



Conflict Management in SAARC: Problem and Prospectus

Dr. Somnath Shrirang Raut

C. B. Khedgis Basveshwar Science Raja Vijaysigh Commerce Raja Jaysigh Arts College
Akkalkot, Dist- Solapur (MH)

Corresponding Author - Dr. Somnath Shrirang Raut

Email- somnath.com@gmail.com

DOI- 10.5281/zenodo.7919457

Abstract

Sustainable peace and development maintain through regional cooperation. Regional cooperation institute offers several benefits for participant. It works not only on economic prosperity but population and social issues also. Hence in the present era, Regional Cooperation is become essential to keep peace, develop confidence building among states. In Asia, for southern part regional cooperation carried out through South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It has however been tackle with number of challenges. One of the prime barrier for the SAARC has been recurring inter state conflicts among member states. Hence, the present paper made an attempt to bring to light present conflict issues in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation members. For this purpose the data collected from various published and unpublished sources. Collected data present through table, chart and map to find out results. The result of present paper is shown that, South Asian States have conflicts due to border between them.

Keywords: South Asia, Conflict, Interstate Conflict, Confidence Building Measures.

Introduction

As compare to the world, South Asia have rich raw material and abundant human resources. Proximity of Indian Ocean underline the geopolitical importance of region. These strength automatically stimulate the integration of regional entity and create identity at world level. To develop and sustain the importance of regional identity come into force regional Cooperation Institute. It works for Cooperative growth strategy, inter regional trade and social as well as political development. Such understanding of South Asian States formulated South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) consisting Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India. India is founder member of South Asian Association of regional Cooperation which was established in 1985. Its primary and large aim is promoting the development and progress of the all above states. Till date 18th SAARC summit organised so far. 19th summit have been to go in Pakistan at Islamabad but it was cancelled. 20th summit has to be planned again in Pakistan. Out of the 18th summit India hosted three summit, one after another as Bengaluru (2th summit, 1986)

New Delhi (8th 1985) and New Delhi (14th 2007). It indicates the endevourance to develop bilateral relationship. As per India's 'Neighbourhood first' policy took active participation in several projects in these states by giving ever such funds and Technology transfer Viz- Farakka Dam in Bangladesh, Salama Dam in Afghanistan. Although yet have the various conflict with in SAARC member.

Objective

The present paper have following objectives

1. To study the devotion of India to support neighbour state.
2. To understand the rise of SAARC.
3. To find out the interstate conflicts of SAARC

Database and Methodology

The present paper based on second data. This secondary data collect through published and unpublished material, internet, government reports and publication of foreign department. The collected data represent by map, chart and table. Analyze the data and get results.

Interpretation Origin of SAARC

Initially SAARC was established with 7 States, including Bangladesh, Bhutan,

India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. After that, at the 13th Summit held **Genesis of SAARC**

at Dhaka in 2006, Afghanistan merged as 8th member of it.

Table insert table

State	Population (2021)	Population (2021) in %	GDP (nominal) [US\$ million, 2022]	GDP (nominal) [US\$ million, 2022] in %	Exports (US\$ million, 2022)	Exports (US\$ million, 2022)	Defence budget (US\$ million, 2022)	Defence budget (US\$ million, 2022) in %
Afghanistan	4,00,99,462	2.11	18,734	0.48	784	0.20	12,000	13.14
Bangladesh	16,93,56,251	8.91	4,60,756	11.70	52,000	13.31	4,530	4.96
Bhutan	7,77,486	0.04	2,842	0.07	580	0.15	25.1	0.03
India	1,40,75,63,842	74.02	30,49,704	77.44	3,03,400	77.65	60,580	66.33
Maldives	5,21,457	0.03	5,786	0.15	256	0.07	86.4	0.09
Nepal	3,00,34,989	1.58	29,813	0.76	819	0.21	213	0.23
Pakistan	23,14,02,117	12.17	2,84,214	7.22	21,940	5.62	11,400	12.48
Sri Lanka	2,17,73,441	1.15	86,556	2.20	10,930	2.80	2,500	2.74
	1,90,15,29,045	100	39,38,405	100	3,90,709	100	91,335	100

Source:

In May 1980, the concept of regional Cooperation was put forward to develop the welfare of people of South Asia. In April 1981 foreign secretaries of each South Asian state came together at Colombo and five areas of cooperation such as agriculture, Meteorology, rural development, communication and health as well as population activities. After that, in 1985 at Dhaka heads of each state from South Asian state adopt the charter to established the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

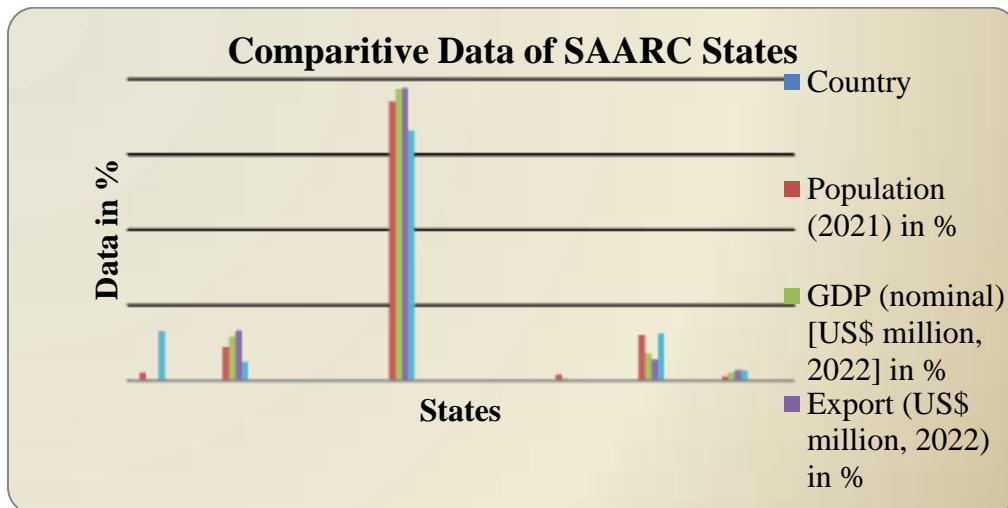


Fig 1: Role of India in SAARC

No doubt India is the prime state of SAARC. India enjoy excellent bilateral relations with remaining 6 states excluding Pakistan. India was hosted three SAARC summits. It has common land or sea border with 6 of remaining seven States. It's size, population, economy, indeed the pivot of

SAARC. India encompasses about 70% of land population with 75% of GDP of region. (table 1) India's trade with SAARC state measured around 5.5% of its global trade. Defence budget of India shows remarkable difference as compared to other states of SAARC. The SAARC states show acute asymmetrical power. Thus because of its

geography, economy, GDP, international trade, India has international stature and come center to SAARC

Conflicts in South Asian countries States

Interstate conflicts have create hurdle to regionalism. Regionalism has a different interest for each state, who become part of any other regional organization. Most of the regional Cooperation is work for economic Cooperation by doing free trade agreements. Even some States agree on some issues at the background of that particular regional organization, but their interest is found different. That's why the conflicts may be occurring in the same Regional organization. SAARC also have some conflicts among their member states as follows-

1. Border Conflict

Indian and Pakistan are the same state under the British rule. After independence these two states fought three major work wars and Kargil war also. Partition of these two states create conflict on Siachen Glacier region, Jammu and Kashmir region and Sir Creek region. Another major dispute found among Afghanistan and Pakistan to take consideration of Durand line. It was again indirect conflict between India and Pakistan. But now a days, due to Pakistan occupied Kashmir don't have direct contact with Afghanistan. Indian and Bangladesh have conflict on Teen Begha Zamin (Borderline between two States)

2. Cross Border Terrorism

Cross Border Terrorism is the major issue found all over the world. In SAARC region, on the several times India and Pakistan have been blames to each other for cross border terrorism. They claim for carrying out and support terrorist activities in their state. Recently terrorist found in Nepal, hence there is new conflict issue start between India and Nepal.

3. Conflict For Natural Resources

Rivers origin in Himalayan region and flow southward. Indian and Pakistan having dialogue over the Baglihar Dam, which is built on river Chenab in Indian administrated Kashmir. Ganga river flow from India and enter in Bangladesh before meet to Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh want a fair share of water of Ganga river. For that purpose they oppose construction of Farakka Barrage in India.

4. Conflicts Related to Refugee and Immigration

The land border between India and Bangladesh is porous due to natural region. Before from Bangladesh Independence from former East Pakistan also the problem of illegal immigrants immigrations was critical. Hence in the 1971 war, India helps to freedom East Pakistan and establish the new state as Bangladesh. But the problem remain same. After that, on the Afghanistan and Pakistan border area found refugee problem. Pakistan due to cross border militancy has decided to shutdown refugee camps. Nepal and Bhutan border area face the problem of over repatriation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.

Conclusion

India have large geographical area in SAARC region. India have comparatively high GDP, export capacity, high defence infrastructure with including atom weapons. That's why create unbalanced political as well as military power in SAARC region. Hence, India took important role in resolving the conflict emerged in SAARC. With take lead in direct government to government dialogue to address Confidence Building Measures. India emphasized the need for a zero tolerance towards terrorism. Resolve the conflict between India and Bangladesh about Teen Bigha Corridor. Provide facility to Afghanistan to improve human values. Thus, peace keeping moment is lead by India.

References

1. Government of India, Mumbai Terrorist Attack (November 26-29, 2008), Dossier provided to Government of Pakistan, January 5, 2009; <http://www.hindu.com/nic/dossier.htm>, accessed January 23, 2009
2. Pachori Sunita, Conflicts in South Asia – Challenges to SAARC Regionalism, International Journal of Research in Geography (IJRG), Volume 5, Issue 1, 2019, PP 34-41.
3. Thukral Gobind, Increased military spending keeps South Asia on the boil, Deccan Herald, Bangalore, October 2007.
4. Zahangir Kabir, Challenges of SAARC in its Third Decade, SAARC Human Resource Development Centre, Islamabad, 2005, pg. 11.
5. https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_SAARC_2020.pdf
6. <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/dec/doc2022128141701.pdf>