

Regional Cooperation and Development including SAARC, ECO SCO & the role of Pakistan

SAARC — Cooperation

South Asian Association Regional (Intergovernmental org)

1)

Introduction

SAARC is an important regional organization in South Asia. It was established in 1985 & consists of eight member countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pak & Sri Lanka. SAARC aims to promote regional cooperation in various areas, including economics, trade & cultural exchanges, and social development. SAARC serves as a platform for member countries to come together, discuss common challenges, and explore collective solutions. It facilitates dialogues & cooperation on a wide range

of issues, such as poverty alleviation, regional security, climate change, and enhancing connectivity & people to people contact.

2-4

2 Objective & Significance

The objective is to promote & enhance regional cooperation among the member countries in South Asia. The core objective of SAARC, as stated in charter, are as follows:

2-2

Objectives

1

Promoting economic & social development

ACC to world bank
Intro regional trade
has the potential
to triple, reaching
67 Billion Annually

2

strengthening collective self reliance

3

Fostering mutual understanding and cooperation

Agri centers promote
agri research,
cooperation &
technology transfer
among member
countries

4

Promoting peace stability & security

Trilateral
Highway
&
TAPI
gas pipeline

2

2:1 SAARC aims to accelerate economic growth, promote social progress and improve the quality of life within the region. This includes measures to alleviate poverty, promote sustainable development, enhance trade and investment, and establish a common platform for socio-economic collaboration.

2:2 SAARC emphasizes the significance of collective self-reliance among its member countries. This involves leveraging and combining regional resources, expertise, and capabilities to address common challenges and achieve shared goals.

2:3 Fostering SAARC seeks to deepen mutual understanding, trust and cooperation among the member countries. It facilitates dialogue, diplomatic engagement, cultural exchanges, and people to people

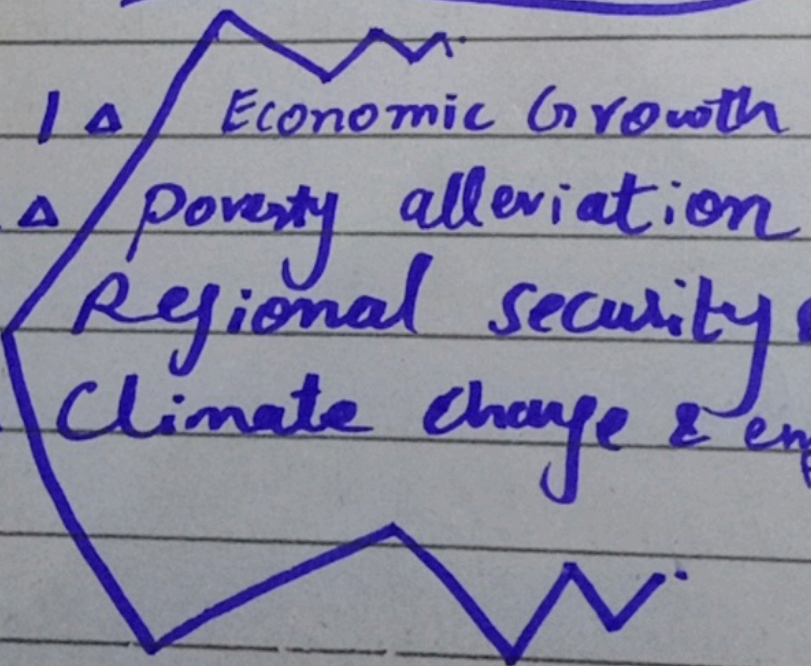
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connections to build a cohesive South Asian identity & promote regional peace & stability.

2.4

SAARC recognizes the importance of peace, stability & security in the region. It encourages member countries to resolve disputes through peaceful means, cooperate on security matters, combat terrorism & extremism, & create an environment conducive to regional prosperity.

3 IMPORTANCE

- 
- 1 Δ Economic Growth & Integration
 - 2 Δ poverty alleviation
 - 3 Δ Regional security & stability
 - 4 Δ Climate change & environmental protection

3.1- Regional cooperation with SAARC has the potential to

spur economic growth, enhance market integration, & foster trade & investment. Streamlining trade procedures, reducing barriers, & promoting regional connectivity can boost intra-regional trade, leading to economic gains for member countries.

According to World Bank, increasing regional trade in South Asia to levels observed in ASEAN countries could boost the GDP of SAARC countries by as much as 8.7% by 2025.

3-2-

SAARC places significant emphasis on poverty alleviation and social development. By sharing best practices, experiences, and resources, member countries can collaborate to implement effective strategies for poverty reduction, access to education, healthcare, and other social welfare schemes. This can help uplift the living standards.

Regional promoting Food security essence of shelter for all.
global objective

3-3

of millions of people in the region SAARC serves as a platform for member countries to address common security challenges as terrorism, cross border crimes, and border disputes. Cooperation in intelligence sharing, joint military exercises, and counter terrorism efforts can enhance regional stability.

3-4

Climate change and environmental protection:

South Asian countries are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. SAARC facilitates regional cooperation by sharing knowledge, exchanging best practices, and developing joint initiatives to address climate change, promote sustainable development, and protect the

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environment. Cooperation in this area can contribute to regional stability & ensure a sustainable future.

4 Challenges & Barriers faced by Pakistan

Pakistan faces several challenges and barriers within SAARC that hinder effective cooperation and hinder the fulfilment of its objectives.

4.1 Bilateral Issues & Regional Security Concerns.

Bilateral issues and regional security concerns have often impacted the functioning of SAARC. Political tensions and conflicts b/w member countries, including Pakistan, have at times hindered progress.

and cooperation within the Organization. Overcoming these challenges requires sustained diplomatic efforts, confidence-building measures, & dialogue to address bilateral concerns and promote regional stability.

4.2 Cross border trade & Connectivity.

SAARC aims to enhance cross-border trade and connectivity, but various barriers can hamper this objective. Issues such as ~~tariffs~~ tariffs, non-tariff barriers, inadequate transportation infrastructure, & bureaucratic hurdles can impede smooth trade flows within the region. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to improve trade facilitation, streamline customs procedures, and promote cross-border investment.

4.3 Lack of Political and Implementation will

The successful implementation of SAARC initiatives often requires strong political will and commitment from member countries. In some instances, the lack of consensus or follow-through on agreed-upon initiatives can be achieved through high-level dialogues, fostering greater understanding among member countries, and emphasizing the mutual benefits of regional cooperation.

4.4 Disparities in Economic Development

Economic disparities and uneven development among member countries pose a challenge to effective cooperation within SAARC.

The varying levels of economic development can create divergent interests and priorities among member countries. Addressing these challenges necessitates the promotion of inclusive growth, special programs for least developed countries and targeted development initiative that account for the specific needs of each member country.

4.5 Security concerns & terrorism

It remains a significant challenge for the SAARC region, including Pakistan.

Terrorism can hinder progress in various sectors and undermine efforts toward regional cooperation.

Addressing these challenges requires enhanced intelligence sharing, joint counter-terrorism

efforts and cooperation in law enforcement, border management and intelligence agencies.

4.6 Energy Cooperation

is a vital aspect of SAARC agenda and Pakistan has identified it as a priority area for collaboration. Pakistan faces significant energy shortages and the country has prioritized the development of its energy sector through multiple initiatives such as CPEC & renewable energy projects. Enhanced energy cooperation among the SAARC member countries can contribute to addressing Pakistan's energy needs, promoting regional energy security and increasing broad based economic development.

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4-7

Human resource development

is a key element of SAARC's agenda that can contribute to achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in the region. Addressing bottlenecks across various sectors, including education, healthcare, & vocational training, and advancing the reform agenda can foster human resource development. Pakistan can leverage its investment in its education sector, robust skilled labor market, to create an optimal knowledge-sharing environment within the region

& beyond.

4-8

Green Economy

The SAARC member countries have significant opportunities to transition to a sustainable path of growth

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by promoting a green economy. Green Growth initiative can include adopting sustainable practices in agriculture, transportation, forestry, & tourism sectors which are strengths of Pakistan. By taking advantages of its vast natural endowments, conservation initiatives, environmental entrepreneurship can foster its sustainable economic growth & promote collective environmental resiliency.

5. Role of Pakistan

Economic Cooperation

Trade b/w SAARC countries has grown significantly over the years, with the total intra-regional trade reaching \$30 billion in 2019. Pakistan has

agreements → mutual assistance

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been an active participant in SAARC's initiative to promote trade liberalization, investment, and economic integration. It has signed several trade and investment agreements with SAARC members, including (SAFTA) South Asian Free Trade Agreement.

Presented in essay

Ex: 1 SAFTA (signed in 1995) Jan 2004

70 out of 100

Transport and Connectivity

Pakistan strategic location as a gateway to Central Asia and the Middle East, makes it a significant player in promoting regional connectivity.

The country has been investing in infrastructure development, including the construction of highways, railways, and ports, to facilitate trade and transport in the region.

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CPEC project, with a total investment of \$60-billion, aims to enhance regional connectivity and promote economic development.

Energy Cooperation:

SAARC countries face significant energy challenges, including lack of access, high costs, & environmental impacts. Pakistan has been collaborating with other SAARC members to promote cooperation in the energy sector, including the development of renewable energy sources, hydropower, and energy efficiency.

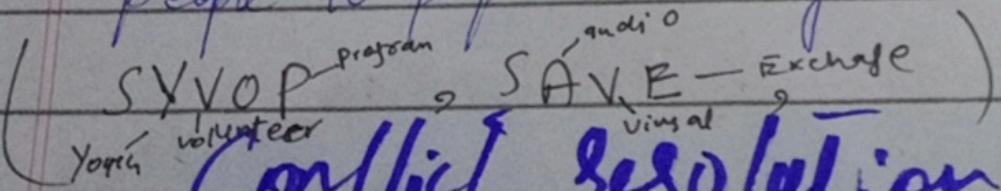
Pakistan has been exporting electricity to Afghanistan as part of the CASA-1000 project, which aims to enhance energy trade & cooperation in the region.

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Cultural and people-to-people Exchanges:

Pakistan has been an active participant in SAARC cultural initiatives, promoting understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures and traditions of South Asia. The country has been hosting various cultural festivals which aims to promote cultural exchanges & dialogue among the member countries. Pakistan also offers educational Scholarships to students from other SAARC countries to promote people-to-people exchanges.

EX



Conflict Resolution & Peacebuilding:

SAARC provide a platform for member countries to address

Common Challenges and Conflicts
in the region. Pakistan has
played a role in facilitating
dialogue & negotiations to
resolve conflicts & promote
peace & stability in South
Asia. Pakistan has been
involved in the Afghan peace
talks, aiming to promote a
peaceful resolution to the
conflict in Afghanistan.

Humanitarian Assistance

Pakistan has actively participated
in humanitarian assistance to
other SAARC countries during
time of natural disaster & emergencies.

Tourism and cultural Exchanges.

Pakistan has been working towards promoting tourism with SAARC by showcasing its rich cultural heritages, natural beautys and historical sites. It actively participated in SAARC Tourism initiatives to facilitate tourism exchanges and collaborations among member countries. Pakistan host the SAARC film Festival, bringing together filmmakers from the region. in 2013

Role - of Pakistan

- Pakistan suggested that women participation in SAARC Related activities
- Pakistan assembled ministerial level meeting on "International economic issues" at ISB in May 1986.
- Pakistan assigned highest

priority to the eradication of drugs abuse & drug trafficking through effective regional cooperation.

→ Pakistan is 2nd largest contributor towards all SAARC related activities as well as towards the budget of the SAARC secretariat.

Factors responsible for SAARC failure:

- ① Political instability
- ② Trust deficit
- ③ Lack of social cohesion
- ④ Unsettled India-Pakistan relations as main hurdle
- ⑤ Bilateral relationship within the region & varying visions for the SAARC
- ⑥ India tries to dominate.
- ⑦ Lack of financial constraints & political cooperation.
- ⑧ Economic disparities, limited institutional capacity, security concerns.

Eco

Economic cooperation organization

Introduction

- Afghanistan, Iran
- Azerbaijan,
- Kazakhstan,
- Kyrgyzstan,
- Pakistan, Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
- Tajikistan

Economic cooperation (ECO) is

a regional intergovernmental organization composed of 10 members in Central and West Asia. It aims to promote economic, technical, & cultural cooperation among its member countries.

Pakistan, as one of the founding members of ECO, plays a significant role in driving regional cooperation & fostering development with the organization.

With its strategic geographic location, Pakistan serves as a vital link b/w South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

It actively participates in ECO's initiatives and projects, contributing to the enhancement of trade, transport and energy and tourism within the region.

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Pakistan's commitment to the regional cooperation through ECO underscores its dedication to promoting peace, stability, and economic prosperity in the wider region. Through its active engagement, Pakistan continues to shape the development agenda of ECO and strengthen regional ties for the benefit of all member countries.

Significance of ECO

ECO holds a significant importance in promoting regional cooperation, economic integration, and development among its member states. Here are some facts.

2.1-

Economic Cooperation

ECO aims to enhance

Economic cooperation among member countries. It's trade and investment agreements contribute to the growth of regional trade. According to ECO's Statistics, the total Intra-ECO trade reached \$ in 20-.

2.2 Transport and Connectivity

ECO has been instrumental in developing regional transportation and connectivity networks. The construction of the ECO Container Train, which connects Isb, Pako with Istanbul, Turkey, & enhances trade links b/w the region.

2.3 Energy Cooperation

ECO promotes collaboration in the energy sector to address regional energy needs. This includes joint projects, such as the Turkmenistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan - India TAPI gas pipeline, which aims to transport

natural gas from Turkmenistan to South Asia via Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Tourism development

ECO member countries have diverse cultural and historical attractions, and ECO works towards promoting tourism within the region. Pakistan, with its rich cultural heritage and scenic landscapes, offers various tourist destinations. Ancient ruins of Taxila and the stunning valleys of C.B.

Regional Integration

ECO plays a crucial role in fostering regional integration and strengthening ties b/w member states. It provides a platform for dialogue & cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, education, & technology transfer.

3

Objective & Importance of ECO for Pakistan.

3.1 Trade & Economic growth.

One of the primary objectives of ECO is to promote trade & economic growth among the member countries. For Pakistan, this is especially important as the country relies heavily on its exports to drive economic growth. According to the statistics, Pakistan exports to ECO countries in 2020 stood at \$1.9 billion, demonstrating the importance of cooperation and collaboration among member countries.

3.2 Infrastructure development

ECO provides an opportunity for the member countries to work together to develop infrastructure projects, such as highways, railways & energy infrastructure.

Ex. Quetta Zehar railway line, which provides a crucial rail link b/w Pak & Iran, facilitating trade and people to people exchanges. Date: 1/202

APITA agreement
Trade
matters
Affairs

These projects can have a significant impact on Pakistan's economy by creating jobs, improving transportation and increasing access to goods and services.

3.3 Political Cooperation and Stability

ECO plays a vital role in promoting political cooperation and stability among its member countries. By establishing regular intergovernmental meetings and promoting economic cooperation, ECO can help address regional conflicts and foster more 'up' understanding among the member countries.

Join

3.4 Cultural exchange:

ECO also encourages cultural exchange among member countries, which helps to promote social

35

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coherent cohesion, cultural understanding & regional unity. ECO organizes cultural exchange programs, such as festivals, exhibitions, and conferences. These initiatives provides an opportunity for Pakistan to showcase its diverse cultural heritage and foster cultural understanding among member countries.

35 Joint research and developments.

ECO facilitates joint research & Development projects. ECO facilitates joint research and development projects in various sectors, including agriculture, technology & health.

Ex: Agriculture Research & Development
Pharmaceutical Research & Development

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MTWTFSS

Renewable Energy Research,
water resource, Mergers and
IT & Communication Research, Climate
Change Research etc.

3.6 Trade Facilitation

ECO promotes trade facilitation among member countries including Pakistan, by reducing trade barriers & enhancing customs cooperations. This enables Pakistan to expand its export markets within the ECO region. Pakistan exports to ECO increased \$1.81 billion in 2019 — ~~Report~~ by Ministry of Commerce.

4 Role of Pakistan

4.1 Trade & Economic Development:
Pakistan has been actively

Involved in promoting trade within ECO region. ECOTA ECO Trade agreement was signed in 2008 to provide a framework for reducing trade barriers among member states, and Pakistan has played a key role in its implementation. In ~~2019~~ ~~Pakistan~~ (to Embassy of Pakistan, Iran).

4.2 Transport and Connectivity

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under the China's Belt and Road Initiative, connects Pakistan with China and provides a crucial transport corridor for trade & connectivity within the ECO region.

In the ECO Transport and Communications project list, Pakistan has actively participated in

initiative such as Central Asia
Regional Cooperation Program
(CAREC) to
enhance regional transport connectivity
(ECO secretariat).

4.3

Energy cooperation:

Pakistan has been collaborating
with ECO member countries to
enhance energy cooperation.

Ex. the TAPI gas pipeline project
aims to transport natural gas
from Turkmenistan to Pakistan to
India, fostering energy cooperation
within the region. Additionally,
Pakistan has been actively involved
in the development of the (TAPI)
power transmission line project.

These projects will boost energy
security and contribute to
the economic well-being of
the region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

4.4 cultural exchanges

Pakistan has organized and participated in various cultural events and exchanges within ECO to promote cultural diversity. For example, the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) plays a pivotal role in strengthening cultural ties among member countries, and Pakistan regularly contributes to its activities.

Moreover, Pakistan has hosted cultural festivals and exhibitions to showcase its artistic & cultural heritage to the ECO community. These events provide a platform for intercultural dialogue & cooperation. (by Embassy of Pak. in Tehran, Iran).

4.5

Agriculture and Food Security.

Pakistan has actively participated

in initiatives aims at enhancing agriculture cooperation among ECO member states. The ECO Regional program for food security (RECOF) is a significant endeavour to address food security challenges in the region through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity building. Pakistan being an agrarian economy, has shared its expertise and knowledge in agriculture and irrigation techniques with other ECO member countries.

This exchange of information helps exchange agriculture productivity and food production in the region.

(ECO Secretariat).

Health and Pharmaceuticals

Pakistan has been actively involved in cooperation with ECO member states in the area of healthcare and pharmaceuticals.

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The ECO health initiative aims to facilitate knowledge transfers, capacity building, and joint efforts in addressing health challenges such as disease outbreaks, healthcare infrastructure developments and access to affordable healthcare. As a major producer of pharmaceutical products, Pakistan has contributed to the supply of quality medicines to other ECO countries. This cooperation enhances access to affordable healthcare and promotes the development of the pharmaceutical industry within region (Ministry of National Healthcare Services, Regulations & Coordination Pakistan).

Tourism and Cultural Exchange:

Pakistan has been actively promoting tourism within the ECO region, aiming to showcase

Date: / / 2012

rich cultural heritages landscapes
 and historical sites. The Eco
 tourism and cultural Program
 focus on facilitating travel