

## ROLE OF SAARC IN SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL COOPERATION: A PURSUIT

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### *Abstract*

*South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has tried through headways Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and Agreement on south Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) to create a consciousness among the member countries for closer cooperation and mutual understanding. Yet, the region suffers from mutual hostilities, mistrust and discontent. The present research paper is a critical evaluation and to answer some of the issues which arise such as, does it require any change in the nature and scope of operation? The success and failures of SAARC and how can SAARC become a dynamic organization? and to what extent is sub-regional cooperation possible? These are some issues which need a deeper understanding and focus.*

### *Introduction*

In the growing era of liberalization and globalization, no country can escape its influence. After the Second World War, many changes were visible in the global scenario, the United Nations was established, which emphasized on protecting the unity and integrity of the nations. Regional organizations were initially seen as a means of international or global unity, and in this sequence various ideologies related to it emerged, in which functionalists, federalists and those biased towards federalism took place. Charles Pentland added another ideology in the name of neo-functionalism. According to these ideologies, regional integration can be achieved through the cooperation and emotional harmony of the social, political behavior of the people of the respective countries, because

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the behavior of the people in which the work of connecting the economies is done in such a way that results naturally. Becomes of political unity, or such social conditions are created, that the leaders are ready to show the courtesy of being united on a global scale? It paves the way for regional integration. In the case of South Asia, the only problem that the peripheral nations suffer from is that the core will not allow their sovereignty to be maintained and as a result they try to keep a superpower behind them so that they can breathe in the open air. Due to this kind of psychological conflict, the mistrust between them increases even more. "Due to all these problems the nations of South Asia are unable to think about their common problems like poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, social injustice, cross border terrorism and drug trade etc. Along with this the way to that solution Can't find the one who will lead them towards the path of peace, stability and development in the region. South Asian countries to fulfill the objectives of SAARC.

No way is left. Mutual mistrust and suspicion create such situations that the concept of regional cooperation remains hidden. Summits remain only a formality every year, in which a target is fixed, failing to achieve which the heads of government gather again and start thinking about the problems and disputes of the region.

The expectations that have been expressed about the role of SAARC, its ongoing struggle with collective policies over a decade has made it outside the internal environment which is seen as a process of integration. It should also be noted that various regional organizations or state-level functionaries, which are the part of the political, cultural and ideological environment of different regions, aim to achieve the goal of regional unity. "regional integration" aim for studies done in relation to "regional integration" show that common political system, common foreign policy formation, common agreement on a particular issue, common national solution and tendency to avoid internal interference, etc. are such factors, which are necessary for the establishment of a regional organization, as strategic alliances such as NATO and economic organizations such as the European Union, REC and ASEAN have been established. In such a situation, it is futile to think about such an alliance in South Asia, because the system of nations at the regional level is not the same, nor do all countries accept the same type of foreign policy in various major matters, either ideologically or politically. They all do not have the same strategy, in any way be it diplomatic, or political all the countries are not the same. Internally, all of them have a sense of doubt and mistrust towards the main country, due to which they are unable to progress. Mo. Ayub has rightly said that South Asia is fortunate to be in such a situation, where the situation is between regional polarity and regional cooperation, in such a situation, hoping for regional cooperation is like flying in the air.

If we look at the theory of neo-functionalism, most of the Asian rulers have one hundred natures in the context of South Asia, and all of them show positive and cordial attitude in the field of regional cooperation, because they all have the right to develop themselves and become effective. There is a tendency to happen. When such elite or ruling class people saw the global scenario changing, only then the effort for South Asian cooperation seemed to be fruitful. In such it becomes relevant to have a look at those elements which helped in the establishment of TEN. With the end of the Cold War, bipolarity ended from the world system. In such a situation, it was America's effort to provide a united system to the world by making the countries in its favor through mutual aid and grants, in such a situation, Indra was sprinkled about its existence in the newly independent countries, such an Indra through which the countries of the South, their Became conscious about the status quo. There were two categories in the divided world from the point of view of economy. The first category was of developed and rich countries, which were known as the countries of the

‘North’, the second category was of poor or developing countries, which were called the countries of the South. In such a situation, South-South dialogue became very necessary. This was the reason that the countries of South Asia also started making efforts in this direction.

It became clear to them that through cooperation, they can face extreme poverty, and social, economic development can be achieved. In this context, it was considered that through concerted efforts limited natural resources of the region can be harnessed, rate of industrial development can be achieved, and economic availability can be increased through market expansion. Apart from all this, their voice can be strengthened in international organizations. Through cooperation among South Asian countries, they can set mutual programs, and use technology for common benefit, doing so will help to end the tension prevailing in the subcontinent, as well as the excessive expenditure on security. There will be expenses in the development process. The small countries of Asia took steps to establish a regional cooperation organization which came into being in Dhaka in 1985 after much debate and discussion. It declared that the goal of SAARC is to facilitate the process of economic and social development by harnessing the human and natural resources of the region. Along with this, enhancing the quality of life while increasing the prosperity and welfare of the people, including facing the problems of poverty, underdevelopment, decline in production, unemployment and population pressures prevailing in the region. For the implementation of all these, a regional organization was very essential. Together, these countries created a food and development fund, established a secretariat in Kathmandu, and established a common market called the SAPTA South Asian Varenya Trade Agreement. In fact the objectives set by SAARC.

#### *To What Extent Has It Been Achieved?*

Its study is very relevant. If the member countries have so far failed to achieve the target, what is the major reason behind it and what are the possibilities that they can be achieved. The first three summits of SAARC also tried to achieve the goals set by it to some extent, ‘Bangalore summit talked about banning cross-border drug trafficking, while education, broadcasting, Emphasis was laid on strengthening tourism and control over disasters and commodities. In the Kathmandu summit, it was said to discourage the hijacking of aircraft. Bilateral issues were also raised in this summit contrary to the rules of SAARC. In the Islamabad conference, it was talked about opening the doors of learning through fellowships and scholarships so that cultural and educational exchanges can take place. The possibilities of collective cooperation were explored in the field of trade, services and construction. India and Pakistan signed a nuclear deal to reduce tensions in the subcontinent. Despite all this, after some time it was realized that the member countries of SAARC did not fulfill their promises, such as there was no reduction in drug trafficking, hijacking of aircrafts, nuclear scare and terrorism. The promises made by these countries could not be fulfilled in these summits, even after the end of the Cold War in the international arena, there was no abatement in the Indian subcontinent. There was no shortage. The areas in which efforts were made to agree on economic cooperation among the member countries, such as trade and import-export, exploitation of water resources, collective efforts in power generation, setting up a combined reserve bank in South Asia, etc. were never put into practice. It could not be possible, because the skeptical leaders wanted to refrain from taking any initiative in this matter.

If the domestic environment of these countries is helpful then only its will power can be awakened, the domestic environment of Pakistan, Bangladesh and to some extent Nepal is not helpful for this and there is a lot of domestic pressure on them, in such a situation if Pakistan

shows will power. , many problems of the subcontinent can be solved by itself and can pave the way for regional cooperation. Pakistan was sceptical about the concept of SAARC from the beginning, but due to the enthusiasm of other countries, it had to give its consent, Pakistan in various summits Pakistan's attitude is becoming non-cooperative, if in principle Pakistan is against terrorism, then in practice it promotes terrorism the most.

Whether it is illegal drug trade, whether it is cross-border terrorism, Pakistan plays an active role in all these. At the national level, Pakistan tries to increase the trade and economic area among the member countries, on the other hand, it prohibits the entry of Indian goods into its border. In other words, it can be said that Pakistan's role in relation to TEN is more that of the press.

Bilateral talks were also included, but due to non-agreement of other countries, Nepal had to agree that this organization would try to achieve political unity through economic cooperation. In this context, Nepal made a proposal that India, Nepal, Bhutan will work to establish cooperation in some areas, such as exchanging each other. Establishment can be done, so that economic and social condition can be improved by power generation.

Any effort of regional cooperation can be successful only with patience, mutual trust, dedication and acceptance of all. Unfortunately, the national activists of South Asia are not very concerned about each other's interests if they want to fulfill their interests. Many reasons can be enumerated for this type of non-cooperative behavior of countries.

Geo-political conditions have given rise to apprehensions in South Asia, such apprehensions get strengthened. This type of activities and attitude of India in the subcontinent is always misunderstood due to the relatively developed nation (India) increasing its economic and military power, while India has been developing its power only for this reason, so that it can become a leader in the whole world. Reasons for wrong apprehension that South Asian subcontinent should not be considered weak Political leadership has failed miserably to solve these countries. It can be said in this way that the cooperation organization established in South Asia Some efforts can be made through media so that some problems of this subcontinental people can be solved." The need is that this effort should be done keeping in view the development of the regional people and not to establish itself as an ineffective regional organization. Only by keeping a positive attitude to do any kind of cooperation can be expected in the field, because negative thoughts always give rise to instability, destruction, and sorrow. 'SAARC', representing one-fifth of the world, despite being the world's largest regional organization in terms of human resources, has not been able to achieve the goal of eradicating the poverty of the people of the region. The achievements of SAARC pale in comparison to the problems facing the region.

There are many problems in the region, which need to be solved from the root, it is the responsibility of SAARC to try to overcome these problems, but this has not happened. This is how day-to-day life of citizens of ten countries is going on. There is no sense of activism in its implementation even after the demand for making the South Asian Free-Trade Zone has been there for a long time and it has been agreed upon, because if this happens, the people of the region would definitely get some help in getting rid of poverty.

Despite summits in the last 37 years, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation - SAARC, which represents about 150 million people, and more than half of whose people are below the poverty line, has not achieved its goal due to mutual mistrust and tension. Could do Mainly due to the conflict between India and Pakistan, the organization has deviated from the target set for itself, there are variations of political and other chaos in the seven member countries of SAARC.

SAARC's relatively poor performance and security inconsistencies between India and its neighbors have prompted some SAARC members to seek cooperation with other international organizations. Pakistan joined the Economic Cooperation Organization with Iran Turkey and 5 Central Asian Republics Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan where India wants to become a full dialogue partner of ASEAN and seeks APEC membership, while Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed its desire for ASEAN membership, even though it was not welcomed there. South Asia's growing step towards neo-regionalism - SAPTA

Regionalism of economies began to arise due to the emergence of the new trade pole NAFTA APEC, while There was also the emergence of the European Community 11, in such a situation, the fear of security began to spread during the two countries. In such a situation, India's liberalization resulted in headwinds, although market reforms were far behind in many countries of the region, and this could not be possible until India integrated its economy with the legal economy, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and India provided some concessions to Maldives. As a former foreign secretary stated, the Sasta Agreement was a landmark act in South Asia because a general agreement on the issue of economic and trade cooperation had not been reached mainly due to opposition from Pakistan.

There are 5000 items tradable between the allied countries. While very few of them are covered under SAPTA, according to one study, tariffs on 106 items imported by India account for only 12 percent of India's total trade. Most of the tradable items are yet to be included in the agreement. The study also states that- "The percentage of trade between the ten countries is the percentage of their trade with other countries. The potential in this area is very high. Hence the idea of setting up a SAPTA fast track", so as to take advantage of more concessional import duty reduction within a short time. SAARC had decided to establish a 'South Asian Free Trade Agreement' by the year 2000.

Pakistan made India the Most Favored Nation (MFPN) Fearing that India may dominate its market, SAARC Eminent Persons Group set up at the new SAARC Summit on Liberalization and Globalization openly discussed the achievements of DoS. found that this organization has completed two important stages, the first stage was preparatory, in which the members of the region were full of different arrangements and inconsistencies, to agree on the regional cooperation organization, the Coordinated Planning Program (TPA) is in this approach. is the result of. This was the very initial stage, In which very few areas were coordinated.

SAARC began to expand in the latter part of its development, while social and economic issues such as preferential trade, energy poverty alleviation were also included within the scope of the organization. Although it was felt that positive response was not being received in this direction from the member countries. As a result, the task force felt that there was a "wide gap between the theory and practice of the organization". The institutional framework adopted by SAARC provided a useful platform for programs to be conceptualized, even if not implemented, and to exchange views on various issues among member countries. which may be the same in all countries. The Coordinated Program Implementation Group of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation had set up certain programs under SAARC, which have generally facilitated personal interaction between experts in the field through seminars, workshops and training programs and exchange of data and information in identified areas. Reconciliation emphasized.

SAARC was expanded to 11 sectors through the 'SAARC Integrated Program Mechanism' (SIPA), which was recognized by an independent group of experts in 1999 to cover seven sectors, namely (1) agriculture and rural development. (2) Communication and Transport, (3) Social

Development, (4) Environment, Meteorology and Forestry, (5) Science and Technology, (6) Human Resource Development and (7) Energy. SAARC's involvement in poverty alleviation is an important initial step of SAARC, SAARC's three-tier poverty alleviation program has provided a useful institutional method for member countries to track poverty statistics. On completion of this process, mutual exchange of experiences related to it and effective diplomatic intervention is expected. In the social declaration of SAARC, the question of development of children, women and other vulnerable sections of the region has also been raised, SAARC has made a commitment to protect the rights of children at the regional level and to make a consensus at the regional level regarding the problems of girls and women. Have tried. SAARC has chosen 'Environment' as an important area related to regional interests. The study has been completed in the context of increasing green house effect in the area to protect the environment. Over the years, SAARC has established regional institutions to complement the Technical Committee to identify the priority tasks of the region and build consensus on them, 5 of which are: SAARC Agricultural Information Center (SAIC), SAARC Working Paper Center (SDC), SAARC Meteorological Research Center (SMRC), Southern Tuberculosis Eradication Center (STC) and SAARC Human Resource Development (SHRDC), as well as 3 regional centers to be set up in SAARC, including the SAACC Cultural Center (Sri Lanka), SAARC Coastal Management Centre (SCAMC) and SAARC Information Centre (Nepal) (SIC) etc.

Another achievement of SAARC is the effort to find a way to resolve territorial disputes among the member countries of SAARC, this effort has been made by SAARC through treaties and assemblies. In these three types of conferences, the first SAARC Regional Conference on Discouragement of Terrorism (1988), the Second Conference on Narcotic Drugs (1990) and the Conference on Prevention of Trafficking of Women and Children and Prostitution (1997) are members of SAARC. A food safe bank to be set up at the regional level to provide emergency assistance to countries in times of food shortages. The main success of SAARC lies in the fact that it has covered all issues of people-to-people interaction. These include audio-visual exchange programs between the two countries, SAARC meetings, scholarship and fellowship programs, SAARC visa waiver programs, etc.

SAARC has done a great job by giving recognition to some professional organizations and institutions, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, SAARC Law and Association of Accountants are prominent among those who have received such recognition. Seeing the sequence of establishment of SAARC and its development till date, it is clear that it has not completed its journey easily. There are many obstacles in the process of Dales, the purpose for which it is in its development, this process is very slow, it has not been able to fulfill the expectations made towards itself. Disputes between India and Pakistan are the main reason for unrest in the entire region. The testing of the nuclear bomb in 1998 and subsequent incursions by Pakistan along the Indian border affected the entire region. All these incidents have led to the postponement of the SAARC summits. If you look at the SAARC summits. If we go, only 12 summits have been possible in the history of eighteen years, while the summits were to be held every year, the initial 4 summits were held every year. The 1998 summit in Colombo was followed by summits in January 2002 in Kathmandu and in January 2004 in Islamabad. The Working Group of Eminent Persons has considered the SAARC approach since 2000, the date of adoption of the SAFTA South Asian Free Trade Area has been changing. It was earlier decided that it would be achieved by 2005, while the target of 2001 was set at the Male Conference in 1997. 2001 was really early, because it was very necessary to prepare for this before establishing any kind of territory, because any decision regarding the proposed treaty

could be taken in the next summit, which would be held in 1999. The implementation of the treaty was to start from 2000 and the process was scheduled to end by 2010 for the least developed countries and by 2008 for some of the least developed countries, thus SAFTA could not be launched until the end of 2001 as the pace of development of SAARC was too slow. This agreement will be proved in work only when the consent of the secretariat is obtained. This agreement is a little ahead of SAPTA.

Under the trade liberalization program under SAFTA, there is a provision that the least developed countries will reduce their customs duty from 0 to 5 percent by 2014, while this period was fixed in 2009 for the least developed countries, the items secured under the sensitive list are subject to trade liberalization of each respective country. Will be related to Their development can be recreated according to the current World Trade Organization.

The development of SAARC is so slow keeping SAFTA and SAPTA in view, that its goal seems far away.

Keeping the above developments. in mind it can be expected that the member countries of SAARC will try to achieve mutual harmony so that regional development and self-reliance can be achieved. Failed attempt at South Asian regional cooperation

An assessment of the balance of power in the SAARC countries has remained a paradox in the initial decade of their inception. Although the 'Dec' has continued its diplomatic efforts and has also carried out mutual exchanges in the political, cultural, and scientific fields, yet has not been able to achieve international respect equivalent to ASEAN, its regional identity among the SAARC superpowers. Has not yet been able to make or does not want to be. Because of its bilateral disputes, SAARC has failed to fulfill the objectives set out in its charter. At present there are many possibilities before SAARC, but there is no way to make them meaningful. Has 'Dales' turned out to be a failed attempt? To evaluate it, we will first have to pay attention to its objectives. The success and failure of this regional organization will appear around the achievement of these objectives. One of the objectives of SAARC is to provide such an environment among the member countries that the relations between them are better. stay tuned.

The first objective is to work for the welfare of the South Asian people by improving their quality of life. The second objective is to provide an opportunity to everyone to lead a dignified life to their full potential by enhancing economic development, social progress, and cultural development in the region. The third objective is to encourage and strengthen collective self-reliance among South Asian countries, the fourth objective is to establish mutual trust, understand each other's problems and try to solve them amicably, and the fifth objective is economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific. Providing mutual assistance and active cooperation in the field.

The evaluation of SAARC will be relevant only in the context of the above objectives. In the third summit held in Kathmandu, 12 work areas were decided to fulfill the above objectives and efforts were made to achieve the target set for them. The SAARC Anti-Terrorism Declaration was issued, in which it was talked about discouraging terrorism spread by any country in another country. The Third Kathmandu Summit (1987) decided to set up the SAARC Food Security Fund, which started with a stock of 220,000 tonnes of food grains. This food grain cannot be used unless there is a disaster affecting the area. In the Kathmandu Committee itself, for non-proliferation of terrorism in the field, mutual countries were warned that they should not do any work promoting terrorism in any other country in the region. For this purpose, a SAARC Terrorism Monitoring Forum was also established in Colombo, but at the Eighth Summit in New Delhi in 1995, Heads of Government,

Heads of State expressed anguish that the member countries have still not stopped poisoning each other.

SAARC is cautious about the control of narcotic drugs, so in the Male conference in 1990, a working paper was signed in this regard and by 1993, the nations gave their approval on it. In fact, it is spread between two important areas of continent building, in which in the west is the Golden Triangle formed by Iran, Afghanistan and Iran and on the other hand in the east is the triangle formed by Laos, Thailand and Burma. An observation forum for SAARC countries was established in Colombo. SAARC Agricultural Information Center established in Dhaka in 1980, Decay Center established in Kathmandu in 1992, SAARC Meteorological Research Center in 1994 and SAARC Documentation Center established in NewHappened in 1994 in Delhi.

During the 5 years of the emergence of SAARC, the role of the union was limited to a few weak parties, the agenda accepted in the first summit did not show any practical form. India also expressed its anguish that the League did not include its relevant subjects, as the undertakings of trade, industry and currency were not stated among the priorities of the League. The statement of the Indian Foreign Minister was that without these areas, the success of the larger union cannot be assured, until these areas are included, no other way can be brought to remove the bitterness between the member countries. As a critical outcome of a regional study on trade in manufacturing and services completed in 1991, it was decided to set up an inter-governmental group on trade liberalisation. This act came into existence in April 1993 at the Ministerial Conference in Dhaka under the name of SAFTA.

Member countries at the Colombo summit in 1991 decided that an independent South Asian commission was needed to eradicate poverty, a proposal put forward at the next summit, with each nation aiming to meet this objective by 2002. Kept. The bitter reality of South Asia is that in 1990, 362 million people were below the poverty line, which is equivalent to 50 percent of the total regional population, for whom the initial requirement was to provide 'dal-bhaat' i.e., minimum food grains or provision of nutrition. To remove the growing disparity in the field of education towards children of the two opposite sexes, an ambitious goal was set to celebrate the year 1999-2000 as the "Decade of the SAARC Girl Child". "SAARC's goal of providing shade to all by the year 2000 was very ambitious, which was very difficult to fulfill in practice, because non-governmental organizations were also working abroad for this purpose. Worked abroad.

To increase the knowledge of SAARC among the people of the region, 'SAARC (Audio-Visual Exchange Program) was started in 1986. Under this, the programs of All India Radio and Doordarshan were exchanged in each other's countries. This basic idea was taken care of. Keeping this in mind, to showcase the cultural heritage of the region, the Festival of SAARC Countries was started in India in 1992. In the field of education, SAARC meetings, scholarships and fellowships were started to promote camaraderie and exchange of information among students and researchers of the subcontinent. The problem of border crossing between the countries within the region is also considered.

It was necessary to be done, it is extremely from one country to another where India Nepal has an open border, not India Pakistan there is a tight restriction. In such a situation, an institution related to immunity from BISA should be established, so that the citizens of the countries get the facility of easy movement in each other's country, till now such facility is available only to the Supreme Court judges, parliamentarians and policymakers of the organizational structure. Whereas it is very necessary for the people of the whole country to get this facility.



The 5 objectives that were set in relation to South-South cooperation remained unresolved. Summits are organized as a means of expressing dissatisfaction with developed countries and as a center for influencing national economies. Commonly recognized economic, social and environmental issues were raised, on which it was not difficult to agree. For its implementation, first ministerial level conference was held in Islamabad in the month of April 1986 to discuss international economic aspects. Its purpose was to draw attention to events outside the confines of SAARC, whether it was the Uruguay Round of GATT frameworks, or international conferences such as the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. Be it the Population Conference held in Egypt in September 1994, the World Conference on Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995, or the World Conference on Women held in September 1995 in Beijing. In this way, SAARC has tried to achieve its another important objective of cooperation with international and regional organizations.

Other member countries, including India, wanted to open the way for external aid to SAARC, but they were also not in favor of neo-colonialism. The SAARC Japan Special Fund came into existence in 1993, while bilaterally Japan is the second largest debtor in South Asia. Several steps have been taken by SAARC for intra-institutional cooperation, be it with the European Community, ASEAN, or with the Asian Development Bank, APEC, subsidiary agencies of the United Nations including the National Conference on Development and Trade, United Nations Children's Fund, Asia And for the Pacific, there should be an economic and social commission, an international communication group and a development program of the United Nations.

It can be clearly said that in the initial decade of its establishment, SAARC has made its institutional nature clear and at the same time development through its cooperation. SAARC has witnessed several patterns of cooperation, be they in the economic, cultural, technical and scientific fields, as well as has contributed significantly to enhancing dialogue and interaction between political leaders at the top level, as well as bringing together experts, scholars and Academicians have also been given an opportunity to exchange their views through SAARC conferences and seminars. If the initial decade of the 1990s is evaluated keeping in view the bilateral relations of the member countries, then the hopes seem bleak because the history of bilateral relations Not much better.

At the first SAARC summit in 1985, the main hope was expressed that this summit would give impetus to relatively better bilateral relations, shortly after the rumor of India's nuclear attack on Pakistan started, then both the heads of government came to deny it. In 1980, Rajiv Gandhi also traveled to Islamabad to participate in the SAARC Summit, but India-Pakistan relations again became disputed.

Efforts made jointly by Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Me in the Islamabad Summit to improve relations proved to be short-lived, the separatist movement being spread in Kashmir took a new form in Indo-Pak relations, Nawaz Sharif came to power Expressed his words at the Dhaka Summit in 1993, he said. "Development depends on the freedom of the oppressed and the oppressed, and that must be a global responsibility. Pakistan warned about the importance of India on SAARC, but even after its end, Pakistan is not comfortable with India in the organization, in various regional level conferences, Pakistan has given such anti-India provocative talk. There have been repeated demands that political issues should also be included in SAARC, even if this means amending the Charter. The President of Pakistan, Farooq Ledhari, expressed his sentiments at the New Delhi summit in May 1995, saying that "the fact that the organization has not yet settled, need not look too far. The resulting doubts and insecurities are major obstacles in the way of SAARC progressing

or getting to where it should be.” Pakistan continued to strengthen its position with the countries of the region and later competed with the New Delhi government and wished that the regional Platform disabled. Sri Lanka’s ethnic problem plagued SAARC for a decade, days after the 1987 incident of the Indian Air Force providing food to the Tamil population in Jaffna, in June 1987, Sri Lankan representatives in New Delhi attempted to persuade the other member states. Tried to include bilateral issues in the SAARC debate. However, due to strong opposition from India, Sri Lanka had to withdraw its proposal. Later, the then Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Natwar Singh clarified that “bilateral issues between India and Sri Lanka should not affect the association, if countries unite against India, they are destroying SAARC as an institution.” Will be. In spite of all this, except India, all the countries have been raising bilateral issues alone or together, India believes that with the success of the organization, the existence of political issues will decrease and gradually they will end. The mutual conflict of the last 40-50 years is paying the same price that despite being equally ready to solve the problems, they are not able to gather any consensus on bilateral issues. Therefore, the assessment of the first decade of the establishment of SAARC is mixed, it can be called successful, but to a limited extent, the reason behind the dominance of failure is the lack of openness in mutual relations. The organization has disappointed whether it is at the regional level, or at the international level, more so at the level where it had taken a vow to improve the standard of living. “This does not mean at all that its existence is in danger, it is mainly meant to say that it has achieved a goal well below expectations.

The first decade of the establishment of SAARC was full of ups and downs. The development that was possible could not happen. But a goal which was going to give direction to the economic identity of the region, the work of building the foundation was done in the first decade, in the first summit of Dhaka, it was agreed that trade liberalization should be taken step by step as soon as possible. Go so that the benefit of South Asia’s trade or less in the world but maximum at the regional level can be obtained. It took a decade to reach a consensus to achieve this goal.

SAPTA South Asian Varenya Agreement was signed to promote free trade in South Asia. SAPTA allowed the member states to import goods from countries outside SAARC at whatever rate of customs duty they wanted. Clear customs duty with ten countries at 10 percent less rate than they do. The main working principle behind this MoU is that each country should take a decision keeping in mind its present situation. The framework of the South Pacific Region (SAPTA) was passed in 1999 to keep the summit in process. India requested for the summit to be postponed because of the military presence in Pakistan. For the second time in 15 years of DK to be held in 1999, this time this side of India was not accepted by many countries, because if seen in a way, it is another singing song.

Distinguished Persons were appointed during the conference, in which it was decided to consider then after 2000, a move that would provide SAARC. In May 1990, this conference looked positively at India’s demand to convert the South Asian Free Economic Area (SAEC) into an economic one from 2001 to 2005.

These countries reiterated that they would achieve their old goal of eradicating poverty by the year 2002, and for this, funds were allocated to continue working in this direction. It was decided to establish a Group of Experts, with one member each from each of the countries, (GEF) broadly defined with the mandate to prepare a plan of action that would lead to an agenda for the year 2000 and beyond. SAARC may be included, and they should present their report at the Tenth Summit, which was to be held in Colombo in 1998. The report presented by the Working Group on Vulnerable Persons was not only publicized but also publicized. A vision of SAARC after 2000. This report,

presented in the name of, made it clear that SAARC has not worked in the direction where it should have been left out. The acceptance of this report is very relevant, because it also made the member countries realize that Someone's end is necessary. It took a lot of effort to prepare the ground for the conference held in 1998. Due to the ups and downs in relations between countries, it was difficult to get a common agreement. Nuclear tests were conducted by India and Pakistan during this period, due to which the region became sensitive, nuclear disarmament emerged as the biggest issue this time. Mutual differences were visible in this summit. The summit to be held in 1999 was postponed due to political developments in the region and was completed in January 2002. Relations between both India and Pakistan were on the decline, yet the two nations had a positive image towards the ten member countries involved in the summit. is indicative.

Geographical, political, economic, and social conditions of the South Asian subcontinent are very favorable for the establishment of a regional organization but looking at the slow pace of development of the history of ten, it can be said that without all the sixty member countries, the organization will not be successful in a positive way. It is possible.

In the 11th summit held in Kathmandu in 2002, it became imperative that written provisions should be brought for the implementation of programs in all sectors. For the eradication of poverty, it was ensured that the resolution was compulsorily passed, for this it was ensured to get positive participation, be it from national governments, international agencies i.e., enterprises or civil society. All the countries essentially agreed to such a proposal, so that cooperation in the matter of trade finance and investment could be increased more and more. It was considered necessary to create the South Asian Development Fund (SADF), as well as the availability of existing funds was also proved. Along with the progress of SAFTA, emphasis was laid on making meaningful efforts in the direction of SAFTA, for this the Committee of Ministers was instructed to prepare the SAFTA draft by the end of 2002. It was expressed the commitment that no matter how much effort has to be made, efforts should be made to weaken the prevalent terrorism in any form. Decision to stop illegal trade of drugs, drugs and children also taken.

In the 11th summit, it was also decided that this should be a joint effort of the heads of government of the member countries, they should move towards the direction where the South Asian Economic Community is formed. The organization can get a new form, but looking at its experiences, it is not very optimistic, yet the policy makers of the concerned countries are compelled to do so, because regional level alone Because they have suffered a lot.

Its progress in the second decade of the establishment of SAARC may not be according to its expectations, but till the end of the 11th conference, it seems appropriate. Despite all the political differences, the agreement of all the countries regarding the conference is very important, India-Pakistan relations were at the peak of tensions, but keeping in mind the regional economic development, gathering them again on a single platform will be counted among the successes of SAARC.

By the 11th summit, the mindset of the South Asian nations was poised to change as much as the progress SAARC made from 1985-2003. SAARC set new benchmarks of success in the summit. South Asian Economic Community and unified currency were discussed for the first time. There was talk of stressing on equal economic development of all the member countries. The biggest proof of success was that the two countries, who were having bitterness towards each other, decided to neglect it for the success of SAARC, as well as it was decided to start the cycle of bilateral talks. SAFTA South Asian Free Trade Area came as another achievement. The reason behind agreeing on this was that most of the trade is done from outside South Asia, by agreeing on SAFTA, it would

be easier to deal with the negative effects of the World Trade Organisation. Circumstances as well as policy makers played a very important role in the success of the SAARC.

Islamabad summit. Despite being the largest country, Pakistan sacrificed its ego for regional unity and development despite Kargil, cross-border terrorism, and attack on Indian Parliament. And the Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was ready to go to Pakistan and he was very confident about the conference and during it., In his words- “The bond of caste and culture that binds this region in strong bonds is much more important than the political disputes which are the product of a few days.” For him, peace is a matter of desire. There are many announcements in the summit, but it is more important to put them into practice, if that is possible. Only then regional development will be possible.

After evaluating both the success and failure of the SAARC, it can be said that despite having similar geographical and cultural environment, there are many disparities related to border, water and politics from the beginning. There is a state of distrust and doubt about each other in their mind from the very beginning. In view of this, the organization could be considered a failed attempt, because goodwill towards each other was also very necessary for South Asian regional cooperation, which circumstances do not allow, or there is no place for them in history. Due to being proposed by a small country, there has always been a situation of doubt in the mind of the rest of the countries about the role of the main country of the region, they do not want to accept India’s influence under any circumstances.

India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives And the collective effort of nations like Sri Lanka came to the fore in the form of SAARC, SAARC has done positive work in areas that hinder the path of regional development.

The tightening screws of the World Trade Organization, the vulture vision of the developed countries or the countries of the north, it is imperative that the members work to strengthen their group.

Do it so that they can be heard on the international platform. Therefore, it is too early to say whether ‘SAARC’ is an unsuccessful attempt of South Asian cooperation, its success in the changing global scenario is the compulsion of its member countries to remove their false self-esteem, political disputes, all these tasks will make SAARC present in the future.

The establishment of SAARC and the development of the last few years indicate that the concerned countries agree with the ideology of regional cooperation and have found it very suitable for their development. The two largest members, India, and Pakistan have shed their initial hesitation. It is very encouraging that the future of regional cooperation regarding economic development is very promising. A few areas can be identified where meaningful regional cooperation is possible. There is great enthusiasm among the smaller nations, as SAARC has offered them a new hope. Not only India and Pakistan but other small countries the approach of SAARC will also be helpful in the stability of SAARC, political and what kind of country is in terms of diplomatic requirements behave, it will depend on them only.

The thinking of the member countries about the future of SAARC matters a lot. At the regional level, SAARC has a large area, it conducts special studies on various problematic issues. Can organize, can present policy related programs And the collective effort of nations like Sri Lanka came to the fore in the form of SAARC, SAARC has done positive work in areas that hinder the path of regional development. Umrah is a compulsion in front of third world countries. The tightening screws of the World Trade Organization, the vulture vision of the developed countries or the countries of the north, it is imperative that the members work to strengthen their group.

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SAARC from its origin has been very controversial, member countries like India & others are facing challenges those are regional. COVID 19 played very important role, distributing vaccines to neighbours or it is helping them in their domestic front like Sri Lanka & Nepal.

In contemporary world India is getting attention from the world. being fifth largest economy India has her own challenges, huge population, employment & others. SAARC is facing very tough time after 2018 no annual summit has been possible, foreign ministers' meetings cannot be sufficient, all the members should take their responsibility towards the organization. South Asian countries should play their roles in the development of the region, Indo China relation is not in good phase. Balance of power is shifting; these are the goals for SAARC to face. SAARC designed implemented a regional SAARC Covid 19 emergency fund. Some milestones are there with the SAARC.

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