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SAARC AND ASEAN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY SUCCESS & FAILURE.

MUHAMMAD FAROOQ ANWAR

Abstract:

The research paper is an attempt to understand the determinations behind establishment of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation and ASEAN. This paper describes reasons why Pakistan & India were unwilling initially to join the said SAARC. The paper elaborates Evolution, Functions, Achievement, and failure including influence of internal and external power center of the world. The qualitative research method has adopted to evaluate the failure and success of ASEAN & SAARC. ASEAN has shown very rapid growth in regional & global trade; previously mentioned organization achievements are high as compared to SAARC. In fact, the idea was to promote peace, political harmony, cultural exchange and economic development in the region. Pakistan tried utmost to reduce trust defect among the regional countries by utilizing forum of SAARC. The cooperation of South Asian nations is linked with internal & external security of regional countries. The hegemony of India and deep-rooted tension between two countries caused great damage to the smooth functions of SAARC. Kashmir is cause of disagreement between two sates its lingering position created hinders to achieve the goals of SAARC. The issue of so-called cross border terrorism and false flag operations by India has also sabotaged this forum. The Sri Lanka laid formal groundwork in first meeting in Colombo on April, 1981. The series of various meeting was held from 1981 to 1992 for the conceptual framework of SAARC. The foundation of this organization is following three conferences, which were held, between 1947 to 1954:

1. □Asian Relations Conference 1947.
2. □The Baguio Conference 1950.
3. □Colombo Power Conference 1954.

Keywords:

Realism, SAARC, Kashmir, India, History, Bilateral, ASEAN.

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Authors:

MUHAMMAD FAROOQ ANWAR, Lecturer Government Graduate College for Boys, Pakistan, Email: ranafarooqanwar@gmail.com

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Introduction

The 1st framework and concrete proposal for the establishment of this prestigious organization was made by late President of Bangladesh Mr. Zia-ur-Rehman on 2nd May 1980. The purpose of its creation was to maintain peace political, cultural, Economic Cooperation among the states.

Objectives

1. To create opportunities people of region.
2. To promote and maintain peace in the region.
3. Social progress and Economic growth.
4. To promote and strengthen selective self-alliance system for among the regional states.
5. To understand the genuine issues of each other.
6. To promote cultural cooperation among the states.
7. To create opportunities for people of the region.

Member Countries

Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Key Potential Future Member

Russia has expressed its deep interest for the membership of SAARC. Myanmar is also keen for membership of this forum. Australia has also showed interest for the membership of SAARC.

Structure of SAARC

Council

It is apex policy making body which consists of Government of member states. This council meets once in a two years¹.

Council of Ministers

This body is comprised of foreign Ministries of member states and key functions as under: The prime responsibility of body is formulation of policy. Brief review of smooth functioning. To create or decide new era of Economical and political cooperation.

Standing Committee

It consists of member states Secretaries. To provide platform for the mobilization of cooperation within or outside the region. To finalized and deal with the modalities of financial matters.

Programming Committee

This committee is containing of most senior official of member states. Scrutiny and preparation of budget. To finalize annual agenda and schedule. To perform the internal & external activities assigned by standing committee.

Technical Committee

¹ India & Pakistan Continued Conflict & or Cooperation, Stanley Wolpert, 210

To formulate program & Projects. Submission of report. Its domain is Environment, Agriculture, Rural Health, Tourism and Science and Technology

Secretariat

The SAARC Secretariat is located in Nepal and council of Minister appoints Secretary General².

Functions

To coordinate, monitor and projects programs of organization. To prepare agenda of conferences. Drafting & distribution of policy statement.

The Theoretical framework of SAARC

The India influenced SAARC by its military or economic strength and try to establish hegemonic attitude to get its political goal within region and globally even refused to participate in Nineteenth summit Islamabad due to false flag operation of URRI and Pakistan have to postponed Conference because of pressure build by Indian Government and its allies. There is no doubt that Indian hegemonic approach created delays to achieve, social, economic and political growth in the region. This region is underdeveloped and has a lot of threats and the vast variety of challenges. Neither the SAARC forum nor the members look eager to develop economic ties and political congruence. The main problem of SAARC is unsettled disputes among member states

The instituional farmework of SAARC

All organizations of the world have institutional framework and the subject body has also created "Institutional Framework" and prime responsibility of this outline is to multilevel summits. The SAARC supported to encourage progress of south Asian countries (Sigh, 2006). The Concept of Regionalism: There is no regionalism in South Asian region & powerful states tried to sell subject idea in the form of SAARC over three decades by gaining their political mileage and unfortunately concrete progress towards economic, political synchronization is not up to the mark. There is no doubt that so-called regionalism in this region has faced various challenges. Of course, NATO is regional organization & it has transformed conventional aspirations into wider practice of peaceful co-existence, economical collaboration and collective security. The purpose of decentralization is the geopolitical, economic growth of civil society. The Islamabad submits dated 1958 was excellent progress regarding Culture, telecommunication and sports.

Detail of SAARC Conferences

The secretariat has conducted nineteen summits up to 2019, detail is as under:

1. Dhaka Bangladesh 1985,
2. Bangalore India 1987,
3. Kathmandu Nepal
4. Islamabad Pakistan 1988,
5. Male Maldives 1990,
6. Colombo Sri Lank 1991
7. Dhaka Bangladesh 1993,
8. New Delhi India 1995,
9. Male Maldives 1997
10. Colombo Sri lank 1998,

² Regionalism in South Asia Negotiating Cooperation, institutional Structures, Kishore. Dash,2008

11. Kathmandu Nepal 2002,
12. Islamabad Pakistan
13. Dhaka Bangalore 2005,
14. New Delhi 2007,
15. Colombo Sri Lanka 2008
16. Tempo Bhutan 2009,
17. Addu Maldives 2010,
18. Katmandu Nepal 2014
19. Islamabad 2016.

Key Points of Summits

The 1st SAARC summit was held in Bangladesh and the charter of aforesaid organization was signed on 8th December 1985 which is big achievement and the study group for the resolution of regional problems of terrorism was also established during session of this summit. The members were agreed to establish SAARC Secretariat and after end of summit Dhaka Declaration was published.

A. The second summit was held in India and Memorandum of understanding for the establishment of SAARC secretariat was signed by all members unanimously and appointed the Mr. Abdul Ahsan the first Secretary general of SAARC.

B. The main point of this summit was the convention of suppression on terrorism and food security agreement was signed during third SAARC summit.

C. It was held in capital of Pakistan and the important declaration of this summit was the efforts to control drugs and this year was also declared Drug abuse year and girl child. A technical committee was setup to promote vocational education in the region to reduce poverty.

D. The fifth summit was very important because the convention on narcotics was launched and the SAARC travel documents was introduced to facilitate & visa exemption for national judges, parliamentarians and their families etc.

E. The 6th summit was held in Sri Lanka and the draft of cultural programs were approved by the secretary of SAARC. It was just ceremonial summit without any concrete output.

F. It was held in India and due to domination of Indian policy makers the result of subject summit was not up to the mark and it was totally high jacked by India

G. The next summit was held in Maldives the result of subject summit was also not appreciable, this summit was only a debating club.

H. The 10th session was held in Sri Lanka which was very constructive and joint calibration was established to overcome the issue of poverty within region and the ideas behind it was to reduce poverty accordingly.

I. The gathering of 11th conference was held in Nepal and it was not fruitful meeting the declaration of subject assembly was not up to the mark.

J. The 13th session was little bit successful due its cultural harmony and commitment to handle the core issues of region.

K. The key important of fourteen conference was the presence of Afghanistan President and Indian establishment used this forum to malign Pakistan by false propoganda of cross border terrorism & Afghan President supported Indian narrative, India used this forum to counter the tale of Kashmir and

try to convert it into terrorism. The India arranged Press conference of Afghanistan's President to put pressure on Pakistan and he used undiplomatic language.

L. The fifteenth assembly was very good in which the agreement of SDF was approved, the focus of this summit was to reduce poverty and promote cultural activities including the betterment of infrastructure of this region. The advancement of information technology, smooth communication system and tourism was the main agenda of subject session which was very successful. The food Security is global issues, and the strategy of this problem was drawn to handle technically.

M. The sixteenth was also important due to its outcomes and golden jubilee which were the rectification of environmental issues, and it was planned to grow 10 billion trees within five years and India announced the endowment for the climate changes of the south Asian.

N. The points of seventeenth were also very considerable during this session various agreements were signed like Rapid response on Natural disaster, multilateral arrangements on recognition of conformity assessment and important agreement for the implementation of regional standards was part of this conference. Another significant trait was the establishment of seed Bank agreement.

O. The eighteenth summit was consisting of legal permission for the SAARC satellite system and motto was deeper integration for peace among the states.

P. The nineteenth was held in Pakistan and objective was to address the security concern of all nations particularly between Pakistan & India and India has boycotted because of Urri attack and other members supported Indian policy.

SAARC main areas of Success Economic achievements

The organization did various efforts to support and enhance the economic activities of the region but the conflict among the nations created hurdles to achieve required goals of the SAARC. Comparatively the ASEAN economic ideas, and achievements are based on proper homework and regional completions. The policies of SAARC are based on assumptions and pressure of external forces of the world, that's way it did not achieve milestone.

Beginning of SAFTA

The composition of SAFTA is key achievement to boost trade between Member States, the contract agreement of South Asian Free Zone Exchange was signed on 1995 during 12th summit in Islamabad Pakistan. Main issue with SAARC is during its implementation phase so that member state did not get proper benefit from this decision.

The identity of South Asia

The Protuberant achievement of SAARC was effort to bring member of states closer for realization of regional identity. In fact, it is not important to think as member of South Asian but feel proud as part of this region. Through this mind set SAARC did serious efforts to bring the people of region closer and try to promote cultural exchange programs. Using this forum Pakistan has also launched various programs like public diplomacy, Aman Ki Asha etc.

The food Bank of SAARC

It is also very good effort to tackle the issue of food security largely and particularly the crisis of food always remains in Bangladesh. It is emergency source to manage crisis during natural disaster, earthquakes, floods, or climate change issues. The plan to tackle the issue of food security within

region was introduced in 2011 but was not addressed in a professional way due to monetary and conflicting position of region.

SDF

Member states established SAARC development fund in 2010 the purpose of these institutions was to promote welfare for the poorest of the region, key responsibility of this fund was to provide financial assistance to state to improve the living standard of people, social progress and economic growth of the region.

Logic behind South Asian University

The SAARC desk was established in 2010 and the south Asian university was established in New Delhi India to provide doctoral programs in various disciplines for the students of region. The idea was to enhance the capacity of students and promotion of cultural exchange and people to people contact for the creation of harmony amongst the population of south Asia. Particularly availability of moderate education / knowledge on doorsteps accordance with international standards.

The role of SAARC Arbitration Council

This is very protruding attainment of SAARC; it is absolute legal forum for the nations of South Asia to resolve their problem accordingly. Its office is in Islamabad, and it is comprising eight members, it's an inter-government body which has jurisdiction and legal framework with the south Asian region.

People to People contact

There is no doubt that south Asia can be conflict free area of region if the people interact with each other, the SAARC tried to create social relationship among the people of South Asia. This program was successful, various students, lawyers, judges and businessmen get visas and visited member state by this policy.

The important CBM's

The CBM's played key role to reduce tension among the regional countries, of course different obstacles also created regional powers, an important CBM was in trade (Singh,2016).

Even Pakistan lunched CBM of Bus, train and trade from Lahore to Amritsar and Jammu to Azad Kashmir and most recent confidence building measure is project of Kartarpur corridor to facilitate the pilgrimage of India.

SAARC Failure

In fact, all regional cooperation eventually promotes, harmony, peace, mutual respect. The ASEAN, EU and other organization agreements are the examples of regional organizations which shows the credibility of mentioned above bodies, but the story of SAARC is different from these officialdoms according to various thinkers SAARC is unsuccessful organization of the region (Uperti & Shah ,2012).

The causes of Failure:

- ♣ Kashmir issue.
- ♣ Indian Hegemony.
- ♣ Pak India rivalry.
- ♣ Last Summit got cancelled because of Indo-Pak Tension.
- ♣ Multipolitical system.

- ♣ The lack of financial funding for programs.
- ♣ The involvement of external political actors.
- ♣ The role of non-state actors.
- ♣ The Variety of cultural and regional differences.
- ♣ Key bilateral disputes with member states.
- ♣ The issue of food security reserves in Bangladesh.
- ♣ Recourses crouch.

Kashmir

It is confusion that Kashmir is territorial dispute it's not only territorial dispute its dispute of human right of 8 million people which has hijacked by 10 million Indian troops. Both Nation has fought three wars due to this matter. The Kashmir is unfinished stigma of 1947, Pakistan always tried to resolve this problem by nonviolent way, but the attitude of India is very arrogant.

Indian Hegemony

The Power term is very important which is consist of military, economic, financial, diplomatic control of any State. The countries of the region are facing dominion of India and Nepal is most vulnerable state due to its geographical land lock position. And condition of Bangladesh is like Nepal, the economy of Bangladesh is very dependent on India and this state came into being due to conspiracy of Hindu mindset and Bangladesh was Indian Baby in 1971 but now world scenario has changes so-called secular state has border issue with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is also a key member of South Asia. The Indian government involved in cross-border terrorism activities in Sri Lanka. Indian Government is contributing terrorist activities and supporter of Tamil Tigers who are creating insurgency in Sri Lanka. Even Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi openly said in speech that Indian Government was involved in fall of Dhaka and gave threat to Pakistan that now India will support BLA in Baluchistan. This kind of approach is main hurdle regarding progress of South Asia. The false claim of India over Kashmir is example of breach of territorial sovereignty of Pakistan.

Last summit Cancelled due to Indian Hegemony

Indian Government used its influence to hijack forum of SAARC due to false flag operation of URRI, and ultimately Pakistan have to postponed summit because of hegemonic approach of India. Multi-political system Member of SAARC has multi-party system and the existence of religions, nationalist pressures groups is also have key importance regarding the foreign policy of these countries like India , Hindu Fundamentalist are in majority and the moderate secular Indians are in minority and they controlled the internal & external affairs of the state so that Kashmir is bone of contention between Pakistan and India, even Pakistan has tried various occasions to settle this issues but Indian government cannot afford to resolve because of internal pressure. So, the multi-political system of the region is also cause of failure of SAARC which badly suffered the viable relations of the nations.

Financial Funding

This body also has to face the issue of financial funding for the implementation of Memorandum of Understating and completion of welfare project of the South Asian region. This is dilemma of this area that economical position of the countries is not good, and they are dependent on various funding bodies or Banks or powerful countries so that they are not in position to provide sufficient funds for regional development under the umbrella of this organization.

Role of external factors

The history of Indian establishment and government concerning bilateral relations within area like Pakistan are not good and Prime Minister Modi strongly warned Pakistan that India will not participate in bilateral dialog until the unsettle issue of terrorism and Indian's policy makers always tried to hide behind the so-called terrorism wrong narrative & always claims that Pakistan is epicenter, exporter of terrorism but Pakistan is victim of terrorism and thousands of son of soils including civilian martyred their lives due to terrorist activities of India, India is big markets that's way various countries supports its narrative to sell their products. The powerful external factors have also played key role to sabotage the forum of SAARC.

Non-State actors

This is also main question mark of SAARC failure, Sri Lanka have claim that Indian government is sponsoring terrorist activities in Sri Lank and also giving training to Tamil Naidoo troops, but India always says that our Government is not involved and these are Non-State actors who are creating hurdles in your Country. Same case is with India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, these countries also blame each other due to Non-State actors and no one own these actors.

Variety of Cultural and Regional Difference

All countries have huge variety of traditional and regional difference which are source of destabilization in this region. These differences are consisting of ethical, cultural, moral, religious, traditional etc.

Key bilateral dispute among the member states

More than three state have bilateral unsettle dispute which are contributing mistress among these countries Indo vs Pak, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Pak vs Afghanistan Durand line, and cross border terrorism, Sri Lanka vs India terrorism issue Nepal Vs Indo economic hijack issue so that these members have serious problem among each other's which are the root causes of failure and disharmony.

Food Security

It is serious issue of South Asian countries and very complicated subject of the region and particularly the role of SAARC is very disappointed regarding this matter. The inflation & high prices are important matters of these countries due to non-availability of sufficient reserves. The SAARC established food bank to meet the requirements but allocation of funds for this project was not sufficient, and the interest of member state also was not pro-active. following are key points regarding food security.

- a) The sufficient availability of Food.
- b) Surplus Food.
- c) Food Consumption.
- d) Main Issues.

a. The availability of food is combination of local production, and imports of any state or nation, south Asian countries position is alarming because these are agro-based but the production of food is not according to the requirement of these countries.

b. Normally surplus food play key role to meet need of nation, supply and demand are the key matters and if there is huge gap between these two factors, there shall be shortage of food.

c. The food utilization is also unique element regarding food security and storage of food is important to meet the consumption capacity of any nation.

d. The countries of South Asia have good economic growth but the development in the field of agriculture is not admirable which is causing issues of food security problem. The cause of food security is like the lack of funds, political will, contradictions in aspirations. The impact of climate is also badly affecting food issue and deficiency of standard pesticides is also key factor in this regard. The Bangladesh suffered this issue and introduce agriculture policy in 1970 to meet its food requirements & government provided quality seed, pesticides, machinery related to agricultural, Government also issued water management system including standard fertilizers to the formers.

Comparison of SAARC & ASEAN

ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nation was established on 8th of august 1967 and it was bond of 10 countries presenting 500 billion people.

Objective:

The objective of subject organization is as under:

- a) Peace within Region
- b) Cultural development
- c) Social Progress
- d) Economic growth

a) The concept was to maintain peace and resolve the conflict of states to avoid any kind of misadventure or the war because nation cannot make progress without peace and harmony within region.

b) The second objective was to develop cultural relations among the member countries to avoid any kind of conflict, people to people contact and cultural exchange is only one mechanism which can help sates to resolve dispute due to public opinion or the people pressure.

c) The socio progress of any community, group is based on the development of country, and it was aim to enhance the social activities to develop social and economic programs.

Important Achievement

Transport Corridor The organization did effort for the establishment of Transport Corridor which is very effecting and playing key role to join member states. The formation of committee on transport was the 1st step towards it which was officially declared in 1977. ASEAN members improved transportation system to overcome economic leakages, tourism and to meet the requirements of the world trade etc.

The Air transport system

The policy of air transport was developed in 2003 and single aviation market was introduced in 2015 to support economic development of the ASEAN. The record of past 15 years is very glorious which increased 326 % passenger in Compodia,221% in Indonesia and 95% in Malaysia. This statistic shows the hard work and vision to achieve the targets.

Land route Transport system

This system helped the paved road system which was 628,000 Km in 2004 and 967,000 km in 2014.The fast urbanization is issue of the world and these members made mass transit system to tack the issues of traffic jam etc.

Improvement in Maritime transport

It has also contributed accordingly to meet the requirement of the ASEAN states and there is huge growth from 2003 to 2020. Accepting common policy all countries are getting benefits and through this approach the speed of products delivery has increased.

Economical Corridor

It is important point which boasted up the economic growth of the region and the determination of subject countries is appreciable.

The University network for member countries

This network was founded in 1995 and decided to build thirteen universities for students of member states and these institutions are fully equipped with modern tools, syllabus, libraries, academic etc.

Trade & investment Growth 25 %

The foreign investment and growth of last two decades is approximately 25 % which is big milestone for members of ASEAN and this number is unique.

The financial integration

The program of financial integration was formed in 2011 and focus was financial integration of the region, and all countries supported this program and got advantages from its schemes.

The concept of urbanization

Its reality that urbanization is phenomena of today's world and majority states are not in comfortable position to tackle it, but this organization properly handled, developed various programs to overcome its effects on moderate human life.

Social development

The national development cannot be succeeded without socio development of the country and ASEAN did focus on it in a very professional way. But unfortunately, this element is missing in SAARC and South Asian Countries did not make efforts to resolve this topic.

The natural park is symbol of natural treasure

It is unique example of ASEAN cooperation and close coordination with member states the idea behind it to bring nations closer and provide a unique platform for participatory development The community building Another trait of ASEAN is the concept of community building which is consist of masses of states which crates cultural, religious, multidimensional harmony among the members. These states also managed issue of global terrorism by promoting community building program within region which is role model for SAARC and third world countries of the world.

To enhance economic ties with non-ASEAN State

This is also crucial feature of ASEAN, modern world relations or friendship or enmity is only based on economic condition of the countries and this was great efforts which produced outstanding results, in fact economic ties relate to the national interest and sovereignty of states. So, this forum did a lot for this and proved that these nations have very strategic relations with each other's.

Conclusions

The idea behind both forums was to maintain, peace, prosperity, promote cultural relations, strengthen economic ties but ASEAN used its forum in accordance with its objects and member states tried to cooperate with other members regardless of racism or nationality but the main hurdles for SAARC was implementation of its agenda and creation of harmony among member countries. This forum badly failed to accomplish its tasks due to horrible conflicts of the region and the hegemony.

Thus, this organization tried to handle environmental, terrorism, tourism, cultural accord to develop people to people contact which is good contribution towards peace in the most dangerous part of the world.

The dynamics of ASEAN are totally different from SAARC, due to cultural, economic, political gape, it is difference of attitudes, norms and values the European countries always stresses on the moralities, idealism school of thoughts to resolve the disputed issues among the states but the politics of South Asia is different from Europe, India is big country of this region and realists school of thought is its priority to protect national interest , sovereignty of state regardless of moralities or ethical values.

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