

Recommendations for SAARC

Introduction:

The South Asian Association of Regional Corporation was formed in 1985 with ultimate objectives to strengthen the social, cultural, and economic co-operation ~~and~~ in the regional countries.

Despite of many achievements SAARC failed due to intra-regional political tensions, trust deficit and ultra-nationalism. But the revival of SAARC is possible if the following steps would be taken by organization.

1. India - Pakistan Rapprochement:

India Pakistan conflicts should be resolved or Both countries should put their conflicts aside to focus on regional trade co-operation. Pakistan has minimal

trade with nepal and Bhutan due to geographical constraints. Similarly, india has difficulty in land route trade with afghanistan. Pakistan depends on india for trade with Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. India depends on Pakistan's co-operation for land trade route to afghanistan.

So, for the economic co-operation of SAARC countries India-Pakistan Rapprochement is imperative.

2. Role OF India:

India's hegemonic attitude was a biggest thorn in success of SAARC. India should change her attitude towards regional countries. As a big political, economic and country india should use soft power to promote regional cooperation, socio-economic development and put an end to mutual hostility and work together for a better future.

3. Redefining the SAARC charter:

It includes the removal of excessive safeguards, inclusion of 'SAARC minus' concept and focus on trade facilitation and energy trade connectivity which leads to increase regional economic cooperation.

4. SAARC summit on annual basis:

One of the failure of SAARC was cancellation of 19th summit which was going to be hosted by Pakistan. But India refused to attend summit over the issue of terrorist^{attack} for which India blamed Pakistan. SAARC Summits should be held annually and all countries should attend summit to ensure regional progress. SAARC summit is essential either physical or virtual to break the ice.

5. Promote cultural diplomacy:

SAARC countries have different culture and ethnicities. There is a need to promote tourism among SAARC member states. It can stimulate confidence amongst people as well as enhance people-to-people contact of region which will promote cultural and economic co-operation. Moreover,

SAARC member states could follow best practises by other regional organizations like ASEAN or EU. How these countries tackle the conflict of cultural identities and focus on strong regional ties to fulfill regional objectives.

6. Conflict-resolution mechanism:

SAARC does not have any robust conflict-resolution mechanism.

Most of the SAARC members indulge in bilateral political conflicts. So, with SAARC needs to delete Article X from its charter so member states should be capable of

discussing issues, which are directly responsible for faltering the process of regional co-operation.

7. China's full membership in SAARC:

China's full membership in SAARC would be a challenge to India whose hegemonic aims were a biggest constraint in SAARC progress. So, China's entry in SAARC as a full member can give the desired push to organisation to grow as a regional bloc. Moreover, China's global economic influence can help provide the boost it needs.

8. Resolve security issues and peace in Afghanistan:

Peace in Afghanistan is not possible without regional cooperation. A joint UNPKF from SAARC region under the UN aegis is an option to be considered. Nelson Mandela said, "If you want to make peace with

your adversary, you have to cooperate with your opponent, then he joins you as a partner." SAARC has the potential to bring nations together. overall, it needs better branding and visibility amongst south asian population. Coordinated focused and holistic efforts must continue at all levels to revive SAARC.

Conclusion:

Despite many loopholes SAARC has potential to revive. Nevertheless, with pragmatic and practicable way loopholes can be turned into opportunities. The most important is to develop trust among south asian states. In order to achieve this objective contentious issues need to be addressed. Therefore, sincerity and mutual accomodation through result oriented dialogue is of paramount importance currently. The writing on the wall is that regional states cannot move

forward without pragmatism and
flexibility. This is the only way out.