The present study is a modest attempt to survey and analyse the role of neighbouring states in India's security with special reference to Bhutan and Nepal. But before discussing the role of these two states in India's security, it is necessary to take into account all the major threats to India's security and India's response to these threats.

India has been facing threats to its security at global and regional levels. At the global level, the first major threat came from the politics of the Cold War. It was not a threat of an attack from any Super Power but a threat to India's freedom in foreign affairs. Therefore, India pursued the policy of non-alignment to retain its independence in foreign affairs and to judge issues on merit. India's policy of non-alignment and its refusal to join any power bloc and military alliances was a foreign policy strategy for the defence of the country. It kept the forces of the Cold War away from India's borders and safeguarded India's independence and national security.

At the regional level, India has been facing threats to its security from its two immediate neighbours Pakistan and China. Pakistani threat was revealed in the
form of tribal invasion in Kashmir in 1947. So, from the beginning of its independence, India has to pursue a defence oriented policy towards Pakistan. Pakistan refused to accept Kashmir's accession to India, and entered into a bilateral military pact with USA and joined Western military alliances i.e., SEATO and CENTO in order to solve Kashmir dispute from the position of strength. Western support to Pakistan on kashmir issue threatened India's security and its territorial integrity in Kashmir.

The Pakistani threat in the post 1962 period revealed itself in military and politico-strategic form. Pakistan's war with India in 1965 and in 1971; its massive arms flow from USA and China, and its nuclear weapons programme pursued in the latter half of the 70's constituted the vital components of the military threat posed by Pakistan to India. Pakistan's special relationship with China and the US; the Sino-Pak boundary agreement of 1963, and the Chinese support to Pakistan in the 1965 and 1971 wars reflected on their strategic collusion against India. Pakistan's 'Pan Islamic' grouping in the 70's with an emphasis on military collaboration with some of the West Asian countries had significant impact on India's security environment.

Pakistan has played an important role in the US global strategy and acquired the status of a 'frontline
state' following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The consequent flow of massive arms to Pakistan from US has been to achieve a military parity with India. Pakistan's weapons oriented nuclear programme has serious implication for India. Kashmir continues to be a bone of contention and Pakistan's deliberate involvement in militancy in Punjab and Kashmir by providing support to the separatists in these states compounded India's apprehensions about the Pakistan's intentions. Pakistan has always tried to malign India's image and played an active role in cooling India's relations with its neighbour like Bhutan, Nepal etc.

Indian response to the Pakistani threat from 60's to 80's was marked a success with the Soviet support to India. The Soviet support to India certainly strengthened India's strategic and military position and counter-balanced Sino-US military and political support to Pakistan. After the Indo-Pak War of 1971, India emerged as a pre-eminent power in South Asia. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 strengthened India's defence position. The creation of Bangladesh became a strategic asset for India's North-eastern security system. India did its best to utilise the opportunities in shaping the sub-continental balance of power in its favour. India's security environment improved following the Simla Agreement (1972); Tripartite Agreement
(1973); Kashmir Accord and India's nuclear explosion (1974) and the Sino-Indian normalisation. India has faced the Pakistani threat diplomatically as well as militarily more particularly through its indigenous defence preparedness.

Besides Pakistan, China has been another major source of threat to India's security. Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950; its claim of Indian territory and its aggression of 1962 posed a serious challenge to India's security as well as its policy of non-alignment. Chinese threat has been of three dimensions: (i) the military strategic threat including nuclear threat after 1964; (ii) the threat to India's status, its power and influence in South and South-east Asia, and (iii) the threat resulting from Chinese support to anti-India feelings in India's immediate neighbours, and also insurgencies movements in North-eastern part of India. China also posed a grave threat to India's security by constructing the Karakoram Highway and establishing a communication system in the Sinkiang region. Chinese strategic collusion with Pakistan; its growing defence strength, and its missiles in Tibet created a sense of insecurity in India.

India, in the post 1962 period became more conscious of its defences and pursued a defence oriented foreign policy strategy. India's decision makers laid equal stress
on defence and diplomatic preparedness. Defence preparedness was reflected in the form of MIG deal with the former Soviet Union in 1963, its defence planning and subsequent growth in its armed forces. The Chinese aggression had shattered India's implicit faith in the efficacy of peaceful settlement of disputes. So, India adopted a diplomatic approach to prevent any Chinese aggression in the future. For this purpose, India accepted the Colombo proposals in order to settle the boundary dispute with China.

In the 70's, India's strategic environment marked a definite success after the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union, creation of Arunachal Pradesh, the Shillong Accord and Laldenga's decision to accept Mizoram and an integral part of India. In the light of these positive developments in favour of India's internal stability in addition to the noticeable improvement in India's security and status position, the Chinese could not engineer Maoist led revolution in India.

Chinese challenge to India's interests at the South-Asian level was sought to be met by upgrading the economic relations with the countries of the region. India did its best to prevent the Asian balance of powers from tilting in China's favour. It adopted the deliberate policy
of friendship and good neighbourliness with the countries of the region. Not only that but also attempts were made to improve relations with China. It initiated boundary talks with China in the mid 80's. The boundary-talks with China and the exchange of visits between the two countries have qualititavely improved the security environment of India.

The Chinese occupation of Tibet posed a serious Challenge to India's northern security and cast a dark shadow over Indo-Chinese relations. Consequently, India took certain steps to strengthen its politico-strategic position in the Himalayas. In this direction, India made certain adjustments in its relations with Bhutan and Nepal because these states, by virtue of their geo-strategic location cast their shadows on India's security horizon. The location of these states is significant to India's security i.e., either to threaten or prevent any possible threat from the side of China. Therefore, Nehru adopted a strategy of "special relationship" with Bhutan and Nepal by concluding the Treaties of Peace and Friendship with former in 1949 and with latter in 1950 respectively. These treaties strengthened India's strategic environment in the Himalayas and ensured the security of the country from the side of China. After the conclusion of these treaties, the defence and foreign affairs of these two Himalayan Kingdoms
came under the guidance of India, and these states were regarded as an integral part of India's northern security system.

Chinese policy towards the Himalayan Kingdoms of Bhutan and Nepal has been a clear indication of its desire to wean these states away from India's influence. China encouraged Bhutan to become economically self-reliance and expressed willingness to solve its boundary dispute with Bhutan. China also supported and encouraged anti-India activities in Bhutan and Nepal, and supported the Nepalese King on his National Panchayat. It also constructed Kathmandu-Kodari road, supported Nepal's proposal of 'Zone of Peace' and encouraged Nepal to support Gorkha movement in India.

Against this background, India has been strongly opposed to Chinese presence in Bhutan and Nepal because its presence in these states would endanger India's security. Therefore, India has been pursuing a policy of military and economic aid to Bhutan and Nepal to contain the Chinese influence in these states. However, there has been some irritants in India's bilateral relations with these states. For instance, Bhutan's membership of UNO and Nepal's membership of non-alignment led to their quest for an independent role in foreign affairs which was articulated
in a demand to update the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1949 and Indo-Nepalese Treaty of 1950. Their condemnation of the merger of Sikkim with India Union and India's nuclear explosion; their support to Pakistan on the question of declaring South Asia as a 'Nuclear Weapons Free Zone' were against India's basic interests. The growing relationship between China and Bangladesh and the strategic significance of the narrow Silliguri Corridor for uninterrupted links with North-eastern India has made Bhutan a prime security concern to India. Similarly, Nepal's neutral role in Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962; its reluctance to Gorkha recruitment in India army; its demand for separate trade and transit treaties; its demand for the withdrawal of Indian Military Liaison Group from Kathmandu; its support to Gorkha movement and its import of arms from China caused concern in India regarding the security of its northern border.

India took several steps to improve its relations with Bhutan and Nepal. India's attitude towards these states has remained friendly. It has tried to bring political stability in the Himalayan Kingdoms and for this, it supported anti-Rana forces in Nepal and sent military officials to Bhutan to train its defence forces, and an adviser to assist the King on policy matters. Over the years India has been pursuing a policy not to support the
Congress workers but to provide more and more economic assistance to Nepal. India's policy of appeasement towards Bhutan and Nepal restored the goodwill which was eroded during the 60's. India began to act as "big brother" and provided large economic assistance for the developments of these states. India signed trade pact with Bhutan in 1972 and 1978. India also encouraged and supported Drukpas-Nepalese marriages to settle the ethnic issue in Bhutan and to weaken the growing Nepalese involvement in Gorkha movement in Darjeeling Hill area. India also played an important role in the resolution of the Sino-Bhutanese boundary dispute, and opened and observation post in the Sumdorong Chu area and altered the status quo in its own favour.

India also signed agreements with Nepal to construct a road from Thapa to Janekpur along the Southern Terai and for a joint project over the Kosi river beneficial to both the countries. The emergence of India as a pre-eminent power in South Asia required better rapport between India and Nepal. India rejected Nepal's proposal of 'Zone of Peace' because it was against the spirit of Indo-Nepalese Treaty of 1950, and would endanger India's security. India concluded trade and transit treaty with Nepal in 1978, and advised the King to restore democratic freedom in the Kingdom and laid more emphasis on the
economic upliftment of the Nepalese. Nepal also realized the need of India's assistance for its own security. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the two countries came close to each other. The exchange of visits and mutual consultations between the two countries ensured the security of their respective borders from the side of China. The two countries also solved their problems on bilateral basis.

However, the relationship between the two countries deteriorated on Nepal's support to Gorakha movement and its import of arms from China. But the Indo-Nepalese relations improved after the conclusion of trade treaty in 1990 and an agreement on Tanakpur hydel project in 1992. India and Nepal also agreed to assist each other to contain terrorism in the region. The relationship between the two countries further strengthened when Manmohan Adhikari, the then Prime Minister of Nepal on his visit to India in April 1995, assured the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao that the Indo-nepalese Treaty of 1950 will not be abrogated and Nepal would abide by the treaty.

Thus we can say that Bhutan has not so far posed any serious challenge to India's security and strategic
planning. Like Bhutan, Nepal has also decided not to create security problem for India. India's policy towards these Himalayan Kingdoms is based on its security considerations as well as for peace and prosperity in the region.