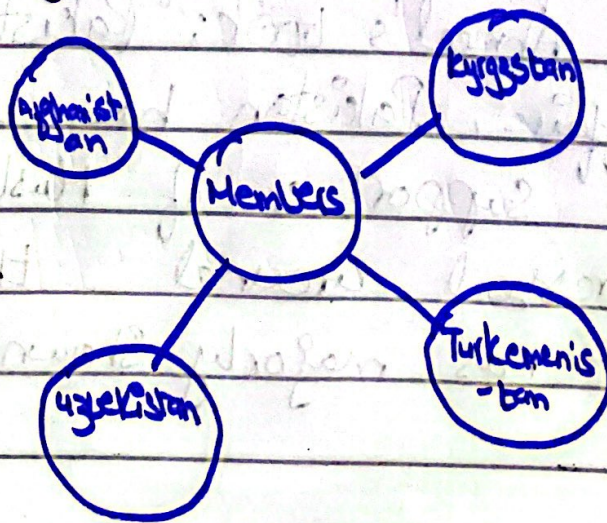


(Q)

Discuss the Pakistan's historic role in ECO and under the regional integration framework; what are the future prospects of ECO for Pakistan?

INTRODUCTION:

Economic Cooperation Organization was created way back in 1990's and it was formerly known as Regional Cooperation Development consisting of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan. It later on expanded and added the following members:



The organization consists of 460 million people and a land worth 8 billion acres. Moreover, Pakistan has played a significant role in establishing this organization and expanding its benefits to South Asia as well.

HISTORIC ROLE OF PAKISTAN:

The 16th Summit of ECO and Pakistan's support for Palestine:

Pakistan has played a historic role by increasing its participation at ECO and extending unconditional support for Palestinians. As per Shamsheed Ahmed's book; "Pakistan and World Affairs", Pakistan has been a staunch supporter of Muslims being oppressed around the globe. It has majorly shown support for:

Pakistan's Support for Muslims

Palestinians

- ↓
- Through SCO
- OIC
- ICJ

Muslims of Kashmir

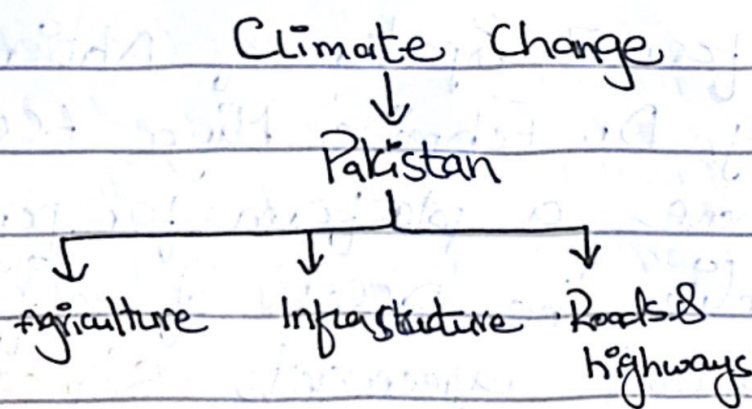
- OIC
- SCO
- ECO

Pakistan's Role in Formulating Parliamentary Forum for ECO:

As per former Speaker of National Assembly, Dr. Fehmida Mirza, ECO must have a platform for parliament to expedite the process of ratification of different agreements signed under ECO. Moreover, this would encourage other member states to quickly ratify agreements as well.

Pakistan's Historic Role in Becoming the voice of developing countries for Climate Change:

Pakistan has stood up for the devastating consequences climate change has left for developing countries like Pakistan. According to a report published by Al Jazeera, Pakistan formulated the idea of the "Loss and Damage Fund" through which developed countries provided aid to underdeveloped countries. Climate change has impacted Pakistan's economy in the following sector the most:



Led to inflation, political instability and damage.

Pakistan's Important Role in Doha Supporting Afghanistan:

As Pakistan has always supported Afghanistan and its reconstruction. It has also asked countries for aid to bring stability in the region via Afghanistan. Abdul Sattar in his book has stated that a stable Afghanistan shall ensure a stable South Asian region. Through ECO, Pakistan has raised awareness its voice to help the war-torn country.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF ECO:

While Pakistan has played an important role in bringing issues to the table via ECO, it can also extract out important developments out of it.

Energy Requirements of Pakistan and ECO:

Pakistan is a country deprived of utilizing untapped resources for fulfilling its energy requirements. Through ECO, Pakistan can fulfil its energy requirement. According to a former Ambassador of Pakistan, Central Asia is a rich source of energy like oil, gas, petroleum etc. These countries can help Pakistan in fulfilling its energy requirement with the help of ECO Trade Agreement; by removing trade obstacles like custom duties and tariffs.

CASA-1000 can become an important part of Pakistan's economic boost:

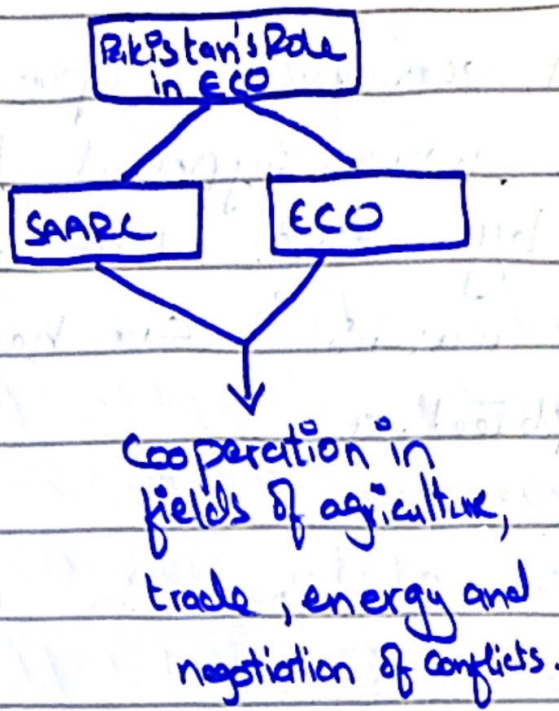
CASA-1000 is a deal to project which was signed by among a few countries. The project aims to provide Pakistan with energy

and boost economic cooperation. The project was supposed to be completed by 2018 but due to unfortunate reasons, it ~~is~~ has not been completed. &

Pakistan Can Encourage the Revival of SAARC through ECO:

Since Pakistan has shown support towards other regional issues like Israel - Palestinian conflict, it can also encourage the SAARC countries to join the organization and work on the problems emanating within SAARC.

According to Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, there is growing political differences among SAARC countries due to the organization's rule of not discussing issues related to regional conflict. Therefore ECO and SAARC countries could seek cooperation via ECO.



Revival of Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline:

Unfortunately, the Pak-Iran gas pipeline project has come to a halt. It can be revived through ECO. The sanctions imposed by US on Iran's nuclear programme has led towards the slowdown of the project. However, the political regime in Pakistan stays committed to resume the project. Pakistan's ministry of Foreign Affairs has shown full commitment towards the project.

Conclusion:

Therefore, Pakistan has played a crucial role in developing a stronger bond with its Central Asian States and 2 Middle Eastern Countries.

The organization holds great potential to elevate Pakistan's economy and fulfil its energy needs along with those mentioned previously.