

Assessing the Obstacles to Regional Integration for Development, Governance and Diplomacy: A Comparative Analysis of The SAARC and The European Union

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Abstract

This research paper sprang up out of the analytical discourse on the impediments to regional integration, confronted by the EU and the SAARC. The EU, since its inception, has been under the shadow of more dreaded challenges in contrast with the SAARC's. Thus, anchored to the qualitative document analysis (QDA), this research paper discovers a multi-pronged finding. Firstly, despite the menaces of right wing extremism, historical rifts among the states and the unprecedented Ukraine War are making inroads in the march to regional integration, the EU has weathered the storm masterly by virtue of bilateral solutions and advanced political systems. Secondly, the dark clouds of terrorism, complex territorial and historical disputes have been hovering over the SAARC since 1985, with absence of bilateral resolution mechanism, therefore putting the spanner in the working of the association. In order to turn the tables, the SAARC really needs to transform itself into a citadel of bilateral diplomacy and developed political systems.

Key Words: Article X(2), Bilateralism, Historical conflicts, Indo-Pak relations, Right-Wing threat, Terrorism.

Introduction

Motivated by the mission to conjure up meteoric progression and moon-touched development out of regional integration, the SAARC and the EU begot their respective inceptions in 1985 and 1993. Economic growth, cooperation and self-sustenance among the members (SAARC, 1985) are the chief goals of the SAARC, an association (Ahmed, 2013) with eight members (Ahmar, 2017). Whereas, the EU, the platform of 27 member states (Gabel, 2019), crafted the vision to ensure development, amalgamation of internal and external policies and economic integration. (Laursen, 2012). Axiomatically, Both the EU and the SAARC have been confronting perennial challenges towards materialization of their respective objectives since their inceptions. Firstly, the EU is at the mercy of serious impediments to regional integration, in fact facing graver syndromes than the SAARC's. (Muzaffar, Jathol, & Yaseen, 2017). The bilateral wrangles between the European states have seriously placed the EU on a bumpy track or a tough road to success. What's more the crescendo of insecurity-ballooned mainly by the right wing movements, threatening the foundations of liberal democracies, the Ukraine War and the historical constraints among the European states- has virtually touched the climactic proportions, with further snowballed challenges being opened up for the organization in a formidable way. Ergo, the swirling winds of chaos, blowing ubiquitous in Europe, have been unable to tear apart the flag of the EU, as the organization has beautifully weathered the storm, thanks to bilateral diplomacy and advanced political systems. Whereas, the SAARC states, sucked deeper and darker into the quagmire of deep rooted historical antagonism, bilateral conflicts and underdeveloped political systems are unable to bump and glide into the harbor of regional integration for the attainment of development, quality governance and sound diplomacy. Ipso facto, if the SAARC really desires to touch its wagon to the star, it must immerse into a strong resolute, with the vision to amend the SAARC laws and adhere to bilateral diplomacy, forgetting that dark, saturnine past, embracing the light of progression for sake of future and taking a leaf out of the EU's book, thereby making its way to be on the crest of a wave of development and regional integration.

The Obstacles To Regional Integration

It is an indubitable fact that both the SAARC and the E.U countries have been witnessing manifold potential challenges to regional integration. However the orientation and approach of both the associations are different in this regard. The EU, due to excellent regional integration, has touched the pinnacle of glory in the fields of development, governance and diplomacy. Whereas, the situation is totally at contrast in the SAARC region. We shall draw the comparison of obstacles to regional integration for achievement of development, quality governance and diplomacy, faced by both the associations in detail:

The SAARC: No Bilateral Discussion

Resort to solution to bilateral disputes, is a forbidden commodity in the SAARC region, thanks to draconian law of Article X (2) of the SAARC Charters. The relations between India and Pakistan have been at extreme divergence due to Kashmir conflict, Siachen dispute, Sir Creek conundrum, and violation of Indus Water Treaty, lack of trust due to historical, military and cultural factors since 1947. In fact, at the multilateral level, there policies are bolt opposite to each other in Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf politics. As far as Kashmir conflict is concerned, both the countries have their respective views and arguments based on contradiction over the decision made by the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1947, however the history of this problem actually harks back to the colonial era and has resulted in the occurrence of two furious wars (Blakemore,2019). This Kashmir conflict, due to its extreme significance for the two states, has virtually snowballed into a full syndrome for the whole SAARC region, with reverberations even being felt in the corridors of the global platform like the UNO and the OIC. The Siachen Glacier dispute -emerging out of importance of a strategic mountain and connecting point to China, started in 1984 and subsequently degenerating into a high-altitude -warfare with loss of approximately twenty seven hundred soldiers from either sides owing to not military but environmental hazards (North,2014) - has virtually destroyed the Indo-Pak relations, with ray of hope lost into the clouds of mystery. Furthermore, the Sir Creek imbroglio, emerging out of dispute over interpretation or lack of proper demarcation of the maritime boundary between Indian Kutch and Pakistan's Sindh, is important for strategic and fishery (the largest fishing zone in the continent of Asia) spectra for both the countries (Dabas,2016).

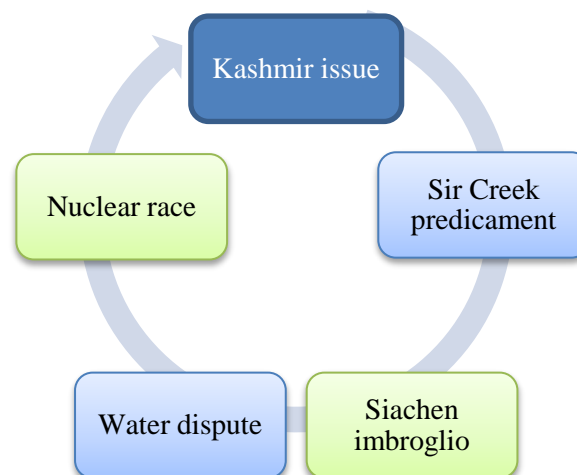


Figure 1:Indo Pak areas of divergence

This unresolved issue is continuously devouring the peace in the South Asia region. Above and beyond that, Indo-Pakistan water conflict has sprung up of controversial constructions by India namely heavy Kishanganga Hydroelectric project (of 330 Mega Watts) on the Jehlum and Ratle Hydroelectric Project (of 850 Mega Watts) (Bhattacharya,2023) on the Chenab respectively, thereby disturbing the flow of water of these two important rivers flowing into Pakistan, violating the Indus Water Treaty. In addition, that the distrust in nuclear weapons between Pakistan and India, maintaining that they

developed nuclear weapons for deterrence purpose ,has almost led to a nuclear conflagration between both the countries in 2019,as remarked by Mike Pompeo (Markey,2023) , former Secretary of state for the US. These various issues between India and Pakistan have verily stymied the progression of the SAARC, their attitude and approach to conflicts are deep rooted in antagonism against each other .They have actually elevated these disputes to the sky and linked trade, investment and regionalism to that impasse .Likewise, the SAARC is facing a tough road to hitherto unresolved disputes between India and Bangladesh. The biggest constraint within Bangladesh-Indo-relations is the Farakka Barrage, built by India on the Ganges River in 1974 with the strategy to divert its riverine route from Bangladesh to (India's) Hoogly River in order to flush out the accumulated silt from its Calcutta port. This Farakka Barrage is badly affecting 33% of total Bangladeshi populace with the disruption of the agricultural, food and navigational facilities (Kawser & Samad,2016).Into the bargain , the Teen-Bigha Corridor ,a porous Indo-Bangladesh border located in Mekhliganj of Cooch Behar city of India, with some areas of unfenced international border (Sengupta,2022) and a point of infiltration of non-state actors from Bangladesh is a real security peril to India. The non-demarcated maritime dispute of the Bay of Bengal between India and Bangladesh has propelled the latter to knock at the door of the UN for its intervention (Kamruzzaman, 2021). Further,India and Nepal relations have also been mired by the unresolved Kalapani-Limpiyadhura conflict, the piece of land captured by the former since Sino-Indo war of 1962.In all these looming conflicts ,the SAARC has not played any supportive role, primarily barricaded by the present laws, governing the organization.

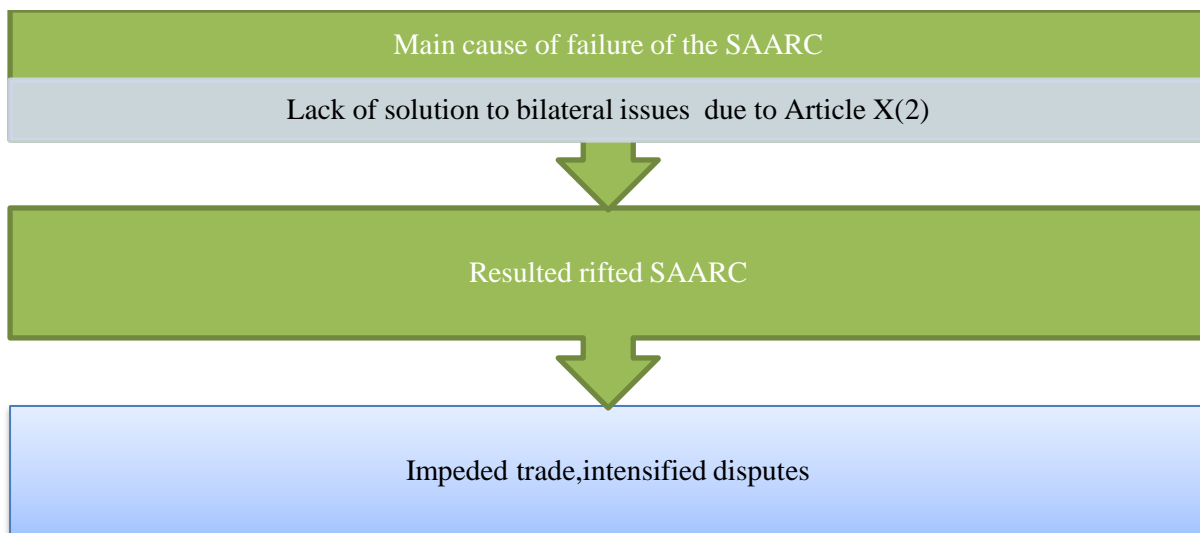


Figure 2: Main cause of failure of the SAARC.

The EU And Bilateral Predicaments

Like the SAARC, the EU too is entangled in the web of serious regional conflicts, but it has different orientation compared to the former. The disputes, be those emerging between the members or the nonmembers that could devour regional peace ,the EU has always harked to strong resolution of the conflicts.The EU has displayed a three-pronged approach to dispute resolution in the region-firstly, it has tried its best to resolve the bilateral or multilateral conflict among the members; secondly, it has supported its member in the conflict against the non-member within the ambit of justice and thirdly ,it has restrained the EU membership to the new aspirants ,on condition that the state at dispute must do away with the existing territorial predicaments with other states. All these three approaches to dispute resolution have virtually added to triumph of the organization. Firstly, the EU has played marvelous role in resolution of the Gibraltar issue. Spain, claiming its sovereignty over this territory of Gibraltar, lost its control to the UK under article 10 of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and by the order of the International Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2016 ,ordaining that the sovereignty of Gibraltar belonged to the UK ; Gibraltarians are happy with the UK due to their powers apart from defence and

foreign affairs (Garcia,2019), the issue in essence stands resolved ,thanks to the EU's efforts. More interestingly, even in the looming Mont Blanc dispute between France and Italy, an apple of discord between these two major powers of the E.U for decades again now fanned by the flames of antagonism as the former introduced steps to occupy the disputed mountain in 2020 (Giuffrida,2020) and the Rock-All syndrome , a point of dissonance among most powerful European countries like Denmark ,Iceland ,Ireland who negate the UK's territorial claim over the area (McCrave,2019), though the latest of the four has left the E.U followed by its UK-EU BREXIT Deal, the EU has played a very significant role, The smoldering embers of these perennial conflicts have been extinguished by the EU by virtue of diplomatic efforts and unhampered free trade, investment and development in the region. Similarly, in the Piran Bay conflict, a disputed maritime region between Croatia and Slovenia, the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has warned both the members in 2018 to find a bilateral solution in an urgent manner, making it clear that the dispute would not be tolerated by the European Union (Reka, 2018). Secondly in support of their member ,Cyprus, in the conflict against Turkey, a non-member, driven mainly by the ethnic fights between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots jostling the South-Mediterranean area for decades, the EU states have taken a very stern stance. Even in the Aegean Sea conflict (Falk, 2022); Greece has seen a similar response from the EU. Due to these particular issues, Turkey has been unable to get European Union membership (Karaca, Karacan & Yasar, 2022). In similar fashion, Montenegro, a European non-member country ,has been jeopardizing its membership to the European Union for decades, as the latter has explicitly manifested that it would not allow new membership to any country having unresolved border dispute (Kajosevic,2021)as its ongoing Prevlaka Peninsula conflict against Croatia is a standing menace to regional peace. Thirdly, Kosovo-Serbia conflict, between two non-EU-members, jeopardizing peace and stability in the region, has seen an excellent intervention by the EU. Historically, Serbia, views that Kosovo is part of its territory; whereas Kosovo claims to be an independent state with status as Republic of Kosovo, although it has been recognized by 101 out of 193 states of the United Nations. This ghastly conflict, due to military ,economic ,ethnic and security tussle has claimed more than thirteen thousand lives (Chadwick,2019).In resolution of this dispute between Serbia and Kosovo ,the European Union has successfully arranged the February 27 ,2023 Accord between both the countries for mitigation of relations ,receiving massive applaud by the US' Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken on March 19 ,2023 for this diplomatic landmark .More importantly ,the EU shall not give membership to Serbia unless it resolves the conflict with Kosovo and takes drastic measures to improve performance in rule of law and stability. This orientation of the EU towards the disputes is at contrast with the SAARC'S. We see that, the EU has been decelerating the mounting gales of conflicts for the protection of regional integration and development since the ages. On the other side of the coin, the SAARC has not been utilizing its platform for resolution of the disputes for decades, thanks to the approach of avoiding discussions on issues of bilateral conflicts in the association.

The Peril Of Ukraine War

No matter how much politically divided the SAARC is, it does not have most potential foreign threat like that of the Russian-Ukraine war. Most of the issues, till now unable to be solved in the SAARC are mainly because of lack of sincere will, political leadership and unity among the member states. The Russian War against Ukraine, the non EU ally, has verily posed an unprecedented military and security peril to the European Union. However, this aggression by Russia has received a very unified and concerted response from the European Union. It is due to this war that the Europeans have united emotionally with Ukraine on a principle of unity (Gruyter,2023).For its security and safety, the European Union has been openly supporting Ukraine and opposing Russia since the outbreak of this war .On one side ,it gave euro 2.5 billion aid, military, diplomatic and political support to Ukraine ,with further green signal of soon becoming of a E.U member .On the other side , it imposed massive sanctions of different nature against the Russians along with new policies to limit EU's reliance on gas import from Russia and fortify defence against it (Maurer, Whitman & Wright,2023).Even for sake of protecting a European state from the belligerence of Russia, the European Union has played a very significant role, although P.R.C. alleges the E.U for intensifying this conflict. Anyhow, it's a point

to ponder that the European Union really has no place for conflict and war, despite manifold challenges of security and military nature being faced by the Union. This model should be replicated and adapted by the SAARC countries. When the former foes in the WW2 - Germany and Italy, Belgium and France - and many others have joined hands together for their common military and security policy under the aegis of the EU, then why India and Pakistan and other states cannot join hands for the common good of regional integration. This spirit of unity is the main difference between the EU and the SAARC.

Terrorism And Peace

Terrorism, due to its manifold repercussions is the chief destroyer of regional integration in the SAARC. It being a really complex nontraditional security threat with multiple types and causes, has directly impacted the law and order, development, cultural progression and foreign direct investment in the SAARC countries. Two SAARC members Afghanistan and Pakistan - according to South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) due to the deadly terrorists activities by proscribed groups of AL Qaeda, ISIS, TTP, LET, and IMU in Afghanistan and forty five active insurgent groups (e.g. Al Jihad, Muslim United Army etc.) - fall in the rank of 'very high impact terrorism zones' with scores 8.822 and 8.160, with ranks 1st and 6th respectively (Global Terrorism Index, 2023). This high level of terrorism in two neighboring countries is the product of the repercussions of the Afghan War of 1979, a series of proxy between the erstwhile USSR and the US. Militarisation of the students in Afghanistan and providing home to international terrorists have further ignited these dying embers of chaos in the society. The unfenced or porous border of Durand Line between Afghanistan and Pakistan has also resulted in the cross border movement of the non-state actors, thereby resulting in their infiltration into Pakistan particularly. Followed by the NAP 2015 and Operation Zarb E-Azab, the Government of Pakistan has initiated excellent counter terrorism agendas. It has also initiated the border fencing drive which is on the verge of completion, thereby helping the country stop the terrorist's infiltration into its territory. Poverty, underdevelopment and illiteracy are among chief reasons for terrorism in both the countries. In addition, India, most powerful SAARC country in terms of economy and politics, is also at 13th rank as victim of terrorism in the world, with score 7.175, showing high impact of terrorism on its territory (G.T.I., 2023). Whereas, in the European Union, Greece and Germany with score 4.793 and 4.242 fall in the category of 'medium terrorism impact countries', this is indeed not really dangerous level of terrorism (G.T.I., 2023). Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and Netherlands fall in the category of 'low terrorism impact countries' (G.T.I., 2023). All the other countries in the European Union are further safe than these supra-mentioned countries (G.T.I., 2023). If we compare the levels of terrorism in both the organizations, we can plunge onto the conclusion that terrorism is haunting the SAARC in a lethal way, whereas the European countries are basking in the sunshine of peace and security. This is due to manifold reasons. Strong institutions, popular welfare, quality education, progressive cultures, women empowerment, job opportunities, massive investment, good governance, socio-economic justice, effective security policies and equity have really propelled the peddle of boat of peace in the EU region. Whereas, the landscape in the SAARC is portraying the episodes of bad governance, underdevelopment, bilateral wrangles and poverty, pushing the ship of regional law and order to the wildest zones of storms and tempests, thereby causing massive blow to the performance of the SAARC.

Historical Conflicts And Rifts

If we project light on the historical fights and antagonism in the SAARC region, we find the episodes of two countries namely India and Pakistan fighting incessantly. After their respective inceptions, both the countries have been at loggerheads. They came head on in four military fights in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 Kargil War respectively, thus providing for already widened cleavage

between both the countries. This bilateral animosity, between both the countries, is the chief cause of the struggling of the SAARC. However, shedding gleam on historical fights, European countries had much more disputes than that of the SAARC states. In the World War I (1914-1918) current EU member countries of France, Italy, Belgium, Greece; former EU member the UK; present EU aspirants Serbia and Montenegro all fought for the Allied Powers against the Central Powers comprising European powers of Germany, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire (presently Turkey being aspirant of EU membership) and Austria-Hungary. Ergo, in the World War II (1939-1945), the Axis powers, current members of EU namely Germany and Italy combated the Allied France (current EU member) and the Great Britain (former EU member). These wars, due to mass level destructions, pushed the world into the endless abyss of chaos, underdevelopment, human insecurity, deep rooted hatred and existentialist crisis. In addition to the two World War, the Cold War (1945 to 1991) had extreme effect on Europe. It actually divided Europe into the US-NATO alliance versus USSR-Warsaw Pact alliance (Wilde, 2019). The US bloc wanted the supremacy and implementation of the Capitalist system in Post-WW2 Europe; whereas, the USSR bloc dreamt of implementing and protecting Communism in the continent. This actually was extremely detrimental to European integration as it became the region for flash points in the race of two biggest powers of the world. Virtually much to surprise, the world has witnessed how these European nations forgot their thorny past and moved onto the road leading to mass level development and regional integration. This indeed is the lesson that the SAARC must learn from the European Union: how to forget the rainy past of historical, nationalist, policy and ideological divergence, without any lame excuses of historical wrangles or ideological hatred, since there is always a room to be back on the right track. The SAARC states direly need overhauling of their contemporary outlook of political systems and cultures to meet the standards of the EU in conflict resolution.

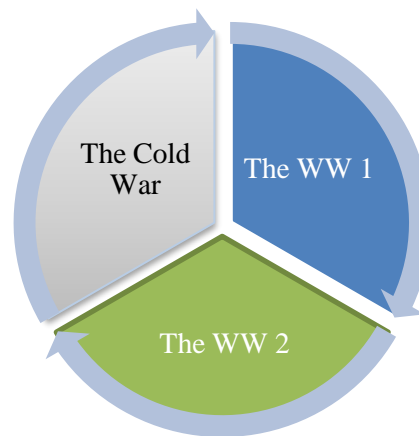


Figure 3: History of divergence in current EU states

The Right Wing Threat

It is true that the European Union is seriously facing the conundrum of right wing extremism. The rightists are the ideological groups being reactionary, nationalists and conservative segments found in various European countries, posing direct and indirect perils to liberal democracies and integration in the European Union. These rightists fall into various categories, with advocacy for their own ideologies, doctrines or set of beliefs. Firstly, the main type of rightist extremism is Neo-Nazi-Movement (Pauwels, 2021). This movement, yearning for the ideals of Germany, practiced in the years from 1933 till the epilogue of the World War II, is fighting for the visions of totalitarian state and Anti-Semitism. The Blood & Honour in the UK (former EU member), the Nordic Resistance Movement, the Sonnenkrieg Division and the Feuerkrieg Division in other parts Europe are the right movements being present in the European Union areas, thus posing massive threat to liberal democracies in the region (Pauwels, 2021). Secondly, there is another category of right wing extremism in Europe, fighting Islam and migration due to their so-called agenda of defending the Christian or European orientations from the waves of migration and spread of Islam. The Soldiers of Odin, a group emerging in Finland,

and now spreading its wings into other EU states ,has been advocating this kind of right wing extremism since 2015 (Pauwels,2021).Very much similar to the second type of rightists , the third category of rightists in Europe is busy in defending the European Culture against Islam . Génération Identitaire movement in France is best example of this type of rightist extremism (Pauwels,2021).Fourthly, Ultranationalist movements like Italian CasaPound in Italy ,the French Bastion Social in France , All-Polish Youth in Poland and Hungarian Légió Hungária in Hungary have been striving for the establishment of nationalist states, based on the principles of protection of traditionalism and ethnic nationalism in Europe (Pauwels,2021) since decades.The fifth category of rightists is Far right sovereign citizen movement .They ,due to their radical beliefs ,negate the concept of state and its institutions .They simply fight against the state laws; the Reichsbürger Movement in Germany, now spreading in other states of the European Union is the best example of this type of right wing extremism (Pauwels,2021).There are multiple rightists movements and groups ,operating in Europe Union areas, advocating anti-globalisation, anti-immigration, anti-European Union, xenocentrism , Ethnocentrism ,anti-multiculturalism ,Anti-Elitism, status quo and anti-Euro in defence of their thought. These thoughts have even become agenda of some of the famous political parties of European countries e.g. The Freedom Party of Austria, the Far-Right Vox Party of Spain, Sweden Democrats in Sweden and the AFD in Germany. The SAARC is not facing such right wing threat to the level which the EU is fighting. The former really cannot bear the brunt of this peril. Therefore, despite all these serious threats, the European Union is making strides in the fields of development and regional integration, this is surely due to devotion and motivation of the member states to allow the organization to touch the crescendo of glory mainly driven by their very advanced political systems, progression-driven- cultures and very responsive liberal democracies. On the other side of the picture, the SAARC has no such vision, Intention and strategy or will to make it an effective organization like the European Union.

Figure 4: Types of right wings movements in EU zone.

Causes of SAARC's Failure

In addition to the bilateral issues posed by the member states, the SAARC has been presenting the dismal picture in regional cooperation and integration due to the following reasons:

- i) Article X(2) of the SAARC Charter bars the discussion on bilateral issues at the Platform ,it has only allowed shedding light on multilateral problems of the region, this really has crippled the outlook of the SAARC (Kaler,2016) .
- ii) Moreover, the crescendo of Indo-Sino realist competition has also resulted in the hampered performance of the SAARC, as it has further fanned the flames of Indo-Pak hostility.

- iii) India is now drifting towards BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation) instead of reforming the SAARC.
- iv) Ideological and philosophical outlook in Pakistan as the fortress of Islam and India as buttress of Hindu state have resulted in clashes and divergence between these two important countries.
- v) Lack of free trade in the region due to Tariffs, para tariffs and Sensitive Lists.
- vi) Lack of people to people connection, caused by mutual distrust, visa and security policies
- vii) Opposite foreign, internal defence, external defence and security policies among the members.
- viii) Greater strategic rift among the members with different power alliances in the global scenario.
- ix) Regional politics and antagonistic competition among China, Iran, India, Pakistan and the CARs in Afghanistan state building process.
- x) Lack of track 1 and track 2 diplomacy to bridge the people, due to massive cultural rift, bad role played by local leadership and media
- xi) Underdeveloped political cultures in the SAARC region, with leadership vacuum to realize the importance of regional integration.

Conclusion

The EU and the SAARC, providing the matrix for regional integration for the achievement of goals like development, sound governance and diplomacy, have been enmeshed in the web of manifold challenges. The EU, despite wading through the ice-floes of some really perennial predicaments, is still bearing the stamp of excellence. On one side the horrendous onslaught of the right wing is cutting swathe through the EU, historical divergence rooted in the WW 1 staring in the eyes of the EU, the unprecedented Ukraine War engulfing the European peace and security in the Continent, and sending shudders down the spine of the organization. However, on the other side, the EU, due to the mechanism of immersing into diplomatic solution to challenges, in the presence of highly advanced political models, has steered the victory out of the jaws of danger. Whereas, the mounting gale of disputes among the SAARC states, particularly in the shape of Indo-Pak conflicts, is spiraling out of control. The lethal and tumultuous winds of terrorism and lack of bilateral-solution approach, are tearing apart the already tattered flag of the SAARC. Nonetheless, there is still hope that with the amendment of Article X (2) of SAARC Charter and with strong resolute to transform its current political outlook, the SAARC still has the capacity to lay the axe to the root of most looming imbroglios of bilateral disputes between the states. In this way, the SAARC can really see the dawn of development and regional integration, in consonance with the approach of the EU.

Recommendations for the SAARC

It is undeniable that the SAARC is teetering on the brink of failure, with no hope being present at the moment. However, still the SAARC has a lot of potential to slough off from this state of despair and despondency. Firstly, the SAARC members are in close contact with the observers namely: the US, China, the European Union, Japan, ROC, Iran, Myanmar, Australia and Mauritius on areas of agriculture, economic development, energy trade and environment. The SAARC has also signed MOUs on various specialized M.O.U.s with following agencies of the world (SAARC,2020). In this way, the SAARC can become the vanguard for the new Silk Route for the Big powers like the US and PRC,

followed by the Rebalancing and Revisionist philosophies , for the European powers ,for the Players from the Pacific Ocean , for the new opportunity providers from Africa and the Middle East in the areas of cooperation on economic development, investment ,infrastructural development and trade markets. Secondly, five SAARC states - India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bangladesh- have direct access to the waters of the Indian Ocean. These states, one day, have to cooperate collectively against piracy, nontraditional security threats, Non state actors and disruption of sea lines of communication, threats to food safety and problems of maritime borders. They have the opportunity to make the best use of their Indian Ocean ports, food, beach and petroleum industries. Thirdly, the SAARC countries, by setting aside the differences can have access to partnership in CPEC with a view to utilizing the trade and energy infrastructure to explore more markets from South Asia to the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus to Eastern Europe .Fourthly, the SAARC has massive potential to transform the lives of the people due to its vast tourism opportunities. India is home to the remnants of the glorious Indus Valley Civilisation, architectural epitome and heritage excellent of the the Murya Empire, the Ghaznavid Dynasty, The Slav Dynasty, the Lodhi Dynasty, the Khilji Dynasty, the Mughal Dynasty, and the Maratha Dynasty. It's also the place, marked with importance of agricultural, administrative and revenue records of the British Legacy .The Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Amber Palace, Humayun's Tomb, Gateway of India Mumbai, Jallianwala Bagh, Victoria Memorial, Kumbhalgarh Fort and Simla are top areas of historical and cultural importance in India. Pakistan is home to 'Mohenjo-daro (Mound of the Dead Men) ,a very important settlement site of the Indus Valley Civilisation located in Sindh) , Harappa Civilisation site in Sahiwal, erstwhile Montgomery) , The Badshahi

Mosque , the Salt Range, the Pir Pinjal Range, the Gogera site of 1857 war of Independence, the architecture of the Mughals like the Shahi Qila, also Noor Mahal ,the Historical Indus River (the bread basket source of ancient civilisations) Ranikot Fort (The Great Wall Of Sindh), the Himalaya Range , the tombs of Qaid E Azam and Allama Iqbal, Khewra Salt Mines, Royal Palace in Bahawalpure, tomb of Rai Ahmad Khan Kharal (famous figure of 1857 war from Tandlianwala subdivision) and many other tourist places. Tourist places in Bhutan (Punakha, Trongsa ,Jakar ,Thimphu etc) , Nepal (Pashupatinath Temple,Kathmandu Durbar Square,Buddha Stupa,Sagarmatha National Park etc) , Sri Lanka (Colombo , Kandy, Udawalawe National Park, Galle, Hikkaduwa Beach , Galle Face Green etc) , Afghanistan (Band-e-Amir National Park, DarulAman Palace, Buddha of Bamyana , the three Anglo Afghan War sites etc), Maldives (Male Island, Banana Reef, Baros Island, Veligandu Island, Vaadhoo Island etc) and Bangladesh (Sompur Mahavihara,Sajek Valley,Liberation War Museum etc) are among the top sites for tourist attraction. If the SAARC countries collectively ensure package of SAARC tourism with quality security and human resource management, they can earn trillions of more dollars in this sector .Fifthly, with great human resources strength in the regions, the SAARC can make the best use of such potential in terms of specialization of labour and knowledge based economy. Finally, due to its great and naval and strategic potentials, the SAARC countries have the potential to make a regional security bloc in pursuance of its areas of cooperation. The SAARC, following the strategy as depicted in figure 5, despite being the lame duck these days, can transform its outlook:

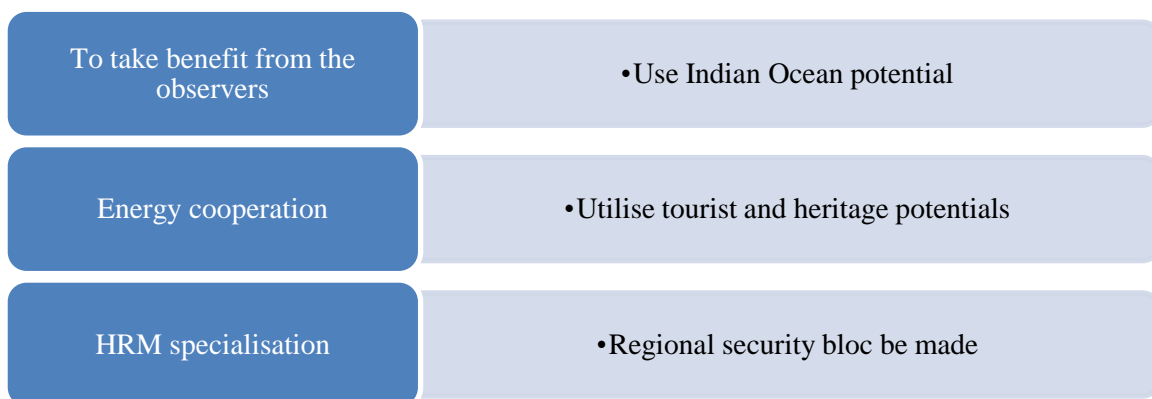


Figure 5: six-pronged solution for the SAARC's revitalization

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