

Contribution of Japanese Aid to the Development Process of Nepal Chandra Prasad Dhakal¹

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Economics,
Saraswati Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University
Email: cpddhakal@gmail.com

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Abstract

Japan is one of the developed nations of the world. It has provided various supports to the developing and under developed nations. Nepal established a friendship relationship with Japan in 1965. Since the time of friendship establishment, Japan has been playing a major role in the development process of Nepal. Loan assistance, technical supports, and grant assistance are provided by Japan to Nepal. Japanese aid is increasing in trend; however, the sector is changing on the basis of the priority of Nepal government. Japanese aid is basically used in human development and infra structure development. The result of the Japanese aid is effective in grass root level. The priority of the aid has brought positive changes in community. The study followed the mixed method and analyzed the collected data by through qualitative and quantitative research design. Numerical data were projected in table and figure other information mentioned through paragraph description. On the basis of data analysis and discussion, conclusion has been made. The portion of Japanese aid is high and the utilization of the aid has brought a positive impact on both human development and infrastructure development in Nepal.

Keywords: Aid, Japan, Nepal, relationship

1. Introduction

Japan, a developed nation in the world, plays an imperative role in the development process of Nepal. Respective embassies were opened in Tokyo and Katmandu after the establishment of their friendly diplomatic relationship in 1956. Japanese Buddhist Monk, Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi first came to Nepal on his way to Tibet in 1899 in search of holy Buddhist scriptures. He introduced Nepal and highlighted the importance of Lumbini to Japanese people through his writings and publications. During the Rana Regime in Nepal, eight Nepali students had visited Japan for pursuing higher education in between 1902-1905. It made Nepali to come closer to Japanese culture and technology (MOFA, 2020). Nepal established its embassy in Tokyo in 1965 and Japan established its embassy in Kathmandu in 1967. Nepal has Honorary Consulate in Osaka. Japan is a longstanding friend and a major development partner of Nepal. Both countries celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the establishment of their diplomatic relations in 2016 by organizing various programs and exchanging high level visits. As being Asian nation, Nepal and Japan have enjoyed very old and close relationship and have shared the common values of life. Nepal is the birthplace of “The Light of Asia”, Lord Buddha. Acharya, (1998) highlights the history of Nepal- Japan relationship and notes:

In 1905, during his second visit to Nepal, Kawaguchi wrote a 75 pages long letter to Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher Rana. The letter was full of patriotic feelings recommending to the Prime Minister of Nepal for the promotion of education vocational schools, exploration of mines, production of electricity, construction of roads, trade, banks and modernization of administration. This was the beginning of personal exchange between the two countries. Based upon these direct encounters a century ago, the two countries

now enjoy wide ranging bilateral relations conducted in a lasting spirit of friendship and co-operation. (p.6)

Nepal has been obtaining Japanese assistance in the financial as well as technical terms. Japanese aid comes for the construction of many projects for the development proposes on various sectors of economy to Nepal. This assistance has played a prominent role in enhancing the relationship between Nepal and Japan. In current period, Japan has become one of the largest donors (Bilateral) to Nepal. In fiscal year 2019/2020, Japanese assistance to Nepal was US \$. 125 million which was greater than the amount that was provided by other nations (Report of MOAF, 2020). Therefore, we can certainly see among the bilateral donors from Asia that Japan has emerged as a major development partner of Nepal. In political and diplomatic level, various high level exchange visits have been organized by two sides that MOFA Reports (2020) briefly narrates:

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali paid an official visit to Japan from 1 to 5 November 2018 at the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, H. E. Mr. Taro Kono. Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Hon. Mr. Bhanubhakta Dhakal visited Japan from 8 to 12 October 2018 to attend the 57th session of Asian African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). Likewise, recent high-level visits from Japan to Nepal include the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan H.E. Mr. Taro Kono from 9 to 10 January 2019. During the visit, the Foreign Ministers of Nepal and Japan held delegation level bilateral talks. Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Kono paid courtesy calls on the Rt. Hon. President and the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal. (MOAF, Report, 2020)

Above report shows the deep relationship between Nepal and Japan and Japan's vital role in the development process of Nepal. During the early sixties, Japan made lateral mechanism to provide support to developing nations. Through bilateral mechanism, Japan has been providing grants in different sectors like construction, good governance, education, cultural and tourism sectors. In recent years, various activities have run to promote bilateral relationship between Nepal and Japan that MOAF Report (2020) highlights, "The first and second meetings of the Mechanism were held in March 2015 and June 2016 in Tokyo and Kathmandu respectively. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed in Kathmandu on 9 January 2019 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Nepal and the Government of Japan on conducting bilateral consultations during the visit of Foreign Minister of Japan to Nepal" (p.4).

2. Research Methodology

The paper is prepared by using a mixed method of research design including both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Khan (2007) defines mixed methods as "the research that combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research. Mixed methods can help you gain a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study, as it integrates benefits of both methods" (p.34). Numerical data were analyzed by using a quantitative research design and qualitative information was analyzed through interoperation and description. Quantitative data were collected through census and statistical book and qualitative data were gathered from descriptive books, articles, journals etc. The study based on library research used only the secondary sources of data.

Contribution of Japanese Aid to the Development Process of Nepal

Japan has been contributing to the socio-economic development of Nepal since 1954. Japan provides bilateral grants, loan, multilateral aid and technical assistance. It has also been assisting Nepal for the promotion of peace and democracy. Shrestha (2015) notes the nature of providing Japanese aid to Nepal as "the major areas of Japanese economic cooperation to Nepal include human resource development, health, agriculture development, infrastructure

development, environment protection, culture, etc. Japan also provides concessional loan for the infrastructure development in Nepal” (p.5).

Above detail shows that Japan is the main development partners of Nepal. Nepal also makes relationship with Japan as trade and business partner. Sigdel, (2020) highlights that "Nepal’s major exports to Japan include pashmina products, ready-made garments, woolen goods, carpets, handicrafts, Nepali paper and paper products, leather goods, and silverware and ornaments to Japan" (p.8). From Japan, Nepal imports vehicles and spare parts, electronic goods, machinery and equipment, iron and steel products, photographic goods, medical equipment and fabric. Economic survey (2020) notes the situation of trade between Nepal and Japan as:

In the FY 2017/18, Nepal’s export to Japan remained above USD 9.9 million and import above USD 74.2 million. Japan is one of the major source countries of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nepal. The total FDI amount from Japan up to FY 2017/18 was approximately USD 30 million and in the FY 2017/18 alone it remained approx. USD 4.33 million. (p.321)

Nepal- Japan relationship is not only limited to development and trade but it also expands in cultural sectors. Annually thousands of Japanese tourists visit Nepal and exchange cultural and religious belief between each other. Lumbini, the birth place of Gautam Buddha, is the attraction of Japanese tourists. In the year 2018, 29,768 Japanese tourists visited Nepal (Report of Tourism Department, 2020). In the same way, thousands of Nepali nationalities have been living in different cities of Japan. Foreign Ministry of Japan' notes "above 97000 Nepali are living in Japan. Nepali community is the 7th largest foreign communities in Japan" ([http://: www.jica.go.jp](http://www.jica.go.jp)). Exchange at people- to- people level is also one of the driving forces to further strengthening friendly relations.

Major Events in Nepal- Japan Relations

It would not be out of place to present major events between Nepal- Japan relations to understand Japanese co- operation to Nepal. An attempt has made to show these events chronologically.

Table 1 Major Events

Year	Major Events
1990	Nepali- style open garden exhibited during Osaka Expo’90
1991	Japanese, parliamentary Election Observation Mission, led by Keiwa Okuda, president, Japan- Nepal parliamentarians' friendship league, visits Nepal. Finance Minister Ryutaro Mashimoto visits Nepal. Acting president of Nepali Congress Krishna Prasad Bhattarai visited Japan
1994	Inaugural flight by Royal Nepal Airlines between Katmandu and Osaka. Completion of the construction of Udayapur Cement factory, with a Japanese government loan.
1995	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for foreign Affairs Madav Kumar Nepal pays an official visit to Japan. Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited Japan
1996	King Birendra inaugurates the international Buddhist Research centre in Lumbini, constructed by the Reiyukai international
1997	Their Highness Prince and Princess Akishino visited Japan
1998	Former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuwa visits Japan Japanese parliamentary Delegation led by vice speaker of the House of Representations Kozo Watanable visited Nepal. Prime Minister Girja Prasad Koirala pays an official working visit to Japan
1999	Embassy of Japan commemorates the centennial of Nepal- Japan relations

2000	Nepali parliamentary delegation led by Rt. Hon. Tara Nath Ranabhat, speaker of the House of Representatives visited Japan
2001	JILCI (JAAN information, language and culture institute), the autonomous Japanese language institute under JICA was established in Nepal
2002	A portrait of Reverend Ekai Kawaguchi was printed on a postal stamp
2003	Chief Judge Kedar Nath Upadhaya visited Japan
2004	Chief of Army staff Pyarjang Thapa visited Japan
2005	Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka visited Japan
2006	Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Yasuhisa Shiozaki visited Nepal
2007	Senior Vice Minister for Defense Tadahide Kimura Visited Nepal
2008	Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Osamu Uno Visited Nepal
2009	Minister for Finance Dr. Baburam Bhattarai Visited Japan
2010	Vice-President of Nepali Congress Ram Chandra Paudel visited Japan
2011	No important visit occurred
2012	Minister for Foreign Affairs Koichiro Gemba visited Nepal
2013	President Ram Baran Yadav visited Japan for treatment.
2014	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Federal Affairs and Local Development Prakash Man Singh visited Japan.
2015	Minister for Foreign Affairs Mahendra Bahadur Pandey visited Japan
2016	Former DPM and Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa visited Japan
2017	State Minister for Environment of Japan Mr. Tadahiko Ito visited Nepal
2018	Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali visited Japan., Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Hon. Mr. Bhanubhakta Dhakal visited Japan from 8 to 12 October 2018 to attend the 57th session of Asian African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO)
2019	Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Taro Kono visited Nepal.
2020	Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Norihiro Nakayama visited Nepal.

Source: MOFA, 2020

Organization and Agencies for Cooperation

There are many organizations and agencies through which Japan has been assisting to Nepal. Some of them are as described below.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

In Nepal, JICA was established in August 1978. It is an executing organ of government sponsored technical cooperation for developing countries and as agent to administer emigration service. JICA carries out varieties of programs to support national development of the developing countries through such technical cooperation. Technical cooperation is aimed a transfer of technology and knowledge that serve socio- economic development of developing countries. JICA and Japanese volunteers are sent through JOCV, which was established in 1972, the monetary amount of Japanese assistance to Nepal is shown in table- 2.

Table 2 Japanese Technical Assistance to Nepal

(Rs. in million)

Fiscal year	Total technical assistance	Japanese technical assistance	Percentage
2009/10	181.8	66.2	31.3
2010/11	4370.8	1228.2	36.4
2011/12	3356.6	1728.7	28.1
2012/13	3808.9	1531.2	51.1
2013/14	3365.5	1484.2	40.2

2014/15	5983.4	1699.3	44.1
2015/16	3953.3	1387.6	28.4
2016/17	3344.5	1173.9	35.1
2017/18	5107.7	2216.7	43.4
2018/19	5314.2	1865.3	35.1
2019/20	5475.3	21990.1	40.0
2020/021	753.6	354.9	47.1
Total	52731.3	18632.4	

Source: *Various Issues of Japan’s ODA annual report, MoF, Japan*

It is clearly seen that Japanese technical assistance is increasing smoothly except in few years. During the period up to the fiscal year 2020/021, Japanese technical assistance is totaled to Rs. 753.6 million. Japan is cooperating with Nepal through technical assistance annually by supporting the ideas, machinery and money values. JICA has always been supporting and encouraging developing countries like Nepal. In the recent years, JICA has tried to address the development issues of the developing countries through various four approaches; i. regional and country specific approach, ii. project cycle management approach, iii. integrative approach and iv. cooperative approach, (JICA, Bulletin, 2010). Japanese government established Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) in 196. Through the fund, Japanese government provides support to industrial development and economic stability of the developing countries. The fund is considered the bilateral loan on the government level. Nepal has utilized the loan and grant support in Kulekhani hydropower project. Nagdhumga tunnel road, Kathmandu–Bhaktpur road construction, Sindhuli-Kathmandu road and other large and small scale infra structure projects and hydroelectricity projects.

Section- Wise Distribution of Japanese Aid

Since the time of the establishment of diplomatic relationship, Japanese government has been providing support in various sectors including good governance to infra structure development. Sector-wise grand assistance is presented in the following table as:

Table 3 *Sector-wise Japanese Grant Assistance to Nepal (2000- 2020)*

Sectors	Grant Assistance	Percentage
Agriculture, Irrigation & Forestry	66142.4	27.5
Power, Communication & Transport	87719.1	36.4
Social sectors	32183.2	13.3
Debt relief	30044.2	12.4
Other	25095.6	10.4
Total	241184.5	100.0

Source: *Japanese Embassy*

It shows that the Japanese aid to the different sectors. Japanese grant assistance has highly concentrated in Agriculture and transport, power and water supply. Japanese grant assistance is provided to the industrial amount of loans is provided in industry and power sectors. In the industrial sector Rs. 424 million and in power sector Rs. 9993.4 million loans have been provided. The data in the table show that the total amount of grant is less than loan assistance. In total Rs. 7631.4 million appeared as grant assistance and Rs. 14392.6 million appeared as loan assistance. In the period covered by the study, total Japanese assistance to Nepal was Rs. 13339.8 million. Data relief assistance to Nepal is also another remarkable feature of Japanese aid to Nepal. The following table shows the main projects completed with the loan assistance of Japan.

Table 4 Major Project by Japan under Loan Assistance (Rs in million)

Project	Amount in Rs. '000
Kulekhani No.1 Hydropower station project	10224.00
Kulekhani No.1 Hydropower station project Ph 1	108900.00
Kulekhani No.1 Hydropower station project Ph 2	59496.00
Kulekhani No.2 Hydropower station project Ph 1	384091.26
Kulekhani No.2 Hydropower station project Ph 2	268360.00
Udaypur Cement plant project	2753559.0
Kulekhani Disaster prevention project I	539290.00
Kaligandaki A Hydroelectric project	8728656.00
Kulekhani Disaster project II	1797744.00
Nagdhunga Tunnel Road	22000
Kathmandu - Bhaktpur Road	7200
Other miserliness projects	45800
Total	14722532

Ph= phase

Source: JICA office, Nepal

Above table shows situation of Japanese loan assistance that is basically concentrated in the hydropower station projects and Kulekhani disaster prevention project. There is a single industry assisted by the Japanese government under loan assistance to Nepal. This is Udaypur cement plant project. Hydropower station projects occupied 65.16 percent (Rs. 959727.20) of the total amount of project extended under loan assistance of Rs. 14670320.26 to the Nepalese government. Udaypur Cement plant project occupied 18.77 percent (Rs. 2753559.0) of the extended total project loan. Kulekhani disaster prevention project occupied only 15.93 percent (Rs. 2337034.0) of the total project extended loan assistance by Japan.

Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects

Not only the Japanese Government, but also many Japanese Non- Government Organizations (NGOs) and numerous individuals are actively dedicating themselves to help enhance the welfare of the Nepalese people. The Japanese government supports these grassroots activities of both the Japanese and Nepalese NGOs through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project (GGP). Many grass root projects were run in the past through the grants of Japanese aid some of the programs are as follows:

Table 5 Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects to Nepal (2012 to 2022)

FY	No. of projects including other	Total in Yen
2022	4	10,000,000
2021	5	132,875,326
2020	7	58,131,991
2019	6	5,04,42,208
2018	6	1,798,329
2017	8	2,746,956
2016	5	4,334,271
2015	6	23,762,394
2014	7	3,919,65
2013	5	138,990

2012	4	6,723,114
Total	Total	240211371

Source: Nepal Foreignaid Department

A number of Japanese NGOs are actively engaged in diverse areas of development activities. These NGOs have been rendering services to the community people at the grass roots level even in the hilly areas far from the city. The above-mentioned activities have brought the people of both countries closer and have further strengthened friendship and understanding. As a part of Japan’s ODA to Nepal, the government of Japan provides grant assistance for Grass Roots Projects mainly to be implemented by the local government and NGOs, for socio- economic development as grass roots level. The following are the outlines of the projects which were completed and handed over in January and February 2003.

Japanese Aid to Nepal

Nepal has been receiving foreign aid from both the bilateral and multilateral sources. The pattern of foreign aids is different from projects to projects and donor to donor. At present, Japan is on the top position in providing foreign assistance to Nepal. The following Table- 4.5 shows the total amount of Japanese aid from the FY 2012 to FY 2022.

Table 6 Inflow of Total and Japanese Aid in Nepal

Source: i) Various Issues of Economic survey, MoF, Government of Nepal. ii) Various Issues of Japans ODA Annual Report MoFA (2021), JapanAbove table shows the increasing trend

Fiscal year	Total foreign aid	Total Japanese aid (Grant+loan) (00000)	% of Japanese aid to total aid
2012/13	11249.4	6928.3	61.6
2013/14	14289.0	5295.5	37.1
2014/15	15031.9	4994.4	33.2
2015/2016	16457.1	1746.6	10.6
2016/2017	16189.0	2894.5	17.9
2017/18	17523.9	8394.1	47.9
2018/19	18797.4	7090.3	37.7
2019/20	14384.8	5326.2	37.
2020/2021	15885.5	2802.2	17.7
2021/22	18912.4	1494.6	7.9
Total	158720	46966	27.5

of Japanese aid in Nepal. Some of the major projects successfully completed under Japans Aid are Kulekhani hydropower project I and II, Udaypur cement plant, TU teaching hospital, national tuberculosis centre, modernization of Tribhuvan international airport and Gongobu Bus Park. Ongoing projects that are yet to be completed include Kaligandaki- a hydropower, Benepa Sindhuli Bardibas road, Bagmati irrigation project and so on. Japan has also provided loan assistance to Melamchi water supply project, which will help to reduce the problems of water supply in the Katmandu valley. Thus, Japan is very much interested to help by playing an effective role in the grant assistance to the development process of Nepal. Up to now, the government of Japan is providing different types of aids to the different sectors of the Nepalese economy, especially concerning different purposes for the betterment of mass poverty- ridden Nepalese people and for the expansion of stagnant economy like Nepal.

Japanese Loan Assistance to Nepal

Japan had started to provide loan assistance to Nepal since March 1970. At present, Japan is one of the top donors to Nepal and is involved in every important sector of the economy. Japanese loan assistance is a recent phenomenon. Japanese loan assistance is only direct bilateral loan provided by government and it is usually called “Japan’s ODA loan”. This is classified as a form of ODA in accordance with the criteria of Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and it fulfills most of the following prerequisites (APIC, 1989).

- a. This cooperation should be done by official agencies to developing countries.
- b. This cooperation should be administered with the promotion of the economic development and the welfare of developing countries as its main objective.
- c. This cooperation should be confessional in character and contain a grant element of at least 25 percent (Shrestha, 2015).

Japanese loan assistance is comparatively more effective than the total loan assistance received by Nepal. The contribution of Japanese loan assistance is valuable; however, the portion of Japanese loan is high in total loan of the Nepal. The following table shows the situation as:

Table 7 Share of Japanese Loan to Total Loan

Fiscal year	Total foreign loan	Total Japanese loan	%
2012/13	7312.3	6372.5	87.1
2013/14	9463.9	5150.0	54.4
2014/15	9043.6	4462.5	49.3
2015/2016	11054.5	0.0	0.0
2016/2017	11852.4	0.0	0.0
2017/18	11812.2	4364.3	62.3
2018/19	12044.0	3296.4	27.4
2019/20	7698.6	*	*
2020/2021	4546.4	*	*
2021/22	7629.0	*	*
Total	924556	23645	*

Note: * means not available of data

Source: i) Economic Survey ii) Foreign aid division iii) Various issues if Japan’s ODA annual report MOFA (2021), Japan

Above table shows that in the initial years, the loan amount provided by Japan to Nepal was small. It is clear that Japanese loan assistance has occupied an important place in the total loan assistance to Nepal.

Japanese Technical Assistance to Nepal

Technical Cooperation refers to the assistance provided to develop human resources that lay the foundations of developing countries to build their nations. The term “Technical Assistance” is related to the human resource development. It is the fundamental force to drive the country along the path of peace and prosperity. In the context of Nepal, “Human Development” is required for the process of nation building. However, its supply is below what is required in such circumstances, the existing inadequately trained human resources may not be sufficient to meet with the growing challenges for all round development. Foreign countries have been supporting Nepal not only in terms of money but also in the forms of ideas, values, technology and technical machinery. Japanese technical assistance covers a wide area of activities by accepting the students from Nepal as well as by supplying technique and modern equipment in different fields like health, education, agriculture, hydro-power, transportation and communication. The foreign development partners of Nepal are not

only helping through the government agencies but also through the INGOs. It has an important role in the economic and social development of Nepal.

3. Conclusion

Japanese aid plays a great contribution to the development process of Nepal. Japan provides support in all sectors including agriculture, energy and social development. Since the establishment of diplomatic friendship relationship, foreign aid has covered many fields like agriculture, public health, education, transportation, communication, electrification, industrialization, public administration, poverty alleviation, emergency relief as well as family planning and various allied training programs and expert services for socio-economic development in Nepal. Loan, technical assistance and other supports play a great role to uplift the socio-economic status of poor people. During the Maoist civil war, Japanese aid brought positive changes in Nepal by providing basic support to the government. Support providing in hydroelectricity and road construction brought positive impacts on the life of people. Like that, support used in humanitarian sectors help to reduce multiple cycles of poverty and unemployment. As a true friend, Japan is continuously providing support to the development of Nepal.

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