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COOPERATION (SAARC) : COOPERATION AND CONFLICT. THESIS ADVISOR :
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The purpose of this study is to evaluate the performance of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in the 1980's. This period was highlighted by the efforts of this Association to establish regional co-operation and its implementation of its policy in order to point out its development, co-operation and conflicts between SAARC's member states, as well as the future trend of the Association.

The finding of this study show that the rationale behind the establishment of SAARC derived from the following considerations; (1) Unlike other regions which have developed cooperative agencies for consultation on a regional basis, South Asia had no such equivalent. (2) This type cooperative organization would help different countries in this region to cope more effectively with the poverty in their region which is one of the poorest in the world. (3) South Asian Cooperation will strengthen the bargaining power of the South in any North-South negotiation as well as contribute to Global South-South cooperation. (4) Regional cooperation in South Asia is likely to strengthen its voice effectively in international forums. (5) Regional Cooperation may help reduce political tension in South Asia. (6) The joint venture programmes of SAARC can greatly curtail the dominant role of the transnational corporations etc.

South Asian Association for regional cooperation was established on the initiative of the former President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh in the half of 1980's. SAARC has developed a organizational structure for cooperation its member states, especially in the following fields (1) Agriculture (2) Health and Population (3) Meteorology (4) Postal Service (5) Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Abuse (6) Rural Development (7) Science and Technology (8) Sports, Art and Culture (9) Telecommunications (10) Transport (11) Women in Development (12) Audio-vision Exchange (13) organized Tourism (14) Documentation (15) SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships (16) Youth Volunteer Exchange (17) Prevent of Terrorism etc.

However, this region is still plagued by numerous conflicts largely attributable to India with its imperialist policy. These conflicts can be grouped as follows: (1) Conflicts between India and Pakistan (2) Conflicts between India and Bangladesh (3) Conflicts between India and Sri Lanka (4) Conflicts between India and its neighboring Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan.

The findings of the study can be summarized as follow. SAARC's early founding efforts were marked by regional conflicts which hindered the Association from becoming a true Supra-National organization of regional cooperation. To avoid political confrontation between its member states and to enhance friendly atmosphere conducive to increased cooperation especially in the economic field, political issues had been excluded from the agenda of SAARC's early conferences. Nevertheless, one may say that a forecast of the Association's future within the next 5-7 years is rather bleak.