



Road Transportation and Legal Framework in Nepal

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Abstract

This article investigates how road transportation interacts with international legal frameworks, particularly focusing on their impact on the movement of vehicles, goods, and individuals across borders. Utilizing Nepal as a case study, the research examines the nation's road transport systems alongside international legal obligations and treaties that influence landlocked nations. It explores the significance of international agreements such as the Vienna Conventions concerning Road Traffic and Transit, the United Nations' pacts on transport infrastructure, and regional initiatives like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) transport agreements. The analysis further evaluates how Nepal's national transport regulations conform to or differ from these international standards, pinpointing gaps and challenges in legal alignment, infrastructure enhancement, and cross-border connectivity. Attention is directed towards matters of transit rights, foreign investment, safety regulations, and sustainable transportation. Through doctrinal analysis, case studies, and policy assessments, the dissertation offers suggestions for improving Nepal's legal and institutional frameworks to bolster regional integration and facilitate safe, efficient, and lawful road transport in alignment with global standards.

Key words : Road Transportation, International Law, Transit Rights, Landlocked Countries, Nepal, Cross-Border Mobility, Vienna Convention, Transport Infrastructure, Regional Connectivity, SAARC Transport Agreements, Legal Harmonization, Sustainable Transportation, Road Safety, International Conventions, Transport Policy.

1. Introduction

Road transportation plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth and connecting nations, facilitating the movement of individuals and goods. In regions like Nepal, which is geographically landlocked and diverse, road networks serve as essential lifelines for trade, community interaction, and regional development. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, traffic congestion, road accidents, and regulatory issues have hindered the effective functioning of the road transport system. With the global dimensions of trade and transport, road transportation is increasingly influenced by international treaties and regulations.

International legal frameworks establish guidelines for cross-border transit rights, safety standards, environmental concerns, and cooperation among neighboring countries. Despite the existence of national legislation and global agreements, there remain gaps in the effective management of road transportation in Nepal, especially in terms of compliance with international transit protocols and road safety regulations. This research aims to explore the intersection of road transport networks and international regulations, assessing their impact on national transport policies, infrastructure development, and cross-border relations. The background emphasizes the necessity of incorporating international legal considerations into national road transport management to improve mobility, safety, and sustainable progress. This study will deliver a thorough examination of existing challenges, legal structures, and potential avenues for enhancing Nepal's road transport sector in light of international law.

1.1 Background

Nepal's diverse topography and challenging terrain have a big impact on the best ways to get around. The two primary modes of transportation for both passengers and goods are rail and road. Each mode has advantages and disadvantages that are influenced by economic, infrastructure, and topography. Nepal's hilly geography has a significant impact on its transportation system, which presents unique challenges that can occasionally prevent the development of a cohesive transportation system. Nepal has recently made great progress in improving its infrastructure and optimizing its transportation systems in spite of these geographical challenges. Since road transportation is the primary means of transportation in Nepal, it plays a significant role in the country's economy. This form of transportation involves moving people and goods from one location to another using trucks, buses, motorbikes, and other motor vehicles. The hilly geography of Nepal makes infrastructure expansion challenging. In 2024, Hada and Khadka

1.2 Objective of paper

The broad objective of this study is to analyze the development of Nepal's road transportation system and assess the effectiveness and challenges of applying international road traffic laws in the country.

The specific objectives of the study were:

To analyze the International Legal framework role and impact of international laws, treaties, and agreements on Nepal's road transportation system.

2. Literature Review

Adhikari (2020), in his article "Road Transport Governance in Nepal: Institutional Gaps and Legal Overlaps," provides a critical analysis of the fragmented authority among key institutions involved in Nepal's road transport sector. The study identifies overlapping responsibilities between the Department of Transport Management, the Traffic Police, and local governments as major obstacles to the effective implementation of transport laws and policies.

This institutional ambiguity, according to Adhikari, leads to inefficiency, lack of accountability, and weak enforcement. The paper emphasizes the need to harmonize the roles of concerned agencies and to revise the existing legal framework in alignment with international norms to improve governance and regulatory outcomes in the road transport system of Nepal.

Shrestha (2018), in the Kathmandu School of Law Review, examines the extent to which Nepal's transport legislation aligns with international legal frameworks, particularly the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic. The study critiques the Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Act of Nepal, identifying several inconsistencies in areas such as the mutual recognition of driving licenses, inadequate vehicle safety standards, and weak provisions for cross-border transport facilitation. The paper emphasizes the need for legal reforms to bring Nepal's domestic transport laws into greater harmony with its international obligations, especially in the context of increasing regional mobility and trade.

K.C. (2017), writing in the Tribhuvan University Law Journal, presents a doctrinal analysis of the Motor Vehicles and Transport Management Act, 2049 (1993), identifying key legal deficiencies and outdated provisions. The study highlights ambiguities in the legislative text, the absence of specific regulations for international freight transport, and weak safety enforcement mechanisms. Emphasizing the growing importance of regional trade and mobility, K.C. advocates for comprehensive legal reforms to align Nepal's transport law with international standards and to support effective regional trade facilitation. The article provides a foundational critique of Nepal's transport governance framework.

3.3. National and International Laws adopted by Nepal on Road Transportation

1. Motor Vehicles and Transport Management Act, 2049 (1993)

The Motor Vehicles and Transport Management Act of 2049 (1993) serves as the main national legislation regulating road transport in Nepal. It creates the legal structure for vehicle registration, driver licensing, road safety regulations, and the management of transport services. The purpose of the Act is to promote safe, efficient, and regulated road transportation by establishing standards for vehicle operation, driver qualifications, and traffic regulations. Additionally, it gives government authorities the power to enforce traffic laws and foster sustainable transport development. This Act is essential to Nepal's transport governance, aiding national initiatives to enhance road safety and infrastructure while adhering to international transport standards. (Motor Vehicles and Transport Management Act, 2049 [1993])¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Government of Nepal. (1993). *Motor Vehicles and Transport Management Act, 2049 (1993)*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.

2. Vehicles Registration Plates of Nepal, 2017

In 2017, Nepal introduced a standardized embossed number plate system for vehicle registration, replacing the earlier handwritten plates that used Devanagari script. This new system, which began implementation in mid-July 2020, incorporates elements such as the state code, vehicle category, age identifier code, and a distinct vehicle number. The plates are distinguished by color based on the type of vehicle: white with black lettering for private vehicles, yellow with black for public or commercial vehicles, white with red for government vehicles, and white with blue for diplomatic vehicles. This modernization initiative aims to improve vehicle identification, curb fraud, and bring Nepal's vehicle registration methods in line with international standards.¹²⁹

3. Transport Management Directives 2060

The government has mandated 'registration' for individuals seeking new route permits or changes to existing routes in an effort to eradicate the syndicate system within the public transportation sector. The Department of Transport Management (DoTM) has implemented this new procedure following revisions to the Transport Management Directives-2060. In the past, transportation groups and committees associated with the Federation of Nepalese National Transport Entrepreneurs (FNNT) were able to obtain route permits from district administrative offices. According to the new regulations, public transport providers must now officially register with the Company Registrar Office.¹³⁰

4. Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Regulation, 1997

The Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Regulation of 1997 establishes comprehensive rules and processes for executing the provisions of the Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Act of 1993. It specifies the standards for vehicle operations, requirements for licensing, traffic control measures, and mechanisms for enforcement. This regulation is vital for putting road transport policies into action in Nepal, with the goal of improving safety, efficiency, and adherence to regulations in the transport industry.¹³¹

5. Public Road Act, 1975

The Public Road Act of 1975 serves as an essential law regulating the building, upkeep, and administration of public roads in Nepal. It establishes the duties of government entities and local governments in the advancement and maintenance of road infrastructure, with the goal of guaranteeing safe and efficient transportation. This Act bolsters the nation's initiatives to extend its road network, improve connectivity, and foster regional growth.¹³²

¹²⁹ Government of Nepal. (2017). *Vehicles Registration Plates of Nepal, 2017*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.

¹³⁰ Department of Transport Management, *Transport Management Directives, 2060* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 2003 [2060 B.S.]).

¹³¹ Government of Nepal. (1997). *Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Regulation, 1997*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.

¹³² Government of Nepal, *Public Road Act, 1975* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 1975).

6. Road Board Act, 2002

The Road Board Act of 2002 creates the Road Board as a governing entity tasked with the planning, financing, and upkeep of road infrastructure in Nepal. The purpose of this Act is to guarantee sustainable funding methods for road development, enhance road quality, and encourage efficient management of road assets. By means of this legislation, Nepal aims to improve the effectiveness of its road network and facilitate wider economic growth and connectivity.¹³³

7 Local Self-Governance Act, 1999

The Local Self-Governance Act, enacted in 1999, grants local governing bodies in Nepal, including municipalities and rural municipalities, the autonomy to handle local matters independently, such as the development and upkeep of infrastructure like roads and transport services. This legislation promotes decentralization of power, allowing local governments to strategize, allocate budgets, and carry out road construction and transport management that meet the specific needs of their communities. By fostering local involvement and accountability, the Act significantly contributes to enhancing regional connectivity and improving road transportation services throughout Nepal.¹³⁴

8. Local Self Governance Rules, 1999

The Local Self-Governance Rules of 1999 lay out comprehensive guidelines and processes for carrying out the stipulations of the Local Self-Governance Act from the same year. These regulations define the duties and functions of local bodies in overseeing local infrastructure, which encompasses road upkeep, transportation services, and community development initiatives. By implementing the Act, these Rules facilitate decentralized governance and enable local authorities to manage and enhance local road transportation systems effectively.¹³⁵

9. The Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), of 1975

Nepal is a participant in the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), established in 1975. The country joined the TIR Convention in 2017, making it a contracting party. This convention holds particular significance for Nepal, a landlocked nation, as it streamlines the transit of goods across borders by simplifying customs processes through TIR Carnets. By joining the TIR system, Nepal seeks to minimize delays and reduce expenses associated with cross-border road freight, thereby improving trade efficiency with neighboring nations such as India and China. The TIR Convention offers a simplified customs transit system that facilitates the international transportation of goods by road. The TIR Convention has gained acceptance as a global standard, fostering secure and efficient cross-border road transportation.¹³⁶

¹³³ Government of Nepal, *Road Board Act, 2002* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 2002).

¹³⁴ Government of Nepal, *Local Self-Governance Act, 1999* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 1999).

¹³⁵ Government of Nepal, *Local Self-Governance Rules, 1999* (Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, 1999).

¹³⁶ United Nations, *Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention)*, 1975, accession by Nepal 2017.

10. The Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, 1954.

Nepal is a participant in the Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954), having joined the agreement on 21 September 1960. This global convention enables the duty-free temporary importation of personal vehicles, primarily intended for tourists and individuals on brief visits, through standardized customs procedures. As a signatory, Nepal permits foreign private vehicles to enter the country for a limited duration, usually up to 30 days each year, with nominal daily fees such as NPR 1,000 for cars and NPR 200 for motorcycles. If a vehicle leaves Nepal on the same day, customs duties are waived, provided that the required documentation is completed at border checkpoints. By being a party to this convention, Nepal aligns its customs regulations with international norms, thus promoting tourism, cross-border movement, and temporary trade-related activities. Although the practical application of this convention may be somewhat limited, it establishes a legal framework for reciprocal agreements with other contracting nations and aids Nepal in its efforts to streamline border transit regulations.¹³⁷

11. Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997)

Nepal is not a signatory to the Agreement on the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of Such Inspections (1997). This treaty from the United Nations aims to create standardized regulations for regular vehicle inspections and encourage mutual acknowledgment of inspection results among member states to promote road safety and ensure environmental compliance. Because Nepal has not ratified this treaty, it does not implement these uniform inspection protocols or gain from the mutual recognition of vehicle inspections with other nations. Joining this agreement could aid Nepal in enhancing its vehicle inspection standards, improving environmental safeguards, and integrating more fully into global road transport systems, thereby benefiting sectors like tourism, logistics, and cross-border trade.¹³⁸

12. Vienna Program of Action for Land Locked Developing Countries for the Decade (VPoA), 2014-2024.

Nepal has embraced the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 (VPoA). As a participant in the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Nepal has been actively involved in both the creation and execution of

¹³⁷ United Nations, *Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, 1954*, accession by Nepal 21 September 1960.

¹³⁸ United Nations, *Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections, 1997*.

the VPoA, which was established at the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Vienna in November 2014. The VPoA sets forth specific priorities and actions aimed at tackling the distinct challenges confronted by LLDCs, with the goal of fostering sustainable development and improving their integration into the global economy. Nepal has engaged in numerous initiatives and partnerships within the VPoA framework, concentrating on areas such as transit policy, infrastructure growth, trade facilitation, and regional collaboration. Furthermore, Nepal's Permanent Representative to the United Nations has highlighted the significance of the VPoA in ensuring the comprehensive, timely, and effective execution of measures designed to assist LLDCs.¹³⁹

13. Convention on Transit Trade of Land-Locked States, 1965

Nepal is a signatory to the Convention on Transit Trade of Land-Locked States (1965), having signed it on July 8, 1965, and ratified it on August 22, 1966. This treaty, established by the United Nations, aims to promote the unrestricted and free transit of goods for landlocked nations by defining clear rights and responsibilities for both landlocked and transit countries. For Nepal, being a landlocked country, its involvement in this convention is essential for gaining access to seaports and international trade routes. The convention guarantees key principles such as non-discrimination based on the origin or destination of shipments, exemption from customs duties on goods while in transit, and the provision of sufficient transportation facilities. By ratifying this convention, Nepal emphasizes its dedication to addressing the challenges that stem from its landlocked status and facilitates smoother international trade, which is vital for its economic growth and integration into the global economy.¹⁴⁰

4.4. Legal Precedent related to Road Transportation in Nepal

1. Nepal Transit Case (India-Nepal Bilateral Agreement Dispute – not formal court case but key legal example)

The Nepal Transit Case, stemming from disagreements regarding the India-Nepal bilateral transit agreements, illustrates the challenges of managing cross-border road transport between adjacent nations. Even though it wasn't an official court case, the dispute underscored significant legal and diplomatic issues regarding transit rights, customs processes, and the efficient transportation of goods through Indian territory to and from Nepal, which is landlocked. Nepal's dependency on India for seaport access has rendered these transit agreements essential for its trade and economic growth. The situation highlighted the necessity for explicit, enforceable legal structures to regulate transit agreements, minimize administrative hurdles, and safeguard Nepal's sovereignty.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ United Nations, *Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024* (adopted at the Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, Vienna, 2014).

¹⁴⁰ United Nations, *Convention on Transit Trade of Land-Locked States, 1965* (signed 8 July 1965; ratified by Nepal 22 August 1966).

¹⁴¹ *Nepal's Transit Through India: An Assessment*, Bimal Taneja, ResearchGate, 2015.

2. Ride-Sharing Legality & Regulatory Framework (Pathao/Tootle, 2025)

In 2024, Nepal's Supreme Court rendered a significant decision that established ride-sharing services like Pathao and Tootle's place under national transportation legislation, addressing the growing popularity and legal ambiguity surrounding these services. Although the Court recognized ride-sharing services as legitimate public transportation providers, it emphasized the necessity of strict regulation to ensure passenger safety, uphold driver rights, and adhere to traffic laws. Within six months, the government was ordered by the verdict to set precise rules pertaining to insurance, vehicle requirements, licensing, and fare regulation. This decision was a significant step in integrating digital mobility services into Nepal's traditional transportation network while maintaining a balance between consumer protection, regulatory oversight, and technical advancement.¹⁴²

3. Provincial Ride-Hailing Regulation Verdict (Gandaki Province, June 2025)

A significant decision on the regulation of ride-hailing services in Gandaki Province was rendered by the Kaski District Court in June 2025. The Court upheld the Gandaki Province Ride-Hailing (Regulation and Management) Rules, 2025, finding that federal powers cannot exceed provincial authority over transportation regulation. This decision emphasized the value of ongoing public service delivery and supported the idea of regional self-governance in transportation administration. By upholding provincial authority and balancing the rights of local governance with the need for effective ride-hailing service administration, the decision set a model for decentralized control of innovative transportation services..¹⁴³

4. Ban on Larger Vehicles on BP Highway (2025 Writ)

In 2025, the Nepalese government released a regulation limiting the movement of larger and heavy vehicles on the BP Highway due to safety issues stemming from its narrow and twisting landscape. This choice resulted in a writ petition submitted by the Forum for Protection of Consumer Rights Nepal to the Supreme Court, contesting the prohibition and urging a reevaluation of the technical assessments that justified the limitations. The petitioners requested the possible removal of these restrictions, contending that the prohibition negatively impacted trade and transport effectiveness. On June 20, 2025, the Supreme Court was hearing the case, emphasizing the continuing conflict between road safety concerns and economic interests in Nepal's transportation industry.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Supreme Court of Nepal, *Ruling on the Legality and Regulation of Ride-Sharing Services (Pathao and Tootle)*, 2024; see also Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, *Ride-Sharing Regulatory Framework Guidelines*, 2025.

¹⁴³ Kaski District Court, *Verdict on the Enforcement of Gandaki Province Ride-Hailing (Regulation and Management) Rules, 2025*, June 2025.

¹⁴⁴ Supreme Court of Nepal, *Writ Petition Concerning Restrictions on Heavy Vehicles on BP Highway*, hearing 20 June 2025.

5. Deepak Tamang Case (Bidur, Nuwakot, 2023 Supreme Court ruling)

In the 2023 case of Deepak Tamang from Bidur, Nuwakot, the Supreme Court of Nepal tackled the matter of a deadly accident caused by an unlicensed two-wheeler operator. On March 2, 2023, the Court decided that operating a two-wheeler without a license does not necessarily constitute negligence, especially in cases where the death was entirely accidental. The ruling differentiated between incidents with motorcycles and cars, highlighting the necessity for a detailed legal perspective. The Court issued a six-month prison term for the crime of unlicensed driving, but chose not to impose any fine, acknowledging the factors related to the accident.¹⁴⁵

5. Nepal needs to adopt International Law for Road Transportation

Nepal should evaluate the adoption of the following significant international road transportation laws and agreements to enhance its legal framework, boost safety, foster regional connectivity, and align with worldwide standards:

1. Vienna Convention on Road Traffic (1968)

Nepal should consider ratifying the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic (1968) to update its legal and institutional framework for road transport and ensure compliance with international standards. The aim is to establish consistent regulations for international road traffic, covering driving practices, vehicle registration, and driver licensing. The Convention offers a thorough set of rules that regulate international road traffic, including standardized driving norms, licensing procedures, vehicle registration, and mutual acknowledgment of documents among participating countries. For a landlocked and transit-reliant nation like Nepal, such alignment is crucial for enhancing cross-border trade and mobility, particularly with neighboring countries that are already members of the convention.¹⁴⁶

2. Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968)

Nepal ought to embrace the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968) to enhance road safety, ensure consistency in traffic management, and align with global standards, especially as the nation seeks to bolster regional connectivity and accommodate increasing numbers of domestic and international road users. It addresses the standardization of road signs, signals, and markings to maintain uniformity across nations. At present, Nepal's road signs and traffic signals lack full standardization, leading to potential confusion for local motorists and international visitors alike. The Vienna Convention offers a consistent system of road signs, signals, and markings that are universally acknowledged by the countries that have ratified the agreement. By adopting this Convention, Nepal can guarantee that all road users, particularly foreign drivers, freight transporters, and tourists, can easily comprehend and navigate its roadways.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Supreme Court of Nepal, *Deepak Tamang Case, Bidur, Nuwakot*, ruling 2 March 2023.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations, *Vienna Convention on Road Traffic*, 1968.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, *Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals*, 1968.

3. Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), 1956

Nepal should subscribe to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), 1956, to enhance the effectiveness, reliability, and legal security of cross-border goods transport, which is a crucial requirement for a landlocked nation that relies heavily on transit trade. For Nepal, embracing this convention would provide increased legal clarity and transparency within its road freight industry, diminishing disputes and delays that currently occur due to ambiguous liability or inconsistent documentation practices.¹⁴⁸

4. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), 1975

Nepal ought to implement the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) from 1975 to improve the effectiveness, security, and cost-efficiency of its international road freight transit, especially as a landlocked nation that heavily depends on overland trade routes through India and China. The TIR Convention creates a worldwide customs transit framework that permits goods to move across various international borders with minimal customs intervention using a single internationally accepted customs document known as the TIR Carnet.¹⁴⁹

5. Asian Highway Agreement (2003)

Nepal ought to formally embrace the Asian Highway Agreement (2003), also referred to as the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, to strengthen regional connectivity, enhance trade facilitation, and better integrate into the larger Asian transport infrastructure system. As a landlocked nation, Nepal's economic progress significantly relies on having efficient and dependable overland routes for imports and exports. The Asian Highway Agreement provides a coordinated framework for establishing an international road network across Asia and connecting it with Europe. By signing this agreement, Nepal stands to gain from standardized technical specifications, collaborative frameworks, and international backing for the enhancement of crucial highway routes traversing its land, such as Asian Highway routes AH2, AH42, and AH57.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ United Nations, *Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), 1956*.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations, *Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), 1975*, accession by Nepal 2017.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), *Asian Highway Agreement, 2003* (also known as the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network).

6. Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions (1958)

Nepal should embrace the Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment, and Parts (1958), commonly known as the 1958 Agreement, to enhance its vehicle standards, promote road safety, and comply with international automotive regulations. By adopting it, Nepal would gain from globally accepted vehicle and component standards, facilitating the import and operation of safer, more efficient, and environmentally friendly vehicles. This is especially critical in Nepal, where many second-hand and outdated vehicles are still in use, contributing to traffic incidents and air pollution.¹⁵¹

7. Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), 1957

Nepal needs to implement the Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), 1957, to guarantee the safe, secure, and environmentally conscious transportation of hazardous materials both domestically and across its borders. With the rising transportation of chemicals, fuels, and other dangerous goods that are vital for sectors such as industry, healthcare, and agriculture, it is essential to comply with ADR standards to safeguard public health, road users, and the environment. The ADR establishes comprehensive regulations concerning the classification, packaging, labeling, handling, and transport conditions for hazardous materials, effectively minimizing risks associated with accidents, spills, and exposure. For Nepal, which contends with difficult road conditions and infrastructure challenges, adherence to these international safety standards can greatly lower the chances of road incidents involving hazardous shipments that could negatively impact communities and ecosystems.¹⁵²

8. Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs (ATP), 1970

Nepal should implement the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), 1970 to enhance the quality, safety, and dependability of transporting perishable items, which are crucial for the nation's food security, agricultural exports, and public health. The ATP Agreement establishes global benchmarks for temperature control, insulation, and equipment standards necessary for the road transport of perishable foods such as fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meats. By committing to this agreement, Nepal can guarantee that perishable goods maintain their quality and safety during transportation, thereby decreasing spoilage and preventing food borne illnesses.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ United Nations, *Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment, and Parts (1958 Agreement)*.

¹⁵² United Nations, *Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), 1957*.

¹⁵³ United Nations, *Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), 1970*.

9. Convention on Transit Trade of Landlocked States (1965)

Nepal ought to endorse the Convention on Transit Trade of Landlocked States (1965) since, being a landlocked nation, it relies significantly on the transit facilities and support of neighboring countries to reach global markets. This Convention establishes a definitive legal framework that ensures landlocked countries like Nepal have the right to free and efficient transit of goods through transit nations to and from seaports. By ratifying this Convention, Nepal would bolster its legal position in negotiations to secure uninterrupted transit rights, minimizing the chances of arbitrary restrictions, delays, or blockades that could severely affect its economy. Additionally, it would streamline customs procedures and create standardized transit regulations in collaboration with neighboring countries such as India and China.¹⁵⁴

10. Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (2014–2024)

Nepal ought to embrace the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) 2014–2024, as it offers a thorough, internationally recognized framework designed to tackle the distinct challenges that landlocked nations like Nepal encounter. The Programme aims to enhance transit connectivity, facilitate trade, develop infrastructure, and promote economic diversification all essential components for the sustainable development of Nepal. By aligning itself with this Programme, Nepal can benefit from technical support, initiatives for capacity building, and financial resources.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

In conclusion, it has investigated the complex relationship between Nepal's road transport sector and its involvement with international legal frameworks. As a developing and landlocked nation, Nepal depends significantly on an effective, secure, and interconnected road transportation system to facilitate economic growth, social inclusion, and regional integration. The analysis indicates that although Nepal has made considerable progress in expanding its road network, it continues to encounter significant challenges, such as poor infrastructure quality, ineffective enforcement of road safety regulations, insufficient institutional coordination, and limited adherence to global transport standards. From an international legal standpoint, The research findings indicate that the lack of alignment between national laws and international standards, along with inadequate institutional capabilities and weak political commitment, has hampered Nepal's capacity to reap the full benefits of international legal instruments. Moreover, Nepal's collaboration with neighboring nations on cross-border transportation matters is lacking a solid legal and regulatory framework, which affects regional trade facilitation and connectivity. To tackle these issues, it is crucial for Nepal to enhance its legal and policy

¹⁵⁴ United Nations, *Convention on Transit Trade of Landlocked States, 1965* (signed 8 July 1965; ratified by Nepal 22 August 1966).

¹⁵⁵ United Nations, *Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), 2014–2024* (adopted at the Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, Vienna, 2014).

frameworks in accordance with global best practices. This involves revising national road transport legislation, ensuring adherence to UN conventions, boosting regional collaboration, and encouraging stakeholder engagement, including civil society, local governments, and the transport sector. This study adds to the existing knowledge by delivering a legal and policy-focused evaluation of Nepal's road transportation system within the framework of international law. It underscores the immediate need for legal reform, institutional enhancement, and international collaboration to build a sustainable, safe, and integrated road transport system. Ultimately, aligning Nepal's transportation infrastructure and governance with international legal standards will not only enhance domestic mobility and safety but also promote regional trade, diplomacy, and economic progress.

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