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What Impedes Regionalism In South Asia?

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A sub-division of Asia, South Asia is a densely populated geographical region, essentially consisting of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. These countries are an impossible combination of political regimes, socio-economic realities and ethnic composition, religious and linguistic diversity the world could possibly offer. As a result, a regional integration scheme with several states, their clashing ideologies, values and interests, and national/domestic policies, makes it difficult in its efforts to bring peace in South Asia.

South Asia is unique in terms of factors that are both unifying and divisive. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity are shared by all the countries of the region. However, the overlapping of religious and linguistic groups across national boundaries becomes a trigger for conflicts. As a result, the geographical contiguity has outnumbered all possible reservations against the very idea of a South Asian form of regional cooperation and possibly integration. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), formed by the initiation of Zia-ur Rahman, the then President of Bangladesh, in 1985, which now represents more than one-sixth of the humanity had a very modest beginning in evolving its institutional structures. South Asia has been a late-comer to the whole concept of regionalism. It became a veritable tortoise in comparison to other regional groupings in the course of time due to the lack of enthusiasm and the attitudinal transformations on the part of the member states and thereby making it one of the last regions to wake up to the challenge of the new regionalism. The article therefore seeks to enumerate the hindrances that SAARC faces in developing regional integration:

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES:

- Member states are under different stages of development. India accounts for 72 percent of the region's area. It is doing the best economically among the SAARC members. India's export shares dominate over other SAARC members. Politically, democracy – as an ideal and as an institution – has struck deep roots in the Indian soil (Copland 1995). As a result, both the political and economic developments have led to an undeniable 'Big-Brotherly' attitude on part of India. This has generated a negative repercussion among the other members of the SAARC. Apprehensions are raised against the Indian dominance and the sidelining of the small states in the region.
- There is disparity in regional resource of the member states. The boundary demarcations often impact on the distribution of national resources and the conflicts over its uses. In South Asia, differences and antagonism between the members of SAARC are over equitable sharing of water, shifting river courses, flood control, harnessing of hydroelectric power and related ecological and developmental issues.
- Inadequate transport and communication facilities among the member states mar regular interaction. Along with physical means of transport, the modern means of communication or e-connectivity should be used for communication and dialogue. Karl Deutsch (1957) laid great emphasis on the success of integration to be linked with a 'sense of community' or 'we-ness' among nation-states, which itself is depended on transport and communication, mail flows, student travel, tourism and inter-regional trade, etc.
- The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC-CCI), the apex business organisation of SAARC, that works closely with governments and private sector to enhance cross-border trade and foster competition between service providers, but the non-availability of information about the potential of a country has been

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the major bottleneck in the promotion of intra-regional trade in South Asia . This issue of non-availability of information arises from the distrust and political differences among the members of the region.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PROCEDURAL CHALLENGES:

- SAARC's present structure gives emphasis on intergovernmental 'cooperation' rather than supranational integration.
- Unlike the EU, SAARC has yet to develop institutions like a SAARC Parliament to broaden and legitimize its actions for peaceful resolution of political quarrels. SAARC is yet to form forums like ASEAN Regional Forum and sign pacts like Treaty of Amity and Cooperation done by ASEAN.
- SAARC progress is obstructed by the disparity in approaches, and contrasting self-images and perceptions among the countries in the region. The perceptual differences have contributed to security dilemma and the subsequent arms race in South Asia . Countries are dispensing large parts of their national economy to defence and military preparedness. A prominent example is of India and Pakistan , who share a legacy of suspicion and distrust against each other.
- Wide gap between conceptualisation and operationalization of programmes and agendas, leading to the unfulfillment of promises made by the framers of SAARC.

INTER-STATE PROBLEMS:

- Interstate conflicts in South Asia negate efforts towards regional cooperation. SAARC's forward march has often been stymied mainly because of the uneasy relations between India and Pakistan . Pakistan is adamant on not giving primacy to economic issues till the time the political problems are not resolved.
- Though smaller neighbours of India were enthusiastic about SAARC's formation initially, they resisted for past two decades the SAARC in practice, fearing that interdependence will erode their sovereignty and political autonomy. The small states fear the Indo-centrality of the region.

INTRA-STATE PROBLEMS:

- Pakistan - military dictatorship, frequent political instability, terrorism.
- Afghanistan- transitional democracy, Taliban problem.
- Nepal- Maoist take over and ethnic problems.
- Sri Lanka- frequent natural disasters, Tsunami.
- Bangladesh - political instability, fundamentalist violence, ethnic violence.
- India- cross-border terrorism.
- Bhutan- Nepali immigrants problem.

THREAT OF TERRORISM:

- Since 9/11 terrorist attack in US, South Asia has attracted a renewed attention internationally. Pakistan and Afghanistan have become a hub of suspicion, political instability, Islamist extremism, and economic and social weaknesses. There is an alarming rise of Islamist groups who use anti-democratic means to threaten South Asia .
- Allegations of supporting terrorist activities on one another especially between Pakistan and India have created distrust, which has been undermining regional cooperation.

To sum up, South Asian regionalism is impeded by elements that are within the institutional set up of SAARC; nationalist pulls and pressures; nature of leadership; domestic political, economic and resource

problems; intra-regional political and economic relations; rise of terrorism; and extra-regional factors

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Structural Challenges. 471 component (disconnection b, for details, see section below). Finally, the recent synthesis reported by MacMillan and co-workers established the viability of incorporating a vinyl indole as the 471 component in an application of their enantioselective catalysis via chiral iminium ions (disconnection c) [10r]. Notably, three of the four distinct Diels-Alder disconnections that allow direct construction of the C7 quaternary center have been successfully employed in. Structural Challenges for Space Architecture. Dec, 2017 By Valentina Sumini, Ph.D. and Caitlin T. Mueller, Ph.D. In Outside the Box Comments 17. Engineering Habitats for the Moon and Mars. Several decades after the first space age, there is renewed interest in space exploration and specifically in future human habitation far beyond the Earth's surface. NASA recently received funding with an ambitious target: to send a manned mission to Mars by the 2030s and allow for future human habitats and even cities. These are all major challenges in structural geology and tectonics. Satisfactory answers to these challenges imply theories that are advanced enough to have testable implications and to make reliable forecasts as to likely scenarios for given boundary conditions and physical properties. The purpose of the paper is to outline and discuss these challenges. Plates and Their Driving Forces. The theory of plate tectonics was formulated in the 1960s, that is, close to half a century ago. Another one of the biggest challenges that structural engineering companies face is finding a way to integrate new structural engineering practices with those from ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago. The third major challenge within the structural engineering field is finding a way to complete projects in a more efficient manner.