

"PEACE IN SOUTH-ASIA IS MERELY A DREAM"

ESSAY OUTLINE:

1) Introduction:

- South Asia - A quarter of world's population.
- Occasional optimism, but constant relapse into hostilities.
- Thesis statement.

2) Why peace In South-Asia Is Merely A Dream?

a) Burden of history:

- Colonial legacy
- Partition of 1947

b) Kashmir - The bone of contention:

- Three wars (1947, 1965, 1971)
- UN resolutions ignored
- Revocation of article 370 (2019)

c) Indo-Pak nuclear standoff:

→ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report on nuclear arsenal of Pakistan and India.

→ Bill Clinton's remarks during his 2000 South-Asia visit.

d) Climate vulnerability and water disputes:

→ Construction of dams by upper riparian states

→ India's unilateral suspension of Indus Water Treaty (IWT)

e) Economic disparities and poverty:

→ World Bank (WB) report on intra-regional trade

→ Beggar-thy-neighbour policy of India

f) Complex human diversity:

→ Cross-border communities

→ Identity politics

g) India's expansionist foreign policy:

- Vision of Akhand Bharat
- Border disputes with almost all neighbours.

h) Geographical centrality of India:

- Non-visible connectivity
- Bhatta's remarks - South Asia as Indian backyard.

i) Rise of nationalism and political rhetoric:

- Hindutva ideology under Modi
- War hysteria

j) Intra-state insurgencies:

- Indian-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan through BLA.
- Afghan-Taliban's tactic support to TTP.

k) Strategic interests of external powers:

→ CPEC vs Indo-US partnership

l) Afghanistan - The graveyard of peace:

→ Soviet invasion (1979)

→ US-War on Terror (2001)

→ Return of Taliban (2021)

m) Failure of regional organizations:

→ Dysfunctional SAARC

3) Turning The Dream Into Reality-
A Way Forward:

a) Regional multilateralism:

→ Follow models of ASEAN and EU.

b) Encouraging CBMs:

→ Political, military, economic and humanitarian confidence-building measures

c) Economic interdependence as a peace tool:

- Mutual trade
- Michael Kugelman's report
on economic/trade potential between
India and Pakistan.

4) Conclusion

South Asia is home to nearly a quarter of world's population, yet it is the most unstable region in the world, grappling with a myriad of issues. The ~~seven~~^{eight} developing states ~~are~~ face multiple inter-state and intra-state conflicts that adversely impacts the stability of the region. Rooted in the historical legacy of partition, the Kashmir issue has been the bone of contention between the South Asian powers: India and Pakistan. Nuclear brinkmanship, hydropolitics, terrorism by non-state actors, and the involvement of global powers keeps the region volatile. Moreover, India's geographical centrality, its expansionist policies, and ultra-nationalism threatens the sovereignty and security of smaller states. Besides these factors, the densely populated South Asia has a complex human diversity

struggling with economic insecurities and other humanitarian crisis. Historically, ^{many} efforts have been made to ease the tensions, but each effort has eventually collapsed, leading the region back into recurring cycles of hostilities. However, with meaningful steps in the right direction, this dream could still be transformed into reality. A complex interplay of historical, geographic, economic, political, and social factors continues to ignite tensions among South Asian nations, rendering the prospect of perpetual peace in the region an ever elusive dream.