

Q/1/1/1:05
What is the way forward for SAARC in terms of achieving regional integration? How can the role of India be made more inclusive?

Background:-

South Asian region has a diversity in religion, cultural and lingual aspects. South Asian association of regional cooperation (SAARC) was basically established to create cordial relations between the states so that trading and economies of overall region could get better and peace and security would prevail in the region. But, SAARC can not achieve its aim of achieving peace, prosperity, collaboration and cooperation among the states. Different states are diverted on different matters. Following are the restructuring reforms which could help in better

regional cooperation.

1. South Asia Security Dialogue:

South Asia security dialogue should be made in which different working groups should be formed. Working groups should have equal nominations from each state. These working groups should collaborate with each other and form the final security rules confined to each country which should be binding by each country.

2. South Asian Nuclear dialogue:

South Asian Nuclear dialogue should be formed just as above security dialogue. It should have different working groups. India and Pakistan being the two prominent and nuclear states of South Asian region should collaborate on usage of minimum nuclear arsenal. It should be made sure to achieve minimum credible deterrence.

rather than maximum possible deterrence. ~~A~~ • Sense of security can be prevailed by these steps.

3. Conventional Arms reduction Dialogue

Even though, global instinct to increase armed arsenal is decreased, but it is increasing in South Asian Region with every tick crossing the click. India is above all in it because of its multi-centric disputes. Through dialogues, the states should reduce its expenditure on buying heavy weapons rather than this money can be expanded on other multiple human social issues which are prevalent in our region.

4. South Asian Parliament:

South Asian parliament should be formed in which there should be equal representation of all the countries. The nominees should be ex-parliamentarians,

intellectuals, experts, lawyers etc. They should make and give recommendations on issues of mutual interests, so that problems can be solved and peace would prevail in the region.

5. Confidence Building Measures:-

Confidence building measures should be enhanced so that there would be a way for further dialogues. Concessions should be provided in various matters e.g. vis easy visa processing for movement across states, visa-free movement of people, people to people contact should be promoted, economic and social problems should be solved mutually. Pakistan and India showed confidence building measures many times but territorial dispute is in the way which is not letting the cordial

relations between the two states.

Territorial Border disputes should be solved.

PAK-IND:

Pakistan and India fought there was on Kashmir but no result is seen. Kashmir issue is the main issue in tense relations between the states which then inhibits the trading and other relations.

PAK - AFG:

Pakistan shares a ~~to~~ large border with Afghanistan called durand line. But Afghanistan is of the view of greater Pakbunistan, which is a hurdle in achieving regional peace.

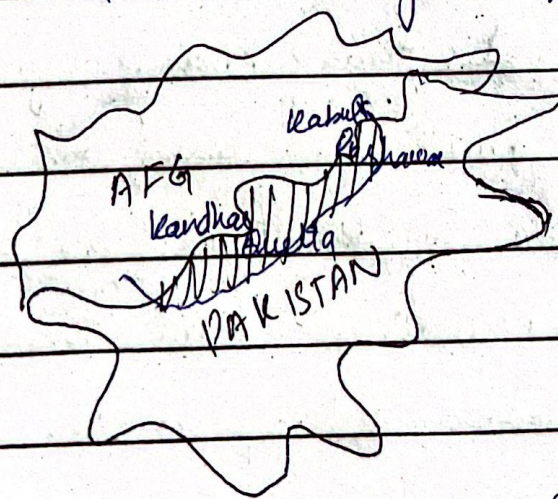


figure: Border dispute between Afghanistan
Pakistan and Afghanistan

How India can be made
more inclusive:

India should support amendments
in charter of SAARC:-

According to article 10 of
charter of SAARC, bilateral issues
cannot be discussed on the platform
of SAARC. India should support
the amendment ~~off~~ in this
article of charter of SAARC.

Pakistan adopts this view and Sri-
lanka also of the same line of
thinking. President Kumaratunga of

Sri-lanka addressed this issue in
kathu summit that even though

contentious matters should not be
discussed on SAARC platform but

bilateral issues should be discussed
for the betterment of region. It

is very important to resolve

first the bilateral issues which

can then lead to regional stability

Regionalism should be promoted:-

Even though, all the states of South Asian region are very much in conformity in social, cultural and lingual similarity. But they are very much apart. Everyone is on its path. No country can progress without promotion of regionalism.

It is not the states or countries that emerge; but it is the region that emerge.

(Hira Rabbani Khan 2012)

India ~~should~~ can play a role in promoting and arranging meetings between the states so that cultural, social and political interaction can happen between the states.

Free trade should be promoted:-

The objectives of SAFTA should be ensured so that free trade can take place.

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between the state countries. In 2011, trade between SAARC countries is just \$4.5 billion while in NAFTA countries, it reached upto \$1 trillion. It is very important role of India as it is biggest economy in the region, so it should reduce all the customs & duties and free trade should be promoted

Bilateral talks should be promoted:

Bilateral talks should be promoted to resolve all the territorial and border disputes between the states. India and Pakistan should resolve all the issues and think about their mutual human rights issues and economical problems. According to Regional Security Complex theory of Copenhagen school, "

the rivalry between India and Pakistan defines south Asia security complex. India should also resolve its border issues with Bangladesh and Bhutan over Kalapani region.

India should provide SAARC countries with new technology:

India being a global largest economy of South Asian region can play a important role in enhancing the technology capabilities to SAARC countries. Modi's plan of sending SAARC's satellite in space can launch the dream exploration dreams of all the countries. Instead of cooperating with other countries, India should sign treaties with the SAARC countries, it would help these countries to develop, as a result regional development can occur.

Conclusion:-

It is very important for SAARC to modify its structure and keep binding to its rules. States should cooperate with each other. India, being the largest economy, can play an important role by collaborating and promoting free trade with SAARC countries. But India is playing its self-interest role, by cooperating with South-east and East-Asian countries.