
Regional Security and Economic Integration in South Asia: The Role of SAARC in Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

South Asia remains one of the most geopolitically complex and economically diverse regions in the world, marked by persistent security threats and economic disparities. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established to foster regional integration, economic cooperation, and conflict resolution among its member states. However, political tensions, territorial disputes, and unresolved historical conflicts have hindered SAARC's effectiveness in achieving its core objectives. This study examines the role of SAARC in addressing regional security challenges and promoting economic integration as a means of conflict resolution. It explores the impact of inter-state rivalries, cross-border terrorism, and military confrontations on regional stability while assessing the organization's efforts in facilitating diplomatic dialogue and economic partnerships. Additionally, the study evaluates the limitations of SAARC in mitigating conflicts, including structural weaknesses, lack of enforcement mechanisms, and political differences among member states. The research highlights how economic interdependence can help build peace through trade agreements, connectivity, and security cooperation initiatives. By looking policy frameworks, and economic policies, this research outlines how to enhance SAARC's capacity to promote and nurture regional security and economic partnership. This paper examines SAARC's maintenance of economic and security relationships and South Asia's geography conflict resolution advocacy. The author considers and evaluates the extent to which political friction may be lessened and synergy be attained through dialogue, cooperation, and mechanisms of institutions. The research findings affirm that the political will and the economic integration advance the institutional changes needed for SAARC to work optimally as conflict resolution body in South Asia.

Keywords: SAARC, regional security, economic integration, conflict resolution, South Asia, cross-border tensions, trade agreements, inter-state rivalries, peacebuilding, economic cooperation.

Introduction

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Established on December 8, 1985, in Dhaka (Bangladesh) aimed at Cultural, Socioeconomic & Regional Integration. This concept was first put by President of Bangladesh Ziaur Rahman in 1980 and subsequently adopted by the seven founding members Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan, eighth in 2007, qualified for membership. SAARC was established as a platform for regional integration to take place on a collective Fostering regional integration based on mutual benefit, the SAARC body embarked its vision on collective actions to combat poverty through trade and economic interdependency, agricultural up gradation, priority in health and education, technological advancement, and others to promote peaceful cohabitation. Sahasrabuddhe (2010)



Source: <https://www.mapsofworld.com/saarc-member-countries.htm>

Though, a working of the SAARC organization functions on principles like sovereignty, equality, and non-interference in internal affairs. This deep regional integration is hampered by politics, especially on the India and Pakistan side, and their economic and bureaucratic issues. Despite its shortcomings, SAARC remains a vital platform for South Asian countries to address shared challenges such as climate change, disaster management, and economic growth. Madhur (2023)

The South Asian region is characterized by geopolitical intricacy and economic disparity, with almost a quarter of the world's population and a wide variety of political and economic systems and arrangements, as well as history contexts. Despite the region's growth potential, it is unable to achieve a positive level of growth, because the region is unable to fully integrate. The region is characterized by a significant number of threats to security, territorial conflicts and disputes, and cross-border blockades. These factors represent a considerable barrier to cooperation and to the positive development of the region. For this reason, the SAARC

can help achieve a positive level of cooperation to promote regression. Ahmad (2017)

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was created in 1985 in an attempt to achieve a minimal level of regional integration, and for the eight members (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) to create a framework for economic cooperation and collaboration. The main goal was to find solutions to regional problems through diplomatic discussions. However, political conflicts and a lack of commitment from member countries have made it extremely difficult for SAARC to meet its objectives, to the point of failing. Bishwakarma & Hu (2022)

Challenges of Security in South Asia

Islam and Kieu (2020) South Asia is a highly unstable region in the world. It experiences various security crises, including intrusions, violence of the insurgent groups, skirmished across the borders, and internal conflicts. India and Pakistan have been at it for decades, and that is the uncalming of the region's diplomatic equilibriums. Issues such as cross-border militancy sponsorship and nuclear proliferation fall well within the rivals' domains. Plenty of SAARC's primary objectives has been to resolve these conflicts, but it has, to a large degree, been ineffective as it does not intervene in the domestic matters of states.

SAARC was designed with a goal to resolve issues through communication and economic collaboration. However, it still hasn't been able to resolve and remedy significant issues. This is due to the absence of a system for conflict resolution. SAARC, unlike other regional blocs such as the EU or ASEAN, has no mechanisms in place to address conflicts between its member states. This severely limits the implementation of peace initiatives. There is economic potential in the area, but the countries of South Asia do not trade with each other. Inter-regional trade in SAARC is minimal. Ahmed (2018)

Political Rivalries and SAARC's Functioning

Ongoing warfare diplomacy between India and Pakistan has been a large distraction for SAARC. Diplomatic tensions have resulted in the postponement or cancellation of SAARC meetings. This has further weakened the organization as a cohesive regional entity. Without reconciliation of the political issues, the potential of SAARC in fostering security and economic collaboration will be significantly constrained. Obino (2009)

The Future of SAARC in Regional Stability

In spite of these negative factors, SAARC still has the potential to develop and improve in order to meet its goals of fostering regional security and economic integration. Realizing an economically interdependent SAARC will allow all member states to profit from the collaboration. Such an economically interdependent SAARC will, however, depend upon the cooperation of member countries to strengthen SAARC, the member states undertaking the necessary institutional reforms, and member states' undertaking the necessary proactive diplomatic efforts. Sawhney (2010)

Research Questions

1. How has SAARC contributed to regional security and economic integration in South Asia despite ongoing political and territorial disputes?
2. What are the key limitations and challenges hindering SAARC's effectiveness in conflict resolution and economic cooperation among member states?
3. What strategies and policy reforms can enhance SAARC's role in fostering regional stability and economic interdependence?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze SAARC's efforts in addressing regional security challenges and promoting economic integration as a means of conflict resolution.

2. To identify and evaluate the structural weaknesses, political constraints, and enforcement challenges that limit SAARC's effectiveness.
3. To propose strategic recommendations for strengthening SAARC's role in facilitating diplomatic dialogue, trade agreements, and regional peace initiatives.

Significance

This study significantly takes a close look at how SAARC has an impact on regional security issues and helps economic integration in South Asia. This study examines how the interplay of political tensions, economic relations, and conflict resolution integrates with and benefits the work of political science students and practitioners of policy. This study highlights the shortcomings of SAARC while proposing essential strengthening and internal solidification of economic relations with friendly trading partners. This study contributes to the larger discourse on the regionalism of South Asia and the need to foster economic integration with the construction of regional collaborative frameworks.

Literature Review

Kandel (2023) literature emphasizes the fact that SAARC Charter has been the starting point for regional cooperation, specifying principles of economic integration, social development, and mutual understanding by its eight member countries. The Charter reflects the commitment of SAARC to combating poverty, upgrading education and health, and strengthening agriculture, without violating sovereignty or political independence. Moreover, it promotes peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal matters, and makes the organization stronger in its intent to promote harmonious and prosperous South Asia.

According to studies conducted by Bishwakarma & Hu (2022), the aim of SAARC was to foster collaboration and facilitate economic integration within the region. However, due to the political animosity and rivalries between India and Pakistan, SAARC has faced considerable challenges. This has meant that many of the Association's initiatives and approaches remain stagnant. To breathe new life into SAARC, experts think it needs to change its setup or bring in new members. Some even suggest adding China to help even out power relationships and boost economic growth through more trade and money coming in.

Khalid et al, (2020) study underlines that regional trade is essential to overcome the predicament of food security in SAARC countries, especially in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. It has been found that GDP as well as foreign direct investment positively influences the volume of trade, and bilateral exchange rate negatively impacts trade. A long-term relationship has not been discovered between trade volume and food security. The findings indicate that food security, along with an export potential, will be enhanced with the improvement of trade competitiveness and the creation of a positive economic climate in the region.

Singh et al., (2022) provide a synopsis of the food situation in the SAARC nations (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) using the metrics of availability, access, utilization and stability in the context of sustainability of changing climate scenarios. Through the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and World Bank, this research attempts to ranks the countries based on present and future food security. Among the future climate scenarios, Bangladesh is the food security champion, followed by Sri Lanka in the second position, whereas Maldives and Afghanistan occupies the lowest positions in food security. India, in in we will speak of her, is the sixth ranked country, Afghanistan and Maldives being the lowest. The study's framework is a construct of considerable utility for decision-makers to allocate and distribute coping strategies for food secured areas and more vulnerable to extreme ranges of food in security, in a changing climate.

Dutta (2011) considers China's potential induction as a full member of SAARC given its political, economic, and security ramifications on the region. SAARC has, since 2007, began allowing some extra-regional states, including China, Japan, the EU, and the US, to act as observers. Other states like Russia and Indonesia have also shown an interest in joining. Ultimately, the study attempts to assess SAARC's current relevance and its

structural challenges in order to determine if the full membership of China would aid in the furtherance of regional integration as opposed to creating even greater regional disparities.

Jain & Singh (2009), the literature assesses SAARC's merchandise trade performance, as well as, its intra-regional trade patterns. This, in turn, suggests that the principal members of SAARC possess similar export baskets, which, in turn, results in a higher competitive rivalry in the global marketplace. India and Pakistan, however, have a greater degree of export diversification. The Grubel-Lloyd index reveals that intra-industry trade has been on the rise. This is probably as a result of industry and trade reforms. The study applies both the "Revealed" Comparative Advantage (RCA) index, as well as, the Relative Trade Advantage (RTA) index in order to demonstrate that India is favorably placed in a number of sectors, while the major SAARC economies have a greater degree of specialization in the textile sector. The report suggests that despite a greater degree of economic convergence among the principal SAARC member states, the trade integration has been happening at a remarkably slow pace. Hence, a greater policy improvement, as well as better cooperation, is required.

Sexena et al. (2015) SAARC has made attempts to improve the trade and privatization of economies. Nonetheless, with only 5 percent of trade in the SAARC region, it has the least trade in the world. The SAARC region has the trade potential as the countries (SAARC) account for 21 percent of the world production, while their GDP is only 3.8 percent. SAARC has the potential to trade efficiently. The other countries of the region are in SAARC as they (countries) have the problems of geography, language, and other political problems. The SAARC region has the SAARC opportunities and the problems in the regional SAARC integration.

Ali & Talukder, 2009, it is evident that there are preferential trade and regional integration in SAARC. This emphasizes the fact that most of the world trade is contributed by the SAARC countries. Moreover, trade policies are dominated by political issues. Ali & Talukder state that free trade of the region to the other countries of the world is trade diverted while to the countries of the region, trade would be created. The result of the research is that there is still no full trades are in South Asia.

Rafique et al. (2024) focuses on the energy situation of the SAARC countries and takes into account the primary and the new and renewable sources of energy. There has been a considerable increase in the consumer side of the demand-supply gap in the energy market in the last 25 years due to the booming of industrial activities. The energy generation and transmission of energy to the end user has been the focus of most studies. However, in the areas of forecasting energy demands, trade of energy, and the innovations of decentralized energy systems, there is still a gap in the literature. The study shows that there is an opportunity for South Asian countries to trade RERs, i.e. hydropower, solar, and wind to overcome the energy trade deficits and develop a decentralized and sustainable trade. This will guarantee South Asian countries with the energy sufficiency to stabilize their economies and empower them to trade their energy surpluses.

Trannum and Khan (2023) examine the history, development and experience of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and its role in advancing regional cooperation and integration. This work concentrates on sub-regional cooperation and the illustrative case of the Motor Vehicle Agreement for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN), which is expected to facilitate potential cooperation and subsequent regional integration. However, an effective SAARC has to contend with the challenges posed by its member states' political hostilities, economic inequalities and inefficient institutions. The authors advocate for the replacement of existing barriers by stronger policy interlinkages, economic liberalization, and sub-regional frameworks, so as to improve the overall performance of SAARC by attaining deeper regional integration.

Idrees and Naazer (2017) suggest that the major hindrance to the effectiveness of SAARC is the interstate conflicts, as bilateral and contentious issues fall outside the scope of SAARC, thereby hampering regional cooperation. Such conflicts are surprising to find amongst member states who share cultural, linguistic and historical commonalities, as these conflicts seem to stall any progress. This study examines the potential impact of these conflicts on regional integration, and proposes the stagnation to be attributed to lack of

effective conflict management and resolution. In relation to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) the authors propose the use of multi-track diplomacy and conflict management frameworks that are likely to facilitate regional cooperation and development.

Jety (2003) literature compares ASEAN and SAARC, analyzing why ASEAN has become a success in conflict management and regional cooperation, while SAARC failed to do the same. The study admits that regionalism is unique to every region and requires specific strategies that best suit conflict resolution. In respect of SAARC, ASEAN's model may not be replicable directly but the principles followed by ASEAN in its management of conflict, diplomatic engagement, and economic cooperation could be adaptable to South Asian socio-economic and political realities. The study found that SAARC can learn a lesson from the consensus-based approach and non-interference policy by ASEAN as regional tensions mount due to unending conflicts within South Asia including Afghanistan.

Saini (2015) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was created to promote peace, social justice, economic prosperity, and mutual understanding in South Asia. Regional cooperation was initiated in November 1980 and the following year in 1981 and then in 1983, it set out some of the areas for cooperation which were agriculture, rural development, telecommunications, meteorology, health, and population. Later it added science and technology, sports, arts, and culture. The first SAARC Summit in 1985 in Dhaka formalized the creation of the organization by adopting the SAARC Charter, which would guide regional cooperation among its seven founding member states: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Muzaffar et al, (2017) paper analyses the challenges that face regional cooperation within SAARC, particularly India and Pakistan's initial reluctance to engage fully in the regional collaboration. The study analyzed SAARC's achievements and shortcomings concerning the promotion of peace and harmony, along with economic collaboration among the South Asian states, and employs qualitative research methodologies. SAARC's objectives were focused on the development of communication and the strengthened partnership of political leaders, along with the goals of resource sharing and the promotion of mutual confidence. The strife between India and Pakistan, particularly regarding the Kashmir issue, has been the most important roadblock. The study argues that India's alleged hegemonic aspirations and his distrust, along with his negative stance regarding the smaller South Asian countries, have been the most significant determinants of the weakened efforts at regional integration.

Ahmad (2017) paper reviews the cause of cancellation of a series of SAARC summits and focuses on the effects it has on regional cooperation. The summit is, therefore, the most important platform upon which regional leaders gather, address pertinent issues, negotiate or identify concerns bilaterally, sign agreements, and, in some cases initiate negotiations. However, due to multiple failed summits, SAARC members have so far failed to make full use of this opportunity. The SAARC Charter prohibits contentious or bilateral political matters from being discussed at Summits in order to protect the organization from being derailed by regional conflicts. However, ongoing tensions, particularly India's strained relations with the other member states, continue to undermine the Summit process.

Babar (2023) explains in research that e context of SAARC, rethinking the regional security paradigm entails addressing the non-traditional security threats of climate change, health crises, food insecurity, and terrorism. These challenges are all transnational and cannot be addressed uni-dimensionally through the military. SAARC enables dialogue, coordination, and confidence-building among the South Asian states. The enhancement of regional dialogue under SAARC strengthens the cooperative security and the resilience of South Asia. e context of SAARC, rethinking the regional security paradigm entails addressing the non-traditional security threats of climate change, health crises, food insecurity, and terrorism. These challenges are all transnational and cannot be addressed through the military. SAARC enables dialogue, coordination, and confidence-building among the South Asian states. The enhancement of regional dialogue under SAARC strengthens the cooperative security and the resilience of South Asia.

Bhatta (2004), explains in research that from the SAARC perspective, the purpose of regional integration is to establish peace in South Asia through cooperation and dialogue among the member countries. Economic cooperation, people-to-people contact, and the facilitation of trade help in the reduction of political confrontations. SAARC offers an organizational framework for the construction of confidence and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Increased dedication to SAARC provides the potential to achieve peace and stability in the region over the long term.

Batool & Javaid (2018), SAARC is an important organization for the economic integration of South Asia. For example, the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) aims to promote intra-regional trade by lowering trade barriers. Improving regional trade and economic flow has benefits for all South Asia countries as it encourages partnerships for development investments. SAARC promotes economic growth and interdependence through trade partnerships.

Ahmed (2013), SAARC is an important organisation for advancing South Asia's economic integration through avenues of regional integration. SAFTA encourages participants to trade with each other by lowering barriers to trade and increasing trade. SAARC promotes cross-border investment and also encourages member countries to undertake joint development initiatives. Economic cooperation aims to reduce trade and investment gaps of the member countries.

Waqas e al (2024), transforming long-standing conflicts into organized regional cooperation entails the South Asian Confederation vision. South Asia should promote a collaborative regional community because of their combined economic interdependence, cultural affinities and collective security predicaments. Politically, mistrust and doubts over the entrenched claims of sovereignty are seen as the main challenges facing the South Asian Confederation. Nonetheless, the easing of inter-state relations and the development of regional partnerships can help build the basis for collective South Asian governance.

Niaz & Shad (2023), South Asian regional integration model focuses on South Asian regional integration, with political commitment and economic collaboration forming the core pillars. The European Union demonstrates how economic collaboration and political integration can be achieved. The experience of the European Union divorce friction demonstrates that political integration, like economic collaboration, can evolve from superficial integration and a robust institutional framework. Political mistrust and regional institutional weaknesses, however, characterize South Asia. South Asia can achieve stronger regional integration through an incremental approach to trade, connectivity, and institutional collaboration.

Baru & Standard (2009), states that initial formation of regions in South Asia resulted in the creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which promotes collaboration and encourages cohesion amongst neighbouring states. SAARC has formed a systematic framework which coordinates interstate dialogues. In conjunction with SAARC were other regional cooperative mechanisms including the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) and other bilateral regional cooperation agreements. Regardless of the many limitations surrounding these cooperative mechanisms and agreements, these were the primary building blocks surrounding regionalism in South Asia.

Islam (2025), explains that SAARC has been instrumental in promoting regional dialogue and cooperation in South Asia. However, its effectiveness is hindered by political clashes, particularly bilateral rifts among its member countries. There are also weak institutional mechanisms and decision-making based on consensus which further hinders advancement. Suggested reforms include reinforcing the SAARC Secretariat, deepening the economic integration, and insulating regional cooperation from political conflicts.

Aryal & Bharti (2023), due to the Indian Leadership within the SAARC, it has been to India's advantage to shape and influence the regional integration plans for South Asia. There still are word and concerns over India's bigger dominance over the smaller, weaker association member countries, India's Role is still very important. There still are political conflicts and integration still has a long way to go. India will need to take a more balanced and inclusive approach to have effective regional cooperation within the SAARC.

Hamanaka (2010), South Asia displays a particular kind of political economy regarding a political and

economic consideration among the countries forming a region. The flow of trade and investment and the implementation of infrastructure development projects provide the basis for potential growth. Nevertheless, historical rivalries, mistrust, and power asymmetries tend to stifle collaboration. There is a need to align the economic factors with political discourse and the resolution of conflicts in order to achieve effective regional cooperation.

Discussion

SAARC has limited South Asia's conflicts resolvability due to the organization's traditionally limited role in the region's security. The SAARC Charter shapes the fundamental objectives of the organization include the promotion of regional collaboration, peaceable coexistence, and the mutual respect of territorial sovereignty. However, the document's outright exclusion of bilateral and contentious political dispute resolution has most notably hampered the organization's direct action regarding major security conflicts, namely the Indo-Pak tensions. Consequently, SAARC has operated predominantly as a confidence-building mechanism, rather than as a primary framework for managing South Asia's conflicts. Nonetheless, SAARC's regular gatherings and conduct of ministerial meetings, as well as meetings on the margins of formal meetings and diplomacy, have furthered the establishment of communication during periods of heightened regional tensions and have produced, albeit indirectly, the reduction of misperceptions. These factors collectively contribute to the primary requirement for sustainable peace in the region, which is the long-term resolution of conflicts.

Likewise, bolstered by international trade agreements and the SAARC trade framework, trade theory attributes the regional interdependencies envisioned in the SAARC agreements and SAFTA to interregional trade and to the trade nexus theory, which posits that economic interdependence will strengthen regional security. The SAARC agreements, and particularly SAFTA, seek to reduce intra region trade barriers, thereby institutionalizing the economic interdependence trade SAARC and the trade SAFTA nexus as the foundation for the projected economic development and, in time, interregional security. The politics of the region, particularly the mistrust, however, has resulted in economic integration and development, and trade growth in the region to be non-existent, and therefore SAFTA's potentials to create an economically integrated region. The fault in intra SAARC trade has resulted in the SAARC organization and member states to be economically stagnated, and in addition, to miss the benefits of reducing regional conflicts through trade and economic cooperation. Deficient as that may be, cooperation among SAARC member states in specific economic sectors such as

Also, the experience of SAARC exemplifies the potential and limitations of regional organizations when it comes to the provision of security in regions that are politically divided. Although SAARC has not been able to function as an orthodox conflict resolution actor, it has, through its institutional mechanisms, been able to engender a sense of regional identity and a spirit of collaboration framed around non-traditional security challenges like poverty, climate change and other health-related crises, and food security. The resolution of these challenges through collective action has enhanced regional security in a secondary way especially by addressing the structural causes of conflict. Hence, the argument is that the potential for SAARC to be a means for the promotion of stability and progressive conflict resolution in South Asia lies in augmenting the economic integration of SAARC and expanding its focus to include non-traditional security areas.

Conclusion

Since 1985 when the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, (SAARC) came into existence, the heads of state have held this summit a record 18 times. So great is the potential for cooperation among the regions, but at times, political tensions and last-minute cancellations by member nations like India and Pakistan have besmirched summits. Pakistan has been the host for SAARC summits twice, in 1988 and 2004. However, security challenges in South Asia have been persistent, and the conflicts and issues of terrorism have not yet been resolved. This has hampered the proper holding of SAARC meetings and regional

cooperation. The main reason for the cancellation of SAARC summits is the deterioration in diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan, which is further complicated by the Kashmir dispute.

SAARC has had the marked yet limited influence on regional security and economic integration in South Asia, all along being shadowed by entrenched political conflicts between India and Pakistan. This is despite the fact that the very purpose of the organization was to promote cooperation among states in agriculture, telecommunications, and healthcare, among other areas. However, this has been largely thwarted by its failure to address bilateral issues constantly arising between its members. The doctrine of non-interference followed under SAARC has, at several times prevented it from taking opportunities to ensure positive debates on big issues like the Kashmir issue, cross-border terrorism, and regional military tensions. However, there is an increasing realization for developing conflict resolution mechanisms within the organization that would bear a chance for durable peace and stability within South Asia. Non-political, developmental dialogue may make SAARC supersede its historical political differences. But besides that, more importantly, a culture of confidence-building needs to be continued amongst the regions: good governance human rights and these confidence-building measures need to continue being fostered. And they can actually result in the constructiveness of regional cooperation economic stability and durable peace for South Asia in the successive summits.

The purpose SAARC was to boost regional unity and set up a structure for economic teamwork among its eight member nations: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The main aim was to tackle regional issues through better diplomatic talks. But SAARC has run into big problems in achieving its goals because of ongoing political fights and a lack of dedication from its member countries.

Despite all these problems, SAARC is yet to improve itself to serve its motto and adapt regional security and economic integration at the regional level. Transforming SAARC into a platform where all member countries can get benefits by focusing on economic interdependence and rectifying structural inefficiencies is possible. SAARC in itself requires cooperation among member countries to be strengthened, institutional reforms to be initiated, and proactive diplomatic efforts to be made accordingly

Recommendation

The organization requires crucial reforms to place SAARC at an enhanced position for it to have effective action in regional security and economic integration. Such reforms include a conflict-resolution mechanism, incentives for enhancement of trade and economic partnership, and political will among member states. The institutions must be strengthened, there should be more dialogue through diplomatic channels, and the trade agreements must be enforced to make SAARC a potent organization.

To deal with these security issues, Pakistan will have to initiate proactive measures within the region fostering peace and stability. The policies of the federal government must be in respect of the reinforcement of regional security cooperation and adoption of a middle-of-the-line approach to ensure that SAARC nations get ample opportunity to air their voices, which may also help the federation to enjoy improved economic stability with the improvement in regional trade relations by Pakistan on the removal of trade barriers. Infrastructure development on the lines of energy projects, cross-border trade initiatives, and mutual technological exchange can promote economic integration and increase resilience in the region.

More peaceful issues such as conflict resolution mechanisms, multi-track diplomacy, and some focus on development issues like poverty reduction, climate change, and economic cooperation before an upcoming SAARC summit may assure success for Pakistan because SAARC may emerge from its historical political differences while engaging in non-political, development-based dialogue. Pakistan should continue its efforts to cultivate a culture of trust-building within the region through good governance, human rights, and confidence-building measures. That will pave the way for further summits being more constructive and regional cooperation more productive, the economy stable, and peace sustained in South Asia.

Since the established of SAARC all its meeting remained positive and overcome the regional issues such as trade, geopolitics and economy. This study further suggests that all member states of SAARC make sure the continuity of organization. India and Pakistan can lead the role to reorganize SAARC with the inclusion of member states to unite into one platform. SAARC reorganization can provide an opportunity to all member states for social cohesion and economic development among member states and neighbor countries.

The article encourages SAARC to perform more actively its functions in order to improve regional security and economic integration. SAARC member states need to engage in dialogue and confidence building measures to deal with the political tensions. It is possible to reduce the likelihood of conflict if there are shared interests that can be achieved through joint economic cooperation. SAARC Implementing agencies need more resources and powers to act and carry out the decisions that have been made. People-to-people contacts and cultural partnerships can further enhance SAARC regional confidence and durable stability.

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