

Date 09-10-2024

# Current Affairs

CSS-2022

Q8. (a) Write down short notes on the following:  
(10 marks)

## Poverty and Trade in South Asia and the Role of SAARC:

### 1. Poverty in South Asia:

South Asia has one of the highest concentrations of poverty in the world with millions of people living below the poverty line. Factors contributing to this include high population growth, lack of access to education, poor healthcare and limited economic opportunities. Countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal face significant challenges in reducing poverty, despite economic growth in some sectors.

"As of 2021, 35% of the population in South Asia lives on less than

\$3.20 a day, the international poverty line for lower middle class-income countries"

(World Bank)

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## 2. Trade as a Tool for Poverty Reduction:

Trade can play a pivotal role in poverty reduction by increasing job opportunities, boosting incomes and improving all economic development. By engaging in regional and global trade, South Asian countries can leverage their resources, develop industries and improve living standards.

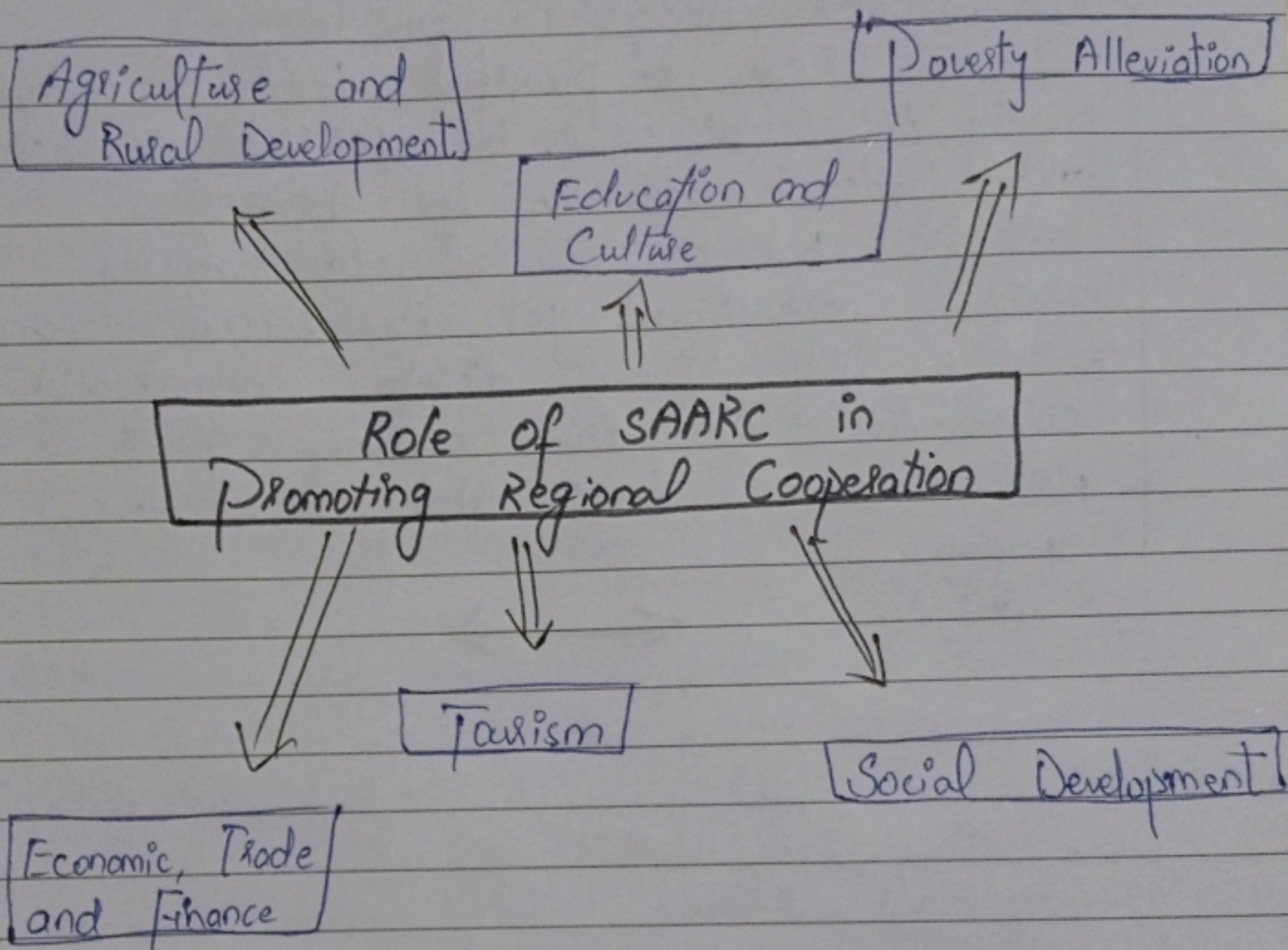
"The COVID-19 pandemic pushed as estimated 50 million people in South Asia into extreme poverty, reversing years of progress in poverty reduction"

## 3. Role of SAARC:

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was formed in 1985 with the aim of promoting economic, social and cultural cooperation among its member states.

"The main purpose of SAARC is to encourage countries in South Asia to work together, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for the people"

(Abul Ahson)  
(1<sup>st</sup> Secretary-General of SAARC)



#### 4. SAFTA : (South Asian Free Trade Area)

The South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), launched by SAARC in 2006, aims to reduce trade barriers among member states to enhance economic integration and trade cooperation.

"By reducing trade barriers, SAFTA makes it easier for businesses in South Asia to sell goods to each other"

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## Concluding Thought:

Trade can be a powerful tool to reduce poverty in South Asia, but political conflicts and trade barriers hinder progress.

SAARC has a potential to foster regional cooperation, yet its success depends on resolving internal disputes. Strengthened collaboration can drive economic growth and improve living standards across the region.

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(b) A Comparison of Leadership Qualities  
Between Xi Jinping of China  
and Joe Biden of the U.S.:

Xi Jinping and Joe Biden, as leaders of China and the US respectively demonstrate contrasting leadership styles and qualities shaped by their political system and global visions.

Xi Jinping is known for his authoritarian leadership and centralization of power within the Chinese Communist Party. Xi Jinping is a strategic and decisive leader who seeks long-term national goals, including the BRI for expanding China's influence globally.

In contrast, Joe Biden leads with a democratic and inclusive approach focusing on collaboration, diplomacy and multilateralism. His leadership emphasizes coalition-building both domestically and internationally.

"America is back, Diplomacy is back  
at the center of our foreign policy"  
(Joe Biden)

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### i- Xi Jinping's Leadership Approach:

Xi Jinping, President of China is known for his centralized, authoritarian style of governance. He has consolidated power within the Communist Party and emphasizes state control, discipline and strategic planning.

"The Chinese Communist Party is the highest force of political leadership in our country" (Xi Jinping)

### ii- Joe Biden Leadership Approach:

Joe Biden, President of the United States, takes a democratic, inclusive approach, focusing on diplomacy, coalition-building and working closely with allies. His leadership reflects a commitment to democratic values and human rights.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the power of their dreams" (Joe Biden)

### iii. Domestic Focus of Xi Jinping:

Xi Jinping's leadership is focused on internal stability and economic development. He emphasizes strong state control and policies like "Common Prosperity" to address income inequality within China.

Xi Jinping "Made in China 2025" initiatives aims to make China a global leader in technology with a focus on artificial intelligence, robotics and advanced manufacturing.

### iv. Domestic Focus of Joe Biden:

Biden's leadership centers around rebuilding the U.S. economy post-pandemic, addressing inequality and strengthening democratic institutions. His administration also focuses on climate change and healthcare reforms.

### v. Global Vision of Xi Jinping:

Xi Jinping's aims to position China as a global leader, expanding its influence through initiatives like Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI). His leadership is characterized by assertive foreign policies and economic development.

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vi. Global Vision of Joe Biden :

Biden's leadership emphasizes multilateralism, rebuilding alliances, and promoting democracy and human rights on the global stage. His administration seeks to restore the United States leadership in international organizations.

"We are determined to build a world that is more secure, more just and more prosperous" (Joe Biden)

Concluding Thought :

In Conclusion, Xi Jinping's leadership is characterized by centralized control and a focus on national strength, reflecting China's authoritarian governance. In contrast, Joe Biden emphasizes democratic values, diplomacy and coalition-building in addressing global challenges. Their differing approaches illustrate how leadership styles are shaped by each nation's political development and priorities.

