

## ORGANIZATIONS.

### QUESTION NO # 01

The people of South Asia had suffered because of missed opportunities for regional development, connectivity, and cooperation. Evaluate the performance of SAARC in the light of this statement.

#### 1- INTRODUCTION :

"Organisations don't exist on their own; they consist of participants and their success or failure is determined by the extent to which the goals of these participants coincide, to what extent they are ready to yield, and how they build interactions with each other."

~ ALEXEI KUPRIYANOV

The South Asian region, home to a significant portion of the global population, has been characterized by missed opportunities for regional development, connectivity, and cooperation. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), established in 1985 with the

aim of promoting economic growth and social progress among its member countries, has played a central role in fostering regional collaboration. However, the performance of SAARC in addressing the regional development, enhancing connectivity, and promoting cooperation has been subjected to scrutiny. SAARC faced a series of challenges including political tensions, Infrastructure deficit, Bilateral issues, Trust Deficit and resource allocations etc. Moreover, these challenges can be addressed by ensuring political will, institutional reforms, infrastructural reforms, regional collaboration on common challenges and ultimately following the footsteps of European Union.

## 2- OVERVIEW OF SAARC:

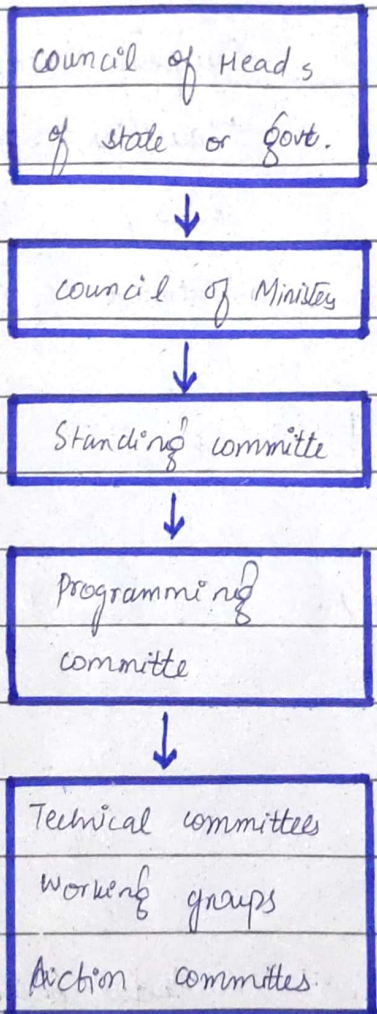
The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of SAARC Charter in Dhaka on December 8, 1985.

Established in	Dhaka (Bangladesh), Dec. 8, 1958
Member countries	8 Countries — India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan.
Observer states	9 observer states — Australia, European Union, Iran, Japan, Mauritius, South Korea, USA, China, and Myanmar.
Head Quarters	Khatmandu, Nepal
Launch of SAARC	2017
Satellite for South Asia	
Specialized bodies	South Asian University (SAU) — India South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO) — Dhaka SAARC Development Fund (SDF) — Bhutan SAARC Arbitration Council (SARC) — Pakistan
1 <sup>st</sup> Secretary General	Abdul Ahsan (Bangladesh)
Current Secretary General	Gulam Saawat (Bangladesh) — Took office on March 4, 2023

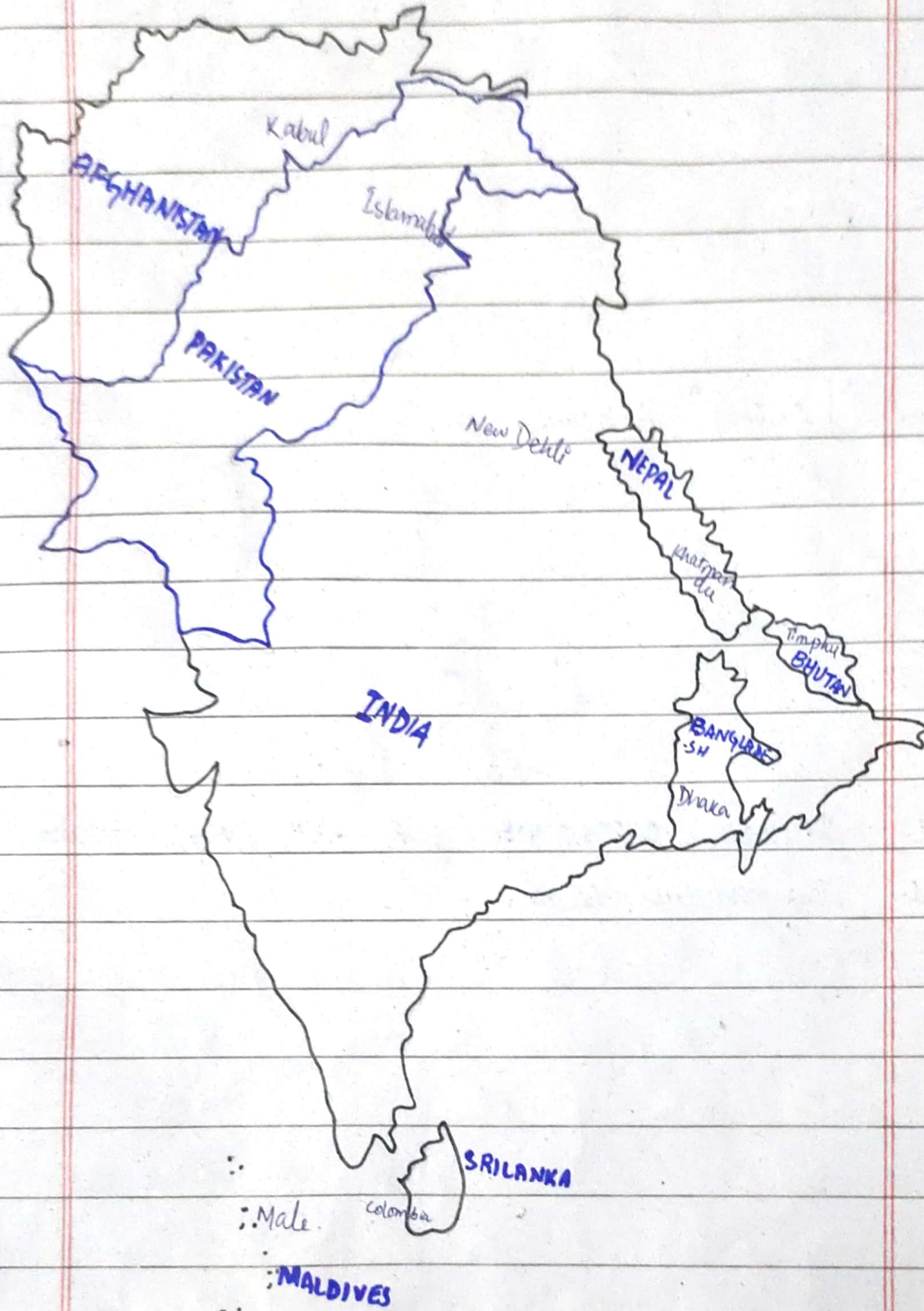
Last Member to Join Afghanistan (April 2007)

Last SAARC Summit 19<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit in Pakistan (cancelled)

### 2.1 Structure of SAARC.



## 2.2 Map of Member countries of SAARC



### 3. MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1- Challenges.

SAARC has faced challenges in promoting intra-regional trade and economic cooperation among member states. The lack of progress in harnessing the region's economic potential and natural resources has hindered overall development.

#### 3.2- Limited Achievements.

Despite being in existence for over three decades SAARC has not been able to significantly boost regional development or address key socio-economic issues affecting the region's population.

### 4. MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

#### 4.1- Infrastructure deficit.

SAARC has struggled to enhance physical connectivity within the region due to inadequate infrastructure and transportation networks. This has impeded the movement of goods, services and people, hindering economic growth and regional integration.

#### 4.2. Missed Opportunities.

The organization has not effectively capitalized on opportunities to improve connectivity through joint infrastructure projects or initiative, limiting the region's potential for economic <sup>cooperation.</sup>

### 5. MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

#### 5.1 Political Tension:

Persistent political tensions and <sup>differences</sup> among member states, particularly India and Pakistan, have undermined cooperation within SAARC.

"The political differences had deep negative impact on the political will to realize the economic cooperation and integration"

~ Jehangir Asraf Qazi

Bilateral issues have often overshadowed the organization's objective of fostering collaboration and mutual understanding.

#### 5.2 Missed opportunities:

There is lack of trust and prioritizing national interest over the regional

cooperation among the member states has hampered effort to address challenges such as poverty, disasters, and climate change collectively. This resulted in missed opportunities for joint action and regional solidarity.

"Excessive nationalism among members is one of the major obstacles in SAARC's slow progress"

~ Pran Chopra.

## 6- WAY FORWARD:

### 6.1- Political Dialogue and Conflicts Resolution:

Prioritize political dialogue and conflict resolution mechanism to address bilateral tensions and historical disputes among member states.

### 6.2- Enhanced connectivity and Infrastructure Development.

Focus on enhancing physical and digital connectivity through joint infrastructure projects, transportation networks and digital initiatives to improve regional integration.



### 6.3- Promotion of Trade and Economic Cooperation:

Strengthens intra-regional trade by reducing trade barriers, harmonizing regulation, and promoting economic cooperation among member states.

### 6.4 People-to-people Exchanges and Cultural Diplomacy:

Promote people-to-people exchanges, cultural diplomacy, and educational programs to foster mutual understanding, tolerance, and social cohesion among diverse communities in South Asia.

### 6.5 Focus on Common Challenges and Sustainable Development:

Addressing common challenges such as poverty alleviation, disaster management, climate change mitigation and public health initiative through collaboration efforts and shared resources. <sup>Also</sup> Implement sustainable development goals, environmental conservation measures and resilience-building strategies to ensure the well-being and prosperity of region's population.

## 7- CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evaluation of SAARC's performance in promoting regional development, connectivity and cooperation in South Asia underscores the challenges and missed opportunities that have hindered the ~~organization's~~ organization's effectiveness over years. SAARC has struggled to overcome political tensions, limited achievement in boosting intra-regional trade and inadequate connectivity within region.

However, it is imperative for SAARC to prioritize political dialogue, conflict resolution, people-to-people exchanges, enhanced connectivity and sustainable development initiatives so, that it can contribute meaningfully to the well being of the people of South Asia.