

Making the Soft Power Hard: Nepal's Internal Ability in Safeguarding National Interest

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Soft power is an important instrument of foreign policy and a tool in safeguarding national interests. Under various regimes after the advent of democracy in 1950, Nepal has experienced a turbulent effect of international influence on technology, governance capability, policy transfer, labor migration and climatic affairs. In these contexts, traditional diplomatic effort based on persuasive bargaining requires an interest based practice which is complicated for the countries like Nepal where military power and economy are considered to be public goods rather than strategic base for the expansion of domestic policy making the other countries follow.

Nepal creates an exemplary image in coping with the internal and external threats even during the major political transitions in 1950, 1990 and 2006. In all these power sharing mechanisms, the immunity that galvanized internal forces with minimum experience of indirect influence from the neighbouring countries shows that soft power values in Nepal became the major component for managing internal tensions and mitigating external interests. At one hand, the sources of soft power rests on ancient value system and on the other, Nepal celebrates new political system confronting the values earlier regime survived on. Political crisis before 2015 and the natural disaster after it plunged Nepal into a serious threat. During the time of crisis it is need and the value that functions compared to the interest. This paper posits a central question that how soft power became a variant during the war to peace transition from 2006 to the period of implementation of constitution stipulated in 2015 with the result of a stable government. The first part of the paper explores the dimensions of soft power in Nepal- both perceived and practiced- after *Jana Aandolan II*. The effectiveness of soft power in maintaining the geostrategic importance through a constant coupling of soft power diplomacy adopted and endorsed in Nepal by the external powers and Nepal's own soft power standpoint will be analyzed in the second part of the paper. The last section of the paper analyzes the challenges for effective implementation of soft power diplomacy in meeting the national interest.

Key words: Soft power, geo-strategic importance, national interest