

Name: Aqsa Ali Islamabad Campus.

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(Q) Explore the significance of SCO for Pakistan?

SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)

Introduction:

SCO is an international intergovernmental organization. It was established in 2001. It has six members initially. In 2017, Pakistan and India ^{were} also granted its membership in 2017. Its official language is Russian and Chinese.

a) Historical perspective:

Shanghai five has five members that include Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, ^{and} Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan. Shanghai five was actually initiative of China in order to resolve the demarcation issue with CARs (Central Asian Republics) - later with the accession of Uzbekistan it became SCO.

b) Objectives of SCO:

Following are the objectives of SCO

① Political Objective

To promote trust with the states.

- (ii) **Economic Objective:-**
To enhance ^{economic} cooperation between states. Trade, Services, business among members states must be improved
- (iii) **Security Objective:-**
To deal with security issues such as terrorism, Separatism, illegal & immigration.
- (iv) **Energy Objective:-**
To meet energy requirement among states.

Significance of SCO for Pakistan :-

Pakistan got the membership of SCO in 2017. Pakistan can utilize its membership for various goals, such as to meet its energy demand, security issues etc. Here are the benefits of SCO for Pakistan.

- (i) **Geo-political importance:-**
SCO is an international intergovernmental organization which helps Pakistan to promote its ~~for~~ political interest. This organization to an extent helped the CARs to reduce their border tension among them in the same way it

help Pakistan to resolve its bilateral relations with India.

a) It provided a platform for Pakistan to discuss its relations with India.

Pakistan and India both have had strained relations. Both states have bilateral issues, border skirmishes, trust deficit with each other. SAARC is not an successful organization. ~~but~~ however, SCO provided both states as an opportunity to discuss their political issues. Also, member states ^{could} help them to have dialogue with each other. Through SCO, Pakistan would have better opportunity to resolve or manage its conflict with India.

b) Relations with Russia

During cold war, Pakistan has adopted the alliance strategy. It aligned itself with USA. However, especially in the last two decades USA and India's strategic partnership has posed threat to Pakistan's security.

Through SCO platform, Pakistan can improve its relations with Russia. One such example is the providence of Mi-35 helicopters to Pakistan by Russia. So, Pakistan can reduce its dependency on Western block by improving its relations with Russia.

c) Diplomatic platform

Pakistan with the SCO membership can strengthen its relations with CARs. Through this platform, Pakistan can secure its interest ~~thru~~ by effective diplomacy.

(d) Geo-Economic interests:-

a) Trade relations with CARs.

Pakistan has great significance importance for CARs. Pakistan can improve its economic relations with CARs. Regionalism in the region will bring prosperity. ~~EAP~~ Pakistan provide ~~for~~ CARs with an opportunity to have an access to the warm waters. Trade in the region will bring foreign direct investment in Pakistan. Especially, with the materializing of CPEC (China Pakistan Economic

(Corridor) there will be boost in the economic activity. It will generate employment in Pakistan.

b) Trade relations with China
SCO will further strengthen relations between China and Pakistan. Both states will explore future economic endeavours between themselves.

③ Energy interests:-

a) Energy Projects with Russia and CARs:-

Russia is one of the largest importers of oil & gas. SCO would provide Pakistan with the opportunity to strengthen its relations with Russia and to have energy deals with it. In this way, Pakistan can meet its energy requirement not only relying on Middle Eastern energy sources. Diversifying its energy sources will result into less dependency on one region for oil.

b) Rich natural resources of CARs.

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are rich in oil and natural resources. e.g. Uzbekistan is rich in oil and gas. In the same way Kazakhstan is rich in oil and natural gas.

Through initiating, developmental project with these states Pakistan could ensure uninterrupted energy demands.

(4)

Metallic and non-metallic (Raw material needs)

CARS is rich in raw materials e.g. Uzbekistan in; (metallic ores, lead, copper, zinc etc.

Kazakhstan in;

Non-metallic ores

Uranium

Thus, Pakistan can also get raw material through SCO by having trade deal with them.

(5)

Security Issues

SCO primarily focus on security issues, es to combat 3 evils

① Terrorism

② Separatism

③ Extremism

Pakistan is a peace loving country. However, above three evils threatens

Pakistan security. Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism. So RATS (Regional Anti-terrorism Structure) could help Pakistan in combating these evils.

a) Control drug Trafficking
SCO ^{could} help Pakistan in providing intelligence information and training to personnels (Anti-Narcotic team) to locate hubs of illegal drug mafias

b) Combating Terrorism
SCO through joint military exercise helps Pakistan when in need. It has conduct its naval drill. SCO could provide Pakistan when it need military expertise in combating Terrorism. With the advance intelligence sharing it could help Pakistan to effectively deal with emerging threats.

Conclusion:-

Pakistan is a peace loving country. Main objectives of SCO resonate with Pakistan interests e.g, combating terrorism, improve trade, cooperation and energy needs. Thus, SCO has great significance for Pakistan.
