IMPACT OF JAPANESE FOREIGN AID: AN ANALYSIS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NEPAL

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Abstract

The role of foreign aid in economic development remains debatable in economic literature. Some studies empirically proved its positive impact on economic growth, while some studies emphasized its undesirable effects. In Nepal, several economists have tried to find out the non-optimal utilization of foreign aid in the economic development of Nepal. The focus of the study is an analytical component of the impact of Japanese support and its role on the economic development of Nepal. Recently, the government's development slogan 'Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali' would definitely positive with the proper use of Japanese aid on the economic development of Nepal. The goal of this study is to analyze the impact of Japanese help on the overall economic development of Nepal. The methodological tool has been totally based on secondary data and verified quantitatively with the statistical test of significance. The result of the study has been positively analyzed. This research article concludes that the impact of Japanese aid in the economic development of Nepal, which would be definitely constructive for the economic growth of Nepal.

Keywords: Foreign aid, debatable concept, optimal utilization, positive impact, economic goal, economic development. **JEL Codes:** F 35, F 63.

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1. Introduction

Foreign aid is money, capital, or technologies that one country voluntarily transfers to another, taking the form of a gift, a grant, or a loan. Many countries in the world accept foreign assistance and get different benefits. Foreign aid has been given different meanings by different schools of thought concerning its structure, its factors such as interest rate determination, repayment period, and other modalities.

Foreign aid is concerned with the economic and social progress of the country. The key purpose of aid to developing countries is to accelerate their pace of economic development up to a point where a satisfactory rate of growth can be achieved on a self- sustaining base. The function of aid for a development program is not directly to improve the standard of living in the recipient countries but to impart them to transition from economic stagnation to self- sustaining economic growth. From the economic history of various countries, it may be envisaged that almost every advanced state of the modern world had to rely on foreign aid for upgrading the pace of economic development.

Domestic resources are not sufficient to meet the financial requirements of economic development in developing countries like Nepal. The present level of capital formation of these countries is too low. Any substantial increase in saving is not possible due to the extremely stumpy level of income and widespread poverty. Public borrowing and taxation have got their limitations. Deficit financing is also discarded because of its inflationary impact on the economy. At this juncture, the only alternative to pull the economy remains foreign aid. Income saving and investment of the developing countries are too low. Without increasing the rate of these three vital components, no countries can achieve stable growth. The overall aid of foreign aid is not to equalize income in different countries but to provide every country with an opportunity to achieve steady growth. That aid should not be discontinued when a certain income level is reached in developing countries but not only after those countries can mobilize a level of capital formation adequate for self-sustaining growth. Thus, foreign aid is advantageous for the acceleration of growth mechanisms in these underdeveloped countries.

Until 1951, Nepal was under the feudalistic, exploitative regime that kept the country isolated from external influences, efforts to modernize the country started only after the expulsion of the Rana Regime. British technical experts in hydropower were Nepal's first experienced in foreign aid. United States' (US) assistance in agriculture, education, health, and transport was another main area. India became another major donor country and showed a keen interest in assisting Nepal. Nepal obtained many more opportunities to have aid in later years form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Japan, China, the United Kingdom (UK), France, Germany, Canada, etc. to contribute considerably in Nepal. After the late 1970s, Nepal has been obtaining foreign aid from other bilateral donors and multilateral agencies.

Japan is one of the developed courtiers in the world. Nepal receives much aid from outside, and one major donor is Japan. Japan is also interested inflowing the assistance an overall development to Nepal. Nepal and Japan established their friendly diplomatic relationship in 1956, and the respective embassy was opened in Tokyo and Katmandu. In 1970, Nepal-Japan has established the Nepal Japan Friendship and Cultural Association (NJFCA). Japan provides official development assistance to ensure the efficient and fair distribution of resources and good governance in Nepal. Nepal has been obtaining Japanese aid in the

financial as well as technical terms. Japanese aid comes for the construction of many projects for the development proposes on the various sector of the economy to Nepal and to enhance the relationship between Nepal and Japan. Japan is one of the key source countries of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nepal. The total FDI amount from Japan up to FY 2017/18 was approximately \$ 30 million, and in the FY 2017/18 alone, it remained almost \$ 4.33 million (Economic Survey, 2018/19). Therefore, we can certainly see among the bilateral donors from Asia, Japan has emerged as a main development partner of Nepal.

The question of foreign aid has been a subject of debate and discussion among academics, policymakers, and intelligence. Opinions have differed. The relation between foreign aid and economic development is far from being straight. Many fell that there is no escape from foreign assistance for a developing country, which suffers from a chronic shortage of resources if it wants to achieve a significant level of development.

Japanese Agencies Assisting of Nepal:

- i) Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA): In Nepal, JICA was established in August 1970. It executes government-sponsored technical cooperation for developing countries and as the agent to administer emigration service. After the establishing JICA in 1970, Japan is mainly providing technical assistance to Nepal through its executing organ and effective organization.
- ii) Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV): JOCV was established in Nepal in 1970 as the eleventh host country. Over the years, JOCV has played an active role as a partner in Nepal's socio-economic development process, which can be the main reason for the increasing demand for Japanese volunteers year by year. The office of JOCV in Nepal was amalgamated into the roof in 1983.
- iii) Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF): Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) was established in 1961 and is responsible for providing yen loans in public cooperation. The objective of OECF is to contribute to the industrial development and economic stability of the developing countries. The fund is considered with a bilateral loan on the government level.
- iv) Export-Import Bank of Japan (EIBJ): EIBJ was established in 1951 in Japan, which a public cooperation oriented bank. The bank extends loans with a grant element to less than one percent to a foreign government. The objective of the bank is to promote economic exchange between Japan and other countries. It assists both developing and developed countries for the economic cooperation only parts of business undertaken by the bank.
- v) Scholarship Program: The government of Japan has provided scholarship programs to Nepali students for education in Japan. The government of Japan provides Monkukagasho scholarships to students from across the world every year. More than 100 Nepalese students have already received this kind of scholarship and pursued their higher studies in Japan, and they are now contributing to the task of nation-building in Nepal.
- vi) Other Organizations: Besides JICA, OECF, EIBJ, there are also other organizations there are namely; The Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation

(OFCF), Japan Overseas Development Cooperation (JODC), and the Metal Mining Agency of Japan (MMAJ). There are also some private organizations, which are the Association for Promotion of Industrial Cooperation (APIC), International Development Centre of Japan (IDCJ), Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS), and Internal Management Association of Japan (IMAJ), etc.

Japanese Financial Aid to Nepal

Nepal has been receiving foreign aid from both the bilateral and multilateral sources. Present, Japan is in the top position in providing foreign assistance to Nepal. ANNEX-1 shows that the increasing trend of Japanese aid inflow in Nepal, leaving apart some fluctuation. Total Japanese aid to Nepal was Rs. 231.8 million in FY 1984/85 and moved up to Rs. 6928.3 million in FY 1994/95, Rs. 4146.1 million in FY 2004/05, Rs. 4077.1 million in FY 2014/15 and Rs. 10834.5 million in FY 2017/18. During the period (FY 1984/85 to 2017/18), it is calculated that the total Japanese aid inflow is 137562.5 million of total aid to Nepal during that year. During 34 years from FY 1984/85 to 2017/18, the overall Japanese foreign aid to Nepal of average is 4045.957. During the study period of FY 1984/85 to 2017/18, Japanese support covered the average percent from full external assistance received by Nepal is 13.80 with these periods.

Some of the major projects completed during these periods 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 completed include Kaligandaki 'A' Hydropower, Benepa Sindhuli Bardibas Road, Bagmati Irrigation Project, Tinkune Kathmandu to Bhaktapur Suryabinayak Road, and so on. Japan has also provided loan assistance to the Melamchi Water Supply Project, which will reduce the problems of water supply in the Katmandu valley.

- i) Grant Assistance to Nepal: In the phase of thirty-four years, out of total aid inflow in Nepal is Rs. 996594.7 million aids is a foremost component. It took a big area in the platform of foreign aid. The ANNEX-1 shows that the total amount of Japanese grants assistance to Nepal is 137562.5 million from 1984/85 to 2017/18, which 12.79 percent out of the total external funding. The data reflects that in FY 1984/85, Nepal received Rs. 68.1 million grant assistance from Japan sharing out of full foreign grant assistance, which moved up to Rs. 5326.3 million in FY 2001/02 and Rs. 6241.01 million in 2017/18, covering 49.02 percent of total grant inflow in Nepal, which was the maximum share of Japanese grant to total grant.
- ii) Loan Assistance to Nepal: Japan started to provide loan assistance to Nepal in March 1970. At present, Japan is one of the top donors to Nepal is involved in every vital sector of the economy.

Japanese loan assistance is a recent phenomenon. Japanese loan assistance is only a direct bilateral loan provided by the government, and it is usually called Japan's Official Development Assistant (ODA) loan. ODA loan is classified as a form of ODA under the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and it fulfills most of the following prerequisites (APIC, 1989).

Now we can analyze the Japanese loan assistance comparatively with the total loan assistance received by Nepal. In other words, what kind of contribution has been made in the total aid of Japanese assist in a certain period.

The data simply shows the Japanese loan assistance and its percentage share in the total loan assistance received by Nepal within the period of FY 1984/85 to FY 2017/18. Data shows that in the initial years, the loan amount provided by Japan to Nepal was small. In FY 1984/85, Japan provides Rs. 163.7 million loan assistance, which was 9.3 percent of the total foreign loan of Rs. 1753.0 million. There was no loan from the FY 1997/98 to FY 1998/99. In FY 1994/95, Japan provided Rs. 6372.5 million loan assistance, which was 87.1 percent of the total foreign loan of Rs. 7312.3 million. From FY 1990/91 to FY 2017/18, overall Japanese loan assistance is Rs. 63701.5 million, which 18.31 percent of the aggregate loans help during the last 34 years. It is thus clear that Japanese loan assistance has occupied an important place in the total loan assistance to Nepal (Economic Survey, various issues).

iii) Technical Assistance to Nepal: The term Technical Assistance is related to human resource development. It is the fundamental force to drive the country along the path of peace and prosperity. Japanese technical assistance covers a wide area of activities, from accepting the students from Nepal and the supply of techniques and modern equipment in different fields like health, education, agriculture, hydropower, transportation, and communication. The foreign development partners of Nepal are not only helping through the government agencies but also through the International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). It has a significant role in the economic and social development of Nepal.

2. Methodology

The study is based on secondary data, and no further attempt is made to verify the quality of published data. The coverage of the research of 37 years is FY 1984/85 to 2017/18. This study will be covered to the foreign aid given as loans, grants, and technical assistance. Private foreign investment and exchange gaps will not be taken into consideration.

This study is based on secondary data obtained from various publications of the National Planning Commission (NPC), Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Embassy of Japan, etc. To achieve the goals of the study, books, magazines, newspapers, and journals have been studied. The required data are collected from various issues of the economic survey, budget speech, and several plans of Nepal.

The article of the study is descriptive. It is designed to describe the increasing volume of Japanese aid inflow and GDP growth in Nepal. It focuses the on-trend, magnitude, structure, impact, and role of Japanese aid in Nepal. The descriptive, quantitative, and analytical research tools are used for the study.

i) Research equations:

$$Y_t = a + bj_t$$
....(i)

$$Y_t = a_0 + a_1 j_t + a_2 j_{t-1} + a_3 j_{t-2} + a_4 j_{t-3} \dots (ii)$$

Where, Y_t = GDP at time periods, j_t , j_{t-1} , j_{t-2} and j_{t-3} =Japanese aid at different time periods a_0 , a_1 , a_2 , a_3 and a_4 = Regression parameters

Statistical Test of Significance: Coefficient of Determination [R²]:
 Parameter Estimates (T-test): Parameter Estimates (F-test): Parameter Estimates (D-W test):

3. Objectives and literatures

The objective of this study is to analyze trends, patterns, and the effectiveness of Japanese aid in the economic development of Nepal. The goal is to analyze the impact of Japanese assistance on the overall economic development of Nepal.

The related literature is based on the research; there have been several studies in knowing the impact of foreign aid inflow in the economic development of developing countries like Nepal. Similarly, in the areas of foreign aids, these are several booklets, journals, and articles to review of the literature.

The role of foreign economic assistance in economic development and growth remains contentious in economic literature. Some studies proved its positive impact on the economic development empirically, while some studies highlighted its undesirable effects as Chenery and Strout and Chenery (1966) concluded, based on empirical evidence from least developed countries (LDCs), that foreign capital has a positive effect on economic growth. Afterward, some other studies also argued that foreign economic assistance stimulates economic growth. However, some other economists like Leff (1969) and Griffin and Enoj (1970) have analyzed its adverse impacts on progress. They argued that the Foreign aid could adversely affect the economic growth by substituting the domestic savings. So, the literature on the effectiveness of foreign aid shows both positive and negative effects in economic development.

Poudyal (1988) performed regression analyses between foreign aid and economic growth and aid and domestic savings. Poudyal (1988) found that aid had a significant positive effect on the level of gross domestic product (GDP). Paudyal (1982) believed that foreign aid contributed positively to the development of Nepal. It was only possible through aid to build projects and physical infrastructure, which would not have been manufactured due mainly to resource constraints.

In Nepal, several economists have tried to find out the role of foreign aid in the economic development of Nepal. Many economists in Nepal, such as Dahal (2008), Dhakal, Upadhyaya, and Upadhyaya (1996),

Karmacharya (2000), Khadka (1996), Khatiwada (2003), Panday (2001), Paudyal (1982), Sharma (1999), Sharma (2011), Shrestha (2002), Bhattarai (2009) all are highlighted the non-optimal utilization of foreign assistance for Nepal and interpreted it as a sustainable

and prospective factor for higher growth if macro and micro-level efforts are made for optimal utilization of foreign support.

Karna (2007) states that foreign aid holds critical importance in Nepal. Even though its economic importance lies in the fact that it provides resources for the national budget; it also helps bridge the gap between national saving, and investment. Pyakuryal, Adhikari and Dhakal (2008) found that the resource gap has widened over the years due to increasing fiscal deficit.

Foreign Aid Policy 2009 outlines problems as is the absence of prioritization based on national needs, ignorance of sustainability, operation and maintenance aspects of the projects, and slow disbursement as compared to commitments. Sigdel (1997) found that one billion increments in the resource gap are met by more than one billion increments in foreign aid during the fiscal year (FY) 1981/82 to 2001/02. The flow of foreign aid is faster than the increment in the resource gap (1.023477, lag coefficient).

Acharya (1998) stated that foreign aid has been unable to achieve its objectives in Nepal by principle. Basnet (2013) found that foreign aid has a positive and significant impact on growth in five South Asian countries.

Galiani, Knack, Xu & Zou (2016) found that a one percent increase in the aid to gross national income (GNI) ratio raises the annual real per capita short term GDP growth rate by 0.031 percentage point.

Overall, having found out that foreign aid positively affects GDP, its importance to lift every sector of the economy in Nepal viz: infrastructure development, minimizing resource gap, etc. but on the other side, the inefficiencies, misuses, cost of dependence syndrome aid has generated every concerned citizen consider about its existence in Nepal. In the Nepalese context also there are sufficient studies but individual donor-wise studies and Japanese aid, in particular, are too few. These are the guiding factors that have encouraged me to undertake this research.

4. Empirical Analysis

Foreign aid is said to have effects on economic growth and the overall welfare of the country. The amount of foreign aid becomes essential for the further progress of the country. In a situation, there may arise questions like whether foreign aid has proved beneficial for Nepal? Has foreign assistance shown positive effects on the economic growth and overall welfare of the country? If the answer to these queries is found positive, then to some extent, foreign aid has played a positive role in the Nepalese economy and is necessary for the further growth of the economy.

The research intends to analyze the impact of Japanese aid on the gross domestic product (GDP) of Nepal. Thus the starting point is examining a direct relationship between the GDP and the amount of Japanese aid. Different lagged and unlagged models have been used to analyze the impact. Models have been estimated in log-linear forms. All the data in the analysis are taken from various economic surveys and Japanese Aid booklets during the period FY 1984/85 to FY 2017/18. In all statistical analyses, numbers in parenthesis below the co-efficient of independent variables indicate their respective t-values with corresponding significance. All regression lines in this chapter are computed by using the

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Impact of Japanese aid in the period t is,

$$Y_t = 127316.309 + 33.21 J_t$$
.....(i)
 (2.193) (3.039)
 (0.001) (0.000)
 $R^2 = 0.57$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.51$, $F = 9.574$, DW = 0.451, N = 34

Where $Y_t = Gross Domestic product in time period t (dependent variables)$

 J_t = Japanese aid in time period t (Independent variable)

Equation (i) shows a positive relationship between nominal GDP and Japanese aid inflow. The Beta coefficient is equal to 33.21, implying that one million changes in Japanese aid have produced 33.21 million changes in the GDP. Though it seems impossible logically, it has given the approximate figure. The adjusted R² value is 0.59, implying that 59 percent of the total variations in the dependent variable being explained by the independent variable.

The calculated value of $F(V_1, V_2)$, i.e., F(1, 18) degrees of freedom, is 9.574, which is greater than the tabulated value of F for 5 percent level of significance (4.41). Hence it can be said that the overall significance of the specified equation is significant. t statistics also support the best fit of the theoretical distribution of the parameters at a 5 percent level of significance.

The D-W (d*) statistics from the data is 0.451. From the D-W table with a 5 percent level of significance, n = 34 observations, and K' = 1 independent variable, the significant point of dl & du are dl = 1.20 and du = 1.41. Since dl > d* and du > d*, there is a positive autocorrelation in the GDP function. Impact of Japanese aid with one year lag,

In equation (ii), GDP is regressed with the Japanese aid in the lagged one year. The equation itself is a better fit, with 57 percent of the variations independent variable being explained by the independent variable. The Beta coefficient is equal to 40.399, implying that one million changes in Japanese aid have produced 40.399 million changes in GDP.

The calculated value of F (V1, V2), i.e., F (1, 17) degrees of freedom, is 16.885, which is greater than the tabulated value of F for a 5 percent level of significance (4.45). Hence, it can be said that there is a strong association among variables in the equation.

The D-W (d*) statistics from the data is 0.819. From the D-W table with a 5 percent level of significance, n = 34 observations K' = 1 independent variable, the significance print of

dl & du are 1.18, 1.40 respectively. Since, dl > d*, du > d* there is positive autocorrelation in the GDP function. Impact of Japanese aid with a two-year lag,

$$Y_t = 113284.250 + 41.897 J_{t-2}$$
 (iii)
$$(6.253) \qquad (2.462)$$

$$(0.005) \qquad (0.000)$$

$$R^2 = 0.88, \ Adj R^2 = 0.56, F = 24.941, DW = 1.311, N = 32$$

Where, J_{t-2} = Japanese aid in two year lag.

In equation (iii), GDP is regressed with the Japanese aid two-year lag. The beta coefficient is 41.897, implying that one million changes in Japanese aid have produced 41.897 million changes in the GDP - the value of R^2 and adjusted R^2 show the fit of the model. Adjusted R^2 (0.56) implies that a 56 percent change in GDP is explained by the adjustment in Japanese aid and rest 41 percent change is due to the other variable.

The calculated value of F (V1, V2), F (1, 16) at degrees of freedom is 24.941, which is greater than the tabulated value of F for a 5 percent level of significance (4.49). Since the calculated F-value is higher, there is a strong association among variables in the equation.

The D-W (d*) statistics from the data is 1.311. From D-W table at 5 percent level of significance, n = 32, & k' = 1 independent variable, the significance point of dl & du are dl = 1.16 & du = 1.39. Since dl < d* and du > d*, there is no auto correlation in the GDP function

Keeping the R^2 and Adjusted R^2 in mind, the one-year lag model, is not as strong as the two-year lag model. That's why we can conclude that Japanese aid has been primarily made with a short gestation period of two years.

5. Findings

- 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.
- ii) The total foreign aid inflow in Nepal from FY 1984/85 to FY 2017/18 is Rs. 996594.7 million. In FY 2014/15 lowest grant assistance only 4.93 percent of the total inflows of foreign aid but in FY 1994/95, grant aid comprised 61.58 percent of the total aid.
- iii) Japan has been participating in the economic development programs of Nepal since 1956 after the diplomatic relations between the two countries has been established. Till than from 1951 to 1956, Japan did not provide any assistance to Nepal.
- iv) Japanese aid to Nepal is in the form of a grant, Loan, and technical assistance. Technical assistance is being provided in equipment supply,

- training to Nepalese dispatch of Japanese experts to Nepal, and development survey.
- v) There is a positive relationship between the nominal GDP of Nepal, and Japanese aid inflow and one million changes in Japanese aid have produced 33.21 million changes in the GDP.
- vi) GDP is not explained by the change in Japanese aid but also clarified by other variables the 57 percent of the total variations in the GDP being explained by the Japanese support.
- vii) The beta coefficient is equal to 33.21, implying that one million changes in Japanese aid have produced 33.21 million changes in GDP in Nepal.

6. Conclusion

Japanese aid mainly in the economic infrastructure likes roads, bridge, transportation, safe drinking water supply, civil aviation, and telecommunication, and so on. Typically Japan aid is on these sectors like agricultural development, the social sector, which consists of health and education, human resource development, cultural grant aid, environment conservation, and sustainable development.

Japanese foreign aid to Nepal has brought a significant change in the socioeconomic status of Nepalese people. More people have access to education, health and communication from when foreign countries assisted Nepal. The number of schools, hospitals, communications, and social services facilities have increased significantly. The road network has also significantly expanded, enabling a large number of towns and villages in peripheral areas to increase the local peoples economic status as well as social life.

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ANNEX – I

Total Amount of Foreign Aid and Japanese Aid from FY 1984/85 to FY 2017/18

(Rs. In a million)

Fiscal Year	Total Foreign Aid	Total Japanese Aid	Japanese Aid in %
			(from total aid)
1984/85	2676.4	231.8	8.66
1985/86	3491.5	659.4	18.88
1986/87	3314.4	929.0	28.02
1987/88	5078.5	1104.6	21.75
1988/89	5666.9	897.7	15.84
1989/90	6427.1	1069.5	16.64
1990/91	5990.0	1781.9	29.74
1991/92	7800.4	1757.4	22.52
1992/93	9235.6	3501.4	37.91
1993/94	11557.2	1571.9	13.60
1994/95	11249.4	6928.3	61.58
1995/96	14289.0	5295.5	37.05
1996/97	15031.9	4994.4	33.22
1997/98	16457.1	1746.6	10.61
1998/99	16189.0	2894.5	17.87
1999/00	17523.9	6394.1	36.48
2000/01	18797.4	8354.1	44.4
2001/02	14384.8	6299.7	43.79
2002/03	15885.5	7435.43	46.80
2003/04	18912.4	4712.4	24.91
2004/05	23657.3	4161.1	17.58
2005/06	22041.8	4477.0	20.31
2006/07	25854.4	3047.8	11.78
2007/08	29300.6	3462.6	11.81
2008/09	36351.7	2166.4	5.95

2009/10	49769.4	3376.5	6.78
2010/11	57997.8	5834.1	10.05
2011/12	51893.4	5433.0	10.46
2012/13	47199.2	4168.7	8.83
2013/14	60204.6	4037.8	6.70
2014/15	82581.93	4077.1	4.93
2015/16	89559.87	4964.4	5.54
2016/17	95024.46	8961.9	9.43
2017/18	105199.8	10834.5	10.29
Total	996594.7	137562.5	-
Averag e	29311.61	4045.957	13.80

Source: i) Various Issues of Economic survey, MoF, Government of Nepal.

ii) Various Issues of Japan's ODA Annual Report MoFA, Japan.