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MA in Political Science

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Paper XIV

Human Security in South Asia

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Paper Introduction
Human Security in South Asia (XIV)

The paper on 'Human Security in South Asia' makes an attempt to analyse the status of human security in South Asian region. We know that the South Asian region is comprised of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Though the region is considered as an important geo-political space, diversities characterise in the region. Democracy is the most popular form of government in the region. However, this from of government has failed to address certain common problems of these countries like cross border terrorism, ethnic conflicts, low level of development, health hazards. These problems are responsible for creating obstacles in promoting and protecting all aspects of human security. It is worth mentioning that human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflicts. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care along with regional cooperation in these fields. This paper is divided into three blocks to discuss the status of human security in the South Asian region with special reference to SAARC. With a view to analyse human security in South Asia, the paper examines the status of women, children and trans-border relationship through which we can improve the human security condition in this region. Let us have a look at the comprising units of this paper.

Block I of this paper, (Human Security in South Asia) examines the status of human security in this region and consists of two units, viz, Unit I on 'Conceptual Framework of human Security' and Unit II on 'State of Women and Children in South Asia'.

Unit I: Conceptual Framework of human Security

The unit is designed to introduce you to the concept of human security. In this unit an attempt is made to examine the various aspects of human security. The unit also examines the concept of human security from various angles. The contemporary discourse on human security in South Asian region gets priority in our discussions. The unit will help you to understand that even if progress is being made the absence of human security cannot ensure development.

Unit II: State of Women and Children in South Asia

Now it is seen that women and children are the most vulnerable group of the society. They are easy victim of the present modernised world. According to an estimate, in India more than 50 lakh child labourers are present. The situation is worse in the countries like Bangladesh, Afghanistan. Again, in some of these countries women enjoy the status of second class citizens who are debarred from taking part in the decision making process. Though international community took various initiatives to improve the conditions still the region is unable to implement such laws due to the absence of proper implementing mechanism or weak government. The unit will help you to examine the status of women and children in the South Asian region.

Block II of this paper, (Migration and Displacement in South Asia) deals with the problem of migration and displacement in South Asian region. Mass migration has changed the demographic profile of many countries in this region. In this block we are going to discuss these two issues in two different units.

Unit I Migration to India: Political and Security Implications.

This unit attempts to discuss the problems created by migration in India. In simple terms migration refers to the movement of people from one to another place in search of better opportunity. It may be local, national or international. Cross border migrations has created various problems in India since independence. Basically migration from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has changed the demographic profile of many states in India involving and various security issues. In this unit an attempt is made to analyse the consequences of migration.

Unit II: Internal Displacement in South Asia

This unit makes an attempt to discuss the problem of internal displacement caused by various factors in South Asian region. The region has been witnessing all the three types of internal displacement. However, because of lack of proper policies the plight of internal displacees is still pathetic. After loosing their homes and traditional sources of livelihood they become impoverished and marginalised. In this unit we shall discuss the entire aspects of internally displaced persons and their situations in South Asian region.

Block III of this paper, (Regional Co-operation in South Asia) discusses mutual relationship among the South Asian nations. South Asian region is the homeland of one third population of the world and characterised by a tremendous diversity in terms of political, economic, security and social

systems. However, the countries of the region have tried to fight their common problems by creating a single platform. This block contains two units.

Unit I: Trans-Border Relations among South Asian Nation

This unit discusses the mutual relationship among the South Asian nations in various fields. It covers fields like human trafficking, anti terrorist measures, human right protection etc to analyse their relationship. It needs mention here that te establishment of SAARC has strengthened the process of mutual relationship in this region.

Unit II: SAARC and Regional co-operation:

It deals with the efforts of SAARC in bringing the nations together. SAARC is a regional organisation established by seven South Asian nations to promote and protect their common interests. Since its inception in 1985 it acts as the guardian of their common interests. This unit shall discuss different aspects of SAARC and its role in South Asian region.

Thus this paper will help you to understand the entire aspects of South Asian region. After going through this paper you will be able to examine the position of South Asian nations in the world politics.

BLOCK I

Human Security in South Asia

Unit 1: Conceptual Framework of Human Security

Unit 2: State of Women and Children in South Asia

Unit I

Conceptual Framework of Human Security

Contents

1.1 Introduction

Human beings desire to lead a safe and secured life and hence the individuals established society to enjoy such a secured life. Earlier security is viewed from the perspective of being attacked physically by other. In the later stage the term 'security' is chiefly used to denote state security. The contemporary discourse on human security criticizes the classical or traditional approach to security mainly concerned with state security. Now, concept of human security has assumed global importance and this is based on the idea that security of the humankind cannot be restricted to the security of the state. Therefore, today when we talk about human security individuals are the main referents.

This unit is an attempt to introduce you to the concept of human security. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) took initiative in the later part of twentieth century to develop a new concept of security that goes beyond state security. It includes security of all individuals who face threats from different quarters. Realizing the importance, this has been accepted at the global level within a short span of time. Therefore, the unit discusses the role of UNDP in developing and popularizing this concept.

Moreover, the unit also introduces you to Canadian and Japanese perspectives on human security.

1.2 Objectives

The concept of human security has assumed great significance in the present time. It has much broader connotations than earlier and goes beyond territorial security. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- *define* the concept of human security

- *examine* the role of UNDP in developing the concept of human security

- *discuss* the Canadian and Japanese perspective on human security.

1.3 Meaning of Human Security

The term 'human security' has been defined in different ways by different scholars. However it is very difficult to arrive at a final definition or universally acceptable definition of human security. Thus the concept of human security is still in the process of evolution, yet to reach its final stage. Today, when one talks about human security it goes much beyond the concept of state security. It now refuses to be confined to the territorial boundary of a state. Rather, it has now got a global character as different issues of international/ global concern are incorporated under the concept of human security.

As has been mentioned earlier, security is one of the main concerns of all human beings in the society. The concept of human security has been evolving with the passage of time and therefore it has undergone various transformations. Earlier human security was understood from the point of view of military security only. Thus it mainly talked about physical security. However, later the social and psychological elements have also been added to it. UN plays a very significant role in popularizing this new notion of human security. This new notion of human security has kept the human beings at its center and the state has become an important agent of implementing such a concept. This new notion of human security can be examined from two different perspectives — physical and psychological. While some give arguments in favour of physical security some emphasize psychological security only. But one must admit the fact that we all want to

be secured in the society from various threats. Such security gives individuals the environment to enjoy freedom and lead a dignified life.

Human security is described as the condition of existence where basic material needs are met and in which human dignity including participation of the community can be realized. It must be remembered that the concept of human security cannot be implemented for one particular group at the cost of other groups or communities. Therefore, human security must aim at the welfare of all the sections in the society. The following definition of human security gives us an idea about all-comprehensive notion of human security.

"*Security is both a feeling and a reality. We are secure when we feel protected from harm, free from dangers, and safe from attack. In this way, security is merely a state of mind. But there's the reality of security as well, a reality that has nothing to do with how we feel. We are secure when we actually are protected*" (Schneir 2003:9).

From the discussions and the definitions, it also emerges that the concept of human security has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. While the quantitative aspect deals with the satisfaction of basic material needs of life like food, shelter, education and health care, the qualitative aspect of human security is the achievement of human dignity. Such type of security can only be enjoyed in a democratic environment where every individual has got the right to participate.

Therefore, we can safely say that the concept of human security is undergoing change and it has become much broader in dimension. The broader concept of human security has been successful in discarding the traditional 'exclusive' discourse on security and replacing it with an all 'inclusive' alternative paradigm (Hussain 2010). In the contemporary period the concept of human security is not restricted to the national boundaries of different countries. The world has come to realize that the human kind as a whole is facing many threats globally. These threats must be included in the security dimension though they are not under the military sphere. It has been observed that the post-Cold War global community, particularly, the western world after the disappearance of its "all pervasive threat of communism", gradually realized the importance of fighting collectively against certain common threats like poverty, terrorism, forced migration, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, civil violence, AIDS etc (Hussain 2010). If we try to trace the

origin of these threats it becomes clear that most of them originated in the western societies. Later these have spread to all the nations of the world and everyone became conscious about being secured from all these evils. It is now realized by all that if a particular country of the world is attacked by one of the above mentioned threats it will have global consequences. For this reason these events are now globally recognized as serious threats to human kind. Therefore, emphasis has been put on providing security to human kind from all these threats which are not created only by war or armaments and which people face in their day to day life.

Hence, from the above discussions it is clear to us that the contemporary discourse on human security is different from the classical or traditional approach to human security. Now let us discuss the main differences between the two.

- The contemporary discourse on human security opposes the classical approach of human security on the ground that the latter only emphasizes state security. In the classical or traditional approach to security, the state is the main referent. On the other hand, the contemporary discourse on human security puts maximum emphasis on individual safety and freedom.

- The classical approach believes that threat to a state comes from other states and therefore, territorial security is very important. On the other hand the contemporary discourse emphasizes dangers emerging within the boundaries of the state and it assumes global character. Hence it points out various threats like terrorism, forced migration, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, civil violence, AIDS which cannot be restricted by the borders of a nation.

- Again, the traditional approach emphasizes the use of force for security. On the other hand, the contemporary discourse on human security does not consider force as an instrument for security. It regards all-round development as a means to bring security to all members of the society.

- The traditional approach considers the state as the sole actor in security matters. On the other hand the present human security discourse recognizes the role of different other organizations for providing security to individuals. Thus, it emphasizes the role of governments,

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different non-governmental organizations and international organizations as the major agents of human security.

- The scope of contemporary notion of human security is much broader than the scope of traditional approach to security as the first one emphasises on guaranteeing comprehensive security.

Thus, we see that the concept of human security is always linked with threats to human society. Hence, protection of humanity from threats and preventing the humanity from disasters has become the major concern for the emerging human security discourse (Hussain 2010). From the above discussions it is clear to us that the role of non-military issues in threatening the human societies has been widely recognized all over the world.

STOP TO CONSIDER:

Emergence of the concept of human security

- Independent Commission on International Development Issues in 1980s focuses on the fact that - mankind wants to survive from miseries like hunger, disparities between rich and poor and social and political exclusion.

- Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues in 1980s: Besides military issues many nations are threatened by poverty, deprivation and economic inequality. Security goes beyond the state to include security of the people and planet

- UNDP developed and popularized the new notion of human security by the publication of its Annual Human Development Reports since 1990. moreover, it published a special volume on human security in 1994 with

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SAQ:

Do you think human security is essential in a world free of conflicts and violence? Give arguments to support your answer. (80 words)

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....
....
....
....

1.4 UNDP and Human Security

The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan states:

"Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces for more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment—— these are the interrelated building blocks of human— and therefore national—— security" (Annan 2000).

From this definition it is clear to you that the term 'human security' has much broader connotations. It goes much beyond absence of violence to include freedom to enjoy human rights, access to health care and other opportunities of life. Thus, this new concept of human security emphasizes more on the security of the individuals and the society in general than the security of the state. So we can say that there is a shift of emphasis from state-centric to human-centric security in the emerging concept of human security discourse. The United Nations through its various agencies have been trying to popularize the idea of the human security as a compass of human development. Hence, human security today constitutes an important component of human development. Human security today assumes greater significance with the intervention of the United Nations Development Programme. With the efforts of United Nations and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) this new concept of human security is popularized all over the world. The programme, which had also pioneered the notion of human development through the publication of its Annual Human Development Reports since 1990, published a special volume on human security in 1994 with an aim to link up macro development processes with micro life experiences. These agencies have pointed out that security should be examined from different perspectives. According to UNDP (1994), human security can be grouped in the following seven categories:

- economic security,
- environmental security

- food security,
- health security,
- personal security,
- community security and
- political security

From the above categories of security it is clear that security cannot be restricted to personal or political security only. All individuals in the society are concerned with economic, environmental, health and political aspects. Moreover, they also want security of food and also of their own community. Hence we can say that we all as members of the society irrespective of our nationality want to be secured from certain common threats that endanger human society. Therefore, the concept of human security has to be examined at various levels. Human security can be seen at quantitative and qualitative levels. All these securities are inter-related. To enjoy dignified life individuals need to be secured at different levels. They need proper food for sustenance, money for living, a proper and healthy environment, good health free from diseases, personal, political as well as community security.

The Annual Development Report of UNDP (1994) has defined human security as the 'legitimate concern' of the 'ordinary people' in their daily lives, for whom security implies protection from threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards. This Report further states that, 'human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was no cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapon — it is a concern with human life and dignity.' (UNDP:1994)

From the above definitions it is clear that UNDP has made human security people centered shifting its emphasis from state security to the security of the common people at different levels. Annual Development Report of UNDP (1994) has clearly pointed out the paradigmatic shift of the concept of human security both in regard to end and means of security in the following ways ——

a) in regard to the end of the concept of human security there is a shift from a total stress on territorial security people's security in much greater extent.

b) in regard to the means of human security the shift is from security through armaments to security through sustainable human development.

Thus we can say that the contemporary discourse on human security is mainly based on the idea that security is meant primarily for all individuals. Thus, personal safety, well being and individual freedom is the main concern of security. Again, there are direct and indirect security threats. While direct security threats come from arms and physical attacks indirect threats include threats coming from diseases, hunger, unemployment, crime, conflict, environmental hazards etc. The present notion of human security puts more emphasis on indirect threats. The means of such security is all-round human development. Emphasis is on equity, sustainability and participation of all individuals. Moreover, UNDP has pointed out certain threats having global consequences. These global threats are –

- Unchecked Population Growth
- Disparities in Economic Opportunities
- Migration Pressures
- Environmental Degradation
- Drug Trafficking
- International Terrorism

Again, UNDP has examined human security from two perspectives 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'. However, it prefers the notion of 'freedom from want' to 'freedom from fear'. According to UNDP, emphasis on the second one narrows the concept of human security. It is because this notion is mainly concerned with the issues of violence and conflicts. The chief focus of freedom from fear is on emergency assistance, conflict prevention and resolution and peace-building. On the other hand 'freedom from want' broadens the scope of human security. Besides the issues of violence and conflicts, this notion is also concerned with eradicating poverty, environmental degradation, removing various diseases which are posing global threats. Hence the main focus of this notion is on the achievement of development and security goals.

The qualitative aspect of human security examines how far an individual is able to enjoy personal autonomy, as well as the right to participate in the community. Human society thus talks about the substantive notion of

democracy where individuals can enjoy real freedom and participate in the community life. Human security is closely related to the concept of human development too. It is not restricted to territorial security only. Rather it is observed that nation state's obsession with territorial security is detrimental to this notion of human security which emphasizes on day to day security of life. Earlier, territorial unity and integrity has been perceived as something very sacred and uncompromising that transcends the concerns of all other forms of security (Dutta: 2009:17)

Thus, by linking human security with human development UNDP has developed different indicators of human development. They are —— life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality rates, access to safe sources of drinking water, access to health and educational facilities etc. Hence, it can be stated that while human development focuses on the macro socio-economic process aiming at a humane development, human security talks about delivering the goods of it to the micro level life experiences. (Dutta, 2009: 20).

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Relationship Between Human Security And Development

The present discourse of human security is closely linked with the concept of development. However, it criticizes the traditional notion on security on various grounds. Therefore, we can examine the relationship between human security and development in the following way –

- Human Security – a critique of traditional notion of development

- Human Security rejects the idea that economic growth is equal to development

- Human Security regards poverty and equality as the root causes of individual vulnerability

- Human security is the objective of development

- Human development – widening the range of people's choices

- Human security –free exercise of these choices by the people

- Human security ultimately leads to Human development

From the above points it is clear that human security is a practical approach to human development paradigm.

1.5 Canadian Perspective on Human Security

In the previous section we have discussed the concept of human security as developed by UNDP. Besides UNDP, there are two other perspectives on human security put forwarded by the Canadian government and Japanese government. In this section let us discuss the concept of human security as developed by the Canadian government.

Here, first of all we must look at the definition of human security given by Canadian government. It has defined human security as freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety or lives. Thus, they have mainly emphasized the notion of freedom from want than freedom from fear. In its attempt to discuss and develop the broader concept of human security, the Canadian government has outlined five foreign policy priorities for advancing human securities in the year 2000. These are as follows:

- Protection of civilians, concerned with building international will and strengthening norms and capacity to reduce the human cost of armed conflicts.

- Peace support operation, concerned with building UN capacities and addressing increasingly complex requirements for deployment of skilled personnel including the Canadians to these missions.

- Conflict prevention, with strengthening the capacity of the international community to prevent or resolve conflict, and building local indigenous capacity to manage conflict without violence.

- Governance and accountability, concerned with fostering improved accountability of public and private sector institutions in terms of established norms of democracy and human rights,

- Public safety, concerned with building international expertise, capacities and instruments to counter the growing threats posed by the transnational organized crimes

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The Canadian perspective on human security has thus mainly emphasizes security that is similar to the UNDP perspective. Like UNDP, Canadian perspective is based on the idea that security is primarily for the Individuals, although state security is also important. Again, security values are personal safety, well being and freedom. The security threats are direct and indirect. Moreover, like the UNDP perspective, the Canadian perspective also emphasizes direct threats. According to the Canadian perspective security means promoting political development and global institutions.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Threats to Human Security identified by UNDP and the Canadian Model:

Following are the major direct and indirect threats as identified by UNDP and the Canadian model.

Direct threats to Human Security identified by UNDP and Canadian Model:

- Violent crime: terrorism, genocide, group conflicts
- Dehumanization: Child and Women Abuse
- Drugs
- Discrimination and domination of weaker sections
- International violence
- Weapons of mass destruction

Indirect threats to Human Security identified by UNDP and Canadian Model:

- Deprivation: of food, water, Primary health care, education
- Diseases
- Disasters: Man-made and Natural
- Economic Underdevelopment
- Environmental degradation: local, national, regional, global
- Population displacement: refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, migration

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1.6 Japanese Perspective on Human Security

Since the middle of 1990s the Japanese government has been playing a leading role in the development of human security at the conceptual as well as practical levels. It is observed that after the first Gulf war Japan came to play a major role in peace-keeping in the world. In 1995, Prime Minister

Murayama Tomiichi's speech in support of human security, at a Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly to celebrate its 50th anniversary, makes him one of the first heads of states to endorse the idea of human security.

In 1998 first time the Japanese government incorporated the concept of human security in its foreign policy in the backdrop of Asian financial crisis. It is worth mentioning here that the then Japanese government jointly with the UN secretariat started the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) which sponsored almost 170 projects. The Japanese government too had taken measures like that of their Canadian counterparts to promote the concept of human security at the global level emphasizing freedom from want and freedom from fear. Again, in its effort to popularize the idea of human security, Japan took the initiative to establish the Commission on Human Security in 2001, co-chaired by Ms. Ogata Sadako and Professor Amartya Sen. The objective behind the establishment of this commission is to further the development of the concept of human security and recommend techniques for its practical application. The commission submitted its final report in 2003 (MOFA 2009; CHS 2003).

According to the Japanese perspective, human security can be ensured only when the individual is confident of life free from fear and want (Takasu: 2000). Japan examines human security from different perspectives of threats to human lives, livelihood and dignity as poverty, environmental degradation, illicit drugs, transnational organized crimes, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, the outflow of refugees and anti-personnel mines, and has taken various initiatives in this context (Government of Japan 1999). The Japan government (1999) has further stated that to ensure 'Human Freedom and Potential', a range of issues needs to be addressed from the perspective of 'Human Security' focused on individual, requiring co-operation among the various actors in international community, including governments, international organizations and civil society. Hence, we can say that the Japanese perspective on human security makes an attempt to balance between "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" and between "protection" and "development".

1.7 Summing Up

After reading this unit you are now in a position to define human security. Human security has been evolving throughout the ages. The traditional notion of human security is mainly concerned with territorial security. On the other hand the contemporary discourse on human security emphasizes more on indirect threats that come from indirect sources of threats like poverty, environmental degradation, diseases and terrorism etc. From this unit you have learnt that besides UNDP, the Canadian and Japanese governments have also dealt with the comprehensive notion of human security. Thus human security operates at physical and psychological levels and it has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. This unit has also helped you in realizing that the need of the hour is to focus on human security in all its dimensions cutting across the boundaries of the states.

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Unit II

State of Women and Children in South Asia

Contents

2.1 Introduction

As we have discussed in the previous unit human security discourse takes into consideration the security dimension of all human beings in the society. However, we are aware of the fact that women as members of the society face some other problems unlike their male counterparts. From the previous unit we have learnt that in the broader dimension of human security there is a difference between state and individual security. However, to the feminists there is no difference between domestic, social and public violence since they view all as equal violation of basic human rights. Women suffer more in the times of conflict and violence as they have to bear the additional socio-economic burden of the family. However, their condition is not much better even during normal condition and time. Major chunk of women hardly get the opportunity to enjoy the human rights in the society. Most of the times, their rights are suppressed in the name of culture, tradition and societal norms.

Again, it is also observed that the children as a voiceless community face many security threats in the society. Their rights are often violated. Therefore, this unit is an attempt to present before you a picture of the state of women and children in the South-Asian region from the perspective of human security.

2.2 Objectives

From the previous unit it is clear to us that human security is multi-dimensional. While discussing the status of women and children we must remember that legal provisions against physical attack do not ensure human security to them. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- *examine* the state of women in the fields of education, jobs, health and political participation in South Asia

- *discuss* the problems women face arising out of violence against them

- *assess* the state of children in South Asia.

2.3 State of Women in South Asia

While examining the condition of women in South Asia we find that large chunk of the women in this region are lagging behind in many fields than their male counterparts. Women, though they constitute a huge group often find it difficult to voice their grievances in the society. They are not given adequate opportunity to participate in different areas of life. Though constitutions of different countries give them equal status and they are entrusted with equal legal status, they enjoy a lower status in the society. They suffer from poor health condition and malnourishment. They are educationally backward as compared to men. Moreover, in India the child sex-ratio has dropped from 945 females per 1000 males in 1991 to 927 females per 1000 males in 2001. This is may be because of female foeticide and high mortality rate of girl child. We can examine the plight of women in four different areas, viz, education, job, health and political representation. Let us now discuss the status of women in the above mentioned areas in South Asia.

A. Education

Education is very essential for all-round development of personality of individuals. It helps in social reformation and eradicating social evils. In the context of human security education plays a very vital role. Therefore, in the contemporary period much emphasis has been put on providing

educational opportunities to all sections of the society. However, it has been observed that women are lagging behind in the educational arena than men.

In most of the South Asian countries the education of girl children was a neglected aspect. Earlier, women were not encouraged to go outside their homes for education. Moreover, the syllabus for women was also different since much emphasis was put on teaching them household activities. With the spread of modern and secular education and education for women got some impetus. Many schools and colleges were established to impart education for women in this region. With such efforts many women entered into the domain of what earlier known as 'male domain'. But it must be remembered that only a small section of the women got the opportunity to receive education.

In the mid of the twentieth century most of the nations of the South Asian region got independence from colonial rule. These newly independent nations made efforts for encouraging education for women. However, even in the twentieth century literacy rate of women is below that of men. According to available data, approximately 67% of illiterate adults are women. Again 3 out of 5 illiterate persons in Southern Asia are women. Governments have been taking measures for providing education to women. Constitution of India provides for free primary schooling to every child under the age of fourteen. Poor economic backgrounds, early marriage of girls and social norms and customs have stood in the way education of women. In poor families girls are forced to enter into the labour market at a very tender age. Moreover, they have to perform a large number of household activities from sibling care to cooking. In such families investment on women education is not considered profitable. Lack of education and lower level of education has placed the women in a marginalized situation. It has also become a threat to their human security.

B. Job

Job or the type of work one person is primarily engaged in has a close relationship with education. A major portion of women find it difficult to go outside and find jobs. Moreover, they are mostly engaged in domestic chores which are considered as 'free and voluntary service'. Lack of education

lowers the chance of getting a prestigious job. Therefore, to meet the financial burdens of the family they opt for the jobs that involve physical labour. The pregnant women suffer a lot as there is no special leave like maternity leave. Again, it is observed that in the unorganized sector women receive less salary than their male counterparts even for the same amount and same hours of works. Hence their participation in economic activities is less and they almost remain invisible in economic arena. According to the Human Development Report 2003, women in India work longer hours than men. While women work 7.6 hours on an average men works 6.5 hours per day. Again, we all know that engagement in market activities help in increasing our income. The Human Development Report 2003 further states that men in India spend 92 per cent of the total work time in market activities and 8 percent in the non-market activities. On the other hand, women in India spend 35 percent of their time in market activities and 65 percent in non-market activities (Hussain 2010).

C. Health

Security of health constitutes a very important dimension of human security. Women face various threats to health security in developing countries. Women account for 50 percent of all people living with HIV/AIDS globally. Again, in the year 2000, there were almost 80 million unwanted pregnancies, 20 million unsafe abortions and 5 lakhs maternal deaths at the global level. It needs mention here that 99 percent of these cases are found in the developing countries. The countries of South Asian region belong to the developing category and therefore it can be said that the women in South Asian countries suffer from various health insecurities. The UNICEF Report of 1996 also made it clear that the women of South Asia are not given proper care. It results in higher level of malnutrition among the women of South Asia than anywhere else in the world.

Early marriage of girl child and sex-selective abortion also negatively contributes to health of women. Though minimum age for marriage of girl child is fixed at 18, this rule is often violated. The social norms and customs also go against the health security of women.

The pregnant women do not get proper medical care. For this reason maternal and infant mortality rates are very high in the countries of South Asia like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Studies have shown that the average nutritional intake of women is 1400 calories daily. The necessary requirement is approximately 2200 calories. Again women constitute 38% of the HIV positive people in India and they occupy 25% of beds in AIDS care centres. Moreover, in India 92 % of women suffer from gynaecological problems and 300 women die everyday in child birth and pregnancy related problems.

STOP TO CONSIDER:

Factors responsible for poor health of women:

Women, all over the world suffer from various health-related insecurities. In India it is found that women are neglected when it comes to providing better healthcare and nutritional facilities. In this connection Amartya Sen has pointed out certain factors responsible for the poor health of women. They are –

- Undernourishment of girls over boys
- High incidence of maternal undernourishment
- Prevalence of low-birth weight
- High incidence of cardio-vascular diseases
- Absence of reproductive rights

D. Participation of Women in Politics

Participation of women in politics is one of the debated issues. Women are not much encouraged by their families and the society at large to join in politics. Among the South Asian nations in India we have found that women took part in the national movement in the colonial period. However their participation in active politics in the post-independence period has been quite low. According to Human Development Report 2003 women occupy 8.8 percent seats in the lower house and 10.3 percent in upper house of Indian parliament in 2000. The following table gives us a clear picture of women participation in active politics in India.

Table 1 : Representation of Women in the Lower House of Indian Parliament

Year	Percentage of total seats occupied by women
1952	4.40
1957	5.40
1962	6.70
1967	5.90
1971	4.20
1977	3.40
1980	5.10
1984	8.10
1989	5.29
1991	7.07
1996	7.07
2000	8.80

Government of India 1952-2000

Hence, we can conclude here that women's participation in politics in India is very poor till date. Their percentage in Lok Sabha has not crossed two-digit number till 2000. There is a huge demand for Women's Reservation of Seats in the Parliament which is yet to be passed. The 73rd and 74th Amendment of the Constitution has ensured 33 percent reservation of seats for women in local self-government. This measure has increased the political awareness of women and given them the opportunity to contest in elections and take part in the decision making process at the lower levels. Though the present President of India is a woman and we had leader like Mrs. Indira Gandhi who also became the Prime-Minister of the country, it is wrong to conclude that women take active part in politics in India.

Another important aspect that has close connection with the human security of women is violence against women. It has been observed that women are

not secured even within the four walls of their homes. Cases of domestic violence against women are often heard. Domestic violence leads to violation of basic human rights such as the right to live with dignity and security. It also violates the right to shelter and livelihood. It is also experienced that the most of the times the victims of domestic violence remain silent. It hampers in creating an environment where human rights can be enjoyed. In India protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act has been passed. A Delhi based Research organization has found wife battering is the most common form of domestic violence. Usually, low self-esteem, alchoholism and suspicion are regarded as the major reasons behind domestic violence against women. Moreover, disrespect and disobedience to husband as well as parent-in law, complaining about husband's drinking or gambling habits may also result in violence against women. Since it is believed that women are sheltered by men and the latter are the custodians of women's security domestic violence against women is socially accepted. Most of the times, cases of domestic violence are not reported. Thus domestic violence has stood as an obstacle of human security of the women.

While discussing the problems of women in the society, we must mention another social evil associated with women in India i.e dowry. Though dowry is regarded as a crime by the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, this system continues in the society even today. It is found that the bride and bridegroom's family both are responsible for continuation of dowry system. The practice of dowry system has resulted in increasing number of dowry deaths in India. If the bride's family fails to meet the demand of the groom's family, the bride is harassed or sometimes even killed. Because of the demands of various Women's Movements and anti-dowry groups the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 and the Indian Penal Code (Section 498A and 304B) are amended. According to IPC section 498A any cruelty whether by the husband or any relative of the husband to the woman is an offence punishable by imprisonment of up to three years. Again Section 304B of IPC states that the death of a woman within seven years of her marriage by burns or bodily injuries with evidence of cruelty or harassment by her husband or his relatives in connection with a demand for dowry is a 'dowry death' punishable by imprisonment of not less than seven years. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (amended in 1984, 1985, 1986) states that giving and taking of dowry in any form is a crime as well as considers the givers and takers of dowry as criminals.

Despite all the above mentioned legal provisions, dowry system still prevails. It is because society does not consider dowry as a crime. Giving dowry is sometimes linked with the parent's status in the society. However, for the poor section of the society girl child has become a burden because of prevalence of dowry system. Sex-selective abortion and female infanticide are also the results of the dowry system. Thus, dowry system may be considered as the root cause of many social evils existing in India causing insecurity to women even before their birth.

Moreover, women also feel insecure in the society because of sexual harassment and trafficking. We often hear the cases of rape and sexual assault of women. However, there are many cases of rape and sexual assault where women keep silence. Society considers rape victims responsible for their plight. They are even ostracized. In the fear of condemnation of the society many women do not feel safe to report rape cases and make it public.

As mentioned earlier, insecurities of women started before their birth. The women are not safe even in their mother's womb. The number of girl children between the ages of 0 to 6 against 1000 boys of the same group is declining in India. Many argue that the declining sex-ratio of women is not natural but deliberate. Female infanticide and female foeticide contribute towards declining sex ratio of women. Female foeticide means sex-selective abortion where girl child is killed within the mother's womb itself. On the otherhand female infanticide means killing of baby girls within the hours of birth. This happens because parents of girl child consider girls as burdens and therefore they do not want to take the burden for long. Moreover, social values also give weightage to sons over daughters. The crimes against women are increasing in India at a very alarming rate. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) even anticipated that the growth rate of crimes against women would be higher than the population growth rate by 2010. According to NCRB, 'Crime in India 2000' report in every 3.5 minutes one crime was committed against women, 45 women were raped every day, 121 women were sexually harassed everyday, 1 girl is trafficked in every 46th minute, 21 women were murdered every day in dowry related issues, 135 women were tortured by their husbands and in laws every day in India.

The above mentioned government records give us a picture of the insecurities women faces in India or in the South Asian countries. It needs mention here

that these are only reported cases. Many cases of crime against women go unreported. Therefore, we can say the data only presents before us a partial picture of the situation. The women form one of the backward and marginalized groups in the society whose human rights are often violated. Moreover, they are a voiceless community in the patriarchal society. These weaknesses have made them vulnerable to various problems and insecure in the society and sometimes even within the four walls of their homes.

SAQ:

After studying the state of women in South Asia, according to you what type of measures can be taken to improve their condition? (60 words)

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....

2.4 State of Children in South Asia

A nation's future depends on the children who are the future citizens. However, these children suffer from various insecurities in the society which stand in the way of their proper development. The United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) report published as The State of the World's Children 2005 states that the rights of one billion children are violated because they are deprived of at least one or more basic services required to survive, grow and develop. The condition of the children in the South Asian region and the developing countries as a whole is more deplorable. Hence, we can say that their security is not ensured in the society where policies are made without taking into consideration their problems.

Here you must remember that the definition of children is given in different ways by different groups at different times. According to the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child a person below 18 years is a child. However, 1860 Indian Penal Code considers person below 12 years as a child. The Child Labour Act of 1986 regards person below 14 years as a

child. Irrespective of different opinions, usually a person under 14 years of age is regarded as a child.

A child faces different insecurities in the society. There are certain common insecurities for all the children. But it is also found that children of economically poor families have different insecurities than the children of the rich families. Again insecurities of children also depend on their gender. The girls face insecurities different from the boys as children of the society. Now let us discuss here the major insecurities faced by children as a whole in general and the children of South Asian region in particular.

- **Child Labour**

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) clearly states certain universal legal standards for the protection of child against neglect, abuse and exploitation at work so that they can enjoy the basic human rights. However, we all are aware of the problems children face as child labourers. Experiences have shown that children as labourers have to work in sub-human conditions and they are denied justice too.

It is found that a large number of child workers exist in Asia followed by Africa and Latin America. In the South Asian region a large number of child labourers can be found in development countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. In India children are engaged in different activities like domestic labour, bonded labour, commercial sex work, industrial work, agricultural work and street hawkers etc. We all have seen or met children working in those above mentioned fields for earning money. These children are illiterate or drops-out of educational institutions. Hence, their right to education is often violated.

It is very difficult to ascertain the actual number of child workers. In India, according to the Union labour minister there were 17 million child labourers in 1995. while some other studies reveal that the umber of child workers go beyond 40 million. Among the several reasons for child labour, the poor economic background of the family is the most important and common reason. For taking the burden of the family and the siblings, children come out of their homes and work in hazardous situations and bear the torture of the employers. In India children work in textile, carpet, footwear, glass, gemstone polishing and limestone quarrying industries, tea, coffee and

tobacco plantations etc in unhealthy situations. Moreover long hours of work also degrade their health. Children working as domestic help need to do all the household works for whole day. When they fail to perform all those tasks sometimes they are abused and beaten up by their employers. Likewise the street hawkers and the children working as agricultural laborures are often abused and exploited by the employers because of lack of voice. Though there are various legislations against child labour like the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, these are not implemented properly.

Again it needs to be mentioned here that child labour is closely linked with bonded labour. The children of many poor families have to work under the employer of their parents if the parents fail to repay the loan to the employer. It has been observed that in various states of the country, the bonded fathers, over 40 years of age, free themselves by depositing their sons into bondage (Ahuja:1997)

- **Child Abuse**:

We all have come across the term 'child abuse'. It implies non-accidental, physical and psychological injury received by a child from his parents, guardians or employers. Child abuse may be in the form of verbal abuse, threats of physical violence and physical punishment, emotional negligence and sexual abuse. Physical violence may leave mark in their bodies and sometimes make them handicapped for the rest of their lives. Similarly the psychological trauma stands as an obstacle in the development of their personality. The girl children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. There are many instances of girl children below 14 years becoming pregnant because of sexual exploitation. They are sexually exploited in the society sometimes by the employers, sometimes by their teachers and sometimes even by their relatives. In the present time a number of such cases relating to child sexual abuse come to limelight. It is very unfortunate that India has the highest number of sexually abused children. From studies it is found that in India a child below 16 years is raped in every 155th minute, a child below 10 years in every 13th hour, and 1 in every 10 children sexually abused at any point of time (Krishnakumar, 2003).

Another dangerous phenomenon relating to child sexual abuse that is growing alarmingly in the present time is paedophilia. It has been found that many

Europeans, British, German, Dutch, French and Swiss people come to Goa in search of children since it is easy for them to sexually abuse children at a cheap rate. Government also ignores these problems as it is earning a good amount of revenue from the foreign tourists. A paedophile sexually exploits at least 20 children during his or her visit to Goa.

Child trafficking is another evil which creates insecurities for the children in the society. Almost 1.2 million children become victims of child trafficking every year in the world. The entire south Asia region suffers from this problem where girl children are sold to brothels without their knowledge. Usually, the children from poor economic background become the victims of child-trafficking. A significant percentage of child sexual abuse occurs outside the family and boys are generally the victims of employment related abuse while girls are generally victims of acquaintance related abuse (Kewalramani 1992).

It is already mentioned that the children do not feel secured in the homes as well as in the work place. They are often subject to beating by their guardians for non-compliance with family norms (Hussain 2010). In schools also they are subject to punishment by their teachers. Sometimes, they even need medical treatment when they receive corporal punishment. Instances are not rare to show students committing suicide because of trauma after getting punishment in the schools.

Hence, from the discussions in this section you get an idea about the problems of children. Their rights are often violated as they constitute a voiceless community. In paper XVI we shall discuss the rights of women and children in detail.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss critically the state of women in South Asia.

2. Write a note on violence against women.

3. Discuss the problems of child labour in South Asia.

4. What are the major problems faced by the children in South Asia? Discuss briefly the state of children in the region with special reference to India.

2.5 Summing Up

After reading this unit you are now in a position to examine the state of women in South Asia. From this unit you have learnt that women in South Asia face various insecurities in the society as well as within their homes. They are vulnerable to different types of violence both at psychological and physical levels. Many cases of violence against women go unreported and unnoticed. Educational backwardness of women has further marginalized them. Moreover, the status of their health is also very deplorable. From this unit it is clear to us that they are not adequately represented in the prestigious jobs of the society as well as in the political arena. Therefore they constitute a voiceless community. Reading of this unit has given us some idea about the state of children in the region too. We have learnt that children constitute a vulnerable community who are often abused and exploited by their parents, guardians or employers.

2.6 Reference and Suggested Readings

Ahuja Ram, *Social Problems in India*, Rawat Publications, 1997

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BLOCK II

Migration and Displacement in South Asia

Unit 1: Migration in India: Political and Security Implications

Unit 2: Internal Displacement in South Asia

Unit I

Migration in India: Political and Security Implications

Contents

1.1. Introduction

One of the distinguishing characteristics of human beings is the tendency to migrate or move out. Migration is caused by various socio-cultural changes. Since time immemorial man had been moving out in search of opportunities to varied lands resulting in the movement of population. It is known to us that migration or the movement of population is an essential component of economic development, social change and political organization. The growth of cities, the development of new resources and territories and the increasing international context of business, leisure and political experience depends upon the settlement, temporary or permanent, of individuals in diverse locations away from their place of birth and upbringing (Jackson 1969:1). Thus the phenomenon of migration is practically as old as the history of man.

This unit is an attempt to discuss the meaning and definition of migration. Here an attempt is made to help you understand the classifications as well as factors leading to migration. Moreover, from this unit will also address the issue of migration in South Asia as a whole and Northeast India in particular.

1.2 Objectives

Migration of human population is essential for proper development of the society. However, it has been observed that many times migration has created problems in different countries. After going through this unit you will be able to:

- *define* and classify migration
- *describe* the factors leading to migration
- *discuss* the problem of migration in the South Asia region in general and Northeast India in particular
- *examine* the political and security implications of migration

1.3 Meaning and Definition of Migration

 History of human civilization is replete with instances of migration. Migration is a natural process which promotes human growth and leads to the development of human civilization. Contrarily, there has been an alternative phenomena of mass agitation and the feeling of the' son of the soil' or 'Bhumiputra'. Though much can be debated upon the issue of migration and its relevant theories, we must take into consideration the humane aspects of migration. In the context of forced migration we basically deal with a group of people forced by circumstances to migrate. Their sense of loss in losing their motherland and 'land of birth' had been no easy task for them to reconcile with. Here, we must understand that the migrant's sense of loss is both at the individual and societal level.

Migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. Migration may be international, inter-regional, inter-urban, rural –urban or intra-urban. Here it must be pointed out that there is no universally accepted definition of migration. United Nations' Multilingual Demographic

Dictionary defines migration as a form of spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another involving a permanent change of residence. Eisenstadt defines migration as the physical transition of an individual or a group from one society to another. Scholars of different disciplines defined migration according to the approach they adopted in pursuance of their study. Geographers have emphasized the temporal and spatial significance of mobility, sociologists have laid stress upon the social consequences of mobility while economists have given importance to the economic aspect of migration (Sinha and Ataullah 1986:122). The Oxford Dictionary defines migration as 'movement of a person or persons involving a permanent change in place of residence by the crossing of specified administrative or political boundaries.' Broadly defined, migration is leaving one's original place of residence and going to a new one for permanent settlement of residence for a long duration of time (Peterson 1968: 286-292).

Migration is thus defined as a relatively permanent moving away of collectivity, called migrants, from one geographical location to another, preceded by decision making on the part of the migrants on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values or valued ends and resulting in changes in the interactional system of migrants (Mangalam 1968:8). Thus Mangalam opines that the dimension of collective movement is an essential criterion of migration. Hence, we can say that migration is differentiated from simple population mobility by the fact of its 'relatively permanent moving away'. Meyer Fortes has distinguished between mobility, which represented movement within boundaries and migration. Migration is a change of residence in which persons cross boundaries. Such boundaries may be either geographical, structural, ethnic, administrative or some other division, which is recognized as setting him apart (M. Du.Toit 1975: 5).

E.G. Ravenstein who first explained the basics of the laws of migration (1885; 1889) stated that migrants moved from areas of low opportunity to areas of higher opportunity and every stream of migration produces a counter stream, particularly in rural to urban migration . He also suggested that the choice of destination is controlled by distance, with migrants moving to areas near their place of origin (Ravenstein 1885 and 1889). These 'laws of migration' outline demographic and economic variables particularly in relation to the factor of distance represent the beginning of an attempt to

relate in a systematic way the factors which enter into what is simply a temporary or permanent change of residence. Later researches have evolved in course of empirical analysis and looked upon migration in terms of opportunities. Stouffer puts forth the argument of 'intervening opportunities' and states that the number of persons migrating a given distance is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at the place of destination and indirectly proportional to the number of intervening opportunities. Therefore in the process of understanding the causes or motivation of migration, the push and pull theory gradually developed. This theory is based on factors at the place of origin and destination of the migrants. Thus, we can find various pushing factors which force the migrants to leave their original habitat. At the same time we can also find certain pulling factors that pull the migrants to their destination. In his theory of migration, Everett S. Lee also attempted to explain the forces supposed to have exerted an influence on individual's perception of migration as push and pull factors (Lee 1969:287). He perceives 'negative' factors which force the migrants to leave the place of origin and 'positive' conditions at the place of destination which attracts them.

1.4 Classification of Migration

From the earlier discussions you have learnt the meaning and definitions of migration. Migration takes place for different reasons and hence there are different types of migrations. Here in this section let us discuss the classifications of migration.

Involuntary or Forced Migration and Voluntary Migration

Migration involves different forms of population movement mainly to explain the mechanism and motivational factors behind it. Every act of migration has certain factors in the decision to migrate like the area of origin, area of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors (Lee 1969:285). Social scientist G. Beijer distinguished between migrations which are based on choice and those which are involuntary (Beijer 1969:13). A voluntary migration is that wherein the decision to migrate has an element of choice attached to it. It is the decision or selection of the people or community to migrate to some other better place for specific reasons such as the availability

of fertile land, better economic condition, etc. (Debbarma and George 1993:4-5).

Forced migration is one in which the person migrating has neither the decision nor the say in the question of the decision to migrate (M.Du.Toit 1975:1). Stated briefly, forcible displacement is what pushes people against their will to migrate. It can be conceptualized to be the product or counter-product of conflict, development projects, disaster, trafficking or smuggling (Khatiwada 2006:24). Displaced persons deported from or have been obliged to leave his country of nationality or of former habitual residence under racial, religious or political compulsion falls within the purview of forced migration (United Nations1947:816). Khatiwada conceptualized a very thin line of difference between the two— forced and voluntary, which in proper empirical situations seems to get 'blurred' (Khatiwada 2006:27).

Migration, voluntary or involuntary leads to various effects. Migrants put pressure on the available resources of the host countries causing tension between them and the locals (Ghosh 2004:28). With migration, there is a spurt in the competition for resources between the migrants and the native population. Migrants affect the politics of the host country by their direct or indirect involvement in the politics of their host habitats. Example can be cited of the Hindu refugees from East and West Pakistan to Assam, West Bengal and New Delhi, the Muhajirs in Pakistan etc. A satisfactory standard of living is attained with the settlements of migrants and their participation in the host economy with their skills and compatible cultural values. Besides, migration brings cultural diffusion, social integration, new political set up and also results in redistribution of population. It is said to affect the whole sphere of life viz. social, economic, political etc. (Debbarma and George 1993:4-5).

STOP TO CONSIDER:

Factors leading to migration

Empirical studies have concluded that many factors lead to migration. No matter how short or long, how easy or difficult it might be, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination and an intervening set of obstacles. The factors which encourage or force the migrants to migrate may be summarized as follows

- Factors associated with the area of origin

- Factors associated with the area of destination

- Intervening obstacles

- Personal factors.(Lee 1969:285)

Economic factor is clearly one of the most important factors in voluntary migration. Motivation studies identify four factors of economic migration. They are

- Ambition, better job opportunities;

- Hope, better future for the children;

- Courage, for a new beginning, or zest of adventure; and

- Better economic opportunities.(Beijer 1969:48)

1.5 Migration in the South Asian Region

Several categories of migrants exist in the South Asian Region. They are

(1) Partition-displaced migration

(2) Bangladeshi Refugees during the Bangladesh crises of 1970-71

(3) Lhotsampa (ethnic Nepalis) from Bhutan to Nepal and India

(4) Bhutanese Political Refugees.

(5) Indian repatriates from Myanmar to India

(6) Arakanese refugees to Bangladesh

(7) Chin-Burmese refugees to India.

(8) Kashmiri migrants in Pakistan

(9) Lankan Tamil migrants to India

(10) Migration of Hindus from Pakistan to India in the Rajasthan sector during 1971 Indo-Pak war.

(11) Migration of Chakmas and other tribes of Bangladesh into parts of India's North-east.

(12) Tibetan Refugees into India.

From the above list, it is clear to you that South Asia has witnessed migration in different periods of history and hence different categories of migrant exist in the region.

The following table presents before you the picture of migration in South Asia.

Table 1: Profile of South-Asian Refugees

Refugees	Origin	Host country/countries
Ethnic Rohingyas	Burma	Bangladesh, India
Burmese Chin	Burma	India
Chakma	Bangladesh	India
Sri Lankan Tamils	Sri Lanka	India
Tibetans	Tibet	India, Nepal
Bhutanese	Bhutan	Nepal, India
Kashmiri	India	Pakistan
Afghans	Afghanistan	India

Source: S.D. Muni and Lok Raj Baral (eds), Refugees and Regional Security in South Asia, New Delhi: Konark Publishers cited in Monirul Hussain's Human Security in India: Health, Shelter and Marginalisation

From this table it is clear to us that migrants move from one country to another within the South Asian region. It also shows that among the South Asian nations, India has provided shelter to a huge number of migrants from different countries in different periods.

1.6 The Migration scenario in North-east India

This region consists of the states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram and Nagaland. The North-eastern region with 7.7% of India's land area and 3.9% of the total population is characterized by diversities. The reorganization of the states in the northeast had been experienced only in the post-colonial period. Previously, the North-eastern region had been one whole identified as pre-colonial Pragjyotishpur and colonial Assam.

1.6.1 State-patronised Pre-colonial Migration

 Historian H .K. Barpujari attributes the geographical location of the region to be the prime factor responsible for the migration of various groups from

different directions here since the ancient period. In the Introduction of his book titled *The Comprehensive History of Assam* Vol.I, Barpujari had mentioned the different connecting routes that linked Assam with the neighbouring countries such as the Assam-Burma route and the Patkai route. These routes were responsible for the coming of the various races from South-East Asia, the Ahoms and other Tibeto-Burmans from the north-east. The hill passes of Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal were also probably used by certain waves of the Tibeto-Burman migrants. On the west, the valleys of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra were used by the Indo-Aryans to penetrate into Pragjyotish-Kamarupa. Thus 'Assam being located in one of the great migration routes of mankind' these migrants successfully entered the region to contribute to the moulding of the culture and ethnic composition of the people of the region (Barpujari ed. 1990: 2-3). To speak of the communities who have migrated into the region, we can refer to the Australoid, Caucasoid and Mongoloid etc. Rajmohan Nath in his book *The Background of Assamese Culture* referred to the various races of people brought in from different parts of India by the Varmana and 'Mleccha' line of Kings. The people of Deccan were also brought into Assam during the Pala period either as temple labourers, job seekers or retinue to the Hoihoya princess.

A significant group that entered Assam through Burma and the Patkai Hills in the 13th century was the Ahoms, a Tai-Shan tribe who became the ruling dynasty of the region for a long span of six hundred years since 1228 till the annexation of Assam by the British colonialists (Hussain 1993: 27). The period 1228-1826, the period of Ahom rule in the history of Assam, that is, the so-called pre-colonial society, witnessed migration to this part of the region in spite of the insularity maintained by the Ahom administrators. The society, because of its self-sufficiency and lack of transportation and communication facilities, was not open to migration during the period unless it was on State initiative (Nag 1990: 25). The Ahom rulers and other ruling dynasties of the region therefore, encouraged migration to their advantage exclusively.

The gradual Hinduisation of the Ahom Kings in Assam impelled them to invite high caste Hindus from geographically adjacent Bengal, so as to strengthen their newly adopted system. Such migration gained momentum

during the reign of the Ahom King Pratap Singha (Hussain 1993: 27). Successive Ahom Kings Rudra Singha (1696-1740) and his son Siva Singha (1741-1744) patronised the migration of Bengali priests. In this context we should mention Krishnaram Bhattacharjee, a Saivaite priest from the neighbouring district of Nabwadip in Bengal who was appointed at the Kamakshya temple at the Nilachal Hills.

It is important to point out here that in the year 1203 A. D., Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of Qutubuddin's army invaded Assam but was defeated. Anthropologist B. M. Das focuses that the first batch of Muslim migrants comprised of those soldiers who preferred to stay rather than accompanying back their defeated leader (Das 1985: 15). There were also the migration of Pathan and Mughal soldiers who came in as prisoners of war in their repeated incursions against the Ahom kingdom and decided to stay back in Assam after the wars were over. Muslim technicians and artisans were brought from northern India under the patronage of the Ahom rulers to fill the vacuum created by the non-availability of local skill. Thus Muslims in Assam were either invited by the state to conduct its diplomacy with the Mughals or they were prisoners of war left behind by the Mughal invaders (Basu 1970: 108-111). Migration in the pre-colonial society of Assam was encouraged by the ruling classes.

1.6.2 State-sponsored Colonial Migration

Following the British annexation of the Brahmaputra Valley in 1826, the process of gradual incorporation of the hills and plains of the North-eastern region started. However, with the incorporation of the Brahmaputra Valley into the colonial British Indian Empire, the region was gradually moulded in the colonial interest that aimed at opening up its insular economy.

The fundamental intention of the colonialists was to channelize the resources of the region to suit their economic interest. Colonial officials perceiving the need of maximising the revenue growth of the region for economic purpose felt that the land abundant economy of Assam was a fertile pasture to welcome migrants to the region. The erstwhile, uninhabited land frontier was made to be gradually attracted by both labour and enterprise from the neighbouring province of the Raj, to meet the economic demands of the 'infant' colonial

administration. All this happened basically in the interest of colonialism (Hussain 1993: 221). Even the Assamese middle class that correspondingly emerged in colonial Assam initially welcomed migration. Assamese Renaissance that grew under the impact of Bengal Renaissance and colonial patronage, had torchbearers like Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Gunabhiram Barua, Bolinarayan Bora etc. They through their pleas and memorandums implored the British government for the promotion of migration for the economic progress of the province i.e. Assam (Guha 1988: 68; Nag 1990: 87). The different groups of migrants during the colonial period were the

Tea Plantation Tribes

Marwaris

Nepalis

Bengali Hindus and

Bengali Muslims.

The Bengali Hindus who migrated in the colonial period were an important segment of population flow to Assam. They were brought into the region to man the administrative bureaucratic structure of the incipient colonial economy. With the annexation and colonization of Assam by the British in 1826, the colonialists immediately required personnel for the incipient colonial administration in Assam. The poor status of education among the local population during the initial rule of the British made the colonial rulers look for substitutes.

The Bengali Hindus of the colonial Bengal by virtue of being the first recipient of the English education under the aegis of colonial rule were equipped with the knowledge and skill of being staffed in the lower rank of the colonial bureaucratic order of the British administration. To relinquish the expenses that were required of equipping the local populace with the modern means of education so as to qualify themselves as public servants, the alternative that lay in the hands of the colonial policy-makers was to invite the Bengali *baboos* from the neighbouring state of Bengal to act as the *amolahs* in the budding colonial administration (Mill 1853: 89). Therefore, according to Myron Weiner, "by the beginning of the twentieth century, the doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists, clerks, railways and post office officials as well as officers of the State government in Assam were Bengali Hindu

migrants" (Weiner 1978: 93). They began to exercise their share of influence in the social sphere of the Brahmaputra Valley. Bengali came to be introduced as a language of the courts and schools of Assam since 1836.

In categorising the major migrant communities to the Brahmaputra Valley, we have listed the Muslims of East Bengal origin, the tea labour community, the Marwaris, Nepalis and the Hindu Bengalis who were responsible for the marked socio-economic transformations in colonial Assam. They left a deep impact on the future politics of the region. It is however necessary to understand the social transformations in the colonial period through migration and which led to crystallisation of forces to leave an impact upon the question of future migrations into the Assamese society. The question that naturally arises in the mind of a researcher pertains to the factors instrumental in bringing about the change in the Assamese mind towards the acceptance of migrants in post-colonial Assam. Surprisingly, the previously cosseted society of Assam had patronised, encouraged and gradually accepted migration in the pre-colonial and colonial period. Till recently, Assamese landlords were seen to have welcomed the hardworking Bengal tenants in the sparsely populated region of Assam (Chandra 2000: 308). Even educated Assamese intellectual like Bolinarayan Bora is said to have implored the colonial government to bring educated people from West Bengal with enhanced pay for the educational development of Assam (Sarmah 1999: 4).

1.6.3 Migration in the post-Colonial period

The independence of India in 1947 was accompanied by Partition. The decision of the colonial government for granting freedom with the division of the country on communal considerations had led to the creation of the two states of India and Pakistan. It consequently divided the provinces of Punjab and Bengal.

The division of Bengal resulted in the formation of East Pakistan, that was to remain within Muslim majority Pakistan and West Bengal as a part of independent India. The Bengal Boundary Commission of Sir Cyril Radcliffe besides demarcating the territories to constitute the two dominions brought in the Sylhet Referendum which was to decide the fate of this district of Assam. Sylhet, historically an integral part of Bengal, ultimately chose to

be with East Pakistan except four of its thanas remaining in India which was amalgamated with the district of Cachar in the Surma Valley of Assam. The newly drawn boundaries decided the fate of many who were affected by this separation. This vivisection led to a communal rage on either side of the border that forcibly shook the religious minorities from their roots to be compelled to look for a 'safer' abode. Needless to say that most of the refugees into Assam from East Pakistan were Bengali Hindus - the persecuted religious minority in Islamic Pakistan ruled by modern and politicised armed forces. The Partition made their position extremely vulnerable. The threat to their existence with dignity both actual and under perception, propelled their movement across the border (Hussain 1995: 124).

There were two categories among the displaced Bengali Hindus who migrated from East Bengal / East Pakistan in the aftermath of the Partition of 1947. One was the upper classes of the Bengali Hindus who in order to preserve their honour and search for security in trouble-torn East Bengal, decided to migrate from the land of birth. They were identified as the Bengali *bhadrolok* refugee migration. The other was the low caste refugees, mainly the peasants who confronted economic constraints with the migration of the upper class. This was because their livelihood was interwoven with the higher classes. They therefore followed the *bhadrolok* refugees.

Another group of migrants that has caused a lot of social tension and generated a movement of the size and intensity of the Assam agitation of 1979-1985 period is that of the Muslims of present Bangladesh.

It is perceived that the region has emerged with insurgencies and conflicts of all kinds due to the demographic complexion that seem to have arisen with migration.

1.7 Migration: The Political and Security inter-phase

Population movements create conflicts within and between states. Migrants play an important role as a cause of insecurity and violence. Generally, it has been argued that migration causes inter-communal tensions within the receiving state. There can be cited two set of causes. The first is rooted in antagonistic ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic forces within the host population. The second is based on the potential endangerment to the host country's social and economic stability and security, especially where the

presence of a large number of migrants begins to translate into a competition for scarce jobs, economic resources and social security services. If the host population perceives the migrants as 'one of us', positive and generous conceptions of distributive justice will be applicable and the concept of 'we' and 'they' should be ignored.

1.8 Summing Up

After reading this unit you are now in a position to discuss the meaning, definition and types of migration. This unit helps you in understanding the different classification of migration like voluntary and involuntary migration. Various factors are responsible for the migration of population. After reading this unit you are familiar with the factors responsible for migration. The unit further helps you in discussing the problem of migration in the South Asian region in general and northeast India in particular. Lastly, from this unit you have learnt the political and security implications of migration.

1.9 Reference and Suggested Readings

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Unit II:

Internal Displacement in South Asia

Contents :

2.1 Introduction

The South Asian region has witnessed an enormous rise of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in recent times caused by various factors like conflicts, natural calamities and development projects. In the previous semester you have learnt the meaning of IDPs and know that internal displacement may be caused by conflicts, development projects and natural calamities. The situation of IDPs is often worse than the refugees because of the fact that they live within the boundaries of the state which has been responsible for their displacement. Moreover, they are not protected under refugee laws. Interestingly, in South Asia the internal displacees cannot be regarded as a national category since what happens inside a country has its implications on the neighbouring nations. For example, the IDP problem in Myanmar has its implications for the minorities of Northeastern India and Bangladesh. Therefore, it is essential to regard them as regional categories.

This unit makes an effort to present before you a picture of the problem of internal displacement in South Asia. While doing so, it discusses different types of internal displacement in the region. Hence, from this unit you will get the picture of the scenario of conflict-induced, natural calamity-induced and development induced displacement in South Asia.

2.2 Objectives

The problem of internal displacement is becoming acute day-by day in South-Asia. After reading this unit you will be able to:

discuss the problem of internal displacement in South Asia

examine the problem of conflict-induced internal displacement in South-Asia

elaborate the problem of development-induced internal displacement in South-Asia

discuss natural calamity-induced internal displacement in South-Asia

2.3 Conflict-induced Internal Displacement in South Asia

Almost all the South Asian countries have faced different conflicts between various ethnic groups. Moreover, discontentment with the government and militarization have also led to sporadic violence in some countries. In this section let us have a look at the scenario of conflict-induced displacement in South-Asia.

Among the South-Asian countries, Afghanistan is facing humanitarian crisis because of conflicts and civil war causing internal displacement. In the 1990s a large number of people were internally displaced. There were almost 400000 displaced persons in camps. If we trace the history of conflict-induced displacement, it is found that it started in 1979 with Soviet invasion. During Soviet invasion of 1979 there was bombing of villages and the destruction of harvests, livestock and people as well as displacement of population. The Civil War in 1993 again led to the displacement of huge number of population.

Severe drought and consequent famine in 1996 resulted in the displacement of population in Afghanistan. After that US air-strikes in 2001 further resulted in massive displacement in Afghanistan. The UN estimated that the total number of people displaced at the end of 2000 was ranged between 600000 to 800000 persons and included displacement caused by drought and conflict. Moreover, the total number of conflict-induced IDPs at the end of 2000 was estimated to range between 300000 to 400000 (Qadeem 2005).

The IDPs in Afghanistan have been exposed to different types of repression and oppression (ibid). The Afghan IDPs are even deprived of life by the

security forces. During the Taliban regime, males and females of the same IDP families were forcefully separated and women and girls taken away by them are still missing (ibid).

If we analyse the scenario in Pakistan we find that since independence Pakistan has witnessed various armed political and military conflicts causing displacement. The conflict-induced displacement increased significantly from 1970 onwards (Atta ur Rehman Sheikh, 2005). The major events leading to internal displacement in Pakistan are —— insurgency in Balochistan, uprising in Sindh and battles between militant Mohajirs and the security forces in Karachi, secession of East-Pakistan, wars with India etc. However, there is no adequate mechanism to manage displacement in Pakistan.

Conflicts and violence have displaced a huge number of populations in India too. There are a number of ethnic and communal violence that caused displacement of the population. For example, communal riots and consequent violence is one of the reasons for creating IDPs. We can name the Gujarat riot that displaced mainly people belonging to Muslim community. Again, militancy problem in Kashmir has displaced Kashmiri pundits. Clashes between ethnic groups have resulted in displacement in many regions of India. The northeast region which is a home to a number of ethnic groups has witnessed conflict-induced displacement. It has been assumed that the northeast region accounts for almost half of India's conflict-induced internally displaced persons —if not more than half of it (Bhaumik 2005). According to an estimate, the total number of IDPs is close to 300000 in northeast India alone (ibid).

While discussing conflict-induced displacement in northeast, it needs mention that there are seven major conflicts which created massive displacement in the region. They are –

- Displacement of Bengali Hindus and Muslims from and within Assam

- Displacement of Adivasis and Bodos from and within western Assam

- Displacement of Bengalis from Meghalaya

- Displacement of Bengalis and Muslims from and within Tripura

- Displacement of the Nagas, Kukis and Paites in Manipur.

- Displacement of the Reangs from Mizoram

- Displacement of the Chakmas from Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram (ibid).

Another South Asian country, Bangladesh also suffers from the problem of internal displacement. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, internal displacement took place because of violent conflicts of 3 decades that started in mid 1970s. Government Task Force estimated that till July 2000, almost 128000 families were internally displaced in the region (Guhathakurta and Begum, 2005). Moreover, communal violence also caused displacement of population in Bangladesh. Infact, communal violence and displacement of population in Bangladesh continues from the period when it was a part of Pakistan..

In Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), internal displacement has become acute in the last part of the twentieth century. The displacement of civilian population increased after the crackdown of democratic movement in 1988 by the army (Roy Chaudhury 2005). Thus militarization in Myanmar led to massive displacement of population. The civilian got displaced either in anticipation of forced relocation when the government ordered them to relocate or flee when the human rights abuses or military threats become intolerable for them (ibid). Most of the times, the displacees in the new resettled areas find it difficult to manage the basic necessities of life. Their rights are often violated too. Karen, Karnei and Mon ethnic groups are displaced in large scale. There is absence of government record to estimate the total number of internal displacees in the country. Since, independent monitoring or assistance to internally displaced persons is not authorized so far, it is difficult to verify the number of IDPs in Myanmar. Information about the IDPs in Myanmar comes from unpublished field reports of different humanitarian agencies working around the border areas of Myanmar. Available figures suggest that there were between 600000 and 1 million internally displaced persons by the beginning of 2002. Another estimate says that the military junta's repression of minority ethnic groups and political opponents have created between 500000 and 1 million IDPs. (ibid)

In regard to the conflict-induced IDPs in Nepal, it emerged mainly because of conflict between the government forces and the armed insurgents of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), started a 'People's War' in the country from 1996. However, there is no proper survey to estimate the number of displacees of Maoist violence. From various reports, it wss found that the number of internally displaced persons increased rapidly with the deterioration of the security situation in

November 2001 when the state emergency was declared. Many such displacees migrated to India too (Srestha and Adhikari, 2005).

In Sri Lanka, conflict-induced displacement has become acute. As a result of internal strife between different groups, the civilians in Sri Lanka are suffering. Anti-Tamil conflict in the Southern parts of Sri Lanka in 1958, 1977 and 1978 displaced many Tamil people. In 1983, with the emergence of military conflict between the Sri Lankan security forces and Tamil militant groups, the number of IDPs increased. It is estimated that by 1990 about 10 per cent of Sri Lankan population were internally displaced. Again the estimates of UNHCR and Refugees International states that by 2001 almost 800000people were displaced (Banerjee 2005).

Thus, from the above discussions in this section we get an idea how conflicts have been creating problems in South Asian countries making people homeless and marginalized within the boundary of their own country. In the following section we shall deal with the development-induced displacement in South Asia.

SAQ:

Make a list of major conflict induced displacements in Assam in the last two decades (50 words).

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2.3.2 Development induced Displacement in South-Asia:

In order to attain rapid economic development most of the newly independent nations of South Asia have opted for the Western model of development. The aim of development is to improve the living standards and to ensure happiness to all citizens. Various countries have experienced that the western model of development often benefits the wealthier section, forcing the backward communities to leave their homes leading to extreme economic

hardship, community disintegration, and mental and physical problems. It is experienced that development projects create both direct and indirect displacement. The first occurs when people are physically forced to move from their ancestral homes while the latter occurs when development planning and policies constrain the livelihood to the degree that people decide to move on their own will.

In the initial period of nation building, these countries often ignored the problem of internal displacement. Development policies of these countries are not concerned about the resettlement of the displaces of the development projects. The basic argument put forwarded here is that- someone has to suffer if the nation is to prosper. In almost all South Asian countries, governments do not keep the actual data relating to displacement. Besides, there is absence of clear-cut policy of resettlement and rehabilitation of the displacees, which makes the problem more complicated. These countries are not even following the UN Guiding Principles relating to internal displacement. It can be mentioned here that the problems relating to resettlement are mainly due to the inefficiencies and inconsistencies of the institutions concerned.

While discussing the problem of development-induced displacement in this region we must mention that a large numbers of farmers occupy land classified as non-agricultural or non-arable and therefore claimed by the state agencies. These people are never compensated for those losses by the concerned authority. When the displacees move from their original habitats, they are not only uprooted from their homes but also from their traditional sources of livelihood too. Moreover, there is community breakdown which was built after staying together for a long period of time. Again, they loss their access to common property resources. Because of such losses they face identity crisis in a new environment. Again displacement of the tribal communities has often deteriorated the ethnic relations leading to conflict in this region.

In Pakistan, most of the development projects have caused dislocation of human settlements and disturbed their livelihoods. The rural communities have been the major victims though the people of the semi-urban and urban areas also suffer from the negative effects of development. In all development projects, problems remain the same regarding compensation, resettlement

and rehabilitation. In order to solve the financial problems in post-independence era, governments in Pakistan have been emphasising on industrialisation. As a result, a huge number of people become homeless in their own country. The period of President Ayub Khan (1958-69) known as 'the Decade of Development', shows good performance in terms of economic growth, but fails to address the issue of equitable distribution of resources among all classes. Although, many development programmes are being introduced to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, population explosion etc., Pakistan is yet to achieve the goal of sustainable development and social justice.

In Nepal, people are displaced for irrigation schemes, airports, promulgation of national parks etc. Here also, it is very difficult to find figures relating to the number of displacees. In many projects, land was acquired without any coherent plan. According to available data, there were between 6,00,000 and 1 million IDPs in Myanmar in 2002. Dams have caused displacement of good number of people in this country and these IDPs in Myanmar are deprived of the basic amenities of life. Such displacement has mostly affected ethnic minority groups of the nation. In countries like Sri Lanka and Afghanistan conflict-induced displacees outnumber the development-induced displacees. Nevertheless, many people are displaced by developlment and infrastructural projects in these countries and they live in a very pathetic condition.

Dams and hydropower projects have been the major source of displacement in South Asia. In most of the countries of this region, dams are worshipped and regarded as prerequisite of development. Pakistan has 81 large, medium and small dams contributing to the problem of displacement. Concern for resettlement of victims has always been secondary in project plans. Many displacees of Ghaji Barotha Hydropower project are awaiting implementation of the resettlement projects. There are inconsistencies in the award of compensation measures. In Ghazi-Barotha Dam project, a comprehensive resettlement plan has been incorporated. The total number of affected persons of this project is 21,653. The project was expected to be a model for future initiatives as it was addressing issues that were ignored by earlier projects.

Without taking proper measure for rehabilitation and resettlement, the Pakistan government has introduced another hydropower project 'Vision

2025', including many small and big dams, water reservoirs, expressways, highways, roads, canals etc. This project is going to intensify the problem of internal displacement in Pakistan. Moreover, the number of displacees as estimated by the government is often less than estimated by NGOs. Here we can cite the example of Mangla Dam, world's third largest earth-filled dam. It has displaced 5,000 persons according to official statistics, but independent agencies show the figure as 30,000. The victims did not get proper compensation. Now the Pakistan Government is raising the height of this dam by 40 feet ignoring protests from various sections. It will affect another 40,000 people.

Tarbela Dam of Pakistan launched in 1967 had displaced 96,000 persons and 120 villages came under water. The promised compensation package did never materialise. About 2100 families are still waiting to get due compensation. The Report of the World Commission on Dams has revealed that out of 96,000 displacees of Tarbela Dam, two-thirds are expected to get agricultural land. Of these 20,000 people could not be provided land due to shortage of land. Nor did the victims receive adequate compensation to buy alternate land. In Kalabagh dam, the total estimated population to be affected is 83,000. A comprehensive resettlement plan has been designed but a section of people has reservations about it for its negative effects. In the face of the pressure from political parties as well as civil groups, the Kalabagh Dam could not be included in the 'Vision 2025'.

The process of urbanisation has also contributed significantly towards the problem of internal displacement in South Asia. Islamabad Capital Territory was created to develop a new capital displacing many in Pakistan. Although cash compensation and land on concessionaire rates were given to victims, it was not free from anomalies. Eviction drives are taken almost on a routine manner causing displacement of population in cities like Kolkata. Even in Delhi, the High Court has ordered demolition of jhuggi (shanty house) settlements on public road which will demolish the homes of more than 3 million to make a clean and green city. In Bangladesh, the governments often resort to violent eviction of slums in Dhaka, making several thousands of slum dwellers homeless. The people living in the slums are very poor and after eviction, they become further marginalised. In Agargaon area of the city, for eviction of slums the police raided the houses arresting, looting and

harassing families and raping women. Data shows the number of families in slums has been decreased from 13,613 on July, 2001 to 4,620 on 10th March, 2002. This method of eviction amounts to the violation of human dignity and fundamental rights of the poor. Thus, in the name of planned urban development people are being displaced in South Asia.

Construction of roads has also displaced a good number of people in this region. National Motorway Network Project consisting of 10 projects was launched in the early 90's in Pakistan. Thousands of families living on the periphery of the newly constructed motorway faced extreme difficulties which included division of their lands, stoppage of water supply lines and displacement of the people. The project was carried out with such irresponsibility and haphazard planning that it disturbed the entire cultural habitat and livelihood patterns of the area. Moreover, compensation was paid only to those whose lands were acquired for building metalled road. Lyari Expressway Project of Pakistan is going to displace a population of 2,03,200 and will hit mostly the urban poor in Karachi. In all 25,000 houses, 3600 shops and commercial units, 50 mosques, 5 churches, 8 temples, 10 schools, 38 clinics, 1 hospital and 66 factories would be destroyed by the project. Many NGOs are protesting against it, but the government is determined to carry out the project. It has created a lot of confusion among the displaced communities as they are not taken into confidence. Nepal has also witnessed the same problem. However, there exist no records of compensation for the land acquired by many projects. The construction of infrastructural projects has also caused dislocation of population in Myanmar.

Like many other South Asian countries in India too, there is no reliable official statistics regarding the number of development-induced displacees. Displacement was regarded as an unavoidable corollary of development here. According to official estimate the number of such displacees is 15.5 million in 1994. But depending on the calculations on the basis of the number of dams built in the country, that figure may go up to 21 to 33 million. According to an estimate, development projects have directly displaced about 21 million people during 1955-90. Besides, these projects have deprived a huge number of people of their means of livelihood causing indirect displacement.

Dam building was equated with nation building in India. During the last 50 years almost 3300 big dams have been constructed in India. Whereas the beneficiaries of the dam are meant to be large landowners, tribal people are paying the price. Here also big gap exists in the estimate of displacees by the government and NGOs. In case of Narmada dam, the official figure states that it would displace about 42,000 families wheras the NBA put the figure at 85,000 families or 5,00000 persons. In West Bengal about 3000 big and medium dams have adversely affected the weaker section of the society. At present 700 dams are under construction and these will definitely increase the displacement problem in the state.

In Northeast India the development projects have directly affected the poor and powerless tribals both in the hills and plains. Absence of adequate rehabilitation policy for the displaced has led to further pauperisation, marginalisation and helplessness among the displaced. Besides, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh also suffered from Kaptai Dam constructed on the river Karnaphuli across the international border in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Tuli paper Mill of Nagaland has also displaced hundreds of tribal families and affected the rich bio-diversity and environment. The Loktak hydel project in Manipur displaced around 20,000 people as their villages went under water. In Arunachal Pradesh more than 20,000 would be displaced by the Siang project. The Dumbar Dam of the Gumti Hydel Project in South Tripura district which aims at generating 8.60 MW of power, has displaced a total of 5845 tribal families – between 35,000 to 40,000 people in all. Likewise, Tipaimukh multi purpose project is also going to displace over 15000 people. It would mainly attack two tribal communities- Zeliangrong and Hmar.

If we analyse the scenario of development and displacement in Assam, we find that the few development projects built here have displaced a large number of people from their habitat and livelihood. Again, most of these displaced people belong to tribal communities. The major development projects that have caused displacement in Asssam are — The oil sector and oil townships, two paper mills of Assam at Jagiroad and Cachar, expansion of Guwahati city, establishment of IIT etc. Besides displacement of population, these projects have destroyed the greenery and the surrounding environment. For the construction of the Bogibeel Bridge over

the mighty Brahmaputra more than 2000 bighas of land have been occupied. According to an estimate, almost 500 families having ownership documents of these lands are not compensated yet.

In the recent years more than 160 hydel projects have been planned in the northeast region ignoring the fragile ecology of this region. It needs mention here that the north east in general and Arunachal in particular have very high risk of earthquake as it falls under seismic zone V. Geological condition of this region is fragile. The common people have become conscious of the dangers associated with the building of dams in this region. They are also aware of the fact that such projects are not only going to displace them; they will be alienated from their own place. Dams and other mega projects will imperil their sustainable modes of living making their life more difficult.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Anti-dam Movements in Northeast

Dam is considered as an important tool of development. However, dams have immensely contributed to the problem of internal displacement. Therefore, of late most of the proposed dams face oppositions from the common people. Two such projects facing opposition in Assam are –

• The 2000 MW Lower Subansiri project to be constructed on the border areas of Assam and Arunachal is already facing lot of opposition from the people as well as from the governments of both the sectors. The project was planned by National Hydro Electric Power Corporation (NHPC), a government run public sector unit and it is very keen to construct those projects as it has obtained environmental clearance for the projects. The proposed height of the project is 116 meters and it will submerge 3436 hectres of land. Besides it will affect the rich bio-diversity of the region as 42 hectres of land belonging to Tulley Valley reserve forest will also be submerged, where many rare animal species can be found. The NHPC has already constructed their office in an elephant corridor. As a result of this the elephants have started attacking and destroying the neighbouring villages. The indigenous people of Arunachal are also worried over the threats posed by these projects to their habitats and unique cultural habitats. Again, the project is going to submerge a vast tract of cultivable land in Arunachal Pradesh impoverishing a large number of indigenous people, while people of other states will enjoy the benefit. Moreover, the Ministry of Power has planned the construction of Upper Subansiri dam in Arunachal Pradesh following directions

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by the Ministry of Environment and Forest on the basis of Indian Board of Wildlife (The Assam Tribune , 27th November'05). This dam is opposed strongly by the indigenous communities living in the submergence area. They are adopting Gandhian methods of strikes and dharna to appeal to the government for scrapping the projects. However, government has been using its coercive power to stop the protests.

• The Pagladiya Dam Project is to be constructed in Nalbari District of Lower Assam. The project is going to irrigate 54,125 hectres of land, protect 40,000 hectres of land from flood and erosion, and generate only 3 MW of electricity. But it would displace almost 150000 population most of whom are tribal people. The rehabilitation and resettlement package is also not acceptable to the people of the area. Besides many of them do not posses proper ownership documents and therefore will not get any compensation. Hence, the people have started their movement under the banner called "Pagladia Bandh Prakalpar Ksatigrastha Alekar Sangram Samiti" against the implementation of the project. The Central government as well as the Brahmaputra Board, which is the implementing agency of the project are making all efforts to construct the dam there. But till now the resistance of the people have been quite successful and the authority has failed to do even the ground survey because of the resistance of the people.

Similar situation prevails in Nepal also. In the Kulekhani Hydroelectric Project, the affected 3,000 population were not compensated adequately. Moreover, the permanent losses were not taken into consideration. So the majority of the affected houses become poorer. Marsyangdi Hydroelectric Project in this country, displaced a population of about 1800. Compensation was given only in cash. The complete information regarding the reasons and procedures of displacement has not been provided to the IDPs or would be IDPs in these projects. Hence, the displacees are deprived of many of their legal rights.

In this way, development induced displacement has become a regular feature in South Asia. In countries like Nepal the problem will continue to be so as the country has a big potential for water resources and there is absence of other major economic resources. Ignoring the problems created by dams, the union Government of India has planned construction of a number of new dams in the Northeast India. Moreover, many gas based thermal projects are still in the pipeline in Tripura, which will definitely aggravate the problem of internal displacement in this region.

As stated earlier, the IDPs of this region face lot of hardships. We already know that the majority of the displaced people belong to tribal communities. It is to be mentioned here that the tribal people have very close relationship with nature. Moreover, they have a very well-knit web of community life. The construction of such projects disturbs their community life and breaks their relationship with the nature. Besides, such displacement due to development creates the problem of space further creating ethnic conflicts among them.

Thus, in the South Asian countries, displacement owing to development presents a grim scenario that includes landlessness, unemployment, homelessness, marginalisation, lack of food, loss of common resources and breakdown of social networks. As mentioned earlier, the nations do not have proper resettlement policy and law on resettlement and compensation issues. Apart from lack of commitment of government towards the implementation of resettlement guidelines, there are other factors that harm the IDPs. These include the absence of community participation and inadequate funding for compensation. It also includes incompatibility of ethnic background, clash of interests between the host community and resettled families and lack of support services as well as social organisations processes to integrate the resettled population in the local communities. Moreover, implementation of resettlement action plans is faulty and poor. All these inadequacies exist in almost all the projects. In some cases families were displaced twice as the design of the project was modified.

Here it needs mention that the problem of displacement is not temporary. Rather, it should be regarded as a crime against humanity. A separate legal regime is necessary to deal with the whole problem. However, the same set of laws cannot be applied to all types of displacement. There is an urgent need to protect people against such displacement and evolve an alternative method of development. When displacement becomes unavoidable, steps should be taken to protect the victims during displacement and proper resettlement and reintegration of the people should be arranged.

Some NGOs are championing the cause of the displacees of development projects. Their activities include: Policy advocacy, awareness raising, research and pressure group activities. It is often found that dams are built, people are uprooted and then the project is abandoned. So no one can enjoy the benefits. Although resistance has come from the victims with the

support of the civil society and NGOs, it has not achieved complete success. But this should be regarded as a positive development as the common people are becoming aware of their rights and started questioning the legitimate authority of the state. The need of the hour is to evolve a people friendly model of development to avoid the problem of displacement. So, we need a humanistic approach to understand the physical as well as the psychological trauma of the displacees which is often overlooked by the people in power.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Internal Displacement and Women

Internal displacement is a very traumatic experience for different sections of people. However, the women and children are more vulnerable. Women as the marginalized entities within the marginalised group are often forced to shoulder the negative affects of displacement. The worst victims of such projects are those women participating in the economic activity of the family. The women heads are even denied the status of PAF. The cash compensation usually disempowers women who lack the experience of handling financial matter. The disintegration of social network of the displaced community makes them more vulnerable. The women head of the families always find it difficult to pursue their cases with the department dealing with compensation or allotment of land. The National Commission of Women noticed that in the Tehri Dam project the displaced women lost their share of livelihood and the area where they are relocated did not provide them with the supplementary sources of income. Again, one method of eviction in the cities has been to enter an area and beat up women and children. They are not safe in the resettlement sites. Sometimes women are not recognized as the owners of land. So the development projects besides displacing thousands of families have also caused severe disempowerment of women in this region.

SAQ:

Draw the relationship between development-induced and natural calamity induced displacement (50 words).

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2.3.3 Natural Disaster-Induced Displacement in South-Asia

We already know that Displacement is also caused by natural calamities like earthquake, flood, river-bank erosion, drought etc. In the present time the natural calamities are becoming very devastating because of environmental degradation. Almost all countries of the world now experience devastations caused by natural calamities.

In Pakistan acute drought from 1998-2001 has caused loss of human lives, livelihood and habitat. Drought has mainly affected twenty-six districts of Balochistan, six districts of Sindh, ten districts of Punjab and nine districts in NWFP. An independent assessment states that around 1 million people left their homes in search of basic necessities like food, water in Balochistan. More than hundred thousand were displaced in Sindh and thousands remain displaced in Cholistan (Punjab). While there is no official record regarding the number of deaths, International Red Cross estimated that by August 2000 around 1500, and very possibly almost double this number of people had died (Rehman Sheikh 2005).

Flood has also caused displacement in Pakistan. From 1950 to 1998 Pakistan suffered a loss of US $5000 million, 60000 villages were affected and thousands of people were dislocated due to floods. In 2001, heavy rain created havoc in Islamabad and Rawalpindi where 71 people died in flash flood (ibid). Again, according to an estimate the tropical cyclone of 1999 took the life of over 1000 and displaced thousands of people in southeastern Sindh.

Natural disasters like land erosion and earthquake are also leading to displacement. Submergence of large area of land under the sea forced people to leave their places in search of livelihood. In 2001, earthquake in southeast Sindh (Hyderabad, Badin and Tharparkar) displaced over 1000 families.

River-bank erosion is one of the major causes of displacement in Bangladesh. Many people became homeless and landless because of river-bank erosion by Jamuna river. In Kazipur, 23% of its total area was eroded during the early 1980s and about 46% of population experienced displacement in that decade. Moreover, 42.9% of those displaced has experienced dislocation for more than four times (Guhathakurta and Begum 2005).

After discussing the enormity of the problems of all the three categories of displacement in South Asia, it needs mention here that one type of displacement is linked with another. The conflict-induced displaced people may further worsen the situation when they try to resettle in a place occupied by other groups. Moreover, there is a close link of development with environmental degradation. Therefore, we can say that establishment of some other development projects will increase the number of development-induced displaced people. Moreover, development projects affects the environment negatively which may lead to natural calamities creating further displacement of population.

Check your Progress :

1. Discuss briefly the problem of conflict-induced displacement in South Asia.

2. How development is responsible for displacement of population? Write a note on the problem of development-induced displacement in South Asia.

3. What is natural calamity-induced displacement? Give a picture of natural calamity induced displacement of population in South Asia.

2.4 Summing Up

Reading of this unit has helped you in understanding the magnitude of the problem of internal displacement in South Asia. From this unit you have learnt that conflicts and violence have been largely responsible for creating a huge number of displaced populations in South Asia. Moreover, various development projects have significantly contributed to the rise of internally displaced people in this region. Among the various development projects taken up by the governments of these countries, dams have the highest capacity to displace people. After reading this unit you also learnt that natural calamities like earthquake, river-bank erosion, flood and drought have created massive displacement in the countries of South Asian. There is absence of proper mechanisms to deal with the problems of internal

displacement in these countries for which this category of population become impoverished and marginalised within the boundary of their own countries.

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BLOCK III

Regional Co-operation in South Asia

Unit I : Trans-Border Relations among South Asian Nations

Unit II : SAARC and Regional Co-operation

Unit I

Trans-Border Relations Among South Asian Nations

Contents:

1.1 Introduction

The South Asian region is characterised by a tremendous diversity in terms of political, economic, security and social systems. The region is a homeland of world's one third population. In recent years, South Asia has received growing attention as a region that is getting integrated into the world economy. However, the South Asian countries suffer from certain common problems like that poor governance and rampant corruption at all levels of administration etc. which stand in the way of development. The region has a highly complex and diverse socio-political structure which gives it a unique identity in world politics. We need to mention here that almost all of the countries of this region have experienced colonial exploitation. So development becomes a major issue for these countries in the post-independence era. Various efforts are taken by these countries to develop their position through mutual understanding and in this process South Asian

Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) was formed. South Asia has successfully converted South Asian Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) into a South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) in July 2006.

In this unit we are going to discuss the Trans border relationship among the South Asian nations. An attempt is also made to discuss the role of regional and international organisations to discuss the trans-border relationship among these countries.

1.2 Objectives

In this sub-continent three aspects of strategic security are relevant to understand the trans-border relationship among these countries. These aspects are: territorial security and integrity, economic security and energy security. After going through this unit you will be able to:

- *discuss* the relationship among south Asian nations

- *analyse* the role of regional organisations in bringing mutual co-operation in South Asia

- *examine* the role of international organisations in bringing mutual co-operation in South Asia

- *describe* the areas of conflict among the South Asian nations

1.3 An Introduction to South Asia

The South Asian region is comprised of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Himalayas in the north and the vast Indian ocean, the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal in the south, west and east respectively provide a natural insularity to the region. Such geographical location is responsible for the linguistic, social and cultural distinctiveness of this region. Though Afghanistan, and Myanmar take part in the discussions of South Asian countries and China plays a major role in its politics they are not regarded as a part of South Asian region. Here in this unit the term South Asia is used to describe the above mentioned seven countries only. But our attempt is to examine the role of other countries specially China in this region.

The South Asian region stands for diversity in every sense and yet constitutes one important geo-political space. It needs mention here that various countries of this region do not have the same political social structure. Despite having various problems India and Sri Lanka successfully implemented democratic system since independence. Though Pakistan and Bangladesh had tried to establish democracy, they failed due to their military supremacy. But in recent years they have successfully established democratic government. Bhutan still has monarchy and after a long struggle Nepal has overthrown its monarchy and established democratic system. From this perspective we can say that this region favoured democratic system of government.

In terms of economic development, it is seen that India enjoys a superior position among the South Asian nations. Again in terms of military power India is emerging as a super power. It needs mention here that the region got international attention after India and Pakistan got access to nuclear weapons. Now, two nations of this region are equipped with nuclear powers. It indicates that the region has made a progress in the field of science and technology. But in the mean time, nuclear race derogated the relationship between India and Pakistan. Arms race also becomes a major problem posing a threat to the development of these countries. It is seen that one third of the national finance is spent on the military budget. Moreover, India and Pakistan become high rated buyer of arms from international market. Cross-border terrorism also becomes a threat to these countries. All the nations of this region have experienced terrorism. The terrorist activities also derogate the relationship among the nations as it is seen that a terrorist group of one nation becomes the guest of other nations. The host nation provides arms, shelter, finance and every facility to these groups operating in their neighbouring nation.

Again, environmental degradation, inter and intra-state conflicts, inadequate access to basic social services, and low levels of women's participation in economic and political activities often characterise this region. Thus it is seen that increasing inequality among these countries brought them closer. So information, ideas, culture, people, resources, capital, and crime all move across borders than ever before. As such, problems and challenges affecting one nation often have a rippling impact throughout the region.

Hence it can be said that, insurgency, ethnic strife and resource sharing make the region turbulent. It is widely recognised that the South Asian region can develop and prosper if the countries co-operate with each other in different aspects. It is worth mentioning that almost all the conflicts of this region are rooted in or conditioned by the domestic politics of the nations concerned.

SAQ:

Do you think that the condition of South Asian region will be improved through mutual understanding? (50 words)

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1.4 Trans-Border relations among South Asian Nations

Cross-border or trans-border issues are those which cannot be resolved successfully by isolated policy action at the national or sub-national levels. The list of such issues is long and growing. The management of common resources such as water, trafficking of women and children, trade integration, and forced child labour are serious cross-border issues that require regional responses. Other issues include illegal migration; market access for less developed countries (LDCs), regional investment funds, as well as aid and debt relief for the poorest and disadvantaged countries to address imbalances within the South Asian region. All these problems and issues require well-managed cross-border coordination between the national governments. Apart from these, it also needs coordination and efforts between governmental agencies and departments. If necessary, new steps needed to be adopted to improve the process. Again, in order to address the cross-border issues faced by the countries within the South Asian region, it is essential to forge strategic alliances at the regional level. Such alliances at regional levels may provide regional platforms for dialogue on issues such as trade in services and energy; management of trans-boundary energy and

water resources; labour mobility; and management of development assistance flows.

Here in this section we are going to discuss trans-border relationship among the South Asian nations in the context of migration and refugee problem, trade and commerce, trans-national crime and terrorism, water management and human trafficking and human rights.

1.4.1 Migration and Refugees

Migration is one of the burning issues that have a significant impact on development efforts. Migration cannot be managed unilaterally. We know that, increase in migration can place additional stress on existing infrastructures, leading to decline in the quality of public services and the access to them by disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Migration of population leads to refugee problem. The migrants are vulnerable to health problems, due to partial or negligent legal status, as well as language, economic, and other barriers, which inhibit them from taking full advantage of any existing social safety nets. In the case of refugees, this vulnerability is heightened, as reintegration can be more difficult due to prolonged exposure to traumatic circumstances, as well as unclear legal status or commitment by host countries, and extended periods spent in camps.

In the South Asian region it is seen that migration and refugees become major problems. Basically, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have faced these problems since their independence. During partition, many people came to India from Pakistan and settled in India. Similarly, people from India also took shelter in Pakistan. Again during the Bangladesh war many people migrated to India thereby changing the entire geographical scenario of North-East India. To address this problem, "managed migration" regimes have been introduced in some countries within South Asian nations to help capitalize upon the benefits of immigration and lessen its costs. These regimes aim to facilitate cooperation between states to plan the movement of people in humane and orderly ways and within the framework of regional consultative processes. Many countries within the region have also established standard operation procedures and institutions to protect refugees and their children. For example, screening mechanisms to identify those in need of special protection have been put in practice in Bangladesh and Nepal.

1.4. 2 Trade and Commerce

As we have mentioned earlier, SAARC has changed the scenario of South Asian region. The economy of this region now receives growing attention due to the establishment of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) in July 2006. With SAFTA, South Asian countries are now looking towards deeper integration of the region. This Free Trade Association would lead to growth in intra-regional trade from US$ 6 billion to US$ 14 billion by 2010 (Government of India, 2006). However, South Asia is still far from realising its full potential. One of the critical factors prohibiting South Asia in achieving its full potential is absence of regional transit trade. Unlike European Union, South Asia does not have regional transit arrangement, although partial transit exists for landlocked countries like Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal.

Again, we know that trade is always profit-driven in nature and can lead to marginalization of the least developed countries. But for the better development of mankind we need a new approach on this cross-border issue to give international trade a humane face by changing its premises from mere profit to human development. Such goals will be achieved through the adequate change of structures and institutions, effective policy-making and inclusive governance mechanisms. Such changes can pursue human development goals such as poverty reduction, equality of opportunities, decent work, access to education and the freedom for everyone to fulfil their potential through trade relationship among the countries of South Asian region.

Realising the urgent need for enhancing South Asian trade, the heads of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries have been emphasising the potential of an integrated transport and transit system for the region. For this purpose they emphasised that higher intra-regional trade would not be achieved until and unless the physical infrastructure and appropriate customs clearance and other facilitation measures, including multimodal transport operations were in place. Again, in order to reduce regional and multilateral trade transportation costs, the South Asian policy makers aim to integrate the region through an improved connectivity including a regional transit arrangement. In accordance with the rule of World Trade Organisation countries of South Asian region have accorded an FTA rules in 2006 and are aiming to form a Customs Union by 2013 and an Economic Union by 2020.

The FTA arrangement in South Asian region has increased the trade relationship among the countries. It is seen that countries like Nepal and Bhutan depend on India for their regional and international trade. In particular, Nepal is increasingly dependent on India for its 68 percent of exports and 62 percent of imports in a year. Again Bangladesh imports 13 percent of its global imports from Bhutan, India, and Nepal, but its export to these countries is low, compared to import. The interesting development is that Bangladesh's trade with Bhutan has witnessed a steep rise in recent years which is carried out overland using the India, Bangladesh and Bhutan transit corridor. India's trade with adjacent countries like Bhutan and Nepal has also gone up, which is again carried overland.

If we analyse India's trade with Bangladesh, it is found that it has been witnessing a phenomenal rise. Here, we should remember the fact that they do not have any bilateral transit arrangement. The trade between Bangladesh and Nepal witnessed a marginal rise between 2000 and 2006. It is estimated that trade between the two countries carried overland in 2006 through a tiny corridor between India, Nepal and Bangladesh was almost US$ 4.50 million. Thus it is seen that trans-border relationship among the South Asian countries is now increasing. The increasing rate of export and import indicates that now the region is moving forward to establish a free trade arrangement which helps the region to develop rapidly.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

International Conventions and South Asian Countries

Recognising the fact that harmonized transport facilitation measures at the national and international levels are the prerequisite for enhancing international trade and transport along road and rail routes of international importance, the UNESCAP at its 48th session adopted resolution 48/11 of 23rd April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures. It recommended that the countries in the region, if they had not already done so, should consider the possibility of acceding to seven international conventions in the field of land transport facilitation, which were originally developed under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE): (a) Convention on Road Traffic, 1968; (b) Convention on Road Signs and Signals, 1968; (c) Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), 1975; (d) Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road

Vehicles, 1956; (e) Customs Convention on Containers, 1972; (f) International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982; and (g) Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), 1956. (UNESCAP, 2007)

It needs mention here that among the countries of South Asian region Bangladesh and Sri Lanka had signed the "Convention on Road Traffic", while India and Pakistan had signed both "Convention on Road Traffic" and "Convention on Road Signs and Signals". Bhutan, Maldives, and Nepal have not signed any one of these seven UN Conventions. Except Afghanistan, no South Asian countries have signed the "Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles" or the "Convention on the International Transport of Goods under TIR Carnets". Accession to different versions of conventions is likely to undermine facilitation objectives. For instance, many countries are contracting parties to the Convention on Road Traffic (1949), but have not ratified the new version of the convention (1968). The Convention on Road Traffic (1949) is still valid while maintaining relations between the Contracting Parties. Therefore, in order to facilitate the cross-border movements of goods and vehicles, South Asian countries should pursue a closer regional cooperation to accede to all of these conventions.

1.4.3 Co-operation against Trans-national Crime and Terrorism

Now it is seen that cross-border terrorism or criminal activities are increasing day by day. Because of the presence of differences among countries, the existence of regional associations does not itself guarantee sound cooperation. The need of the hour is not only to break down barriers to trade and transit, but also develop cooperative means to address various common issues. Such agreements usually relate to sharing of information and intelligence and joint investigations.

In South Asian region mainly India and Pakistan have had a long-standing rivalry since the partition imposed on India by the British in 1947. This rivalry has been far more damaging to SAARC. We already know that the SAARC was established in 1985 and it is only partially successful in solving regional issues. One of the factors creating problems in the region is flourishing cross-border illegal arms trade supporting various criminal and insurgency activities.

It is worth mentioning that South Asian nations have implemented a *Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and an Additional Protocol*

to the Regional Convention on Terrorism under the banner of SAARC. These two documents emphasise cooperation against organised crime and terrorism amongst relevant agencies, especially in information exchange, completion of all law harmonisations and the criminalisation of terrorism, as mandated by UN Resolution 1373 of 2001. They also have a Regional Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and finalised a text of the Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. But, the actual state of cross-border cooperation against terrorism and crime within the SAARC region, however, is a far-cry from the declared policy. But in terms of India and Bangladesh, it is seen that in the recent years they have established a good relationship to combat cross border terrorism. Even Bangladesh and Bhutan gave permission to Indian army to undertake operation against terrorist groups in their land. Moreover Bangladesh had declared that they do not provide their land to use against India by any terrorist groups.

Again, in 2006, India and Pakistan established a bilateral panel at Additional Secretary level for exchanging counter-terrorism information. The panel was established after the so-called 7/11 bombings in Mumbai, in which over 200 people died and which were initially blamed by India on the ISI and Pakistani-based L-e-T. Following the bombings, India became silent on the Kashmir peace process until the two heads of state met informally at the Cuba Non-Aligned Movement leaders' summit. Subsequent talks at Foreign Secretary level helped to establish the panel. During this period the panel has met five times but failed to make any real progress.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

India – Bangladesh Agreement on Railways

India and Bangladesh have signed agreements relating to operation of railways for the purpose of trade in goods and services between the two countries. These agreements derive directly from the provisions of the India - Bangladesh Trade Agreement. Under these agreements, both the countries agreed to operate trains (goods/passengers) through three border routes, namely, Gede (India) – Darsana (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India) - Rohanpur (Bangladesh), and Agartala (India) – Akhaura (Bangladesh).

1.4.4 Water Management

We know that 'water' is a key issue in poverty reduction, sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the UN. Water is essential for the production of food, and lack of water is the first cause of death and disease in the world. The South Asian region faces many water related environmental challenges in the present time. Examples include the assurance of an adequate and clean water supply, the prevention of urban and basin flooding, search for a sensible sewage strategy, the achievement of sustainable water quality to enhance quality of life, and the protection of aquatic and coastal fisheries. More than 700 million people in Asia do not have consistent access to safe drinking water, and more than twice that number lack access to sanitation.

The Asian Development Bank has organized various conferences on water security and management in Asia. The ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) countries have also started extensive research and networking activities in setting priorities and looking into ways and means of supporting effective water management in the region. With Asia and the Pacific, Integrated Water and Environmental Management Plans (IWEMPs) were developed in the region with the aim of ensuring decent water quality. The IWEMPs preserve fresh water resources, controlling pollution, treating wastewater, preventing groundwater overdraft, and wastewater reuse.

The relationship between Bhutan and India is a great example of the politicization of water issues in South Asia. Bhutan, a technically less equipped

has to depend on India. Non-governmental organisations and civil society have taken important steps to encourage regional cooperation, particularly in the sharing of the Himalayan waters between Nepal (upstream) and India (downstream). Again India and Pakistan in 1960 signed the Indus Water Treaty and to share the water of Ganga, India and Bangladesh signed the Farakka Treaty in 1996.

Check Your Progress :

1. What do you mean by trans-border relationship?

2. Discuss the issues which are preventing the South Asian region to develop a healthy relationship among its nations.

3. Discuss the measures taken by the South Asian nations to combat terrorism.

4. Discuss the importance of trade and commerce in the development of bilateral relationship among the South Asian nations.

4. Migration is a barrier of development. Discuss.

1.4.5 Human Trafficking and Human Rights

The United Nations defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation." Estimates place the value of human trafficking industry at US$10 billion per annum.

The South Asian region is seen as the most vulnerable region for human trafficking because of its huge population pyramid, growing urbanization, and extensive poverty. Trafficking is a violation of human rights. Victims of trafficking suffer from physical and mental abuse and social stigmatization. They become isolated, losing ties with their former lives and families. Trafficking undermines development efforts and raises social and health costs. Women are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. Data from

2004 shows that of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year, 80 % are women and girls.

Despite having an alarming rate of human trafficking cases the policies to combat trafficking are meagre in South Asian region. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) support regional cooperation to combat trafficking and reduce undocumented migration and forced labour. This Commission further supports capacity-building and economic empowerment of women; and promote adoption and implementation of international legal instruments. It is seen that almost all the human trafficking routes within South Asia run from the less developed to the more developed regions. But to combat human trafficking, the countries of South Asian region have only focused on the exchange of information, legal coordination, law enforcement, training, institutional capacity-building and extra-regional cooperation. It needs mention here that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has issued the first regional anti-trafficking treaty in the Asian continent.

SAQ :

Do you think that South Asian countries have adopted proper strategy to deal with the human trafficking problem? (60 words)

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1.5 Regional and International Organisation and Trans-Border relationship

In the era of globalisation we cannot deny the role of national, regional and international organisation in world politics. Since the First and Second World War attempts are made to establish some international and regional organisations to make the nations closer and to resolve their problems through mutual understanding. The South Asian region is one of the backward regions and has experienced colonial exploitation. After independence almost all

the nations of this region took membership of UNO and showed their commitment towards establishment of world peace. Again, South Asian nations have also established a regional organisation to resolve their common matters, known as SAARC. Here, in this section we are going to discuss the role of UNO and SAARC in South Asian region.

- **United Nations Organisation**

Since the establishment of UNO, it has tried to identify key groups in this region willing to work together on practical matters related to the implementation of different aspects of the strategy. In addition, the UN seeks to find ways to enlist the academic and research communities in the region to promote UN Strategy implementation. It should be pointed out here that UN is basically concerned with the counter terrorist activities. Therefore, realising the fact that there is lack of cooperation among the South Asian nations, UN works for shaping regional response to terrorism.

The UN has an important role to play in terms of conflict prevention and crisis management in South Asian region. According to the Secretary-General's Report (2008) on the Strategy implementation efforts of the United Nations, "*the Special Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General, in providing mediation support and backstopping the Department of Political Affairs, have helped to facilitate peace agreements in thirteen conflicts around the world since 2001*". (www.un.org/terrorism/strategy-forthepress).

Among the South Asian countries, the U N deputed missions in Nepal and Afghanistan and a military observer group deployed along the Line of Control in India and Pakistan. The UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) provides an example of where the UN has played a largely constructive role in "*monitoring ceasefire arrangements, providing technical support for the conduct of the election of a Constituent Assembly in a free and fair atmosphere and providing a small team of electoral monitors*". (United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on the Request of Nepal for United Nations Assistance in Support of its Peace Process, UN Doc. S/2008/454, July 10, 2008.)

- **SAARC**

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established by the India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal

and Bhutan on December, 1985 to promote regional cooperation among these nations. In April 2007, Afghanistan joined SAARC. It is an economic and political organisation and the programmes of the SAARC have focused on internal regional cooperation designed to face the following important challenges :

(i) Building on progress of SAFTA

(ii) Poverty reduction

(iii) Improving intra-regional and inter-regional connectivity

(iv) Securing energy security; v) Management of natural disasters

(vi) Protection and preservation of environment

(vii) Fighting terrorism and extremism.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Relationship of China with South Asian Countries

China, the super power of Asian continent plays a crucial role in this region. The relationships of China with South-Asia countries are on the right track with a great potential and bright future. On the bilateral level, China has promoted its relationship with all the countries in South Asia. Visit of the Chinese President to India and Pakistan has strengthened the strategic and cooperative partnership between China and India while enhancing the "all-weather" friendship between China and Pakistan. The relationships between China and other South Asian countries are stable now. In the mean time, China has some major border disputes and water sharing disputes with India. To make an influence in this region and to subvert India, China is trying to interfere in the domestic policies of its neighbouring countries. Moreover, it has provided military equipments to Pakistan, the rival of India.

However, China has shown its commitment to contribute to the regional development of SAARC as an observer. While there were some unresolved issues, these should not be obstacles in the way of strengthening cooperation between China and the South Asian countries to create a win-win situation for both sides. China took the observer status in the SAARC to take an opportunity to enter South Asian market. Its priorities are trade, cooperation in energy and natural resources, infrastructure and communication and people-to-people relations. The economic relations between China and South Asian countries had mounted rapidly and China's trade with them in 2006 amounted to about US$ 26 billion.

- **SAFTA**

The Agreement on the South Asian Free Trade Area is an agreement reached at the 12th SAARC summit at Islamabad on January 6, 2004. The foreign ministers of SAARC countries had created an agreement on SAFTA that there should be zero custom duty on the trade practically all products in the region by the end of 2012. one of the basic principles of SAFTA is that for the benefit equitability all contracting states itshould take into account their respective levels of economic and industrial development, the pattern of their external trade, and trade and tariff policies and systems. SAFTA also paid attention to give recognition to the special needs of the least developed contracting states. Since the inception of SAFTA so far four rounds of negotiations have been concluded covering over 5000 commodities.

- **South Asia-EU**

The European Economic Community had established bilateral cooperation agreement with four of South Asian countries before the SAARC was established. Now the EU has strategic partnership with India. Moreover, EU has developed bilateral relationship with five members of SAARC. As early as in 1988 the European Parliament had adopted a resolution welcoming the establishment of the SAARC and expressing readiness of the European Economic Community to establish cooperation with the SAARC. In 1996, the EU entered into a Technical Cooperation Agreement with the SAARC. Such efforts of world community helped the South Asian nations to develop their trans-border relationship and provide a platform to work as a unit.

1.6 Evaluation of Trans-border Relationship in South Asian Region

Thus from the above discussion it is seen that South Asian economies are aiming to undertake trade facilitation measures to reduce current physical and non-physical barriers to trade by means of both visible infrastructure and invisible infrastructure (such as reformed policies, procedures, and regulations). But due to the lack of adequate research on trade facilitation, strategies it has failed to develop a healthy relationship among the South Asian nations. Though all the South Asian nations seek to promote regional cooperation, bilateral disputes, especially between India and Pakistan stands

in the way of favourable outcomes. Even when regional solutions are available, the nations do not take recourse to the solutions.

From the above discussions it is now clear to us that despite the establishment of a common forum like SAARC for addressing their common problems, this has failed due to the troubled relationships between Pakistan and India to promote regional cooperation like its counterpart ASEAN. One of the manifestations of SAARC's overall failure has been the region's low intra-regional trade. Rajan notes that intra-SAARC trade is only 5 percent of the region's total trade (in other words the aggregate value of trade of all SAARC countries), compared with 62 percent for the EU and 55 percent for the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). Despite the introduction of the first phase of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) regime in 2007, South Asia has significantly higher sets of tariffs than other comparable regions and very much higher non-tariff barriers. (Rajan, 'Renewing SAARC')

The problem with South Asian nations is that Pakistan has little incentive to co-operate with India. Pakistan uses the cross-border terrorism of groups like Lashkar-e- Taiba (L-e-T) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (J-e-M) as a cat's paw in its proxy war with India, especially over the Kashmir dispute. There is ample evidence that Pakistan has officially fostered, supplied and trained such groups. (ICG Report No. 79, 24 June 2004)

With SAFTA, South Asian countries are now looking towards deeper integration of the region. However, in reality, South Asia is far from realising its full potential. One of the critical factors prohibiting South Asia in achieving its full potential is absence of regional transit trade.

To sum up we can say that due to the diverse, complex and plural nature of the South Asian nations, they have faced several problems which are generated within its own external and domestic sphere. Such problems barred them to work together and establish national consolidation. It is proved with the break up of East Pakistan and birth of Bangladesh in 1971. It needs mention here that the same degree of such complexity does not exist equally in all nations. The Indo-Pak relation has also influenced the relationship amongst the other countries of the region. The region has witnessed four major wars and several near wars. Again, Indo-Pak crisis over nuclear tests and the low intensity conflict over Kashmir are viewed as

a flashpoint. Tensions between pluralist democratic governments and unitary form of non-pluralist governments in the sub continent further add to the imbalances and tensions into the region. The situation has resulted in the involvement of extra regional powers in South Asian conflicts, thus making the situation complex and complicating intra regional relations. (Ghosal 1998.)

To enhance the trans border relationship among the South Asian nations Dr. Sartaz Aziz, former Finance and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Dr. Kamal Hossain, former Foreign and Law Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, former Foreign Minister of Nepal and Dr. Mahmood Shaugee, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation of Maldives had made the following suggestions:

Due importance may be accorded to the prospects for sub-regional cooperation while pursuing the goal of strengthening overall cooperation in South Asia. Geographical realities, resource endowments and manifest complementarities point to significant benefits which could result for all partners from sub regional cooperation in the North-Eastern sub-region of South Asia, comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and North Eastern areas of India. They have also made the statement that, *In terms of sequencing, it will not be necessary to require that SAARC itself must make substantial progress in different areas before it expands its horizons and strengthens cooperation with other regions. The two processes can move on parallel tracks and become mutually reinforcing.* (SAARC 2015 Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia ,The New Delhi Statement on SAARC 2015 and Asian Resurgence)

SAQ :

Critically evaluate the existing Trans border relationship among the South Asian countries. (50 words)

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Check Your Progress :

1. Discuss the role of China in South Asian region.

2. Examine the role of international community in bringing co-operation among the nations in South Asian region.

3. What is SAFTA? Discuss the aims and objectives of SAFTA.

4. Examine the cross-border trade relationship among the South Asian nations.

5. Write a note on

    a. SAARC

    b. Indo-China relationship

    c. South Asia and EU

6. Examine the trans-border relationship in South Asian region.

1.7 Summing Up

After going through this unit, now you are in a position to analyse the trans-border relationship in the South Asian region. In this unit you have learnt that the South Asian region got international attention after the acquisition of nuclear power by India and Pakistan. Again their efforts towards the establishment of a free trade zone enhanced their trade relationship. However, SAARC and its sister organisations have not been able to realise its full potential because of the existence of serious political differences and disputes in the region giving rise to tensions and mistrust among member states. It needs pragmatic and implementable policy, institutionalised approach and a sincere and transparent implementation by credible officials to achieve this goal.

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Unit II
SAARC and Regional co-operation

Contents

2.1 Introduction

South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation in short SAARC is a regional organisation which was established to develop an area in terms of economic and social development through collective effort. The regional organisations basically facilitate the states of a region to emerge as developed countries undermining their long history of enmities and hostilities. You have already learnt the basic structure of SAARC in your second semester. Here in this unit we are going to discuss the role of SAARC in bringing regional co-operation among its member states. An attempt is also made to examine the various problems faced by the SAARC to bring a common platform for development.

2.2 Objectives

We know that to retain their individual identity and sovereignty and to make a common platform for development seven nations of South Asian region

formed SAARC after their independence from colonial rule. After reading this unit you will be able to

- *discuss* the basic structure of SAARC

- *examine* the aims, objectives and goals of SAARC

- *describe* the role of SAARC in the South Asian region

2.3 Formation of SAARC

The concept of SAARC was first conceived by the Bangladeshi President Zia-ur- Rahman in 1980. He had tried to develop cooperation among the regional countries of South Asia through one common organisation. It needs mention here that the region of SAARC lies in the south of Himalayas and is surrounded by Hindkush Mountains and consists of seven countries, i.e. India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives. The active initiative of Rahman with the aim of peace keeping, the foreign secretaries of the above mentioned seven nations had conducted a meeting in Colombo in April 1981.

The idea of a common forum to resolve their common problems received immediate approval from the states. Only India and Pakistan despite acknowledging its significance were reluctant to join it. Finally after a prolonged discussion all nations were agreed to form a common organisation for themselves.

As you all know that the assassination of Indira Gandhi and Zia- ur- Rahman had brought a drastic change in the South Asian Region in 1985, when all were set to hold the first summit of SAARC in Dhaka. However, the first summit was held in Dhaka in fixed time on 8th December, 1985. For the first time, all the leaders of these seven countries joined a multilateral summit for informal consultation at regional level.

2.3.1 Aims, Objectives and Goals of SAARC

You have already learnt that the SAARC is a common forum of seven South Asian nations. Here you should know the meaning of a charter. Charter is sometimes relating with the constitution, where rules and procedures are written. The charter of SAARC consists of ten articles. It describes the

conceptual framework, objectives, principles and guidelines of the organization.

The charter of SAARC clearly defined the aims objectives and goals of SAARC as follows:

- To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;

- To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and realize their full potentials;

- To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;

- To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;

- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;

- To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;

- To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and

- To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

Thus, it is seen that the basic aim of SAARC is the overall development of this region through mutual co-operation and coordination among the member states.

Apart from these the charter of SAARC also defined some principles. These are as follows:

- Co-operation within the framework of the Association is based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and mutual benefit.

- Such co-operation is to complement and not to substitute bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

- Such cooperation should be consistent with bilateral and multilateral obligations of the member states.

- Decisions at all levels in SAARC are taken on the basis of unanimity.

- Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from its deliberations.

It needs mention here that keeping in view the conflicting position of mutual relationship of the regional states the last principles were taken. However, its meetings have provided informal opportunity to discuss such issues on the sideline of association.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Structure of SAARC

SAARC was established in the year 1985, and since its inception in world politics it has made impressive progress in organizational evolution. It has now four tire structure, as

- The Annual Summit

- The Council of Ministers

- The Standing Committee of the Secretaries

- Technical Committee of Officials and experts. Since 1987, it also established its permanent Secretariat located in Kathmandu and its Secretary General is selected by rotation in alphabetical order.

SAQ:

Do you think that the principles of SAARC are properly implemented? (100 words)

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2.4 SAARC and Regional Co-operation

After discussing the aims, objectives and goals of SAARC, now let us discuss the role of SAARC in regional co-operation. As we know that the basic motive behind the formation of SAARC was to bring stability in South Asian regions through mutual co-operation. In world politics we have witnessed establishment of various regional organisations as European Union, which gained success in bringing not only stability but also prosperity and development. To achieve economic development and to combat the common problems of this region, SAARC provides a common platform for its member states since its inception.

In terms of economy we know that Asia accounts for more than 30% of world GDP and contributes half of the global growth in recent years. Despite high growth rates, Asia is still facing considerable socio-economic challenges. If Asia is to re-emerge as a major power in the global economy and to successfully address its own challenges and issues, there is a need to make the region's economies more integrated regionally and internationally. In this context SAARC came forward and provided a common platform for their economic development. For example, South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement was done under the banner of SAARC. Again, in 1993, SAARC countries signed an agreement to gradually lower tariffs within the region, in Dhaka. Finally in the 12th SAARC Summit at Islamabad, SAARC member countries devised the South Asia Free Trade Agreement which created a framework for the establishment of a free trade area covering 1.6 billion people. This agreement went into force on January 1, 2008. Under this agreement, SAARC members will bring their duties down to 20 per cent by 2009.

In the Twelfth SAARC Summit of the Heads of State and Government, which convened, in Islamabad, from 4-6 January, leaders addressed means of increasing regional co-operation in the areas of economy; poverty alleviation; science and technology development; social, cultural and environmental issues; and terrorism of prevention. The outcome was adoption of an Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism approved days earlier by the Council of Ministers. The convention was come into force 30 days after the final instrument of ratification was deposited. Furthermore, counter- terrorism was a major

topic addressed in the Summit Declaration. Heads of state and government condemned terrorist violence in all forms and stated that terrorism continues to be a major threat in South Asia, as well as a challenge to all states worldwide. They also stressed that terrorism violates the United Nations and SAARC charters and reaffirmed their commitment to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression on Terrorism in addition to other relevant international conventions to which they are party.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Regional organizations within the sphere of the UN

When the victorious leaders of allied powers were discussing the scope of new world order after the World War II, the newly would-be independent nations in Asia and Africa wanted to have regional platform for solving their disputes. Apart from the issue of veto among the permanent members, the issue that member-nations had while joining the United Nations was whether their sovereignty would be compromised by joining an international mutli-lateral organisation.

In that context, many regional organisations were formed after 1945. Some of the organisations such as African Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organizations, Australia, New Zealand, United States, Treaty and Arab Union were formed for regional understanding of the political issues. Some of the regional organisations such as NATO are military and some like the African Union or the South Asian Association of the Regional Co-operation are meant to address regional issues amicably.

However, all the regional organisations per se needed to be within the scope of the UN and should comply with the UN mandate of establishing international peace and security.

The SAARC also plays a major role on the Suppression of Terrorism which addresses issues involving the funding of terrorism. Hence, a protocol was designed to strengthen the Convention "by criminalizing the pro-vision, collection or acquisition of funds for the purpose of committing terrorist acts" and by increasing efforts to prevent the financing of terrorism. Specifically, it encourages states to hold individuals or groups that have committed terrorist-related offences liable domestically, and to implement practical measures and adapt domestic legislation to prevent and suppress

terrorist financing. The ministers also adopted several other documents, including the final draft of a document establishing a South Asian Free Trade Area and a social charter.

Thus it is seen that, the heads of state of SAARC member states underscored the importance of controlling terrorism in the region, calling on deepened cooperation and improvements to implement the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and the Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention. Member states continued to stress the importance of achieving a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

2.4.1 INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF ACTION (IPA)

The IPA is a key component of the SAARC process and includes twelve agreed areas of cooperation, each being covered by a designated Technical Committee. These are as follows:

1. Agriculture (TC01)

Since the establishment of SAARC it is observed that agriculture is among the five areas identified for promoting regional co-operation among the SAARC member states. The arrangement to promote co-operation in this field the first meeting of TC01 was held in 1983. It needs mention here that along with the agriculture, forestry was also added in the working of this Technical Committee. Under the provisions of this arrangement SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) at Dhaka in 1988.

2. Communications (TC02)

After agriculture Telecommunications and Postal Services got priority in the SAARC discussion as means to develop co-operation among its member sates. For this purpose TC on Telecommunications and TC on Postal Services both established in 1983. It is worth mentioning that both the committee had functioned separately in the initial stages of its establishment but in 1993 both were merged into one single committee. The committee aimed at bringing an over-all improvement in the postal services in the region, the work programme in this sector included training, seminars, workshops study tours etc.

3. Education, Culture and Sports (TC03)

Educational sector occupies an important position in SAARC agenda for developing co-operation among its member states. Therefore to improve educational level in the SAARC region a Technical Committee was set up in 1989. Again, to enhance the co-operation in the fields of sports, arts, and culture another Technical Committee was set up in 1983 and were amalgamated into a single TC on Education and Culture with effect from 1993. The priority sector in this field are Women and Education; Universal Primary Education; Literacy, Post Literacy and Continuing Education; Educational Research; Science and Technical Education, Education for the Underserved Areas and Distance Education.

4. Environment (TC04)

in the present time, environmental degradation emerged as a burning problem and to address this issue the third SAARC Summit (Kathmandu, 1987) decided to set up a commission to study on "Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment". The recommendations made by this commission were referred to the Committee on Environment which was set up on February 1992. The committee recommended that immediate action is needed for strengthening the environment management infrastructure. The committee seeks to address the problems like land and water planning issues, research and action programme on mountain development in the Himalayan Region; coastal zone management programme; a SAARC forestry and watershed programme; programme on energy and environment. It needs mention here that SAARC also address the issues like pollution control and hazardous waste management programme. Again a SAARC cooperative programme for biodiversity management; peoples participation in resource management; information exchange on low cost and environmentally sound habitat technologies were also important steps towards this process of bringing environmental awareness. Establishment of a SAARC relief and assistance mechanism for disaster and regional co-operation on the development of modern disaster warning systems is a major step taken by the SAARC to improve the victims conditions.

5. Health and Population Activities (TC05)

The last area for co-operation is health and population management. For this purpose a technical committee was set up in 1984. The primary focus of this committee was children and population welfare and policy, maternal and child health, primary health care, disabled and handicapped persons, control and eradication of major diseases in the region such as malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis, diarrhoea diseases, rabies, AIDS, and iodine deficiency disorder.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Designated SAARC Years

Since 1989, it has been the practice to designate SAARC Years to focus on specific themes of common concern to member states. Plans of Action both at the regional and national levels were implemented in the following years :

1989 - SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking

1990 - SAARC Year of Girl-Child

1991 - SAARC Year of Shelter

1992 - SAARC Year of Environment

1993 - SAARC Year of Disabled Persons

1994 - SAARC Year of the Youth

1995 - SAARC Year of Poverty Eradication

In addition, 1991-2000 A.D. has been designated as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl-Child" and 1996 as the SAARC Year of Literacy.

2.4.2 SAARC Funds

To improve the economic condition of its member states and to boost up the developmental process SAARC had established many common funds as:

- *South Asian Development Fund (SADF)*

It is worth mentioning that in order to establish a South Asian Development Fund, we know that a panel of experts was formed under the chairmanship

of H.E. Lyonpo Dawa Tshering, the Foreign Minister of Bhutan. The panel of experts consisting of eminent persons from the SAARC region held three meetings and the Chairman had exploratory consultations with the potential donors. The panel had recommended for establishing an Inter Governmental Group (IGG) on South Asian Development Fund (SADF) to define the size, structure, resources and operational modalities of the proposed Fund and also to examine the relationship of the Fund with the SAARC fund for Regional Projects including the possibility of their merger.

- *SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (SFRP)*

Again a fund known as Fund for Regional Projects was set up in 1991 for providing credit on easy terms identification and development of projects having a regional character. Council for SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (CSFRP) is responsible for the management of the above mentioned fund. It needs mention here that the Council is comprised of representatives of the Development Financing Institutions of SAARC member states. So far feasibility studies for thirteen projects have been undertaken which cover hydropower, sericulture, dairy products, medicinal cultivation and herbs etc.

Thus, it is seen that economic co-operation and integration is based on complementarities which help in the maximization of the mutual benefits. It will be achieved by working together, countries enjoy social and economic benefits that otherwise may not have occurred solely through individual efforts. Regional integration can produce win-win outcomes in both the quantity and quality of economic growth, while aiding in the reduction of global imbalances. More importantly, regional integration can also be a potential driver of sustainable economic growth that will contribute in poverty reduction goals in developing countries, if accompanied by pro-poor national policies. So it needs some extra efforts to balance the economic growth. For this reason the SAARC has maintained a good and diplomatic relation with some other countries, for example, Memorandum of Understanding on the Trade Analysis and Information System (TRAINS) was signed in February 1993. The global aim of TRAINS is to increase transparency in international trading conditions and thus facilitate trade. This was the first

Agreement of cooperation to be signed by SAARC with an international organisation. Under this Agreement, UNCTAD provides the SAARC Secretariat, on a regular basis, an updated copy of TRAINS CD-ROM containing latest data on trade control measures prevailing in developed and developing countries. The SAARC Secretariat in turn updates trade control measures prevailing in the SAARC member states on a regular basis and forwards the same to UNCTAD Secretariat, on computer floppies for inco-operation in the updated versions of TRAINS CD-ROM (www.south-asia.com/saarc)

Apart from these efforts, SAARC has also entered into the co-operation arrangement with the Colombo Plan Bureau for promotion on the Role of SAARC NGOs in anti-narcotic activities. In this context, representative of NGOs from seven countries attended a meeting of the SAARC Forum on the role of NGOs in Drug demand reduction in Dhaka on 10-13 April 1995.

Hence it can be said that, SAARC provides continuity to relations among the member countries especially when bilateral relations are at the critical juncture. Since the beginning of the nineties there has been a conscious policy direction by India towards normalisation of relations with its neighbours, especially the smaller neighbours. In this context, the importance of the SAARC Forum for India is emerging more clearly. In this continuum, the Gujral Doctrine too, recognising the importance of the neighbours (especially the smaller neighbours), is based on the assumption that the strength and stature of India cannot be divorced from the quality of the relations which it has with its neighbours.

Check Your Progress :

1. Write a note on the organizational structure of SAARC.

2. What are the basic principles of SAARC?

3. Discuss the importance of SAARC in the context of economic development of the region.

4. Write a note on the role of SAARC in bringing mutual co-operation among the member states.

2.5 Problems faced by the SAARC

Though SAARC has emphasized the need for strengthening intergovernmental efforts with increased people to people contacts through greater participation of its member states, still the organization is unable to overcome some problems in the field of regional co-operation. There is no single factor/reason as main cause of conflict in this region. It is embroiled in many issues and provides a disappointing picture in every social, economic and political context. So the region is almost perpetually plagued by various inter and intra-state conflicts and crisis stemming from the lackadaisical approach of the ruling elite toward resolution of such problems which are based on narrow considerations of caste, religion, ethnicity, language, community, and the like. This distorts the national integrity/unity and the overall order situation of the affected state (s). In other words, the persistence of multifarious problems, both within and between the member states hampers the sustenance of an environment wherein basic essential needs of the common man are fulfilled.

Though since the inception of SAARC it is working for developing the relationship among the South Asian Nations, their diversity always becomes barrier in front of the organization. Another reason behind the failure of SAARC is that the South Asian Region is an area of tremendous political complexities. For example, states like Pakistan and Bangladesh have been largely ruled by authoritarian military rulers. India, per se faces several unresolved issues that stem from internal as well as external sources. The conflict between India, Pakistan which includes ethnicity, border disputes, separatist demands, terrorism and subversive activities, communalism, religious problems and so on becomes the barrier on the way of SAARC's success.

It needs mention here that The Charter of the SAARC does not allow to discuss bilateral and contentious issues but because of these issues SAARC Summits have been interrupted and failed to evolve as a true bloc. It seems that SAARC should consider bilateral and contentious issues to be discussed for its long life. Moreover, the very fact that the inter-state problems, interests are considered prior to the socio-economic and political well being of the country as a whole is detrimental for the development of genuinely democratic policy.

Again, problem of civil violence in recent years has emerged as a more serious security issue than the problem of inter-state warfare in South Asia. India has been variously preoccupied with quelling separatists and religious conflicts such as in the state of Punjab and Kashmir (an issue that remains contentious between India and Pakistan). Another example of such tension is Religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims in Gujrat and Mumbai are always high. For example, Mumbai was adversely affected by religious violence in 1993 and Gujarat in the January of 2002.

Thus it is seen that South Asia is one of the 'critical regions with complex security' in the world primarily due to the fact that most of the South Asian states are engulfed with varying degrees of conflicts and disputes. Inter-state conflicts in South Asia probably are highest compared to any other regional blocs. So SAARC as a regional organization is failed to promote the common interest of its member states.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Regional Conventions/Agreements Under Saarc

1. Agreement on Establishing the SAARC Food Security Reserve (SFSR)

During the Third SAARC Summit (Kathmandu, 1987), an Agreement on establishing the SAARC Food Security Reserve was signed. The Agreement, which came into force on 12 August 1988, provided for a reserve of foodgrains for meeting emergencies in member countries. The size of the reserve at present stands at 241,580 tonnes.

The SAARC Food Security Reserve Board comprises of representatives from each member country and meets once a year. The main functions of the Board are to undertake a periodic review and assessment of the food situation and prospects in the region including factors such as production, consumption, trade, prices, quality and stocks of foodgrains.

2. SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism

The SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in Kathmandu in November 1987 during the Third SAARC Summit and came into force on 22 August 1988 following ratification by all member states.

The Convention embodies and gives a regional focus to many of the well-established principles of international law in this respect. Under its provisions,

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member states are committed to extradite or prosecute alleged terrorists thus preventing them from enjoying safe heavens.

Regional Cooperation is also envisaged in preventive action to combat terrorism. Exchange of information, intelligence and expertise are among the areas identified for mutual cooperation under the Convention. Cooperation among Liaison Officers (Anti Terrorist Law Enforcement Officers) is being developed through holding international meetings continually at regular intervals to monitor, update, evaluate and improve counter-terrorism strategies.

The SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) has been established in Colombo to collate, analyse and disseminate information about the terrorist incidence, tactics, strategies and methods. Efforts are being undertaken for strengthening STOMD further.

The Eighth SAARC Summit, (New Delhi, May 1995) expressed serious concern on the spread of terrorism in and outside the region and reiterated their unequivocal condemnation to acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal, It deplored all such acts for their ruinous impact on life, property, socio-economic development and political stability as well as on regional and international peace and cooperation. The Summit Leaders reiterated the need for a constant dialogue and interaction among the concerned agencies of member states.

The Ministers sign the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism in Kathmandu in November 1987.

3. SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

The SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances which was signed in Maldives during the Fifth SAARC Summit in November 1990 came into force on 15 September 1993, following ratification by all member states.

The Convention seeks to reinforce and supplement at the regional level, the relevant international conventions and promote regional cooperation among member states in both law enforcement and demand reduction. Incorporating the generally accepted principle of extradition or prosecution consistent with the respective national legislative regimes, the Convention envisages the widest measures for mutual legal assistance among member states in investigation, prosecution and judicial proceedings in respect of drug offences. The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Technical Committee on Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse, during its annual meetings.(www.south-asia.com/saarc)

2.5 Role and Relevance of SAARC in the Contemporary Period

It is well known that the potentiality of regional integration in South Asia nevertheless is not promising compared to other organisations. To some extent SAARC lacks minimum requirements to be a case of successful economic union. However we cannot ignore the role of SAARC in the contemporary period. In this crucial juncture of world politics where monopoly of USA is seen everywhere through SAARC the region still maintain its regional identity. Though the current level of cooperation in South Asia, however, is manifested by historical legacy of state formation, economic well-being and the size and power of individual states, it is good sign that in the recent years the trade among the member states of SAARC is increasing day by day.

In the contemporary world politics SAARC becomes a forum for South Asian people. As we know the Cold War gave western European nations another urgent reason to bind economically together to gain strategic strength. This drives home the point that political harmonisation must precede economic harmonisation. The same pattern is evident in the ASEAN, which was formed as a political grouping to oppose threat of Communist expansion from Vietnam and China. This helped to bring together ASEAN members otherwise engaged in political disputes. Though these factors hardly exist in South Asia, the organisation of SAARC still plays a crucial role in harmonising these conflicted countries.

It is known to all that power determines the status of nation in international politics. In international relations a small or weak neighbour has to live under fear when its large neighbour has 'expansionist' policy and there are unresolved and complicating factors in their relations. In this situation SAARC provides security to its member states. In this context we can say that as it is seen India continuously shows her hegemonic flavour towards her small neighbours like Bhutan and Nepal. But it is SAARC who barred India to take any decisive decisions.

However, it may be noted that South Asia emerged as a regional entity in the international political system with the creation of SAARC but it failed to strengthen regional cohesiveness. Regional cooperation in South Asia cannot be said to have evolved into a complete block in terms of 'regionalism and economic integration' due mainly to the prevalence of conflict over the desire of peace and stability. So it can be said that the role and relevance of SAARC is under scrutiny.

Thus it can be said that SAARC will not succeed in providing a platform to the people of the region and strengthening the region on the international arena unless its two main countries India and Pakistan make real peace with each other. This mean resolving all the disputes mainly relating to Kashmir, opening borders, free trade, absolute trust for each other and establishing zero tolerance to terrorism against each other. Until this happens, SAARC will always be just a summit which will happen every year in one of its member countries. India and Pakistan can resolves all their issues and make peace if they are honestly into it and want to achieve it practically. This may lead to the failure of SAARC as a regional union. India and Pakistan need to leave behind their old enemity and make peace. Here we may cite the example of Germany and France which made peace with each other after the war which contributed towards the creation of EU.

SAQ:

Do you think that SAARC will help in resolving disputes between India and Pakistan. (50 words)

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2.6 Summing Up

After going through this unit, now you are in a position to examine the role of SAARC in the field of regional co-operation. It is known to us that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) comprises of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. After a close analysis of SAARC, we have found that SAARC is a manifestation of the determination of the people of South Asia to work together towards finding solutions to their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding and to create an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits. The main goal of the Association is to accelerate the process of economic and social development in member states, through joint action in the agreed areas of cooperation.

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