle comes first than other social and religious divisions. For instance, a Muslim leader at Birgunj said that ‘the first issue is the Madhesi issue and the Muslim issue comes second.’ However, mobilizing all the Madhesi would be a major obstacle in this direction. Internal divisions within the community might weaken its strength. But if effectively mobilized, the Madhesi force may play a crucial role in Nepali national politics, as this force has the potential of representing not only the Madhesis but also the other smaller ethnic and religious minorities of Nepal, thereby triggering a divide largely between the present Nepali ruling groups and the antagonists group. In such an event, it would have huge implications for Nepal’s domestic politics. The present political structure may have to be restructured to accommodate the hitherto underprivileged and marginalized groups.

Furthermore, the present trend of the struggle of many Madhesi organizations have been showing a violent nature. The emergence of Madhesi groups such as the Madhesi National Liberation Front (MNLF) formed by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in April 2001, the Madhesi Jantantrik Morcha under the leadership of Jai Krishna Goit, formed in 2003, and the Madhesi Tiger under Sambhu Prasad Yadav alias Ajaya Yadav have began their movements to ‘fight injustice’ against the Madhesi people with a belief in arms movement. These
developments suggest that the Madhesi movement has now increasingly become more radical in its struggles.

These developments have security and political implications for India as well. In the event of a widespread violence in the Nepal Tarai, it would have direct impact on the bordering states of India. The open border and the close ties of the people of the border would be adversely affected. India’s current policy of economic cooperation and development of the Tarai region needs to be maintained, as this would help the Tarai people to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of the Tarai, thereby, reducing a conflict situation. India may also maintain its policy of reverting too much of political support as it might harm the position of the Madhesis’ in Nepal’s domestic politics.

To sum up this concluding chapter, it may be mentioned that the purpose of the arguments presented in this study is to problematise and generate debate and discussion on a subject that has been neglected in the social science research till recently.