

ABSTRACT

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a political and economic organization that was established in 1985. It aims to enhance the development of its member states through enhanced intra-state cooperation. Different fields were to be improved using this association, but still, regional development is what South Asia lags in. Therefore, sufficient efforts to promote regional development among member countries were required. In the past 30 years of its presence, the association's tasks have in like manner stayed lazy and agonizing. Therefore, there is a need to increase the activities of regional development of SAARC, to connect and integrate the region of South Asia in real spirit. The role of Pakistan in SAARC was an important concern for this research. Pakistan's role in the development of SAARC was imperative projects had been carried out in SAARC with the help of Pakistan.

Pakistan has played an affective role in the development of SAARC. During the time period 2000-2010, Pakistan's role in SAARC was constructive and that is majorly discussed in the research. Sufficient literature has been added that gives insight into the previous body of knowledge in this field. Therefore, by looking into the relevant literature, the knowledge gap was looked for and consequently was researched. A qualitative research design was used, and secondary data was used to evaluate the regional development of SAARC and Pakistan's role in the development of SAARC. By qualitative research design, the thematic analysis has been done, and various themes have been extracted from the topic of 'regional development of SAARC'.

The discussion of 'regional development of SAARC and the role of Pakistan' is a top to bottom assessment of the outcomes, expounding on the meaning of the discoveries and referencing pertinent sources to contextualize them. Therefore, the regional development of SAARC is an important research topic that established the reason why and how South Asian nations have prospered and how Pakistan has contributed to this area. This thesis has comprehensively discussed and analysed the role of Pakistan in SAARC.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has provided a basic overview of the problem of research. The history and the developments were discussed on the surface in the 1st chapter. The chapter discussed that South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation founded by South Asian founding governments, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is recognised as a regional organisation that supports the economic and social development of South Asia. New perspectives and ideas have been given to the SAARC. Even though many of the gathering governments were large and ambitious, only a select few were able to satisfy their demands. Pakistan's leaders made significant contributions to the foundation of SAARC and to its development into a model of national homogeneity-based local participation. In 1988 and 2004, Pakistan hosted separate SAARC summits. South American Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a proposed set of policies that would make it easier for South American governments to cooperate on financial matters and help everyone achieve happiness. This article discusses the numerous factors that have contributed to SAARC's current prosperity, as well as Pakistan's role in this accomplishment.

The South Asian Regional Cooperation Organization was established on December 8, 1985. It has eight member countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. The organization's Secretariat was established in Kathmandu, Nepal, in January 1987. The objective of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is to promote the welfare of its members and improve the quality of life in the region. It also aims to enhance its cooperation with other regional and international organizations.

The idea of establishing a territorial partnership between South Asia's seven nations was first raised in November 1980. The foreign secretaries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal,

Pakistan, and Sri Lanka met in April 1981. The representatives of all South Asian countries acknowledged the declaration of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SARC) during their meeting held in New Delhi in August 1983. They then adopted an Integrated Program of Action (IPA) that focuses on various areas of collaboration.¹ Transportation, postal administration, and logical and mechanical joint effort, just as sports, expressions, and culture, were included in the IPA later. "Afghanistan" turned into an individual from the SAARC at its thirteenth yearly gathering in 2005. "China" and "Japan" were given observer status at the same time.

The "SAARC" endeavours to expand the prosperity of individuals in South Asia, make aggregate independence, invigorate dynamic contributions and common assistance in various regions, and associate with worldwide and territorial associations. It is viewed as a regional alliance encouraging monetary, social and economic development in the region. Different thoughts and points have been introduced for the SAARC. A small portion of them were satisfied with the get-together states' suppositions, while others neglected to satisfy them notwithstanding having a wide handle and execution. This organization has encouraged financial turn of events and social advancement in South Asia. The following are the goals of this organization as outlined in its charter.

- Develop public's prosperity and personal satisfaction in South Asian individuals and nations.
- Guarantee that all individuals have the valuable chance to live in independence and achieve their maximum capacity, speeding up the district's monetary, social, and social development.
- Advance and build up the aggregate confidence of South Asian nations.
- Support common trust, comprehension, and consideration of one another's concerns.
- Facilitate collaboration with other developing countries by promoting active participation and reciprocal support in the ears of socio-cultural, economic, technology and science fields.

¹ Muhammad Muzaffar, Iqra Jathol and Zahid Yaseen, "SAARC: An Evaluation of its Achievements, Failures, and Compulsion for Cooperation", *Global Political Review* 2, no. 1 (2017): 36-45.

- Reinforce international collaboration on areas of mutual interest among themselves; and
- Team up with worldwide and provincial gatherings that have comparable points and targets².

Reinforce global participation in normal worries and work with worldwide and territorial associations with equivalent objectives and goals. "Yearly SAARC Summits" are held, with the "Affiliation's Chair" being the nation facilitating the meeting. Choices should be made collectively, and reciprocal and disagreeable issues are avoided from "SAARC" conversations. Apart from its 8 members, 9 observers including US, China, Iran, Japan, South Korea, EU, Myanmar, and Australia also play its role. ³ The following zones of collaboration were agreed upon by the member states "Agronomy and Countryside Progress" are closely linked, tutoring and civilization are intertwined, biotech, financial, commercial, and financial issues, science and technology, energy, environment and tourism, media, information and communication, poverty reduction, aspects of safety, person-to-person contacts, the mechanism for funding and social advancement. The declaration of SAARC was adopted in the 18th Summit at Kathmandu in 2014. The labour migration was discussed in the Declaration.

According to Article 21, "SAARC" members pledge coordination to guarantee the security of migrants from South Asian nations. The meeting also discussed the opening of developmental fund, a food bank and South Asian University. The representative, head of states and governments reemphasized the critical nature of combating terrorism in the region of South Asia too, calling for active collaboration and enhancements in the execution of convention on terrorism, persecute to an additional protocol. The need of establishing a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism was reiterated by member nations. At this time, all countries are confronted with global issues. The problems and difficulties that South Asia faces are extremely serious.

² NTI, *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)*, <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/south-asianassociation-regional-cooperation-saarc/>.

³ Iqbal, Muhammad Jamshed. "SAARC: origin, growth, potential and achievements." *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 27, no. 2 (2006): 127-140., http://nihcr.edu.pk/Latest_English_Journal/SAARC_Jamshed_Iqbal.pdf

To begin with, the goal of poverty reduction is a long way off. It is a monumental endeavour for one of the world's poorest places, where 1.6 billion humans live in these eight countries, and more than 40% are in extreme poverty, with 50% illiteracy. According to prior years' data, South Asia's per capita GDP is even lower than sub-Saharan Africa. Even though some nations have achieved great headway in economic growth in recent years, their impact remains limited. Overall, South Asia's living standards are still low, and many people's living situations are still poor, with access to nourishment, consumption of water, well-being services, and instructive standards considerably below the average. Water, health services, and educational standards are all far below the national average. Civil war in Sri Lanka recently over, while uncertainty still lingers in Afghanistan, while Pakistan is engulfed in tremendous natural and man-made difficulties. We must confess that SAARC's anti-poverty cooperation has not helped alleviate the poverty problem. Second, economic and commercial cooperation is extremely challenging⁴. There is a significant complementarity among the South Asian nations as measured by their economic magnitude and development levels.

However, most countries are burdened by large external loans, and their foreign exchange reserves are dwindling. Because development funds are limited, nations are forced to seek help, loans from IMF and World Bank and certain rich countries each year. Economic cooperation, particularly in the sectors of industry and finance, has significant challenges. Due to a variety of causes, intra-regional commerce in South Asia has expanded slowly. Third, bilateral ties stifle collaboration. "SAARC" does not address bilateral or contentious topics, according to the "SAARC" Charter. Needless to mention, there are several bilateral issues among South Asian nations that are difficult to resolve due to historical and geopolitical factors. The dynamics of conflicts frequently include the fundamental interests of the parties involved, and neither side is willing to give up their claim lightly, posing a major threat to regional cooperation. Time is needed to address ethnic, religious, water, and other cross-border concerns. Fourth, South Asia is a hotspot for terrorism. The question of how to remove terrorism, eliminate the risks it poses, and

⁴ UN, *SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism*. (2020), <https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/Conv18-english.pdf>

limit the harm it may inflict remains a significant issue for “SAARC”, with serious implications for stability⁵.

Common mountains and rivers connect China with several South Asian nations, forming unique geopolitical, geo-economics, and geo-cultural ties. In many ways, China and “SAARC” nations should collaborate widely and deeply since they have shared interests and concerns. They have a lot of potential for collaboration in terms of economics, social, cultural, scientific, and technical issues, as well as anti-terrorism, environmental protection, and catastrophe prevention and mitigation. Both parties should make every effort to fully realize this potential, to turn it into a beneficial resource for all people in the region. Cultural exchanges play a unique role in "building values, wealth, and harmony," according to the United Nations. China and “SAARC” should look for new ways to cooperate, find a means to break the ice, pave the way for confidence to be established, and set the groundwork for comprehensive cooperation based on reality and long-term perspectives. “SAARC”, as a regional cooperation initiative from Bangladesh, was unable to provide Pakistan with complete satisfaction, as India was always tries to have upper hand and hegemonic position in South Asia. They were also concerned that increased engagement and collaboration might dilute their political outlook on Kashmir.

SAARC Summits and advancement for regional connectivity: South Asian collaboration was the focus of three conferences in 1947, 1950, and 1954. These gatherings were held in New Delhi, Manila, and Sri Lanka. During the 1970s, the seven South Asian nations, which included India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, formed an exchange alliance to promote understanding and harmony among their people. Bangladeshi President Ziaur Rahman sent letters to the leaders of South Asian nations in an attempt to establish a vision for the region's future. At first countries like India and Pakistan were reluctant to join but later accepted that it was important and helpful.

The first SAARC summit occurred on the seventh and eighth of December 1985 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and was gone to by the public authority agents and leaders of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, and Indian PM. December 8, 1985, marked the SAARC

⁵ UN, *SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia*. (2020), <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/595c93b24.pdf>.

Charter, officially laying out the local association. Additionally, it settled concentrated on bunches on psychological oppression and medication dealing, as well as arranging an ecclesiastical-level gathering on GATT and a clerical-level meeting on expanding women's cooperation in regional affairs. Moreover, the culmination made plans to make a SAARC secretariat and laid out an authority SAARC emblem.

The 2nd Summit held in India's on 16-17 November, 1986. It set out to make the South Asian Broadcasting Program, which would incorporate both radio and TV. Head of governments an States accentuated the significance of individuals to individuals' collaborations and taking on genuine endeavours to further develop the travel industry in the locale, like confined convertibility of public monetary forms for guests from SAARC countries.

The first SAARC summit held in 1985 on 7-8 December; various leaders met and accepted the policies and objectives of SAARC. The "SAARC Summit" Statement voiced worry about the deteriorated intercontinental political environment and the extraordinary development of the weapons race, especially in its nuclear dimension. They understood that humanity faced self-extinction as a result of a large concentration of the highly lethal weapon system ever created and also that the weapons race heightened global tensions and contradicted the "UN Charter's values. The Associate States encouraged the "NWS" to begin negotiations on a "CTBT" that would put an end to all nuclear weapons testing, assembly, and organization. In this way, they invited President Reagan to a new meeting in Geneva with General Secretary Gorbachev and expressed confidence that the meeting would contribute to world peace and security. Furthermore, the Second "SAARC" Summit, held in November in Bangalore, India, expressed deep concern that the promise made at the "US-Soviet Summit" in "Reykjavik" had not been realized. Nonetheless, they expressed satisfaction that the Summit's ideas remained on the table and expressed strong anticipation that the arrangements would begin immediately to work toward a final goal of atomic demilitarization⁶.

The Member States' decision to a CBT was squeezed quickly. Conflicts ejected during the Third "SAARC Summit" in "Kathmandu," "Nepal," over "Pakistan's" proposition for a "South

⁶ NTI, Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, 2021, <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/comprehensivenuclear-test-ban-treaty-ctbt/>.

Asian settlement" banning "Atomic Weapons," which just expresses "SAARC's" expectation to "contribute" to atomic demilitarization. The international community's decision to establish the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the CTBT was taken at the Geneva Conference. The states' goal is to stop the atomic trade and prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. They also committed to help in any way they can to complete the settlement.⁷

Moreover, on 2-3 January, the "SAARC National Assembly" met for the 24th time in "Islamabad, Pakistan." The Ministers chose to draft an extended version of 1987 Regional convention on terrorist suppression, which tends to psychological warfare finance troubles⁸. The Protocol's motivation was to reinforce the Convention "by condemning the arrangement, assembling, or acquisition of assets to submit psychological militant activities" and to build endeavours to battle illegal intimidation subsidizing. It urges states to consider people or associations responsible for psychological warfare related follows up on a home level, just as to take pragmatic endeavours and make public standards to shield and forestall terrorist financing⁹. Various reports were additionally supported, including the last duplicate of a section that proposes, the region of South Asia a free trade zone as well as Social Charter.¹⁰

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) led its third summit in Kathmandu, Nepal, from November 2 to 4, 1987. The SAARC culmination likewise set out to commission research on cataclysmic events to start the method involved with tending to the causes and outcomes of normal disasters.

From the 29th to the 31st of December 1988, SAARC held its 4th Summit in Islamabad, Pakistan. In this summit member's countries agreed on declaring the SAARC year against drugs Abuse, to cause notice of the district's medication-related issues. They urged part countries to

⁷ CTBTO, *Text of the Treaty*, <https://www.ctbto.org/our-mission/the-treaty>

⁸ Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Commerce, *Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area*, 2021, https://www.commerce.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/pdf/SAFTA_AGREEMENT.pdf

⁹ "Goa Declaration at 8th BRICS Summit, 2021", http://brics2022.mfa.gov.cn/eng/hywj/ODS/202203/t20220308_10649507.html

¹⁰ Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Commerce, *Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area*, 2021, https://www.commerce.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/pdf/SAFTA_AGREEMENT.pdf

create and carry out public plans around here. It was likewise resolved that 1990 would be assigned as the SAARC Year of the Girl Child.

From November 21st to 23rd, 1990, Male, Maldives facilitated the Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. During the initial segment of 1991, the Summit announced the promotion of organised tourism in the region. The individuals additionally lauded the proposition for formalized cooperation among the Member States' traveller organizations to draw in additional guests from outside the area.

On 21st December 1991, the SAARC summit issued Colombo Declaration. The SAARC part countries additionally recollected the Male Summit's goal to formalize participation in the area of biotechnology. On the tenth and eleventh of April 1993, the 7th Summit was held in Dhaka. Member States reaffirmed their obligation to reinforce and improve SAARC as an instrument by furnishing it with a characterized set of forward-looking points and goals, as well as all vital institutional capacities. The 8th Summit of SAARC was held on 2-4 May 1995, in New Delhi, where member States stressed the need of meeting the around the world settled upon help targets for creating and least created countries¹¹.

On 12-14 May 1997, the 9th Summit was held in Maldives, where members of SAARC agreed and consented to audit the rules for deciding LDC status for though by UN, considering the novel meaning of the degree and extent of neediness in the most unfortunate nations, as well as the special weaknesses of little island states¹².

From 29 to 31 July 1998, the 10th Summit was held in Colombo, in the extended period of Sri Lanka's Golden Jubilee. The SAARC Member States reaffirmed their help for the Middle East's achievement of “the Millennium Development Goals”. From 4-6 January 2002, the 11th Summit was held in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Head of States and Governments concurred that

¹¹ Eighth SAARC Summit New Delhi 2-4 MAY 1995, <https://www.saarc-sec.org/index.php/resources/summit-declarations/25-eighth-saarc-summit-new-delhi-1995/file>

¹² Twelfth SAARC Summit Islamabad 4-6 January 2004, <https://www.saarc-sec.org/index.php/resources/summit-declarations/23-twelfth-saarc-summit-islamabad-2004/file>

more work must be done to advance a sensation of provincial character among the district's kin. From 4-6 January 2004, SAARC held its 12th Summit gathering in Islamabad, Pakistan. The idea of prosperous region of South Asia drove the Twelfth Summit, which was pleased with its rich culture and customs. The significance of sovereign equity, regional uprightness, public freedom, non-utilization of power, non-obstruction in state inward matters, and quiet goal of all issues was examined. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held its 13th summit in Bangladesh from November 12 to 13. From 2006 to 2015, the organization's decade-long effort to fight poverty was unveiled.¹³

The 14th South Asian Regional Cooperation Summit was held from April 3 to 4 in New Delhi. Afghanistan was also invited to participate as an individual. The event was modeled after the car rally held prior to the summit. Next Summit was held in Sri Lanka in August. During the summit, the participating nations reaffirmed their commitment to work together to improve the lives of South Asian people. They also discussed ways to develop their financial and social sectors. The 16th South Asian Regional Cooperation summit was held from April 28 to 29 in Bhutan. It was focused on celebrating the silver anniversary of the organization. Besides this, it also supported the idea of establishing a Decade of Intra-local Cooperation from 2010 to 2020.¹⁴.

The 17th South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation summit was held in Maldives from November 10 to 11. In his opening address, President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives said that monetary policy in different parts of the region can lead to different results. The improvement rate in South Asia has been encouraging, which has led to the region's joining of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). According to Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, the district is doing well. In his address, Nasheed noted that the participating nations had decided to establish a Ministerial Council of the SAFTA to address the issues of non-duty exchange and touchy rundown.¹⁶

¹³ Dhaka Declaration Thirteenth SAARC Summit 13 November 2005, <https://www.saarc-sec.org/index.php/resources/summit-declarations/22-thirteenth-saarc-summit-dhaka-2005/file>

¹⁴ Sixteenth SAARC Summit 28-29 April 2010 Thimphu Silver Jubilee Declaration, <https://www.saarc-sec.org/index.php/resources/summit-declarations/18-sixteenth-saarc-summit-thimphu-2010/file>

At the 18th South Asian Association for the Advancement of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit held in Kathmandu, many of the organization's member states hoped that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be able to create a comprehensive agenda for boosting economic growth within the region. Unfortunately, due to the political enfeeblements of Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the summit did not take place. The summit was off track due to the dispute between Nepal and Pakistan, which pushed China's inclusion in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and India's insistence on maintaining its own membership. This issue has highlighted the need for India to focus on its connectivity and security concerns with its southern and northeastern neighbors.

The establishment of the SAPTA was approved in April 1993 in Dhaka. It created a preferential trading area between South Asian countries, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. A free trade agreement between the region and other countries was also established during the 12th SAARC summit, which was held in Islamabad in 2004. The agreement also provided for an extension of the period by three years for the countries that joined the SAPTA to bring their rates to zero. Various contracts related to the establishment of the organization were also signed. Some of these include the agreements on mutual assistance in customs matters, the establishment of an arbitration body for South Asian countries, and the establishment of a regional fund for development. Some of the most prominent contracts related to the establishment and growth of the organization include the agreements on tax avoidance and double taxation, as well as the establishment of an arbitration body. The other contracts include the establishment of a development fund and the trade in services agreement.¹⁵

Pakistan was scheduled to host the “19th SAARC conference in 2016.” Numerous extremist strikes on India, followed by the terrible Pathankot and Uri attacks, and caused India to boycott the summit, a decision that was backed by several other countries. In October of the same year, India held the “Goa Brics conference,” inviting all “BIMSTEC” leaders. At the “Goa

¹⁵ UN, *South Asian Free Trade Area*, LDC Portal - International Support Measures for Least Developed Countries, <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/south-asian-free-trade-area/>.

summit,” “Prime Minister Narendra Modi” referred to “Pakistan as the mothership of terrorism and discussed Pakistan's support for terrorists and terrorism”¹⁶.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the various historical linkages between the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the establishment of an economic association has not yet been carried out. This has been a contributing factor to the slow progress of the regional cooperation project. The policies of the various states in the region have not changed despite the interactions that have occurred since the inception of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This is why the role of Pakistan in the organization has remained ineffective. The issue is that regional states' policies have not altered to take full advantage of the ideas generated by these interactions or to alleviate the deep distrust that exists between them. That's why the role of SAARC in regional integration and Pakistan's role in SAARC mostly remained ineffective.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Pakistan has played a vital role to promote SAARC and making it a model of local participation in light of sovereign uniformity standards in 1988 and 2004, Pakistan facilitated the fourth and twelfth "SAARC" Summits, separately. "SAARC" is believed to be fit for establishing a favourable climate for monetary accord and working on personal satisfaction in South A. The current research works on different points to make “SAARC” an effective organization and discusses Pakistan’s role in the development of “SAARC”.

The objectives of the study are:

- To highlight the role of SAARC in the regional development
- To examine the role of member countries in SAARC
- To examine the role of Pakistan SAARC

¹⁶ “Goa Declaration at 8th BRICS Summit, 2021”,
http://brics2022.mfa.gov.cn/eng/hywj/ODS/202203/t20220308_10649507.html

1.3 Research Questions

- What is the role of SAARC in regional development?
- What is the role of member countries in SAARC?
- What is the role of Pakistan in SAARC?

1.4 Significance of the Research

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established to foster cooperation among the countries of South Asia. According to this research, the region suffers from various problems, such as underdevelopment, intra- and inter-state violence, and poverty. The economies of South Asia are struggling due to the negative effects of historical exploitation and the region's animosities. Moreover, the lack of cooperation and the consequent breaches of human rights are some of the factors that prevent the region from developing. This thesis aims to examine the role that Pakistan plays in the region and how it can be further strengthened. Pakistan's role in SAARC the topic of this thesis is important to the students of Pakistan Studies, IR, Political Sciences and SAARC policymakers for strengthening the role of SAARC in the region.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

For this research work I have used the Regional integration theory. The emergence of the regional organizations are attempted to integrate the regions in order to compete the international political economy in the form of regional integration. The regional integration theory is based on the integration theory of European Union which was propounded by Ernst Hass and Leon Lindberg in their classical study of European integration which was later applied to the other regions across the globe. The regional integration theory states the effects of regional organizations to the governments and society in their territories and in the regions.

SAARC is a framework that aims to establish a common political authority among its member states. It is based on the concept of regional integration, which states that the political actors of a region should be persuaded to shift their allegiances and expectations to a new center.

The members of the SAARC give up their capability to independently carry out important domestic and foreign policies. Instead, they make joint decisions and establish new organs to deal with issues related to their common interests. SAARC uses the concept of spill-over to describe its approach to addressing issues related to its goals. This concept states that actions related to a specific goal can create a situation where in the original objective can only be attained by taking further steps. The members of the organization use their combined economic and national security capabilities to pursue their goals. Intergovernmental negotiations on the implementation of regional integration reflect the preferences and power configurations of each state. Although the governments of the participating nations give regional groups the power to negotiate their way to achieve their objectives, they retain control over the organization and its integration process.

1.6 Research Methodology

The descriptive method of research methodology has been used in this research. Mix methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used. Both primary and secondary sources have been utilized. For conducting inclusive research the researcher has applied systematic research methodology. Published materials in the forms of books, journals, newspapers and online sources have been used as secondary sources and primary data including speeches, statements and official documents of the SAARC have been used.

Thematic analysis:

To do a thematic analysis, one must first organize their data such that recurring themes may be identified, evaluated, and reported. Selecting codes and developing themes is a descriptive method, but it is also up to interpretation. The unique flexibility of theme analysis makes it applicable to several research questions, methodologies, and sample sizes. Some scholars have placed thematic analysis in the realms of sociology and ethnography, while others have noted its utility in phenomenology. Several researchers have demonstrated that theme analysis is useful both on its own and as a springboard for other qualitative research methods. It's possible that other qualitative methods, such as grounded theory and discourse analysis, could benefit from the thematic analysis criteria for data categorization, theme identification and

refinement, and results presentation. Braun and Clarke classify theme analysis as a "technique," rather than a "methodology," because of its adaptability.¹⁷

In order to conduct a theme analysis, it is not required to adopt a paradigmatic stance. On the other hand, it can be applied to post-positivist, constructivist, and critical realist approaches to study. Many different kinds of study, with many different goals and outcomes, can benefit from the use of thematic analysis as a methodology. Post-positivists can employ thematic analysis to home in on subjective interpretations and experiences in service of gaining an objective perspective. Thus, they are able to make well-informed forecasts about the world. For instance, in constructivism and other interpretivist theoretical frameworks, thematic analysis can be used to highlight the social, cultural, and structural conditions that affect individual experiences. Both the participants and the researcher can gain insight into the process of socially constructed meaning creation through their interactions with one another. Joffe argues that theme analysis is a useful adjunct to constructivism since it may show how several pieces of data can be pieced together to infer the growth of a particular social construct. Using these techniques, thematic analysis digs deeper into the data in search of hidden patterns and themes. Although it recognizes the primacy of physical reality as the basis for human experience, critical realism is concerned with exploring the topic's relevance and its social impact. Academics can benefit from employing thematic analysis in emancipator research that puts a spotlight on the experiences of underrepresented groups, as well as in the critical realist understanding of the power processes that form reality.

Some people consider thematic analysis to be a post-positivist approach. The post-positivist aspiration of comprehending a trustworthy, objective, and fact-based world is in conflict with the more interpretive aspirations of many social science researchers; hence Boyatzis suggests employing thematic analysis to bridge this divide.¹⁸ When the interpretive social scientist utilises thematic analysis to communicate or package their social construction of meaning, Boyatzis argues, a description of social "facts" or observations emerges. He argues that

¹⁷ Victoria Clarke, Virginia Braun, and Nikki Hayfield. "Thematic analysis." *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* 3 (2015): 222-248.

¹⁸ Richard E. Boyatzis, *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Sage, 1998.

a mutually beneficial interaction between interpretive and post-positivist paradigms in thematic analysis is possible because new themes can be generated from testing post-positivist hypotheses and new hypotheses can be generated from testing interpretive themes.

The first chapter provides a basic overview of the whole dissertation. The history and the developments related to SAARC are given in the first chapter. Hence, the theme for the first chapter is the history and overview of SAARC. The second chapter is the SAARC role in regional development. The theme of the chapter was chosen due to the various principles that make up the SAARC. These include political independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and mutual benefit. The region's collaboration has been instrumental in promoting international and bilateral exchanges. The annual summits of the organization are usually conducted once a year. They are held with the host country serving as the chairman of the year's event. The decisions made at the meetings are based on consensus.

The fourth chapter deals with the role of regional countries in SAARC. It deals with the issues that different countries face and their role to counter the problem. The themes within this chapter are therefore related to development of Pakistan and other countries related to SAARC. Pakistan's standing within SAARC. The next chapter is broken up into three sections. Part 1 of this chapter examines Pakistan's SAARC membership in detail from 1985 to 2000. This chapter's second section focuses on Pakistan's participation in SAARC from 2000 and 2010. In the third half of the chapter, issues, and obstacles to Pakistan's effective involvement in SAARC were covered. This chapter is divided into three separate sections. Part one provides a summary of Pakistan's involvement in SAARC from the organization's founding in 1985 until the year 2000. The second section of this chapter will cover Pakistan's participation in SAARC from 2000 to 2010. The final half of the chapter covered issues and obstacles to Pakistan's ineffective involvement in SAARC. Hence, the most prominent theme in the fourth chapter is Pakistan and SAARC.

1.7. Review of Literature Review

There is huge literature available on SAARC. It consists of books, articles, reports, newspapers articles and online sources. In the following pages the most important literature

review is presented covering this research topic from various approaches. The literature review of this chapter talks about the various aspects of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Since its inception in 1985, the scope of collaboration between the different member nations has significantly increased. The goal of the organization is to promote cultural and economic growth, enhance people's standard of living, and expand cooperation across the world. Due to the increasing importance of the organization, its members have urged the authorities to take the necessary steps to revive the organization. They also believe that the implementation of policies and plans can help transform the region into a more developed one. This chapter's literature review focuses on the role of Pakistan in the organization's development.

“Kumar, Rajiv, and Omita Goyal, eds. *Thirty years of SAARC: society, culture and development*. SAGE Publications India, 2016.”

The book explores the political and economic issues that have affected the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) since its inception. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the region's development and offers recommendations for its future. Despite being democratic, the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have not been actively promoting their cooperation in the public. The book argues that the time has come for countries to develop economic cooperation. It also states that political will is a vital component of the process of regional integration.¹⁹

“Muni, Sukh D., and Iftikhar A. Lodhi. *The emerging dimensions of SAARC*. Foundation Books, 2010.”

South Asia has undergone a radical transformation since the beginning of the 21st century. It has witnessed tremendous growth, and some of its nations have been identified as the hub of international terrorism. The rise of nuclear weapons has increased the international involvement in South Asian affairs. As a result, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has taken various steps to maintain its relevance and expand its scope. It has also opened itself up to the participation of other countries, such as the US, China, and Iran.

¹⁹ Rajiv Kumar and Omita Goyal, eds. *Thirty years of SAARC: Society, culture and development*. SAGE Publications India, 2016.

The book aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various developments taking place in South Asia and their potential impact on the region's integration and cooperation. It has been composed of essays by prominent academics and analysts from different countries. The different aspects of South Asian cooperation are discussed in these essays. Besides their economic and trade dimension, they also talk about the security and cultural aspects of the region.²⁰

“Saez, Lawrence. *The South Asian association for regional cooperation (SAARC): emerging collaboration architecture*. Routledge, 2012.”

South Asia's eight member nations, which include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, are known as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This study aims to examine the organization's institutional structure and effectiveness. It also argues that South Asia's unique security complex enables it to act as a regional security force. The objective of this study is to explore the scope of formal institutions such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) that can provide a comprehensive security architecture for South Asian countries. It will also be of great interest to scholars and students of international relations and Asian security studies.²¹

“Rahman, Sultan Hafeez, Sridhar Khatri, and Hans-Peter Brunner. *Regional integration and economic development in South Asia*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012.”

The book features studies on the various activities related to South Asian integration and cooperation. It was made possible through collaboration between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and two of its knowledge network partners. The book is intended for policymakers, academicians, and other individuals interested in South Asian integration and cooperation. It

²⁰ Sukh D. Muni and Iftikhar A. Lodhi. *The emerging dimensions of SAARC*. Foundation Books, 2010.

²¹ Lawrence Saez, *The South Asian association for regional cooperation (SAARC): An emerging collaboration architecture*. Routledge, 2012.

provides a comprehensive analysis of the various activities that are taking place in the region to address key issues such as food security, environment degradation, and trade barriers.²²

“Ahmed, Sadiq, Saman Kelegama, and Ejaz Ghani, eds. *Promoting Economic Cooperation in South Asia: Beyond SAFTA*. SAGE Publications India, 2010.”

The Beyond SAFTA project aims to promote economic cooperation in South Asia, which has a distinct development disparity. Despite the rapid growth of the region's economy, there is still widespread inequality and poverty. This is because the majority of its poor lives in rural settings and are not connected to the global economy. This book brings together experts from different fields to discuss the various factors that affect the development disparity in South Asia. It argues that the region's policymakers and private sector should work together to address these issues. Besides institutional reforms, it also emphasizes the importance of market integration and the implementation of regional cooperation. This book aims to analyze the various political and economic issues that affect the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It also explores the multiple barriers that prevent the region from achieving its goals and how they can be improved. South Asia has been regarded as one of the most underdeveloped regions in the world due to various institutional and policy constraints. The book is a valuable reference for scholars, policymakers, and donors interested in the development of South Asia. It can also be used by think tanks and international relations groups.²³

“Chakma, Bhumitra. *South Asian regionalism: The limits of cooperation*. Policy Press, 2020.”

In this book, Bhumitra Chakma, a South Asia expert, explores the history of regionalism in the region and discusses the various theoretical approaches that can be used to explain its complex dynamics. He also provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of Pakistan in the development of the organization. The author uses comparative analysis to examine the various

²² Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Sridhar Khatri, and Hans-Peter Brunner. *Regional integration and economic development in South Asia*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012.

²³ Sadiq Ahmed, Saman Kelegama, and Ejaz Ghani, eds. *Promoting Economic Cooperation in South Asia: Beyond SAFTA*. SAGE Publications India, 2010.

challenges faced by the region's organizations. He also explores how these obstacles can be overcome in the future.²⁴

“Ahmed, Zahid Shahab. *Regionalism and regional security in South Asia: The role of SAARC*. Routledge, 2016.”

The book aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the South Asian Development Community's progress since its inception. It explores the various aspects of cooperation, including its economic integration and environmental security. The author states that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is making significant progress in addressing its various issues. The organization's members are now more confident about its ability to address these problems. Some of the areas where it has made progress include human security, education, and health. Despite the positive statements made by the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the implementation of the agreements and action plans has been uneven in some areas, particularly in the sensitive security sectors. This study suggests that the region should adopt a more comprehensive approach to address the issues of terrorism and security.²⁵

“Solanki, Hiten Ramanbhai. *SAARC: Nations & Narratives*. Blue Rose Publishers, 2022.”

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a vital component of the world's political and socio-cultural development. It contributes to the establishment of a common political and economic framework. The western hegemony over the region has started to encroach on the world's political and socio-cultural development. Due to the changing political and economic situation, the nations and regions that were previously ignored are now gaining power. The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a geopolitical and economic organization that is rapidly gaining the attention of developed nations. It is a

²⁴ Bhumitra Chakma. *South Asian regionalism: The limits of cooperation*. Policy Press, 2020.

²⁵ Zahid Shahab Ahmed, *Regionalism and regional security in South Asia: The role of SAARC*. Routledge, 2016.

unique cultural and identity-generating union of South Asian nations. It is also interesting to study the various literary works of South Asian authors. This book aims to provide an overview of the literature of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) by analyzing selected literary works from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.²⁶

“Sarkar, Jayanta, and G. C. Ghosh, eds. *Populations of the SAARC countries: Bio-cultural perspectives*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2003.”

As South Asia's largest region, it has seven countries that together account for a quarter of the world's population. In August 1980, the seven nations of the region, which are known as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), formed the organization. Various publications have been created about the group. The book features a variety of articles and an introduction, as well as an epilogue, which explores the various issues that affect the bio-cultural relations between South Asian countries. It also discusses the linkages and biological affinities of the different populations of these nations. The cultural and biological affinities of South Asian countries have been established over time. These have been traced back to the pre-historic period and the contemporary era. The various references to art, architecture, religion, trade, and so on, have also been documented during the historical period of this region.²⁷

“Majaw, Baniateilang. *Climate Change in South Asia: Politics, Policies and the SAARC*. Routledge India, 2020.”

The book explores the various threats climate change poses to South Asia and highlights the need for intensified collaboration to address these issues. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the region's policies and initiatives in addressing these problems. This book will be of particular interest to South Asian Studies scholars and researchers. It covers a wide range of

²⁶ Hiten Ramanbhai Solanki, *SAARC: Nations & Narratives*. Blue Rose Publishers, 2022.

²⁷ Jayanta Sarkar, and G. C. Ghosh, eds. *Populations of the SAARC countries: Bio-cultural perspectives*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2003.

subjects such as environmental studies, political science, international relations, and public policies. It also provides valuable insight into the role of Pakistan in the region.²⁸

“Khan, Maryum. SAARC: The Missing Connection: An Exploratory Study of SAARC. Lap Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH KG, 2015.”

South Asia's leaders have been working toward establishing a cooperative framework for their region. The South Asian Association for Cooperation was established on December 8, 1985. Its members include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Nepal. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is an economic organization that aims to improve the standard of living of South Asian people. It is also dedicated to promoting friendly relations among the different communities in the region. The organization has gained immense importance due to the changes taking place in the world order. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) aims to bridge the gap between the various countries in the region. It is a framework for addressing the issues that exist between them. Its goal is to help the people of this region develop closer relationships.²⁹

“Khan, Owais Hasan. Strengthening regional trade integration in South Asia. Springer Singapore, 2021.”

This book aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various provisions of the GATT and the WTO that are related to trade regionalism. It also explores the challenges and opportunities that face the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The book aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various factors that affect the development and implementation of trade regionalism within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It also explores the multiple other aspects of integration within the organization. The book begins by stating that trade regionalism has failed due to the security concerns and political issues that have been raised by its members. The South Asian Association

²⁸ Baniateilang Majaw, *Climate Change in South Asia: Politics, Policies and the SAARC*. Routledge India, 2020.

²⁹ Maryum Khan, SAARC: The Missing Connection: An Exploratory Study of SAARC. Lap Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH KG, 2015.

for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has not achieved its objective of promoting peace, economic cooperation, and development. With the emergence of developing nations as members, it can still achieve its full potential by implementing structural and organizational changes. The book also focuses on the comparative analysis of the various aspects of South Asian integration with that of the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Although the discussion about comparative regionalism has only been confined to these two organizations, the EU has been acknowledged due to its success. The selection of ASEAN as the subject of this book was due to its similarities to the political structure, economy, and society of South Asia. The book's analysis is based on the theories and practices of international relations and international trade law. It is highly recommended for students, academics, policymakers, and practitioners of South Asian studies, international relations, and international trade law.³⁰

“Ashraf, Tahir, Md Nasrudin, and Md Akhir. "Revisiting SAARC: A perspective from Pakistan." *South Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2020).”

Since its establishment, the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation has not been able to achieve the expected results. The main reason for this is the region's antagonistic relationship between India and Pakistan. The article aims to explore the various factors that have prevented the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) from becoming a vibrant economic community. It also explores the opportunities that it can offer to the people of South Asia. The study finds that the lack of implementation of the declaration and the strict visa regime are some of the key barriers that prevent the region from developing effective cooperation. This article argues that the various member states of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation can enhance their cooperation by managing their differences with India and Pakistan. It also states that the two countries' economic co-operation has a spillover effect on the region's economic activities.³¹

³⁰ Owais Hasan Khan, *Strengthening regional trade integration in South Asia*. Springer Singapore, 2021.

³¹ Tahir Ashraf, Md Nasrudin, and Md Akhir. "Revisiting SAARC: A perspective from Pakistan." *South Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2020).

“Ghuman, Ranjit Singh, and Da Vinder Kumar Madaan. "Indo-Pakistan trade cooperation and SAARC." (2006).”

The establishment of trade ties between Pakistan and India was a direct result of the partition of the subcontinent on August 14, 1947. Both of these countries were heavily dependent on each other for their trade. Following the partition, both of these countries started to take various measures to lessen their dependence on each other. Due to the high prices of various products imported by both the countries, the mutual trade between them has been estimated to have generated potential gains of around Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 crores. These gains can be realized through lower prices and better transshipment and transport arrangements. The trade between India and Pakistan could have increased to \$8802 million in 2004 if the two countries had resolved certain issues in their relations. However, this would require little political will and little investment. In 1997, Pakistan's imports from India were at 4.8 percent, while India's imports from Pakistan were at 6.4 percent. The establishment of the South Asian Association for the Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 has significantly enhanced the intra-trade relations between India and Pakistan, which are two of the most populous countries in the region. The implementation of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) on January 1, 2006, is expected to further boost the trade between the two nations. This paper looks into the various problems that affect the trade between Pakistan and India.³²

“Faizal Yahya, "Pakistan, SAARC and ASEAN relations." Contemporary Southeast Asia (2004): 346-375.”

The dynamics of South Asia's political and economic integration have been influenced by the relationship between its two largest economies, India and Pakistan, which has been a central component of the region's development. While the challenges of regional cooperation are often met by different approaches, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been able to provide a framework for the development of relations between its members. The article aims to discuss the various implications of the improved relationship between India and Pakistan

³² Ranjit Singh Ghuman, and Da Vinder Kumar Madaan. "Indo-Pakistan trade cooperation and SAARC." (2006).

within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It also explores how this can affect the relationship between ASEAN and Pakistan.³³

“Ahmed, Zahid Shahab. "Managing the refugee crises in South Asia: The role of SAARC." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 28, no. 2 (2019): 210-219.”

There are around three million refugees in South Asia, and their long-standing presence poses a significant challenge. The region's history of inter-state conflicts and colonialism has also contributed to the refugee movement. The article aims to explore the various factors that influence the development and implementation of South Asian cooperation in addressing the issue of forced migration. It also focuses on the organization's structure and culture.³⁴

“Paul, Sonatan. "Role of saarc in strengthening the relationship between India and Pakistan: A critical analysis." *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2013): 114-125.”

Before the formation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), each member country had its own set of expectations regarding the association. These expectations were influenced by their historical, political, and economic conditions. However, these have changed due to the transformations taking place in the international, political, and economic environment. As a result, both Pakistan and India joined the organization with more apprehensions. However, through the various meetings and the establishment of the framework, they have been able to achieve their goals. For instance, by developing closer ties with other member countries, Pakistan has been able to enhance its foreign policy capabilities. Through the platform of the organization, Pakistan has been able to interact with other member countries and promote its anti-India stance. It has also been able to use the grievances of other nations against New Delhi. Despite the strained relationship between Pakistan and India, the country has been

³³ Faizal Yahya, "Pakistan, SAARC and ASEAN relations." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2004): 346-375.

³⁴ Zahid Shahab Ahmed, "Managing the refugee crises in South Asia: The role of SAARC." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 28, no. 2 (2019): 210-219.

able to maintain its positive engagement within South Asia. This is because of the various activities of the organization. Unfortunately, due to the political and economic conditions in both countries, it was not possible for the two nations to regularly interact. When interacting with other member countries through the framework of the organization, Pakistan's criticism is lessened. Through this interaction, the country was able to moderate its views regarding the cooperation between India and other members of the group.³⁵

“Ashraf, Muhammad Tasleem, Ali Shan Shahn, and Zeeshan Qammar. "Role of SAARC for People to People Contacts between India-Pakistan: Achievements and Potential for Friendly Relations." *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 6, no. 2 (2022): 689-704.”

The deteriorating relationship between Pakistan and India has been attributed to the issues of Kashmir and cross-border terrorism. The two countries have been going through a period of uncertainty due to these issues. The tension between the people of both countries has generated distrust and hate. Gaps in contracts have raised concerns about their future. The people of both nations should exert pressure on policymakers to improve relations. Due to the traditional rivalry between Pakistan and India, the people of these two countries have weak links. This study aims to explore the role of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in enhancing the connectivity between these two nations.³⁶

“Jabeen, Mussarat, and Ishtiaq A. Choudhry.”Role of SAARC for countering terrorism in South Asia." *South Asian Studies* 28, no. 2 (2013): 389.”

South Asia is regarded as one of the most dangerous places in the world due to the activities of terrorist groups. The region has been continuously highlighted as a potential target

³⁵ Sonatan Paul, "Role of saarc in strengthening the relationship between India and Pakistan: A critical analysis." *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2013): 114-125.

³⁶ Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Ali Shan Shahn, and Zeeshan Qammar. "Role of SAARC for People to People Contacts between India-Pakistan: Achievements and Potential for Friendly Relations." *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 6, no. 2 (2022): 689-704.

of terrorism since the inception of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985. As a result, the organization has been working on establishing a collective mechanism to address the issue. Due to the increasing threats, terrorism was on the agenda of the 3rd Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held in 1987 in Kathmandu. All the participating nations signed a treaty aimed at combating this issue. Although the Convention on Combating Terrorism came into effect in 1988, it did not prevent the activities of terrorist groups. Several initiatives were also taken by this forum, but the results were not satisfactory. This paper aims to review the various initiatives that were taken by this body, as well as identify the obstacles that prevent the implementation of a joint strategy.³⁷

The above review of literature presented a clear picture of SAARC, a regional organization established for the purpose of regional integration between the South Asian countries. However none of the above work present any particular and specific study on the selected topic of this reach work “Pakistan’s Role in SAARC (2000-2010): A Critical Appraisal”. Hence based upon on the above literature review, research has tried its best to search and highlights the role of Pakistan in SAARC in an academic way.

1.8. Scheme of Study

This study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 introduction deals with the Statement of the Problems, Aims and Objectives of the Study, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Research Methodology, Review of the Literature and Scheme of Study.

Chapter 2 is about SAARC’s role in regional development. It examines the role of SAARC in regional development and regional integration.

³⁷ Mussarat Jabeen, and Ishtiaq A. Choudhry. "Role of SAARC for countering terrorism in South Asia." *South Asian Studies* 28, no. 2 (2013): 389.

Chapter 3 has extensively analyzed the role of regional countries in SAARC.

Chapter 4 is about Pakistan's role in SAARC. This chapter is divided into three parts. Part 1 is about the historical background of Pakistan's role in SAARC from 1985-2000. The second part of the chapter is about Pakistan's role in SAARC from 2000 to 2010. Part three of the chapter consisted of issues and hurdles for the ineffective role of Pakistan in SAARC.

Chapter 5 is about the findings, conclusion and suggestions/recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

SAARC ROLE IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is what SAARC stands for. India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives are all in this part of the world. Even though South Asian countries have a lot of natural resources, which is one reason for their wealth, they still need help from other countries to keep it. If the countries in South Asia want to do well, they must work together. In the first chapter's problem statement, it says that not all the platform's principles and programmes have been fully put into place and that there is still hostility between countries. The chapter on research methods talks about how to find secondary data and how to use theme analysis to investigate a wide range of different topics in depth. The themes came out of a thorough investigation that used books, magazines, newspapers, and reports. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) wants to improve the monitoring system, the sharing of data, and the sharing of new ideas in order to deal with these long-lasting social problems in South Asia. Terrorist attacks were stopped by making a deal to get rid of terrorism. It was important to do this because it made sure that no group would keep giving money to terrorists. In 2005, after the situation in South Asian countries got a lot of attention, a deal was made to help get rid of terrorism. Even though SAARC has made a lot of progress in both drug abuse and people trafficking, they are still important problems that need to be solved. Therefore, through various smaller divisions the chapter largely discussed the theme of regional development by SAARC in this chapter.

2.1 SAARC in South Asia

South Asia is a region that is composed of countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Its natural resources are what contribute to its prosperity, but they need to work together with their neighbours to benefit from them. South Asian countries need to work together to develop their economies. However, the implementation of the platform's ideas and policies has

not been fully carried out. This is the main reason why the distrust among the nations still persists. The methodology chapter of this study discusses the various steps involved in collecting and analyzing secondary data. Through the use of thematic analysis, the topics have been thoroughly explored. A comprehensive study of various sources, such as journals, newspapers, and research reports, has also been conducted.

2.2 Role of mutual relationship among South Asian countries

SAARC was established in 1985 as an economic and political organization for the welfare and betterment of South Asian countries. Among the objectives of the organization, one basic objective is increasing the pace of growth of any country that is a member and pinpointing those causes that can ensure peace, permanence, and progress in any nation. Therefore, the mutual relationship has extreme importance in South Asian countries. Various incidents have been there where nations like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh have experienced extremely bad circumstances like the war of 1965 between India and Pakistan, disintegration of Pakistan, and the emergence of Bangladesh and many more such issues that are vast to be numbered. SAARC in these recent years through the best possible steps have made it viable that poverty is reduced, solved energy crisis issues, promoted trade activities, promoted social welfare activities and many more. Therefore, the need for an organization to solve the issues regarding the crisis faced by the countries that are in close relations has always been there. Arshad and Ali 2017 talked about regionalism in South Asia and stated important facts regarding the role of mutual relationships among South Asian countries³⁸. India and Pakistan are the two dominant entities and after World War II there was a need to unite the countries of South Asia especially the rivals' ones and the platform of SAARC was an important element for this unity. SAARC is also important because it was established based on shared interests and benefits with special importance to friendship among nations. Another element that makes SAARC a success is its decision-making ability as it does not focus on political regimes and strategies but instead, its institutional mechanism makes the working of the organization better.

³⁸ Farooq Arshad and Lubna Abid Ali, "Regionalism in South Asia and Role of SAARC," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 38, no. 1 (2017): 123-142.

2.3 SAARC and its role in Economic Development in the Region

A total of 3.3% of the world has been encompassed by the 8 countries of SAARC countries. Out of which three countries including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are the ones which are having water or more specifically Oceans that make them Important throughout the world because of their trade opportunities, the second group is Sri Lanka and the Maldives which are Islands whereas the third group is of the landlocked countries including Afghanistan, Nepal, and Bhutan. So, a strong connection among the countries to promote collateral relations is very important. Landlocked countries do need help to access waters, therefore countries can be a great help to one another to promote economic benefits. SAARC has been working on all such grounds for years because economically if the South Asian countries are weak, they cannot prosper as a whole too. Therefore, the need to have a strong economy can never be denied. In 2001 a regional economic integration was announced by the Asian Development Bank, and it had some quite effective economic conditions and rules that could help improve the economic conditions of the country. This session worked with the financial aid of the Asian Development Bank and this session worked on the following priorities, reduction in tariff barriers to lessen the taxes on trade facilities. Cooperation on energy and its resources to provide energy facilities to the countries that face an energy crisis. Trade improvement measures to increase improvement for the countries with fewer trade opportunities.

Cooperation regarding investments was also prioritized to promote business and the removal or reduction of goods from the sensitive list. In this regards SAARC agreement on Trade in Services called SATIS was also implemented, and it had a positive impact on trade facilities one important aspect of this also session was the ability of better connectivity options like through rails, ships, roads, and air and to improve bilateral relations among nations. An economy can become advanced from a developing economy especially in South Asia through the policies of trade promotion including SAPTA (South Asian Trade and Partnership Arrangement), Free Trade Area (FTA), Multi Sectors Technical and Economic Cooperation and through PDA (Power Development Agreements). SAFTA is a treaty that aims to remove tariff barriers and establish pacts for managing any framework related to trade and resolving any dispute among member countries. The pact shared mutual experience, and this allowed the possibilities for mutual relations among nations. Hence, the mainstay economy would be agriculture and food

production for the population and raw materials would be other drivers of the economy. SAARC has been convincing in its definitive point – economic integration - from its commencement. As the Chamber of Commerce Industries reinforces private and scaffolds the correspondence hole between businesses networks across entire nations. It united the politically entirely went against territories of South Asia in a solitary stage. The prevailing voice of the corporate area pushed legislators to accept more open exchange game plans. Accordingly, the SAPTA, SAFTA, and presently SAARC administration arrangements were framed.

2.4. Role of SAARC in democracy provision

SAARC countries have experienced setbacks in the provisions of democracy after their establishment like many countries including Pakistan have failed to establish a democratic state after independence. The times of martial law in the country give us clear evidence of the situation and the need to make the country a democratic state. But after the establishment of the SAARC organization, various non-democratic institutions were prohibited. Therefore, SAARC has made these countries an example of democracy and the other parts of countries in the globe are lacking democratic systems. In 2008, there was Freedom House Annual Report was conducted, and this report showed that only 14 countries performed well whereas 34 countries performed very badly as compared to the previous year which is 2007. Two countries in Southeast Asia including Myanmar and Thailand are glaring examples that performed badly in this period. Whereas, concerning the South Asian countries democracy prevailed nicely and there was a positive democratic resurgence in the country. Starting from Nepal the people's movement started bringing an end to the non-democratic monarchy in the country in 2008 and thereby establishing a republic state. In 2008, Bhutan also elected a representative government based on the legislature and enforcing democratic rules. The two countries made sure to have a democratic government that would be based on equal rights and duties. In Pakistan, martial law came to an end in 2008, and General Pervaiz Musharraf was forced to retreat whereas Asif Ali Zardari of PPP became President of Pakistan ensuring a democratic state with legislatures that were vital for democracy.

Similarly, in Maldives and Bangladesh, there was also a democratic surge which prevailed in both countries, for example in Maldives a popularly elected president defeated the

former president and in 2008 a democratic state was established. The same was with Bangladesh the Awami League succeeded and hence in 2009, the former president was dethroned promoting democracy in the country. The two other countries including Sri Lanka and India were already democratic states at that time and Afghanistan also became a democracy in 2004. Therefore, SAARC played a vital role in the establishment of democracy on its premises and made sure that no such unethical or unjust activity would take place in the region. The SAARC charter of democracy insists the member states would accept all the rules of democracy in the country. The most promising rule concerning democracy is that continuation of the up-gradation of the democratic establishment and cycles, strikingly through compelling coordination and balanced governance to end violence against children.³⁹ One other rule was that political parties are very important in establishing democracy in the country. Therefore, democracy is very important in the efficient working of the state and hence SAARC usually plays a very positive role in the maintenance of democracy in the South Asian region.

2.5. SAARC cooperation in rural development

In 1981, a regional South Asian corporation met in Sri Lanka and identified the need for an organization for rural development. Rural development is considered very important for any country. The corporation which was a study group admitted meeting together several times and then after the establishment of SAARC, the committee focused on meeting afterwards with seminars, meetings, workshops, and programs. Training programs and workshops on rural progress incorporate a training course on poverty-focused rural development, decentralization, a workshop on local-level planning for rural poor, design and evaluation of agricultural and rural development programs, people's participation in rural development and the local government system as a vehicle for rural development. The rural development by SAARC ensures the wide availability of rural resources. South Asia is an important sector of the global population with urban and rural areas. Rural areas are dependent mostly on livestock and agriculture. People usually do not earn a lot because of the old practices in agriculture and poverty. Therefore, this results in fewer earnings because of these issues. Various SAARC leaders proposed that

³⁹SAARC Charter of Democracy – South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children,” <http://saievac.org/2012/01/23/saarc-charter-of-democracy-2/>

economic and rural development is essential for improving security, nutritious security, employment security, and sustainable growth.

The South Asian region has a population of over 1.79 billion people. Most of them live in rural areas. This region's agricultural production can be improved through the development of rural infrastructure. It also encourages the establishment of effective technical collaborations and the use of innovative technologies.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has urged the development of sustainable agriculture techniques. This was one of the main goals of the organization's integrated program of action, which was focused on rural development. The development of rural areas is very important as it allows people to gain a deeper understanding of the various aspects of agriculture. It also helps in bringing about the necessary projects and programs in these regions. During the fourth meeting of the agriculture ministers of South Asia, the ministers encouraged the establishment of effective rural development projects. The establishment of a technical committee was also carried out by the organization. It was able to help the country develop its rural development strategy. This will allow it to focus more on the areas that need to be developed.

2.6 Living standards of Asians and improvements by SAARC in the field of biotechnology

The reinforcement of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 has resulted in significant developments in the organization's activities at all levels. The goal of the project was to enhance the social and economic conditions of its members and expand cooperation with other regions of the world. Due to the increasing number of achievements and the recognition of the importance of local participation, members of the organization have started to believe that the time has come for them to restore the association. They are also calling on the authorities to implement effective strategies and plans to improve the situation of the region.

All member states coordinated and made efforts to boost technology in the region. The foundation and beginning of this cooperation might be seen when looking into the benefits which SAARC implied to increase the living standard of people. Many examples are there including the Establishment of SAARC Development Funds, South Asia's women empowerment, South Asian

University in New Delhi, SAARC cultural festivals, SAARC foundation for writers and literature, South Asian corporative environmental fund, SAARC centred designed for policy studies, South Asian games (Olympic centre), establishment or development of food bank, South Asian International college in Bangladesh and many more such projects to improve the living standards for the general public's.

It is significant that being a weak or more precisely a poor region, SAARC countries can't foster all parts of their economy alone. They require finance, assets, training, and specialized guidance from more created regions and nations. One of the most recent great improvements in SAARC has been the association of other industrialized countries in giving help with social and monetary regions since its establishment. As of late, member states have arrived at the resolution that they would invite any guide from eyewitness nations, and as spectators, The US, China, Japan, Iran, EU, and South Korea, has made it plain that it will aid the structure of the social framework and catastrophe alleviation⁴⁰. Therefore, various nations have helped SAARC in its development, and it eventually led to the development of the people living in the society. SAARC occupies a major position therefore to improve the living of the people. Be it the implementation of Bhutan's concept of 'Goss National Happiness' that promoted social progress with traditions and culture in consideration or the trading arrangements made by SAARC between the member countries, or the efforts made to promote sports or the reduction or alleviation of poverty. SAARC has been quite important in all these genres to improve the living standard of the societies that are settled in South Asia.

In 1990, the presidents of various countries urged the establishment of cooperation in the field of biotechnology at the culmination of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meetings. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) established a working group on biotechnology in 2004 to encourage local participation in the field. The group has met several times and finished a concept paper on a program of collaboration. The paper discussed various aspects of the biotechnology industry in the region. Hereditarily changed organic entities and bio safety, marker-helped determination, bio-manure and biogas, immunization creation, and genomics are among the region where the program takes

⁴⁰ Dharmendra Singh and Nikola Stakic, "Financial inclusion and economic growth nexus: Evidence from SAARC countries", *South Asia Research* 41, no. 2 (2021): 238-258.

into consideration joint effort. Therefore, SAARC has worked on all the grounds that were important in the field of biotechnology as well.

2.7 SAARC and its association with culture and education

Culture and education are the two most important assets of any nation. Culture ensures that decides the future of a nation. On the other hand, education leads a country towards ultimate success because if a nation is educated and the literacy rate is high, it would help them to be prosperous in every field of life. SAARC countries are enriched with culture and their love for culture can never be finished. Therefore, preserving culture is very important for Asian nations. In the various summits held by SAARC special importance was laid on culture.

The 13th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit was held in Dhaka in 2005. The importance of culture was acknowledged as a contributing factor to the development of South Asian communities. They believe that culture can play a vital role in improving South Asian countries' comprehension and associations. During the second meeting of the Culture Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on October 31, 2007, they adopted a comprehensive agenda for culture. It included the establishment of a website for the region, the development of a collection of social source materials, and the cooperation with other organizations.⁴¹

SAARC also made sure to set up a connection among cultures and different areas to accomplish social and financial development, item advancement joint effort, and social advancement. Therefore, culture was rendered extremely important in SAARC and many adequate measures were taken to promote a culture within various countries. There was the establishment of the SAARC Museum of Textiles and Handicrafts in New Delhi to preserve the textile as well as the culture and other handicrafts of the South Asian societies. Therefore, the importance of culture was never overlooked by the SAARC organization. Education has also been of great importance in SAARC and there had been the great value of being educated for ages. Literacy proficiency is imperative basic freedom and the foundation for deep-rooted

⁴¹ Rajiv Kumar and Omita Goyal, eds., *Thirty years of SAARC: Society, Culture and Development* (SAGE Publications India, 2016).

realisation, which is taken on using training, as per the SAARC goals. It is vital for social and human advancement in light of its capacity to transform people. It is an instrument strengthening individuals, families and social orders to better their well-being, pay, and relationship with the world. Subsequently, the heads of the SAARC part state have paid unique accentuation to bringing proficiency step up in the locale through expanding instruction quality. Ignorance was a not kidding obstacle to financial advancement and social freedom, and its disposal all through the district, particularly utilizing agreeable endeavours inside SAARC, should be pushed with power.

Leaders of the various state governments and organizations have been communicating their obligation to ensure that all learners have access to quality education. This objective is carried out through the development of effective educational plans and assessment frameworks that are designed to meet the needs of all students.⁴² The forerunners chose to energize local joint efforts in professional instruction and preparation. The pioneers taught their Education Ministers to draft a Regional Strategy for Improving Education Quality to work on the guidelines of South Asian instructive foundations and better work for the area's young generation.

4.8. Security aspects of SAARC including terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking:

Many measures have been taken by SAARC to promote awareness about the security aspects. Security aspects including terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking are a nuisance to human beings and sufficient efforts were required to eradicate these security issues. Terrorism has been the greatest threat to mankind for ages and proper efforts would make this issue go away. SAARC had always made sufficient efforts to eradicate terrorism and other security issues. Numerous SAARC gatherings underlined the need for joint exertion in fighting oppression in its structures as a whole and indications, just as the way that terrorists ought not to be absolved from restraint. The need of making reasonable answers to address the issues of cybercrime and transnational coordinated wrongdoing, just as guaranteeing well-being and security for social and financial advancement, especially for youth, ladies, and youngsters, is additionally accentuated.

⁴² Zahid Shahab Ahmed, *Regionalism and Regional Security in South Asia: The role of SAARC*. Rutledge, 2016.

Subsequently, SAARC is endeavouring to further develop the observing framework, data trade, and innovation trade to battle these normal social indecencies within the environment of South Asia. A pact was signed to eradicate terrorism which was quite important to put an end to terrorist attacks because these pacts made sure to cut the financial funding by any organization to terrorists. There is a great deal of importance was given to eradicating terrorism from South Asian countries and it included a pact that was signed in 2005⁴³. Drug and human trafficking are other important aspects that need to be addressed and SAARC has been quite important in the removal of this nuisance from the region. A pact was presented in 1990 and "SAARC conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances" was signed. This pact aimed to look into the issues of drug trafficking and how these issues would ultimately lead to the destruction of mankind. In 1992 in Colombo, another important commission regarding drug control was established "SAARC conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances."

As a result, pacts were signed. Talking about the latest facts by UNODC it is estimated that drug levels have increased very much as compared to the past, not just drugs but drug trafficking as well, the "SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution of 2002." The principal objective of this Convention is to urge member states to cooperate to battle different parts of trafficking in ladies and youngsters, for example, the avoidance of ladies and kids being utilized in global prostitution organizations, especially where SAARC nations are the nations of beginning, travel, and objective, and the bringing home and restoration of trafficking casualties.

⁴³ Irum Shaheen, "South Asian association for regional cooperation (SAARC): Its role, hurdles and prospects." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 15, no. 6 (2013): 01-09.

CHAPTER 3

REGIONAL COUNTRIES ROLE IN SAARC

In this chapter, the roles of South Asian Countries in SAARC have been analyzed. This chapter focused primarily on beautifying the neighbourhood. When they initially met, they discussed India's position. If SAARC is to grow, India must be the responsible older sibling, coordinating its policies with those of its neighbours and considering the requirements, concerns, and interests of the region's smaller members. India must demonstrate its willingness to take the necessary initiatives and actions by increasing its financial contributions to assist the region in addressing its social and economic issues and making greater efforts to develop trusting relationships with other United Nations members with whom it has had long-standing bilateral disputes. The Bangladeshi portion is then dissected. Bangladesh has brought up bilateral problems while participating in SAARC and has never been reluctant to work "in tandem" with Pakistan on issues affecting India. It would be irresponsible to disregard Bangladesh's membership in the SAARC on account of this. Bangladesh anticipated that the gathering will accomplish a variety of things that would enhance the lives of its citizens. We then discuss why countries like Nepal and Bhutan are significant. Nepal and Bhutan's tourism industry has a tremendous deal of untapped potential to produce cash, new jobs, and international tourism. If Bhutan prioritised tourism, it could be a significant economic driver. Bhutan is once again a prominent player in SAARC after learning about Nepal's and Bhutan's duties within the organisation. Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and the Maldives were also assigned substantial tasks. Beyond 2015, the status of Afghanistan's SAARC membership is unknown. Consequently, economic integration with South Asia and the gains from the Indian economy would depend on internal conditions. The theme of the countries role has been discussed in this chapter.

31. The Role of India in SAARC

As a region, South Asia is mainly composed of India and its four neighbour countries: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bhutan. Because of this, India has maintained a relatively low

profile within the organization. It avoids sending out the wrong signal to its neighbours that it wants to control the region. Despite its immense infrastructure and technological capabilities, India did not obstruct the setting up of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretariat in Kathmandu. This was because it wanted to avoid any misunderstandings between its member countries.⁴⁴ Despite its immense technological capabilities, India was one of the first countries to establish an agricultural information center (SAIC) in Bangladesh. This was also because it wanted to maintain a positive relationship with its South Asian neighbors. As a part of the organization, India has been working to address the various threats and problems that affect the region.

In this context, India highlighted the necessity of contact between people including the role of NGOs which is why government efforts for regional cooperation can be strengthened. India has played a key role in encouraging trade and economic cooperation in South Asia, therefore the primary problems of the region like poverty, hunger, poor health and unemployment can be addressed by collective efforts among member countries. India is a region that shares borders with nearly all the member countries of South Asia. India if wished can improve and have a significant role in relationship building amongst the member of SAARC. India possesses a dominant position where SAARC is in the region and it can have a huge impact on the efficient working of the member countries. But India does share several disputes with the member countries. One major dispute between India and Pakistan that needs to be resolved at the earliest hour is the Kashmir dispute because it is the leading cause of all disputes between two neighbouring Pakistan and India. Various SAARC summits have happened in India, and they did have positive outcomes. The First SAARC Commerce Ministers Conference was convened in New Delhi on the 8th and 9th of January 1996' to institutionalize economic cooperation among SAARC countries and to promote intra-SAARC trade under the SAPTA accord. India also sponsored the 'SAARC Trade Fair in the same year (9-14 January), with the theme of cooperation for growth.

In 2004, India suggested the establishment of a task force within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to monitor and map out the progress of the

⁴⁴ Romi Jain, "India and SAARC: An analysis." *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2005): 55-74. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41950459>

communications industry in the region. The main objective of the task force is to bring low costs and technology to the masses. India has supported the establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as a framework for economic integration and the promotion of regional prosperity. It will continue to play a leading role in the development of the region's trade and cooperation. If the region is to progress, India should play a more prominent role in addressing the various concerns of its smaller neighbors. As part of its efforts to improve the region's socioeconomic conditions, India should also step up its efforts to build confidence with its partners. This can be done through the establishment of more funds and measures to address the issues of its neighbors.

3.2 Bangladesh's Role in the Development of SAARC:

Bangladesh is an important member of SAARC which came into existence in 1971 after its separation from Pakistan. Bangladesh just like any other member state played very crucial role in the development of SAARC. SAARC was born and developed in 'non-controversial areas, such as society and culture with the adoption of a "functional approach." SAARC's institutions and programs have been evolving slowly but continuously since 1985.

The importance of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can be acknowledged as its contribution to the development of the region. Its 36th Kathmandu Declaration provides Bangladesh with a framework for the establishment of joint projects in the Bay of Bengal. The leaders of the organization also recognized the various contributions of the Blue Economy to the region. In 2014, the government of Bangladesh suggested the establishment of a blue economy as a solution to the maritime disputes between India and Myanmar. Through the corridor diplomacy of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bangladesh has been able to enhance its relations with other countries. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter prohibits the Forum from discussing controversial or contentious subjects. Through informal discussions, the leaders of the organization have been able to improve the relationship between their nations.

Bangladesh began the SAARC process with two goals in mind. The first was to fight India at the negotiating table due to Bangladesh's fear of a lack of potentiality (system impacting states). The second goal was to elicit sympathy from regional communities and apply multilateral

regional pressure on India⁴⁵. As a result, Bangladesh's approach was to neutralize India's ability to settle bilateral issues. Bangladesh has traditionally been paranoid about Indian dominance as a small neighbour of regional power, and efforts to increase superpower participation in the region are an attempt to alleviate this worry. Bangladesh's goal in forming SAARC was to create a South Asian collective forum to engage India on a regional level. Bangladesh's endeavour had a strategic goal of diluting the so-called Indian ideology. Later, Bangladesh frequently used SAARC to raise bilateral issues, and it has never hesitated to work "in tandem" with Pakistan on topics that threaten India. Therefore, the role of Bangladesh cannot be overlooked in the South Asian Association for Regional Corporations. Bangladesh had clear aims of benefiting its population through the forum of SAARC.

3.3 Nepal's Role in the Development of SAARC:

Nepal is the main country in South Asia to propose local participation in hydropower advancement utilizing its water assets. Participation among Asian nations i.e., India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh and any remaining local nations is an immense asset of abundant nature that can be tapped to assist the member countries. Nepal's efforts to construct the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu demonstrated the country's strong commitment to the regional organization. Nepal aspired to expand its bilateral cooperation into a broader regional framework and arrangement by joining regional organizations like SAARC. Nepal has always been a proponent of holding SAARC summits on time and firmly enforcing decisions made at the summits since its foundation. Since its inception, Nepal has maintained a strong attachment to SAARC, seeing regional organizations as forums for engaging with the outside world for economic progress. The SAARC platform has aided Nepal in establishing an independent identity in South Asia and beyond during the last three decades. Similarly, the SAARC platform helped to improve access to Bangladesh. Because high-level exchanges of visits with such countries are rare, it provided a regular forum for connecting with them. In addition, Nepal views SAARC as a critical tool for boosting regional cooperation. Nepal is likewise driving in various provincially significant fields.

⁴⁵ Sanjay K. Bhardwaj, "Bangladesh in SAARC: Identity Issues and Perspectives." *India International Centre Quarterly* 41, no. 3/4 (2014): 128-141, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24390783>.

The eighteenth SAARC Summit in Kathmandu saw Nepal assume a vital part in helping to 'start participation in the areas of movement, cooperatives, and social insurance, which was incorporated without precedent for the SAARC plan and reflected in the Declaration. SAARC is a significant discussion for Nepal to reinforce associations with neighbours. Given its geological position, SAARC is significant for Nepal in the wording of security, exchange, improvement, the travel industry, and the psychological oppressor danger. Regional collaboration is the greatest way to fulfil Nepal's economic objectives. SAARC assists Nepal in reducing its reliance on India, which can only be accomplished through strengthening ties with neighbours through SAARC. Therefore, an insight into the role of Nepal in SAARC countries provides us with evidence that SAARC is formed and is being developed with the efforts of its members countries.

3.4 Bhutan's Role in the Development of SAARC:

Due to its location, Bhutan is a landlocked state that is bordered by China and India. Both of these countries isolate the nation from the rest of the world. However, it keeps in touch with other nations through Indian Territory.⁴⁶ Bhutan cannot defend its borders in a battle since it is economically and militarily weak (with a force of barely 10,000 soldiers). In such a situation, it must turn to friendly neighbours like India, as well as regional and international organizations like 'SAARC, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the United Nations. Bhutan's active participation in SAARC has served to expand commerce, with the country aiming to strengthen economic links with Nepal and Bangladesh through SAARC to minimize its trade imbalance with India. Membership in SAARC proved to be a watershed moment in The foreign policy of Bhutan is based on the country's participation in the organization's developmental activities. It encourages joint exploitation of its natural resources and mineral deposits. It also plans to participate in various trade and industry activities that are currently unexploited and untapped due to a lack of infrastructure.

Bhutan is seeing an increase in Indian tourists as well as travel packages from other SAARC countries. Bhutan's 'Bhutan Tourism Corporation' is promoting 'Regional Tourism'

⁴⁶ Rajesh Kharat, "The Significance of SAARC for Bhutan." *India International Centre Quarterly* 41, no. 3/4 (2014): 86-98.

under the auspices of 'SAARC (BTC)'. The BTC offers special discounts and concessions to students under the age of 25, children, and travel brokers, as well as enabling travellers to use their currencies in Bhutan, all of which help to attract more visitors. Bhutan's tourism industry has enormous potential in terms of foreign revenue as well as employment and income generation. Bhutan tourism would enable it to get towards the heights of success if it is being worked upon properly. Hence, looking into the literature on the role of Bhutan in SAARC countries one comes to know that Bhutan is again an important member of SAARC.

3.5 Sri Lanka's Role in the Development of SAARC:

Sri Lanka is again an important member of SAARC countries and has performed a critical part in the improvement of the SAARC organization. SAARC cooperation and progress are critical for Sri Lanka's development and the country "supports India's priority in advancing the 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)'"⁴⁷. Now that Sri Lanka wants to achieve strong relations with other countries and smooth trade with member states, it wants to continue in the SAARC process. However, the process cannot move without Indian cooperation. According to former ambassador 'Rajiv Bhatia', "India now has to address the subtle connection that our neighbours make between SAARC and BIMSTEC. The issue of connectivity between South Asia's capital cities is a major concern that needs to be resolved. Apart from New Delhi, the other capitals of the region, such as Dhaka, Kathmandu, and Colombo, need to come together to address it.

Sri Lanka allowed the SAARC's times of stagnation and the nation's craving to diminish its reliance on American and European business sectors, Sri Lanka's transition to East Asia appears to be unpreventable⁴⁸. Moreover, undeniably internal unfamiliar and financial strategies of the United States in the region and the subsequent change in worldwide monetary strength towards the East, Sri Lanka has improved its strategy to place itself as a territorial monetary focus. Be that as it may, the change in the centre may make adjusting Indian and Chinese

⁴⁷ N. Basu, "Sri Lanka Wants 'Cooperation & Progress' In SAARC, India's Focus Still On BIMSTEC", *The Print*, 2020, <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/sri-lanka-wants-cooperationprogress-in-saarc-indias-focus-still-on-bimstec/362793/>

⁴⁸ Kithmina Hewage, "Sri Lanka's New Regionalism: Looking Beyond South Asia", 2017, https://www.ips.lk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FT_20July_Sri-Lanka%E2%80%99s-New-Regionalism.pdf

interests testing. The two countries consider Sri Lanka to be an essential resource while understanding the concerns of their neighbours. Sri Lanka should thusly look for a sort of “essential indiscrimination” to adjust India’s and China’s inclinations in supporting it, permitting both territorial heavyweights to benefit. Therefore, Sri Lanka’s role in the development of SAARC cannot be overlooked.

2.6 Maldives’ Role in the Development of SAARC:

The Maldives has requested that SAARC member states provide conducive climate for the grouping's summit, which has been postponed due to the withdrawal of five countries, including India. The Maldives urged nations to give a useful opportunity for leaders to debate crucial challenges confronting the region at the '19th SAARC Summit,' and expressed optimism that relevant member states will take the necessary steps to convene the summit as soon as possible. The Maldives is a significant member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It is located in the Indian Ocean, which is a vital route for international trade. Because of this, it plays a significant role in the organization's development.

3.7. Afghanistan’s Role in the Development of SAARC

Afghanistan goes about as a passage to Asian nations that is a vital component of the SAARC plan on financial participation and energy security. Terrorism, destitution, and ignorance are generally predominant in SAARC nations. Afghanistan acts as a crossroads between West and Central Asia which is a key component of the SAARC agenda on "economic cooperation and energy security." Afghanistan has suffered enormously as a poor country in the last decade as a result of ongoing civil strife. The country is, however, resourceful and has the potential to develop rapidly. India and Pakistan have been interested in fossil fuel reserves in 'Central Asian republics such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan’s' since the early 1990s⁴⁹. Turkmenistan pipeline Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI) was promoted by the US following its involvement in Afghanistan and received US support and financing pledges from the 'Asian Development Bank (ADB)'.

⁴⁹ Haroun Mir and Habib Wardak, “Afghanistan, SAARC and the Road Ahead”, *India International Centre Quarterly* 41, no. 3/4 (2014): 20-32, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24390774>

Furthermore, the most recent agreement reached between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan on the delivery of power passing through Afghanistan suggests that Afghanistan could play a vital role in assisting an energy-scarce South Asia in meeting its needs. In reality, the completion of the “Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (Casa-1000)” is a significant step in this direction, since Pakistan will become reliant on Afghanistan's transit routes for the first time in recent history. Afghanistan's decision to join SAARC was mostly motivated by economic considerations. “After decades of turmoil, there is a unique potential as a land bridge connecting Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East region”, former President Karzai emphasized clearly during his speech delivered in New Delhi during the SAARC 14th Summit. A reading of the SAARC Charter reveals that policymakers at the highest levels recognize the need for, and relevance of, a shared regional structure to develop economic cooperation and overcome geopolitical obstacles inherited from colonialism. The signing of the SAARC Treaty was insufficient to turn goodwill into political action. Several studies on wars and the lack of economic growth in South Asia have been published, to identify the origins of the region's conflict.

South Asian countries, like those in the Middle East, have seen arbitrary border demarcations since the subcontinent's independence in 1947. The formation of Pakistan and the ongoing rivalry between Pakistan and India are mostly to blame for the continuation of wars in Afghanistan. NATO countries' interest in Afghanistan and the area is waning, and regional countries will reclaim their role, as they did before NATO participation in the 1990s. Afghanistan's position within SAARC will be determined by Pakistan's whims in the post-2015 era. As a result, economic integration with South Asia, as well as any benefits from the Indian economic spill over, will be contingent on domestic political developments.

3.8. Pakistan’s role in the Development of SAARC

As the region's largest contributor to the development of its trade and economic activities, Pakistan's role in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been acknowledged and valued. Due to the instability of the multilateral framework following the Cold War, various trade-driven initiatives have emerged, such as the North American Free trade agreement (NAFTA), the European Union's (EU) Common Foreign Policy Initiative (CFR), and

the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC). Despite the region's various trade-related issues, South Asia has maintained a positive development by establishing a regional trade association in 1985.⁵⁰ Because of economic and political worries, SAARC has gained almost no ground in expanding intraregional business. Unfortunately, due to the political power that some members of the ruling class have in the region, they can easily ignore the interests of the majority. Various theories have been presented to explain how South Asian nations can't continue to trade with each other.

Government intercession in economic advancement through import replacement industrialization (ISI) strategies and firmly directed economic arrangements, just as South Asian economies fabricating indistinguishable kinds of commodities, are models. Doubters of SAARC guarantee that it has neglected to satisfy its guarantee and potential inferable from various verifiable and vital variables that have hampered endeavours to create a prosperous SAARC region. The South Asian Preferential Commerce Agreement (SAPTA) has neglected to improve intra-provincial trade since its creation in 1995. Intra-provincial trade between SAARC nations was scarce at US\$3 billion in 2003, representing fewer than 5% of the locale's general trade with the remainder of the globe. Globalization, on the other side, is impacting the pattern toward economic incorporation, empowering economies to search for options in contrast to the World Trade Organization's multilateral trade framework.

The division of sub-continent in 1947 brought about direct trade between Pakistan and India, as both countries were dependable on each other for business. Following that the two nations went to lengths to limit their dependence based on each other in conditions of business. In 1948-49, India represented 23.6 percent of Pakistan's overall products and 50.6 percent of its imports, individually. These offers were 1.3 percent and 0.06 percent in 1975-76, individually, though they were 1.1 percent and 2.7 percent in 2005-06. In 1951-52, Pakistan had a 2.2 percent and a 1.1 percent portion of India's overall products and imports, individually. This shows that trade between these two close-by countries has been for the most part disregarded. Somewhere in the range of 1965 and 1971, India and Pakistan battled two conflicts. Following the conflict, Pakistan forced an authority trade ban on India. Trade relations between the two neighbouring

⁵⁰ Faizal Yahya, "Pakistan, SAARC and ASEAN relations", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2004): 346-375. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25798692>.

countries were ended for a very long time, presenting snags for the two state-run administrations. Both had to import a major number of things from the overall market at a lot higher rates. The equivalent may have been imported from one another at far lower rates, bringing about altogether decreased transportation and trans-shipment costs. The second struggle between India and Pakistan started on December 3, 1971, because of the last option's line offences during the common conflict with East Pakistan (Bangladesh), which finished with East Pakistan's freedom on December 16, 1971, making trade relations disintegrate further. India and Pakistan are the two significant individuals from SAARC. India represents 76.6 percent of the number of inhabitants in SAARC and 73.3 percent of the absolute land region. Pakistan has around 10.7% of the total populace and 17.7% of the SAARC's absolute land region. Subsequently, they make up 87.3 percent of the SAARC's public and 91 percent of its region. The two countries are among the most uncreated on the planet. Therefore, the SAARC can benefit from the development of business relations between India and Pakistan.

SAARC was set up with the expectation that deliberate cooperation among its individuals would contribute to the evacuation of underlying uncertainty in the area by considering the conversation of touchy issues⁵¹. Despite this, the gathering didn't finish its cases of direction. It has not had the option to set its sanction in motion or achieve any results. The gathering couldn't turn into a useful stage because of proceeded with pressures of Pakistan and India. The domineering aspirations of India, just as the opposition between Pakistan and India block SAARC from being a functioning association that encourages close coordinated effort among its individuals. The organization, however, continues to be a useful tool for tiny governments in promoting bilateral collaboration and understanding. With time, Pakistan's isolation on both regional and international levels deepens. The most recent example seems to be the cancellation of Summit, which was scheduled to be held in Pakistan in the month of November 2016. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Bhutan' have all announced their departure from the 'SAARC Summit' as a result of India's withdrawal. SAARC's procedure states that a member state's non-participation will result in the organization's cancellation. Bangladesh officially announced its

⁵¹ Naveeda Yousaf, Manzoor Ahmad, and Zahir Shah. "SAARC Summit and Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Analysis." *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 54, no. 2 (2017), <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/20-Paper_54_2_17.pdf> accessed 4 August 2021.

departure by expressing Pakistan's displeasure with Bangladesh's policy of executing war criminals from 1971. Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan withdrew because the recent rise of 'violence and terrorism cast doubt on the SAARC Summit's success.

One of SAARC's most serious flaws is a lack of trust. Political divisions hurt member states' political desire to achieve economic partnership and integration. In this regard, the organization should be used to build trust and confidence between Pakistan and India, as well as to resolve issues. It should make every effort to properly implement its charter to reach out to the people of this region on a more personal level. Resolving political divisions, resolving existing conflicts, and improving mutual understanding and trust can help SAARC accomplish its true goals and ensure a successful and stable South Asia. Pakistan must rethink and reassess its existing foreign policy priorities to win over neighbouring governments in today's South Asia, where rivalries are giving way to pragmatic partnerships and economic relationships. Pakistan's status and respect in the region and around the world would undoubtedly be restored if it pursued a realistic and flexible foreign policy. To establish a reasonable agreement on all competing subjects, it is also critical to restart substantive dialogue with India. Pakistan must reach out to all of its neighbours, particularly Afghanistan, and deepen ties with Iran and other South Asian countries. Furthermore, Pakistan's foreign policymakers should make forming new diplomatic and economic alliances with powerful powers a major priority.

CHAPTER 4

PAKISTAN'S ROLE IN SAARC

This chapter discussed the role of SAARC in Pakistan. The theme was the Pakistan's development in all these years. The South Asian area has improved greatly in recent years because of SAARC's efforts, allowing it to tackle conventional and nonconventional threats with unprecedented efficacy. SAARC has recently allowed its member nations to take part in the best practises to address conventional and nonconventional challenges in the South Asian region. Poverty and illiteracy are just two of the social issues that get a lot of attention at the SAARC summit. It has a history of successfully resolving conflicts with the countries with which it maintains diplomatic ties. The two largest SAARC members are India and Pakistan.

The SAARC has played an essential role in addressing the critical need for peace among South Asian states. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is crucial since it was established on the principles of cooperation and mutual aid. It is important for SAARC's success that the organisation is able to make decisions independently of certain political regimes or policies, instead placing its faith in an institutional framework that helps the organisation function more efficiently. Extreme poverty and lack of education are only two of the many societal issues that will be discussed during the summit. They have a long history of interfering in the domestic affairs of countries with which they have diplomatic relations. Pakistan and India are the two largest countries in the SAARC.

The SAARC is an important part of the process of unification among South Asian countries, especially among those that were once at odds. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is well-known for its commitment to world goodwill and for being built on the concepts of mutual interests and benefits. Another factor contributing to SAARC's success is the organization's autonomy, which is grounded not on political regimes and

policies but in an institutional architecture that improves the organization's efficiency. Therefore, through this the chapter discussed the theme of development carried out in Pakistan by SAARC and the role of Pakistan in SAARC. Hence, the theme was discussed in-depth in this chapter.

The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation, also known as the SAARC, was established in 1985. It is a political and economic organization of South Asian nations. Its primary objective is to promote the well-being of its members by improving their lives. As a strategic country, Pakistan has been instrumental in the establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It is working to improve the living conditions of its people by providing them with the best possible services, and participating in the economic, social, agricultural, and educational, tourism and security aspects of the South Asian region. No doubt, Pakistan has immense importance in regional cooperation due to its strategic location in South Asia. Initially, the area of cooperation was cultural traditions, regional and ethnic but later it promoted the other fields of development such as technology, communication and non-conventional issues like climate change in the form of global warming. The main objective of Tajikistan is to maintain security integration in the region by eliminating terrorism.

Through its participation in various multilateral events, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Pakistan has been able to contribute to the development of the region. Several initiatives have also been established in the country to address the issues of the members of the organization. The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a framework for the cooperation of South Asian countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and India. These countries are expected to work together for the development of their economies. The political and economic organization was established in 1985 to promote the welfare of South Asian nations.

The primary objective of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was to enhance the pace of growth of member nations. It also identified the causes of progress and peace that can be achieved. The importance of the relationship between South Asian countries cannot be underestimated. There have been various crises that affected countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. These include the war between India and

Pakistan in 1965, the partition of Pakistan, and the creation of Bangladesh. The region has been experiencing a lot of negative effects, which made it worse.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has made significant progress in addressing various non-conventional and conventional issues of the region. One of these is the issue of illiteracy and poverty, which is addressed by the forum. It has also been working on addressing the crisis that exists between Pakistan and India, two of the founding members of the organization. The establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was based on the shared interests of the participating nations. Its decision-making capabilities have also been acknowledged as one of its success factors. This is because it does not focus on the political regimes of its member nations. Its institutional framework has allowed it to make effective decisions.

4.1 Pakistan's Role in the Development of SAARC

The establishment of trade-driven regional organizations following the Cold War era has helped boost the region's economy. Some of these include the North American Free trade agreement (NAFTA), the South Asian Development Community (SAARC), and the European Commission. South Asia lagged behind when it came to establishing a territorial trade agreement and enhancing regional cooperation. The region was also behind when it came to establishing intra-state business opportunities. The lack of cooperation and intra-state instability prevented the region from developing its full potential. Despite the various cultural, religious, and linguistic differences in South Asia, the administration in the region has a small elite class that has its own political power. This has led to issues that have been created by the lack of cooperation. Economic theories have been presented to explain the reasons why South Asian nations cannot trade with each other. Government intercession in economic advancement through import replacement industrialization (ISI) strategies and firmly directed economic arrangements, just as South Asian economies fabricating indistinguishable kinds of commodities, are models. Doubters of SAARC guarantee that it has neglected to satisfy its guarantee and potential inferable from various verifiable and vital variables that have hampered endeavours to create a prosperous SAARC region.

The South Asian Preferential Commerce Agreement (SAPTA) neglected to improve interprovincial trade since its creation in 1995. Intra-provincial trade between SAARC nations was scarce at US\$3 billion in 2003, representing fewer than 5% of the locale's general trade with the remainder of the globe. Globalization, on the other side, is impacting the pattern toward economic incorporation, empowering economies to search for options in contrast to the World Trade Organization's multilateral trade framework. The division of the Indian subcontinent on

August 14, 1947, brought about direct trade cooperation between India and Pakistan. At that point, India and Pakistan were firmly dependent on each other for business. Following that, the two nations went to lengths to limit their dependency based on each other in conditions of business. In 1948-49, India represented 23.6 per cent of Pakistan's overall products and 50.6 per cent of its imports, individually. These offers were 1.3 percent and 0.06 percent in 1975-76, individually, though they were 1.1 percent and 2.7 percent in 2005-06. In 1951-52, Pakistan had a 2.2 percent and a 1.1 percent portion of India's overall products and imports, individually. This shows that trade between these two neighbouring countries had been for the most part disregarded. Somewhere in the range of 1965 and 1971, India and Pakistan battled two conflicts. Following the conflict, Pakistan forced an authority trade banned by India. Trade relations between the two neighbouring countries were ended for a very long time, presenting snags for the two state-run administrations. Both had to import a major number of things from the overall market at a lot higher rates.

4.2 Pakistan's role in SAARC 1985-1999

Pakistan established mutual relations among the states under the umbrella of SAARC. Different summits were held in different countries to promote mutual relations. In 1983 Delhi declaration promoted corporations in tourism metrology, shipping, telecommunication, transport, agriculture, research, joint ventures, market promotions, scientific and technical cooperation, and education and cultural cooperation were considered important. Pakistan being the neighbouring country of India plays a vital role in this summit to ease tensions with India on border disputes, but it failed. All countries need to establish cordial relations with India established to positive relations with India, however, relations within relations between India and Pakistan are on the verge of collapse India and Pakistan are at loggerheads on multiple issues such as water issues

and Kashmir issues and other border issues which hinder the progress of SAARC countries due to the hegemony of India.

Historically, Pakistan played an important role in the SAARC because it hosted different meetings and made efforts maintain peace in the region. Furthermore, it is also contributed to the field of technology, science, media, telecommunication, trade, peace and other important aspects of cooperation with SAARC countries. In 1988 and 2004 Pakistan facilitated the 4th and 12th summits and equipped and encouraged policy measures to address regional issues. 1989 was the "SAARC Year against Drug Abuse." The year 1990 was likewise assigned as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child". The culmination additionally set out to lay out a specialized advisory group on training and to send off the "SAARC-2000. A Basic need Islamabad in 1986 is an illustration of this. Pakistan additionally proposed SAARC ladies' projects.

The historical role of Pakistan role in SAARC 1985-1999 South Asian Association for Regional Corporation (SAARC) was a vital factor to assist South Asian nations to achieve self-sufficiency in various fields of interest life and increasing the mutual collaboration among the nations. The main aim was to increase assistance in the field of peace, economics and any other required developmental field. SAARC is essentially for the nations with diverse cultures, traditions, religions, and ethics but there is a need to establish good relations among member states. This association is based on establishing a positive relationship among the countries that have affinities related to various fields but due to various reasons and factors, the organization is not as successful as it ought to be. One major reason is the conflicts that are between all these nations on differences. One major conflict is the India-Pakistan dispute which is increasing day by day due to political differences. The strategic imbalance is another reason why SAARC has not been a great success. But still, efforts are made to improve the relations between the two nations, Pakistan and India. Both try to increase their relations with one another to become more stable in various fields including trade, commerce, health, education, agriculture, technology, and any other field to establish positive outcomes. Hence, the need for the development of SAARC in various countries played an important role establishes positive mutual relations.

SAARC had a major concern with Pakistan and India ties and so were with the leaders of the states. A portion of these pivotal components is featured in the addresses made by Pakistan

President Gen Zia before the beginning of the debut SAARC culmination in Dhaka in December 1985. He expressed that Pakistan's support at the highest point would make little difference to its relations with Muslim nations and that the nation would keep up with its public personality no matter what and keep on assuming a positive part in the Middle East, given Pakistan's significance in both the South Asian and Western Asian locales. He underlined that Pakistan's technique of good binds with different countries all through the world will go on without risking the nation's philosophy, autonomy, or honesty⁵².

Despite Pakistan's apprehensions over India's situation, there was a significant acknowledgement of the district's significant troubles. In his discourse, President Zia expressed that the district's kin represented one-fifth of the total populace, and that neediness, starvation, affliction, and ignorance should be generally annihilated. In Dhaka, he excused worries about the Indian strength of the local association. He made light of the idea of the other six individuals holding hands against India inside the gathering, communicating the idealism that India's methodology toward the territorial association would be valuable, impacting their reciprocal relations. Pakistan and India joined the SAARC, not because they considered local collaboration as having natural worth.

There are various instances when different countries came in contact with one another and established mutual relationships to acquire combined motives. Various summits and meetings that happen under SAARC promote mutual relationships and the organization has focused on establishing such points which are helpful for all nations. The 1983 Delhi Declaration is quite important as it encapsulates all the points that are helpful for all the nations and hence became the charter of the organization. These eleven areas that were considered important for the cooperation include tourism, meteorology, shipping, telecommunication, transport, market promotion, joint venture in agriculture, education, technology, science, culture cooperation. These all fields were considered and hence they are the basis of communicating the first SAARC summit. India is an important power in this organization and because it has borders with nearly all of these countries therefore India requires establishing positive relationships among all member nations. But India has disputes with every single nation included in the member states.

⁵² Padmaja Murthy, "Relevance of SAARC." *Strategic Analysis* 23, no. 10 (2000): 1781-1796.

India Pakistan dispute over Kashmir is the bone of contention that has been there for years. Various other disputes with Pakistan also there that needs to be handled to establish a good mutual relationship with Pakistan by India. Bangladesh also has issues with India because of the water dispute over the Ganges. Sri Lanka also has disputes with India because in 1978 India violated Sri Lanka's air space. The same is the way with Nepal which also experienced India's false treaty in 1989. Hence India is a very important part of establishing either a positive or negative relationship among SAARC countries. India occupies a central position in SAARC and hence India must play an important role in establishing mutual relationships among SAARC nations⁵³.

Therefore, without any doubt if India wishes there can be remarkable progress in the association. No doubt, a positive organizational environment and maintaining a good relationship with the organization's members⁴⁶. As regional development is what SAARC is based on, and collaborative efforts of nations are a must for the achievement of its goals and objectives. As Srivastava in his article stated SAARC has the aim of attaining collaboration among nations by reducing terrorism, poverty, and other social issues that the countries are facing. Theoretically, leaders play a very important role in establishing an effective team and can motivate the ones who are working under them⁵⁴. Hence, if SAARC attains the role of leader for the South Asian countries it can be quite beneficial for the developing countries. Even if India works without any personal bias India surely can play the role of being an effective leader but for that India needs to solve all disputes with each of the member countries of SAARC, The collaborative advantages through inter-organizational relationships.

This theory can be applied for attaining objectives by SAARC through mutual collaboration, establishing corporations among various countries, states, organizations, and political parties to achieve their specific goals, hence, the most important on achieving international collaboration among nations. Therefore, one can assume that the success of

⁵³ Romi Jain, "India and SAARC: An analysis." *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2005): 55-74.

⁵⁴ Nannerl O. Keohane, "Dahl's concept of leadership: notes towards a theory of leadership in a democracy." *Journal of Political Power* 8, no. 2 (2015): 229-247.

SAARC is focused on attaining mutual goals that are helpful for all the nations of South Asia. If there would be a strong system, an efficient organization, and a strong collaborative environment among the South Asian countries SAARC would have a positive effect on the working of nations.

Pakistan's role in SAARC meetings cannot be overlooked because it just had not made sure to make efforts for peacekeeping in the region, but it had also hosted numerous meetings of SAARC. Pakistan made sure to have a huge contribution to this field. The meetings that were held in Pakistan had huge aims and were important for the field of technology, science media and telecommunication, trade affairs, peace, and other important aspects. Pakistan has stepped up in SAARC to make it a model of local participation in view of sovereign balance standards.

As the facilitator of the fourth and 12th South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summits, Pakistan has been able to make various efforts to improve the region's economic and social conditions. In 1989, it was declared that the year would be dedicated to fighting against drug abuse. Similarly, in 1990, the year was also designated as the "SAARC Year for the Girl Child." The culmination of the two-year process included the establishment of a training advisory group that will serve as a central component of the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC) framework. It also plans to develop a provincial arrangement that will focus on various fields such as trade development and education.

The SAARC twelfth Summit was perhaps the most important gathering of South Asian countries. It occurred when strains among India and Pakistan were at a record-breaking high. The marking of SAFTA brought to satisfaction many individuals for some time held the conviction that the economies of South Asian countries have a few apparent cooperative energies that ought to be taken advantage of through unhindered intra-territorial exchange. Pakistan has found a way huge way to further SAARC's objectives and points over time. Pakistan's arrangements to have a pastoral level highest point on "global financial worries" in Islamabad in 1986 are an illustration of this. Pakistan additionally proposed SAARC ladies' projects⁵⁵.

⁵⁵M.P. Lama, Mahendra P. "SAARC integrated programme of action: towards more effective cooperation." *South Asian Survey* 5, no. 1 (1998): 39-56, pp.39-56.

4.3 Pakistan's role in SAARC 2000-2010

The role of Pakistan in SAARC between 2000 and 2010 is very important as it was the era of transition economies in the 21st century along with the flagship of globalization. The 11th SAARC summit played a key role which focused on the alleviation of poverty in SAARC countries. Pakistan also pledged to address the lack of provincial collaboration, South Asian people groups' development associations, energy scarcity, climate change, and water issues. Further the SAARC Development Fund and the South Asian Free Trade Area, the SAARC Social Charter, ladies and children, training, battling psychological warfare, and the confirmation of Australia and Myanmar as spectators were also the subject to address at the 11th summit of SAARC. One of the fundamental subjects of conversation during the highest point was the worldwide food emergency. It was also decided during the 11th summit of the SAARC to establish the South Asian Economic Union for achieving economic goals in the region.

The 12th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit was held in Pakistan. It was held to enhance the cooperation between the member countries and implement the SAPTA. Besides economic, cultural, and social activities, tourism was also a major focus of the summit. In 2005, the tourism year of South Asia was established by the region's leaders. During the summit, various initiatives were also taken to improve the living conditions of the people in the region. One of these was the establishment of a South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation. The following year, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) adopted a resolution to establish an awareness year to promote the various programs and activities of the participating nations. As a contributing member of the global war on terrorism, Pakistan has been instrumental in the fight against the Taliban.

The members of the region agreed to enhance their economic cooperation and establish a funding mechanism to boost the region's economy. They also signed various agreements aimed at developing an efficient tax system. In November 2008, an extraordinary meeting of the agriculture ministers of the participating nations was held in New Delhi. It discussed the various cooperative ventures and local procedures in the region.

Pakistan has always focused on achieving Economic, social and political cooperation to compete for other issues. Through the efficient carrying out of various SAARC meetings and

other SAARC centres, Pakistan has played main role in the establishment of peace, constructive measures, solving disputes, and important confidence-building measures among nature. The role of economic corporations among nations cannot be denied. During the 14th SAARC summit, the leaders of the various countries of SAARC member nations implied that it was necessary to move from just declarations to implementations on the various projects.

Pakistan took utilization of the event to add to its international strategic goals. Besides, the different gatherings of SAARC, especially the culmination meetings, permitted Pakistan to make more associations with all SAARC Countries. SAARC gave Pakistan the potential to utilize its strategic location to exercise its interest in the region to save national integrity.

Pakistan has enjoyed the position of Secretary General of SAARC once. Amjad Husain B. Sail, a Pakistani diplomat to Tajikistan, has remained named SAARC's next Secretary General. Despite the frustrating arrangements of India charging Pakistan's association with psychological militant tasks, he was delegated. Pakistan is confronted with numerous problems by India in achieving its goals in the region. India is making the situation worse for Pakistan in the SAARC structure through other provincial powers to draw in Pakistan. India and Pakistan are Important in the SAARC membership due to having nuclear capabilities. Pakistan since its inception is being focused on achieving foreign policy goals to preserve its national integrity. Therefore, it joined the SAARC to achieve its role and objectives. Pakistan wanted to adopt a consistent and cordial approach towards the SAARC nations. Undoubtedly, Pakistan got opportunities for improving bilateral relations with SAARC members.

Historically, Pakistan had strange relations with India which needed a platform to put cards on the table for peace; SAARC provided this platform to both rivals for cooperation. As a result, both India and Pakistan started cooperation in the economic sphere under SAPTA. Pakistan also focused on economic stability, maintaining a secure environment, and reducing terrorism.

Therefore, Pakistan played a major role in making and developing a nice and effective policy for SAARC nations. Various writers and theories were given on the viewpoint of SAARC and Pakistan's role in the development of SAARC. According to the LR Baral, Pakistan is available for social exchange, farming modernization, and policymaking. Pakistan was the main

country to pick Kathmandu, Nepal, as the area for the SAARC secretariat. According to Padmaja Murthy in his journal "Pakistan and SAARC" stated that Pakistan took utilization of the SAARC association to supplement its international strategy targets, outstandingly corresponding to India.

Its demeanour has been predictable in such a manner. No doubt, the role of Pakistan from 2000-2010 is also very wide and is accepted universally. The 15th SAARC summit was very important that was held at Colombo. The Pakistani leaders attended this meeting eagerly. Provincial collaboration, South Asian people groups' development associations, availability, energy, the climate, water assets, neediness lightening, the SAARC Development Fund, transport, data and correspondences innovation advancement, science and innovation, the travel industry, culture, the South Asian Free Trade Area, the SAARC Social

Charter, ladies and children, training, battling psychological warfare, and the confirmation of Australia and Myanmar as spectators were among the subjects talked about. One of the fundamental subjects of conversation during the highest point was the worldwide food emergency."Considering the arising worldwide circumstance of scaled-down food accessibility and overall ascent in food costs, we direct that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Agriculture Ministers of the SAARC Member States be gathered in New Delhi, India in November 2008, to advance and execute individuals focused diminutive to medium-term local procedure and cooperative ventures," the SAARC heads of the government said in an explanation. They additionally perceived the significance of producing nearer attaches to the world's local area to keep up with food security and accessibility.

Pakistan has always focused on achieving a high level of corporation in economic, social, political, and other integral fields. Through the efficient carrying out of various SAARC meetings and other SAARC centres, Pakistan has played a major role in the accomplishment of peace, construction measures, solving disputes, and important confidence-building measures among nature. As the role of economic corporation among nations cannot be overlooked therefore the member countries of SAARC do play a major role in the development of various efforts. During the 14th SAARC summit, the leaders of the various countries of SAARC member nations implied that it was necessary to move from just declarations to implementations on the various projects. Pakistan took utilization of the event to add to its international strategy goals,

prominently according to India. Its demeanour has been predictable in such a manner. Besides, the different gatherings of SAARC, especially the culmination meetings, permitted Pakistan to make more grounded associations with all of the part countries, which could not have possibly been doable in any case. The SAARC stage has empowered progressing and consistent association with the Association's other parts nations.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) provided Pakistan with an opportunity to use other nations' interests against India. As a result, it has maintained its strong relationship with South Asia. The South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was approved by the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on January 6, 2004. It became effective on January 1, 2006. The agreement provides for the reduction of the trade obligations of the participating nations to 20% by 2009. A Ministerial Council was then established to implement the agreement. SAARC trades moved to \$354.6 billion in 2012, up from \$206.7 billion in 2009. Over a similar period, imports moved from \$330 billion to \$602 billion.

Be that as it may, the intra-SAARC business represents scarcely more than 1% of the locale's GDP. Rather than SAARC, ASEAN has a 10 per cent intra-alliance business in its GDP⁵⁶. Despite India's endeavours to frustrate his arrangement by charging Pakistan's association with psychological militant tasks, he was delegated. The assignment was intended to be approved by the Council of Ministers at the November 2016 culmination in Pakistan, yet the country's conditions made that inconceivable. The arrangement was subsequently affirmed by India. Pakistan is confronting many issues. These included holding the nineteenth SAARC culmination when practical in Pakistan to get the SAARC interaction in the groove again. For this, two India and Pakistan should find a spot at a similar table and a reasonable environment for conversations should be made. To reactivate the SAARC structure, other provincial powers ought to likewise draw in Pakistan. The two countries Pakistan and India are quite important

⁵⁶Anila Sultana and Qaiser Sharif. "Aspects, Impediments and Prospects of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC)." *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2020).

because of their nuclear power. One is India and the other one is Pakistan. Pakistan still its inception always focused on achieving a foreign policy that would help Pakistan become stable.

Therefore, Pakistan always joined those associations that would help Pakistan achieve its foreign policy. For this Pakistan joined SAARC and wanted to achieve its role and objectives. Pakistan wanted to adopt a consistent approach that would help build Pakistan good relations with other SAARC nations. Meetings within SAARC are important because these meetings further help a nation to perceive new opportunities for the welfare and development of a country and the same is the case with Pakistan as Pakistan got new and more opportunities for improving bilateral relations. At the time when SAARC came into being, Pakistan was having extremely bad and strained relations with India and there was a need to achieve good communication with the neighbouring country. Hence, after the establishment of SAARC, the number of joint corporations increased between the countries, especially between India and Pakistan. This corporation made Pakistan strong and its relations with neighbouring countries became robust.

SAARC helps the countries, but the role of South Asian countries is also important for the development of SAARC. Pakistan had always played a major role in SAARC and the importance of Pakistan cannot be denied due to it being a nuclear state as well. Pakistan has always accepted the SAARC objectives and rules and complied with them in all true spirits. One major point that Pakistan always focused on is raising bilateral issues, although directly it is not allowed. But Pakistan knows the importance of strong bilateral relations, therefore Regional Corporation is important but in Pakistan's viewpoint stronger bilateral relations are more important. Pakistan focused on raising social issues and bringing up the landmark of the people residing in the subcontinent. Pakistan aims to include that the region all in all should cooperate to work on the social and financial circumstances in their various nations by tending to destitution, lack of education, craving, and ailment. Moreover, part countries may significantly profit from each other's aptitude here. The other thing that Pakistan focused on is promoting understanding among SAARC countries. Pakistan thought that incessant association, encouraging significant connections, and dispersing more data around each other would prompt superior shared arrangement. Nuclear weapons barricade among South Asian nations should also be practised as they are harming the nations.

Pakistan demonstrated in 1990 that the worldwide demobilization process, which has been postponed and fragmented, should have been supplemented by local measures. It declared during the Colombo Sixth Summit in 1991 that it had offered conversations between the US, the Soviet Union, China, India, and Pakistan to handle atomic expansion in South Asia. Pakistan was sure that simply by setting up harmony and soundness in every one of the part nations, just as in the district, all in all, would condition be able to be set up for individuals to appreciate better lives now, and surprisingly better lives for people in the future. It was viewed that a guarantee of harmony ought to be woven into reciprocal ties nearby and that this should fill in as the establishment for multilateral collaboration in the region. Pakistan also focused on economic stability, maintaining a secure environment, and reducing terrorism. Therefore, Pakistan played a major role in making and developing effective policies for SAARC nations.

Pakistan has effectively partaken in gatherings and SAARC culminations in the area, supporting local harmony, open and levy streamlined commerce, individual's to-individuals associations, and generosity. Around here, Pakistan is available for social exchange, farming modernization, and policymaking. Pakistan was the main country to pick Kathmandu, Nepal, as the area for the SAARC secretariat. Furthermore, SAARC's continuous gatherings, especially the culmination gatherings, permitted Pakistan to make more grounded associations with all of its part countries, which would not have been achievable in any case. Various theories have also been presented about the role of countries in the development of an organization and a country's foreign policy. The treaty of Westphalia that was given in 1648 was important in past and had a very important position in modern international relations⁵⁷.

It's quite significant that Pakistan holds a significant position in important matters such as relations of harmony, peace, and war. The Foreign Policy of Pakistan also plays a key role in Pakistan's role in SAARC. Regarding foreign poly of a country, Pakistan's essential area in South Asia has been imperative to worldwide key elements over now is the ideal time.

⁵⁷Anila Sultana and Qaiser Sharif. "Aspects, Impediments and Prospects of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC)." *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2020).

Pakistan stayed a nearby US partner during the Cold War, a vital member in destroying the Soviet Union, a cutting-edge state against the Taliban, and is currently assuming a basic part in battling illegal intimidation and hostility, and in this manner, it kept on assuming the part of fall fellow⁵⁸. Therefore, Pakistan has played an important part in South Asia as well as throughout the world and has extended its services to countries across the world. Foreign policy is what is important in a country's values, and they play a very important role in maintaining a country's reputation. In this way, foreign policy plays an important role in Pakistan's part in SAARC development and maintenance.

SAARC has played a very important role in economic development. It has a role in speeding up the region's monetary, social, and social turn of events, just as allows all individuals the opportunity to live in poise and arrive at their maximum capacity. SAARC countries are dependent on one another for their various needs and for that collaboration among South Asian nations is very important. SAARC has been dealing with all of these issues for a long time, because, if the South Asian states are financially feeble, they would not be able to thrive in general. In this manner, the importance of a strong economy cannot be overstated. The Asian Development Bank announced a local monetary reconciliation in 2001, with a few highly persuasive financial criteria and decisions that may aid in working on the country's financial health. This meeting worked with the Asian Development Bank's monetary guidance, and it addressed the concomitant needs.

- Reduced duty constructiveness to lower exchange office evaluations. Collaboration on energy and its assets to provide energy offices to countries experiencing energy shortages.
- Exchange enhancement methods boost development for countries with fewer exchange opportunities. Participation in projects was also emphasized to promote business.
- Expulsion or reduction of items from the problematic list. SATIS (SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services) were also implemented, and it had a significant impact on exchange offices.

⁵⁸ Q. K. Ahmad, "SAARC: Envisioning the future." *South Asian Survey* 9, no. 2 (2002): 187-199.

Furthermore, a vital aspect of this discussion was the capability for greater availability options such as trains, ships, streets and air to work on respective country relations. Economic stability is a vital factor in the development of a country. SAARC is established to benefit people and throughout the discussion, the societal benefit is quite important for the successful working of SAARC. The members of SAARC enjoy a great deal of liberty in access to important opportunities.

The business opportunities for the member countries also increase incredibly as trade and financial help improve. The organization also provides women with various opportunities. The important chambers of SAARC also have women in their offices and SAARC supports the empowerment of women. SAARC also gives young entrepreneurs the chance to flourish, and various summits are aimed at achieving the needs of young entrepreneurs. SAARC also gives its members the facilitation of achieving a positive environment to work in. This is quite important because it just does not benefit the members within the working environment but also helps them increase networking among the member countries. Individuals can profit from plenty of potential outcomes, going from systems administration with enormous companies from SAARC part countries and all through the world to supporting the plan of monetary and modern strategies through close connections with the public authority. SAARC also helps the member countries in becoming more accepting towards one another.

SAARC plays a significant role in South Asia which is established on the upsides of sovereign uniformity, regional uprightness, political autonomy, in part countries' inner undertakings, and common advantages of the SAARC members. SAARC individuals' reciprocal and multilateral relations are enhanced by provincial collaboration. Unity is needed for choices to preserve national interest. SAARC's thoughts are absolved from two-sided and disagreeable subjects. All member nations ought to research the association's capacity to support provincial harmony and steadiness. SAARC ought to be permitted to create at its speed, and individuals in South Asia which represents a fourth of the total populace, offer more chances to cooperate. The social system has immense importance which links individuals and results in collaboration at all levels than people acting alone. Family, companions, social circumstances, strict construction, monetary status, and home climate are the whole viewpoints that may affect how individuals act and think, as like this working of different organizations in a system can promote collaboration at

all levels. This system is applied to SAARC because it works in collaboration to improve people living standards. Therefore, it can be rightly applied to the SAARC working environment. Development states lead to growth because they supply-side factors including work efficiency, labour force size, and variable sources of information⁵⁹. States rely on the development of an organization from an economic point of view. In this way, SAARC can be considered while looking into the development of economies because it focuses on the development of SAARC through various factors including the efficiency of service, members of an organization, and the organization's sources of information and research. SAARC has been convincing its definitive point - financial joining - from its origin.

As the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries, it fortifies the private area and scaffolds which correspondences hole between business networks across entire districts. It unites the politically against provinces of South Asia in a solitary stage. The predominant voice of the corporate area pushed lawmakers to accept more open exchange courses of action. Resultantly, SAARC has achieved quite important economic as well as human benefits through its objectives and aims and helped the South Asian states. South Asian nations have a great deal of potential for provincial joint effort. Since the establishment of the SAARC in 1985, there have been occasional conversations about future coordination and efforts among SAARC members. Horticulture, well-being and rustic turn of events, meteorology, media communications, postal administrations, transportation, logical and mechanical turn of events, sports, workmanship and culture, drug dealing and misuse anticipation, ladies and advancement, and schooling were among the twelve regions where local participation was recognized. Neediness, joblessness, inflationary strain, a horrible exchange balance, critical spending plan deficiencies, and low development rates are the whole troubles that SAARC individuals face. Regardless of the way that there are shared difficulties, the arrangements that have been carried out are incongruent. The approach issues were more serious than helpful or free. Pakistan has been focusing on economic stability, maintaining a secure environment, and reducing terrorism throughout history. Therefore, Pakistan is playing a key role in making and developing effective policy measures for SAARC nations which makes Pakistan a significant player in the SAARC forum in the development of SAARC.

⁵⁹ Q. K. Ahmad, "SAARC: Envisioning the future." *South Asian Survey* 9, no. 2 (2002): 187-199.

The 11th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit was supposed to be held in 1999 in Kathmandu, but it was suspended due to India's objection to the participation of a Pakistani government that is an undemocratic one. The region has a relatively small area and is only responsible for around three percent of the world's land mass. Due to the existence of various challenges, such as terrorism, poverty, and starvation, it has been considered that the summit would serve as a unique opportunity for the region's leaders to address these issues. The expectations of the people in the region were high as it would help in forming a united South Asia. However, the formation of a South Asian community is still a distant dream.

Despite the various achievements of the organization, it is still considered to be a failure. The Free Trade Agreement between South Asia and the European Union was one of the key achievements of the organization. Despite the various achievements of the organization, the lack of implementation of its provisions has hindered the progress of the region. For instance, the relationship between Pakistan and other member states continues to be strained. A consensus among all member states is needed to formally implement a decision. The lack of trust between Pakistan and India is considered to be a major issue that has prevented the region from achieving its goals. During the 18th summit of the organization held in 2014, the signing of a motor vehicle settlement agreement was delayed as Pakistan refused to participate. Another issue that has hindered the region's progress is India's increasing influence over its neighbor.

As a prime state, India is also a significant contributor to the success of the organization. It is responsible for over 70 percent of South Asia's land mass and its population. Initially, India was reluctant to join the organization due to its belief that it would be used as a tool by smaller nations to take on its dominance. Due to the activities of other countries, such as Pakistan, in pushing for the establishment of a club of China, India's growing economic power has led to a change in its approach. This new approach has also resulted in the country's increasing interest in its neighbors. During the previous government, the authorities of the United Progressive Alliance, which was headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, focused on improving the relationship with its neighbors. Through its efforts, India was able to successfully push for the establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation's motor vehicle agreement. This agreement was regarded as a vital step in the region's efforts to improve

connectivity. The members of the organization can now create a group that can represent the voice of South Asia's people.⁶⁰

The partition of the Indian subcontinent on August 14, 1947, had a direct impact on trade cooperation between India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan relied on one other for trade since the partition. Both needed each other for serving their economic interests, therefore, both took multiple steps to accomplish economic objectives in order to boost commerce. Consequently, both were compelled to reduce tariffs at high prices on the global market and higher costs. Gains from trading with each other might range from approximately Rs. 15,000 and 20,000 crores during the previous 50 years. Pakistan got benefits in terms of cheaper/competitive prices compared to the prices throughout the world, and due to its proximity, transportation and trans-shipment expenses are greatly reduced. Approximately, \$602 million in official trade between the two nations was achieved. If both parties had been able to remove some obstacles to commerce, the official trade between the two nations could be worth US \$602 million in 2002—which could have reached \$8802 million in 2004.⁶¹

Despite the importance of political will, little was done to improve trade between India and Pakistan in 2004. In 2004, India's imports from Pakistan increased by 4.8%, while Pakistan's decreased by 6.4%. The establishment of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) has also contributed to strengthening the intra-trade ties between the two nations. Both South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Pakistan are major economies and make up around 87.7% of global population. The partition of India on August 14, 1947, affected trade ties between the two nations. The share of Pakistan in India's imports and exports decreased from 1.3% in 1948 to 0.6% in 1976. From 1951 to 1952, the country's share in India's imports and exports increased from 1.1% to 2.2%.

⁶⁰Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, "When SAARC Became A Tool To Embarrass Than Cooperate...." (2016). <https://www.orfonline.org/research/when-saarc-became-a-tool-to-embarrass-than-cooperate/>.

⁶¹Anil Bhumali and Chandan Kumar Mukhopadhyay, *SAARC Perspective* (New Delhi: Serials Pub, New Delhi, 2008), p. 40.

India and Pakistan conduct commerce by a land route which significantly reduces transportation and trans-shipment costs and enhances advantages for both nations to encourage bilateral trade. Currently, Mumbai and Karachi ports handle a large portion of trade between India and Pakistan. It is very difficult and cost-consuming to limit trade to ports when both countries share a significant land border which is a Cheaper, quicker, and safer trade route. Checkpoints at Wagha/Attari and Hussain Wala need to allow free trade flow. Additionally, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Kashmir also have other land routes of trade for both neighbours, the infrastructure of trade routes including customs clearance needs to be improved at all border checkpoints which can facilitate the quick and easy exchange of agricultural and perishable goods from both sides through border allows them to move heavy objects and cargo of poorly way. The importation of onions, garlic, and Ca, meat, and produce across the Wagha border in an effective way will be a positive development in this regard to boost the agricultural sector. SAARC is an effective platform for Pakistan in that still has a long way to achieve its modest production. Moreover, it also provides Pakistan to participate in regional security to accomplish the shared goal of maintaining peace, stability, friendly neighbourliness and beneficial cooperation throughout South Asia which is still only a pipe dream in the presence of terrorism and extremism across the border such as in India and Afghanistan. However, unresolved issues for its members and obstructing a cogent regional strategy continue.

SAARC's regional strategy is not only on the operational framework but is also constrained by the particular geopolitical context in which India's hegemonic position and lingering unresolved issues with its neighbouring countries continue to halt the real progress towards regional integration. SAARC is a region that claims to have a strong growth rate in every sector of development despite its flaws. It is clear that if India and Pakistan contribute collectively to regional development, the growth rate of the SAARC region will be highly dependent on the cooperation of both which ranges from 8 to 9% and has the greatest potential benefits for its neighbours. The regional prosperity of the SAARC members such as Afghanistan and Central Asia's directly proportional to the contribution of Pakistan as a positive development. Pakistan has contributed to the regional interaction of the states in every field of life in order to promote the SAARC programs.

No doubt, Pakistan has made moderate progress towards regional economic integration by addressing security issues and adopting pragmatic measures. SAARC members are facing the issues of poverty, education, healthcare, and sustainable development which needs Pakistan on priority possessing the strategic location in South Asia. The member states ‘cooperation in economic development, social advancement, or cultural advancement on a large scale. South Asia is regarded as one of the most impoverished regions in the world. Despite the various progress that has been made in this area, many people still live in appalling conditions. Economic growth rates are still declining or stable in only a few nations. Its most challenging socio-economic imbalances remain. To address these issues, the region has finally reached out Afghanistan as a member. The addition of Afghanistan as a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the presence of other countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, Iran, and the US, which are observing nations, will help strengthen Pakistan's interest in the region. The role of Pakistan is a positive development in the terms of security dynamics in South Asia.⁶²

Furthermore, the vitality of the Pakistan-India security partnership is the potential of SAARC to address regional issues. The participation of Pakistan in joining the security terms of security integration with member states would sustain and influence the region to accomplish the objective of a terror-free region. The shared goals of members stated to establish an Indo-Pakistan strategy in political and economic stability with reference to Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as the SAARC area. As a result, the SAARC has been led by the political partnership between India and Pakistan. The relationship between security and growth has been firmly entrenched. Significant cooperation in the region is hampered by the barriers arising from the trust deficit. With reference to the trust deficit between India and Pakistan, SAARC has aimed at becoming a functioning organization. According to Pakistan, SAARC cannot function unless the Kashmir dispute is resolved peacefully. No doubt, its stubborn attitude of India in solving the disputes with Pakistan is halting progress. India also wants to discuss terrorism as a significant factor. SAARC nations also have different views on terrorism which need to be discussed with an effective framework. India only seeks to pressurize Pakistan by raising the subject of

⁶²“The SAARC Dividend” (Editorial), *The Nation*, Islamabad, April 4, 2007.

terrorism only with reference to Pakistan. Pakistan is playing a vital role to address terrorism at the national as well as regional levels.⁶³

Pakistan being a part of the Millennium Development Goals of the UNO is playing an effective role in the SAARC to achieve the described goals of the international standard according to the UN Charter. In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration. It reaffirmed its commitment to promote democracy, protect the vulnerable, strengthen the organization, and maintain a common environment. The document also stated that the world body should work toward achieving sustainable development.

The following goals of Pakistan have to be achieved under Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals being a part of the SAARC with the collaboration of SAARC members:

- ✓ Firstly, Pakistan needs to achieve universal primary education with the cooperation of SAARC member states to ensure that all boys and girls will be able to finish their primary education.
- ✓ Secondly, Pakistan will Promote gender parity and give women more authority and will eliminate gender discrimination at all levels by 2030.
- ✓ Thirdly, Pakistan will reduce the mortality rate by two-thirds between 2015 to 2030. It will also decrease child mortality.
- ✓ Fourthly, Pakistan will strengthen maternal health in order to reduce the fertility rate. It will decrease the maternal mortality ratio by 75 percent between 2015 and 2030.
- ✓ Fifthly, Pakistan will address malaria, AIDS, and other diseases to halt HIV's expansion by 2030 and start reversing the disease's spread which will halt its growth and start reducing the prevalence of important diseases like malaria. Ensure environmental sustainability.
- ✓ Sixthly, Pakistan will also reverse the loss of environmental resources and incorporate sustainable development ideas into national policies and programs.

⁶³Das Kumar Debendra, *Regional Cooperation and Development Perspective, Problems, Policies*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, (1995), p. 101.

- ✓ Seventhly, Pakistan will cut in half the number of individuals who lack reliable access to basic sanitation and safe drinking water by 2030 on an immediate basis.
- ✓ Eighthly, Pakistan will enable people to make at least 100 million slum dwellers' lives significantly better by the year 2030. ⁶⁴

It will also develop global development collaboration as the most significant goal. Along with all development goals, Pakistan will also develop a commercial and financial system that is governed by free and fair rules to accomplish the objectives of regional peace in the SAARC. This target also includes a commitment to good governance, development, and the alleviation of poverty on a national and international level. Furthermore, it will provide unique requirements for the least developed nations including exports with no tariffs and cancellation of formal bilateral debt for nations committed to accomplishing the objective. Being in a strategic position Pakistan will be a bridge between landlocked countries such as Afghanistan and Central Asian states to connect with the whole world and small islands of developing countries.

Pakistan is playing an effective role to take a vital part in national and international steps in order to address the debt issues facing least-developed nations so that debt may be sustained over the long term. It is creating and implementing plans for the constructive participation of youth in collaboration with developing nations. In partnership with pharmaceutical firms, it is working unaffordable costs with developing nations with access to life-saving medications. It is also utilizing technological advancement with the collaboration of including the private sector in emerging technologies, particularly in the information and communications sectors, to their fullest potential with SAARC members. The 1990s are frequently referred to be Pakistan's lost decade. Pakistan's headcount poverty rate increased from 26% in 1990–1991 to 32% in 2000–2001. Therefore, it needs strong measures in letter and spirit to achieve desire objectives. Even though Pakistan's economy has since partially recovered and has had solid economic growth, the aim of bringing the country's poverty rate down to 13% by 2030 seems to be beyond its capacity undercurrent economic pressure. The prevailing poverty and underweight children under the age of five and the percentage of the population who consume less than the recommended amount of food has both increased dramatically during the past decade leading to much like Pakistan's

⁶⁴Kahol, Yudhishtar. *Saarc: Through the New Millennium*. Anmol Publ, 2003.

rising poverty rate. Furthermore, the literacy rate and the net primary enrolment ratio in Pakistan are low, both in absolute terms and in comparison, to other nations at the same stage of development. Regarding the percentage of students who enrol in Grade 1 and enter Grade 5, a promising trend may be seen. The overall track record of Pakistan in promoting and implementing gender equality is rather precarious. Even though the nation has improved the ratio of girls to boys in school slowly at all levels it seems unlikely that the goal of gender parity will be attained by 2030.

Till the beginning of the new millennium, Pakistan's baby and under-five mortality rates were also on the decline. The rate of improvement in these measures has been too slow. Nonetheless, the objectives that are set by 2030 under Sustainable Development Goals would be accomplished. Throughout my 20 Pakistan's rate of underweight children remained stable at a level. It is unlikely that there will be two-thirds underweight kids by 2030. The same may be said about Pakistan's potential to lower its maternal mortality rate with the cooperation of SAARC members.

The 14th SAARC Heads of State Summit, which was including Afghanistan as the organization's newest member, is slated to take place in New Delhi on April 3–4. To stimulate tourism and fight for peace, SAARC member nations had a strong desire to foster cross-border economic, cultural, and exchange of educational programs particularly to combat the threat posed by terrorism, drug trafficking and all forms of issues among the member states. The Dhaka Declaration highlighted that the SAARC Agenda remained centred on fostering the development of South Asians as a whole, igniting economic expansion, social advancement, and cultural advancement, and solidifying regional unity and self-reliance. During the decade of eradicating poverty, it was intended to create a SAARC Poverty Alleviation Fund that would serve the nations to eradicate the issues of substantial and persistent regional tensions and divisions. The SAARC member nations also resolved to cooperate to put an end to poverty to South Asia and to boost economic cooperation in every sector. Pakistan used to practice step-by-step cooperation and mutual to address the issue of poverty in the social, economic, technical, and scientific programs of then SAARC platforms. The collaboration in these areas will increase the trust, comprehension, and understanding of one another's difficulties in the member states.

It was thought that the member states' growing mutual trust had once again sown the seeds of peace and unification in the area. The members expressed their will to collaborate in a spirit of unity to solve their shared issues. If used effectively, SAARC might be beneficial for its members economically as well as politically for underdeveloped and politically divided member states by bringing both political and economic benefits together. The SAARC can fully exploit the region's abundant human and material resources in the region. Demographically, in South Asia more than 40% of the population struggles to make ends meet, 45% of the population lived in unhygienic circumstances, 10 children perished every minute, and hundreds of thousands of mothers died giving birth. The absence of regional economic cooperation was the cause of these unfavourable economic conditions.

Pakistan is working hard to increase trade and economic cooperation in this area. The SAARC members are also cooperation with Western Europe which is a more powerful force in the globe as a result of economic cooperation among the European nations. Pakistan is succumbed to the west's debt trap due to the vulnerability of individual nations on the global market. Therefore, needs need much more contributions to the SAARC forum to address the national as well as regional problems. Regional collaboration of Pakistan with neighbouring and SAARC countries may relieve the political tension in South Asia. Nearly all SAARC countries shared a common history, culture, and a set of issues. To examine the benefits of regional cooperation in South Asia through SAARC needs cooperation and collaboration. Although Pakistan is contributing to regional economic cooperation as envisioned by SAARC encompassed a wide range of areas which emphasize the collaboration of every sector, especially in the economic sector. However, the main aim is neither political nor economic.⁶⁵

Pakistan under the SAARC has largely been successful in improving the welfare and quality of life of South Asians. Since eradicating poverty and fostering economic cooperation are ambitious goals, political, economic, and other types of collaboration are being considered.

⁶⁵ Abdul Majid, "Performance of SAARC as a Regional Organization in Comparison With ASEAN and Eco." PhD diss., University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, Pakistan, 2011.

Through effective production planning, the SAARC as a regional organization has persuaded the members to make their economies complimentary for a balanced interdependence. It was the decision of the SAARC leaders to base their collaboration on the majority of the association. The fact that all nations signed the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) accord on December 7th, 1995 is a major accomplishment for SAARC. All regional leaders reiterated their steadfast conviction that the operation of SAPTA will act as a precursor to the emergence of a new process of SAARC as an organization for regional economic cooperation, and it would strengthen predicting the well-being of South Asians as a whole.⁶⁶ As a result, the third trade show was hosted by Pakistan on September 16, 2001. In 2002, Nepal hosted its fourth trade show. the potential of the area but also in promoting the variety of items to promote economic cooperation at the region level.

It took the SAARC members ten years to agree on SAPTA, while it took the other ten members till 2006 to agree on SAFTA. It was the potential to promote growing intraregional trade, which is currently stagnant and accounts for less than 2% of GDP. If SAFTA had been put into effect, intra-regional commerce would have increased from its current \$6 billion level to \$14 billion. However, SAFTA's actual performance is still insufficient. Pakistan under this only made sporadic attempts to open up the global market and draw in commerce and investment. However, the intra-SAARC trade, which has practically reached a plateau between 4% and 5%, shows no evidence of any discernible growth.

The high tariff and non-tariff obstacles weaken trade ties, insufficient infrastructure development, and a lack of commitment of member states led to the failure of SAPTA. In a region where economic inequality is on a large scale, there is a significant concern about the resistance to low tariffs and reducing non-tariff barriers. The much smaller economies in the region view India's enormous and strong economy as a danger. It needs an equal and just trading formula without which SAFTA development will be halted. SAARC has achieved some headway in the field of social development to increase the potential development of the region but its social agenda is implemented poorly in the member states. The program covered different

⁶⁶South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, www.south-asia.com/saarc

areas such as education, culture, the arts, and rural development. It also looked into science and technology, population, health, energy, and meteorology.⁶⁷

As a contributing member of the Association, Pakistan is acknowledged for its valuable contribution to the establishment of its technical committees. The official release of the SAARC Social Charter in 2004 gave the IPA an additional impetus. The Social Charter of SAARC gives South Asia's socio-cultural development a clear direction. It concentrates on critical issues pertaining to the development and advancement of South Asians. However, this vision has not yet been transformed into reality.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has made fighting poverty a key component of its social agenda. A Food Bank for the region was established to address its food shortage, while a disaster management center was also established to address climate change-related disasters. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has established a disaster response mechanism to address the effects of natural disasters. However, despite the various treaties that it has signed, the implementation of these treaties is still not yet complete.

As a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Pakistan has made various efforts to improve the connectivity in the region. It has also contributed to the establishment of a sense of peace in the region by working with India and Afghanistan. In its 4th Declaration, Pakistan had stated that the region should have an easy flow of knowledge, technology, people, ideas, and money. The SAARC countries are far behind in trading agreements in the region, despite having SAFTA as a significant step towards free trade. Economic integration is also being hampered by political and border skirmishes among the member countries, especially India and Pakistan.

Additionally, there are border limitations that are hindering all concerns of the neighbouring countries to have a smooth trade. Furthermore, shabby infrastructure is also halting the physical and economic connectivity of the region. SAARC is lagging behind the regional

⁶⁷ Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds. *The Dynamics of South Asia: Regional Cooperation and SAARC*. SAGE Publications Pvt. Limited, 1999.

economic integration occurring elsewhere in the region around South Asia, SAFTA is deemed to be meagre in its extent and content.

As part of its efforts to promote regional economic integration, Pakistan has set various objectives for the establishment of a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). However, it is not yet feasible to fully implement the agreement due to the various security and economic concerns that it faces. The 15th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit was held in Islamabad from November 14 to 16. It was focused on the partnership for growth of the people of South Asia. SAARC established the Development Fund (SDF) in 2008 with an initial investment of \$200 million to help the member states' physical, social, and economic development. Pakistan is participating effectively both within the region and abroad to mobilize the resources. At the 16th SAARC summit, the SAARC Development Fund was formally introduced and China, which was attending as an observer provided US \$300,000 to the Fund which was only in the economic concern of Pakistan being the strategic partner of China in the region.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held its 15th summit in 2008. The summit focused on the guiding principles and characteristics of the region's economic cooperation. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was formed to enhance trans-border energy connectivity. The energy centers of the member states were established to share natural gas pipelines and electricity grids. In 2008, the organization needed an initial \$200 million to establish the SDF to help the member nations' economic, social, and physical development. The resources would be gathered from both inside and outside the area of agriculture in a regional partnership. Pakistan being an agricultural country needs technological advancement in the agricultural sector. The Technical Committee's first meeting was held in 1983. The member nations of this Technical Committee are sharing ideas for boosting regional cooperation in the field of technology to boost the agriculture sector. The first SAARC regional agricultural information Centre was established that was a unique institution to address the pros and cons of the agricultural sector. Two significant initiatives including (i) promoting the Bio By the year 2000, villages and (ii) reaching millions of farmers and women were completed successfully under the cooperation of the SAARC members.⁶⁴

Pakistan is the 5th largest populated country in the world and needs regional cooperation in order to address the population menace, therefore it is playing a vital role in the SAARC as the SAARC has made a number of advances in population health and administration and child welfare. These are the areas that the government has failed to address properly. Further, significant health issues have been put on the table of SAARC to address the social agenda. Pakistan on the platform of SAARC has been successful in launching a number of important issues dealing major issues with disease control and health care related to population control. It has had considerable success, and some of its member nations have adopted coordination and collaboration among nations to jointly combat the threat of deadly diseases. The issues of long-standing unresolved concerns, like territorial disputes—Sir Creek—the antagonism between India and Pakistan persists. The escalating tensions over Indus Waters Treaty and terrorism in the region between India and Pakistan and ongoing geopolitical rivalry in the region among regional states are reflected in Pakistan in developing nuclear and missile capabilities in Siachen, particularly Kashmir. SAARC has failed to accomplish its initial goals or overcome new obstacles during the last 25 years. The majority of its initiatives and accomplishments are only a blizzard of papers in the form of its The Charter has failed to address regional security issues. Despite the various initiatives undertaken by Pakistan to improve the economic and social conditions of its South Asian neighbors, the plans for the region's integration have not been successful.

South Asia's largest regional organization, the South Asian Development Bank, labeled it as the least integrated group in the world in 2008, citing various factors such as its lack of connectivity.⁶⁸ A free trade agreement between South Asian nations, which was fully operational, was beneficial for both Pakistan and the region's least developed countries, such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Afghanistan. Through the agreement, these countries were able to remove trade barriers.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Asian Development Bank (2010), “Flagship study on Institutions and Regionalism”, Manila.

⁶⁹<http://www.saarc-sec.org/economics> *Dawn*, Karachi, December 25, 2003. *Dawn*, Karachi, December 3, 2003.

The trade flow barriers such as non-tariff barriers and other roadblock aged were ensured to be removed by Pakistan for smooth trade routes with neighbouring. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held its summit in Colombo in 2008 to discuss the various alarming issues faced by the world. Among these are the increasing environmental degradation, climate change, and excessive exploitation, unpredictable effects and the instability in the supply of energy and fluctuating price of basic commodities and food shortages all are addressing by Pakistan. In March 2010, a group meeting was held in Bhutan to work on a treaty related to the environment. The meeting was attended by representatives from various countries. It will be effective to take on a final form at the following summit. The tumultuous relationship, particularly between India and Pakistan, has shared mistrust which is lagging Pakistan behind in the SAARC.

South Asia was excruciatingly slow to establish its regional bloc. Pakistan felt that there was very little regional organization that could accomplish in terms of cooperation in the given area of SAARC members. The national security concerns of Pakistan are necessary for Pakistan; as a result, Pakistan is playing a critical role to overcome the menace of terrorism in the region. It is believed that regional cooperation would ultimately that regional cooperation would eventually result in “confidence-building measures” for “conflict management resolution”. Unfortunately, the SAARC is unable to take on a political security role due to bilateral tensions, but Pakistan is playing its effective role in every sector of development. The disagreements between Pakistan and India have already hampered SAARC region's socio-economic development. A just resolution to this conflict is essential to establishing peace in the area. Pakistan is still trying to maintain cordial relations with member states to promote the regional development of the SAARC. It faces far more difficult challenges. Unlike India and Afghanistan, there is no shared perception of an external enemy. In contrast to the European Community, the states do not share an equal degree of development. There are vague imbalances. The level of integration in regional security is weighed against the low level of development. The driving force behind regional cooperation is dedication, vision, statesmanship, and to some extent, practice.

Pakistan needs to have a chance to advance its development goals and cooperate in methods to solve the difficulties as SAARC has done the key socio-economic issues in the area which demands peace and stability. It is argued that the microcosmic "anarchical society" of

South Asia would become less and less anarchic as regions of effective collaboration multiplied across the region to overcome the fundamental restrictions that are required by the state's behaviour in a "self-help" in a friendly environment. Pakistan symbolizes in the SAARC a daring new vision for South Asia—a vision of harmony, goodwill, and collaboration. It has removed the conflicts and disagreements between member nations from SAARC's scope. It has also been embroiled in numerous disputes with its neighbours like India, in particular, which is quite a positive stance that makes it effective in the region. As a result, it is adopting the measures according to the charter of SAARC. To accomplish the objective of regional stability the principle of consensus was also introduced by Pakistan on the platform of SAARC.

The founders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) used a pragmatic approach to approach their work. They focused on non-controversial cultural and social spheres, which would allow them to work together in all areas. The increased collaboration and exchanges among the members of the organization are contributing to the promotion of understanding and friendship. As a result, Pakistan is playing a leading role in the establishment of the charter's objectives. As the region and Pakistan work together to address various issues, it is hoped that the people of Pakistan will improve their lives. Pakistan is paying significant heed to accomplish the objectives of the SAARC charter. SAARC members also need to play a significant role in encouraging regional cooperation for trade and socio-economic cooperation.

It is hoped that the SAARC countries will pay more attention to removing barriers to their collaboration and transforming SAARC into a functional organization. Although it is a wonderful goal, it cannot be fulfilled without the governments of the member nations making a sincere effort. The SAARC countries have experienced setbacks in the provisions of democracy after their establishment like many countries including Pakistan have failed to establish a democratic state at times. The times of martial law in the country give us clear evidence of the situation and what was needed to make the country a democratic state which led Pakistan to participate in the SAARC as an active participator in the region to flourish democracy in the country. As a result, Pakistan restored democracy under the general elections in 2008 and adopted the democratic charter of SSRC. But after the establishment of the SAARC organization, various nondemocratic institutions were prohibited. SAARC has made these countries an

example of democracy which the other parts of countries in the globe are lacking at. In Pakistan, martial law came to an end in 2008, and General Pervaiz Musharraf was forced to retreat whereas Asif Ali Zardari who was a leader of Pakistan became the president of the country ensuring a democratic state with legislatures that were vital to democracy. SAARC played a vital role in the establishment of democracy on its premises and made sure that no such unethical or unjust activity would take place in the SAARC countries. According to the SAARC charter of democracy, the member states would accept all the rules of democracy in the country. The most promising rule concerning democracy is the continuation of the up-gradation of the democratic establishments of coordination and balanced governance among the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary which is laid out in the Constitutions of SAARC.

The activities of the South Asian Development Fund (SAARC) are affecting Pakistan's development in various sectors. For instance, in the energy sector, an agreement signed intergovernmental provides for the establishment of an energy market in Pakistan. Through the South Asia Power Exchange and the South Asia Utility Forum, the two organizations are working together to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the region's electricity transmission and distribution systems. As part of the region's free trade agreement, Pakistanis are heavily involved in the distribution of benefits. The benefits of regional trade integration are shared by all countries in the region.

A virtuous circle of Pakistan is resulted in providing facilitates yet more success. Pakistan has deepened and expanded its cooperation in regional integration. Further, institutional links between regional countries have strengthened the participation of civil society to address the issues of regional development. Ultimately, it paved the way for the region to proceed with regional cooperation initiatives. On-conventional issues like climate change, food security, and energy security also need strong regional integration. The governments of South Asia and Pakistan need to work together to address the challenges that face the region's public goods. One of the most important steps that they can take is to adopt an agreement that will allow them to provide specific products and services. Technical cooperation is also a step that will help improve the provision of these services.

4.4 Issues and hurdles for the ineffective role of Pakistan in SAARC:

There are various hurdles/constraints that prevent Pakistan's affective role in South Asian cooperation from developing. Some of them are examined in the following:

1. Inter-State Dispute in the region of South Asia:

Due to the various factors that affect South Asian cooperation, the region's members have a hard time working together. One of these is the distrust and hostility toward their neighbors. This is why the members of the organization feel threatened by their neighbor. Pakistan worsened relations with India and Bangladesh seems to be highlighted here. Due to the various historical conflicts that have occurred since the establishment of the region's political framework, South Asian members are still not able to fully develop their cooperation. Terrorist and communal threats can also affect the region's efforts to improve its cooperation.⁷⁰

2. India's hegemonic potential:

One of the most common reasons why Pakistan's role in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has failed is due to the fear of India's hegemonic potential. This is because the country's desire to participate in the region's decision-making process has caused concerns among its neighbors, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The security, political, and diplomatic issues that affect the region have also hindered the development of the organization.⁷¹

3. Civilization Clash:

According to Samuel Huntington, in his book "The Civilizations Clash," the failure of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation can be attributed to the countries that are

⁷⁰ D. Weerakoon, & Sayawriya, S. *Economic Integration in SAARC with Special Reference to the Role of FDI in Regional Integration*, Conference Paper, Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), (2002), 10-19.

⁷¹ A.K. Sabur, *Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Problems of Conflict Management*. Lahore: Afroze Publications, 2014.

members of international organizations such as the European Union. These countries belong to the same culture, but they are not the same people as the other nations in the region. Moreover, since Pakistan and India are enemies, they are not able to support each other in the organization.

4. Unstable Financial Position of South Asia:

The financial positions of the members of the organization have also become unstable. Due to the lack of development, the members of the organization are not able to fully develop their economies. This is why the trade imbalance between the members of the organization has become an issue. Pakistan has tried its best to economically enhance and integrate the region of South Asia with this organization but usually failed in its efforts. South Asia's economic integration is not feasible due to the presence of India, which is a major contributor to the region's trade. This has encouraged the least developed members to resort to extra-regional trade and aid arrangements, which are not beneficial for the region's economic interaction. Despite the various factors that affect South Asian cooperation, the members of the organization are still not able to fully develop their economies. Due to the low level of intra-regional trade, the objective of the organization has been a failure.⁷²

5. Lack of equality or equivalence between member States

There is a structural imbalance between Pakistan, India and its members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). As a larger country, India has a larger economic and technological infrastructure than its other members. It also accounts for over three quarters of the region's GDP and two-thirds of its global exports. Due to the current tariff structure, South Asian countries are reluctant to trade with India. This is because the country has a large trade surplus with its neighbors. It also has a huge informal trade volume with many of its neighbors. All of South Asia looks up to India due to its size and location, which makes it 80% of the region's intra-regional trade. Despite this, Pakistan blames India for the failure of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). Since India is located in the middle of the region,

⁷² H. Malik, ed., *Dilemmas of National Security and Cooperation in India and Pakistan*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

it is attached to all of its members, and Pakistan's efforts for free trade amongst the members states is usually step down by India.⁷³

6. Trust-Deficit among the members:

The lack of trust among the members of the organization undermines its efforts to develop. Pakistan's role in SAARC to bring trust amongst the member's states is very positive but did not attain the desire result. This is because the members are still in the midst of a history of mutual distrust and rivalry, and these issues have caused them immense damage. The elites of the region do not trust each other due to their various vested interests and nationalistic feelings. This could prevent the organization from becoming a successful and stable force.⁷⁴

7. Exclusion of Contentious Issues from SAARC Charter:

The charter of the organization provides for the exclusion of certain issues from its discussions. For instance, it precludes the discussion of the bilateral and contentious issues. On the one hand, it encourages exchanges and cooperation; while on the other hand, it avoids addressing these issues. Another significant restriction in the charter is that all decisions taken by the organization must be unanimous. This makes it difficult for South Asian countries to participate in the formulation of policies. The charter also undermines the organization's objective of promoting equality among its members.⁷⁵

8. Different Political Systems:

South Asia has various political systems that are different from each other. Due to this, it has not been able to develop a strong democratic culture. Although there are democracy systems in the region, such as in India and Pakistan, it has not been able to develop a robust political system. The various issues that have affected the region's development have also prevented the members from achieving their goals. One of these is the dispute between India and Pakistan over

⁷³ *The News*, (Pakistan), October 19, 2005.

⁷⁴ *Dawn*, (Pakistan) April 30, 2010.

⁷⁵ *Jang*, (Pakistan), April 15, 2007.

the issue of Kashmir. This has prevented the two countries from working together and setting aside their differences. Besides this, other issues such as the disputes with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan have also affected the organization's efforts.⁷⁶

9. Lack of People to People contacts:

The lack of contact information between the people of the Association and the members is a major issue that prevents them from contributing to the development of the organization. They do not know when the Association was established and what its purpose is. This situation makes it difficult for them to help their fellow states solve their problems.⁷⁷

10. Lack of Strong Infrastructure:

South Asian countries share many common features such as low labor costs, low value added commodities, and comparative advantages over their counterparts in other regions. The intra-regional trade can't be successful in such conditions due to the lack of strong industrial infrastructure and trade structure. Most of the member states are not very strong economically, which means they look for other markets in the world.⁷⁸

11. Pathetic Condition of South Asia:

South Asia is considered to be the most impoverished region in the world due to the lack of proper facilities and services for its people. Over 300 million people in the region lack access to safe drinking water, while over 800 million do not have access to sanitation. The region is also heavily militarized due to the activities of its two major countries, India and Pakistan.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ A. Rahamn, *Relations between South Asia and ASEAN*. Bangladesh Country Paper, Columbo: United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR), 1985, 7-10.

⁷⁷ M., Anuradha & Muni S. D. *Regional Cooperation in South Asia*, New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1984.

⁷⁸ S. Sharma, *India and SAARC*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2010.

⁷⁹ M. P. Lama, *SAARC: Dynamics of Emerging New Regionalism*. Paper Presented at the Regional Conference on the Expansion of SAARC: Challenges and Opportunities on 29-30 June, Lalitpur: *Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA)*, 2007, 23-27

12. Some other issue:

There are also various constraints that prevent South Asian countries from achieving their goals. Some of these include the lack of contact information between the people of the Association and the members, the militarized environment, and the lack of industrial infrastructure. The lack of effective communication and cooperation at the Secretariat of the Association has also caused many tasks to get delayed. Other than these, other factors such as the lack of political will and the establishment of a consensus building process are also hindering the region's development. The lack of collective vision and the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for addressing the challenges brought about by globalization are also hindering the region's progress.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ S. Abdullah, "SAARC Intra-Regional Trade: An Assessment", *Strategic Studies* 20, No. 2 & 3, (2000): 235-240.

CHAPTER 5

FINDING, CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 FINDINGS

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) aims to strengthen and promote the cooperation among its members. It is also dedicated to developing mutual trust and understanding. Its objectives are to enhance mutual assistance and collaboration in various fields. It is a vital part of the development of South Asia. It promotes economic, social, and cultural activities and helps improve the quality of life for its people and facilitate intra-region trade and develop the region's standardization. Through the platform of SAARC South Asia's nations enjoy better connectivity and development cooperation. They also have greater opportunities for people-to-people contact. Member countries are also playing vital role in the SAARC through collective efforts and cooperation in progress.

Pakistan is playing a key role in the SAARC due to its strategic position in the region in order to maintain security integration in the region by eliminating terrorism for being the frontline on war and terrorism. It also pledged to address the lack of provincial collaboration and its associations in energy scarcity, climate change, and water issues. A member of SAARC Pakistan has been working toward achieving a high standard of cooperation in various fields. Through effective collaboration with other states, it has been able to maintain peace and solve disputes. Pakistan being a part of the Millennium Development Goals of the UNO is playing an effective role in the SAARC to achieve the described goals of international standard by maintaining common environment, promoting human rights, democracy and good governance. It also affirmed the principles of peace, security, and disarmament as well as development and poverty alleviation.

However, there are a number of reasons that Pakistan's role in SAARC cannot produce its desire results. First, Indian hegemony in the SAARC is halting the influence of Pakistan in the

region as India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan denied attending SAARC summit that was scheduled in Pakistan in the influence of India. Second Kashmir being a bone of contention between India and Pakistan is reflecting the position of Pakistan as a negative state which has failed to resolve this dispute. Third, Pakistan is using the SAARC to propose South Asia as nuclear free region which has annoyed India to cooperate with Pakistan as it will halt the Indian nuclear hegemony in the region. The violation of Indus Waters Treaty by India and mismanagement of water resources to Pakistan is hindering the agricultural growth of Pakistan. Fourth, the Indo-pacific policy of the US in terms of India to counter China is making India stronger in the SAARC which is making India stubborn in order to resolve disputes with Pakistan peacefully.

5.2 CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be stated that SAARC being a regional organization is playing an essential role in every field of life to integrate the region of South Asia. Since its inception SAARC is persuading its goals of regional integration and connectivity in the form of the economic integration. The member countries are ensuring collaboration in every field of life.

Pakistan being a strategic partner on the platform of SAARC is playing a significant role in it due to its strategic location in the region. Pakistan had pledged to address the lack of regional collaboration and its associations in every sector such as energy scarcity, climate change and water issues. As a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Pakistan has been working to achieve a high level of corporation in various fields. Through effective collaboration with other states, it has been able to maintain peace and solve disputes. As a result SAARC Energy Centre and SAARC Human Resources Development Centre were established in Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan is playing an effective role in the SAARC to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of international standard by maintaining common environment, promoting democracy, Human rights, security, peace, disarmament, and governance as well as development and poverty alleviation. However, Indian hegemony in the SAARC is halting the influence of Pakistan in the region to practice its interest on the platform of SAARC. Kashmir being a bone of contention between India and Pakistan is reflecting the position of Pakistan as a negative state which has failed to resolve this dispute. Although,

Pakistan is using the SAARC to propose South Asia as nuclear free region, yet Indian influence in the SAARC is hindering the progress of Pakistan in the SAARC in accordance with its strategic position. The violation of Indus Waters Treaty by India and miss-management of water resources between India and Pakistan and the Indo-pacific policy of the US in terms of India to counter China is making India stronger in the SAARC which is making India stubborn to resolve disputes with Pakistan peacefully.

The political and social environment of South Asian countries can affect the development of their trade relations. For instance, the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) is the foundation of the region's trade liberalization. However, the implementation of the Agreement in Services has been slower than expected, but it was a positive development of the member states in trade especially for India and Pakistan. The rise of regional integration has opened up new opportunities for people to interact with each other in various fields. There is a huge potential for a civil society to emerge in South Asia and become a powerful voice for peace and development.

Pakistan needs to ameliorate relations with India to achieve its objectives and maintain strategic position in the SAARC. Above all, Pakistan should address the energy scenario, sustainable use of natural resources and maintain bio-safety and bio-security to boost agricultural development in the region. Pakistan should enjoy the new trade opportunities in market gaining benefits through adopting technological investment and developing infrastructure. The issues of global warning should be addressed by Pakistan in order to avoid the natural disasters like current flash floods and other natural hazards. Pakistan should focus on the cooperation of agriculture sector according to the given strategies of the SAARC agriculture vision.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATION

The following are some recommendations regarding regional development for SAARC:

- The representatives of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should hold a series of roundtable conferences to discuss the various aspects of the organization's development.
- One of the main recommendations for the region's development is to ensure that food security is maintained. This can be achieved through the establishment of more food

products in each district. Doing so can be done through the use of incentives and strategies that reward producers with high benefits. Additional attention should also be paid to the augmentation and examination of farming techniques. This can be done through the establishment of a comprehensive regional food security program. This can be carried out through the development of research programs that are focused on areas with the potential to improve their efficiency.

- Promoting the activities of South Asian nations on their national benefits can help boost the region's development.

- The establishment of the South Asian Business and Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been seen as a positive development. With the increasing number of administrations in the organization, the movement toward more prominent incorporation is expected to continue. However, despite the positive developments, the people of South Asia still believe that the improvement of monetary and exchange collaboration in the region is not yet feasible.

- Communication between the various administrative authorities of South Asian nations is necessary for the region's development. This is very important for the smooth implementation of the region's integration process, to the exchange of ideas and information.

- In the political sphere: The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a vital forum that plays a crucial role in bringing about various changes in the geographical and universal regions. As the biggest member of this organization, India should take its responsibilities seriously and act accordingly to ensure that the region's conflicts are resolved peacefully. The current structure of the organization prevents the leaders from discussing international issues such as climate change and security threads. This should include the common concerns of the entire region. The main objective of the South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation is to promote South Asia's well-being. It is an organization that can connect the countries of this region's adventurous economies. It should also provide conducive conditions for the peaceful resolution of bilateral conflicts.

- In the economic field: The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should regularly monitor the implementation of policies that can help improve the region's economic stability. South Asia can achieve a positive image in the world through the establishment of high-quality brand names and projects that are beneficial for all its member

countries. Another important step toward establishing a cooperative environment is to work with smaller sub-region nations. One of the most important steps toward establishing a cooperative atmosphere is to work together to develop new construction projects that will help improve the connectivity among South Asian nations. Doing so will allow them to learn more about each other's cultures and improve their trade. The relationship between Pakistan and India should also be improved to benefit the region's development. One suggestion for economic initiatives is to encourage low-interest loans and investments. To reinforce the region's economic stability, regular meetings should be held to discuss the establishment of investment and trading activities. Investment and trade can help improve the image of a country and create job opportunities for its citizens. New policies should be implemented under the supervision of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Economic policy coordination is also important to reduce the rivalries in the international and regional markets caused by South Asian nations. To ensure that their trade production is on the same page, all countries should establish joint export activities. The economic initiative should also learn from each other's mistakes. This is because the knowledge gained from failure can be used to improve the efficiency of their economies. South Asia can learn a lot from other countries that have successfully tackled the issue of poverty.

- In the Social field: Among the social objectives that the organization can achieve is increasing collaboration within its various members and with other organizations. It can also improve the image of South Asia in the international media and improve the relationship between the countries. The various social initiatives that the organization can achieve are very important since they can help the countries develop their economies and improve their social and institutional conditions. To ensure that these goals are met, the organization should work with other organizations and non-governmental groups. Despite the various moving patterns that have occurred in the region, the South Asian Association has tremendous potential. People of South Asia must not remain ignorant of the opportunities that can be achieved by expanding the joint efforts of the countries. The increasing number of resident investors in South Asia can help strengthen the region's personality and provide a better environment for its conventional elites. This will lead to the establishment of a superior South Asia.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX-I

Islamabad Declaration

The Islamabad Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 31st December, 1988.

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met at the Fourth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Islamabad from 29- 31 December, 1988.

2. The Heads of State of Government expressed their deep satisfaction at the progress achieved by the Association since the last Summit. They reiterated their commitment to the SAARC Charter and renewed their determination to cooperate in promoting the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improving their quality of life by eradicating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and environmental degradation.

3. They recalled that their countries were linked by cultural, social and historical ties and they had at their disposal substantial human and natural resources. They recognised that these provided a sound basis as well as immense opportunities for regional cooperation. They therefore expressed their determination to make optimal use of their resources for the benefit of their people by working jointly to pursue their shared objectives. They were aware that by acting in concert they could realise the full potential for regional progress, taking into account complementarities and growing interdependence.

4. The leaders endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers that any country in the region subscribing to the objectives and principles of the SAARC Charter may be admitted as a member of the Association by a unanimous decision of the Heads of State of Government.

5. The Heads of State of Government expressed satisfaction at the progress so far made in the implementation of the SAARC Integrated Programme of Action. They underlined the need for closer cooperation in the activities undertaken under this programme. They took note of the measures to streamline and re-orient various SAARC

activities to make them more action-oriented so as to improve the quality of life of their peoples. They directed that the Secretary General may submit recommendation to the Standing Committee which should in turn decide how to streamline SAARC activities and make them more effective. They welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC), as well as the steps being taken for the establishment of other regional institutions.

6. The Heads of State of Government lauded the smooth functioning of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) Programme which had proved to be a useful medium for promoting a South Asian consciousness amongst the peoples of the region. They decided that SAVE Programmes should also emphasise social, economic and technical themes. They also noted with satisfaction the successful launching of the Youth Volunteers Programme and the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships Scheme. They decided that Education may be included as an agreed area of cooperation.

7. The Heads of State of Government expressed satisfaction that the South Asian Food Security Reserve had become operational on 12 August 1988. The Reserve would serve as a cushion against food shortages and was a tangible manifestation of the spirit of cooperation in the region.

8. The Heads of State of Government noted with satisfaction that the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism had been ratified and had come into effect on 22 August 1988, thus reflecting the sincere desire on the part of the Member States to enter into meaningful cooperation to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the South Asian region. They called for the adoption of enabling measures by Member States to implement the Convention at the earliest.

9. The Heads of State of Government expressed grave concern over the growing magnitude and the serious effects of drug abuse, particularly among young people, and drug trafficking. They recognised the need for urgent and effective measures to eradicate this evil and decided to declare the year 1989 as the "SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking". They agreed to launch a concerted campaign, as suited to the situation in their respective countries, to significantly augment SAARC efforts to eliminate drug abuse and drug trafficking. These included closer cooperation in creating a greater awareness of

the hazards of drug abuse, exchange of expertise, sharing of intelligence information, stringent measures to stop trafficking in drugs and introduction of more effective laws. They directed that the Technical Committee concerned should examine the possibility of a Regional Convention on Drug Control.

10. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep sense of sorrow and profound sympathy at the loss of valuable lives and extensive damage to property suffered during the year by Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan as a result of unprecedented floods, cyclones and earthquakes. In this connection, they recalled their earlier decision at Kathmandu in November, 1987 to intensify regional cooperation with a view to strengthening their disaster management capabilities and took note of the recommendations of the meeting of the SAARC Group of Experts on the Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment, that met in Kathmandu in July 1988. They expressed the conviction that identification of measures and programmes as envisaged by the Group of Experts would supplement national, bilateral, regional and global efforts to deal with the increasingly serious problems being faced by the region as a result of the recurrence of natural disasters and the continuing degradation of the environment. They urged that the study should be completed in the shortest period of time so that it could provide a basis for the member countries to draw up an action plan for meaningful cooperation amongst the Member States. They decided that a joint study be undertaken on the "Greenhouse Effect" and its impact on the region.

11. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that modalities for studies to be carried out for cooperation in the areas of trade, manufactures and services had been worked out by a Group of Experts, which met in Islamabad recently. They emphasised the need for the completion of the studies within the agreed time schedule. They directed that the Fourth Meeting of Planners should examine the possibility of cooperation in agreed areas of trade, manufactures and services, which would promote the objectives of meeting the basic needs of the peoples of the region. The report of the Planners should be considered at the next Council of Ministers meeting, with a view to making specific recommendations to the next Summit.

12. The Heads of State or Government reviewed the progress on the Situation of Children in SAARC countries. They reiterated their commitment made in the Bangalore Declaration to accord the highest priority to the needs of children in national development planning and stressed that the concept of Human Resource Development should lay particular emphasis on the welfare and wellbeing of children, especially in the literacy and health spheres. They called for the conclusion and adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. They decided to declare 1990 as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child".

13. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the effective functioning of the SAARC Secretariat and its role in coordinating SAARC activities. They also noted that a Headquarters Agreement had been signed between the Secretariat and the host Government. They thanked His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the assistance and cooperation extended to the Secretariat.

14. The Heads of State or Government noted that the decision to involve regional NGOs or professional bodies in SAARC activities, taken at the Fifth Session of the Council of Ministers, pursuant to the direction given by the Kathmandu Declaration, was an important step towards the promotion of people-to-people contact which has always been emphasised by the Association.

15. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need for closer and more frequent contacts among the peoples of SAARC. As a beginning, they decided that Supreme Court Judges and Members of the National Parliaments of each member State would be entitled to a special SAARC travel document which would exempt them from visas. They further directed the Council of Ministers to examine what other categories of persons should be given this facility and to submit their recommendations.

16. They further noted with satisfaction the mandate given to the Secretary General by the Council of Ministers at its Fifth Session on the question of contacting organisations with similar aims and purposes.

17. The Heads of State or Government expressed their determination to give concrete shape to the objectives of SAARC. In this context they emphasised the need to progressively carry out SAARC activities within a broad framework of a long-term perspective and to

harmonize their efforts to ensure tangible benefits to the peoples of South Asia as a whole. They were conscious of the fact that all South Asian countries faced problems in varying degrees in areas such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection. Towards this end they were of the view that all Member States should identify areas of core interest in their national perspective plans or prepare such plans and consolidate them into a regional plan to be called "SAARC-2000 : A Basic Needs Perspective", with specific targets to be met by the end of the century.

18. They recognised that Human Resource Development is one of the means of realizing these objectives. In this context they welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host a Centre for Human Resource Development and directed the Secretary-General to set up a Group of Experts from Member States to examine the proposal on the basis of a paper to be prepared by the Government of Pakistan and to submit its recommendations to the Standing Committee.

19. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their abiding commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, particularly those enjoining respect for the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and national independence, non-use or threat of use of force, noninterference in the internal affairs of other states and peaceful settlement of all disputes. They reiterated their faith in the United Nations as the most important forum for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the promotion of international cooperation aimed at the progress and prosperity of mankind.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the relaxation of global tensions through intensified super-power dialogue on a broad range of international issues and welcomed the progress towards the resolution of protracted regional disputes and conflicts. They agreed that these developments had enhanced the prospects for disarmament, security, peace and progress for all peoples of the world. They appreciated the important role played by the United Nations in bringing about these positive changes in the international political environment. They also called upon all States to strengthen the capacity of the UN system in all respects to achieve the purpose of the UN Charter.

21. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their deep commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement as an important force for

strengthening world peace and harmony as well as for promoting development with justice and equity. In this context they expressed satisfaction over the results of the Ministerial Conference of the Non-aligned Movement held in Cyprus in September 1988 and expressed the hope the decisions of the Conference would contribute to the reduction of tensions and to the promotion of development. They hoped that the current discussions on the improvement in the methodology of the Non-Aligned Movement would result in strengthening the movement and enable it to play its role with greater effectiveness.

22. The Heads of State or Government believed that the escalation in military expenditure was a major constraint on world development. In this regard they noted that the UN Conference on Disarmament and Development had clearly established a link between disarmament and development and had provided a valuable framework for future action in this vital area. They urged that resources saved through disarmament measures should be diverted in particular to developing countries for development.

23. They welcomed the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on Intermediate Nuclear Force. They hoped this would be a precursor to further accords to reduce strategic nuclear arsenals drastically and to prevent an arms race in Outer Space. They called for the early conclusion in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a Convention to Ban Chemical Weapons. They declared their intention to continue their efforts to contribute to the realization of the objective of halting the nuclear arms race and eliminating nuclear weapons. They declared their resolve to support every effort to conclude a treaty prohibiting vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

24. The Heads of State or Government noted with deep concern the continued structural disequilibrium from which the world economy had long suffered. This had resulted in slower growth in the developing countries, downward trends in commodity prices, decline in the net export earnings of the developing countries and deterioration in their terms of trade. These developments combined with the overwhelming debt burdens, the reverse financial flows from the developing to the developed countries and the sharp rise of protectionism in the developed world had further aggravated the economic difficulties of the developing countries.

25. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the interdependent character of the economies of the developed and the developing countries. They called for the resumption of the North-South dialogue with a view to restructuring the international economic system and to establishing the New International Economic Order based on justice and equity. They called for coordinated actions by the developed and the developing countries to increase the net flow of developmental assistance, overcome debt difficulties, expand the access of the developing countries to the markets in developed countries, arrest the deterioration in terms of trade of the developing countries and stabilize commodity prices.

26. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the need for preserving and liberalizing the multilateral trading system with renewed efforts both within and outside the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. They also underscored the importance of the developed countries fully respecting and implementing the commitments made in Punta del Este on "standstill and rollback" arrangements. They expressed concern that on account of differences between major trading entities on the question of agricultural subsidies, the Montreal Meeting on the midterm review of the Uruguay round was inconclusive. They particularly regretted that there was no progress in the negotiations on issues of major interest to developing countries such as trade in textiles and a Safeguard System. They were disappointed that on some of the issues of interest to developing countries on which there was agreement, particularly tropical products, it would not be possible even to implement the decisions taken, from the beginning of 1989 as envisaged. They emphasised that the development dimension must be taken into account in the negotiations on new issues, particularly services and intellectual property rights. They agreed to take concerted action to this end in the forthcoming negotiations.

27. The Heads of State or Government fully supported the call for the initiation of a comprehensive process for the preparation of an International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade as well as the proposal of the Group of 77 for convening a Special Session of the General Assembly in 1990 to revive growth and development in the developing countries.

28. The Heads of State or Government reemphasized the need for increased resource flows and special measures in favour of the least developed countries within the Framework

of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) for these countries. They supported the convening of a high level United Nations Conference on the least developed countries in 1990 to review progress and formulate national and international policies and measures for accelerating the development process in the least developed countries during the 1990s, especially in order to help them achieve their long term socio-economic objectives.

29. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which Prime Minister of Pakistan chaired the meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of Pakistan.

Joint Press Release Joint Press Release Issued on December 31, 1988 at the End of Fourth SAARC Summit, Islamabad.

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met at the Fourth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Islamabad from 29-31 December, 1988. The meeting was marked by an atmosphere of mutual understanding and spirit of accommodation.

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of the Association enshrined in the SAARC Charter and renewed their determination to work collectively towards the attainment of these objectives. They issued the Islamabad Declaration.

3. The Heads of State or Government were deeply shocked at the armed attack on the Republic of Maldives on 3rd November, 1988 aimed at destabilising the Government and taking over the country. They strongly condemned these acts of violence which disrupted the peace and security of a Member State. They expressed full solidarity with the Government of Maldives.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the high incidence of drug production, trafficking and abuse. They decided to declare 1989 as the "SAARC Year Against Drug Abuse" in order to focus attention on drug-related problems facing the region.

They called upon Members States to prepare and implement national programmes in this regard.

5. They welcomed the launching of SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships schemes and the Youth Volunteers programme. They recognised that Education was one of the principal areas requiring urgent attention in the region and decided to include Education among the agreed areas of cooperation. For this purpose they decided to set up a Technical Committee and accepted the offer of Bangladesh to chair the Committee.

6. The Heads of State or Government agreed to launch "SAARC-2000-A Basic Needs Perspective" which calls for a perspective regional plan with specific targets to be met by the end of the century in areas of core interest such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection. In this context they welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host a Centre for Human Resource Development and directed the Secretary-General to convene an Expert Group Meeting of member countries to work out modalities for the realization of "SAARC 2000 - A Basic Needs Perspective".

7. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the idea of holding South Asian Festivals from time to time and accepted the offer of India to host the first such festival.

8. The Heads of State or Government directed the Standing Committee to examine the desirability of establishing a regional body to promote cultural links among Member States.

9. They welcomed the coming into force of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They stressed the importance of the adoption of enabling measures at the national level that would be necessary in order to fully implement the provisions of the Convention.

10. They welcomed the Agreement regarding the establishment of a South Asian Food Security Reserve in August this year which marked a major breakthrough in the common endeavours of the Governments of member countries of SAARC to assist each other in food emergency situations.

11. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction at the progress achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA). They

recognised the need for focusing attention on more concrete and result-oriented activities within the SAARC framework.

12. They welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Agriculture Information Centre (SAIC) at Dhaka and were of the view that proposals for the setting up of regional institutions, focusing on problems of common concern in the region, should be given priority.

13. They reiterated their earlier commitment to accord priority to the needs of children in national development plans. They decided to declare 1990 as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child" and directed that specific programmes and activities be undertaken to increase public awareness of the problems of the girl child.

14. They expressed satisfaction at the progress in the studies underway regarding the feasibility of cooperation in areas of trade, manufactures and services. In the meanwhile they directed the Secretary-General to convene a special meeting of the Group of Coordinators to identify any specific areas where cooperation may be feasible immediately. They directed that the report of the Group should be presented to the next sessions of the Standing Committee and the Council of Ministers.

15. The Heads of State or Government expressed profound sorrow at the natural disasters suffered by Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan in 1988 and urged that the study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment be completed in the shortest period of time so as to provide a rational basis for identifying areas keeping in view the potentials and possibilities of evolving a regional plan of action, particularly to strengthen disaster management capabilities and to protect and preserve the environment.

16. They expressed satisfaction at the concrete steps being taken for the implementation of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) Programme. They directed that social, economic and technical themes should be given emphasis by the SAVE Programme.

17. Recalling the usefulness of the earlier Ministerial meeting on Women in Development held in India in 1986, the Heads of State or Government called for the holding

of a second Ministerial level meeting and welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host the meeting.

18. They expressed satisfaction that pursuant to the direction given by the Kathmandu Declaration for enhancing people-to -people contact, concrete steps had been taken by including regional NGOs and professional bodies in SAARC activities.

19. They decided that any country in the region subscribing to the objectives and principles of the Charter may be admitted as a member of the Association by a unanimous decision of the Heads of State or Government.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the effective functioning of the SAARC Secretariat and its role in coordinating SAARC activities. They appreciated the work of the SAARC Secretary-General in the discharge of his responsibilities and thanked His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the assistance and cooperation extended to the Secretariat.

21. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Fifth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1989.

22. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep appreciation for the outstanding manner in which the Prime Minister of Pakistan had conducted the meetings as the Chairperson of the Fourth SAARC Summit. They also expressed profound gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference

APPENDIX-II

TWELFTH SAARC SUMMIT ISLAMABAD 4-6 JANUARY 2004 ISLAMABAD DECLARATION

We, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan, Lyonpo Jigmi Yoezer Thinley, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the President of the Republic of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal, Surya

Bahadur Thapa, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga:

Having met at the Twelfth Summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 4-6 January 2004;

Guided by the vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia and proud of its rich culture and traditions;

Deeply conscious of the growing interdependence within and amongst nations and regions in an increasingly globalizing world;

Desirous of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and Non-Alignment, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in the internal affairs of the states and peaceful settlement of all disputes;

Reaffirming the centrality of SAARC for promoting regional cooperation and emphasizing the need to enhance its efficacy;

Strongly reaffirming our commitment to the objectives, principles and provisions of the Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC);

Declare that:

Regional Cooperation

Economic

1. We renew our commitment to the objectives and principles of SAARC and pledge to reinvigorate cooperation to realize peace, amity, progress and prosperity of all peoples of South Asia

2. We affirm our determination to create an inclusive, just and equitable partnership for peace, development and prosperity. Satisfactory progress has been made in SAPTA. The signing of the Framework Agreement on SAFTA is a major milestone. It is important to maintain this momentum and move towards further broadening of economic cooperation and to ensure equitable distribution of benefits of trade and cater to the special needs of the small and LDC Member States by providing them special and differential treatment.

3. We reiterate our commitment made at the 11th SAARC Summit at Kathmandu in January 2002 for the creation of a South Asian Economic Union. In this context, we underline that creation of a suitable political and economic environment would be conducive to the realization of this objective.

4. A study on creating a South Asian Energy Cooperation including the concept of an Energy Ring should be undertaken by the Working Group on Energy.

5. For accelerated and balanced economic growth it is essential to strengthen transportation, transit and communication links across the region.

6. Public and private sector cooperation, particularly joint ventures holds great promise. It is important to move towards Project cooperation under SAARC. Prospects for setting up of a South Asian Development Bank should be examined by the SAARCFINANCE through the council of ministers.

7. Priority attention should also be given to the need for harmonization of standards, simplification of custom procedures, as well as cooperation among the central banks.

8. Development of tourism within South Asia could bring economic, social and cultural dividends. There is a need for increasing cooperation to jointly promote tourism within South Asia as well as to promote South Asia as a tourism destination inter alia by improved air links. To achieve this and to commemorate the twentieth year of the establishment of SAARC, the year 2005 is designated as "South Asia Tourism Year", for the success of which, each member would individually and jointly organize special events.

9. SAARC members should continue to safeguard their collective interests in multilateral forums by discussing, coordinating and exchanging information with a view to adopting common positions, where appropriate, on various issues.

Poverty Alleviation

10. We recognise poverty alleviation as the greatest challenge facing the peoples of South Asia and declare poverty alleviation as the overarching goal of all SAARC activities. It is imperative to relate regional co-operation to the actual needs of the people.

11. Provision of basic needs, promotion of literacy, and better health care are a regional priority. It is important to undertake effective and sustained poverty reduction

programmes through pro-poor growth strategies and other policy interventions with specific sectoral targets.

12. The Plan of Action on Poverty Alleviation, prepared by the meeting of Finance and Planning Ministers in Islamabad in 2002, is hereby approved.

13. The reconstituted Independent South Asian Commission for Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) has done commendable work. An effective strategy should be devised to implement suggestions made in its Report "Our Future Our Responsibility". In this context, ISACPA should continue its advocacy role. It should prepare and submit to the next SAARC summit a comprehensive and realistic blue-print setting out SAARC Development Goals for the next five years in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, health and environment giving due regard, among others, to the suggestions made in the ISACPA report.

14. The SAARC Secretariat should periodically update and submit Regional Poverty Profiles.

15. SAARC should continue to collaborate with international organizations and UN agencies in the field of poverty alleviation. Arrangements for SAARC Food Security Reserve should be made more effective. We also recommend the establishment of a Regional Food Bank for which a concept paper should be prepared.

16. Investment in human resources is critical for future development of South Asia. It is, therefore, essential to establish a network of centres of higher learning, training and Skill Development Institutes (SDI) across South Asia. In this context, the role of the SAARC Human Resource Development Centre (SHRDC) is important.

Science and Technology

17. Strengthening of scientific and technological co-operation across the region is fundamental to accelerating the pace of economic and social development. Sharing of scientific and technological expertise, joint research and development and industrial application of higher technology should be encouraged and facilitated.

Social

18. We hail the signing of the SAARC Social Charter as a historic development, which would have a far-reaching impact on the lives of millions of South Asians. Issues covered under the Charter, such as poverty alleviation, population stabilization,

empowerment of women, youth mobilization, human resource development, promotion of health and nutrition and protection of children are key to the welfare and well being of all South Asians.

19. Progress has been made in the constitution of SAARC Autonomous Advocacy Group of Prominent Women Personalities (SAWAG). To enable women to contribute to the socio-economic development, there is a need for SAARC to encourage women entrepreneurs in the region.

20. Member states should move towards an early ratification of the two Conventions on Child Welfare and Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

21. Easy and affordable health care, prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other serious communicable diseases are priorities. The year 2004 is declared as the "SAARC Awareness Year". The SAARC Secretariat should effectively implement the proposed programmes on the observation of the SAARC Awareness Year and develop a regional strategy through a consultative process and collaborate closely with the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and other international organizations and civil society.

22. The important initiative taken by the Maldives in hosting the Emergency Meeting of the SAARC Health Ministers on SARS epidemic in Male' on 29 April 2003, was a welcome development.

23. As agreed by the SAARC Health Ministers' Conference held recently in New Delhi, a SAARC Health Surveillance Centre and a Rapid Deployment Health Response System should be set up to deal with the emerging and re-emerging diseases as well as to establish a network between various Institutions dealing with malaria and other vector borne diseases in the Member States. Also, documentation of traditional knowledge to safeguard Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in medicine needs attention.

24. The importance of cooperation in medical expertise and pharmaceuticals as well as in the field of traditional medicine requires elaboration of a SAARC Plan of Action that should be developed in the shortest possible time.

Cultural

25. We take pride in the rich cultural mosaic of the peoples of South Asia and underline the need for preservation of traditional skills and crafts and promotion of cultural exchanges between nations. 26. We welcome the establishment of a SAARC Cultural Centre in Kandy, which will serve as a symbol of South Asian shared cultural heritage.

Environment

27. It is important to undertake and reinforce regional cooperation in the conservation of our water resources, environment, pollution prevention and control as well as our preparedness to deal with natural calamities. We welcome the early establishment of the Coastal Zone Management Centre in the Maldives.

28. The early and effective implementation of the SAARC Environment Plan of Action is important. We further stressed the early submission of the State of the Environment reports to expedite the preparation of SAARC State of Environment report and the commissioning of the work on drafting a Regional Environment Treaty.

Combating Terrorism

29. We condemn terrorist violence in all its forms and manifestations and note that people of South Asia continue to face a serious threat from terrorism.

30. We are convinced that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is a challenge to all states and to all of humanity, and cannot be justified on any ground, whatsoever. Terrorism violates the fundamental values of the United Nations and the SAARC Charter and constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. We agree to fully implement the relevant international conventions to which we are parties.

31. We reaffirm our commitment to SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, which, among others, recognizes the seriousness of the problem of terrorism as it affects the security, stability, and development of the region.

32. The signing of the Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Combating Terrorism to deal effectively with financing of terrorism is a further manifestation of our determination to eliminate all forms and manifestations of terrorism from South Asia.

SAARC Award

33. We welcome the institution of the SAARC Award on the basis of a concept paper drawn up by His Majesty's Government of Nepal and decide to present the award during the Summits in future. The Award will honour and encourage outstanding individuals and organizations within the region in the fields of peace, development, poverty alleviation, and in other areas of regional cooperation.

Information and Communication

34. We recognize the vital role that information and media can play in the promotion of peace, progress and harmony in South Asia. In this context, the initiatives for introducing regular 'SAARC Roundup' and 'SAARC News' programmes for telecast and broadcast on National TV and Radio Channels, respectively, in Member Countries is a welcome development. We agree to the establishment of a SAARC Information Centre in Kathmandu.

35. SAARC should endeavour to bring the benefits of information and communications technology to all peoples of the region, bridging the digital divide and assist in the development of knowledge based societies.

SAARC Integrated Programme of Action (SIPA)

36. We note with satisfaction the progress achieved in regional cooperation through SIPA. The commitment to SIPA must be matched by a corresponding allocation of resources for it.

Strengthening of the SAARC Secretariat

37. We agree to strengthen the capacity of the SAARC Secretariat. In this regard a Committee comprising of a Member from each Member State should meet soon and submit its recommendations within three months for consideration of the next session of the Council of Ministers. The Secretary General would coordinate the work of the Inter-Governmental Committee. Pending implementation of the recommendations of the proposed Committee a Poverty Alleviation Cell at the Secretariat should start functioning with a view to following up the Summit decisions on poverty alleviation.

Sub-Regional Cooperation

38. We encourage the development of specific projects relevant to the individual needs of three or more Member States under the provisions of Articles VII and X of the SAARC Charter.

Inter-Regional Cooperation

39. We express our determination to develop mutually beneficial links between SAARC and other regional and international organizations, bodies and entities and agree to establish dialogue partnership with other regional bodies and with states outside the region, interested in SAARC activities.

Enhancing Political Cooperation

40. We envision South Asia to be a peaceful and stable region where each nation is at peace with itself and its neighbours and where conflicts, differences and disputes are addressed through peaceful means and dialogue.

41. Reaffirm our pledge to promote good neighbourly relations on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and national independence, non-use of force, non-intervention and non-interference and peaceful settlement of disputes and recognize the importance of informal political consultations in promoting mutual understanding and reinforcing confidence building process among Member States.

Security of Small States

42. We are particularly mindful of the security concerns of small states that arise, inter alia, from their particular vulnerabilities, which should be firmly addressed by scrupulous adherence to the UN Charter, rules of international law and strict adherence to the universally accepted principles and norms related to sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all states. This should be ensured by all, both severally and collectively, through appropriate actions. 43. We endorse the recommendations made by the Council of Ministers at its Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth sessions.

Thirteenth SAARC Summit

44. We appreciate the offer of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to host the Thirteenth SAARC Summit in January 2005.

Islamabad

6 January 2004.