

Pakistan Affairs

Assignment Question

Explore the significance of Shanghai Cooperation Organization for Pakistan.

1 Introduction

"I believe the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an important platform for member states to enhance the mutual trust, promote cooperation and safeguard regional stability and prosperity" Xi Jinping.

Reference: Speech at SCO summit, Qingdao, China, June 2018.

Shanghai cooperation organization is an evolving regional alliance that has an immense potential and capacity to play role for Asian regional integration. SCO holds significant importance for Pakistan in various aspects.

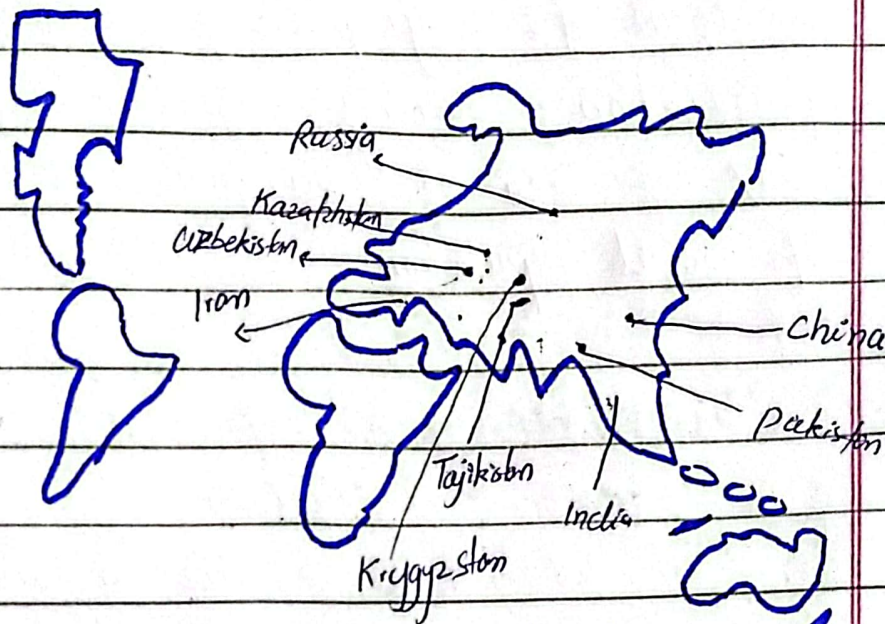
Firstly, Pakistan membership in SCO provides security benefits through addressing

the peace issue such as **cross-border terrorism and stability in Afghanistan**. with support of key regional players like China and Russia. Secondly, SCO offers **economic advantages** especially in addressing Pakistan energy shortages and facilitating energy deals transparently through "**Energy club**". Thirdly, Pakistan involvement in SCO provide or enhance regional connectivity, trade and economic cooperation, aligning with initiatives like CPEC. Furthermore, SCO membership acts as an image builder for international level or relations showcasing its responsible role in the prestigious organization. In short, SCO play significant role in geo-politics, geoeconomic and geo-strategic level.

2 Background

The Shanghai cooperation is regional intergovernmental organization established to promote mutual trust among members state to promote peace economic growth and solve security related issue.

Initially formed as "Shanghai Five" in 1996 by China and its four post Soviet neighbours. Now it expand and include 9 members.



World Map: SCO Members in world map

It primary member China, Russia and central Asian Republic. Observer state Pakistan and India give the permanent member state in 2017 exhibition the

SCO membership expansion in south Asian region. According to charter of SCO, summit of council of head of state shall be held annually at alternative venues. The location follow the alphabetical order of member state's Russia.

Recent summit was held in 2022 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. It is the 22nd annual summit of SCO. It is world's largest regional organization in term of geographic scope and population, covering approximately 80% of area of Eurasia and 40% of world population.

3 Significance of SCO for Pakistan

The main objectives of SCO are following

a Strengthen relation among member states

b promote cooperation in political affairs, economic and trade, scientific-technical cultural,

c regional peace.

According to SCO objectives the significance of SCO for Pakistan is following.

(i) Significance of SCO in Enhancing Pakistan's Security Landscape

(ii) Significance of Pakistan Strategic Positioning within the SCO Framework

(iii) SCO's Role in Pakistan Economic development

(iv) SCO's Contribution to Pakistan Effort in Countering Terrorism

(v) Exploring SCO's Role in the facilitating Pakistan Regional Connectivity Initiatives

(i) Significance of SCO in Enhancing Pakistan Security Landscape

The Shanghai cooperation Organization Play a crucial role in enhancing Pakistan security landscape by fostering regional security cooperation. It act as an effective player to bridge the gap between India and Pakistan through a series of diplomatic moves that would urge both parties to bring an end to historical disputes.

A 3000km border disputes along with Sino-former Soviet border resolve through this platform. SCO membership promote the cooperation between the india and China to counter end the terrorism and reconstruction of Afghan which ultimately gives the benefits to Pakistan regional stability and promote security. Mutual cooperation between member state of SCO for counter extremism, terrorism and separatism help in enhancing the security landscape.

(ii)

Significance of Pakistan Strategic position in SCO Framework

Pakistan geography, cultural history background place it in a unique strategic position. The significance of Pakistan has attach to SCO is based Pakistan potential as a trade corridor for the Central Asian Republic and Xinjiang western China.

Pakistan's membership with SCO not only provide an opportunity for regional security it also play a important role in acquiring the important position in SCO's 2015 to 2025 vision due to its strategic position. The permanent SCO membership for Pakistan will ensure greater access to resources and energy projects within a grouping framework.

(iii) SCO Role in Pakistan Economic Development

Pakistan location make it a source of regional economic integration between members states of SCO. Chinese assistance in developing China-Pakistan corridor in Pakistan, developing Gwadar Port and Kashgar as a special economic zone upgrading Karakorum Highway and link Gwadar with Kashgar, central Asian via KKH create a trans-continental overland connectivity. For the landlock countries, Pakistan give

access to warmwater which can earn a lot of foreign exchange reserve of Pakistan through transit fee and foreign exchange reserve. China-Pak Economic corridor provide a direct link to international maritime route and provide various opportunities for trade. it also provide great job opportunities for Pakistani worker. Thus, SCO has a significance in Pakistan economic development.

(iv) **SCO's Contribution to Pakistan Effort in Countering Extremism**

SCO has significantly contributed to Pakistan effort in countering the extremism through joint counter-terrorism and extremism initiatives. The main focus of SCO is combating with terrorism, extremism and separatism through engaging in the anti-terrorism exercise and cooperation. The creation of (RATS) under

the SCO has played a crucial role in strengthening the role of SCO in counterterrorism grid by training armed force in member country like China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. RATS has instrumental in preventing terrorist attack and also arresting terrorist. China is also developing naval base in the Arabian Sea, which will great importance for Pakistan. Moreover, SCO convention on countering terrorism and extremism and other legal framework have enhanced security cooperation and combat terrorism effectively.

4

Conclusion

Shanghai cooperation organization plays a significant role in economic security, trade and combating with terrorism, extremism. It has enhance the regional security, promote trade and reduce terrorism. Pakistan and India issue specially Kashmir issue can also be solve by SCO through diplomatic means.